

**BUCHANAN PRESERVATION SOCIETY**

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Dear Commissioners:

We talked to Mike Baker and he suggested we bring this issue to your attention. This is about another piece of City infrastructure that is old and failing and needing repair.

A short portion of the mill race wall west of Oak Street has collapsed. A longer portion is deteriorated, leaning, and at risk of collapse as well.

The race is a significant part of the City's infrastructure. It carries a substantial amount of water from McCoy Creek and is integral to downtown flood control. It also carries stormwater runoff from multiple City streets. Perhaps just as importantly, the race powers the wheel at the Pears Mill today just as it did 180 years ago. The millrace is a contributing resource to our Downtown National Register Historic District and provides an iconic water feature for our downtown.

The walls of the race between Oak and Charles Court were constructed at different times.

We believe that the first hundred feet of the northerly wall west of Oak (the part behind the park and Ross-Sanders House) was built sometime between 1936 and 1961 – it probably wasn't there in 1936 but we know it was there in 1961 – so it is between 60 and 85 years old. This is the part of the wall where the collapse has occurred.

The next hundred feet of wall (next to the fire station) was built by City employees in 1975 – 47 years ago. It appears to be in good condition, or at least not obviously at risk.

The last fifty feet of wall (adjacent to the residential lot on Charles Court) was built between 1936 and 1961, no doubt by the property owner. It also appears to be in good condition.

All three sections of the wall are built of stacked and mortared pieces of broken concrete sidewalk or pavement.

Here are some pictures of the collapsed part of the millrace wall:



Here is a photo of where the next collapse seems likely. It's hard to get a good photo of this, but if you visit the site the deterioration and current lean is clearly visible:



Here is a picture of a part of the wall constructed by the City in 1975. The wall is considerably lower here and appears to be in good condition:



The Buchanan Preservation Society asks that the City rebuild both the collapsed and the deteriorated portions of the northerly mill race wall; and since the race is a contributing resource to the Downton Historic District and an integral component of Pears Mill operations, the Society also asks to be a partner in the design and execution of this work.

The length of wall that requires immediate attention is about 60 feet. Salvaged materials should be reused and similar materials procured if necessary. The end result should be a wall similar in appearance to the original wall. The height of the new wall could be made lower by removing some of the existing bank and grading it similar to the slope of the bank parallel with the fire station. Lowering the height of the wall should increase its stability.

Thank you for your time and for your favorable consideration.

Sincerely,

*Beth Murphy*  
President  
Buchanan Preservation Society

*Peter Lysy*  
Treasurer  
Buchanan Preservation Society