



lower Little Rock Creek
Walkable Watershed
healthy waters : healthy communities

Date: March 25, 2014

To: Jen Baker, City of Raleigh Office of Sustainability
City of Raleigh Core Team

From: Alisa Hefner, Skeo Solutions
Miranda Maupin, Skeo Solutions
Vernice Miller-Travis, Skeo Solutions

Re: March 13, 2014 Public Meeting Summary

Overview

A kickoff public meeting was held on Thursday, March 13, 2014 at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center to introduce the Raleigh Walkable Watershed project and gather community ideas related to biking and walking, water flow and flooding, creek and greenway, and community engagement. Input provided during the meeting is summarized by topic below.

Vernice Miller-Travis (Skeo Solutions) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and encouraging participants to share their ideas and concerns. Jen Baker with the City of Raleigh Office of Sustainability, introduced herself as the project lead for a multidepartment city team, including Planning, Parks and Recreation, Stormwater, Community Services and Community Development. Next, Alisa Hefner (Skeo Solutions) provided an overview of the purpose and goals of the project and described the watershed context. Participants then visited four stations to provide input.

Summary of Input from Participants

General observations

- Provide a better understanding of watershed and related terms. Sherry Graham, Director for the Walnut Creek Wetland Center used the analogy of a bathtub to explain a watershed.
- Is there a way to integrate communities impacted by flooding, such as Rochester Heights and Biltmore Hills?
- Shift perception of the creek as dumping ground to a natural and community asset.

Biking and Walking

- More destinations are needed in area, such as community services like a grocery store.
- Many of the streets are narrow with homes situated close to the road; sidewalks on narrow streets would be challenging and would not likely have residents' support.
- Concerns shared over residents paying for new sidewalks (Following the public meeting, the City was able to confirm that the sidewalk assessment is no longer in effect. To request a new



lower Little Rock Creek Walkable Watershed healthy waters : healthy communities

sidewalk, residents would sign a petition requesting a sidewalk and enter a citywide lottery. No direct costs are incurred by the residents for installing new sidewalks.)

- Concerns shared regarding loitering in the neighborhood, particularly around Bragg Street west of Garner Road. Some were concerned that more sidewalks would encourage more loitering. Others suggested more positive activity, such as more people out walking would discourage unwanted activity.
- The following intersections were noted as dangerous spots for pedestrians: crossing Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd (particularly at Garner Road and Holmes/Chavis Way), and Garner Road at Hoke Street.
- Intersections are commonly used for school bus stops.
- Area along State Street south of Peterson Street is dark and has history of illegal dumping. Lights and surveillance cameras were recommended.

Water Flow and Flooding

- Debris and litter blocking storm drains. (is there a City program to report these issues?)
- Flooding was noted in Brown Birch Apartment complex, Garner Road south of Peterson Street and State Street south of Peterson Street. It was also noted that it used to flood along Peterson Street where the creek crosses.

Creek and Greenway

What activities would you like to see in the greenway? Where could views or access be improved?

- Add access for people who are elderly or disabled.
- Improve safety, make it less scary and more inviting, thin vegetation.
- Balance improving access to greenway with concerns about attracting undesirable activity.
- Consider how to benefit Rochester Heights and Biltmore Hills communities
- Add drinking water fountains, exercise stations and things that draw people to the greenway, such as bike-a-thons and foot races, benches for sitting, mileage markers, and information kiosks.
- Improve lighting along the greenway throughout the section that flows through the study area, especially under bridges.

Community Engagement

- Suggest making presentations to CACs (Central, South East, North Central, North East?) and neighborhood associations to share project with the general public.
- Conversations rather than emails to share project information.
- Reach out through black press and radio shows and major press.



lower Little Rock Creek

Walkable Watershed

healthy waters : healthy communities

- Additional organizations were recommended: Garner Road Community Center, Biltmore Hills Community Center, St. Augustine's University, Center by Kroger(?)
- Churches were recommended as an opportunity to best gather public input, including Unity Church across from Moore Square, church across from prison, church on Boyer, Providence United, Martin Street Baptist, First Baptist (downtown)
- Social media was recommended as another tool, it was suggested that the project have its own Facebook page.

Recommended Next Steps

Next steps for the project include:

- City to present information on the project at upcoming Central and South Central CAC meetings.
- Distribute Adult Survey and Youth Survey to gather additional public input.
- Convene public meeting on Tuesday, May 20 to share draft opportunities and gather input.
- Hold a working session on May 21 with a small focus group of community leaders and city staff to review public input and refine concept plan based on public input.