



MEMORANDUM

Date: May 2, 2016

To: Darryl Walker, City of Petersburg Walkable Watershed Team Lead
City of Petersburg Walkable Watershed Team

From: Alisa Hefner, Skeo
Beth Schermerhorn, Skeo
Miranda Maupin, Skeo

CC: Amber Ellis, James River Association
Ben Hawkins, James River Association

Re: Walkable Watershed Community Input Session Summary

On Tuesday, April 12, 2016, the Walkable Watershed project team hosted a public input session as part of the Robert E. Lee's (REL) Neighborhood Watch monthly meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to share information about the project and provide an opportunity for the public to review a draft stormwater analysis and then provide input on a list of potential strategies to improve flooding, walkability, connectivity, and water quality. This memo provides a summary of the input provided on the analysis, strategies, additional outreach opportunities and next steps. Approximately 12 people attended the meeting.

Project Background

James River Association and Skeo Solutions launched the Petersburg Walkable Watershed project in the Robert E. Lee neighborhood in fall 2015. Funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grant, the project will focus on community-based planning approach to identify opportunities to address water quality concerns, such as flooding with green infrastructure solutions while increasing the walkability and access to open space for the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Watch Community Meeting

Skeo, JRA and Mr. Walker (City of Petersburg) attended the REL Neighborhood Watch meeting at Robert E Lee Elementary School from 7-9pm on April 12, 2016 to present the existing conditions, opportunities and strategies to community members and to receive input and feedback.

Meeting participants listed and identified their top 3 neighborhood assets and challenges (top priority areas are in bold):

- Assets
 - Quiet residential neighborhood
 - **REL Elementary School and youth who are active in the neighborhood**
 - **Neighborhood churches and businesses**



Walkable Watershed

healthy waters : healthy communities

- **Neighborhood Watch Association**
- Harrison and Poor Creeks
- Proximity to Appomattox River, Petersburg National Battlefield and other natural areas
- Challenges (**bold indicates high concern**, *italics secondary concern*)
 - Few sidewalks
 - Few play areas for children/youth
 - *Flooding in streets and yards*
 - Littering on streets
 - Few areas to walk and interact with nature and the creeks
 - Perception and awareness of the creeks
 - **Public safety**
 - **Speed of traffic**
 - Few public gathering places
 - **Home ownership**
 - No nearby grocery store
 - *Street lighting*
 - Few public trash cans

After identifying assets and challenges, participants reviewed the existing conditions map and discussed options for resolving flooding, litter and walkability concerns.

- Participants identified additional areas where flooding occurs in the neighborhood including Henrico St. onto N Whitehill Dr. and that the pond on the school property can overflow to the back of buildings on Washington St.
- There was discussion about low-cost methods for diverting water away from streets using French drains.
- The participants discussed how Petersburg National Battlefield does not feel like a part of their neighborhood. They also noted that the admittance fee is a barrier to utilizing the park.
- The principal of the elementary school shared that she believes that 1/3 to 1/2 of students walk to school, roughly 175 students.
- At the end of the meeting, all agreed that the strategies presented were within reason and all were interested in attending a future meeting to review the concept plan.

Next Steps

- Skeo will develop a draft concept plan and will review with JRA and the City of Petersburg.
- All will set up a follow up meeting with the Neighborhood Watch Association for a later date this spring.
- JRA will coordinate and host a community cleanup day in collaboration with REL Elementary.