



City of Durham Public Works Department - Stormwater & GIS Services Division South Ellerbe Stormwater Project

Public Meetings Summary | January 2018

INTRODUCTION

The City of Durham is planning a natural stormwater restoration at 808 West Trinity Avenue, the site of the former Duke Diet and Fitness Center. This site will be transformed into a natural space that will be an asset to both the community and the environment.

BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

The property is located along a South Ellerbe Creek tributary that flows into Falls Lake. This project will help the City meet the Falls Lake Nutrient Management Strategy Rules, and is a part of a comprehensive watershed strategy to reduce nitrogen and phosphorous to help to improve water quality. A cleaner Falls Lake will support its uses for drinking water supply, fish and wildlife habitat, and recreation.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Engaging Durham residents to define and prioritize community amenities that could be integrated into the stormwater restoration project is a priority for the City. To date, the City has invited residents to provide input through two meetings open to the public: a Public Information Session on July 27, 2017 and a Design Workshop on September 27, 2017. Information presented at both events as well as video summaries can be found on the City's project website: (<http://durhamnc.gov/1616>).

PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION #1

On July 27, 2017, approximately 50 people attended Public Information Session #1. The project team gave an update on the project status and answered questions from attendees. A survey covering a range of topics was distributed to attendees and made available on the project website through August 14, 2017. A total of 34 people submitted responses to the survey. Most of the responses came from residents who live or work in the Ellerbe Creek watershed (85% of respondents), many of whom also use the South Ellerbe Creek Trail on a regular basis (21% of respondents). Key findings from the survey include:



INFO SESSION DRAWS A CROWD

Public Information Session #1 was attended by approximately 50 people, including a member of City Council, City staff, and design team members.



MEETING OF THE MINDS

At the Public Design Workshop, the project design team facilitated a process for residents to help create a premier community asset.



PROJECT AMENITIES

Design workshop attendees added their creative ideas for community amenities to the project base map.

THREE HIGHEST RATED PROJECT GOALS:

- #1 - Improve water quality in Ellerbe Creek
- #2 - Protect Falls Lake as a drinking water supply
- #3 - Create a natural area that improves wildlife habitat

FIVE HIGHEST RATED COMMUNITY AMENITIES:

- #1 - Access to nearby trails
- #2 - Educational signage
- #3 - Boardwalk
- #4 - Overlook
- #5 - Seating areas

PUBLIC DESIGN WORKSHOP

The Public Design Workshop was attended by over 50 members of the public, City Staff, Durham County Staff and members of the design team. The purpose of the workshop was to bring the public and the design team together to achieve one of the primary goals for the stormwater project: create a premier community amenity and asset.



Based on the input received during Public Information Session #1 and the results of the survey, the workshop was organized into four design stations where the public could submit ideas and comments directly to

City staff and the design team. At each design station, a large base map of the site was available for workshop attendees to write an idea directly on the base map or on a sticky note placed on the base map.

Trails, Boardwalks, Recreation, and Overlooks: The public's comments emphasized a connection between the South Ellerbe Creek and Durham Belt Line Trails, improved connections of these trails to the surrounding neighborhoods, boardwalks to allow for interaction between people and the natural habitat, and overlooks for nature watching.

Natural Areas, Vegetation, and Wildlife Habitat: The public expressed the importance of incorporating the following amenities into the project site: native plant

communities; extensive tree cover to create shaded areas; and enhanced habitat for a variety of species, such as birds, amphibians, bats, and bees and other pollinators.

Educational Opportunities and Public Art: The public's ideas emphasized installing water-themed public art and interpretive signs along the trails and providing hands-on educational opportunities for adults and children. Topics for educational themes included the water cycle, stormwater, the functions of the stormwater restoration project, and flooding.

Stormwater Retrofits Using a Watershed Perspective of the Project: The public recommended green infrastructure at various sites throughout the watershed to complement the benefits of the stormwater restoration project and further improve water quality in Ellerbe Creek and Falls Lake.

Workshop attendees also placed colored dots on photos on the Inspiration Posters to indicate support for a specific design concept (e.g., boardwalk materials, style of interactive sign, vegetation community type, etc.). The workshop also provided a "Free Expression Board" where the public could submit other project-related comments and feedback.

NEXT STEPS

The City will continue to engage the public through numerous outreach activities to inform and solicit input from residents and other interested groups throughout the life of the project. These activities will include future public information sessions, social media updates, short videos, press releases, project status reports, and other

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PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION #2

Spring 2018



Notice Under the Americans with Disabilities Act: Persons who require assistance should call (919) 560-4197, ext. 21254, TTY (919) 560-1200 or email ADA@durhamnc.gov no later than 48 hours before the event.

For more information, visit the project web page: <http://durhamnc.gov/1616>. You may also contact the City's Project Manager, **Sandi Wilbur**, at Sandra.Wilbur@DurhamNC.gov or (919) 560-4326, ext. 30286 or **Megan Walsh** at Megan.Walsh@DurhamNC.gov or (919) 560-4326 ext. 30220