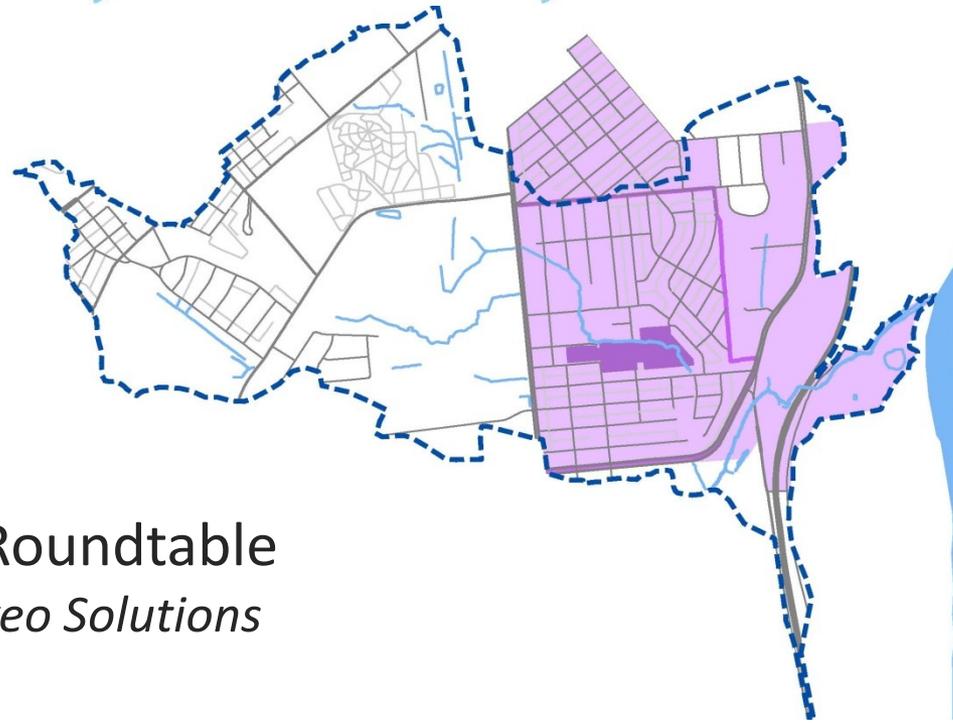


BELLEMEADE WALKABLE WATERSHED

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

healthy waters : healthy communities



Sustainable Water Resources Roundtable

Cheryl Little and Miranda Maupin Skeo Solutions

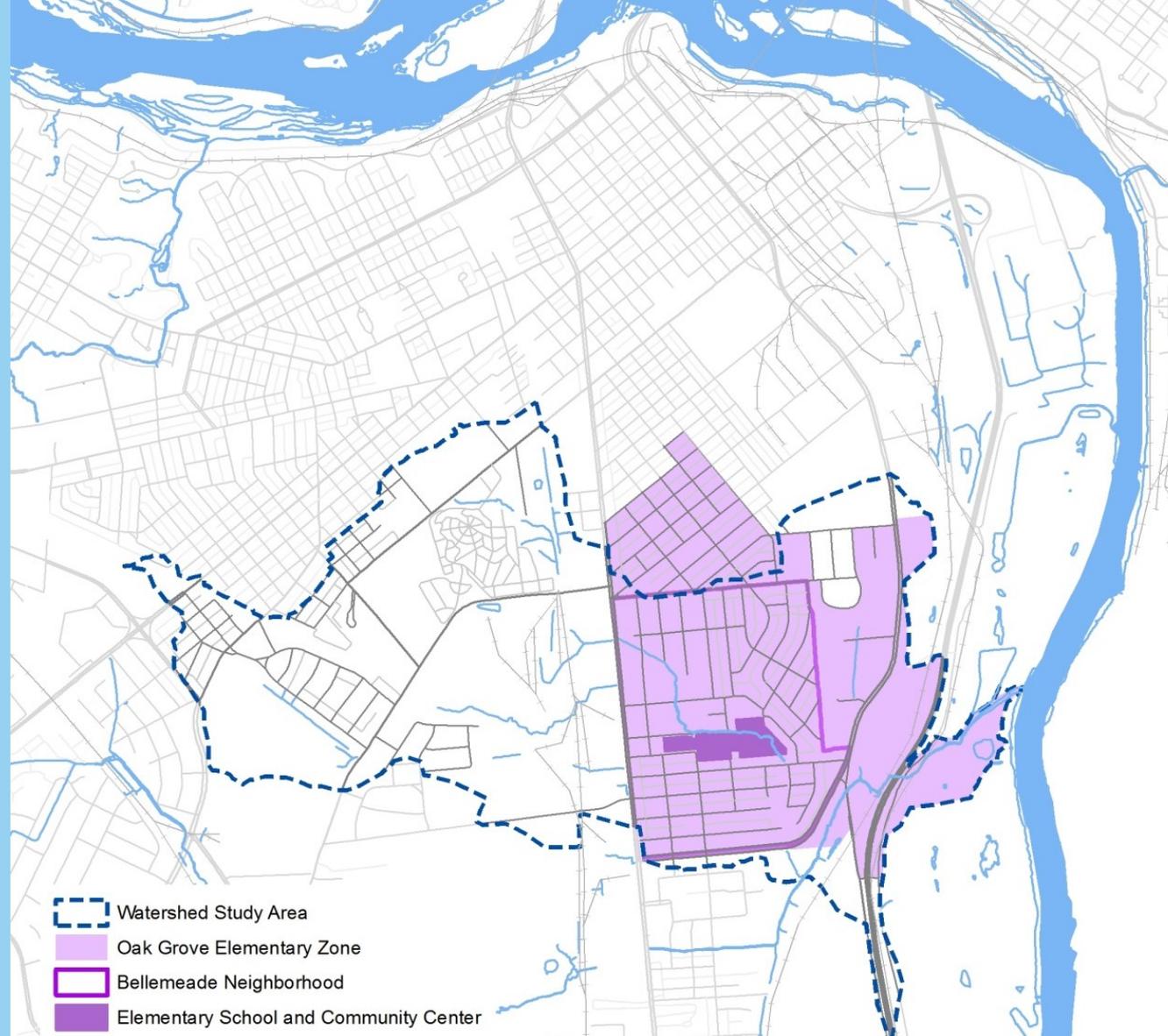
May 31, 2012



The Context

- The Bellemeade neighborhood is underserved - many streets lack sidewalks and proper drainage.
- The neighborhood is bisected by an urban stream that has been neglected.
- The residents tend to be low income.





THE CONCEPT: WATERSHED + SCHOOLSHED

Watershed + Schoolshed

The school district is developing a new elementary school adjacent to the creek – potential to be a community center and revitalizing force.

The City of Richmond is developing a Stormwater Master Plan to improve water quality, mitigate flooding and reduce stream bank erosion.





THE PROCESS

Develop a shared vision, set of strategies and concept plan to improve watershed and neighborhood health in Bellemeade

Objectives

- Slow, infiltrate and clean rain water.
- Improve pedestrian routes to the community center and new school.
- Connect the neighborhood to the creek, the regional trail and the James River.
- Create outdoor education opportunities.
- Develop a sense of community centered around the new school and the watershed.



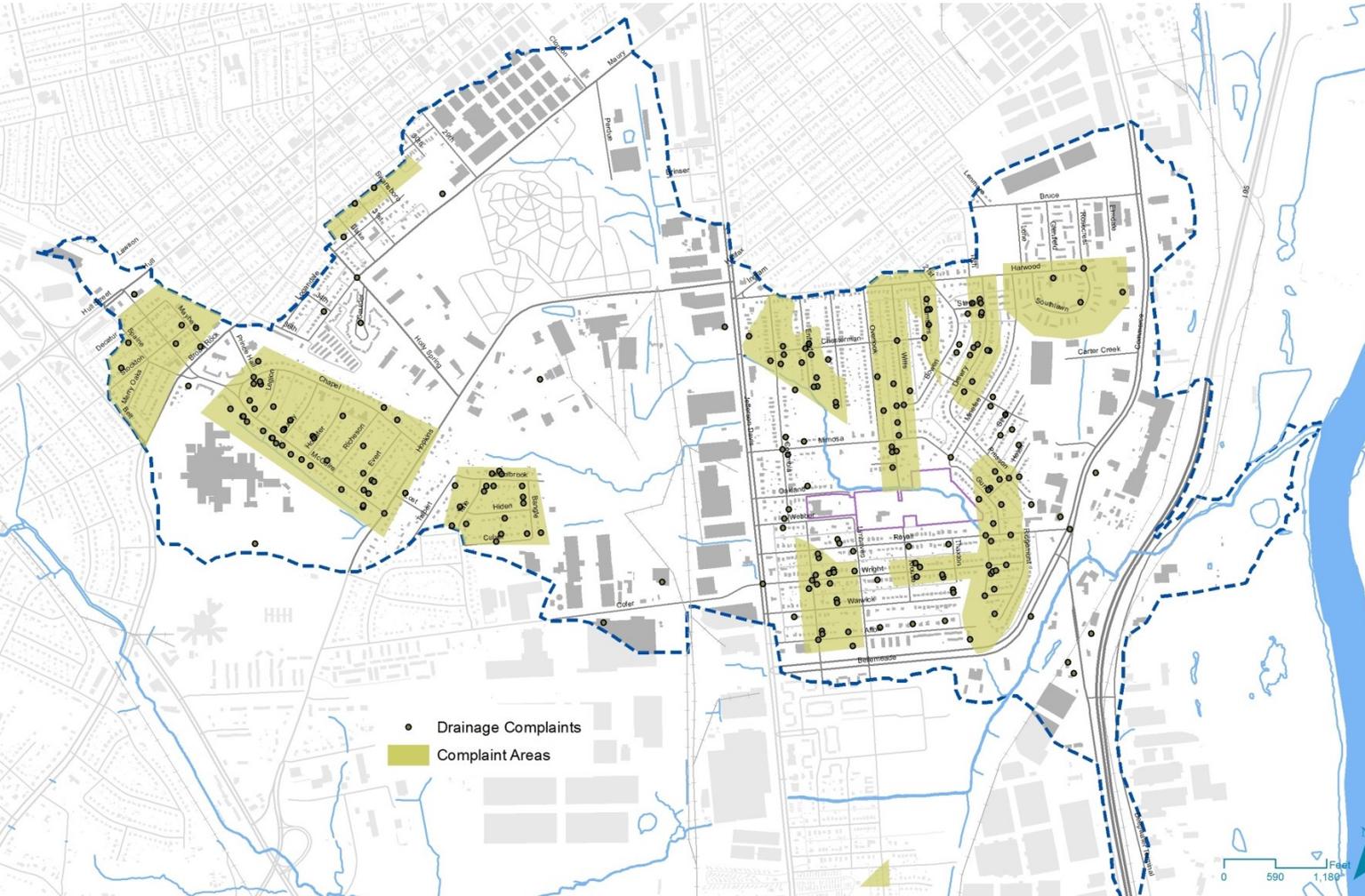
Water flow challenges



- Erosive flows
- Channelization
- Polluted water
- Local flooding

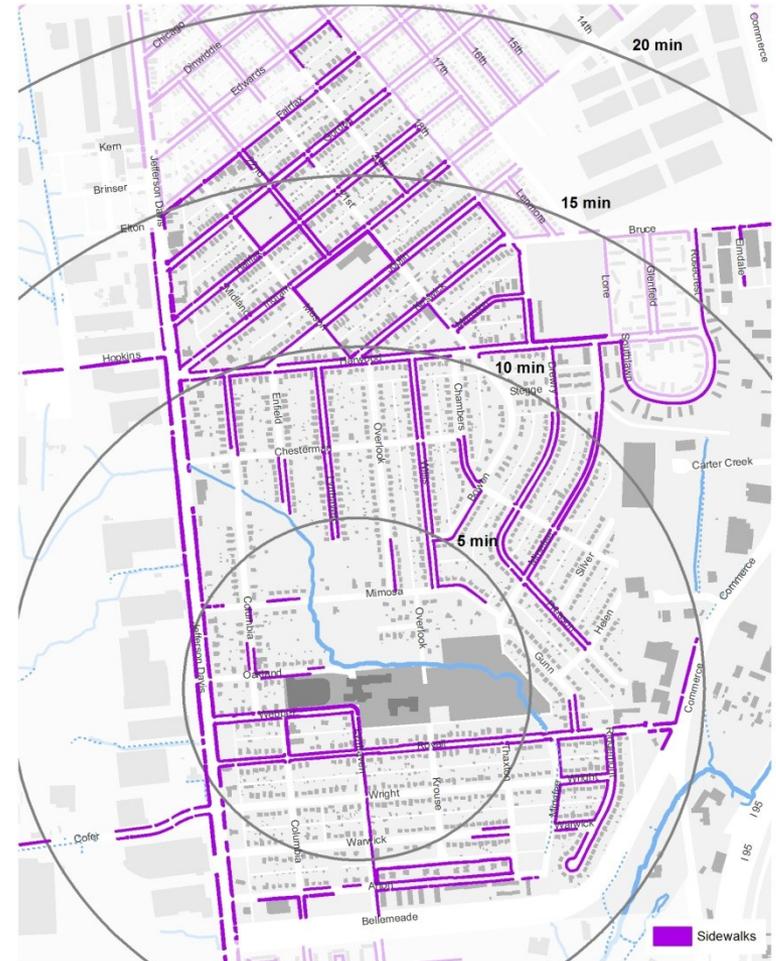


Water flow challenges



Pedestrian flow challenges

- Many of the streets around the school lack sidewalks
- Especially within the 5-10 minute walk radius
- Although most students live within a 15 min walk – almost all students are bused to school.



Bellemeade Walkable Watershed | 2012

Engage all stakeholders

- A community working session brought together students, residents, non-profits and agencies to identify strategies for improving the watershed and walkability in the neighborhood.



- City Departments
- City Public School
- Environmental Organizations
- Community Organizations
- Residents
- Faith-based organizations
- Local business
- Potential funders

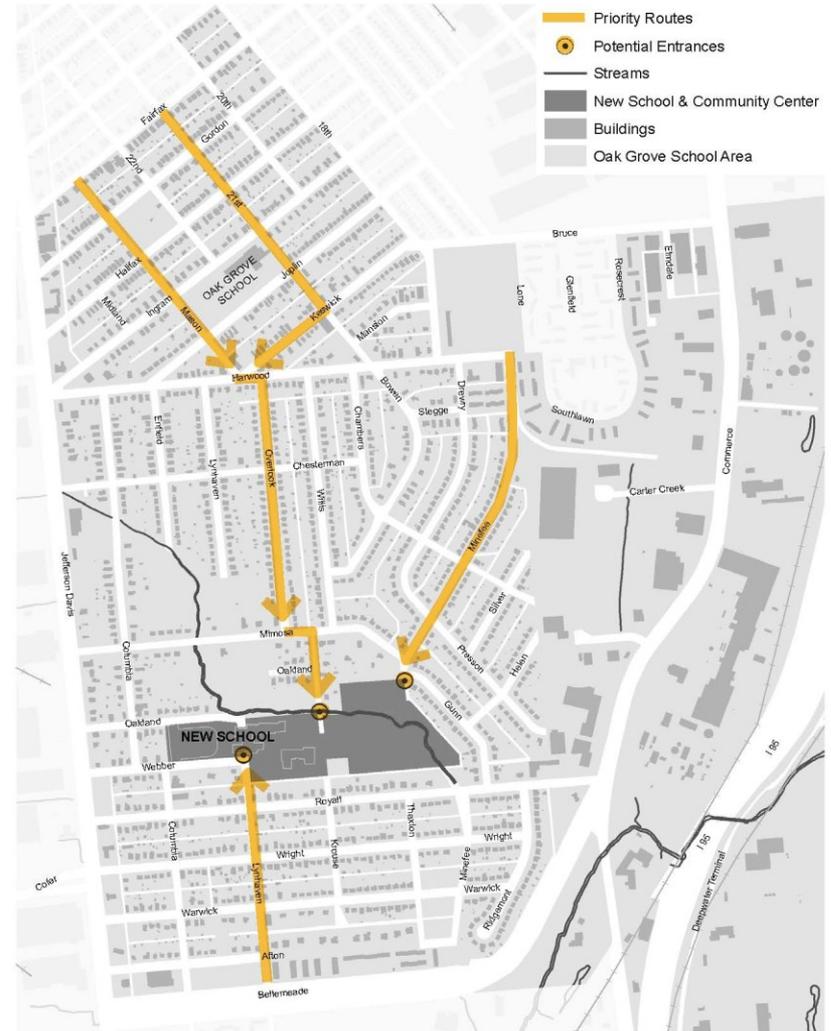
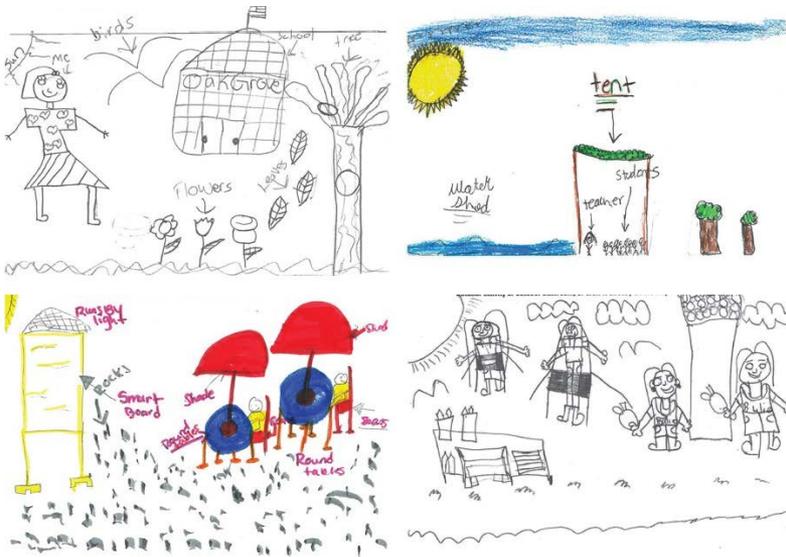
Tour the watershed

- Walking the watershed together allowed agency and non-profit representatives to see the issues and start talking about solutions.



Engage the students

- 5th grade students identified the priority walking routes to school and community center.



Connections

Building on student priorities, the concept plan outlines 3 major green connections to the school and community center.



Green streets

- Planted streetscapes can be used to slow and clean stormwater and provide a pleasant walking route to school.
- Green streetscapes can provide multiple benefits – traffic calming, pedestrian safety and landscaping.



Celebrating connections



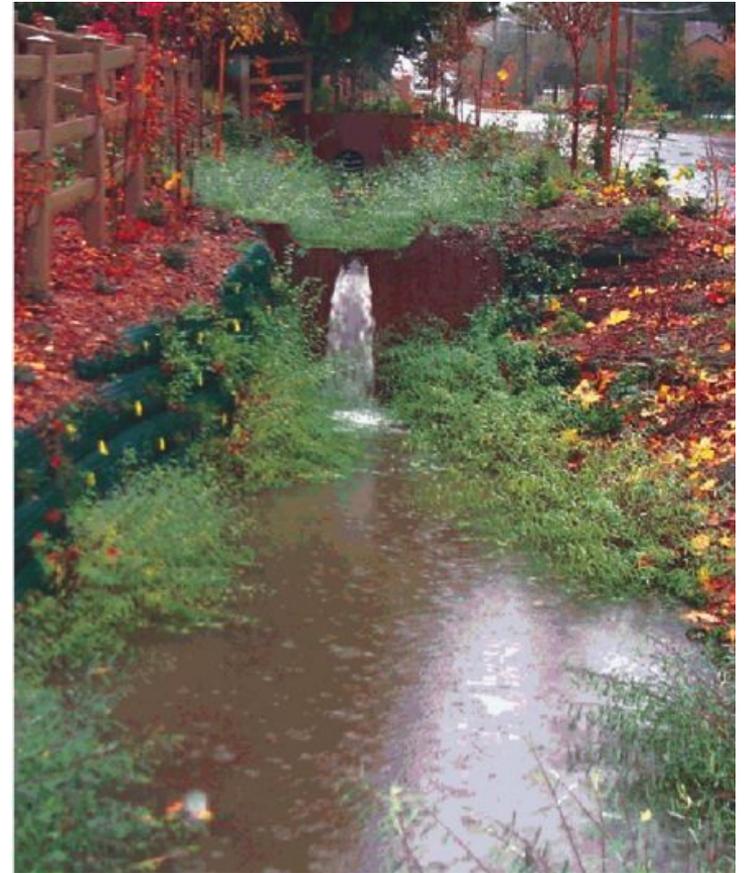
new school site

community center and park boundary
proposed school entry, oriented south and east



Strategies that promote learning

- Stormwater strategies can be designed to highlight how rainwater flows through the neighborhood to the creek.



As a result

- All school sidewalks funded
- Strategies included in City's Stormwater Master Plan
- Leveraged additional private funding to form coalition
- Pro bono park concept plan
- Sparked local non-profit and volunteer activities



Lessons Learned

- Bring a mix of stakeholders to the table
- Think beyond the project scale to a watershed-wide strategy
- Connect multiple benefits (walking, learning and water quality improvement)
- Leverage multiple funding sources
- Generate fun and inspiration



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