

In 2011, the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) created a pilot project called *Walkable Watersheds* to help engage the community in retrofitting and restoring the degraded and impaired Goode's Creek watershed in southside Richmond. The Goode's Creek Watershed drains into the James River and the restoration of this urban landscape helps to clean the James and the Chesapeake Bay. This small watershed scale project will help test new ideas for citywide replication! The plan to restore this small urban park in Bellemeade is the first project now underway. Below are the project elements and partnership opportunities.



Eroding creek before restoration



Revitalization Concept Plan for the Bellemeade Park

Goode's Creek Watershed, Richmond VA
December 2012

Park Concept Plan Projects and Funding Needs

Creek Habitat Restoration -- Return an eroding open channel to native stream habitat by stabilizing the channel using softer-environmentally friendly approaches that use plants to restore habitat, reduce erosion and absorb flood impacts. Cost: \$100,000 -- funded 80%. Seeking stones for bank toe, channel, seating benches and channel riffles.

Stream buffer and wildlife garden -- Includes new urban forests, nature trail, outdoor learning and wildlife habitat. Cost: \$50,000. Most trees now donated. Seeking volunteers to help install and adopt trees as they grow. Seeking interpretive signage funds @\$3000.

Outdoor Learning Stations -- Creating outdoor learning stations for children to learn about stream ecology, stormwater management and riparian habitats. Stations also will educate residents with tips for restoring their own landscapes to reduce runoff. Cost: \$2,000 for site preparation and signage at each stop.

Pathways for Healthy Communities -- Creating a mile of new pathways throughout the park to allow for exercise and nature enjoyment. Cost for trails: Varies. Seeking \$25,000 for purchase or donation of trail surface materials.

Bridges to Healthy Communities -- Bridges help children walk to new green school and join the park sides together. Restore and beautify existing bridge at Overlook Street. Cost: \$5,000. New 'floating' bridge mid park for new safe route to school and to connect community gardens to rest of park. Cost: \$10,000 (if cash, or seeking donations of materials and labor).

Bioswale -- Replaces concrete ditch with series of stepped gardens to intercept and clean stormwater from neighborhood before draining into the creek. Cost: Installation funded. Seeking funds for interpretive signage and learning station: \$2,000.

Field Lighting -- Cost to light the park field at night and expand recreation. Cost: \$200,000.

Community Gardens -- Site preparation and tools for shared gardening. Cost: \$5,000.

In 2011 and 2012, the Bellemeade Oak Grove Community developed a concept plan for a *Walkable Watershed*. The *Watershed Concept Plan* identifies strategies to improve the health of the creek and the learning environment for the school and its community. Restoration of Bellemeade Park is the first project.

Restoration of Bellemeade Park will demonstrate the Walkable Watersheds Principles for:

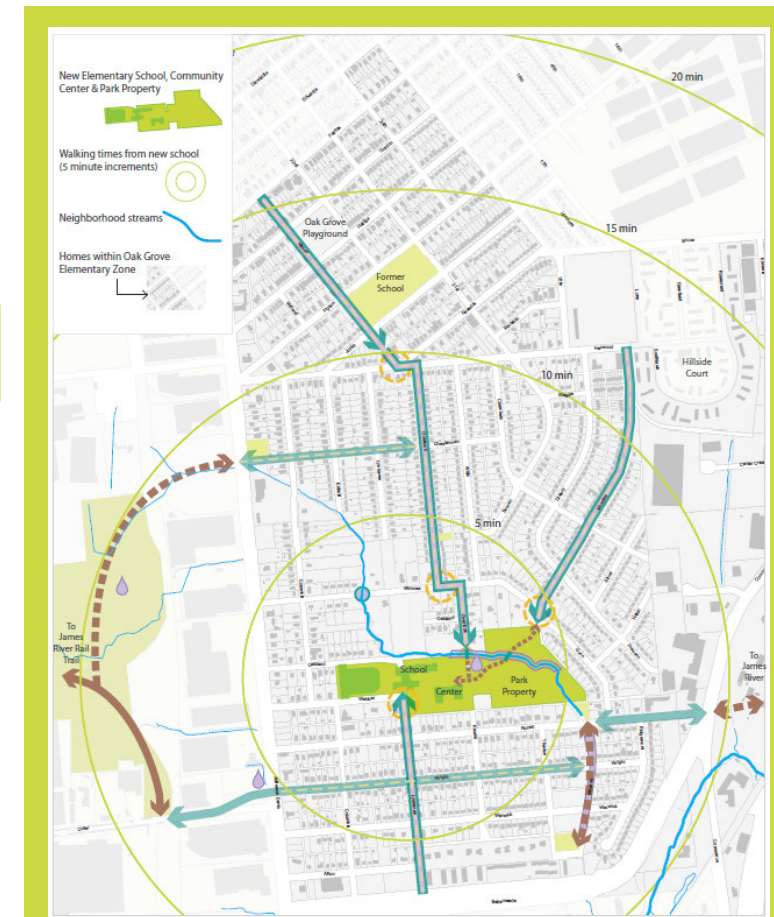
Connectivity -- connect the neighborhood to the creek and the James River.

Safe Passage -- improve walking routes to the community center and new green school.

Water + environment -- slow, infiltrate and clean rain water.

Open space + Habitat -- develop a sense of community around the creek and new school.

Education + awareness -- create outdoor education opportunities.



Watershed Concept Plan, 2012

Coupled with natural areas, gardens, outdoor learning labs, a recreation field, and places for walking or seeking respite; this green jewel in the heart of southside Richmond will be transformational for the citizens, the children and the city's wildlife.

The Bellemeade Park Revitalization will provide children with hands-on, real world science and outdoor learning right where they live and learn. Educating children today helps to ensure that the watershed is taken care of in the future. Located next to the new Oak Grove Bellemeade School -- a new 'green' school opening in 2013 -- this urban green space provides opportunities for all age groups to contribute to hands-on projects for a healthier community. It will also create a sense of community pride and accomplishment by turning degraded sites into places of wonder, nature enjoyment, physical fitness and fun!

Beginning in 2012, the community -- assisted by the nonprofit Green Infrastructure Center -- sought funds to restore and revitalize Bellemeade's park. Inside you will find the park concept plan and the back page lists items funded and those needing funds and project partners. Join with us in bringing back Southside pride and a healthy 'walkable watershed' community!

To inquire about becoming a project partner, please contact the Green Infrastructure Center (GIC) at 804-614-5091. All donations of cash or materials are tax deductible. Please join with the City of Richmond, the Virginia Department of Forestry's Chesapeake Bay Program, Altria, Wells Fargo, the Environmental Protection Agency and nonprofit partners the GIC, the James River Association, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the residents of Jefferson Davis, Bellemeade and Oak Grove communities to make a difference in our capital city -- one walkable watershed at a time!



For more information or project updates visit: <http://www.gicinc.org/projectbellemeade.htm>

