

DRAKE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING MEETING
PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS SUB-COMMITTEE
Thursday, June 18th, 2009 at 7:00pm

- I. Welcome and Introductions**
- II. City of Des Moines Trails Discussion – Richard Brown, Park Planner**
 - a) Des Moines Bicycle and Trail Master Plan
 - b) Current and Future Trail Improvements in the Drake area
 - c) On-street bicycle lanes
 - d) Other pedestrian, bicycle, and trail issues
- III. Future meeting schedule**

Next meeting scheduled for July 16th
- IV. Questions, comments, or general discussion**

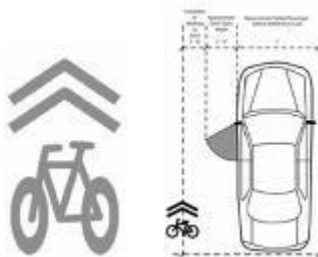
MEETING NOTES:

Richard Brown from the Parks Department discussed the Des Moines Bicycle and Trail Master Plan. The City is working on this plan in partnership with Alta Planning & Design, a firm out of Portland, OR that specializes in bicycle and trail planning. Because this neighborhood planning process is occurring at the same time, the Drake Neighborhood Association has a unique opportunity to have their ideas integrated into this plan. A citywide public input session will be held Tuesday, July 14th at the Downtown Public Library from noon to 1:30pm or 5:30pm to 7:30pm. The Master Plan is expected to be complete early next year.

Key destinations and bicycle routes were discussed and drawn on a map of the Drake neighborhood. This map will be made available to the planning committee. The Parks committee identified commercial nodes, schools, parks, and other areas that could be potential destinations for bicyclists. The committee also identified streets that would/would not be safe for bicycles. Richard noted that adding bicycle routes on currently busy streets can serve as a traffic calming mechanism. Part of the discussion centered on routes to connect the neighborhood with other trails and destinations around Des Moines.

The committee also discussed locations to add bicycle parking. The lack of bike racks in commercial areas and on Drake campus is an issue that prevents many people from riding. Richard mentioned that the Parks Department can only install bike racks on public right-of-way. The Drake Neighborhood Association should encourage area businesses to add appropriate bicycle parking. The Parks Department recommends racks that allow for two points of contact with a bicycle. The idea of replacing car parking stalls with bicycle parking was briefly discussed. It was suggested that the Dogtown area serve as a pilot project area for this.

Signage and way-finding for bicycle routes were also discussed. The group talked about having shared signage with bicycle route information as well as information/history about the Drake Neighborhood. Bicycle route signs should show both distances and time to a destination to encourage ridership. For example, Drake Campus: 1 mile or 6 minutes. Other ways to identify bike routes include painting “sharrows” on the street. These sharrows tell both drivers and bicyclists where their place in the street is. Bicyclists intuitively “connect the dots” between arrows and drivers know to leave enough space when going around bicyclists. Sharrows should be used on streets where there is not enough space for a separate bicycle lane. The idea of “bike boxes” was also discussed. This technique is used at difficult intersections to give priority to bicyclists at lights.



Sharrows



Bike Boxes



Issues related to parks were discussed as well. The group mentioned that the trail in Witmer Park is broken since the shelter has been taken down. The Parks Dept. will work on addressing this issue. A member of the committee also noted that Drake Park was promised a master plan since the park boundaries changed with the reconfiguration of I-235. The group asked about re-grading Drake Park to enhance safety and accessibility. Richard noted that the Parks Dept. has a backlog of projects and master plans waiting to be implemented, with little resources to do so at this time. It is uncertain when Drake Park and Witmer Park will receive any modifications. The Committee brought up raising private funds to renovate the neighborhood parks. This may be an option for getting the work done more quickly.

The Parks Department conducted an evaluation of all the City park facilities last summer in order to help prioritize projects. The Restroom Report has been released and can be found at: <http://www.ci.des-moines.ia.us/departments/PR/pdf/RestroomsReport.pdf>.

The restroom / shelter facilities at Witmer Park have been removed. Renovations to the Drake Park facilities are currently scheduled for FY2012. Reports on other park facilities should be published shortly.

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