WHAT IS THE BIG JUMP SHARED USE PATH?

Installed in 2018 as a pilot demonstration project, the Big Jump Shared Use Path (SUP) on Druid Park Lake Drive provides a safe and comfortable connection for people walking and biking.

The project repurposes one eastbound travel lane for walking and biking across the Jones Falls waterway, the MTA Light RailLink tracks, and the Jones Falls Expressway/I-83.

ISSUES

- There is no direct, ADA accessible route for walking, biking, or using a mobility device to travel between the Reservoir Hills and Remington neighborhoods.
- The lack of connectivity between these neighborhoods is compounded by the absence of a direct public transit connection.
- The economic opportunities for residents of Reservoir Hill—who have a higher than City-wide average of households without a motor vehicle—is limited by the lack of connectivity.
- Existing high-speed roadways combined with inadequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities restrict access to Druid Hill Park.

GOALS

- Implement a pilot project as a car-free alternative connection.
- Provide a direct, ADA accessible connection between the neighborhoods of Reservoir Hill and Remington.
- Use flexible, low-cost materials that allow “on-the-fly” adjustments.

Historical Context

Originally a two-lane residential street, Druid Park Lake Drive allowed easy access to adjacent neighborhoods.

Mid-century roadway expansions of Druid Hill Expressway and I-83 prioritized white suburban commuters and cut off Jewish and Black neighborhoods from the Park.

This echoed a nationwide pattern of racist transportation planning and policy decisions, often under the guide of urban renewal.
PUBLIC IMPRESSIONS

Overall, 87% of survey respondents value the Big Jump Shared Use Path and believe it should be made permanent. Common trips include social or recreational (78%), errands (67%), and commuting (51%).

Themes of concern as the project stands include:
- Excessive motor vehicle speeds.
- Lack of maintenance.
- Perception of safety with plastic barriers.

DATA ANALYSES

Speeding dipped during the initial period, but returned to and exceeded pre-installment levels. Survey respondents noted this is a long-time issue.

Data shows crashes have been reduced, likely due to the reduced streetscape width. However, near misses are more common than collisions, and should be studied more, as perceived and actual safety greatly affect SUP use. Proximity to auto traffic remains a source of stress and discomfort while walking, biking, or scooting.

No significant motor vehicle travel time impact was found on neighboring streets, communities, or parallel routes after analyzing travel time data across four different periods.

The SUP achieves the goal of increasing pedestrian and bicycle mobility by reducing users’ traffic stress via separation from motor vehicles, providing the most direct route between neighborhoods, and improving accessibility for users of wheelchairs and other mobility devices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Make the Big Jump SUP permanent.
2. Institute permanent changes for the overall street design to:
   - Build upon the ADA accessibility achievement.
   - Provide greater physical separation between SUP and motor vehicles.
   - Improve the functional width of the SUP.
   - Minimize SUP users’ exposure to traffic conflicts at intersections.
3. Implement additional traffic calming measures on Druid Park Lake Drive.
4. Improve data collection and continue to establish performance measures.