

Integrated sustainable planning for infrastructure and public works

Saanich working cooperatively within a multi-jurisdictional watershed boundary

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An innovative, sustainable adventure has begun in the communities of Saanich, Victoria and Oak Bay in the core of the Capital Region on Southern Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. The Bowker Creek watershed, home to 30,000 residents in the core of the region, has been highly impacted by urbanization and large parts of the watershed are ripe for redevelopment. The Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI), a multi-stakeholder, inter-municipal and community partnership, has developed the *Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100-year action plan to restore the Bowker Creek watershed* (2010), a visionary

plan which details watershed and reach-specific actions to rehabilitate the creek channel and improve the functioning of this developed watershed over the long term and as redevelopment opportunities arise. Blueprint is a first-of-its-kind opportunistic plan to restore an urban watershed over the long term; it lays out principles of integrated watershed management (IWM) and outlines watershed-wide and reach-specific actions to restore the watershed through the process of redevelopment over the next few decades. (See www.bowkercreekinitiative.ca to view the Blueprint.)

Recently accepted by the three municipalities, the implementation of the Bowker Creek Blueprint has begun and it proves to be a sustainable journey to restore hydrologic function to the watershed and create economically vibrant, climate-adapted, multi-modal communities linked together with a restored creek and improved community amenities. The District of Saanich, which is located in the upper part of the watershed, is undertaking a major planning process along the highly urbanized, heavily travelled Shelbourne Street. Hidden beneath, confined within large stormwater pipes, runs Bowker Creek. This long-term urban planning process for a significant part of the Bowker Creek watershed provides the District of Saanich with an excellent opportunity to incorporate key aspects from the Bowker Creek Blueprint into the Shelbourne Valley corridor planning process. With a clear vision and Blueprint in place, municipalities and communities are able to incorporate efforts into operational work plans, volunteer and school group efforts and to work together with the development community to restore Bowker Creek and its watershed within a vibrant and active community.

The Bowker Creek Watershed

The Bowker Creek watershed, in the Capital Regional District, on Vancouver Island, is a highly urbanized watershed that has evolved over the past 200 years



The Bowker Creek watershed as seen from Mt. Tolmie, British Columbia