AGENDA
ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held electronically via Microsoft Teams
Wednesday March 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure social distancing, this meeting is closed to the public and can be viewed/heard via MS Teams. Please note that MS Teams callers are identified by their phone number which can be viewed on screen by all attendees at the meeting.

***** Territorial Acknowledgement & Inclusivity Statement *****

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (attachment)
   - January 19, 2022

2. **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

3. **BOWKER CREEK DAYLIGHTING FEASIBILITY STUDY** (attachments)
   - Adrianne Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services

4. **SAANICH OPERATIONS CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT** (attachment)
   - Stacy McGhee, Program Manager of Strategic Facilities Planning
   - To access more information about the Project follow the links below:
     - Saanich Website
     - Staff Presentation to Council (Video)

5. **ENAC AWARDS UPDATE**
   - Adrianne Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services

* Adjournment *
Next Meeting: April 20, 2022 at 6:00 pm
In order to ensure a quorum, please contact Austin Winters at 250-475-5494 ext. 3508 or Austin.winters@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

Territorial Acknowledgement and Inclusivity Statement

It is appropriate that we begin by acknowledging that the District of Saanich lies within the territories of the lək̓ʷəŋən (lay-kwung-gen) peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W̱SÁNEĆ (weh-saanich) peoples represented by the Tsartlip (Sart-Lip), Pauquachin (Paw-Qua-Chin), Tsawout (Say-Out), Tseycum (Sigh-Come) and Malahat (Mal-a-hat) Nations.

We are committed to celebrating the rich diversity of people in our community. We are guided by the principle that embracing diversity enriches the lives of all people. We all share the responsibility for creating an equitable and inclusive community and for addressing discrimination in all forms.

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held electronically via MS Teams
January 19, 2022 at 6:01 pm

Present: Councillor Karen Harper (Chair), Braedan Drouillard, Kaden Calleberg (Youth Member), Kurban Ali Keshvani, Ryan Senechal, Sarah Anderson, Spencer Gillis (Youth Member).

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Nathalie Dechaine, Manager of Community Development/Business Systems; Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services; Silvia Exposito, Planner; Megan MacDonald, Senior Committee Clerk; and Austin Winters, Committee Clerk.

Regrets: Jennifer Grant

MINUTES

MOVED by R. Senechal and Seconded by B. Drouillard "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held November 25, 2021 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIR'S COMMENTS / WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed new members to the committee. The Chair encouraged all members to contact her if they have any questions, concerns or ideas about the committee. Members of the committee and staff participated in roundtable introductions.

2022 MEETING DATES / TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair confirmed that meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, except for July, August and December. The Terms of Reference were provided to members of the committee for informational purposes.

IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY INPUT TO TREE INVENTORIES

Committee Member R. Senechal presented on community tree inventories: The following was noted:

- Parks staff provided a report on mapping and tracking the urban forest to Council in 2020 that provides some background on the utilities of tree inventory to the community.
- The key points of the report include:
  - There are high levels of engagement and interest into Saanich's urban forest.
  - Information on tree quantity, species, health and growth is currently insufficient.
  - An inventory is important to manage the urban forest comprehensively and efficiently.
- Council supported and funded these recommendations beginning in 2021 and the Parks Department's capacity to take on inventory tasks is coming online.
- Capturing Saanich's public trees is a large undertaking and time is precious given the anticipated stress on urban trees modeled in a 2 degrees Celsius warming scenario.

- Volunteer participation in measuring and monitoring urban forests can increase the effort to build a public urban tree inventory.
- In doing so it can improve the community's understanding of the urban tree benefits.
- Community tree inventories (CTI) blend the needs of urban forest managers with engagement and empowerment of community members.
- A tree inventory is a spreadsheet combining information about trees and their physical location in a predetermined area. This information may or may not be visually represented on a map.
- Tree inventories can be used for monitoring the condition of a tree population over a temporal scale; provide insight into the survival rate of a tree population to plan for succession; and assists with prioritizing use of operational resources.
- CTI incorporates volunteers gathering field information including the physical location of trees in a predetermined area, the size of trees and their condition.
- The field skills volunteers require would be developed through training sessions and occasional audits that are delivered by inventory experts.
- Field data that is collected would then be integrated into Saanich maps and geographical information systems (GIS)
- In Saanich's public facing GIS there are currently 141 significant trees under public, private or shared ownership.
- Tree inventory is widely supported in the field of urban forestry and is an important tool to adapt to climate change pressures.
- CTI has been utilized in cities such as Portland, New York City, and Hamilton, Ontario though volunteer inputs vary in each location.
- The University of Toronto has tree inventory resources that are easy to follow through their Neighbourwoods Program.
- A potential motion to recommend that Council consider a CTI pilot project in the form of a special event at a special urban park was brought forward.
- If this event were to be successful, additional events could be considered by Council in the future.
- Cost of this initiative could vary based on the quality of data that is desired as well as potential staff oversight.

The following was noted during discussion with committee members:

- CTI could potentially assist in completing many goals that were established in the 2010 Urban Forest Strategy.
- Questioning over how education could be intertwined with CTI took place.
- Staff volunteered to come back to the committee at a later meeting and present in March or April on the topics raised.
- iNaturalist could be utilized as a citizen science tool for CTI.
- Saanich just hired a new Manager of Asset Management and they will assist in ensuring data collected is integrated into existing systems appropriately which could in turn assist efforts with a CTI initiative.
- Some agencies have used i-Tree as a part of encouraging citizen science and community engagement.
- i-Tree is a collection of free science-based tools that: quantifies the benefits and values of trees around the world; aids in tree and forest management and advocacy; and shows potential risks to tree and forest health.
- Due to a potential lack of staff resources, community based initiatives are an ideal solution to rectifying CTI and issues alike.

OVERVIEW OF OUTSTANDING ACTIONS, MOTIONS AND INITIATIVES FROM 2021

The Manager of Environmental Services presented on current outstanding actions, motions and initiatives relating to ENAC from 2021. The following was noted:

- The 21st Annual Environmental Awards took place.
- The draft goals and objectives of the Resilient Saanich Committee was reviewed.
- The Committee supported budgets for the Urban Forest Strategy on various items.
- Some of the topics the Committee provided feedback on in 2021 include:
    - Pollinators;
    - The Cordova Bay Local Area Plan;
    - Natural gas in new constructions;
    - Accessible urban forests;
    - Plastic pollution;
    - Green shores;
    - Deconstruction;
    - The Climate Plan report card;
    - Fossil fuel use in buildings.
- Some topics that will need Committee feedback in 2022 include:
    - The Bowker Creek daylighting study;
    - The Streamside Development Permit Area guidelines;
    - The Streamside mapping;
    - A step code and building retrofit study;
    - The Climate Plan report card;
    - The Cordova Bay pilot integrated storm water management plan project;
    - The water course and drainage bylaw;
    - The Urban Forest Strategy;
    - Panama Flats engagement;
    - The Housing Strategy;
    - The Environmental Awards;
    - Any significant tree nominations.
- Some outstanding motions from 2021 include:
    - A motion to Council to acknowledge the 50th anniversary of the Saanich Greenbelt Proposal, to recognize successes in its implementation and to highlight the need for continued environmental leadership.
    - A motion that Council direct staff, consultants and the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee to implement an intersectionality lens in the update of the Urban Forest Strategy, the development of the Biodiversity Strategy, and the Environmental Policy Framework.
    - The Committee requested more details on the proposed expansion and funding for the Saanich Naturescape Program.

RESILIENT SAANICH UPDATE

The Manager of Environmental Services gave an update on the Resilient Saanich Technical Committee (RSTC). The following was noted:

- RSTC is an initiative that has a 3 milestone approach.
- The first milestone has been completed and a progress report went to Council.
- Milestone one was about getting the community together and trying to come up with goals and objectives for the Committee.
- The RSTC is currently in milestone 2 which is the assess phase and explores the state of biodiversity as well as different elements of an environmental policy framework.

- Councillor Mersereau is the Council liaison for the RSTC and the chair of the RSTC is a member of the public.
- All of the members who sit on the RSTC had to apply and were then appointed by Council.
- Members of the RSTC have areas of expertise in a wide range of fields such as biology, landscape architecture, urban forestry, First Nations peoples, and conservation biology.
- RSTC's Terms of Reference can be viewed in the link below:
  - https://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Environment/RSTC%20TOR.pdf
- Requests for Proposals went out to get a consulting team together to develop the state of biodiversity report and the biodiversity conservation strategy as well as extra support for the RSTC.
- The three main parts of the RSTC's focus right now are:
  - The existing Climate Plan;
  - The Biodiversity Conservation Strategy; and
  - Stewardship
- Involvement with First Nations has been prioritized to get them engaged and ensure their voices are heard with respect to the work being done by the RSTC.
- Saanich and the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council have a Memorandum of Understanding in place.
- Cultural training and exchanging will be taking place for the RSTC.

DRAFT CADBORO BAY LOCAL AREA PLAN

Silvia Exposito, a Planner from Community Planning and Project Manager of the Cadboro Bay Local Area Plan (LAP) delivered a presentation on the Draft Cadboro Bay LAP. The following was noted:

- LAPs are one of the guiding policies for the District of Saanich and they are critical to delivering substantive change over a 20 to 30 year time frame.
- There is a process that is approved by Council for developing LAPs. This process includes:
  - Phase 1 is project initiation;
  - Phase 2 is community visioning;
  - Phase 3 is plan development;
  - Phase 4 is the draft plan review (current phase);
  - Phase 5 is the plan finalization.
- ENAC is brought this LAP to review and provide feedback on prior to bringing this draft LAP to Council.
- The last Cadboro Bay LAP was established in 2002, thus there is a need to update the LAP to meet current municipal priorities and policies.
- The LAP update began in 2018 and it includes an advisory committee that has been assisting staff with community outreach.
- The community input for this draft LAP has been a multi-year process that has explored issues and developed fundamental content of the draft plan.
- Multiple surveys, workshops, open houses, stakeholder meetings and multi-day charrettes were completed to better develop policies and garner key priorities for the LAP.
- The LAP is part of Saanich's Official Community Plan which includes the Sustainable Saanich OCP.
- The updated LAP process also looked to integrate the District's housing strategy, climate action priorities with regards to mitigation and adaptation as well as updates to active transportation.

- The LAPs are very comprehensive in the range of topics they address, but with respect to this presentation the primary focus is on transportation, land use, and the environment.
- Cadboro Bay Local Area has three distinct neighbourhoods which include “The Village, Ten Mile Point, and Queenswood.”
- A lot of the future growth and change from the LAP is focused primarily on the Village Centre and the Village neighbourhood.
- The Queenswood and Ten Mile Point area would largely remain as is with regards to future land use designations except for district wide in-fill projects.
- There is a huge diversity of ecosystems within Cadboro Bay and the draft LAP looks to provide approaches such as education, stewardship and restoration to ensure sensitive development that respects these ecosystems.
- The majority of Cadboro Bay is single detached dwellings and it contains many large institutional properties.
- Cadboro Bay is projected to be one of the areas of Saanich most impacted by a potential sea level rise due to climate change.
- Sinclair Road is a key focus of the LAP process, with clear policy direction for improvements in the Draft LAP.
- The improvements include a design concept for Sinclair Road in alignment with Draft LAP objectives, enhancing the role of Sinclair as a community gateway, and enhancing the Cadboro Bay Rd. and Sinclair Rd. intersection.
- Section 3 of the LAP focuses on the environment and sustainability for which includes policies and directions around protecting and enhancing local areas, the marine shoreline, the coastal upland, and the urban forest.
- These policies within the LAP would increase the ability of Saanich to adapt to climate change impacts.
- There is detailed mapping within the LAP of significant natural assets found within Cadboro Bay such as nesting areas and significant trees.
- There are two large institutional properties in the Queenswood area that contain young forests and diverse ecosystems.
- There are nine key directions taken into account for the Cadboro Bay LAP, for which a lot of them are related to retaining the character of the area while also making housing and active transportation more accessible.
- From a land use perspective the majority of the change with this LAP is in the village neighbourhood where ground-oriented housing will be supported.
- There is also support for added height allowances on institutional mixed-use sites for affordable housing.
- The LAP looks to expand the area where townhouses would be supported as well as additional commercial opportunities and smaller scale apartments along Sinclair Ave.
- With regards to concerns about potential sea levels rising the LAP incorporates the most recent CRD sea level rise mapping and adjusts land use designations based on the mapping.
- From an active transportation aspect improving connectivity of the street and trail network for pedestrians and cyclists accessing the Village, the beaches and area destinations is a key priority of the updated LAP.
- The LAP envisions keeping the green character and semi-rural quality of the streets within the Ten Mile Point area.
- The Village Design Guidelines are also being updated along with the LAP.
- The Guidelines provide direction for building and site design in the Cadboro Bay Village and its surrounding area.
- The Guidelines apply to multi-unit residential, commercial and mixed-use developments in the Village area.

- The next steps for the Cadboro Bay LAP include community and stakeholder consultations followed by changes to the LAP based off of feedback and surveys.
- The LAP will be brought forward for Council consideration and adoption in April or May 2022.

The following was noted during discussion with committee members:

- Questioning took place over the degree to which the Planning Department collaborates with the Engineering Department for this LAP.
- It was clarified that the draft LAP has been written in collaboration with the Engineering Department.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is Wednesday March 16, 2022.

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Councillor Karen Harper, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Austin Winters, Committee Secretary

Memo

To: **Environment and Natural Areas Committee (ENAC)**

From: **Adriane Pollard, Manager of Environmental Services**

Date: **March 11, 2022**

Subject: **Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study and Updates**
File: 2510-45 – Bowker Creek Implementation

The District of Saanich has been an active member of the Bowker Creek Initiative since its inception and has been contributing annually to the funding of the coordinator. With the completion of the Daylighting Feasibility Study and other notable milestones, Council will be considering a series of recommendations from Staff. The Report to Council will include:

- The Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study;
- The Bowker Creek Blueprint: Framework for Collaborative Inter-municipal Watershed Implementation;
- Bowker Creek Blueprint 10 Year Achievements; and
- Updated Terms of Reference for the Bowker Creek Initiative.

The draft recommendations to Council are to:

1. Receive the Bowker Creek Daylighting Feasibility Study for information;
2. Receive the Bowker Creek Blueprint: Framework for Collaborative Inter-municipal Watershed Implementation (attached) for information;
3. Receive the Bowker Creek Blueprint 10 Year Achievements (attached) for information and;
4. Endorse the update Bowker Creek Initiative Terms of Reference (attached);
5. Endorse that Planning, Engineering, and Parks staff resources be allocated to partnering on the updating of the Bowker Creek Blueprint and that allocation of $15,000 for cost sharing of consulting services be forwarded to the one time resource request process during 2022 budget deliberations.

A presentation will be given at the March 16, 2022 ENAC meeting. This will be an opportunity for ENAC to give feedback and make a motion if desired. The Daylighting Feasibility Study may be viewed on the CRD website (https://www.crd.bc.ca/bowker-creek-initiative)

AP/jsp

Attachments: Bowker Creek Blueprint: Framework for Collaborative Inter-municipal Watershed Implementation
Bowker Creek Blueprint 10 Year Achievements
Bowker Creek Initiative Terms of Reference

Bowker Creek Blueprint

10 Year Achievements | 2021

Bowker Creek
URBAN WATERSHED RENEWAL

Introduction

The *Bowker Creek Blueprint* is a 100 year action plan to restore Bowker Creek, which runs through Greater Victoria's most urbanized watershed. Bowker Creek flows from its headwaters at the University of Victoria to its outlet near Willows Beach, through the municipalities of Saanich, Victoria, and Oak Bay. Much of the creek is buried in pipes and culverts, and poor water quality, flooding and invasive species are major issues. Local governments, institutional partners and community champions have embraced the vision of a restored creek and the potential it offers to improve ecological health, hydrology and community stewardship throughout our region.

The *Blueprint* was written in 2010 and subsequently endorsed by City of Victoria (2011), District of Saanich (2011) and District of Oak Bay (2012). These three municipalities, along with community and institutional partners, implement the *Blueprint* through the CRD's Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI). The *Blueprint* provides these municipalities, community and other land steward organizations with information and guidance to manage and restore the watershed and creek corridor.

Considerable progress has been achieved as the Blueprint reaches its ten year anniversary. This document has been prepared to review the ten key actions for short-term implementation identified in the *Blueprint* as important first steps for municipalities and land stewards to achieve. This milestone also provides an opportunity to document and

celebrate the important work accomplished to date by BCI partners and the many community members and partner organizations who are vital to its success. This document serves as a launching point for the next phase of restoration and renewal of Bowker Creek.

Table 1 provides a summary of successes in achieving the 10 short terms actions outlined in the *Blueprint*, as well as achievements in a selection of other important areas to be celebrated. The Bowker Creek Watershed map, following Table 1, highlights a selection of accomplishments throughout the watershed.

Table 1: Snapshot of Success: Blueprint Short Term Actions and Other Key Achievements

✓ Action largely completed ✓ Action underway

Short Term Blueprint Actions			
Municipal plans should include Bowker Creek goals and actions • Bowker Creek is referenced in plans in all three municipalities.	✓	**Reduce effective impervious area for new developments** • City of Victoria is leading the way in mitigating impervious surfaces through Rainwater Rewards program and Stormwater Utility.	✓
Remove target invasive species • High priority species have been reduced/ eradicated. • Volunteer efforts help to control invasive plants throughout the watershed.	✓	**Rainwater management demonstration site in each municipality** • All three municipalities have at least one site.	✓
Oak Bay development of Urban Forest Strategy • All three municipalities now have strategies.	✓	**Develop a strategy to acquire key properties** • The *Blueprint* and the 2020 Daylighting Feasibility Study provided the municipalities with lists of key properties for acquisition, which municipalities are operationalizing.	✓
Oak Bay High School creek restoration • The creek was restored through a collaboration between SD61, Oak Bay, and the BCI/CRD. • Students, staff and community volunteers remain actively involved in maintaining the site.	✓	**Shelbourne Valley Action Plan input** • Opportunities to daylight and restore Bowker Creek are featured prominently throughout the action plan and will help to facilitate future creek daylighting.	✓

Other Key Achievements

Work with landowners between Pearl and Trent Streets to achieve long-term vision

- The Daylighting Feasibility Study provided a plan for restoring the creek through Richmond School and King's Park. The District of Saanich put funds towards the purchase of community green space in 2019, with community members working to fundraise a matching amount.

Restoration work at Browning Park

- Browning Park boasts a natural creek channel, with a greenway and community art.
- Work to remove invasive plants and reduce erosion is ongoing.

Daylighting Feasibility Study completed

- This study lays the groundwork for coordinated and operationalized daylighting of the creek and development of a new greenways network

Community engagement and stewardship

- Through outreach events, presentations and work bees, community members have learned about Bowker Creek and their role in its protection
- Community members are taking ownership of the creek and its stewardship through invasive species removal, water quality monitoring and fish habitat restoration

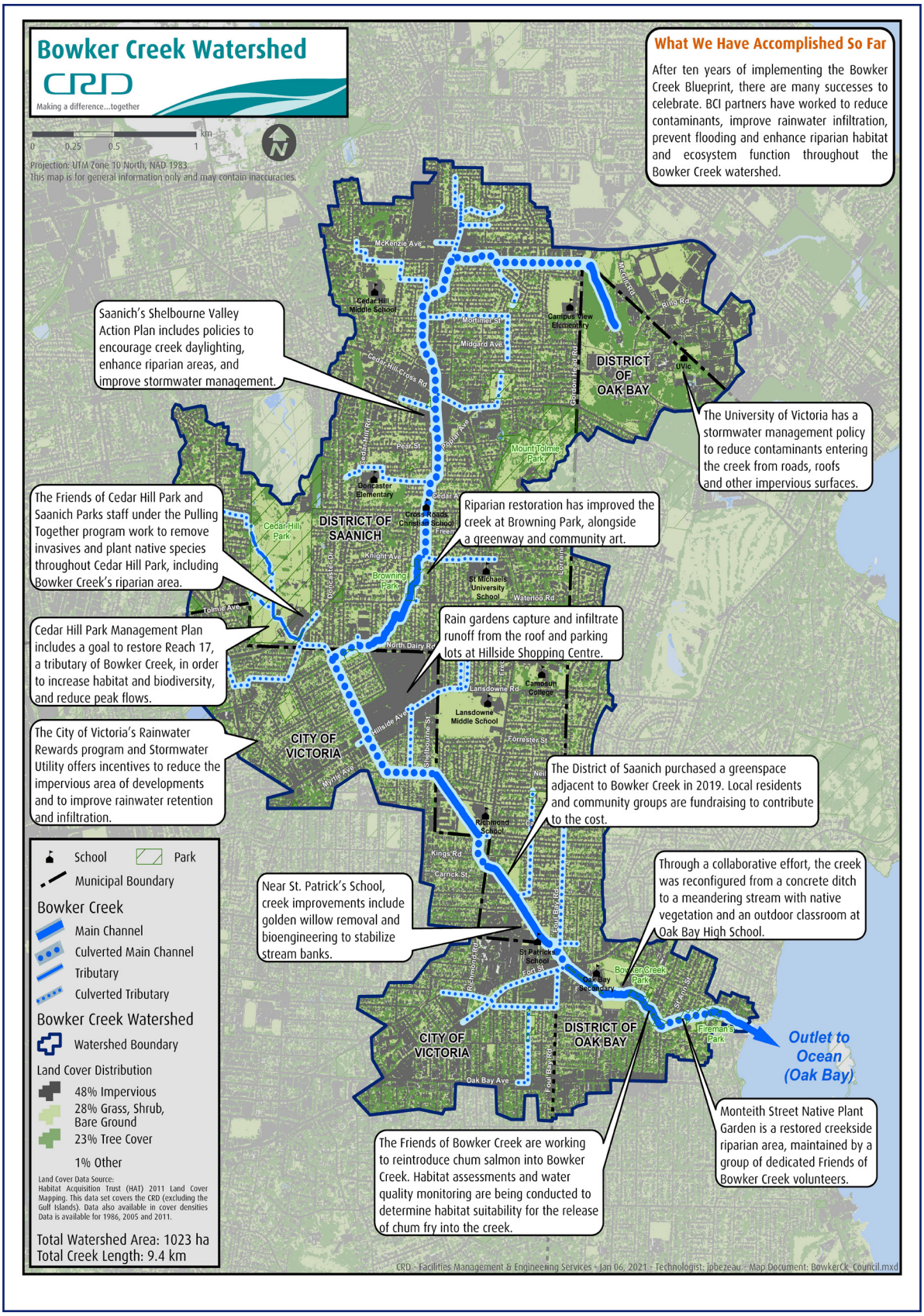
Partnership building and collaboration

- Key partnerships include SD61, University of Victoria, Community Associations, and the Friends of Bowker Creek. SD61 officially endorsed the *Blueprint* in 2018.

Water Quality Monitoring

- CRD staff carry out invertebrate sampling and regular water quality testing including temperature, pH, oxygen, metals, and E.coli. Friends of Bowker Creek have begun additional water and invertebrate sampling as part of their Chum Salmon Recovery Project, and will share this data with the CRD.

BCI Blueprint 10 Year Achievements



Key Actions for Short-term Implementation

This section examines progress made in achieving the ten key actions that were identified in the *Blueprint* as high priority actions. These actions were deemed to be relatively achievable with significant positive benefits for Bowker Creek.

Action #1: Review and revise municipal plans to include Bowker Creek goals and actions

All three municipalities have successfully included *Blueprint* goals and actions into their municipal plan. This action is important because it helps to ensure that the aims of the *Blueprint* are integrated into municipal plans and on-the-ground operations. This section summarizes the various ways the three BCI muncipalities have encorporated the *Blueprint* into their plans and policies.

District of Saanich

The District of Saanich's Official Community Plan (OCP) predates the *Blueprint* (2008) but since the *Blueprint's* publication, Saanich Council has committed to enhancing the Bowker Creek watershed through various motions and plans. Concurrent with its endorsement of the *Blueprint* in 2011, Saanich Council passed a motion that the "Planning, Engineering, and Parks and Recreation Departments be directed to consider the principles and actions for watershed management, the ten key actions for short-term implementation, and stream reach actions of the Bowker Creek *Blueprint* when developing Departmental work plans and budgets." This motion supports numerous noteworthy policies and plans:

Shelbourne Valley

Bowker Creek runs roughly parallel to Shelbourne Street in Saanich's highly urbanized Shelbourne Valley, which holds important daylighting and restoration potential. The Shelbourne Local Area Plan was adopted in 2008 and includes two key policies that relate to Bowker Creek:

- Policy 5.4: Seek opportunities to restore and daylight Bowker Creek
- Policy 5.5: Support community initiatives by a variety of institutions to create a stream stewardship and Environmental Education Program related to Bowker Creek.

In 2017, Saanich Council adopted the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan. This plan is described in more detail in Action #8, later in this document, and contains important commitments to restoring the ecological health of Bowker Creek.

Cedar Hill Park Management Plan

A tributary of Bowker Creek (Reach 17) runs through Saanich's Cedar Hill Park, flowing through an open channel near the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre and ball diamonds. Saanich Council endorsed the Cedar Hill Park Management Plan in 2020, which prioritizes the restoration of Reach 17 as an environmental management and restoration goal. In particular, the plan's Goal 1.0: Move the Bowker Creek *Blueprint* forward lists the following actions:

- Based on modeling completed by Kerr Wood Leidal (KWL) in 2018, develop a detailed plan for improvements to sections of Reach 17 which will include some public interaction with the creek (viewing, etc.)
- Seek funding opportunities (grants and community partnerships) to complete the restoration as planned
- Implementation of improvements to Reach 17 which includes public amenity improvements such as viewing opportunities, interpretive/educational signage and seating.

Spotlight: Community Associations
Numerous Community Associations have been important partners in implementing the *Blueprint* at the local level. Members of Community Associations representing Oak Bay, Camosun, Quadra Cedar Hill, and North Jubilee have all been involved in the coalition since its inception. Community Association members play a key role in sharing a neighbourhood perspective about Bowker Creek with local government staff.

District of Oak Bay
Oak Bay's OCP (2014) references Bowker Creek numerous times:

- Community-wide guidance is provided related to the reduction of impervious surfaces, and support for Bowker and Hobbs Creeks watershed improvement plans. (Pages 52-54)
- A Rainwater Management Bylaw is proposed that would require low impact development practices to increase onsite retention and absorption of rainwater, reducing the effective impervious area in the watershed (Page 59).
- A commitment is made to explore opportunities to acquire the Bowker Creek bed and adjacent slopes as options arise through changing ownership (Page 59)
- Any improvements to the tennis bubble at Oak Bay Recreation Centre should include the potential for daylighting portions of the creek (Page 115)
- The District will explore opportunities for a multi-use greenway corridor along Bowker Creek, in accordance with the proposed regional greenway system, ideally outside of the riparian setback area (Page 122).
- Watercourses Development Permit Area requirements specifically reference Riparian Area Regulations, including guidance related to Bowker and Hobbs Creeks (Pages 169-173). Special guidelines for Bowker Creek include:
  - For any major development projects on sites where Bowker Creek is buried, consider 'daylighting' the creek if possible.
  - Increase the width of the undisturbed riparian area along the creek, ideally to 30 metres from the top of bank, and restore and enhance riparian vegetation in this area.
  - Design the creek and the riparian corridor to provide native habitats, biodiversity, and passage for fish and wildlife. Replace any hard structures such as walls along the creek with landscape solutions such as planting or bioengineering, subject to bank stability and erosion control considerations.

Spotlight: Friends of Cedar Hill Park
Cedar Hill Park is home to a tributary of Bowker Creek (Reach 17) along the western edge of the Bowker Creek watershed. This section of the creek is significant because it is on public land and is accessible to the public. The Friends of Cedar Hill Park (FoCHP) came together in 2006 to protect the natural areas of Cedar Hill Park, including Reach 17. Between 2012-14 the Friends worked alongside other community members to successfully oppose a proposal to build eight clay tennis courts between Bowker Creek and the recreation centre. Members currently meet on a weekly basis to remove invasive plants throughout the park, and sit on the BCI steering committee.

City of Victoria
The City of Victoria's Official Community Plan (2012) references Bowker Creek watershed protection, creek daylighting, the development of greenways and riparian protection numerous times:

- **10.13:** Collaborate with the Capital Regional District, neighbouring municipalities, community organizations, property owners and other partners to protect and enhance streams and watercourses, including the potential daylighting of streams and improvement of riparian habitat, by:
  - **10.13.1:** Implementing management plans for the Bowker Creek watershed
  - **10.13.2:** Exploring the acquisition and designation of creek side ecosystems through a Parks Acquisition Strategy or major redevelopment proposals
  - **10.13.3:** Integrating the acquisition of natural creek side features into the development of greenways, where appropriate.
  - Bowker Creek Greenways are outlined on the Greenways Network map (Map 6).
  - Additionally, a commitment to "integrate Bowker Creek watershed protection and daylighting opportunities into land use planning" is listed as on Map 27, Jubilee Village Strategic Directions and Map 29, Oaklands Strategic Directions.

The City of Victoria's 2017 Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan incorporates the priority of daylighting or celebrating culverted streams, and specifically references Bowker Creek. The following is identified as a short term, high priority planning action:

- **1.2.3** Identify opportunities to daylight or celebrate culverted streams

Spotlight: Friends of Bowker Creek
The Friends of Bowker Creek (FoBC) is a community-based group that works to "support the restoration and enhancement of Bowker Creek and its watershed to a healthy state, guided by the vision and goals of the Bowker Creek *Blueprint*." The FoBC have been instrumental in organizing educational and stewardship work that make an important on-the-ground difference in the watershed. Members of FoBC were a key part of the early production of the *Blueprint* and over the years have been closely involved in the restoration of the creek at Oak Bay High, the development of Bowker Creek signage and artwork, and organizing various community events including Communi-Tea celebrations and pendant printing workshops. The FoBC have hosted the BCI educational display at many community events, including the interactive watershed model. They also hold regular work parties at Oak Bay High and Monteith gardens that give community members the opportunity to remove invasive species and plant native species along the creek.

In 2020, FoBC expanded its focus to include the Bowker Creek Chum Salmon Recovery Project, a multi-year project with the aim of restoring chum salmon back to the lower reaches of Bowker Creek. Volunteer streamkeepers are measuring water and habitat quality, with the goal of releasing chum salmon at Oak Bay High and Monteith Gardens over the next few years.

Action #2: Adopt requirements to reduce effective impervious area for new developments.

Approximately 50% of the Bowker Creek watershed is covered by impervious surfaces, including roofs, roads and other hard, impenetrable surfaces. These impervious surfaces impact creek health by contributing to flooding, erosion, and poor water quality. The "effective" impervious area of the watershed can be lowered using green infrastructure features such as raingardens, permeable pavement and green roofs. In an urbanized watershed like Bowker Creek, new developments present an important opportunity to use low impact technologies to improve rainwater retention and infiltration.

District of Saanich
Saanich has a policy that new developments must detain stormwater run-off onsite, and is working to adopt new standards that will include infiltration.

City of Victoria
The City of Victoria has implemented two important programs to reduce the impervious area of new and existing developments:

Hillside Centre stormwater management
Hillside Centre is the single largest impervious surface in the Bowker Creek watershed. Through a partnership between the City of Victoria and the owners of Hillside Centre, numerous features have been installed to reduce run-off and improve stormwater quality. Parking lot improvements in recent years include tree wells and rain gardens to help slow and filter rain runoff. BCI interpretive signs provide public education about these green infrastructure features, and flagstone artwork reflects the water movement in the creek flowing underground.

Rainwater Rewards program (2015)
The City of Victoria's Rainwater Rewards program is an incentive program for properties that manage rainwater sustainably through technologies like rain barrels and cisterns, infiltration chambers, permeable paving, rain gardens, bioswales, and green roofs. Low density residential properties can apply for rebates to help with up-front costs, and properties over four units may be eligible for an ongoing credit. Mutli-family, business and institutional partners may be eligible for up to 50% off of stormwater utility bills, depending on the type of rainwater management method used. The City of Victoria has Rainwater Management Standards for both do-it-yourself and professional uses to guide the implementation of rainwater management technologies.

Stormwater Utility (2016)
The City of Victoria's Stormwater Utility charge is based on property-specific information including the amount of impervious area on site, street cleaning requirements, intensity code (e.g. low density vs multi-family), and participation in the Codes of Practice Program (program designed to clean stormwater before it leaves a property).

District of Oak Bay
In its OCP, Oak Bay proposes a Rainwater Management Bylaw that would require low impact development practices to increase onsite retention and absorption of rainwater, reducing the effective impervious area in the watershed.

Action #3: Remove specific invasive species beginning to colonize the watershed.

Invasive plants grow throughout the Bowker Creek watershed, and are a concern because they displace native species that provide important ecosystem functions. The *Blueprint* highlighted two invasive plant species, policeman's helmet and invasive knotweed, as priorities for control in the watershed. Other more pervasive invasives like blackberry, ivy, and golden willow grow throughout the watershed and require long-term collective efforts for their effective management and control.

Invasive species control and removal in the watershed is supported by all three municipalities' involvement in the CRD-led CRISP program (Capital Regional Invasive Species Partnership) and numerous volunteer groups.

The District of Saanich is working on golden willow removal in riparian areas and eradication of high priority species. Successes include a 62% reduction of knotweed sites throughout the municipality, and eradication of Policeman's helmet. Several of Saanich's large parks lie within the Bowker Creek watershed, and have teams of volunteers helping to control invasive plants. Within Cedar Hill Park, the Friends of Cedar Hill Park and Saanich's Pulling Together volunteers regularly participate in invasive plant removal and stewardship activities in the Bowker Creek riparian zone (Reach 17). At the highest point of the watershed in Mount Tolmie Park, community volunteers have been actively removing invasive species and participating in stewardship activities for at least 20 years. Further downstream in Browning Park, students and teachers from St. Michael's University School have participated in Pulling Together stewardship activities to remove invasive plants along the creek over the last several years.

In **Oak Bay**, invasive plant removal has a strong volunteer backing. Oak Bay volunteers meet weekly to remove invasive plants and plant indigenous species in the Monteith Street native plant garden (see sidebar), and regular work parties at Oak Bay High School focus on invasive removal and restoration of the creek. These work bees are attended by the Friends of Bowker Creek, Oak Bay high school students and teachers, and members of the general community. Boy Scout groups in Oak Bay also regularly volunteer with invasive plant removal along Bowker Creek.

Spotlight: Monteith Street Native Plant Garden
In 2008, the BCI was awarded funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation to restore the creekside riparian area near Monteith Street in Oak Bay. As part of the site rehabilitation, this neglected city property has become a community amenity with a demonstration native riparian restoration site and native plant garden, highlighting many edible native plants. Since its establishment, restoration work has continued through volunteers with the Friends of Bowker Creek, who meet twice every month to remove invasives from the steambank environment and plant indigenous species. Their ongoing work has made the garden a valuable community gathering place.

Action #4: Complete a pilot project to locate and build a demonstration rainwater infiltration/retention structure in each municipality.

Rainwater management demonstration sites have been established in several locations throughout the Bowker Creek watershed as a way of showcasing infiltration and retention options to the broader community. These demonstration sites are an important way of raising awareness among developers and community members about alternative ways of managing rainwater. Each BCI municipality has at least one demonstration site:

District of Saanich, McKenzie Avenue rain garden and retention pond
The District of Saanich completed the McKenzie Avenue Rain Garden in 2013 adjacent to the University of Victoria. The site includes a wet pond with inline vegetation for water treatment, and graduated vegetation from top of the slope to the basin, using plants adapted to varying water tolerances. A "Raingarden at Work" sign educates the public about the important role of the site.

District of Oak Bay, Monterey Recreation Centre rain garden
In 2012, Oak Bay created a rain garden in the southeast corner of Monterey Centre's parking lot. It is designed to collect rainwater and naturally filter out pollutants, such as oils and grease, before water enters the storm drain. Native plants adapted to wetter winters and drier summers are used in the rain garden. Its location at a busy community centre gives this rain garden great exposure and provides an excellent learning opportunity for the public.

City of Victoria, Trent Street rain garden
The Trent Street rain garden treats surface runoff from the majority of Trent Street and is designed to handle a two year rain event. Besides managing stormwater and pollution, the gardens also narrow the road, calm traffic, separate pedestrian from vehicular traffic, and create wildlife habitat.

Action #5: Support development of an urban forest strategy in Oak Bay to complement those underway in Saanich and Victoria.

All three municipalities in the Bowker Creek watershed have adopted urban forest strategies or plans since the creation of the *Blueprint*:

- District of Saanich Urban Forest Strategy, 2010
- City of Victoria Urban Forest Master Plan, 2013
- District of Oak Bay, Urban Forest Management Strategy, 2017

These strategies and plans help to protect the trees that grow throughout the Bowker Creek watershed. They emphasize the benefits provided by the urban forest, including enhancing the natural environment, mitigating climate change, and improving stormwater management, and will help to ensure healthy tree populations into the future.

Spotlight: Outreach and Events

Public outreach and engagement has always been an important focus of the BCI and its partners. Outreach keeps Bowker Creek in the public eye, develops and nurtures community connections, and builds momentum for watershed renewal. Outreach and engagement activities have taken numerous forms, with help from many dedicated volunteers and community groups, particularly the Friends of Bowker Creek and Peninsula Streams Society:

- Watershed tours for citizens, local government staff, and politicians
- Watershed model and interpretive display at community events
- Interpretive signage and channel markers
- Creekside concert series, Communi-Tea celebrations, and Creekside art workshops
- Printed materials, including Developer's Guide and Home Owner's Guide

Action #6: Develop a strategy to acquire key properties as they come available.

A confidential property acquisition list was created and shared with municipal partners after the *Blueprint* was finalized, in order to support creek daylighting and greenway development. 2020's Daylighting Feasibility Study resulted in a revised list of properties for acquisition, which will be shared with municipal partners and remain confidential. Municipalities will then operationalize the purchase of these properties, according to their internal systems and priorities for property acquisition. It should be noted that property acquisition within the *Blueprint* or Daylighting Feasibility Study is an incremental, opportunisitic process. As properties age and become available for redevelopment or as major infrastructure renewal work is undertaken, the property acquisition list enables the purchase of key properties in a coordinated, forward-thinking manner that could ultimately support creek daylighting and restoration.

Spotlight: Daylighting Feasibility Study

BCI's Daylighting Feasibility Study (DFS) was completed in March 2020. The purpose of the DFS was to a develop a tool to facilitate the establishment of a daylighting corridor for Bowker Creek to ensure future daylighting can occur as properties are redeveloped or major infrastructure renewal work is undertaken. The report summarizes current and future land use and redevelopment plans adjacent to the creek corridor, provides plan and profile views of existing closed sections, proposes daylighting options, identifies properties that may need to be obtained to daylight the creek, and assesses options for incorporating multi-use and pedestrian greenways corridors adjacent to the creek. The DFS represents a milestone in efforts to improve the Bowker Creek watershed. By outlining all opportunities for daylighting Bowker Creek, it builds upon the *Blueprint* and specifically defines how creek daylighting could contribute to the overall watershed vision.

Action #7: Work with Oak Bay High School to design and implement creek restoration on school district property.

Between 2013 and 2018, the Bowker Creek Initiative, District of Oak Bay, School District 61 and Oak Bay High School staff and students worked together to design and create a beautiful and functional meandering creek reach adjacent to the school. The restoration project was officially handed to School District 61 in April 2019. It features a well-used outdoor classroom, community greenway and gently sloped vegetated creek bank. Previously, Bowker Creek flowed through a straight blackberry-choked concrete channel that contributed to downstream flooding during heavy rain events.

Oak Bay High students, teachers, and community volunteers including the Friends of Bowker Creek are involved in continued restoration of the site, including invasives removal and planting native species. The restoration effort has led to important ecological, hydrological, educational, and community-building benefits.

Spotlight: School District 61 and Oak Bay High School

School District 61 officially endorsed the Bowker Creek *Blueprint* in 2018. SD61's support for the creek's revitalization was essential to the restoration of the creek alongside Oak Bay High School. Students and staff at the high school were involved in the design of the restoration project through a 'Creeks and Careers' workshop and a design charrette. They contributed to the final design, including a well-used outdoor classroom alongside the creek.

The restored section of the creek provides a real-life laboratory for science classes, as students learn about native plants, creek ecology, and salmon restoration. Science teacher Derek Shrubsole says "the outdoor classroom provides the students at Oak Bay with a learning resource unique among schools in the area. It allows us to bring students outside for authentic, place-based learning. I also believe it helps to create a connection between our students and Bowker Creek, something they know and care about."

The school has partnered with the Friends of Bowker Creek to maintain the restored creek and keep on top of invasive plants through monthly work sessions. Another exciting partnership has paired Oak Bay students with Dutch students through an exchange program that focuses on local biology and creek ecology.

✓ Action #8: Participate in the Shelbourne Corridor Action Plan process to identify current and future opportunities for creek restoration, rainwater infiltration and/or greenway development.

The District of Saanich's Shelbourne Valley Action Plan was adopted by Saanich council in May 2017 as Appendix O of the Official Community Plan Bylaw. Representatives from the Bowker Creek Initiative provided input into the development of the plan through a lengthy consultative planning process. Multiple commitments to improve and restore Bowker Creek are found throughout plan, including the following key polices:

- **4.2.1** Adopt a District-wide Stormwater Management Bylaw, to reduce stormwater impacts on the Bowker Creek watershed.
- **4.2.3** Integrate the principles and actions identified in the Bowker Creek *Blueprint* as part of redevelopment proposals and infrastructure replacement.
- **4.2.4** Acquire key properties to facilitate the restoration of Bowker Creek, including for the purposes of daylighting sections, enhancing riparian areas, and improving stormwater management.
- **4.2.5** Employ a flexible approach to achieve the daylighting of Bowker Creek, including re-routing or partially daylighting the Creek in stretches where technical constraints exist.
- **4.2.6** Work cooperatively with the City of Victoria and the District of Oak Bay to develop common Development Permit guidelines or other tools to help implement the Bowker Creek *Blueprint* on private lands within the Bowker Creek Watershed.
- ✓ **4.2.7** Support the Bowker Creek Initiative in the development of a study to assess the technical opportunities and constraints of daylighting Bowker Creek in the Shelbourne Valley.
- **4.2.8** Promote daylighting or enhanced stormwater management on greenways that align with the Bowker Creek channel to reinforce the location of the Creek and create a community asset.
- **4.2.9** Consider reducing streamside setbacks and removing other barriers to daylighting to acknowledge urban conditions and land use constraints in the Valley.
- **4.2.10** Encourage the daylighting of Bowker Creek, by considering additional building height allowances, including up to six storeys on sites designated for apartments.

Together, these policies provide a pivotal opportunity to advance plans to daylight and restore Bowker Creek along the Shelbourne corridor. Alongside the Daylighting Feasibility

Study, the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan lays the pathway for future daylighting with important benefits for the watershed, including increased hydrological function, improved biodiversity and habitat, and aesthetic enhancements. Most importantly, the Action Plan operationalizes Saanich's commitment to restoring the creek in this urban setting, making future improvements to the creek more probable and achievable.

Action #9: Work with creek-side landowners between Pearl and Trent Streets to achieve the long-term vision.

This action refers to two important properties along Bowker Creek, both within the District of Saanich. The first property lies between Pearl Street and Newton Street, on the property of SD61's Richmond School. Bowker Creek runs directly through the middle of the schoolyard, and for safety reasons is fenced on both sides due to extreme erosion and entrenchment of the steep banks. Golden Willow and other invasive plants clog the length of this section of the creek.

Part of the Daylighting Feasibility Study explored options for restoring this section of the creek by shifting the creek bed to the side of the school yard. This design includes a meandering creek profile with naturalized vegetation, expands the playing field, and includes a greenway for active transportation and connectivity. During extreme rainfalls, a portion of the site beside the creek would be designed to flood to help alleviate downstream flooding. Creek restoration at this site offers important benefits in terms of improved creek ecology and hydrological function, active transportation, and learning and recreational benefits for Richmond school.

Spotlight: University of Victoria

As home to the headwaters of Bowker Creek, the University of Victoria plays an important role in protecting downstream reaches of the creek. UVic is a long-term member of the BCI steering committee, and has contributed to the creek's health through several initiatives:

- In 2019, UVic installed a new Bowker Creek interpretative sign to explain UVic's partnership in the Bowker Creek Initiative and the importance of the watershed within Greater Victoria. In addition, the signage includes a stormwater management map highlighting the locations of curb cuts, green roofs, permeable pavement, and water detention or bioswales.
- Guided by a Stormwater Management Plan, the university continues to reduce the amount of impervious surfaces on campus and minimizes runoff using permeable paving and green building design.
- In 2020, UVic installed a stormwater detention pond by Parking Lot 10 on the West Campus Greenway to manage campus stormwater entering Bowker Creek.

Action #9 also refers to a nearby riparian area of Bowker Creek, also known as the BC Hydro lands or 2661 Richmond Road. Lying in the Saanich panhandle between Kings Road and Haultain Streets, Bowker Creek flows through a 2.2 ha greenspace at 1843 Kings Road. The space is valued as a natural oasis in an urban setting, where people come to walk, bike, relax, and appreciate nature. In addition to its biodiversity benefits, the site also provides active transportation linkages to the Royal Jubilee Hospital and beyond. A long history of community advocacy led to the District of Saanich's 2019 purchase of the site from BC Hydro for $2.75 million. Community fundraising efforts through the Saanich Legacy Fund and the Save Kings Community Nature Space group aim to raise an additional $2.75 million by March 31, 2021 through grants, personal donations, and requests for contributions from government agencies.

The Daylighting Feasibility Study also explored options for restoring this section of the creek. The restoration plan includes a low lying naturalized area along the creek that could flood during storm events, turf grass that might occasionally flood, park space, and maintenance of the existing greenway path.

Spotlight: Water Quality Monitoring:

The CRD monitors water quality in Bowker Creek at least twice a year, and every 5 years conducts more in-depth analysis. The latest detailed assessment was completed in 2019. In addition to the standard physical measurements of temperature, pH and dissolved oxygen, staff measured metals, E.coli, hardness, suspended solids, organic carbon, ammonia, nitrate, nitrite and caffeine. Water samples were collected five times in 30 days in the summer and fall at four locations in the creek.

Relative to the previous in-depth sampling effort in 2014, 2019's data indicate that sewage inputs and urban development in the watershed continue to degrade water quality in Bowker Creek. Copper, zinc, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, turbidity and suspended solids are at levels that are potentially harmful to aquatic life. Fecal coliform and E.coli levels indicate significant sewage contamination is still present and recreational activities, such as swimming, are likely unsafe.

One indicator did show minor improvement between 2014 and 2019. Sampling of benthic invertebrates (those living in the creek's sediment) suggests a slight improvement in water quality since 2014. The invertebrates found in 2019 indicate less organic pollution overall, although organic pollution still is a concern throughout the creek, particularly in lower reaches.

The CRD will continue to monitor water quality in Bowker Creek and will work with its partners to improve water quality throughout the watershed. Recently, the Friends of Bowker Creek have have begun additional water and invertebrate sampling as part of their Coho recovery project, and will share this data with the CRD in order to build a more complete picture of water quality issues in the creek.

Action #10: Continue with restoration at Browning Park.

Saanich's Browning Park contains one of the most natural stretches of Bowker Creek, with an open channel, treed banks, and a meandering creek profile. A greenway runs alongside the riparian zone, and community art celebrating the creek has been incorporated in various locations around the park. Still, invasive species are an issue in this stretch of the creek, in addition to channelization, conveyance, flooding and erosion. Recent restoration activities have largely focused on invasives removal through the Saanich Pulling Together volunteer program, with most stewardship help coming from St. Michaels University School students and teachers.

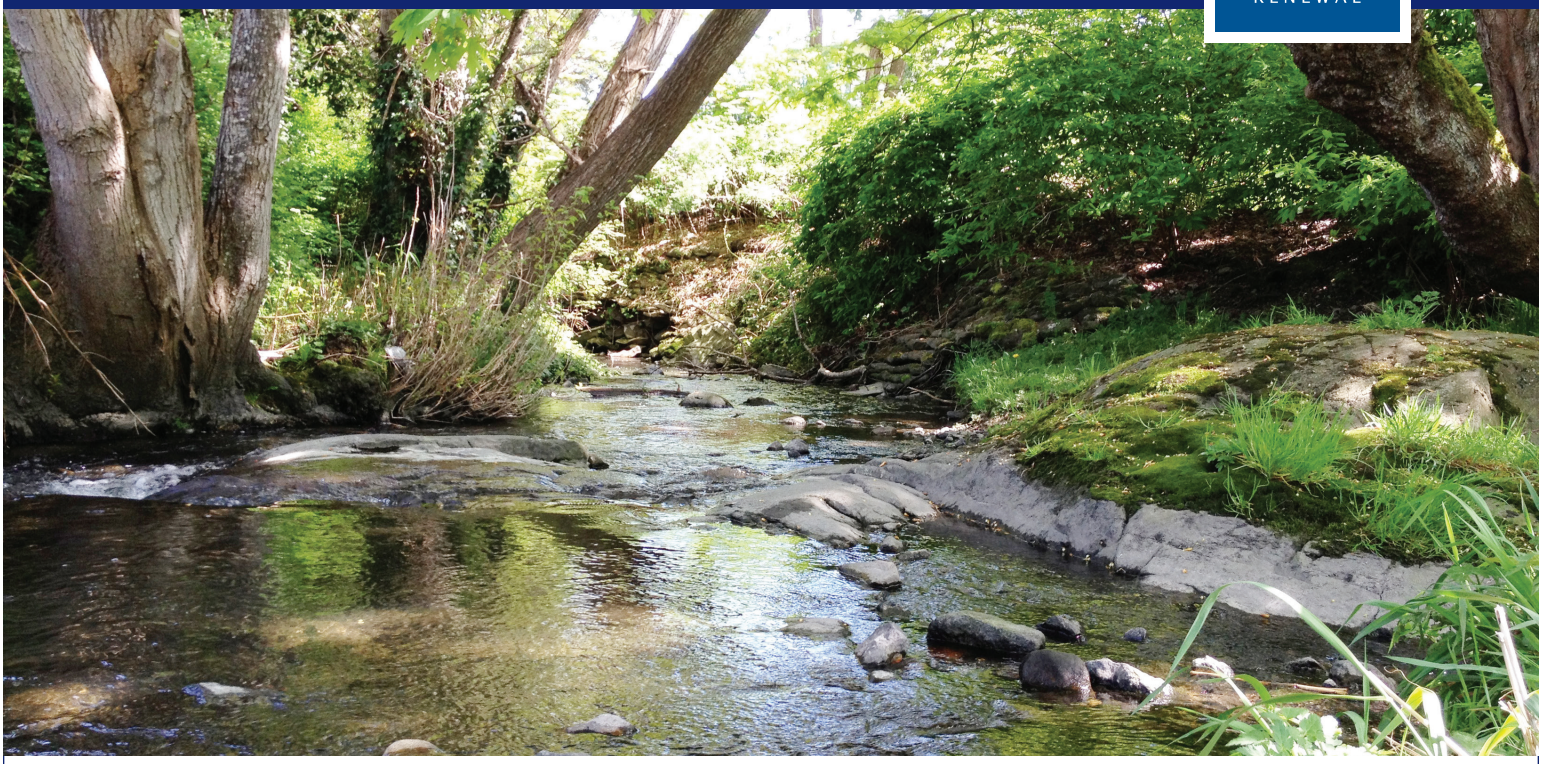
The Way Forward

As the **Bowker Creek** *Blueprint* reaches the milestone of its ten year anniversary, there are many achievements throughout the watershed that should be celebrated. The BCI and its partners have succeeded in completing 6 out of 10 of the *Blueprint's* short term actions, with implementation of the remaining four well underway. Additionally, numerous other key achievements should be noted and celebrated. Some of them are concrete, like the completion of the Daylighting Feasibility Study and ongoing water quality monitoring, while others are less tangible but undoubtedly important, like the building of community, the creation of a network of stewards, and the development of partnerships across municipal and institutional boundaries. Ten years into *Blueprint* implementation, the BCI partners are in a good position to commit to a new set of priority actions. The successes of the past ten years coupled with the newly completed Daylighting Feasibility Study mean that the time is right to update the *Blueprint* and recommit to a revised set of actions for watershed renewal.

Bowker Creek Blueprint: Framework for Collaborative Inter-municipal Watershed Implementation

Bowker Creek Initiative | 2021

Bowker Creek
URBAN WATERSHED RENEWAL



Background

The Bowker Creek Blueprint: A 100 year plan to restore the Bowker Creek Watershed (Blueprint) was created in 2010 and subsequently endorsed by the District of Saanich (2011), City of Victoria (2011), District of Oak Bay (2012), and Greater Victoria School District 61 (2018). The *Blueprint's* watershed-wide and reach-specific recommendations provide member municipalities, the Capital Regional District, the community and other land stewards with information and guidance to manage and restore the watershed and creek corridor over the next 100 years.

When the District of Saanich Council endorsed the *Blueprint*, they also adopted a resolution to work cooperatively with the District of Oak Bay and the City of Victoria on the preparation of development permit guidelines for the Bowker Creek watershed. The resolution envisioned development permit guidelines as the primary mechanism for implementing *Blueprint* actions on private property over the long term. Oak Bay and Victoria Councils both expressed support for coordinated implementation of the *Bowker Creek Blueprint*. However, the City of Victoria noted that development permit guidelines are just one of many tools that could be used to implement the *Blueprint*. Ongoing collaboration should therefore focus on a potential suite of tools, with implementation varying across municipalities. For instance, in the City of Victoria where all of Bowker Creek is underground in pipes, stormwater management is the priority and may be better addressed through alternate tools.

Proudly supported by the CRD

As a result of a multi-year coordinated review and analysis of existing and potential watershed-wide planning tools, the Bowker Creek Implementation Framework has been developed. This framework is a partnership between the District of Saanich, District of Oak Bay and City of Victoria and has the following objectives based on the initial direction from Councils:

- Fostering consistent implementation of the *Bowker Creek Blueprint* watershed-wide actions between the three municipalities through action plans, common development permit guidelines, and other tools;
- Focusing on private land;
- Improving stormwater management;
- Recognizing the different conditions of Bowker Creek throughout the three municipalities;
- Entrenching the *Bowker Creek Blueprint* into municipal legislation and development review processes; and
- Accomplishing the vision of the Bowker Creek *Blueprint* over time.

The document describes tools (including development guidelines, bylaws, programs, all focused on private properties) adopted by each of the three municipalities to achieve the 20 private-property specific watershed-wide actions of the *Bowker Creek Blueprint*, and identifies opportunities for the municipalities to work together to address existing gaps in *Blueprint* implementation.

While significant work has been done towards achieving these 20 actions, there remain gaps in the municipalities' tools to fully complete each action. Table 1 highlights progress in achieving *Blueprint* action plan items that relate specifically to private property, and indicates opportunities for improvement. The table represents both an analysis of what has been achieved to date, and provides options for further progress. Progress towards completing each action is indicated for each municipality as follows:signs throughout the watershed.

Table 1: Implementation progress of watershed-wide Blueprint actions related to private property:

- Complete or in progress for completion
- Under partial development or partially implemented
- Not complete or in progress
- N/A Not applicable to municipality (e.g. some actions do not apply to Victoria because the municipality has no open creek sections)

Blueprint Action #	Blueprint Action Description	Implementation examples and options	Oak Bay	Saanich	Victoria
1	Review and revise relevant official community plans, and community and local plans to include goals, objectives, and actions from the Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan and Bowker Creek *Blueprint*. Incorporate *Blueprint* actions into annual municipal operation plans and budgets.	• District of Oak Bay: OCP, Watercourses DPA • District of Saanich: OCP, Streamside DPA, Shelbourne Valley Action Plan, Cedar Hill Park Management Plan • City of Victoria: OCP	🟢	🟢	🟢
3	Designate a creek flood plain or zone on either side of the creek, through zoning bylaws to prevent any new construction of buildings below the 200-year flood elevation. Flood mapping should include climate change assumptions.	• LUB / ZB to limit development within the 200 year flood elevation • Floodplain or Fill Bylaw to limit fill and development • Floodplain Development Permit Area to limit fill and development	🔴	🟢	N/A
4	Establish policies that require minimum vegetated greenspace on developments and redevelopments, depending on type of land use. 12% is an average target, based on provincial standards and is within the range recommended by the Urban Forest Stewardship Initiative.	• LUB / ZB: designate % greenspace required • Tree Bylaw • Development Permit Area Guidelines	🟡	🔴	🔴
5	Align watershed efforts with climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and strategies, including tree planting, greenways planning and rain/ stormwater infrastructure.	• Tree/Urban Forest Bylaw • Local Area Plan or Action Plan policies • Climate Plan: 100% Renewable and Resilient (Saanich) • Climate Action Plan (Victoria)	🟡	🟡	🟡

Blueprint Action #	Blueprint Action Description	Implementation examples and options	Oak Bay	Saanich	Victoria
6	With land use changes, use amenity bonusing or other mechanisms to fund or construct greenways, greenspace, or to daylight the creek.	• Local Area Plan or Action Plan policies • Negotiations at the time of property redevelopment and/or rezoning (Saanich) • Greenway Plan identified (Victoria)			
7	Encourage and pursue daylighting and greenways projects as part of changes to land use or when replacing hydraulic structures.	• Local Area Plan or Action Plan policies • DPA guidelines • Restore and enhance riparian areas • Provide for daylighting • Provide for greenway (ROW) allowance • Control erosion • Form and character (LID I landscape) • Parks / greenways plans, and design • Capital projects and maintenance policies • Engineering standards			
8	Develop municipal policies to acquire key streamside parcels for use as flood storage, greenway, parklands, and for creek daylighting.	• Update and maintain confidential property acquisition list • DCC Park Acquisition program			
9	Purchase key properties affected by flooding, as appropriate	• Property acquisition list, policy, and designating funding			N/A
10	Revise municipal policies and regulations to permit and encourage low impact development to ensure that developments and redevelopments have an effective impervious area of no more than 30%.	• LUB I ZB Update: effective impervious area targets (30% threshold) • LID I Stormwater Bylaw: Create new bylaw and administer through a DPA			

Blueprint Action #	Blueprint Action Description	Implementation examples and options	Oak Bay	Saanich	Victoria
12	In urban areas, ensure appropriate maintenance of oil interceptors and sediment traps on private property through a municipally-coordinated maintenance program funded by a fee-for-service program.	• Maintenance program (funded through utility) • Stormwater Utilities Bylaw (Victoria)	🟡	🟡	🟢
14	Develop policies to require commercial and institutional property owners to install oil interceptors and sediment traps in parking lots before stormwater reaches the creek.	• LUB / ZB Update • Building permitting process • Stormwater Utilities Bylaw (Victoria)	🔴	🟡	🟢
15	Create a utility to fund stormwater management projects.	• Stormwater Utility	🔴	🔴	🟢
19	Adjust Municipal Development Cost Charges (DCC) to provide incentives for low impact development.	• DCC Bylaw • Incentive program for developers	N/A	🟢	🔴
20	Discourage the sale of invasive exotic plant species at garden centres through education and policy. Encourage landowners to cease using cosmetic herbicides and pesticides through a public education program.	• Education and outreach program for homeowners through CRISP (Capital Regional Invasive Species Partnership) • Pesticide Use Bylaw (Victoria)	🟡	🟡	🟡

Blueprint Action #	Blueprint Action Description	Implementation examples and options	Oak Bay	Saanich	Victoria
21	If municipalities have not already done so, develop and implement an urban forest strategy that includes the following actions: • Develop educational materials describing the links between the trees and creeks, • Protection of existing trees through the development (as appropriate) of tree protection bylaws, • Plant and maintain street trees and boulevards throughout the watershed, including using a diversity of species, • Establish municipal policies that require a minimum of 12% vegetated greenspace on developments and redevelopments, • Eencourage private landowners to plant native trees and vegetation on their properties, and • Encourage schools to add tree planting to school yards.	• Urban Forest Master Plan, Strategy and Policy • Education and outreach program for homeowners and schools	●	●	●
22	Develop a strategy and coordinate invasive species eradication for the creek and riparian area, based on eradicating a few key species. May require some research or trials.	• Prepare an invasive species removal incentive/strategy for private properties • Invasive Species or Noxious Weed bylaw	●	●	N/A
26	Identify and contact landowners with streamside properties and provide information on what is happening in the creek and ways they can contribute to creek health.	• Education and outreach program for homeowners	●	●	●

Blueprint Action #	Blueprint Action Description	Implementation examples and options	Oak Bay	Saanich	Victoria
27	Encourage voluntary action by developing and delivering workshops and educational materials on various subjects and needs including: • Best on-site stormwater management practices for builders and developers, • Low impact development (stormwater management) for municipal managers and councils and the public • Workshops and/or educational materials for residential land owners on topics that include: • rain gardens, • installation of rain barrels, • disconnection of roof leaders, • protecting streamside vegetation, • planting native species, • lawn and garden management to maximize infiltration, • installation of pervious areas, • car washing, oil leaks and paint disposal, and eliminating deposition of deleterious substances into the drainage system.	• Create region wide standards and educational material • Education and outreach program for homeowners • Work with community associations	🟡	🟡	🟢
28	Identify and contact owners of properties with large impervious surfaces and provide information on pervious surface technology and stormwater detention and infiltration.	• Education and outreach program for homeowners, businesses and developers	🔴	🔴	🟢
31	Provide regular updates and outreach to residents and other watershed users through websites, Bowker Creek list serve, other list serves, community newsletters, other media, displays at community events, and presentations to community associations and groups.	• Create inter-municipal key messages and outreach materials • Education and outreach program for homeowners	🟡	🟡	🟡

Recommendations

Table 1 indicates that the three Bowker Creek Initiative municipalities have a range of progress levels in adopting development permit guidelines, bylaws and programs that support the implementation of watershed-wide *Blueprint* actions on private land. Overall, the areas of most progress are:

- Urban Forest Bylaws and Plans
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation plans
- Local Area Plan or Action Plan policies
- Stormwater quality programs
- Public education and outreach about invasive species, urban forests, streamside living, and stormwater management

The areas of least progress are:

- Floodplain designations
- Requiring a percentage of greenspace in developments
- Setting limits to impervious surfaces and associated outreach
- Stormwater Utilities
- Development Cost Charges

It is recommended that the three municipal councils support the formation of an inter-municipal working group to identify opportunities to collaborate on the areas of least progress. Appendix 1 describes planning tools that could be used by municipalities to achieve further watershed protection.

Appendix 1: Further Planning Tools for Watershed Protection

From the Green Bylaws Toolkit:
https://stewardshipcentrebc.ca/PDF_docs/GreenBylaws/GreenBylawsToolkit_2016.pdf

Legal Tools:

- Development Permit Areas to protect the natural environment: reflect the shared responsibilities of landowners and local governments to protect the environment
- Cluster new developments to protect biodiversity corridors and ecological features using OCP policies, development permit guidelines, and Zoning Bylaws
- Covenants: "Local governments and landowners use covenants to restrict the use of private land to activities and areas of use that respect sensitive ecosystems. Under section 219 of the Land Title Act, a local government or approved organization (such as a land trust) may hold a covenant registered on the title to private land that protects specific characteristics of the land, such as wetlands, grasslands, forested areas and other ecologically significant features." Page 118, Green Bylaws Toolkit.
- Tree protection bylaws: can be used to require tree cutting permits in relation to areas affected by flooding or other hazards
- Urban Forest Bylaw: to achieve percent greenspace cover targets throughout the watershed
- Comprehensive Environmental Bylaw (page 128) – North Vancouver *(Environmental Protection and Preservation Bylaw)* This bylaw includes requirements for setbacks from watercourses, vegetation requirements for riparian areas, sediment control, QP oversight in some circumstances – this covers all private lands, including those not in a DP area. Bylaws are a regulatory approach that does not run with the property, and is not site-specific like a DP
- Covenants: local government can adopt bylaws to exempt riparian lands from property taxes if subject to a conservation covenant (p 163)

- Local government can require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for properties in DPAs before issuing development approvals. EIAs can address preservation of functioning ecosystems: conservation areas, buffers, wildlife corridors, mitigation measures to minimize impacts on habitat.

Outreach & Stewardship:

- Develop a "biodiversity checklist" of features that developers and homeowners can choose from (e.g. green walls, bird boxes);
- Public education and awareness: compile and distribute a guide to native plant landscaping to private landowners
- Where City has limited control (e.g. private land), cooperation and engagement of stakeholders – working group; ongoing public communication (social media, open houses, information sessions etc)
- Encourage private land stewardship
- Rainwater management - swales, infiltration trenches, reduce impervious areas
- Groundwater recharge - vegetated swales, infiltration basins, absorbent vegetation

Planning and Policy:

- Greenway showing overall pattern of ecologically connected areas on public/private lands
- Maintain contiguous habitats on public and private lands
- Member municipalities can implement a Master Implementation Agreement (with regional district, health authority and the Province) - an integrated watershed management approach to managing and protecting surface water, drainage and groundwater in the Bowker Creek watershed (page 158)

  From Common Design Guidelines for Green Stormwater Infrastructure: (CRD 2019) https://www.crd.bc.ca/education/green-stormwater-infrastructure

- Under the authority of the BC Local Government Act, local governments can regulate the design and installation of green infrastructure
- Stormwater quality bylaws
- Flood zone bylaw: land may be designated as a flood plain, specify flood level for flood plain, and setback from a watercourse (section 524); restrict (re)development within the 200 year flood plain of Bowker Creek

- Subdivision and development bylaws: can include stormwater management requirements. These traditionally focused on conveyance and flood protection, but these can include green infrastructure principles
- Could require soil permeability testing,
- Minimize impervious area by recommending narrower roads, minimal parking, pervious paving, green roofs
- Disconnect impervious areas from storm drain system, have them drain to absorbent landscape with only an overflow to the storm drain system
- Require new developments to install only (or primarily) native plants

From BC Climate Action Tool Kit: https://toolkit.bc.ca/dpa

- Development Permit Areas work in coordination with zoning bylaws to shape development on scale of a parcel or development site;
- DPAs work well with Comprehensive Development Zone – can be quite specific
- DPAs can stipulate conditions for density bonusing to achieve certain climate action or ecosystem functionality goals
- DPAs can be used to protect ecologically significant areas and natural hazards to maximize the benefits of compact and complete communities that concentrate growth (section 489 of Local Government Act)

Other Documents:

- Vision, Principles and Actions: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/integrated-stormwater-management-vision-principles-and-actions-volume-1.pdf
- Best Management Practice Toolkit: https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/integrated-stormwater-management-best-practice-toolkit-volume-2.pdf
- Compact communities: https://www.refbc.com/sites/default/files/building-change-2017.pdf
- Develop with Care: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/natural-resource-stewardship/laws-policies-standards-guidance/best-management-practices/develop-with-care

BOWKER CREEK INITIATIVE (BCI) TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)
REVISED SEPTEMBER 2021

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Bowker Creek Initiative steering committee is to assist with and coordinate the efforts of the District of Saanich, City of Victoria, and District of Oak Bay and other agencies and interests in implementing the Bowker Creek Blueprint. The steering committee will assist in undertaking a variety of activities, including but not limited to, monitoring goals and objectives, prioritizing actions, applying for grants, reviewing technical documents, increasing public awareness, and promoting partnerships.

2.0 Membership

The steering committee should represent a balance of local government, community, and institutional partners, ideally comprised of:

- Capital Regional District staff;
- Representatives from the three municipalities,
- Representatives from institutional partners (e.g. University of Victoria, SD61);
- Representatives from Community Associations in the watershed;
- Representatives from environmental stewardship groups; and
- Watershed residents.

The steering committee will endorse all proposed steering committee members prior to appointment. Selection criteria for public members of the steering committee will include:

- property ownership or residency in the Bowker Creek Watershed preferred but not required;
- willingness and ability to commit to the necessary time to support the committee;
- demonstrated interest and knowledge of the Bowker Creek Watershed;
- ability to work toward consensus with people who hold different interests and opinions about the future of Bowker Creek Watershed;
- skills and experience related to watershed topics are helpful, but not required;
- skills and experience related to the roles and responsibilities associated with a steering committee are helpful, but not required; and
- members will identify alternates to attend meetings in their absence whenever possible.

Interested parties will apply by letter to explain how they fulfill the above selection criteria. The steering committee will decide to accept their application through consensus.

Every effort will be made to create an appropriate balance of members, including a mix of people who represent the diverse backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and neighbourhoods in the watershed, while maintaining a manageable size of committee (ideally between 8 and 15 people).

The responsibilities of the steering committee should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- identify opportunities and facilitate the development of partnerships between government, community and business;
- promote coordination, clarify priorities, and help resolve scheduling issues among municipalities;
- identify funding sources and participate in the preparation of grant applications;

- review engineering, planning and consulting documents as appropriate;
- participate in the creation of public outreach and information, and events;
- monitor and evaluate conditions and trends over time to ensure the goals and objectives are being met.

Appointment to the steering committee includes accepting responsibility to commit to and advance the principles, spirit and intent of the Bowker Creek Blueprint, and in that context to:

- help foster plan realization through the local governments, communities and other stakeholders who may be involved;
- attend committee meetings;
- attend public information and community events;
- remain informed and inform others;
- share resources, creativity, experience, and expertise;
- work toward mutually acceptable recommendations; and
- build trust among participants through open, respectful, and productive communication.

3.0 Decision-Making

Steering committee members will jointly seek outcomes that accommodate the interests and values of all members and their constituents, if applicable, and will make decisions by consensus.

Consensus means an agreement that all participants can live with. The participants may not agree with every aspect but taken as a whole, a decision based on consensus reflects common major interests and satisfies individual concerns of participants to the extent that they can support it.

If participants reach consensus on a set of recommendations that resolves most, but not all of the issues that are being addressed, they will seek to document areas of disagreement. The reasons for disagreement and opportunities to resolve a disagreement will be included in the steering committee meeting records with the agreed-upon recommendation or action.

A quorum will consist of not less than four people of which two must be government representatives and two must be community representatives.

4.0 Meeting Procedures

The BCI Steering Committee will meet four times per year. Additional meetings may be held at the call of the chair if sufficient notice is given. Participants will make every effort to attend committee meetings.

5.0 Public Relations

Persons who are not steering committee members may attend committee meetings. Persons attending a meeting will be asked to respect the process guidelines. Presentations by the public may be accepted at the discretion of the steering committee.

When speaking with the media, steering committee members should solely represent their own organization and its views, and not speak for the BCI as a whole. For media inquiries specific to the BCI, the Chair will defer to the CRD media spokesperson and guidelines.

The report gives a good summary of past work and our Society commends what has been done. We note that Parks Natural Areas simply does not have the number of staff to address all the badly needed projects and clearly needs better financial support.

We are, however, very concerned about the final paragraph which includes the statement:

"Urban and suburban natural areas should not be seen as pristine wilderness due to the immense disturbance pressures on them. It is doubtful that they will be able to be restored to their full previous states."

With that view, we certainly will not have any pristine wilderness in Saanich. However, I would say that the majority of Mt Douglas Park is indeed "pristine wilderness". Certainly the half of the Park north and northwest of Churchill Drive is a beautiful pristine forested wilderness area. The remaining forested area to the south is close to pristine but is rapidly being subdivided by visitors creating rogue trails and run over by off-trail off-leash dogs. The majority of the forested areas of the park do not need restoration, they simply need protection! And our efforts related to protection, such as simply identifying rogue trails, let alone closing and restoring them, have not resulted in action.

We have also read the Focus Magazine article “Saanich Park Report Card indicates failure by Saanich to steward Garry Oak ecosystems and species at risk” and agree with it's conclusions in relation to the large Garry Oak ecosystem on the southwestern side of Mt Douglas Park.

The Natural Areas crews have and continue to do excellent work and really understand a natural area but it's not clear that they have the full support and certainly not the necessary funding to do that work.

--

Darrell Wick, President
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Victoria, BC, V8N 4P7, Canada
Mobile: +1 250 884-9291
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6110-20 Saanich Operations Yard

The Corporation of the District of Saanich

C 28 Feb 22

Report

To: Mayor and Council

From: Harley Machielse, Director of Engineering

Suzanne Samborski, Director of Parks, Recreation & Community Services

Date: 2/17/2022

Subject: Saanich Operations Centre Redevelopment

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information and acknowledge the outlined public engagement process.

PURPOSE

This report provides an update to the Saanich Operations Centre Redevelopment project and provides Council with an overview of the planned public information campaign that staff will be undertaking in the upcoming weeks.

DISCUSSION

Background

Council adopted the Strategic Facilities Master Plan in April 2018. That document identifies the Saanich Operations Centre as the District's number one priority for capital investment. Over the course of the past four years, staff have reviewed the viability of relocating the Operations Centre as well as opportunities to redevelop the Operations Centre at the existing site at 1040 McKenzie Ave. The Saanich Operations Centre has been the home base for Public Works and Parks staff for more than sixty years. It is very well centrally located within the District and allows for effective and efficient deployment of the various work crews to all parts of the District.

At the Council meeting of September 30, 2019, staff provided a detailed outline of the activities up to that time and confirmed the results showing that alternate properties for relocation did not exist. Therefore, District operations for the Parks and Public Works divisions would be remaining on the existing site. Council approved a contract award to a recommended lead proponent resulting from an RFP for a design consultant on February 24, 2020.

Since then, staff with the support of a consulting team have advanced the preliminary planning and feasibility analysis for the redevelopment project. This project is adopting similiar templates and strategies as previous initiatives (the Strategic Facilities Master Plan and the Business

Case for the Redevelopment of Fire Station #2, approved in May 2019, to give decision makers a comprehensive understanding of the project).

Methodology

Staff's workplan over the last two years reflects three phases of planning. The first phase, Programming and Site Analysis was from March 2020 to January 2021. The second phase, Conceptual Site planning and Non-District opportunities has gone from February 2021 to December 2021 and the last phase Public Engagement and Business Case preparation is current until the Business Case is presented to Council sometime in second quarter of this year.

Phase I - Programming

After engaging design consultant architects TKA+D and RDHA in the first quarter of 2020, staff have worked to complete long-term spatial requirements for operations (also known as "programming") and to analyze the site and ultimately test various site layout options. The design consultant's programming work with staff took place from May 2020 to February 2021.

Due to work and travel impacts from the pandemic, the consultant conducted interviews remotely through virtual meetings and conference calls. Eight working groups involving 32 management staff and supervisors directly contributed to the amassed documentation, producing an extensive and detailed program document. This document identifies requirements for both the physical area and the adjacent operational areas needed to deliver services efficiently.

The interviews covered the following topics:

- spatial requirements for individuals and divisions; current and optimal for growth
- work flows; current and problematic, as well as a future ideal
- possible changes to service delivery in the future
- public interface requirements; e.g., service desks, meeting areas
- meeting requirements and frequency
- storage and warehousing
- common areas; e.g., lunch room, lockers and change rooms

The resulting program of 10,700 m^2 / 115,177 ft^2 will initially accommodate just under 400 FTE staff and 50 casual/temporary workers, with capacity to include an additional 125 staff projected over the coming decades. This area factors in circulation, supporting technical service areas and common areas including meeting spaces. The meeting spaces will be configured to accommodate both large and small groups. A positive outcome of the program is the identification of one set of common areas for staff change rooms, lockers and lunch room. Currently, several of these areas are scattered across the site, thereby separating various work groups.

From the beginning of the project, staff considered opportunities to improve service delivery. Relocating the administration and technical support/design staff in Engineering, Recreation and Community Services to the site where their work is implemented is seen to be a positive

operational objective. Currently the directors and many staff of these departments work at alternate sites such as the Annex at 760 Vernon Avenue (next to Municipal Hall) and 3500 Blanshard. Further, staff and supervisors who were interviewed as part of the SOC planning process spoke to the benefit of having all related service delivery units located near each other. It is believed the proposed layout will promote new ways of working and more efficient service delivery. The District's Occupational Health and Safety Division will also relocate to the site, as the Public Works and Parks divisions have historically experienced the most work-related claims and day-to-day incidents requiring first aid.

Phase I - Site analysis

The design consultant's site planning began by taking an inventory of the existing challenges posed to ensure that the planning was informed by the realities of the site, and ultimately, to support the conceptual planning meant to improve operations. The illustration below is to be viewed as a reference to the listed site analysis.

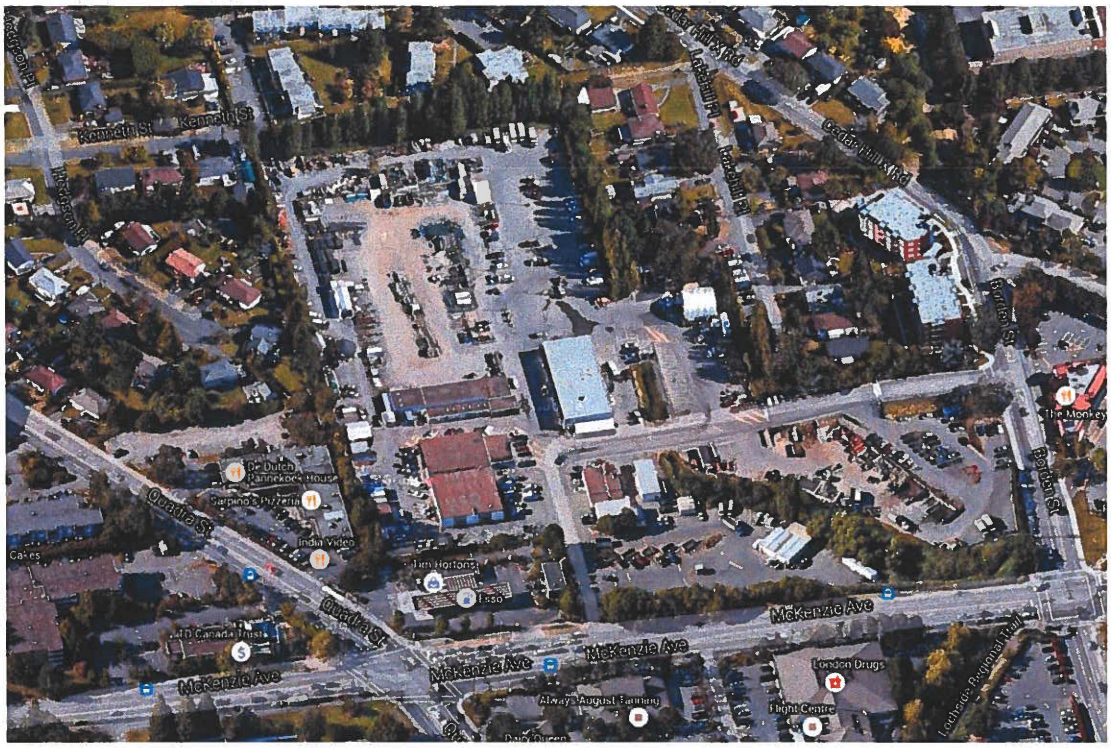


Figure 1 – Aerial view of site

The existing noted site features and constraints considered include:

1. **Vehicle circulation and storage:** At any time in a work day, up to 260 vehicles and equipment from the combined fleets of the Parks and Public Works divisions are circulating through the site and exiting at either Borden or McKenzie. Once on-site, vehicles are stored at several locations. There has long been an intention to improve the circulation and parking

so that drivers can navigate the site with better visibility, and to improve safety. Both McKenzie Avenue and Quadra Street are among the District's streets with highest vehicle volume. Staff factor this into their daily routines of leaving and entering the site to and from worksite deployment locations located throughout the District. Operational vehicles and staff all enter the site only at Borden Street location which has created a congestion point.

2. **Site topography and Public Works Creek:** The grade difference from the McKenzie entry to the middle of the site is as much as 4.5 metres / 15 feet. This grade, in combination with the trees on McKenzie, effectively screens much of the operations. Bisecting the site is Public Works Creek, a listed fish-bearing stream that feeds into the Blenkinsop watershed. The stream's course runs along the northern and eastern perimeter property lines and later flows in a southeast direction, adjacent to the Fleet building and diagonally across the southern end of the property. It then meets with Blenkinsop Creek before exiting the site and flowing south, eventually into Swan Lake. The creek, in addition to being a natural feature, also effectively splits the property. Currently, the parcel east of the creek has staff parking and materials and equipment storage.

3. **The surrounding neighbourhood:** The site is bordered to the northwest, north and northeast by single-family residential dwellings, with the exception of two mid-sized, four-storey multi-unit apartment blocks on Borden Street, adjacent to the Borden entry. The site is bordered to the southwest by a single-storey, multi-tenant commercial retail development at 4011 Quadra Street and an Esso gas station at 4001 Quadra Street (at the northeast corner of the Quadra and McKenzie intersection). Immediately across Borden to the east and McKenzie to the south are commercial and retail strip mall developments of significant size; the most notable is Saanich Centre. Finally, diagonal from the southeast corner of the site at the Borden and McKenzie intersection is the Reynolds High School property, which has a large open playing field near the intersection.

4. **Staff and visitor parking:** The site currently has numerous locations where staff park their personal vehicles. On-site parking varies seasonally, but more than 300 vehicles can be parked in various locations, most notably on the portion of the site that's east of the creek and borders Borden and the access road, and on an additional District property at 4015 Quadra Street. (accessed only from Quadra). Ideally, personal vehicles would not circulate through operations areas for reasons of safety and security. Visitor parking (seven designated stalls in total) is located off the main circulation road in front of Public Works Administration and to the east in front of the Parks machine workshop/ staff lunchroom building.

<u>Phase II – Conceptual Site Planning</u>

After developing a draft program, the consultant began to test numerous ideas through an exercise of identifying key spatial impacts resulting from operations. Four schemes were generated to illustrate answers for questions such as:

- Is the site big enough to construct single or low-storey buildings and have all parking on the surface? Answer: No, density and multi-storey structures are required.
- Could we use the 4015 Quadra Street property as an access point and improve site circulation with a through road? Answer: Yes, an interior street between Borden and Quadra helps to improve safety and visibility for operations vehicles circulating into and through the site.
- Can the creek be incorporated into the project? Answer: Yes, being able to introduce a natural amenity as a design feature to the project will be very beneficial to the project.
- Could some operations-related functions be located east of the creek, and would this provide much-needed additional area? Answer: Although possible, locating operations east of the creek would introduce inefficiencies by needlessly splitting operations and increasing distances between work areas. That parcel would be better considered for future development opportunities such as a relocated garden waste drop-off or a third-party development.
- Can the District improve the public access and experience at the site? Answer: Yes, by placing service counters and administrative functions close to McKenzie Avenue, the District improves services and also separates the public from the busy operations area, improving safety.

The consultants developed four schemes, each one testing various ideas for suitability and factoring in the above questions. They all had the primary aim of maximizing the efficiency of District operations and service delivery. These schemes were completed by testing numerous criteria and illustrating multiple options, which allowed staff to compare the relative merits of each. The project team experienced many robust discussions among the operational divisions and teams. The project team know that getting it "perfect" is not a realistic goal, but conducting an iterative process among staff over several months has provided the project team with an opportunity to develop and optimize a solution.

The input from the review of the four schemes narrowed the options down to two. These two options, known as the linear and courtyard schemes, were further developed and tested to understand which one could be either incorporated or eliminated to result in one scheme. In the end, the decision came down to three criteria: (1) vehicle movement and a more clearly defined fleet-parking layout, (2) safety and movement of staff across the site and (3) a rationalized building layout that better supports future changes to service delivery, either through expansion or contraction.

Last summer, site staff were invited to two all-day events on-site to view the project materials, illustrations and scale models of each of the two schemes. Documented discussion as well as completed surveys produced a strong database of comments and concerns from which to make a decision. The tallied results and discussions among the project team concluded that the linear scheme was better suited to meet the District's operations needs and service delivery criteria.

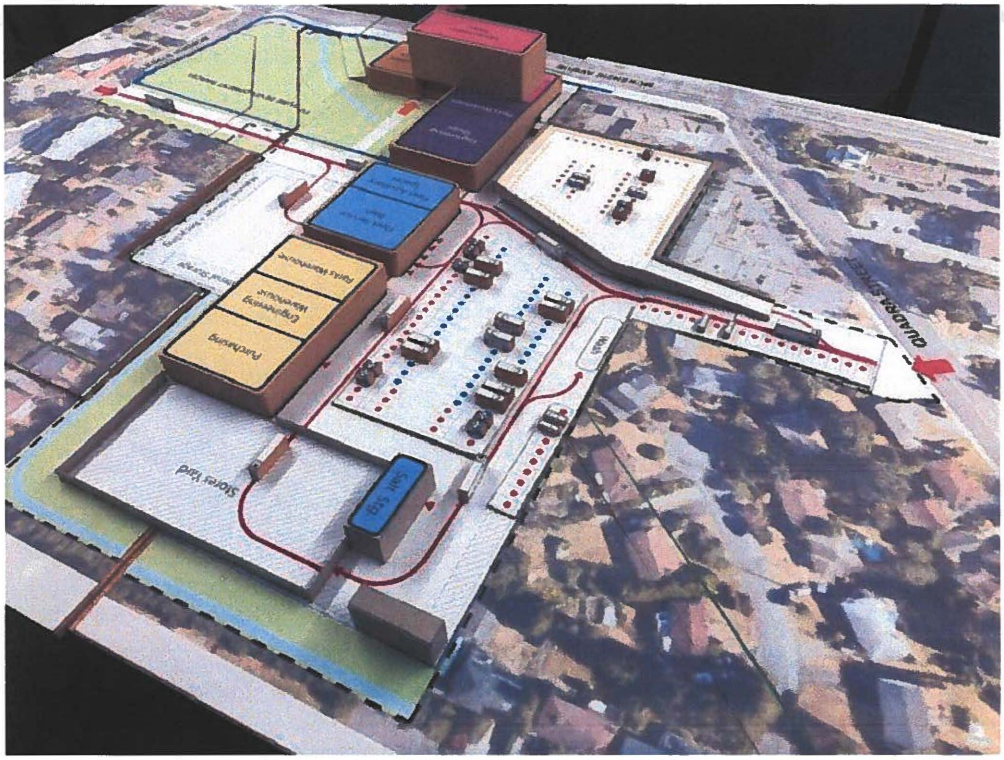


Figure 2 – Model of the linear scheme

The features and benefits of the final scheme include:

- Operations vehicles will be at a centralized storage area, and visual and auditory screening of these areas will shield them from the surrounding neighbourhoods, particularly to the north and east. Efforts will be taken to mitigate noise and fumes affecting residents who reside on Hodgson Place to the west through site planting and vegetation screening.
- The Neighbourhood Centre designation in the District's Official Community Plan (OCP) will be supported and significantly strengthened in the coming decades, resulting particularly from the height and density of development and the available lease areas on McKenzie Ave.
- The site's central location and regional connectivity will be optimized through its immediate adjacency to major regional cycling and pedestrian paths and to several major BC Transit bus routes.
- Height and density are contained to McKenzie Avenue. While the entire site will experience redevelopment, the new construction areas located away from McKenzie Avenue and adjacent to low-rise suburban residential neighbourhoods are lower in height and more sympathetic to the scale of the neighbourhood.
- The areas contained within the southeast parcel of the site, including a restored Public Works Creek, will see newly developed green spaces for staff and the public to use. The

configuration of the buildings will screen the more industrial areas of the site, maximizing the enjoyment and health of this naturalized landscape

Linear Concept - Site Diagram

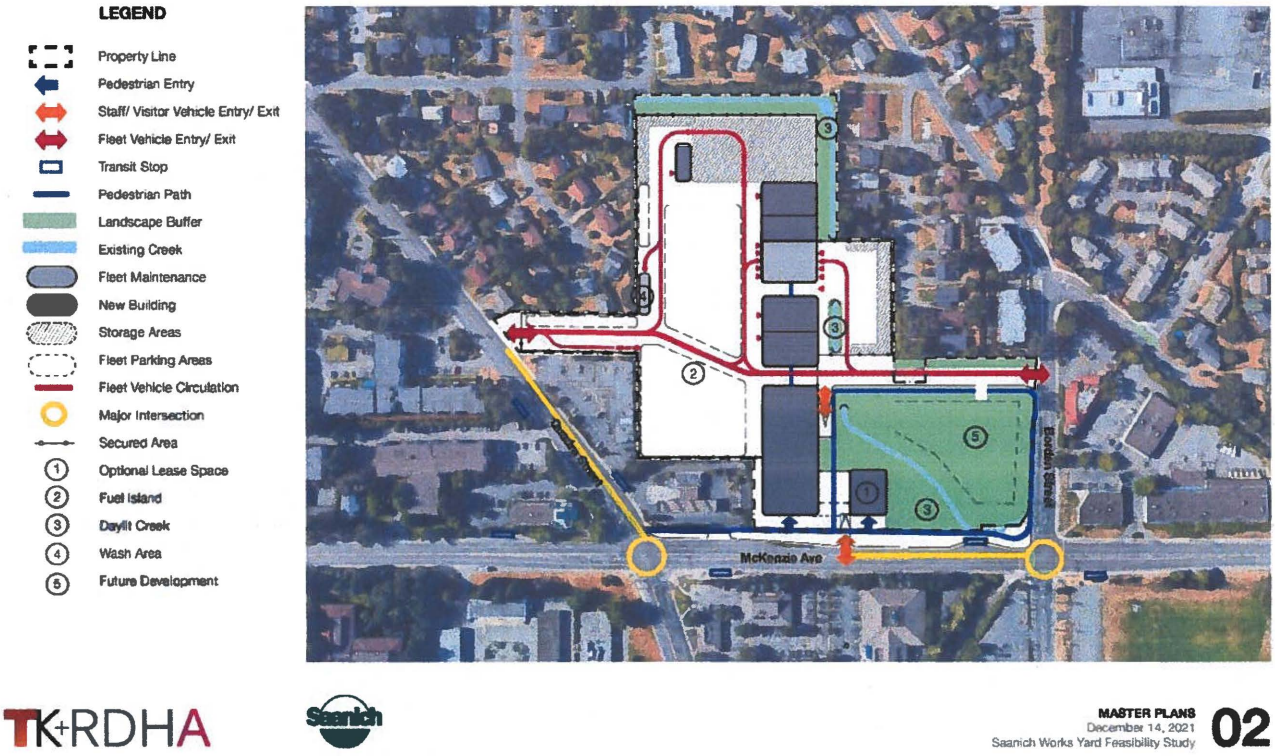


Figure 3 – Proposed site plan showing operational and property features

Phase II – Non-District opportunities

With its goals of improving efficiency, densifying and streamlining circulation, the planning process has identified two opportunities for this site that could be considered for non-District uses: (1) developing the land east of the creek and (2) building additional floors on the new administration building. Staff has reviewed the available footprints, heights and components necessary to support these developments. Staff has not, however, set out to suggest that they will be designed, built or financed by the District; but merely indicate what the implications and opportunities could be.

Developing the land east of the creek: The project team suggests identifying the property refered to as the development parcel east of the creek, adjacent to Borden, as a possible site for a relocated garden waste drop-off or, when the long-term future of the garden waste drop-off is determined, for future development. If a separate business case analysis for the garden waste drop-off determines that this property should be dedicated to commercial and/or

residential uses, the District would solicit interest from qualified businesses to work with the District on implementing such a project.

Building additional floors on the new administration building: Staff suggest considering a plan for additional floors above the new four-storey administration building that will be located adjacent to McKenzie Avenue. Adding four more floors dedicated to a combination of commercial and residential uses would give the opportunity to meet OCP goals of maximized height, density and uses that support the Neighbourhood Centre designation at McKenzie-Quadra.

In the current conceptual planning phase, staff engaged a strategic real estate consultant to analyze market capacity and estimated property valuation. The consultant suggests that current market demand for both commercial and residential uses is high; however, the project team realizes that the decision to consider these opportunities will be market driven at a future time.

With either of these two possibilities, the District would be considering opportunities that need careful analysis. Staff believe other jurisdictions provide good precedent that the District can learn from. For example, the City of Victoria worked with the private sector to successfully develop their soon-to-be-completed new Fire Hall #1.

Two principles that staff consider critical and mandatory will guide how the District pursues any opportunities to share the site with other uses:

1. District operations must not be negatively impacted by additional uses and development. Staff will not recommend pursuing what some consider to be a potential financial benefit if service delivery to residents is jeopardized.
2. Any additional uses or non-District-led development must, at minimum, be financially neutral for the District. Every effort will be made to understand if there could be net positive financial benefit, but staff would not recommend proceeding if our capital burden would need to increase to accommodate third-party interests.

The District would be remiss to not explore these opportunities. This aspect of the project will be analyzed in greater detail in the upcoming business case.

<u>Phase III – Public Engagement and Business Case preperation</u>

Following this report and over the coming weeks, staff will be undertaking an extensive effort of public engagement with District residents. This activity will inform residents of the project, with a focus on communicating the background and need for the project. The messaging is two-fold, as follows:

- The District wants the public to see that the District has a **need** to ensure that critical services will be delivered well into future. While staff have continued working in sub-standard facilities that are 60+ years old and have the potential to pose unnecessary risk to service delivery, the project team has a vision of what that need could look like for the future. Staff needs to ensure that the risk of future service interruption will be minimized and that the District's physical infrastructure will be dependable and able to support a high quality of life in Saanich. The critical services the District provides

(streets, water and sewer infrastructure, water resources management, resident garbage management, green spaces and parks management) require a highly technical and robust facility to be resilient and constructed to a high standard so that it lasts for up to eight decades into the future.

- The District sees this project as an **opportunity** to redevelop an existing underutilized public asset that simultaneously facilitates and advances the implementation of several District goals and objectives. The realization of this vision will follow a plan that is a framework for the District and the community to build onto for the next 80 years. The co-location of public and private interests on District operations property will support the Quadra-McKenzie neighbourhood's growth and prosperity. In addition to environmental restoration, providing public green space and reimagining the Quadra-McKenzie corridor, this redevelopment project for the Saanich Operations Centre is an opportunity for a shared future, one that will mutually benefit us all.

Three project objectives will be shared with residents and businesses. These are foundational to residents' shared understanding of the project's benefits and commitments.

1. **Service Delivery:** the redevelopment will ensure that the District can continue to deliver critical services from this site long into the future. The operations must be delivered from a safe, efficient and robust set of facilities that are built to last and accommodate changing needs for decades into the future.
2. **Healthy environment:** in addition to restoring Public Works Creek, the redevelopment will support and further the District's 2050 net zero goals, climate change resiliency, energy performance and promotion of active transportation strategies.
3. **Community vitality:** given the prime location of these facilities and the opportunity to advance the public realm of this OCP-defined Neighbourhood Centre, the District is uniquely positioned to provide a template for private-sector investment that strengthens the community.

Staff expects that many residents will be interested in the project details.The messaging and visuals will strive to communicate that the plan is conceptual and represents only a framework for development. Importantly, the public will know how their participation matters and where their involvement is expected both now and in the future.

In addition to a page on the District's website, the engagement schedule includes in-person events and presentations to District committees,the two adjacent community associations, and also scheduled information sessions that are currently planned to be both in-person and virtual, health protocols pending. A cornerstone of the messaging will be about the project schedule and implementation process, including costs and funding.

The compiled notes from public discussion and questions, as well as received surveys, will form an appendix in the project report and business case. This documentation will be delivered to Council within the second quarter of 2022.

Concurrent to this activity, and acknowledging the public engagement results, the final plan will form the foundation of the future project. The business case will describe the costs and options

so that Council and the public have a higher degree of confidence in the decisions to be made over the coming years.

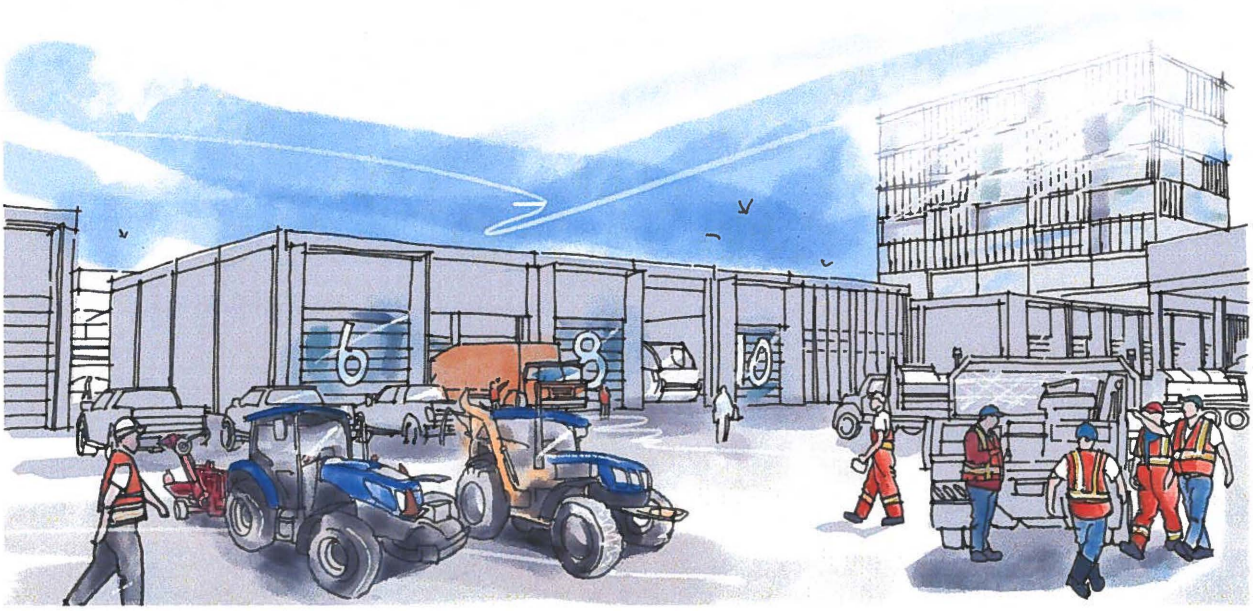


Figure 4 – Conceptual sketch; view to Fleet building

PRELIMINARY PROJECT COST ESTIMATE

Given the magnitude of the project and significant financial commitment that will be required, considerable work has been undertaken to develop sound preliminary project cost estimates. The District has obtained a Class D project cost estimate from Advicas Group Consultants and a peer review through James Bush and Associates. This work has developed a project cost range from $160.1 million to $188.4 million (as at Feb 2022). With the long timeframe in the schedule for this project, an escalation factor has also been provided to Spring 2026. Based on high level estimates for inflation over the next four years, it is anticipated that total costs could increase to a range of $183.1 Million to $211.8 million.

These estimates represent the base project that includes only District of Saanich's direct operational needs. There are also outstanding decisions that could impact the estimates including how the Garden Waste Dropoff service is delivered and how parking needs are managed.

The Auditor General for Local Government developed a tool for municipalities on capital project planning in 2014 - "Oversight of Capital Project Planning and Procurement". One of the questions this tool answers is "How accurate does a project budget need to be? The answer follows:

"As the project becomes better defined, budget estimates can become increasingly accurate. The greater the accuracy of the project budget, the greater the opportunity for your local

government to manage the project within your fiscal limits. Project budgets generally cover the costs of planning, design, engineering, construction and commissioning. **Until a project is actually constructed, a cost estimate always represents the best judgment available at the time**. Quantity surveyors, professional engineers, design consultants and the development of detailed specifications can all help develop a "hard" project budget. In addition, the use of contingency amounts can minimize the potential for cost overruns, if they are managed properly."

This information is provided to clarify that over the course of defining this project, the cost estimates will change. However, it is important to provide a sense of the financial scale of the project at this time so that informed discussions can take place with Council and the public.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The following is the estimated outline of activities and time to realize the redevelopment project.

Public engagement	March 1, 2022 to April 1, 2022
Business case documentation completed and presented to Council	April 25, 2022
Pending business case approval; design development and Electoral Approval Process	2022 to 2023
Pending Electoral Approval Process; Development permit submission, construction documentation, tender	2024 to 2026
Construction; includes multi-phase site strategy	2026 to 2029
Phased move-in and fully operational	Mid-2028 to mid-2029

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council receive as information and endorse the public engagement process as presented.
2. That Council provide alternate direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Currently, the funding necessary to cover project development costs up to and including the business case is in place. The draft 2022 Financial Plan includes a funding provision for the next phase of work in the latter half of 2022 should Council support the project proceeding based on the business case to be presented in April. The five year capital budget also incorporates the high level projected capital costs based on the proposed implementation schedule. These numbers will be refined each year as the project moves from its current Class D estimate through to a higher level of cost certainty and ultimately the approved costs established through the Alternative Approval Process (AAP) required for the level of borrowing needed to complete the project.

While the funding strategy for the project incorporates a combination of reserve funds and borrowing, precise details of the strategy cannot be determined until decisions have been made with respect to potential partnerships on the site. The strategy will also be impacted by the

decisions Council makes over the next four years with respect to transfers to the Facilities Repair and Replacement Reserve Fund and use of borrowing for other purposes.

The AAP will allow the residents of Saanich to indicate if the impact on taxation to complete this project is supportable. The engagement proposed for Spring 2022 will start the process of informing the public about the needs for and benefits of this project. Additional engagement will take place during the AAP to ensure a well-informed decision is made.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This work fulfills Council's 2021–2025 Strategic Plan goals under the theme Healthy Community: "F4 Sustain community infrastructure" to "b. Develop and implement a major Facilities Master Plan."

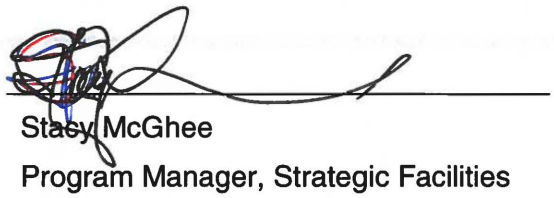
Noted alignments with Strategic Plan goals:

- community well-being
- affordable housing, land use and infrastructure management
- organizational excellence
- economic diversification
- climate action and environmental leadership

CONCLUSION

The redevelopment of the Saanich Operations Centre reflects the District's commitment to providing critical services to residents. Given the demonstrated need, as well as the opportunities to advance District goals, improve services and mitigate risk, Council's acceptance of the information in this report and recognition of the importance and opportunity to engage District residents can be seen as a first milestone reached for the project. This redevelopment project will set the District on a much firmer course to build a future of resilient and robust service delivery that is sustainable and that residents of the District can rely on with increased confidence for many decades to come.

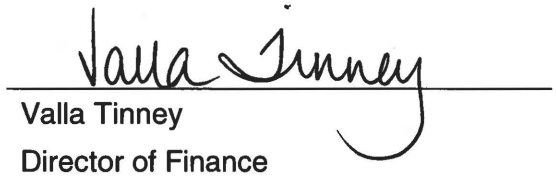
Prepared by



Stacy McGhee

Program Manager, Strategic Facilities Planning

Reviewed by



Valla Tinney

Director of Finance

Approved by

Suzanne Samborski

Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Services

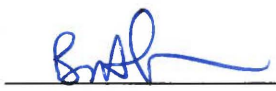
Approved by

Harley Machielse

Director of Engineering

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS

I endorse the recommendation from the Directors of Engineering and Parks, Recreation & Community Services.



Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer