

Bowker Creek flows through an urban watershed from its headwaters at the University of Victoria, along Shelbourne Street in Saanich, past Jubilee Hospital in Victoria, to the ocean at Oak Bay.

Hillside Centre - Realizing Rainwater Rewards



Permeable Possibilities

Low impact development (LID) mimics the natural water cycle by slowing, filtering and cleaning rainwater before it flows into pipes and waterways such as Bowker Creek. LID features increase permeability - the ability of rainwater to absorb into the ground and filter into waterways. The renewal of Hillside Centre in 2014 introduced several LID features that will help improve the health of Bowker Creek, as illustrated below.

Managing Rainwater at Home

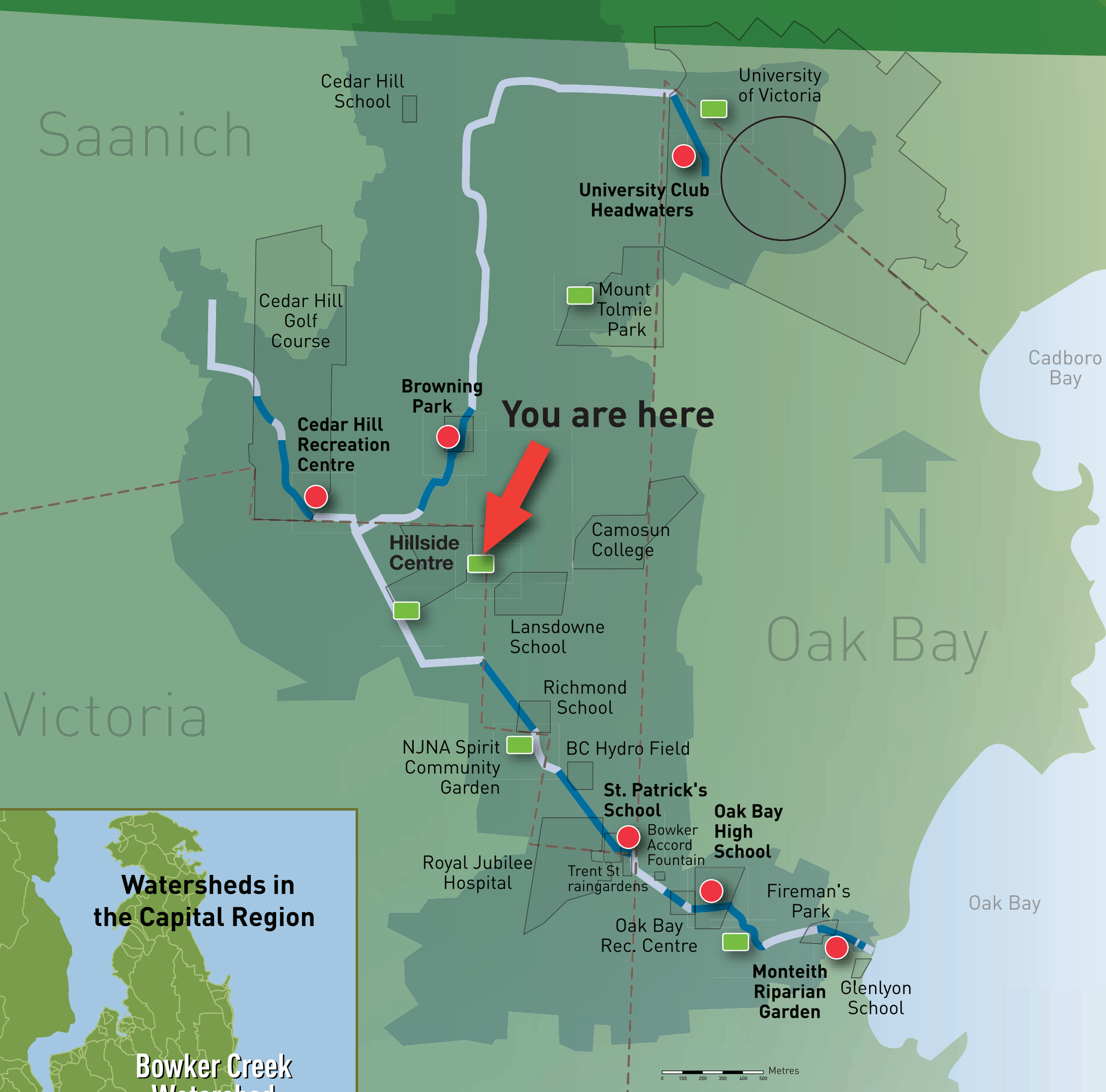
LID features can also be used around the home to harvest rainwater for irrigation and to ensure clean water flows into pipes and waterways.

What is the BCI?

The Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI) is a partnership among the Capital Regional District, the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, the District of Oak Bay, institutions, businesses and community groups. To restore Bowker Creek, the BCI is working to reduce pollution and flooding, connect greenways and restore natural areas in the watershed.

The watershed management goals of the BCI are:

- 1 Take responsibility for actions that affect the watershed
- 2 Manage creek flows effectively
- 3 Improve and expand public areas, natural areas, and biodiversity in the watershed; and
- 4 Achieve and maintain acceptable water quality in the watershed



open creek	
piped creek	
watershed	
view point / creek access	
information sign	
municipal boundary	
landmark site	

Use this map to plan a tour of the Bowker Creek Watershed.

Bowker Creek Watershed

- 1028 hectares in area
- Home to approximately 30,000 people
- 56% of the watershed is impervious
- Bowker Creek is 9.4 kilometers long, with a 1.4 km tributary at Cedar Hill Park
- 60% of the original creek is piped underground

A watershed is the land that drains surface and groundwater to a common waterway such as a creek, lake or ocean. In an urban watershed, hard surfaces such as buildings, roads and parking lots block water from soaking into the soil. When it rains, the water collects pollutants as it quickly flows into underground pipes and then into creeks. This can cause flooding, streambank erosion, water pollution and habitat loss.

Trees and other plants uptake and evaporate rainwater, and provide critical habitat and shade on hot days.

Permeable paving, used instead of concrete or asphalt, slows rainwater run-off and promotes infiltration.

Rain gardens are shallow depressions that use soil and plants to naturally slow, filter and clean rainwater.

Rain barrels, cisterns and holding tanks collect rainwater that can be used for irrigation.

Oil and grit separators capture and store pollutants from the parking lot, preventing them from entering waterways.

Rainfall enters a large **rock-filled cistern** via **perforated pipes**. During larger storm events, runoff that cannot be absorbed is directed to the municipal system.

Tree wells and **structural soils** are large planting systems that naturally slow, filter and clean rainwater.

Curb cuts allow rainwater to flow off parking areas into rain gardens and bioswales.

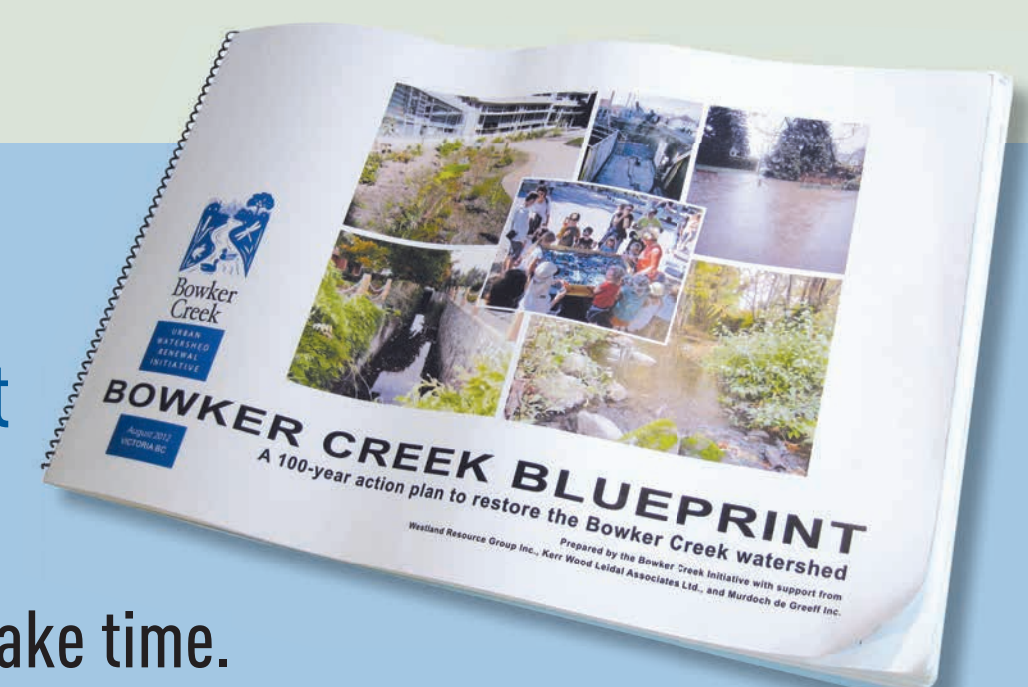
The City of Victoria stormwater utility program offers financial incentives or rewards for those who manage rainwater sustainably. Go to www.victoria.ca/stormwater for more information.

There is another information sign at the Doncaster parkette (across Hillside Centre parking lot) describing Bowker Creek underground.

The Bowker Creek Blueprint

Improving the watershed will take time. The Blueprint is the 100-year action plan that guides this work.

Find out more about Bowker Creek at: bowkercreekinitiative.ca



HILLSIDE

