

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.

Bowker Creek Underground



Bowker Creek
URBAN WATERSHED RENEWAL



open creek	
pipied 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

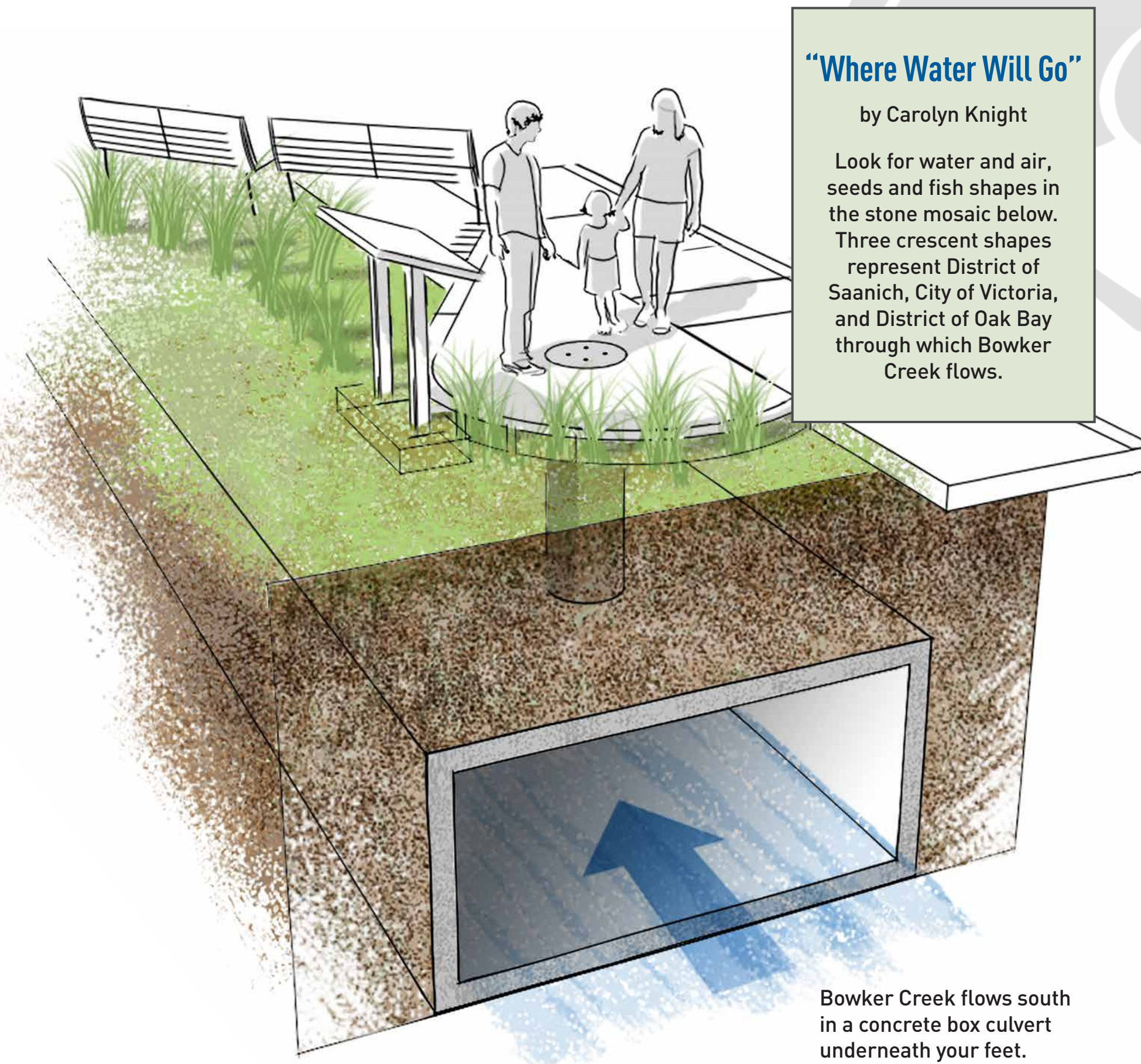
- 1028 hectares in area
- Home to approximately 30,000 people
- 56% of the watershed is impervious
- Bowker Creek is 9.4 kilometers long, with a 1.4 km tributary at Cedar Hill Park
- 60% of the original creek is piped underground

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.

Bowker Creek is under your feet

Six feet below, Bowker Creek is flowing in a concrete box culvert built in 1964 to collect stormwater and send it quickly on its way downstream to the ocean at Oak Bay. If you listen carefully, you might be able to hear the creek at the grate cover behind you. Stormwater pipes from the surrounding neighbourhoods and roads lead to the box culvert, carrying oil and pollution, silt and grit from roads into the creek.

If you walk around the corner to Hillside Avenue, you will see two long rain gardens completed during the redevelopment of Hillside Centre in 2014. Rain gardens allow rainwater to soak into the ground rather than flowing quickly into pipes. The plants and soil microbes in rain gardens also break down roadway pollutants. This approach to stormwater management is one way of achieving the goals of watershed management.



"Where Water Will Go"
by Carolyn Knight
Look for water and air, seeds and fish shapes in the stone mosaic below. Three crescent shapes represent District of Saanich, City of Victoria, and District of Oak Bay through which Bowker Creek flows.

Bowker Creek flows south in a concrete box culvert underneath your feet.

What is the BCI?

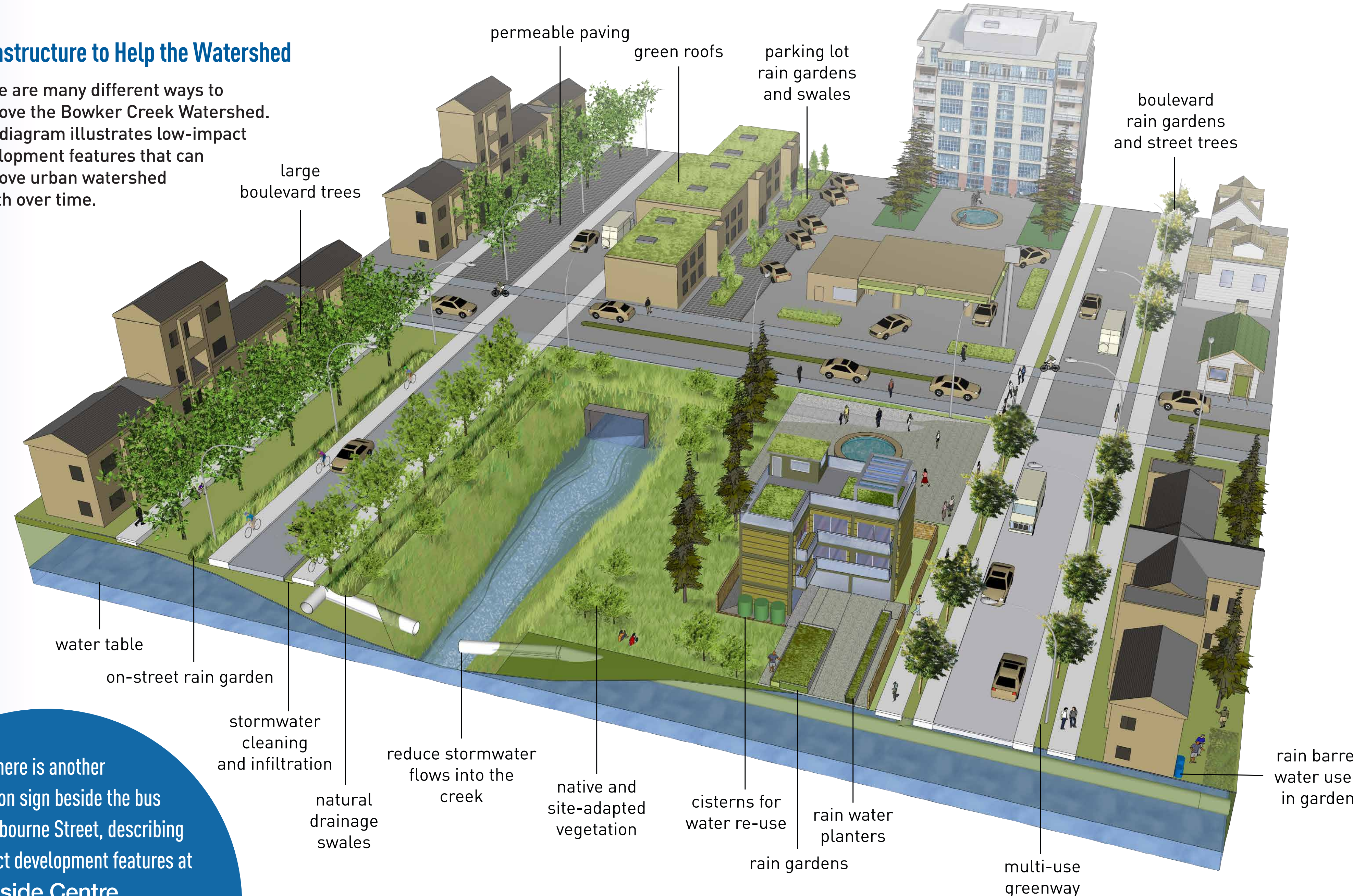
The Bowker Creek Initiative (BCI) is a partnership among the Capital Regional District, the District of Saanich, the City of Victoria, the District of Oak Bay, institutions, businesses and community groups. To restore Bowker Creek, the BCI is working to reduce pollution and flooding, connect greenways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

The watershed management goals of the BCI are:

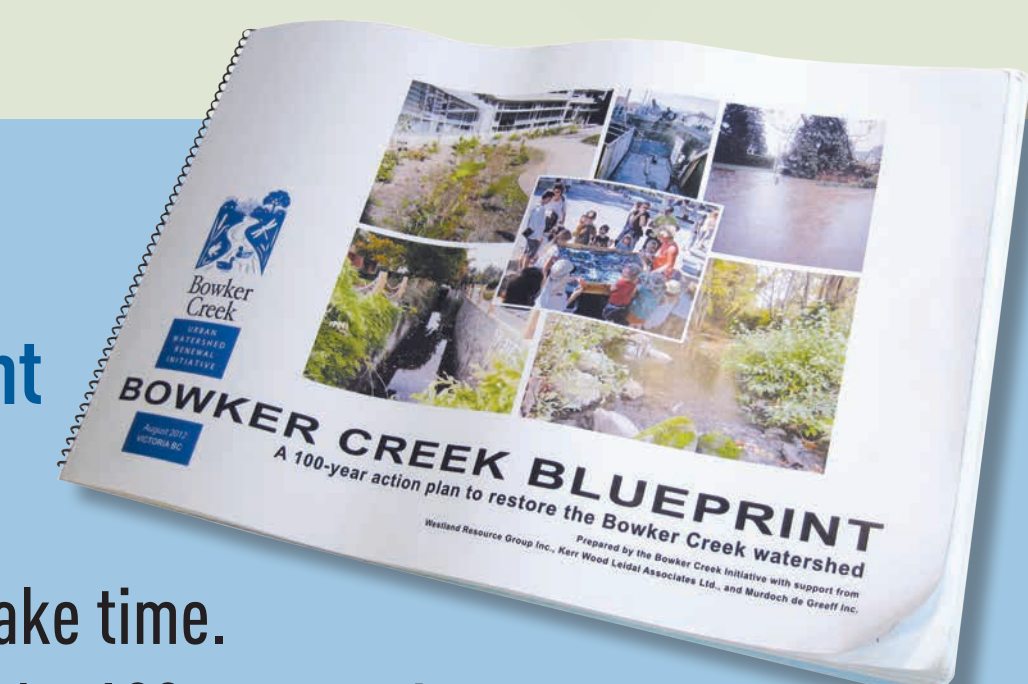
- 1 Take responsibility for actions that affect the watershed
- 2 Manage creek flows effectively
- 3 Improve and expand public areas, natural areas, and biodiversity in the watershed; and
- 4 Achieve and maintain acceptable water quality in the watershed

Infrastructure to Help the Watershed

There are many different ways to improve the Bowker Creek Watershed. This diagram illustrates low-impact development features that can improve urban watershed health over time.



There is another information sign beside the bus stop on Shelbourne Street, describing the low-impact development features at Hillside Centre.



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

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

HILLSIDE

