

**Friends of Bowker
Creek**

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July 22, 2012

Mayor and Council
District of Oak Bay
2167 Oak Bay Avenue
Victoria, BC, V8R 1G2

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Bowker Creek Blueprint – July 23, 2012 Resolutions for Adoption

The *Friends of Bowker Creek* fully supports the *Bowker Creek Blueprint* and urges Council to adopt and implement the plan. Developed using a “Team” approach by the *Bowker Creek Initiative* (BCI), the *Blueprint* provides the municipalities of Oak Bay, Saanich and Victoria as well as 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 short to long term.

The *Blueprint* incorporates substantial input from watershed residents, community partners and municipal staff, and reflects the experience gained since Council endorsed the *Bowker Creek Watershed Management Plan* in 2003. The *Blueprint* builds on existing resource materials and studies and outlines a bold and realistic plan of action.

We acknowledge that the *Blueprint* will be implemented over the long term in recognition that change can be slow in the urban environment. Having an Action Plan in place will ensure that positive changes can happen incrementally, and that opportunities for major improvements can be realized as they arise. The recent and successful \$738,000 federal gas tax grant for Bowker Creek and the Oak Bay High School redevelopment is an excellent example of capitalizing on these opportunities.

Some further opportunities for Oak Bay that are provided by the *Blueprint* include:

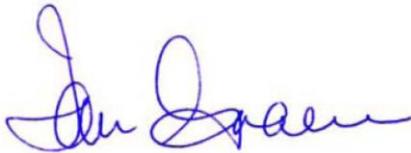
- Moving forward on the 10 key short-term actions listed in the *Blueprint* (p 21);
- Integrating the Bowker Creek watershed goals and actions into municipal plans and policies particularly during the proposed update of the District’s *Official Community Plan*;
- Providing continued guidance during the Oak Bay High School redevelopment, providing for an outdoor classroom and a natural amenity for generations to come.
- Consider designating jointly - with Saanich and Victoria - a Bowker Creek Watershed Development Permit Area using recent environmental provisions in section 919.1 of the *Local Government Act*;
- Work with adjacent municipalities to acquire the necessary agreements, properties and connections to align and construct the next portions of the Bowker Creek regional greenway to eventually link Oak Bay to the CRD’s regional trail network;

- Recognize synergies with community health and wellness programs delivered through the Oak Bay Community Recreation Centre;
- Explore ways to restore the riparian area along the Oak Bay Recreation Centre property and consider higher value community use of the 15 parking stalls immediately adjacent to the stream bank.
- Work with institutional partners to promote the *Blueprint* and “watershed thinking” during future redevelopment at the University of Victoria and Oak Bay Lodge property.

The *Blueprint* and the work of the BCI are receiving wide recognition across the province and were the focus of the *Convening for Action On Vancouver Island (CAVI) Forum* in February 2010. The *Blueprint* was also featured at the Vancouver Island State of the Island Economic Summit last fall and is consistent with the Province’s *Living Water Smart Plan*.

In closing, we appreciate the Oak Bay Council’s continued commitment to the *Bowker Creek Initiative* and urge you to adopt and implement the *Blueprint*. Implementing the *Blueprint* in partnership with other municipalities, organizations and community interests will have positive downstream impacts on Oak Bay residents, and will help to grow community spirit and build healthy, sustainable communities.

Yours truly,



FRIENDS OF BOWKER CREEK SOCIETY

Ian Graeme
Director

cc: David Marshall, Director of Engineering Services, District of Oak Bay
Ray Herman, Director, Parks and Recreation
Chris Hyde-Lay, Manager, Parks Services
Tom Croft, President, Community Association of Oak Bay
Jody Watson, Chair, Bowker Creek Initiative Steering Committee
Natalie Bandringa, Bowker Creek Initiative Coordinator