



Ed Robertson, assistant director of public works stands on the bridge at Bowker Creek. The city will design a “rain garden” here – basically a natural way of handling and treating storm water.

Sharon Tiffin/News staff

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Green tech scrubs storm water

By Keith Vass - Victoria News

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The city is quietly eyeing a new way to clean the rainwater that falls on Victoria’s streets before it reaches the ocean.

With \$10,000 in provincial funding, Victoria’s public works department is hiring a consultant to design the city’s first rain garden – a natural filtration system using plants and different soil types to screen out pollutants.

“What a rain garden tries to do is to on-site, naturally reintroduce (rainfall) back into the groundwater,” said Ed Robertson, assistant director of public works.

“You’re trying to clean naturally road runoff. There’s oils and stuff that accumulates, so you’re naturally cleaning that out. And you’re also trying to direct the rainwater flow into the groundwater.”

Rain gardens have been successful in other West Coast cities, including Vancouver, Portland and

Seattle, Robertson said. So his department wanted to seize an opportunity to trial the technology here.

After the Capital Regional District tore up Trent Street, a small nub of a road that borders Bowker Creek, to build a new pumping station, the city asked the CRD to hold off on simply repaving the street.

Having the opportunity to trial a rain garden close to Bowker Creek was a bonus, Robertson said.

“We’re part of the Bowker Creek initiative and trying to have the pipes that discharge into Bowker Creek discharging as clean a water as possible. So if we can clean what’s going (in) before it hits the creek, that’s a big benefit.”

The design work won’t happen until later this year, after a consultant is selected through an open tender process. The rain garden could be built as early as next spring.

“Assuming we find that it’s something we want to employ, we’ll start looking at projects after that to see how could we employ it (elsewhere in the city),” said Robertson.

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