

Royal Jubilee worksite aims for greener neighbourhood impact

JOANNE HATHERLY
Times Colonist

Neighbours of the new patient-care tower under construction at the Royal Jubilee Hospital are welcoming a new building practice that sees industrial trucks "wiping their boots" before rolling onto the streets.

Trucks at the Richmond Road and Bay Street site drive through a motion-sensitive wheel-washing station before leaving the excavated building site in an effort to prevent dust and grime being tracked along city streets. The wash-down is in keeping with the project's LEED — Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design — gold standard building practices.

"This is an extremely environmentally sensitive area," said David Leadbetter, Vancouver Island Health Authority's project director at the site. "Bowker Creek is on one side, a residential area on the other, and then we have the hospital where we have to protect air quality for the obvious reasons. If the air is full of dust, it could create problems for some patients."

Construction on the 500-bed tower began on July 30, and last week the first concrete pilings were poured. The \$348-million project is expected to be finished in 2010.

Prior to the groundbreaking, officials from VIHA and ISL Health, the private firm that has partnered with VIHA to build the new tower, met over a period of 18 months with members of the North Jubilee Hospital Neighbourhood Committee to discuss the impact of the construction.

With the wheel-washing in place, Katherynn Foster, one of the committee members, describes the mood among neighbours as "hesitantly optimistic."

Of key concern is Bowker

Creek, which is just 280 metres east of the building site. Over the past four years, the creek, which originates near the University of Victoria and winds through Saanich and Oak Bay into the ocean, has undergone extensive rehabilitation to remove contaminants, restore vegetation and control runoff.

Soren Henrich of the Bowker Creek Initiative calls the new construction "very encouraging" for the creek and surrounding area.

The tire-washing system works by spraying the wheels of trucks as they drive slowly through a system of water sprayers. The debris-laden water drains into a collection tank under the spray site that removes the heavier sediments through a conveyor.

The system uses an organic shellfish-based material to separate debris from the water, which then filters through three 19,000-litre holding tanks. The system cycles about 75,000 litres of water to clean about 120 trucks a day.

Despite the shellfish origins of the cleaner, the system is odourless.

The system flushes a couple of thousand of litres of water once a week, with some water going into the stormwater system and a remainder into crushed rock at the site.

The sediments from the system are pumped out regularly and shipped to a sod farm, where it is used as fertilizer.

The sprayers and filtration system are rented. The added cost to the \$348.6-million project is about \$100,000, including site preparation.

"It's not an expensive thing to do," Leadbetter says.

ISL Health, the firm building the new facilities, has also contracted street cleaners to sweep Richmond Road four times a day to lessen the effect on the neighbourhood.

jhatherly@tc.canwest.com



DEBRA BRASH, TIMES COLONIST
Trucks going out of the construction site at Royal Jubilee Hospital are using a wheel-washing device that is designed to reduce the amount of dirt carried onto city streets and into the air. It's part of an overall plan to cut the impact of construction on the neighbourhood.