



# City Council Agenda Bill

# 20299

Bill Number

**Subject:** Project update: Downtown Improvement Gardens (DIG)

**Summary Statement:** The Downtown Improvement Gardens project design has been accepted by the Department of Ecology (ECY) and is ready to be put out to bid. The project will install 36 bioretention facilities (raingardens) in the eastern portion of the Central Business District to provide stormwater treatment to approximately 80 urban acres. Pedestrian improvements include reducing the pedestrian crossing at Ellis and Champion Streets from 170' to 30'. The project is designed to remove impervious surfaces, decrease heat islands and increase vegetative cover while resulting in a net gain of two parking spaces. Public engagement included outreach to adjacent business and property owners through printed materials and multiple meetings to provide information and solicit public input.

**Previous Council Action:** February 25, 2013 Ecology Grant Update

**Fiscal Impact:** 2012 ECY Grant Total: \$450,000  
City of Bellingham Stormwater Fund match: \$150,000  
City of Bellingham Street Fund: \$100,000

**Funding Source:** See above

**Attachments:** Locations Map  
DIG Frequently Asked Questions  
DIG Brochure

Meeting Activity	Meeting Date	Staff Recommendation	Presented By	Time
Committee Briefing Information Only	10-Feb-2014	Information Only	Ted Carlson, PW Director	0:10

**Council Committee:**

**Agenda Bill Contact:**

Freeman Anthony, Project Engineer  
778-7924

Reviewed By	Initials	Date
Ted Carlson, PW Director	<i>TC</i>	1/20/14

**Committee Actions:**

**Public Works / Public Safety**

Terry Bornemann, Chair  
Michael Lilliquist; Jack Weiss

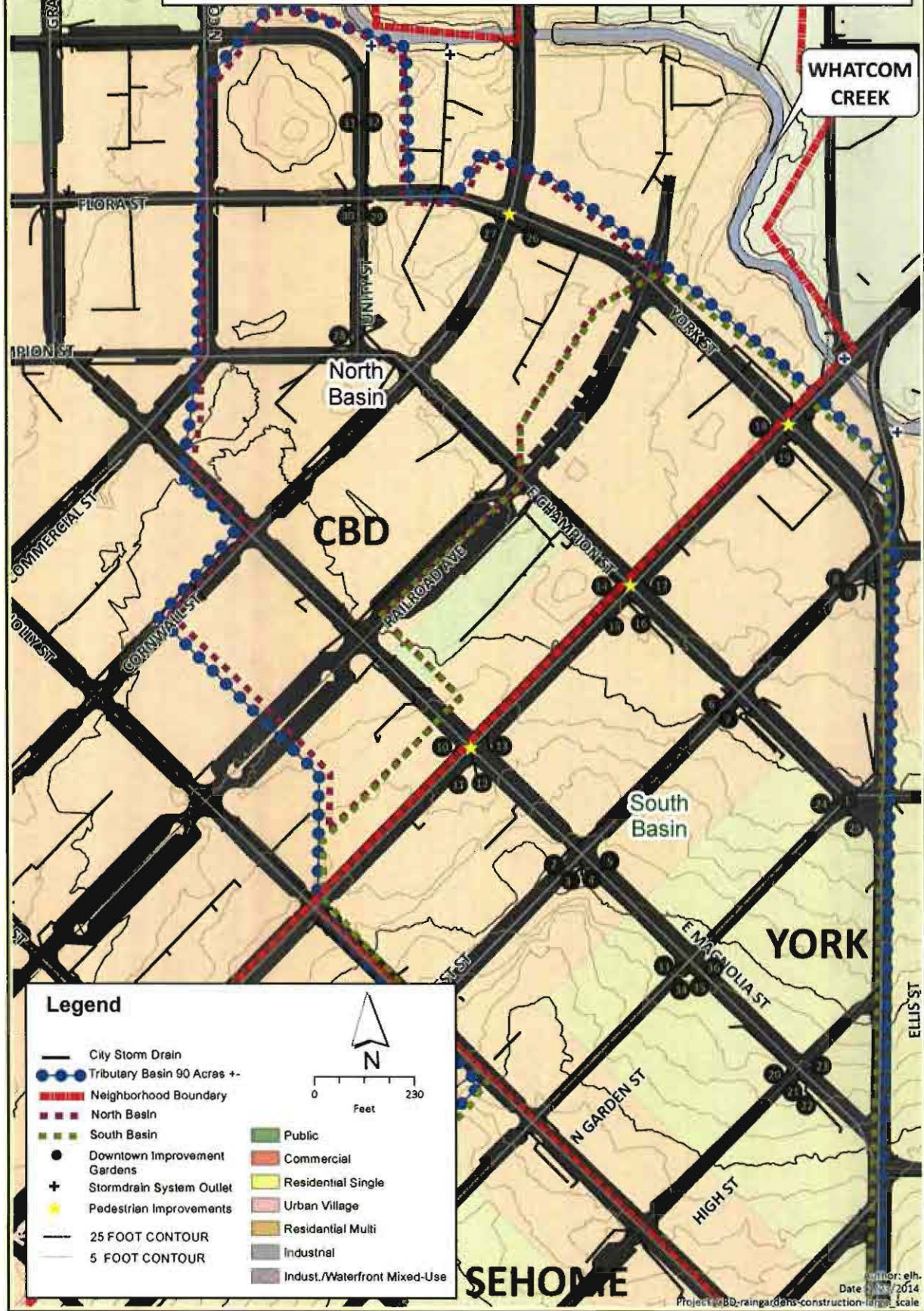
Reviewed By	Initials	Date
Legal Mayor	MTS KL	1/27/14 1-28-14

**Council Action:**

# City of Bellingham

## EV-0105 CBD Bioretention Treatment Project

### Final Locations



**Legend**

- City Storm Drain
- Tributary Basin 90 Acres +-
- ▬ Neighborhood Boundary
- North Basin
- South Basin
- Downtown Improvement Gardens
- + Stormdrain System Outlet
- Pedestrian Improvements
- 25 FOOT CONTOUR
- 5 FOOT CONTOUR
- Public
- Commercial
- Residential Single
- Urban Village
- Residential Multi
- Industrial
- Indust./Waterfront Mixed-Use

# DIG

## Downtown Improvement Gardens

### Frequently Asked Questions



Find out if your business can be a DIG Steward.

#### **What is the DIG program and why is it important?**

The Downtown Improvement Gardens (DIG) program aims to improve Whatcom Creek. Installing 36 raingardens in strategic locations downtown will help treat and infiltrate stormwater from over 80 urban acres. DIG also creates attractive urban green spaces in our downtown, enhances pedestrian and bicycle safety, and helps protect sewer ratepayers' investments in the piped collection system.

#### **Who maintains and cares for DIG?**

To really keep the raingardens in good shape, DIG Stewards will need to provide oversight and care, especially during establishment. The City is responsible for looking after these raingardens as an important part of the city's stormwater collection system. City Stormwater Maintenance crews will visit DIG sites periodically, every 6-12 months, to make sure they function properly.

#### **What is the role of a DIG Steward?**

Becoming a DIG Steward is voluntary. As a DIG Steward, you will be partnering with the City to help with simple activities; picking up trash and debris, making sure curb openings and overflow drains are unobstructed and pulling out invasive weeds. This will help keep dirty stormwater and pollutants out of our streams while maintaining attractive streetscapes for our community. Anytime you suspect your DIG isn't functioning properly, you can call the City Stormwater crews.

#### **Do I need to attend a training workshop?**

The City recommends that you attend a training workshop for more information on how to be the best DIG Steward by making sure your DIG looks and functions properly. Training dates will be provided on the City webpage.

#### **How much time will it take me?**

As a DIG Steward, you can spend as much time as you want caring for your raingarden. We know you're busy and appreciate any time you can provide. Important times to check on your DIG are before and after a storm event when heavy rains can cause trash and debris to collect around curb openings and drains, preventing stormwater from entering the raingarden. Removing any trash, debris, and leaves from curb openings and overflow drains ensures your raingarden will function properly. A periodic check for invasive weeds improves both performance and appearance.

#### **Can I add plants, flowers, or vegetables to my DIG?**

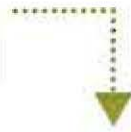
Adding colorful plants and flowers to your raingarden may seem attractive, but they can disrupt the raingarden's function in managing stormwater. The City carefully selects the plants and soil that work best for stormwater management. Any changes or plant additions to your raingarden may disrupt this function and crowd out desired plants. If you think more plants are needed, check with the City Stormwater crews.

To learn more - [www.cob.org](http://www.cob.org) and search DIG

This project is funded by the  
Washington State Department of Ecology.



# DIG



- ✓ Good for **Downtown**
- ✓ Good for the **Creek**
- ✓ Good for **Business**

- Improves downtown's sense of place through enhanced vegetation
- Improves water quality of Whatcom Creek
- Adds pedestrian safety with added green islands

Find out if your business can be a DIG Steward.



Find out if your business can be a DIG Steward.

Contact:



360 647-7093

[www.sustainableconnections.org](http://www.sustainableconnections.org)

OR



360 527-8710

[www.downtownbellingham.com](http://www.downtownbellingham.com)



To learn more visit

[www.cob.org](http://www.cob.org) and search for DIG

or contact

Project Manager

Freeman Anthony, P.E.

[fanthony@cob.org](mailto:fanthony@cob.org)

360 778-7925

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CITY OF BELLINGHAM  Low Impact Development



# DIG

## Downtown Improvement Gardens



600 local businesses taking action for a healthy community.



## The DIG Program

To help improve the water quality in Whatcom Creek, the City of Bellingham received a grant from the Department of Ecology. Installing 36 raingardens in strategic locations downtown will help treat and infiltrate stormwater from over 80 acres in our central business district.

At the same time, this project will improve downtown by bringing more landscaping and green space to our urban center.

Now that is something to DIG!



## Piping Pollution

Right now, the stormwater runoff from 80 downtown acres picks up oil, grease, heavy metals, sediments and bacteria from the paved surfaces and carries it



directly to Whatcom Creek. The creek is now an impaired urban stream. Temperatures are too hot and fecal coliform is too high. The City of Bellingham has developed a plan to help address this issue: raingardens!

## A Green Solution

Raingardens are gardens designed to:

- Filter pollutants from stormwater as close to their source as possible
- Reduce runoff from streets and infiltrate stormwater into the soil and ground
- Improve water quality to nearby streams
- Beautify neighborhoods with minimal maintenance once the plants are established
- Reduce stormwater and sewer infrastructure costs

**In a recent downtown planning survey, green space downtown was the second highest ranked priority for community resources.**



## DIG Stewards

To participate in DIG, an adjacent business will be asked to become a DIG Steward and provide oversight and maintenance; keeping trash out and plants alive. DIG Stewards will improve their business curb appeal and water quality in the creek. It's a win-win! The city maintenance staff will complete thorough maintenance and review annually, leaving the technical work to the professionals.

It's that easy.

**Find out if your business can be a DIG Steward.**

