

City of Tacoma 2024 Stewardship Opportunities Report

Q.85a Attach a list of stewardship opportunities

The City of Tacoma has a variety of programs and opportunities for stewardship focused on the prevention of stormwater pollution and maintaining the health of Tacoma's open spaces and aquatic ecosystems. During the 2024 reporting year, the City provided the stewardship opportunities described below.

Adopt-a-Storm Drain Program [Adopt-a-drain.org](https://adopt-a-drain.org)

The Adopt-a-Storm Drain (AAD) program provides a free, year-round stewardship opportunity for residents to adopt storm drains in their neighborhood and commit to regularly removing leaves, trash, and debris to prevent pollution and flooding. Participants use a web application to locate and adopt storm drains in their area. They also track the amount and type of debris collected using the online tool and are directed to contact the TacomaFirst 311 hotline if they observe any illicit discharges, supporting the City's source control efforts. Increased awareness of catch basin conditions and what is entering the storm drain system serves as a bridge to educating participants about other pollution prevention behaviors, such as proper yard care practices that protect water quality, responsible car washing, pet waste management, and the safe use and disposal of household chemicals and cleaners. In 2024 Tacoma coordinated with several Western Washington jurisdictions to run a Spanish language campaign including poster creation and distribution, Spanish social media toolkit, TV commercials and radio ads. All materials were created and distributed using the 2023 AAD Spanish Speaking Focus Group input.

2024 Impact:

- 33 new adopters
- 46 new drains adopted
- 196 total participants
- 389 drains adopted
- Over 1,227 pounds of debris collected

Open Space Habitat Restoration

The City owns and stewards approximately 500 acres of open space properties to promote and increase healthy tree canopy, ecosystem function, and biodiversity. The City holds a lead role in the Green Tacoma Partnership that collaborates with Washington Conservation Corp Crews, Parks Tacoma, Pierce Conservation District and others to educate the public while encouraging and recruiting stewards and volunteers to participate in habitat restoration activities by removing invasives and replanting with native vegetation. There are active volunteer stewardship groups at multiple City-owned properties including: Julia's Gulch, Wapato Hills, Fern Hill, Ash Street, and Mason Gulch.

2024 Impact:

- 6 volunteer work parties

- 86 volunteers
- 258 hours of stewardship

Beginning in 2025, the City of Tacoma is partnering with Pierce Conservation District in order to grow the volunteer stewardship program, which will include training habitat stewards, onboarding more volunteer sites, and hosting regularly scheduled volunteer events in Tacoma's open spaces.

Green Tacoma Day

Green Tacoma Day is an annual community stewardship event organized by the City of Tacoma to engage residents in restoring urban natural areas that support watershed health. Held at multiple sites across the city, the event brings together community volunteers to plant trees and native vegetation, remove invasive species, and improve habitat. These efforts help reduce stormwater runoff, filter pollutants, and protect the ecological health of local streams and Puget Sound. Green Tacoma Day provides residents with hands-on opportunities to care for the environment while contributing to long-term improvements in urban green space and water quality.

2024 participating organizations included: Pierce Conservation District, Tacoma Tree Foundation, Washington Conservation Corps, Metro Parks Tacoma, Port of Tacoma, Tahoma Bird Alliance, University of Washington Tacoma, Washington State University, Clover Park Technical College, South End Neighborhood Council, and Pierce County Parks.

2024 Impact:

- 169 volunteers
- 493 volunteer hours
- 250 free trees distributed
- 666 trees/plants installed
- 1,550 sq ft of weeds removed
- 4,830 sq ft mulched

Depave Program

Tacoma staff work with Pierce Conservation District to coordinate Depave events, which involve removing hard surfaces like concrete and asphalt from public locations throughout the city. These projects aim to reduce impervious surfaces, improve stormwater infiltration, and increase green space. Residents nominate potential Depave sites, and if selected, the City provides trees, plants, TAGRO, and support for asphalt and concrete removal. Community members then work alongside the City and Pierce Conservation District to install the vegetation, gaining hands-on experience in green infrastructure and stormwater management. Residents also commit to maintaining the site long term, fostering a sense of ownership and environmental stewardship in their neighborhoods. In 2024, the Depave program helped community members remove over 3,800 square feet of pavement and compacted gravel, replacing it with trees and native plants. A total of 7 Projects were completed in 2024.

Pet Waste Program

The City of Tacoma's Pet Waste Station Program offers community members a hands-on opportunity to address pet waste issues in their neighborhoods. Residents identify areas where pet waste is a concern and request a station to support cleaner, healthier public spaces. If approved, the City installs a pet waste station, provides an educational sign, and supplies waste bags at no cost to the resident. In return, the sponsor commits to maintaining the station by emptying the waste basket and refilling bags using City-provided supplies. This program fosters long-term community stewardship by empowering residents to actively reduce stormwater pollution from pet waste and protect local waterways.

Make A Splash Grant Program

The City of Tacoma partners with Pierce Conservation District to administer the Make a Splash grant program, which offers up to \$4,000 in reimbursement funding for community-led projects that promote stormwater education, surface water protection, and habitat restoration. This program directly supports public stewardship by empowering residents, schools, and community organizations to lead on-the-ground projects that improve watershed health and engage others in pollution prevention practices.

Grant applications are accepted each fall and awarded in January. Funded projects must include a clear stormwater pollution prevention message or demonstrate stormwater benefits. All proposals must align with at least one program goal: public education, surface water protection, or habitat restoration and tree planting.

In 2024, five projects were funded through the program, and contributed to increased community involvement in watershed protection and long-term stewardship of the local environment.

Low Impact Development

The Stormwater Utility offers a [Low Impact Development Surface Water Rate Reduction](#) incentive. Property owners may qualify for a rate reduction if they choose to install permanent low impact development or green stormwater features beyond permit requirements for new and redevelopment projects. Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 12.08D.250 outlines the program requirements. To qualify for the program, the LID feature must manage a significant portion of the runoff from a hard surface like a roof or driveway. The LID feature must be designed per the Stormwater Management Manual standards, inspected by the City, and property owner must submit an annual maintenance report to verify it continues to function properly.

Catch Basin Marking Program

Tacoma engages volunteers in the Catch Basin Marking Program to raise awareness about stormwater pollution. Catch basin markers serve as a visible reminder that only rain should go down storm drains, helping to prevent pollutants from entering local waterways.

Storm drain marking events are conducted in collaboration with the Environmental Programs Group (EPG) and EnviroChallengers, engaging college, trade school, and high school students. These events take place through the Environmental Services High School Summer Training Program, Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) workforce training, Next Move Internships,

and other workforce development initiatives. Participants gain hands-on experience in environmental stewardship while learning about stormwater management and pollution prevention.

The City provides marking supplies, promotes the program, and ensures that marked catch basins are mapped in the City's GIS system.

Neighborhood Greening programs

The City of Tacoma provides and promotes stewardship opportunities that support watershed habitat improvement, urban forestry, and community-based environmental education. These programs encourage active participation from residents and businesses through tree planting, training, and volunteer events.

In partnership with the Tacoma Tree Foundation and Pierce Conservation District, Tacoma offers multiple urban forestry programs focused on increasing tree canopy including:

- **Grit City Trees:** Free street trees, planting supplies, and assistance.
- **Green Blocks:** Group-based neighborhood plantings with support.
- **Community Tree Program:** Equity-focused tree giveaways and education.
- **Urban Tree Sale:** Discounted trees with training for long-term care.
- **Tree Coupon Program:** Tree discounts at local nurseries.

2024 Impact:

- 747 trees distributed
- 292 households received trees
- 79% of trees planted in neighborhoods of focus
- 5.1 acres of mature canopy added
- 168 volunteers engaged
- 672 volunteer hours contributed
- 13 outreach events attended
- 51 residents trained

These efforts advance the city's goal to increase urban tree canopy from 20% to 30% by 2030 while building long-term community stewardship.

Tidy-up Tacoma Litter Clean-up Programs

Environmental Services Solid Waste Management sponsors both the Adopt-a-Spot and Neighborhood Litter Patrol programs, which provide residents with opportunities to take an active role in keeping public spaces clean and reducing stormwater pollution. Community volunteers apply to adopt a location or host a one-time litter clean-up event. By removing trash from streets, sidewalks, and parks, these programs help prevent litter from entering the stormwater system and impacting local waterways.

Volunteers are provided with free safety gear and litter collection supplies. Solid Waste Management also offers collection services for bagged trash following clean-up events. These programs support long-term community stewardship and promote shared responsibility for maintaining clean, healthy neighborhoods and watersheds.