



# Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs)

## What are they?

CARAs are land areas that recharge groundwater aquifers, which are a source of drinking water.

An aquifer is a geologic formation that readily transmits water to wells or springs. An aquifer is filled, or recharged, by water that filters through the ground. Aquifers can be unconfined, or closer to the surface and connected to the water table or confined deeper underground.

The Central Pierce County Aquifer is a sole-source aquifer. This means it supplies some of our drinking water, and there are no reasonable alternative sources if it becomes contaminated. There are also wells in Tacoma that draw from aquifers. Critical Areas regulations help protect our drinking water from contamination and manage a community resource.

## Why do we value them?



Aquifers provide drinking water, so the water that refills them must be clean and uncontaminated.



Aquifers provide water to streams and wetlands that are essential to local habitat and ecology.





## Central Pierce County Aquifer Area SSA

### How do we protect them?

- Identify and classify aquifer recharge areas.
- Reduce contamination risks by limiting high-risk activities and uses in aquifer recharge areas.

### What changes are needed?

- Consider changes that would clarify hazardous uses and expand protections throughout the aquifer area within Tacoma.

[Tacoma.gov/CriticalAreas](https://Tacoma.gov/CriticalAreas)



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