

## **South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD)- Tip Sheet**

### **What is the STGPD?**

- The STGPD is an overlay zone established in 1988 to protect the aquifer that supplies up to 50% of Tacoma’s water during peak summer months.
- It protects our groundwater from contamination by setting standards for hazardous substance storage, stormwater infiltration, spill prevention, and inspections, testing, and enforcement, while also limiting high-impact land uses (see [TMC 13.06.070.D](#)).

### **2025 Code Update Highlights (effective September 21, 2025)**

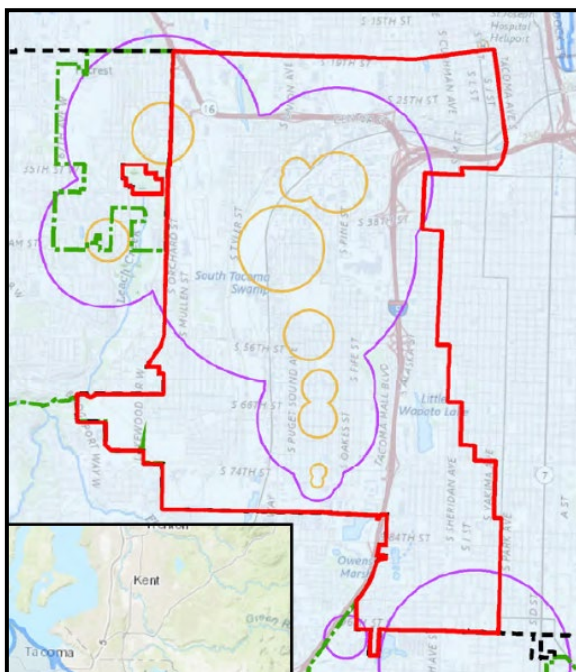
Area	What’s new/ changed
<b>Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STGPD moratorium: Uses temporarily prohibited under the moratorium are now permanently prohibited</li> <li>• High-impact uses table updated: Land uses are now clearly defined as permitted (P) or prohibited (N) in the 1-year and 10-year Time of Travel Zones (areas where contaminants can reach wells within that timeframe), as well as in the rest of the STGPD outside the Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPAs).</li> <li>• Stronger protections in the 1-year Time of Travel Zone, where groundwater is most vulnerable.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring &amp; enforcement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) and Planning &amp; Development Services (PDS) now have authority.</li> <li>• Stop-work/stop-use orders can be issued for serious or emergency violations.</li> </ul>
<b>Stormwater infiltration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The update establishes infiltration as the preferred stormwater management method in aquifer recharge areas, if it doesn’t pose a risk to groundwater quality.</li> <li>• Soil contamination assessments required before infiltration approval.</li> </ul>
<b>Landscaping, Tree Canopy &amp; Buffer Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New landscaping standards in the South Tacoma Industrial Districts and Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center (RGC)</li> <li>• Buffer standards were expanded beyond residential transitions to apply to more zoning district transitions, with clearer, more user-friendly guidance on the required buffer types.</li> </ul>
<b>Lot Coverage Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum lot coverage established for industrial districts</li> </ul>

**High Impact Use Table:** Uses shown in the table are new uses that will be impacted because of the recent code changes.

Restricted Uses and Activities	1-Year TOT Zone	10- Year TOT Zone	Remaining STGPD Area (outside WHPAs)
Agricultural Uses	N	N	P
Asphalt/ Concrete Plants	N	N	N
Boat Refinishing	N	P	P
Cemeteries and funeral facilities	N	P	P
Chemical storage facilities (not include fuel)	N	N	N
Chemical/ hazardous waste reprocessing & disposal	N	N	N
Drycleaner facilities	N	N	N
Fire training center	N	N	N
Greenhouse- commercial/ nursery- wholesale/retail	N	P	P
Infiltration of reclaimed water	N	N	N
Landfill-demolition (inert), municipal sanitary waste, solid waste, wood waste, hazardous waste	N	N	N
Machine shops, fabricating, metal processing with etchers and chemicals	N	P	P
Metal Recycling/auto wrecking facilities	N	N	N
Pulp and paper mill	N	N	N
Railroad yards- cargo transfer areas	N	P	P
Sewage lift stations	N	P	P
Solid waste processing/ handling/ transferring/ recycling	N	P	P
Storage tanks- above ground (hazardous substances)	N	P	P
Storage tanks- underground (hazardous substances)	N	N	N
Vehicle and boat repair/ service/ garages/ body shops	N	P	P

**P** = Permitted with STGPD permit; **N** = Not permitted. See full High-Impact Use Table for details.

**Map:** STGPD Wellhead Protection Areas & Time of Travel Zones ([Click to view the interactive map](#))



**Legend- WHPA Time of Travel (years)**

- 1-year TOT zone
- 10-year TOT zone
- South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District

**Are existing businesses at risk?**

*No. Current businesses may continue operating. New rules only affect future expansions or major changes, which may need additional review to protect the aquifer.*

For staff contact and resources, visit: [tacoma.gov/STGPD](http://tacoma.gov/STGPD)