

ENVIR^{OT}TALK



PREVENTING STORMWATER POLLUTION ONE BRUSH STROKE AT A TIME

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Fall 2023

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PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

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2022 Climate Action Plan Progress Report

Earlier this year, the Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability proudly released the 2022 Climate Action Plan Progress Report. The report highlighted progress made toward equitable actions for climate change and environmental justice goals. The Progress Report also showcases success stories that highlight the community's continued dedication to climate action and sustainability.

The first Tacoma Climate Leadership Cohort (TCLC) program recruited 12 frontline community members focused on taking climate action. Through trainings and demonstration projects ranging from launching a garden program at an elementary school to submitting written comments to City Council, the cohort is making a significant impact on the community. The success of the initial pilot program ensured that the TCLC continues in 2023.

Progress was made in reducing food waste and supporting local food rescue programs, constructing new bike infrastructure, and installing new electric vehicle charging stations in historically underserved areas. The City also engaged in tree planting initiatives to address low tree canopy in certain neighborhoods and promote environmental justice.

The goals in the Climate Action Plan could not be achieved without the dedication of our community partners. Recognizing the impact of climate change on air quality, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department distributed 540 filter fans to residents, prioritizing vulnerable communities. And the TPU Water Department set a positive example by replacing diesel-fueled vehicles with plug-in hybrid electric models, reducing emissions and improving air quality.

Overall, progress made in implementing the Climate Action Plan in 2022 showcases our commitment to sustainability, community engagement, and a better Tacoma for all. The City is proud of our success to date but recognizes that much work needs to be done if we hope to achieve our climate and community resiliency goals.

To read the full progress report and discover ways to get involved, visit cityoftacoma.org/climateactionplan or call (253) 591-5127.





In November 2022, the Tacoma City Council approved a new Solid Waste excise tax. Solid Waste Management Division Manager Lewis Griffith talks about how the tax will help fund expanded community cleanup efforts in the city.

What is the New Solid Waste Excise Tax?

It's a 6% tax on residential and commercial solid waste bills that is now in effect. It's being used to fund and expand community cleanup programs, like Tidy-Up Tacoma, that were previously funded with one-time money from the American Rescue Plan Act and other City funds. Solid Waste customers saw this new charge appear on their April or May bills listed as "local excise tax." A residential customer with a 60-gallon garbage container can expect \$3 per month added to their bill.

Why is This Excise Tax Needed?

The City Council routinely hears from residents that they want to see the City enhance services that support clean and healthy neighborhoods. With these funds, the City will be able to add more staff to proactively address issues around litter and graffiti in the community.

What Will this Excise Tax Do?

The excise tax is expected to generate approximately \$7 million in two years. These funds will expand, and support coordinated litter, debris, and graffiti cleanup services in the public right-of-way. It will also address trail maintenance, upkeep and replacement of public trash cans in business districts, and litter cleanup at and around encampment sites. The City will also work with community-based organizations to see how Tidy-Up Tacoma can better support their clean-up efforts.

How Can Residents Get Involved in Tidy-Up Tacoma in Their Neighborhood?

Tacoma residents play an important role in determining how and where Tidy-Up Tacoma services are implemented. Visit cityoftacoma.org/tidyup to take a brief survey for a chance to win a \$100 Visa gift card. The input received on this survey will be used with community reports from the TacomaFIRST 311 Customer Support Center to help identify where the Tidy-Up work crew should proactively increase scheduled clean-up activities in the coming year.

For specific issues in the public right-of-way, visit cityoftacoma.org/tacomafirst311 or call 311 in Tacoma city limits to alert the Tidy-Up work crew.

Help Prevent Stormwater Pollution Through Make a Splash Grants

When it rains, water that flows from our streets and sidewalks drains directly to the Puget Sound – untreated. That's why protecting our stormwater from pollution, litter, and other harmful debris is an important part of keeping our environment and marine life thriving and healthy.

Make a Splash Grants are reimbursable grants of up to \$4,000 for projects focused on preventing stormwater pollution. The 2023 - 2024 application process will open starting September 1 and run through September 30, 2023.

Past Make a Splash grant awardees have installed rain gardens or permeable pavement to improve stormwater quality. Others have hosted tree planting events aimed at reducing urban flooding and preventing pollutants from ending up in our local waterways.

Some Make a Splash application requirements include having a strong stormwater message, providing a stormwater benefit, having a focus on preventing stormwater pollution, and protecting or restoring clean surface water.

Grants are open to anyone considering a project within Tacoma city limits. To apply, visit cityoftacoma.org/makeasplash or call (253) 208-0536 for more information.



Green Recipe:

Coconut Chickpea Bowl

Welcome the cooler weather with a comforting plant-based dish that uses flavorful ingredients. Milah Williams, co-owner and chef at Greedy Vegan Catering Service was on Urban Green to demonstrate making a coconut chickpea bowl.

To watch this Urban Tabletop segment from episode 38, visit cityoftacoma.org/UrbanGreen.

Ingredients:

- 2 – 16 oz cans of chickpeas, drained
- ¼ tsp ground ginger
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1 cup Roma tomatoes, chopped
- ½ tsp chili flakes
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 3 tbsp grape seed oil
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander seeds
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 2 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp pink Himalayan salt
- 3 cups water
- ½ cup full-fat coconut milk
- 1 tsp lime juice
- 1 – 8 oz can tomato paste
- ¼ cup cilantro, chopped
- ¼ cup green onion, thinly slice
- 6 cups steamed rice

Directions:

Add chickpeas, ginger, garlic cloves, Roma tomatoes, chili, bell peppers, red onion, grapeseed oil, herbs, seasoning, and pink Himalayan salt into a medium-sized pot and combine. Add a lid and set to medium-high heat for 4 minutes.

Add water and full-fat coconut milk and stir until combined. Increase heat to high until the pot reaches a rolling boil.

Add lime juice and tomato paste to the pot and stir.

Reduce heat to low and cover the pot leaving about a half-inch gap for steam to escape.

Cook on low heat for 60 minutes. Remove from heat and serve over steamed rice and top with cilantro and green onion.

NEWS BRIEFS

Puget Sound Starts Here Month

September is Puget Sound Starts Here (PSSH) Month, and the City is hosting various water quality improvement events to allow the community to join in the fun and stewardship. PSSH is a regional campaign for communities to work together to protect Puget Sound and raise awareness of how our everyday actions impact our waterways. During this month of activities, Environmental Services will host EVENTS. To learn more and find out what's going on near you, visit pugetsoundstartshere.org or call the Center for Urban Waters at (253) 591-5588.

Prevent Street Flooding

Street flooding is often caused by a storm drain clogged with leaves, plastic bags, or other debris. To keep these clear, use a rake, broom, or blower to regularly remove debris from the storm drains near your home or business. With more than 18,000 storm drains to manage, the City needs your help, especially during heavy rains. If a storm drain on your street is clear, but there is still street flooding, call (253) 591-5585. Visit cityoftacoma.org/inclementweather to learn more.

Green Tacoma Day

The Green Tacoma Partnership invites businesses, community groups, families, and individuals to participate in Green Tacoma Day on Saturday, October 14, from 9 a.m. to noon. Participants can volunteer to plant trees, remove weeds and litter, connect with the community, and provide a helping hand to local green spaces. For more information on Green Tacoma Day sites, visit cityoftacoma.org/greentacomaday, or call (253) 325-1393.



How-To: Select and Plant a Fruit Tree

Step 1: Select a Fruit Tree

Look for a well-branched tree that doesn't have a flat side, broken tips, or shriveled or wilted stems.

Step 2: Select a Location For Your Tree

Fruit trees require 8-12 hours of sunlight and good soil drainage. Add organic compost to the soil for nutrients and to help with drainage.

Tree sizes vary in height depending on the variety. Ensure that your chosen location has enough vertical space for the tree to grow to maturity.

Step 3: Dig a Hole

Locate your tree far enough from structures, underground pipes, and overhead power lines. Call 8-1-1 two weeks in advance for utility locates.

- **For columnar trees:** Plant far enough away from structures so it will not touch the eaves or gutter when full grown. Follow directions below for hole width and depth.
- **For potted trees:** Dig a hole that is twice the width of the pot and a few inches deeper.
- **For bare root trees:** Dig a hole that is liberally sized to fit the roots without bending or forcing them into the hole.

Step 4: Plant Your Tree

- Loosen and break up your soil so it's not in chunks.
- Blend your existing soil with compost or worm castings, and a small amount of fruit tree fertilizer to give the new tree a boost of nutrients.
- Structure the bottom of the hole to support the roots.
- Cover the roots with the soil/compost mix and gently tamp down to remove air pockets. Do not bury or cover the grafting point.
- Water your tree deeply or put a watering bag around the tree to keep the moisture level consistent.
- The ideal time to plant trees in the Tacoma area is October - March during the cooler, rainy season.



To watch this EnviroHouse How-To on fruit trees, visit <http://y2u.be/4EU71ohPC0Y>. The entire How-To video and recorded webinar library are available at youtube.com/cityoftacoma/playlists. Community members can also register for upcoming EnviroHouse workshops at cityoftacoma.org/workshops or call (253) 573-2426.

Events

Calendar of

SEPTEMBER

- 1-30 Make a Splash Grant Applications are open.** Applications and details are available at cityoftacoma.org/makeasplash or call (253) 208-0536
- 04 Labor Day, Curbside Collection is NORMAL**
- 09 Solatube Natural Daylight & DIY Installation,** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 16 DIY Onsite Make-It Project with Upcycled Fabric,** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 23 Fall-Winter Garden, Keep Growing, Winterize Beds,** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 30 Water Heating Systems: Comparisons, Costs, Ways to Save,** FREE, 10 a.m., **Online Workshop via Zoom,** Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426

OCTOBER

- 01 TAGRO Fall/Winter Hours Begin,** Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 2301 Cleveland Way, Central Treatment Plant, Gate 6, call (253) 502-2150 or visit tagro.com
- 07 Winter Warmth with Heat Pump Systems to \$ave** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 14 Weatherize Your Home Add Comfort and \$ave,** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 14 Green Tacoma Day,** from 9 a.m. to noon, this is a celebration of the Green Tacoma Partnership's work to restore urban green spaces. To learn more about the event, visit cityoftacoma.org/greentacomaday, or call (253) 325-1393
- 21 All About Trees, How to Identify, What to Choose,** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 28 Pruning and Care Fruit Trees,** FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426

Preventing Stormwater Pollution One Brushstroke at a Time

Strolling through some of Tacoma's vibrant neighborhoods, residents will enjoy eye-catching murals painted on the sidewalk near storm drain catch basins featuring brightly colored marine life and the slogan, "If it hits the ground, it hits the Sound." These new art installations are helping to raise awareness of an important and often overlooked issue – stormwater pollution.

Many residents are unaware that water that flows from our streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and other outdoor surfaces goes directly into Puget Sound – untreated. This means harmful materials like chemicals, brake dust, and litter can end up in our water, damaging our ecosystems and shared environment. These new mural installations aim to spotlight the issue and encourage individuals to act.

The idea came from a group of Environmental Services employees who recognized that many residents are unaware that our stormwater and wastewater systems are separated. Wastewater from our sinks, showers, and toilets flows through a sewer pipe to a wastewater treatment plant where it is treated before being safely discharged into Puget Sound. Stormwater that flows down catch basins on the street does not get treated. The slogan, "If it hits the ground, it hits the Sound," aims to remind people of how our stormwater system works and that it's up to everyone to help prevent harmful materials from ending up in Puget Sound.



Pictured: Artists Saiyare Refaei and Gloria Joy Kazuko Muhammad created this mural in East Tacoma that featured the slogan in five languages: English, Khmer, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Twulshootseed, the indigenous language spoken by Puget Sound Indian tribes.

The Environmental Services Department has been working with local artists over the past several years to paint murals throughout the city. Seven local artists were commissioned to help create these murals using environmentally friendly paint that not only serve to share this important message, but also help beautify our neighborhoods.

"We wanted to share this message in a way that not only educates our community but also shares the beautiful talent of Tacoma's art community," said Denisse Linares, a member of the Environmental Services Strategic Planning team and coordinator of the mural projects. "It has been such an honor to work with these artists and to showcase their work."

Storm drains are an often overlooked and unnoticed part of our urban environment. These murals are meant to catch the attention of residents and get them thinking about this important issue and to consider ways they can help. Placing the murals directly on and around the catch basins aims to get people thinking about the problem at its source.

The murals are also part of a larger campaign to help raise awareness. The Environmental Services department has partnered with local schools on youth art projects, designed t-shirts for distribution at community events, and designing City vehicle wraps to help spread the message.

Visit cityoftacoma.org/preventstormwaterpollution or call (253) 591-5588 to find ways to help prevent stormwater pollution in your neighborhood.

Background Image: Mural created by Jorge Garcia, located at 48th and Pacific



Pictured: Mural created by Angela Larson, located at 6th Avenue and Oakes



Pictured: Mural created by Kate Thun, located at E. 25th Street and G Street

Pictured: Mural created by Nori Kimura, located at Center and Durango



EnviroKids

What's that Word?

Complete the sentences below (you'll find the answers in this issue of EnviroTalk) and then find the word or phrase in the word search below. If you get stumped, the answers are at the bottom.

1. By the bucket or truckload, **CUSTOMERS** say their gardens grow faster, lawns grow thicker, and trees grow taller with TAGRO.
2. "If it Hits the _____, It Hits The Sound" is a reminder that it's up to everyone to help _____ harmful materials from ending up in Puget Sound.
3. Tacoma _____ will play an _____ role in determining how and where Tidy-Up Tacoma services are used.
4. Make a Splash _____ are reimbursable grants of up to \$4,000 for _____ focused on preventing stormwater pollution.
5. The goals in the Climate Action Plan could not be _____ without the dedication of community partners.

W	P	T	K	I	Y	D	K	P	G	O	D	J	O
M	Q	Z	H	P	C	K	Y	X	Y	J	P	R	M
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P	F	S	U	H	S	L	G	A	H	M	J	E	R
D	I	T	G	F	T	N	R	G	C	E	S	Q	O
V	O	C	Q	R	O	A	A	P	R	T	T	X	U
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A	T	X	T	H	K	F	J	D	E	C	A	E	M
W	P	M	J	M	B	U	U	B	N	C	H	C	R

1.) CUSTOMERS, 2.) GROUND, PREVENT, 3.) RESIDENTS, IMPORTANT, 4.) GRANTS, PROJECTS, 5.) ACHIEVED

MEET ASSISTANT DIVISION MANAGER Will Hausa



As the Assistant Division Manager for Billing and Technical Services, Will leads three teams that make up the customer services representatives for Solid Waste Management and Business Operations. Although each team works differently, they share the same goal, which is to create a positive experience for residents when they reach out to the Environmental Services Department for assistance.

"Working in the Environmental Services Department is a rewarding opportunity. My favorite thing about the work that I do is making decisions that have a positive impact on the communities we serve," Will said about his job.

Qualifications for an Assistant Division Manager are a four-year degree (or equivalent experience), excellent leadership skills, and the ability to communicate with the community.



Tacoma businesses can go green and save money by joining EnviroStars, Washington's green business program.

With support from the City's Office of Environmental Policy and Sustainability, EnviroStars participants are provided resources and information that help businesses take environmentally responsible actions to gain recognition for their involvement in the program.

If you know a business that may be interested in becoming a Tacoma EnviroStars partner, call (253) 591-5172 or email sustainability@cityoftacoma.org.

For more information about EnviroStars, visit the program website at envirostars.org.

Sort the Sound

City of Tacoma's Recycle Sorting Game!

Dare to find the legendary SortSquatch in this fun and educational waste sorting game!

SortSquatch awaits at tacomawa.recycle.game



DISCOVER THE NEW TAGRO WEBSITE

The Environmental Services Department is proud to announce the launch of an all-new TAGRO website designed to improve customer service and provide more in-depth information about our award-winning line of biosolids products. TAGRO, short for "Tacoma Grow," is a line of soil amendment products produced right here in Tacoma which offer unmatched benefits for gardening, landscaping, and agricultural needs.

"TAGRO has been a beloved community product since 1991," said Dan Eberhardt, TAGRO Biosolids Supervisor. "We needed a website that reflects the pride we take in our products and our commitment to exceptional customer service."

The new TAGRO website aims to enhance the customer experience by allowing visitors to access information quickly and easily, like product descriptions, pricing, and delivery information. Whether you're a seasoned gardener, a landscape professional, or new to the gardening and landscaping

field, the new TAGRO website will ensure you have all the information you need to make informed decisions about our products.

Our TAGRO biosolids program has received numerous national awards, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's first-place award for best biosolids program in the country. By the bucket or truckload, customers say their gardens grow faster, lawns grow thicker, and trees grow taller with TAGRO. To learn more about TAGRO, visit the all-new **TAGRO.com** or call (253) 502-2150 to speak to a representative.

TAGRO products are available to purchase at our facility located at 2301 Cleveland Way in Tacoma. Visit **TAGRO.com** or call (253) 502-2150 for current hours of operation and to find a retailer near you.



Street Sweepers: Keeping Streets and Communities Clean

The City's Street Sweeping Program helps beautify neighborhoods by cleaning up leaves and debris on a scheduled basis. The neighborhood sweeping schedule goes from January through October and shifts to leaf season beginning in mid-October and running through December. You can help prevent potential flooding issues by placing leaves in your brown yard/food waste containers and by keeping streets and storm drains free from debris. To find out when street sweepers will be in your neighborhood, visit cityoftacoma.org/streetsweeping or call (253) 591-5585 for more information.

No Wipes in the Pipes

There's a persistent issue that Tacoma's wastewater treatment facilities face on a daily basis - items that don't biodegrade in the sewer system. Baby wipes and disinfecting wipes are a big issue being they don't break down or tear very easily, and even though they may say "flushable," this is not the case. Avoid drain pain and steer clear of potential issues by only flushing biodegradable items. For a list of what not to flush, visit cityoftacoma.org/WhatNotToFlush or call (253) 591-5418.



Sign up to
Adopt a Storm Drain!

Join with neighbors to
protect Puget Sound!



Keep your neighborhood clean and protect Puget Sound. **Sign up today!**



adopt-a-drain.org



Sign up online. Individuals, organizations, and businesses can participate. Visit adopt-a-drain.org to adopt a storm drain in your neighborhood.



Keep your storm drain clear. Use a broom or rake to sweep leaves, trash and other debris off the drain surface year round.



Track your impact. Enter the estimated total of debris you collect into your online account so we can track results.



Lead by example. Let others know about your commitment. Tell them how they can help prevent water pollution.



Puget Sound Starts Here

Sweep up! Rake up! Pick up!

TIP OF THE DAY

Tub Tile Cleaner

Ingredients:

1-2/3 cups baking soda
1/2 cup grease cutting dish soap
1/2 cup water
2 tablespoons white distilled vinegar
16-ounce squeeze container

1

Mix baking soda with liquid soap in container and dilute with water.

2

Add vinegar and stir until lumps are gone. If it pours from container, then it's the right consistency, otherwise add more water.

3

Shake well before using with a sponge and rinse well.



EnviroHouse
CITY OF TACOMA

Tacoma Recovery and Transfer Center | 3510 S. Mullen St.
Open Thursday - Sunday | 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
cityoftacoma.org/EnviroHouse | (253) 573-2426

Events

Calendar of

NOVEMBER

- 04 Pruning Landscape Trees**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 05 Daylight Savings Time Ends**
- 11 Veterans Day**, The Tacoma Recovery and Transfer Center is open and curbside collection is on a regular schedule
- 18 Holiday Herbal Table Décor**, FREE, 10 a.m., EnviroHouse, 3510 S. Mullen St., Advance Registration required at cityoftacoma.org/workshops, or call (253) 573-2426
- 23 Tacoma Recovery and Transfer Center is closed Thanksgiving Day**. Curbside collection will be one day late. Customers scheduled for Thursday collection will be picked up on Friday and customers scheduled for Friday collection will be picked up on Saturday

DECEMBER

- 25 City Services are Closed to observe Christmas Day**. Curbside pickup schedules for all days will be one day later than normally scheduled between Dec. 25-29
- 26 Tacoma Recycling Center, 3510 S. Mullen St., begins to accept unflocked, undecorated Christmas trees without stands**

JANUARY

- 01 City Services are Closed to observe New Year's Day**. Curbside pickup schedules for all days will be one day later than normally scheduled between Jan. 1-5
- 15 Last day to drop off your unflocked, undecorated Christmas tree** without a stand at the Tacoma Recycle Center, 3510 S. Mullen St.





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