

City of Tacoma 2025 Annual Report

Q36: Continue to design and implement local development-related codes, rules, standards, or other enforceable documents to minimize impervious surfaces, native vegetation loss, and stormwater runoff, where feasible? See S5.C.6.c.i. (Required annually).

In June 2025, Tacoma City Council adopted the [One Tacoma Comprehensive Plan](#), the City's 25-year strategic plan required by the Washington State Growth Management Act. Chapter 4 of the Comprehensive Plan, the Environment and Watershed Health chapter, was updated and reorganized by stormwater watersheds to promote planning at a watershed scale and implement policies and goals to protect Tacoma's natural areas and promote climate resilience which aligns with LID strategies. The chapter also specifically calls out stormwater planning efforts under the Urban Watershed Protection Plan and the City's Urban Forest Plan.

Tacoma City Council approved [Home in Tacoma Zoning Regulations](#) in November 2024, and they went into effect February 2025. These new regulations densify urban residential zones and allow for broader range of housing types to facilitate more diverse, affordable, and sustainable housing options throughout the city. All previously single-family home zoned parcels are now allowed to include additional units or multi-family dwellings with reduced setbacks and reduced on-site parking requirements. In addition to the code update, a variety of flyers and tip sheets were developed to provide approved sample site layouts for various multi-unit arrangements to demonstrate that stormwater management and street tree requirements could be achieved. The City will continue to investigate LID-related incentives for Home in Tacoma middle-housing and incorporate them into City standards or codes as necessary.

An updated [2025 Urban Forest Manual](#), took effect on February 1, 2025. The Urban Forestry Manual was updated in 2024 to ensure an attractive urban setting to enhance livability and foster economic development as well as provide green spaces with trees to reach the canopy goal of 30 percent citywide, support wildlife in the urban environment, and help reduce storm water runoff, filter pollution, and reduce the urban heat island effect. The Urban Forest Manual (UFM) update provides flexibility and incentives for inclusion of desired features like saving mature trees, and planting larger tree species, native plants, and Low Impact Development stormwater facilities. Landscaping regulations apply for new development and redevelopment per the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) 13.06.090B Landscaping Standards and other applicable portions of the Zoning Code (TMC 13.06). These are intended to be used concurrently with TMC 13.06.090B to ensure the requirements and standards are executed properly.

The South Tacoma groundwater aquifer supplies up to 50% of Tacoma's total water demand during peak summer months, and a designated critical aquifer recharge area. TMC code related to the [South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District \(STGPD\)](#) was updated September 2025 per the Growth Management Act (GMA) which requires review and update local Critical Areas regulations at least every ten years. Updates using best available science were made to strengthen groundwater protection and prevent contamination of the aquifer from surface level business practices and stormwater. The updated STGPD code now limits impervious surfaces and adds new landscaping standards to the South Tacoma Industrial Districts, Tacoma Mall Regional Growth Center and industrial zones in the STGPD. It also prioritizes stormwater infiltration in aquifer recharge areas to protect and recharge the groundwater, if soil contamination assessments are done to ensure infiltration is safe and feasible for the aquifer. These changes help reduce impervious surfaces, manage stormwater safely, and support groundwater protection.

In October 2025 certain chapters of the City of Tacoma [Right-of-Way Design Manual](#) (ROW) were updated to include new and revised content and reorganization within some chapters. The ROW manual applies to the construction of all street and ROW improvements including, stormwater and wastewater construction, street lighting, traffic signalization, landscaping, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, shared use paths, street design, and channelization. Updates pertaining to stormwater work in the ROW were to remain consistent with other standards changes for

landscaping per the 2025 UFM update to Tacoma Municipal Code. The manual will continue to be updated on a cyclical basis to provide additional opportunities to propose stormwater low impact development related revisions in the future.

In December 2025, the Tacoma City Council approved the [Tideflats Subarea Plan](#), a comprehensive strategy developed over seven years of collaboration between the City of Tacoma, the Port of Tacoma, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, the City of Fife, and Pierce County. This is a key step toward advancing a shared vision that balances economic vitality, environmental restoration, and community well-being in one of Washington's most critical industrial areas. Stormwater infrastructure within the Tideflats includes drainage structures, inlets, and catch basins, underground storm drainpipes, and surface ditches. Over 70% of waterfront operations have stormwater treatment/filtration systems installed and operational to capture pollutants from their properties. The MS4 Phase I permit applies to the City of Tacoma and the Port of Tacoma as a secondary permittee, whom maintains their own SWMP for lands it owns and operates within the Tideflats. Through the City's SWMP, the Tideflats were determined to be a priority area in the Urban Waters Protection Plan for future stormwater planning. The City of Tacoma is conducting several studies to find ways to improve surface water quality prior to discharge to waterways, such as stormwater treatment devices and Low Impact Development (LID) technologies. Capital projects will expand its stormwater system with an increasing emphasis on green infrastructure.