

City of Tacoma 2025 Annual Report for Reporting Year 2026

Q.81 Attach description of public education and outreach general awareness efforts conducted, including your target audiences and subject areas, per S5.C.11.a.i.

The City of Tacoma has a variety of programs and tools for public education and outreach general awareness. Based on the specific program, the information may be delivered in an ongoing or strategic manner. Our social marketing tools and website are used periodically to deliver many of the required messages and can be accessed by many audiences. The following are descriptions of our public education and outreach general awareness programs.

Adopt-A-Drain

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities), Spanish-speaking residents, and Businesses (including home-based and mobile businesses)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater pollution on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste

Adopt-A-Storm Drain (AAD) provides a free, year-round stewardship opportunity for residents by encouraging regular and sustained actions to prevent flooding and reduce runoff pollution. Participants adopt storm drains and catch basins in their neighborhood and commit to keeping them clear of leaves, trash, and other debris. Participants use a web application to adopt and un-adopt catch basins in their area. The web application allows users to track the amount and type of debris collected and directs users to contact the TacomaFirst 311 hotline if an illicit discharge is discovered.

Increased awareness of catch basin condition and what is going down the drain provides a bridge to educating about several other BMPs aside from litter and debris disposal, such as yard care protective of water quality, car washing, pet waste, and proper use and disposal of household chemicals and cleaners. The program also facilitates the City's source control efforts.

In 2024, Tacoma coordinated with several Western Washington jurisdictions to run a Spanish Language AAD Campaign. This campaign included poster creation and distribution, a Spanish social media toolkit, TV commercials, and radio ads. All materials were created and distributed using input from the AAD Spanish Speaking Focus Group. Building on the 2024 regional Spanish-language campaign, the Environmental Services Director also participated in a Spanish-language radio interview in 2025 to encourage participation and provide stormwater education.

In 2025, Tacoma created and implemented a comprehensive behavior change strategy and schedule for Adopt-A-Drain, The City also created and implemented a comprehensive communications plan. The plan included social media outreach, community partner social media toolkits, mailers, tabling events at community gatherings, and adding an Adopt-A-Drain

sign-up QR code to street sweeping notice cards. These combined efforts resulted in Tacoma's highest adoption year to date: 134 new adopters and 217 newly adopted drains, bringing the program total to 328 participants and more than 590 drains adopted. Reported cleanings removed approximately 2,133 pounds of debris before it could enter Tacoma's stormwater system.

Business Source Control Outreach

Priority Audiences: Businesses (including home-based and mobile businesses), property owners and managers, engineers, contractors, and developers

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities
- Maintenance of existing onsite SW facilities/BMPs
- Source control BMPs for building materials to reduce pollution to stormwater, including but not limited to stormwater pollution from PCB-containing materials

Information is provided to business owners and property managers during source control inspections required by Permit Section S5.C.8. The focus is to inform business owners and property managers of the importance of regularly maintaining their onsite stormwater facilities and using operational BMPs to help protect local waterways and reduce stormwater pollution. Informational handouts are provided to businesses, including mobile painters, pressure washers, and carpet cleaners, on how to properly dispose of their wastewater when needed. Frequently used handouts have been translated into five languages to increase accessibility by business owners and operators.

Through the Thea Foss Waterway Monitoring and Assessment Program and source identification studies, City staff trace and identify sources of PCBs in building materials and follow up with property owners. In 2025, EPG continued PCB education and outreach in city-owned buildings through Departmental Stormwater Coordination Plans and updated the City website with PCB-related information and links to guidance materials provided by Ecology and EPA. All Source Control representatives attended a Seattle 2030 PCB workshop to strengthen technical knowledge.

When commercial or industrial buildings constructed or renovated between 1950–1980 are identified, Source Control representatives provide education on building washdown and renovation/demolition BMPs, discuss potential PCB-containing materials, and direct property owners to Ecology and EPA resources for additional guidance.

College/University and Trade Student Stormwater Education

Priority Audiences: General Public (college/university and trade students)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs

The City of Tacoma’s Environmental Programs Group (EPG) partners with local colleges and universities to provide hands-on learning opportunities focused on stormwater education and sustainable infrastructure. In 2025, EPG collaborated with the University of Puget Sound, the University of Washington Tacoma, and Clover Park Technical College to deliver educational tours and project support.

EPG led tours for the University of Puget Sound Water Chemistry class and the University of Washington Urban Design Project Review class, showcasing green stormwater infrastructure sites. These tours emphasized LID principles, BMPs, and the impacts of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces, as well as hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper waste disposal. Students gained real-world exposure to sustainable urban stormwater solutions and design practices.

EPG also partnered with Clover Park Technical College to support stormwater and environmental education through tours of the Flett Creek holding ponds and pump station. These tours provided technical students with practical examples of stormwater infrastructure and management strategies to inform their coursework and projects.

Additionally, Environmental Services led green stormwater infrastructure tours for the engineering cohort of the University of Washington Tacoma Strickland Fellowship – Engineering Pathway program, offering future engineers’ insight into the design and function of stormwater systems in an urban setting.

Community Event Stormwater Outreach

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs

Stormwater messages are promoted at a variety of community events. Both the EnviroChallengers and Environmental Programs Group staff may be present at these events.

Environmental Programs Group staff typically participate in four to six local community outreach events each year. The following are regularly attended events.

Green Tacoma Day

Green Tacoma Day is an annual celebration of the Green Tacoma Partnership's work to restore 1,881 acres of urban green space, while Arbor Day celebrates the planting, growing, and caring of Tacoma's trees. This day of service offers great opportunities for the Tacoma community to get to know each other and their local green spaces. All are welcome and no experience is necessary. Each year, ES EPG provides funds to sponsor Green Tacoma Day.

South Sound Sustainability Expo

The Expo connects residents and businesses with services, products, companies, and agencies that address sustainability needs in our community. The Expo is a free community event that brings together environmentally minded community members in the South Sound. In 2025, ES EPG staff partnered with the EnviroChallengers to host a booth and provide messaging on stormwater pollution prevention education.

Welcome Back Salmon Days - Swan Creek

The Swan Creek Salmon Challenge is a 2-week-long celebration of the return of salmon to Swan Creek and the surrounding rivers. EnviroChallengers host a booth at Salmon Saturdays at Swan Creek. Messaging and interactive lessons were provided on the importance of preventing stormwater pollution and the role stormwater pollution plays in salmon health and vitality.

Hilltop Healthy Kids Carnival

Environmental Services participated in the Hilltop Healthy Kids Carnival, an annual event providing school essentials, health services, fun activities, and resources to improve children's health. In 2025, ES staff tabled at the event featuring the Scoopy Doo mascot and interactive poo toss game to educate residents about proper pet waste disposal. Educational messaging at the booth included the impacts of stormwater pollution on surface waters, hazards from impervious surfaces and illicit discharges, proper waste disposal practices, and the City's "If It Hits the Ground, It Hits the Sound" campaign.

Dumpster Lid Campaign

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities), Businesses (including home-based and mobile business)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste

For the 2019-2024 permit cycle, the City participated in the regional dumpster lid behavior change campaign, which focuses on Dumpster and Trash Compactor Maintenance as a Best

Management Practice (BMP) and targets commercial businesses. During the current 2024-2029 permit cycle, Tacoma Environmental Services continues to use dumpster stickers that remind users to keep lids closed and avoid overfilling. These efforts help prevent stormwater pollution by reducing contact between runoff and refuse.

Education and Outreach Associated with Development Permitting

Priority Audiences: Engineers, contractors, developers, property owners/managers, and land use planners

Subject Areas:

- Technical standards for stormwater site and erosion control plans
- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities

Through Permit Center assistance, Tacoma staff provides information regarding both the design and maintenance of LID principles and BMPs and stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities. Permit review staff proactively provide information and education about City resources, clarify design standards in the Stormwater Management Manual, and answer specific design and feasibility questions.

The City maintains a website that contains over 80 GSI and LID standard details. These details provide information regarding design and construction of LID and GSI BMPs and facilities.

EnviroChallenger Program

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children and overburdened communities)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs

The City's EnviroChallenger (EC) environmental education program continues to serve public, private, and home school communities within Tacoma. Environmental educators visit Tacoma school classrooms to promote stormwater, wastewater, garbage, and recycling messages to children each year. The ECs also attend many community events throughout the year and help to communicate stormwater messages to adults as well as children.

2025 Activities and Accomplishments:

- 486 classroom lessons delivered (165 stormwater-focused)
- 12,150 students engaged in classroom lessons

- 3 special school events and after-school programs taught
- Teacher STEAM PD series served 250 teachers
- 10 community events attended
- 6 high school interns hosted
- 19 high school interns trained during summer certificate job training
- 2 paid summer experiences provided for high school students
- 7 STEAM library events held with 111 attendees
- Lesson videos viewed 440 times

Community Events and Tours

The EnviroChallenger team attended multiple community events in 2025, South Sound Expo, Salmon Saturdays X2, Art on the Ave., Mosaic X2 Days, Proctor Street Fair, Salmon Homecoming, Kids Health and Safety Fair, Stewart Career Day, Scouts merit badge workshop, high school summer camp at UPS, school STEAM nights.

Collaborations

The EnviroChallenger educators collaborate with local groups and nonprofit organizations for events and activities around Tacoma. The EnviroChallenger team worked for the 6th year with Pierce County, TPU and Peirce County Conservation District to design virtual teacher clock hour workshops. We also worked with the district to support their needs during this time and are working toward embedding our lessons into district curriculum. EnviroChallenger helped the ES artist in residence with school art installation. Providing Adopt-a-Drain information in every email to teachers helped increase program numbers.

High School Job Training

The Tacoma School District Next Move Internships Program places high school students with a City staff supervisor to gain experience working with staff in Environmental Services as well as other City departments. In 2025, for the 10th cohort of Next Move internships, ES hosted six high school students; one student continued with the Jobs 253 paid experience in the ES lab.

The high school summer ES certificate job training program is designed to engage and train students from overburdened communities to gain skills needed to apply for jobs at the City or other union-supported jobs. The high school summer certificate program for ES was canceled this year due to district issues. To supplement the program, the Envirochallengers lead a summer exploratory program. The students participated in stormwater education, stormwater collection and sampling, Chain of Custody documentation, and lab tests while touring ES buildings.

Household Hazardous Waste Disposal and Business Technical Assistance Program

Priority Audiences: General public (residents), businesses, and mobile businesses

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste

The Environmental Services/Solid Waste Management collects and properly disposes of large amounts of household hazardous waste from Tacoma residents at the Tacoma Recovery and Transfer Center. Solid Waste Management works to educate the public about the need for proper disposal and where hazardous wastes can be disposed of through Environmental Service publications and other communication tools, including the Recycle Coach app. Special assistance is also offered to businesses through Solid Waste's business technical assistance program, and certain communications about proper disposal are translated in Korean, Khmer, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

"If it Hits the Ground, it Hits the Sound" Stormwater Initiative Campaign

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste

The "If It Hits the Ground, It Hits the Sound" (IIHTG) campaign was launched in 2021 as part of Tacoma Environmental Services' 2018–2025 Strategic Plan to build general awareness about methods to address and reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff. The initiative emphasizes how stormwater in Tacoma flows directly into local waterways, mostly untreated, and its impacts on surface waters.

Tacoma is widely recognized for its strong arts culture, and public art plays a significant role in connecting residents to their neighborhoods, local identity, and community spaces. Building on this strength Environmental Services staff collaborates with the City's Arts Department, Metro Parks Tacoma, schools, businesses, and other community partners to integrate stormwater messaging into Tacoma's public spaces. The campaign engages local artists to design stormwater educational materials, including murals, vehicle wraps, reusable bags, stickers, handouts, and educational materials such as activity books and coloring pages, ensuring the messaging is visually compelling and accessible to a wide audience. The goal is to embed stormwater education into Tacoma's urban environment in ways that are engaging, memorable, and actionable for both residents and businesses.

2025 Activities and Accomplishments

In 2025, Environmental Services continued and expanded its partnership with the Science and Math Institute (SAMI) as a recurring educational project, engaging students in hands-on stormwater education. Ten additional stormwater murals were painted by SAMI students at

Point Defiance Marina. This ongoing partnership provides students with opportunities to study stormwater pollution, its impact on aquatic ecosystems, and pollution prevention strategies before creating and painting a mural.

The Environmental Services IIHTG Team continues to present at Tacoma IDEA High School, delivering two presentations annually. These presentations cover impacts of stormwater on surface waters, pollution from impervious surfaces, illicit discharges, improper waste disposal, and pollution prevention strategies.

The campaign continued to expand stormwater education outreach through multiple visual communication channels. Art-forward street sweeper schedule cards incorporate IIHTG art and messaging, emphasizing the role of sweeping in removing pollutants before they enter storm drains. Stormwater messaging and IIHTG artwork were applied to highly visible City service vehicles, including a street sweeper, vactor truck, a 55-foot-long haul trailer, and a boat, ensuring that stormwater education reaches a wide range of audiences throughout Tacoma.

The IIHTG campaign hosted the Ground to Sound Film and Arts Festival in March 2025, using film and multimedia storytelling to further stormwater education. A series of pop-up events leading up to the festival engaged over 120 participants in activities including poetry workshops, a photo development workshop tied to social media contests, and a live music cypher featuring an original stormwater education song. Each pop-up event incorporated stormwater education, covering topics including pet waste management, car washing best practices, sustainable gardening practices, low-impact development practices, and hazardous waste disposal best practices. In collaboration with Fosters Creative, the campaign produced stormwater educational videos featuring community members, City employees, and local artists. These videos were widely shared across Tacoma’s social media platforms and hosted on the Ground to Sound website, ensuring ongoing engagement and outreach. The film festival drew over 400 attendees.

The IIHTG campaign maintains a growing collection of murals installed near storm drains throughout Tacoma, as well as large-scale murals on prominent City facilities. These installations, including two highly visible wall murals at the Solid Waste Transfer Center and the City’s wastewater treatment plant, serve as lasting educational tools that reach thousands of residents and visitors each year. To ensure these outreach assets remain effective, the Environmental Services team regularly inspects and maintains the murals, preserving their visibility and impact over time. By combining art with environmental messaging and committing to their upkeep, these murals continue to raise awareness about stormwater pollution and prevention long after their initial creation.

Make-A-Splash (MAS) Grant Program

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs

The City of Tacoma ES partners with PCD to offer grants of up to \$4,000 for stormwater pollution projects promoting surface water education, protection, and restoration. Grant applications are accepted from the general public during the month of May to coincide with Puget Sound Starts Here month and are awarded in July of each year. Grants are awarded to projects that have a strong stormwater pollution prevention message or deliver measurable stormwater benefits, with prioritized consideration to initiatives in low-equity communities and neighborhoods. Submitted projects must meet at least one of the program goals of education, surface water protection, habitat restoration, and tree planting.

Over 83 projects have been funded since 2013. Several K-12 educators who apply have requested one-time project funding and often rely on repeat funding to continue lessons or activities about the impacts of stormwater pollution on water quality and the health of the aquatic ecosystem.

In 2025, a total of eight projects were funded. These projects were completed by December 31, 2025.

Media and Communication Tools

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities), Property owners/managers, Engineers, contractors, developers, and land use planners

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities
- Technical standards for stormwater site and erosion control plans

Stormwater Website

The City's stormwater website [Stormwater Management | City of Tacoma](#) includes information about stormwater services and rates, the Stormwater Management Program Plan, the City's NPDES Stormwater Permit Annual Report, Stormwater Management Manual, permitting requirements, general BMPs to prevent stormwater pollution, Green Stormwater Infrastructure projects, PCB education, and more.

Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)

The City's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube accounts include social media posts related to stormwater and surface water education and stormwater-related programs. The City actively promotes surface water and stormwater messages and "re-tweets" or "likes" Puget Sound Starts Here posts.

Educational Videos

ES partners with other City departments to provide stormwater education through a library of "EnviroHouse How To" videos available on the City's YouTube page. These educational videos cover a variety of sustainable practices and stormwater-related topics, including but not limited to low impact development practices, rain barrels, native plants, rain gardens, pervious pavement, building healthy soils, alternatives to pesticides, composting, natural yard care techniques, and tree care. The videos serve as accessible educational resources for residents, students, and community members interested in implementing stormwater best management practices and sustainable landscaping techniques.

Stormwater Awareness Week

In 2025, the City of Tacoma issued a Stormwater Awareness Week Proclamation and launched a weeklong social media campaign highlighting source control best management practices (BMPs) and general stormwater pollution prevention strategies.

EnviroNews Listserv

"Tacoma EnviroNews" is an automated electronic listserv that anyone can subscribe to and post messages related to environmental issues, events, and job or volunteer opportunities. The City posts Stormwater Management Program-related events, stormwater education, and announcements to the listserv throughout the year.

EnviroTalk Publication

ES sends out the EnviroTalk magazine three times per year to approximately 54,000 single-family and duplex home residents throughout the City to educate them about stormwater, wastewater, and solid waste messages, activities, and upcoming events in the community.

Utility Bill Inserts

Stormwater messages are included throughout the year in the utility bill inserts sent to approximately 125,000 customers in the city.

TV Tacoma

TV Tacoma is an avenue to provide local viewing audiences with information, including stormwater-related public service announcements, "If it Hits The Ground, It Hits the Sound" campaign messaging, and more.

Urban Green is a TV Tacoma program that showcases environmental and sustainable efforts around the City of Tacoma. The program is available on TV Tacoma and online at

www.cityoftacoma.org/UrbanGreen and features topics such as:

- Interviews with regional and national experts on environmental issues pertinent to our region

- EnviroChallenger tips for sustainable living
- Local efforts and regional opportunities for environmental stewardship
- Upcoming chances to learn more and/or get involved
- Make-A-Splash grant recipients and their stormwater-focused projects

Tacoma Report is a TV Tacoma news program that airs every two weeks and features information about various city programs and initiatives.

Stormwater Manual Listserv

This technical listserv informs interested parties about the City's Stormwater Management Manual, updates to stormwater-related policies, technical trainings, and SWMP Plan updates. Subscription is open to anyone and includes engineers, developers, City development staff, and the general public. Anyone can sign up for the listserv on the City's stormwater manual webpage.

Tacoma Rainiers Marketing Packets

Twice in 2025, Environmental Services included stormwater education materials in marketing packets distributed to all attendees at Tacoma Rainiers games. The materials focused on promoting the City's Neighborhood Pet Waste Station Sponsorship Program and Adopt a Drain program, helping raise public awareness about stormwater pollution prevention and opportunities for community involvement in stormwater management.

Mobile Toilet Kit Program

Priority Audience: General public, including overburdened communities and individuals without access to sanitation, phones, or the internet.

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste

The Mobile Toilet Kit Program provides essential sanitation supplies to unsheltered community members to help prevent human waste from entering Tacoma's stormwater system. This program supports general public awareness by educating individuals about how human waste can contaminate stormwater and impact local waterways, and by providing tools that make proper waste management more accessible.

Environmental Services distributes toilet kits that include disposal bags, instructions, and educational messaging explaining how pollutants can reach creeks, lakes, and Puget Sound when waste is left on the ground. Staff provide brief, in-person education at the time of distribution and engage participants in conversations about preventing pollution.

This program increases awareness among a priority audience that may otherwise have limited access to sanitation resources, phones, or the internet. By reducing waste-related discharges

and strengthening understanding of stormwater pollution pathways, the Mobile Toilet Kit Program contributes to the City's broader education goals under the NPDES Phase I permit.

Natural Systems Management (Open Space)

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities), and Businesses (including home-based and mobile business)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs

The City owns and stewards approximately 515 acres of open space properties for goals of improved stormwater interception and infiltration, healthy tree canopy, ecosystem function, biodiversity, and community health and wellbeing. This stewardship is primarily conducted by two WCC crews who lead ecological restoration efforts in environmentally critical areas such as steep slopes and wetlands. Stewardship is also supported by community volunteer work parties, through the Tacoma Habitat Stewardship Program. The City holds a lead role in the Green Tacoma Partnership, established in 2005, which promotes restoration and community stewardship in urban natural areas. In 2025, Open Space Management began a partnership with PCD to grow the volunteer stewardship program, including training habitat stewards, onboarding more volunteer sites, and hosting regularly scheduled volunteer events.

The Natural Systems Management Group promotes activities to protect existing urban natural areas and forests and increase Tacoma's tree cover while educating the public about the stormwater benefits of urban forestry and green infrastructure. Through educational programming and outreach, the City emphasizes how trees and vegetation function as low impact development practices by intercepting rainfall, reducing stormwater runoff, filtering pollutants, preventing erosion, and decreasing the impacts of impervious surfaces on local waterways.

Educational messaging focuses on the connection between urban natural areas and stormwater management, including how a healthy, multi-layered canopy, consisting of trees shrubs, and understory species, reduce peak stormwater flows, mitigates erosion, improves water quality by filtering pollutants before they reach surface waters, and mitigates the effects of impervious surfaces in urban environments. Participants in planting events and educational programs learn about proper plant and tree selection, planting techniques, and care practices that maximize stormwater benefits while supporting healthy plant establishment and growth.

The City's canopy cover increase is achieved by planting trees with help from partner organizations and community members and by preserving existing healthy trees. The City also helps sponsor an annual Green Tacoma Day/Arbor Day celebration, which serves as a platform for educating volunteers about the role of trees in stormwater pollution prevention and the

broader environmental benefits of urban forests and natural areas. The program supports various other educational opportunities to successfully plant and care for trees and native plant species, ensuring that participants understand both the stormwater management functions and long-term stewardship requirements of urban green infrastructure.

In April 2025, the Natural Systems Management Group's Open Space Program partnered with the Pierce Conservation District to relaunch volunteer stewardship in the City's open spaces through the new [Tacoma Habitat Stewardship Program](#). The four activated sites are located in the South Tacoma neighborhood, the South End neighborhood, and the port; these areas rank on the lower end of both the Tacoma Equity Index and the Tree Equity Score. Both the South Tacoma and South End neighborhoods are historically redlined, overburdened, and underserved communities.

The program offers community members two primary ways to participate. First, trained habitat stewards take on leadership roles at designated sites, contribute to site-specific restoration planning, and help lead work parties while educating volunteers and the public. Second, volunteers may participate in restoration work parties, where activities focus on planting native plants and trees and removing invasive weeds. Together, these efforts support the restoration and long-term care of Tacoma's urban natural areas, enhancing critical benefits such as cleaner air and water, improved stormwater management, wildlife habitat, climate resilience, and expanded community health and access to green spaces.

2025 Achievements:

- Active sites: 4
- Volunteer events: 25
- Volunteer number: 268
- Volunteer hours: 795
- Acres enrolled: 10.9
- Trees/plants planted: 341
- Focus weeds removed: 75,025 sq ft
- Mulch spread: 14,390 sq ft
- Garbage: 946 gallons
- Education events: 2
- Onboarded 1 full-time staff member and an AmeriCorps position at Pierce Conservation District to help build and run the program

NEBC Managing Stormwater in the Northwest Conference

Priority audiences: Engineers, contractors, developers, property owners/managers, and land use planners.

Subject Areas:

- Technical standards for stormwater site and erosion control plans
- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPS/facilities

In 2025, the City was a sponsor at NEBC: Managing Stormwater in the Northwest conference. The audiences at this conference were private industry and consultants, regulatory community, and implementers of stormwater regulations. The key messages promoted at the conference were technical standards for stormwater site and erosion control plans, LID principles and LID BMPs, and stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities.

PCB Educational Workshops

Priority Audiences: Businesses (including property managers and contractors), developers, contractors, engineers, planners, and other MS4 Permittees

Subject Areas:

- Source control BMPs for building materials, hazards associated with improper handling of PCB-containing materials, prevention of illicit discharges from building washdown, and proper testing and remediation procedures

ES EPG partnered with Seattle 2030 and Pierce County to host a PCB educational workshop for Businesses (including property managers and contractors), developers, contractors, engineers, planners, other MS4 Permittees, and City employees involved in source control, permitting, and building maintenance.

Pet Waste Program

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste

Information on proper management and disposal of pet waste is available on the City's website and is included in the City's publications and programming, including social media, utility bill inserts, the EnviroTalk newsletter, social media posts/videos and environmental lessons by the EnviroChallengers. The dog mascot, "Scoopy Doo," and a "Poo Toss" game are also commonly used at Environmental Services sponsored community and family fun events.

For the 2025 reporting year, five new bag stations were installed. ES supported 79 volunteers through the distribution of pet waste bags and pet waste station maintenance. 79 total stations throughout the city of Tacoma displaying education on pet waste BMPs.

Private Stormwater Facility Maintenance

Priority Audiences: General Public, Businesses (including home-based and mobile business), Engineers, contractors, developers, and land use planners

Subject Areas:

- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities

This program provides property owners with the drawings and operation and maintenance instructions for privately owned stormwater facilities and provides technical assistance to homeowners and business owners, as requested.

Purple Bag Program

Priority Audience: General public, including overburdened communities and individuals without access to sanitation, phones, or the internet.

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- Litter and debris prevention

The Purple Bag Program, launched in 2021 by Environmental Services Natural Systems Management in partnership with Neighborhood and Community Services, provides regular waste pickup services at unsanctioned homeless encampments throughout Tacoma. The HEAL Team and community partners—including St. Vincent de Paul and the Tacoma Rescue Mission—distribute purple bags during ongoing outreach visits and resource navigation efforts.

Encampment residents fill the bags and place them at the roadside for scheduled collection by waste management contractors. This service gives unhoused community members the tools needed to keep their living area clean and dispose of trash and contaminated items properly, helping protect personal health and downstream water quality.

Staff provide brief, face-to-face education at the time of distribution, explaining how trash, debris, and contaminated materials contribute to stormwater pollution and how these pollutants travel untreated to creeks, lakes, and Puget Sound.

Sustainability Small Grants Program

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities), Businesses (including home-based and mobile businesses)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs

Through the Sustainability Small Grant Program, reimbursable awards of up to \$5,000 are available to individuals or groups interested in helping educate residents and businesses about the environment and sustainable practices. Priority consideration is given to proposals that have surface water benefits by keeping pollutants out of local receiving waters or prevent polluted runoff. Examples of funded projects include planting trees or encouraging transit use and other sustainable transportation options. The Sustainability Small Grant brochure also includes program information in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Khmer.

Eight grants were awarded in 2025.

Tacoma Green Resilience Opportunity Corps (previously known as: Green Stormwater Infrastructure Workforce Training)

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities)

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- Technical standards for stormwater site and erosion control plans
- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities

The Tacoma Green Resilience Opportunity Corps is an eight-week paid workforce training program for young adults ages 18-26, with a focus on green infrastructure careers and sustainable stormwater management. The program graduates two cohorts annually. The program is a collaborative effort sponsored by the City and delivered through a partnership between Pierce Conservation District (PCD), City of Tacoma Environmental Services, Clover Park Technical College, The Nature Conservancy, and Palmer Scholars.

The curriculum emphasizes watershed and habitat protection, sustainable stormwater strategies, stormwater BMPs, LID principles and LID BMPs, and hands-on learning through place-based projects throughout the Tacoma area. Participants receive both classroom instruction and field training from environmental professionals representing regional partner organizations.

ES leads multiple training sessions featuring expert guest speakers, including:

- Source control representatives
- Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) maintenance crews
- Regulatory compliance analysts
- Stormwater management specialists
- Stormwater engineers
- Construction management specialists
- IDDE inspectors
- Stormwater field sampling experts
- Natural systems management specialists
- Urban forestry specialists

ES Environmental Programs Group and ES Urban Forestry staff serve on the Green Infrastructure Curriculum subcommittee, which guides the eight-week training program. Originally formed to develop the curriculum, the subcommittee now focuses on gathering feedback from organizations piloting the curriculum, identifying opportunities for improvement, and supporting workforce development efforts across the Central Puget Sound region. The City is actively exploring new implementation approaches to expand program reach and enhance career opportunities for participants. In 2025, 15 students graduated from the program.

Tacoma Green Stormwater Infrastructure Projects

Priority Audiences: General Public (including school age children, college/university students, trade students, and overburdened communities), Engineers, contractors, Property owners/managers, developers, and land use planners

Subject Areas:

- General impacts of stormwater on surface waters, including impacts from impervious surfaces and the hazards associated with illicit discharges and improper disposal of waste
- LID principles and LID BMPs
- Stormwater treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities
- Technical standards for stormwater site and erosion control plans

Tacoma continues to increase the visibility of green stormwater infrastructure by installing LID facilities, including permeable roads and bioretention facilities, where feasible. City-sponsored GSI and LID projects are used to demonstrate to school age children, college/university students, trade students, engineers, contractors, property owners/managers, developers, and land use planners how LID can be incorporated into projects and how various design challenges can be overcome. The City has provided information on GSI, LID, and other stormwater

treatment and flow control BMPs/facilities on its website, in the City's Stormwater Management Manual and Public Works Right-of-Way Design Manual, as well as in project-specific outreach materials and publicity events.

TPU Water Conservation Program

Priority Audiences: General public, businesses, engineers, contractors, property owners/managers, developers, and land use planners.

Subject Areas:

- Water conservation, Outdoor irrigation & lawn watering runoff - minimize through public education and water conservation efforts.
- Street and sidewalk wash water - minimize volumes used and reduce these discharges through public education and water conservation messaging

Tacoma Public Utilities (Tacoma Water) Water Conservation Team provides education, incentives, and technical assistance to reduce potable water use and minimize stormwater runoff from outdoor practices. The program targets residential and commercial audiences, promoting behavior changes (e.g., letting lawns go dormant in summer and sweeping instead of pressure washing), device-based efficiency (e.g., smart irrigation controllers, hose nozzles, timers, and rain gauges), and hands-on support for businesses through site assessments and water-use reporting.

Residential

The team distributed free hose spray nozzles, hose timers, and rain gauges to help residents right-size irrigation and prevent runoff, and promoted EPA WaterSense-qualified smart irrigation controller rebates. In partnership with Pierce Conservation District, TPU, and Pierce County, Tacoma Water launched the Golden Lawn campaign, encouraging lawn dormancy during summer to reduce irrigation demand and runoff; 200 residents pledged and received yard signs to show their commitment. Residential messaging was delivered at community events, 48 events attended in 2025, and via social media to encourage sweeping sidewalks and driveways instead of pressure washing to conserve water and keep wash water out of storm drains.

Business & CII

Tacoma Water's Customizable Rebate program for Commercial/Institutional/Industrial customers offered financial incentives based on estimated water savings to offset the cost of efficient equipment and systems. The team provided no-cost site assessments, consultation sessions, presentations, and detailed water-use reports to identify savings and reduce irrigation overspray and runoff. Smart irrigation controller rebates are available to commercial customers; 29 businesses enrolled in smart irrigation incentives, and 3 site visits were completed.

Smart Irrigation Rebate

Tacoma Water offers residential, business, and multifamily customers a 50% rebate (up to \$500 per account) for qualifying WaterSense-labeled smart irrigation controllers (and compatible add-ons/plug-ins). The rebate supports MS4 education goals by reducing overwatering and irrigation runoff on Tacoma Water served properties.