



South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Code Update

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

City Council Study Session
August 19, 2025



1

Overview



Purpose of the meeting: Review public comment and testimony on the South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District (STGPD) code update and identify any amendments for Council consideration.

Overview:

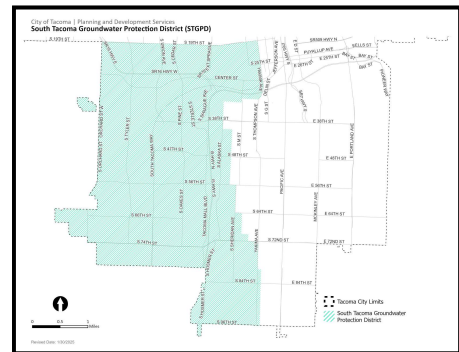
- Background
- Public Comments
- Summary of Testimony
- City Council Questions & Clarifications
- Next Steps

2

2

STGPD Background

- Created in 1988, prior to the State's establishment of the Growth Management Act (GMA) and its guidance on Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas (CARAs)
- **Purpose:** Protect the South Tacoma aquifer from contamination
- **Key Regulations in STGPD:**
 - Applies primarily to commercial and industrial uses
 - Prohibits incompatible land uses
 - Establishes standards for:
 - Hazardous substance storage
 - Stormwater infiltration
 - Spill prevention
 - Inspections, testing and enforcement
- **Lead agencies:**
 - Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD)
 - Tacoma Water
 - Environmental Services
 - Planning and Development Services (PDS)



3

3

Public Hearing Notifications

Notifications – August 12, 2025 Public Hearing

Adjacent Jurisdictions	City News Release	Chamber of Commerce
Department of Health	Economic Development Board for Tacoma-Pierce County	Interested Parties List
Joint Base Lewis-McCord	Neighborhood Business Districts	Neighborhood Councils
Postcard Mailer	Puyallup Tribe	Social Media
Star Center	South Tacoma Way Neighborhood Planning List	Tacoma Daily Index
Tacoma Permit Advisory Group	Tacoma Public Libraries	TPCHD Communities of Focus
TPCHD Regulated Businesses	TV Tacoma	Website

4

4

Public Comments



- **Total comments:** 21
- **Written comments:** 7
- **In-person speakers:** 14
- General support for strengthening groundwater protections
- Concerns that proposed amendments may not fully safeguard the aquifer
- Concerns that prohibiting certain uses may be a threat to local jobs

5

5

Public Comment Themes

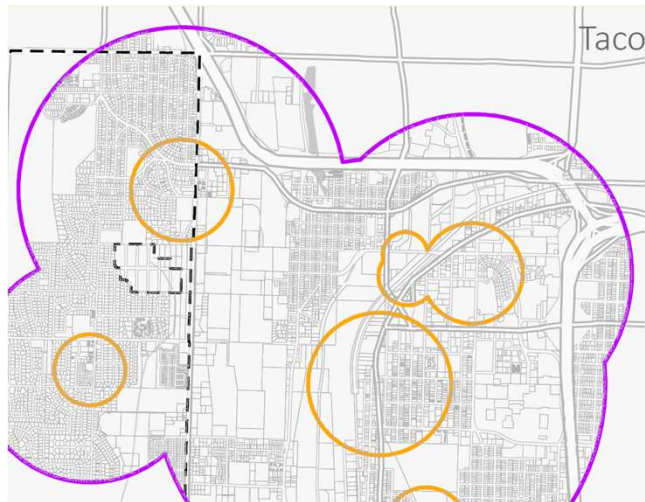


High Impact Use Standards	• Expanding prohibitions to more uses (e.g., fertilizers, hazardous materials, and polyfluoroalkyl substances) • Impact of code changes on existing businesses • Prohibiting certain uses is a threat to city's green economy & local jobs
Stormwater Infiltration	• Treat all hard surfaces as pollution-generating • Unclear water quality standards for infiltrated stormwater • Ambiguity regarding when stormwater infiltration must be treated
Impervious Surface Standards	• Set impervious surface limitations across all zones • Concerns about the impact of Bridge Industrial project
Enforcement	• Align STGPD waiver process with land use variances
Water Quality	• Drinking water quality and treatment

6

City Council Questions & Clarifications

- How many businesses will the code changes affect?
- How are parcels handled if they are partly inside Time of Travel Zones?
- What support exists for remediating contaminated sites in STGPD?



7

Staff Suggested Edits

- Add language for nonconforming uses: Existing underground storage tanks may be replaced, provided the replacement meets the standards for a new tank
- Remove waiver language, reference the variance process
- Clarification for split parcels
- Minor code clean ups based on public comments

8

8

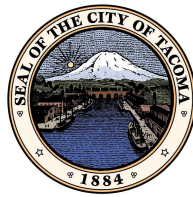
Next Steps



2025 Dates	Actions
August 26	First Reading of Ordinance
September 9	Final Reading of Ordinance
September 20	Current Moratorium Expires

9

9



South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Code Update

City of Tacoma | Planning and Development Services

City Council Study Session
August 19, 2025

10