

# Planning for Improved Public Health in Local Land Use Decisions

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Tacoma-Pierce County

**Health Department**

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*

# Opening Poll



Who has engaged with their Local Health Jurisdiction (LHJ) on a local land use decision?



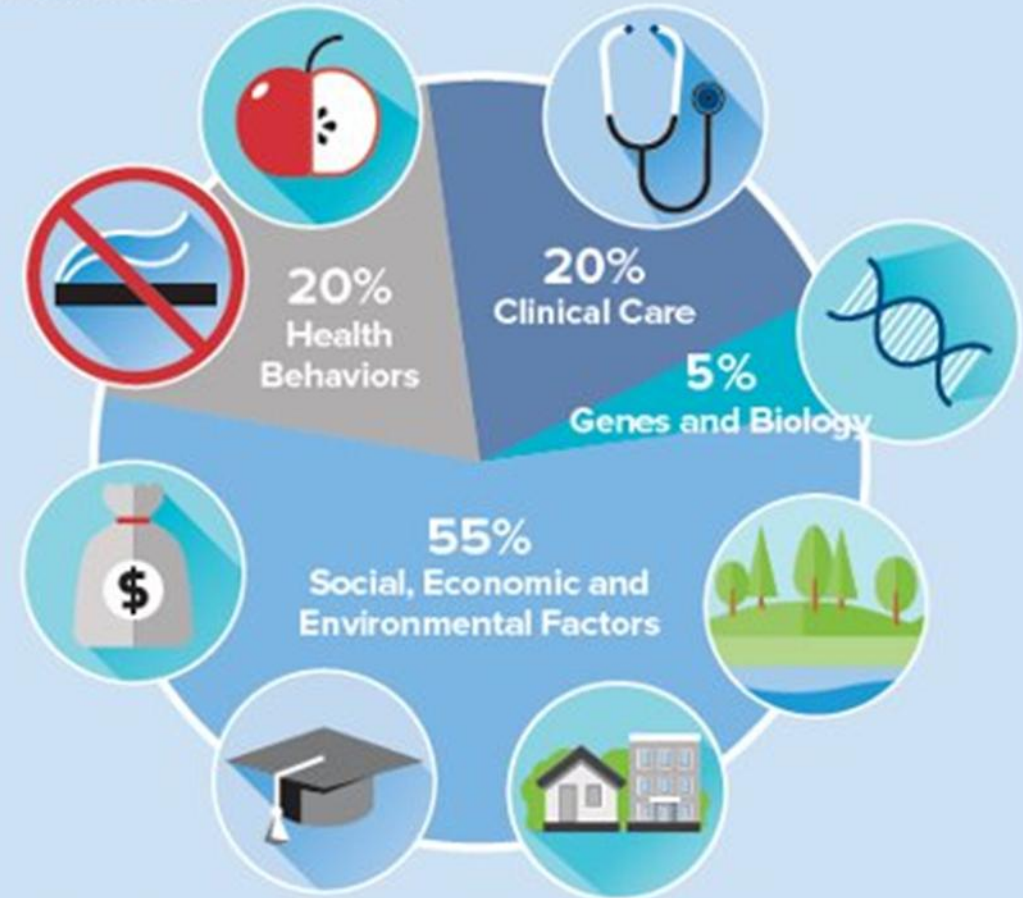
Who has implemented feedback of their LHJ in a local land use decision?



# Why is the Health Department here?

Health Starts Where We Live,  
Learn, Work and Play.

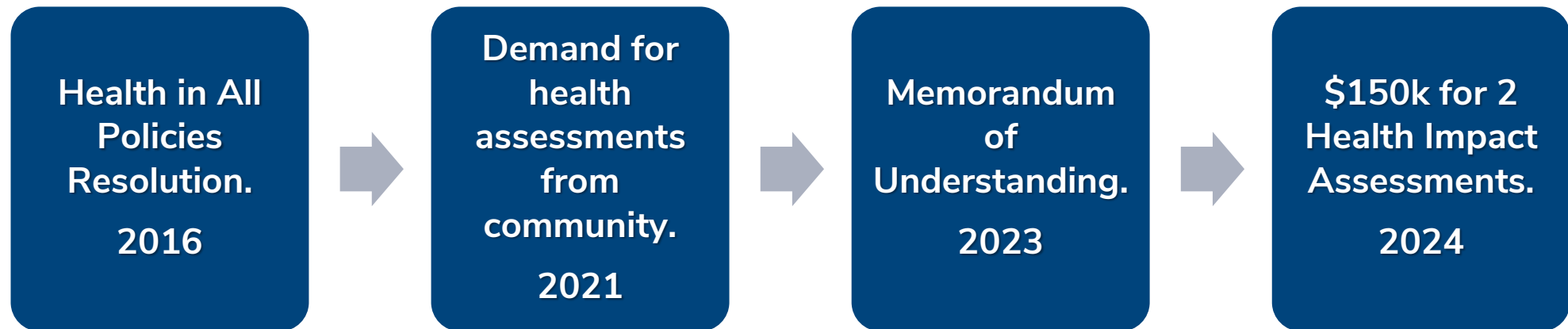
What makes us healthy?



Adapted from <http://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/FAQ.html>



# Health Department Partnership with City of Tacoma



# Health Impact Assessments (HIA)

## Are

- A tool to inform decision-makers and the public of the health outcomes—both beneficial and harmful—of a proposed project, policy, or program.

## Are not

- A tool to stop permit approval or reverse a previous permitting decision.
- A tool to assess the impacts of a project, policy, or program that has already begun.
- Regulatory.



# Policies Assessed

## Tideflats Subarea Plan



Port of Tacoma

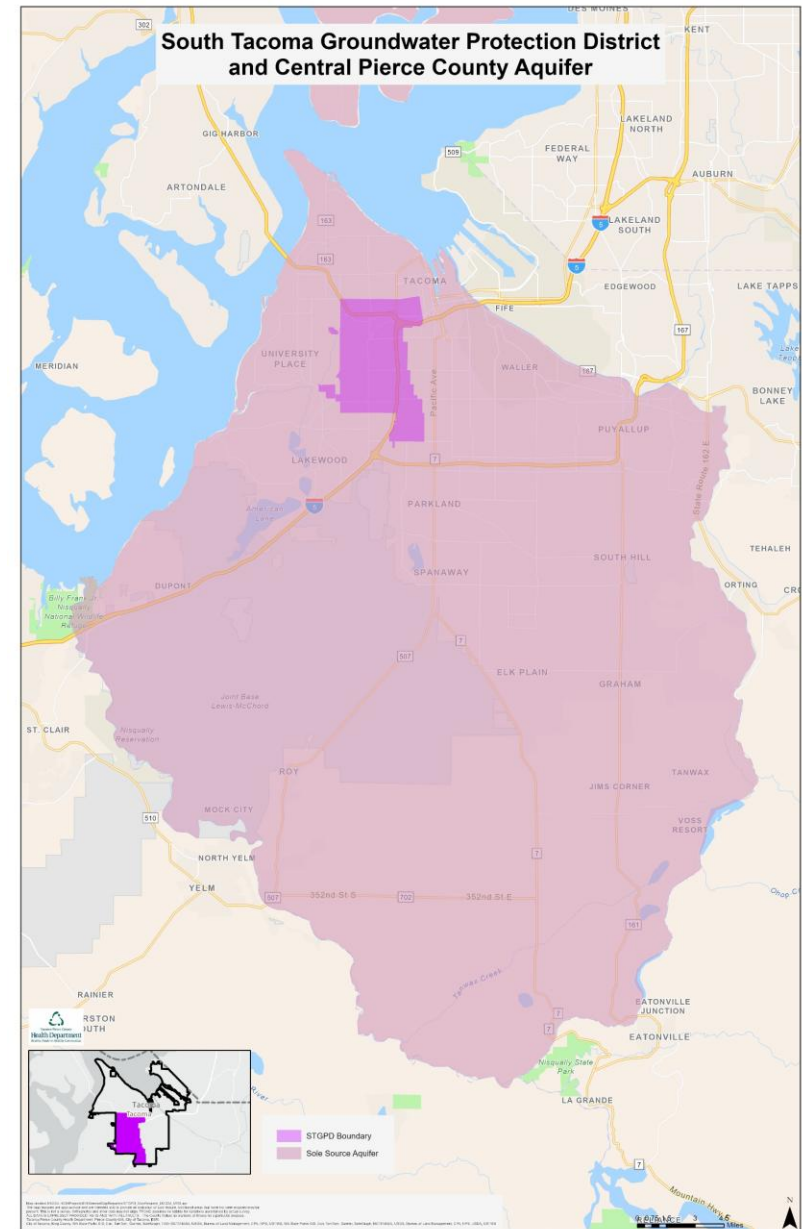


City of Tacoma



# Policies Assessed

## South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Protection District Code Update



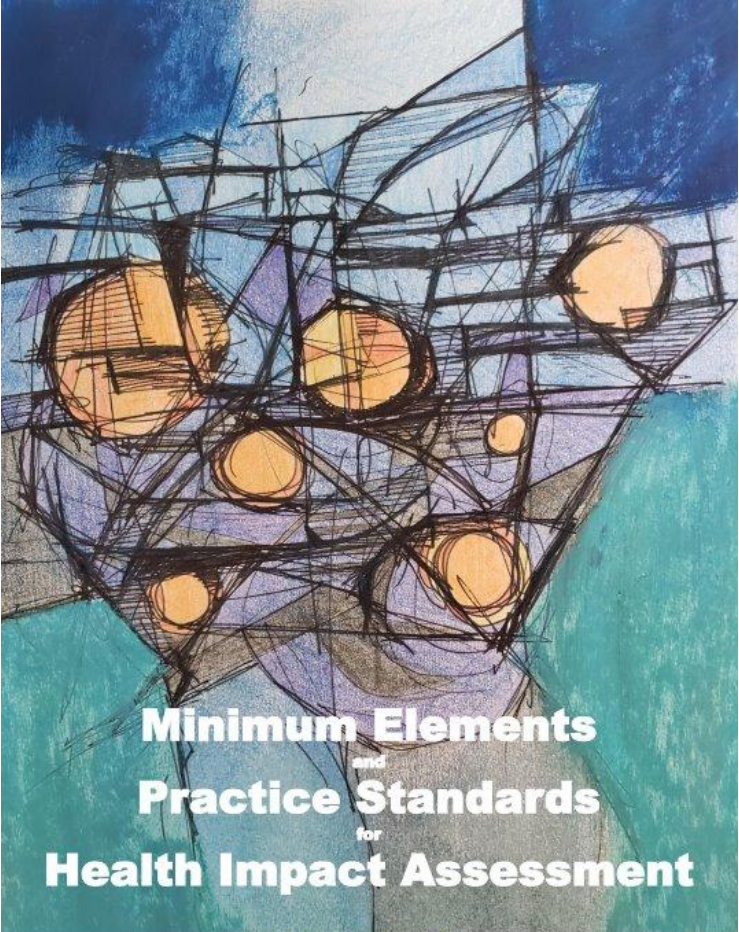
# Environmental Conditions and Health



Photo credit: Ecology, Communities of a Healthy Bay, and Tacoma News Tribune.



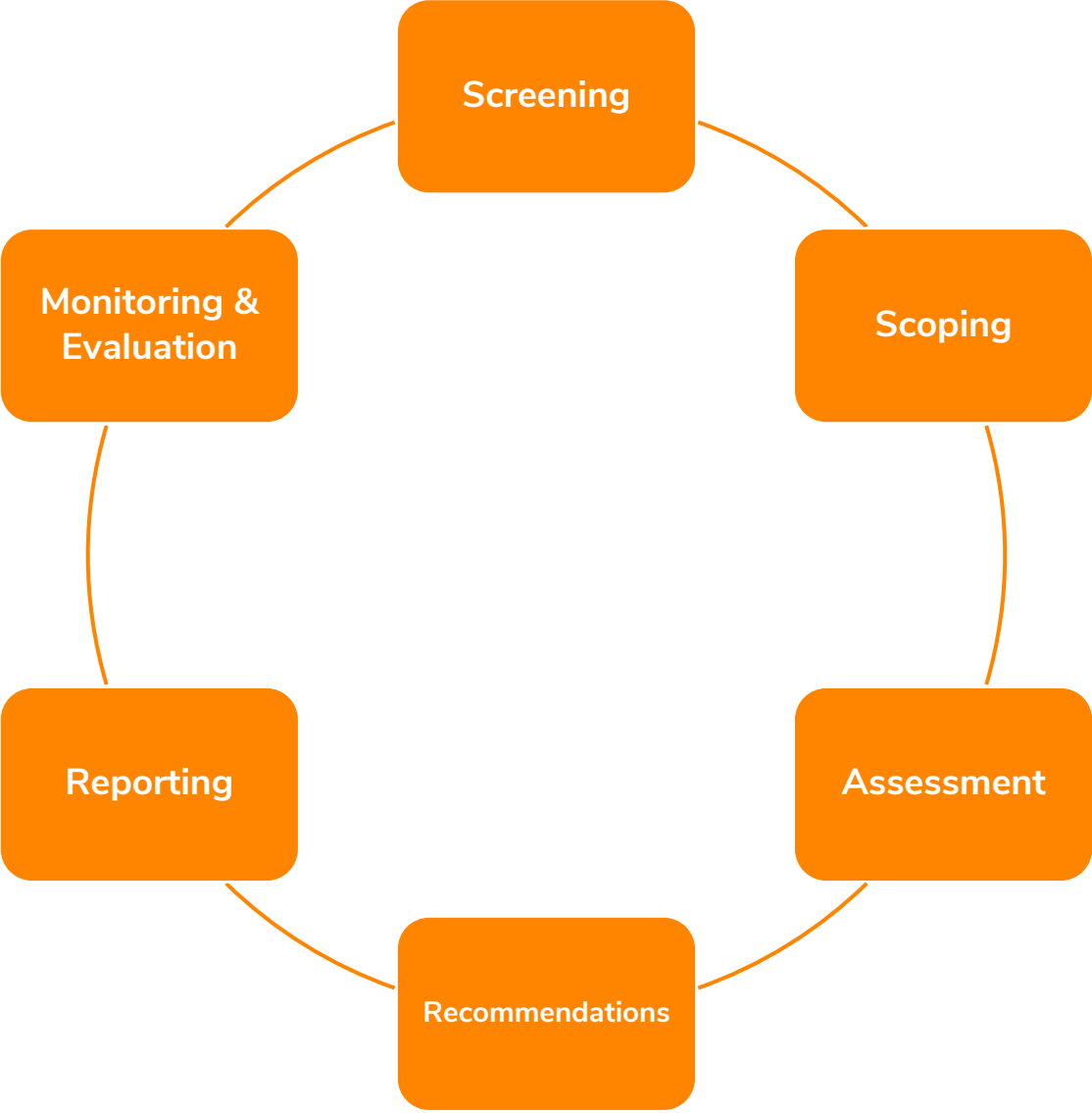
# Approach



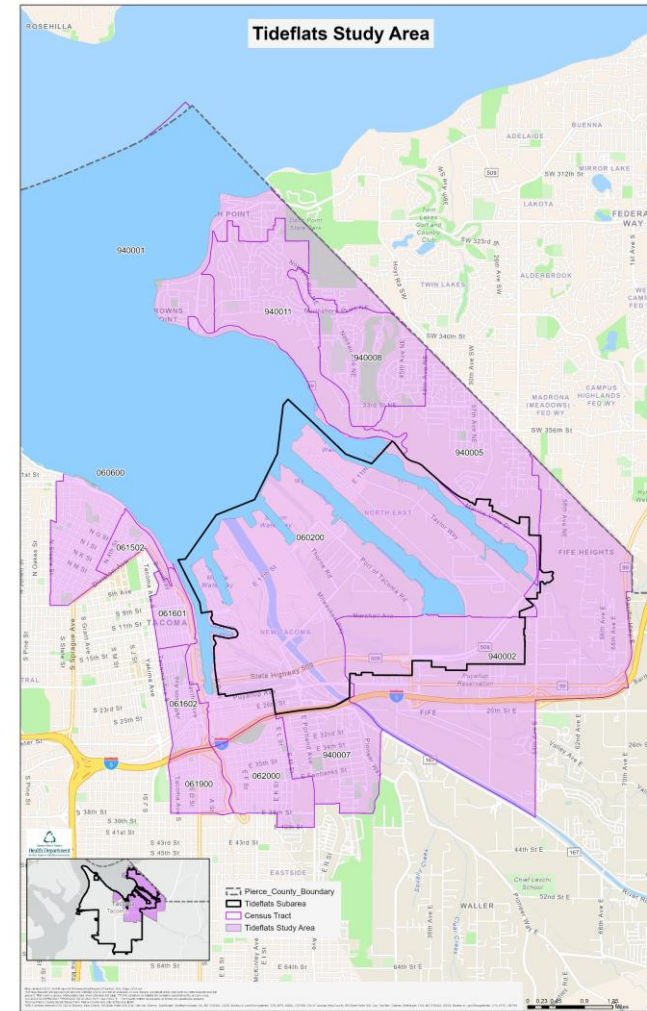
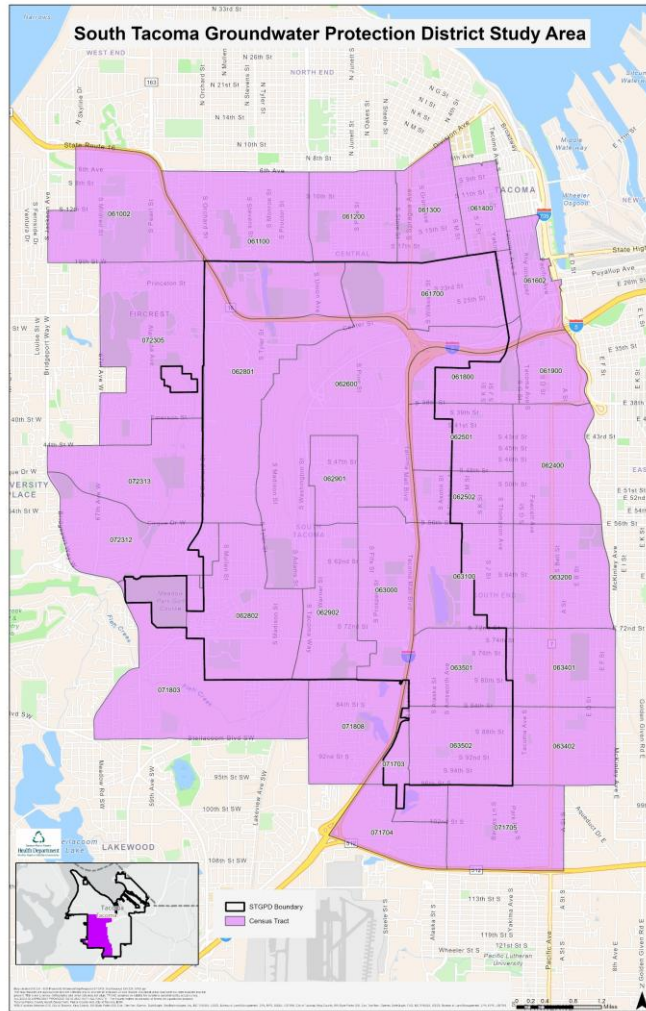
Version 4



August 2022



# Baseline Health Characterization



# Baseline Health Characterization

Compared to *Pierce County*, Tacoma's industrial-adjacent communities have higher percentages/rates of:

## Social Determinants of Health

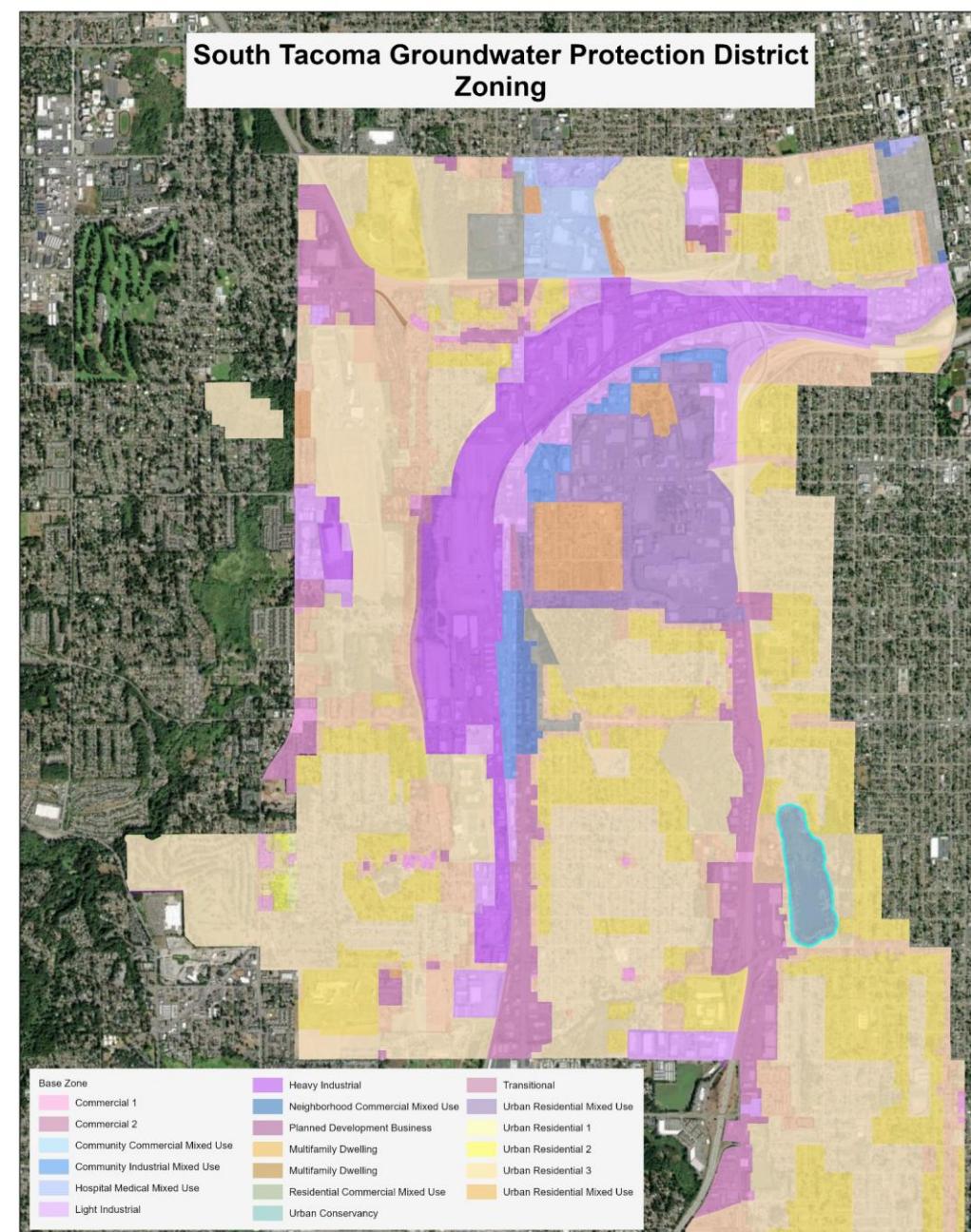
- People of color.
- People who speak English “less than well.”
- People who live in poverty.
- People who live with a disability.
- Households without a vehicle.

## Health Outcomes

- Asthma-related ER visits.
- New cancer diagnoses.
- Premature birth and low birth weight.
- Premature death.



# South Tacoma Groundwater Protection District Assessment



# Maintain ban on new metal recycling and auto wrecking?

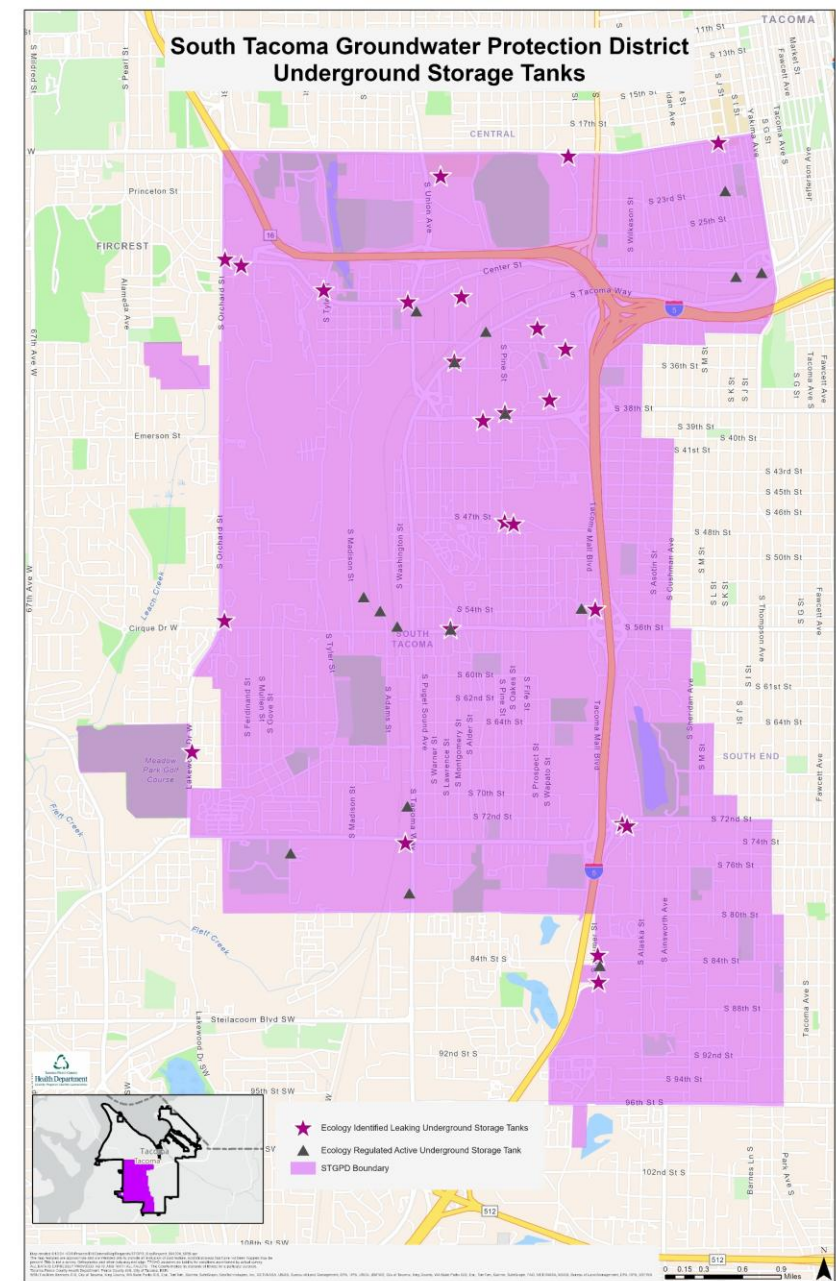
- Substances commonly emitted from metal recyclers, auto-wreckers, metal fabricators, and steel foundries is associated with:
  - Cancer.
  - Cardiovascular and respiratory disease.
  - Diabetes.
  - Poor birth outcomes.
  - Damage to the digestive, endocrine, and reproductive systems.

\*Depending on exposure route.



# Maintain ban on new underground storage tanks?

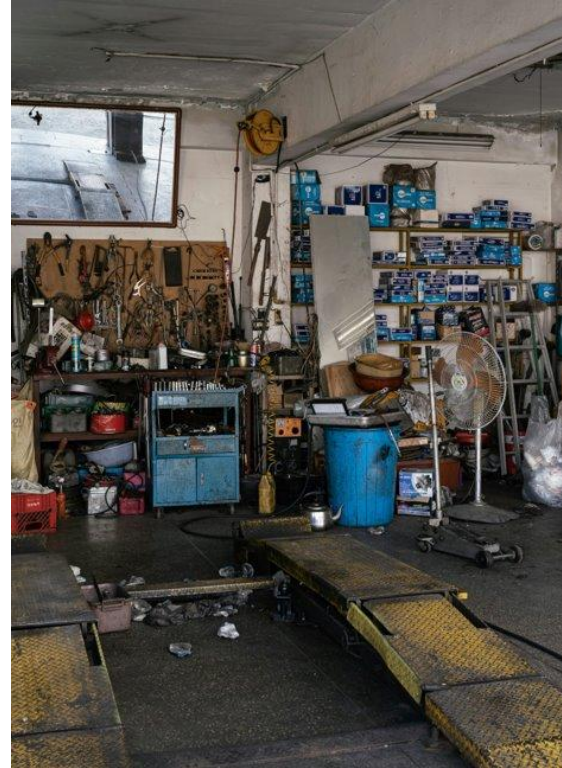
- USTs often hold petroleum products and additives.
- Ingesting water contaminated with these hazardous substances is associated with:
  - Cancer.
  - Problems with liver, kidneys, and stomach.
  - Developmental issues in children.
  - Neurological and reproductive issues in adults.



# Further regulations or prohibition of other use types?



Industrial laundry and dry cleaners



Vehicle maintenance



Landfills



Wastewater treatment and septic systems



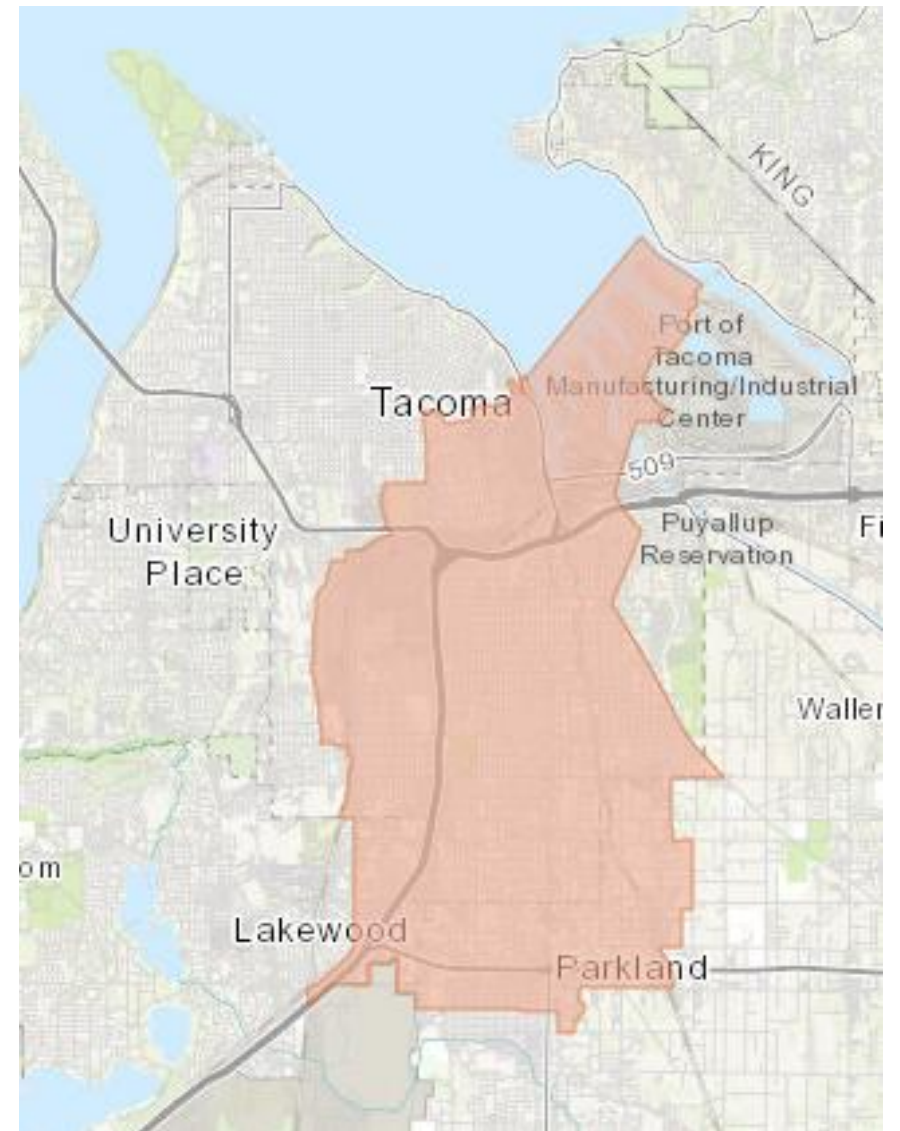
# Other Standards?

- Require soil contaminant testing for on-site infiltration.
- No infiltration through contaminated soils.
- Tree planting/retention.
- Consistent approach to identifying regulated business.
- Countywide collaboration for aquifer protection.



# Addressing Air Pollution

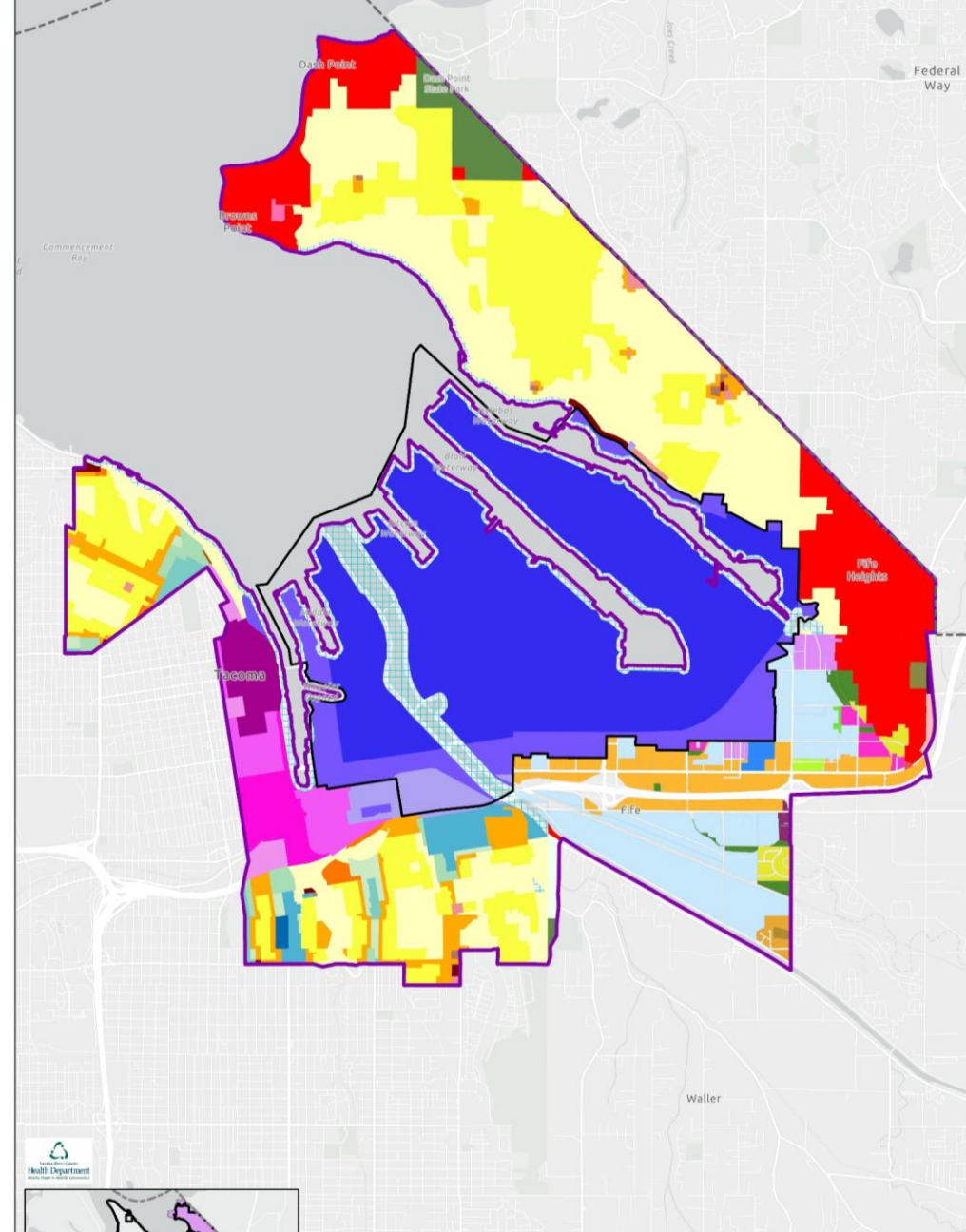
- Residential habitability standard.
  - HVAC with MERV 13 filter or higher.
- Indirect source rule.
- Distribute air purifiers and trees in most overburdened neighborhoods.











Ecology: Communities Overburdened by Air Pollution.



# Tideflats Subarea Plan Assessment



# Priority Action Items

Public Health Criteria	Potential Health Benefit							
								
Reduce volumes of air pollution.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promote better air quality through increased tree canopy.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Better understand and regulate the cumulative health risks of air pollution.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promote healthy housing through better air filtration and weatherization.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lessen the volume of harmful contaminants that enter Commencement Bay.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Better understand the health risks for those who rely on private wells for drinking water.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

106 proposed priority action items.











28 Action Items meet at least 1 criterion.



Tier 1, 2, & 3 actions recommended for prioritization.



# Priority Transportation Investments

Public Health Criteria	Potential Health Benefit							
								
Improve regional air quality and promote better health outcomes by reducing traffic and freight congestion and idling.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve local air quality and promote better health outcomes by moving heavy freight routes away from city centers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increase access to public transit, potentially reducing air and stormwater pollution from commuter traffic.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

36 proposed investment projects.

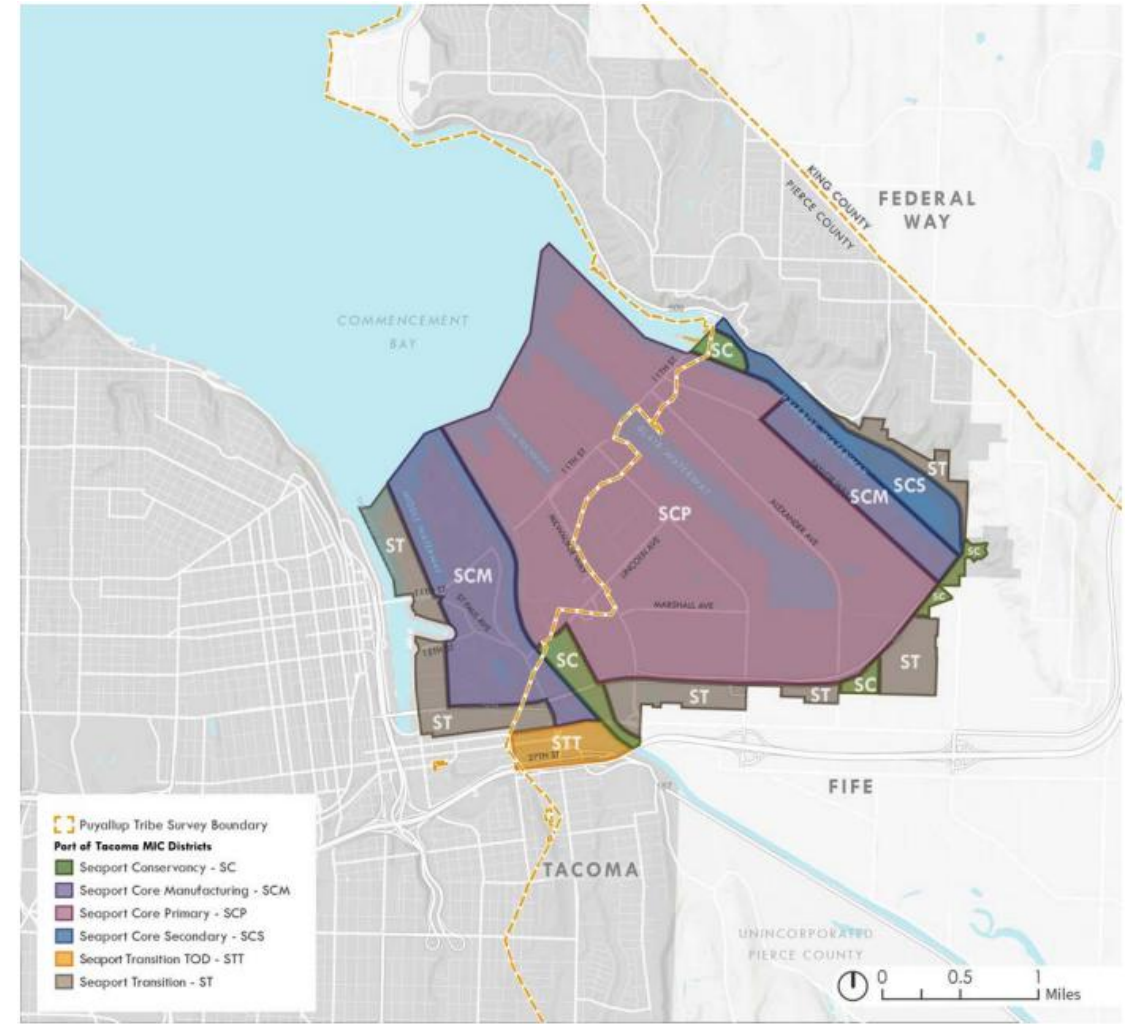


9 proposed projects meet at least 1 criterion – recommended for prioritization.



# Zoning Priorities

- Improve health for vulnerable populations.
- Reduce pollution that is associated with the most severe health outcomes.
- Reduce pollution that could result in improvements in multiple health outcomes.



# Example Land Use Code Recommendations

Land Use Type	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	HIA Recommendation
<b>Residential Uses</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Houseplex</u></li> <li>• Courtyard Housing</li> <li>• Backyard House</li> <li>• Mobile Home/Trailer Court</li> <li>• Rowhouse</li> </ul>	Not permitted in all <u>zone</u> .	Not permitted in any zone.	The Health Department supports keeping these prohibitions intact because it will prevent more residents from being exposed to industrial emissions, noise, and light, and from the traffic-related air pollution associated with freight activities and commuter traffic.
Dwelling (Accessory)	Permitted in M1 subject to special use standards.	Not permitted in any zone.	The Health Department supports this amendment because it will prevent more residents from being exposed to industrial emissions, noise, and light, and from the traffic-related air pollution associated with freight activities and commuter traffic.
Multiplex	Permitted in M1 with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP).	Not permitted in any zones except STT. Residential use <u>prohibited</u> on the ground floor.	<p>The proposed regulation could result in improvements in public health outcomes. However, permitting more housing in the Subarea will expose more residents to industrial emissions, noise, and light, and to the TRAP associated with freight activities and commuter traffic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If multiplexes are permitted in the Subarea, they should be at least 500 feet from the nearest highway and should be constructed with HVAC systems.</li> </ul>



# Example Land Use Code Recommendations

Land Use Type	Current Regulation	Proposed Regulation	HIA Recommendation
Cement and asphalt batching	Permitted in the M2 and PMI zones only.	Not permitted in any zone except the SCM, where the discharge of stormwater and wastewater to waterbodies is prohibited.	<p>This amendment is an improvement from the current regulatory code in terms of public health. However, due to the hazardous nature of components of cement and asphalt batching (see pages 37 and 40), additional standards should be required where the use is permitted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stockpiles of raw and finished materials, including those being transported to and from the site, should be enclosed or covered to avoid PM dispersion from wind and mechanical agitation.</li> <li>• Roads and driveways owned by the facility should be paved to minimize track out of PM that can become airborne or washed into stormwater.</li> </ul>
Laundry and dry cleaning	Permitted in all zones.	Not permitted in any zone except the SCM and SCS, where the discharge of stormwater and wastewater to waterbodies is prohibited.	<p>This amendment is an improvement from the current regulatory code in terms of public health. However, the most western portion of the SCM zone is sited within the Central Pierce County Sole Source Aquifer, and due to the hazardous nature of the chemicals used in laundry and dry-cleaning services (see page 46), this use type should not be permitted in the SCM.</p>



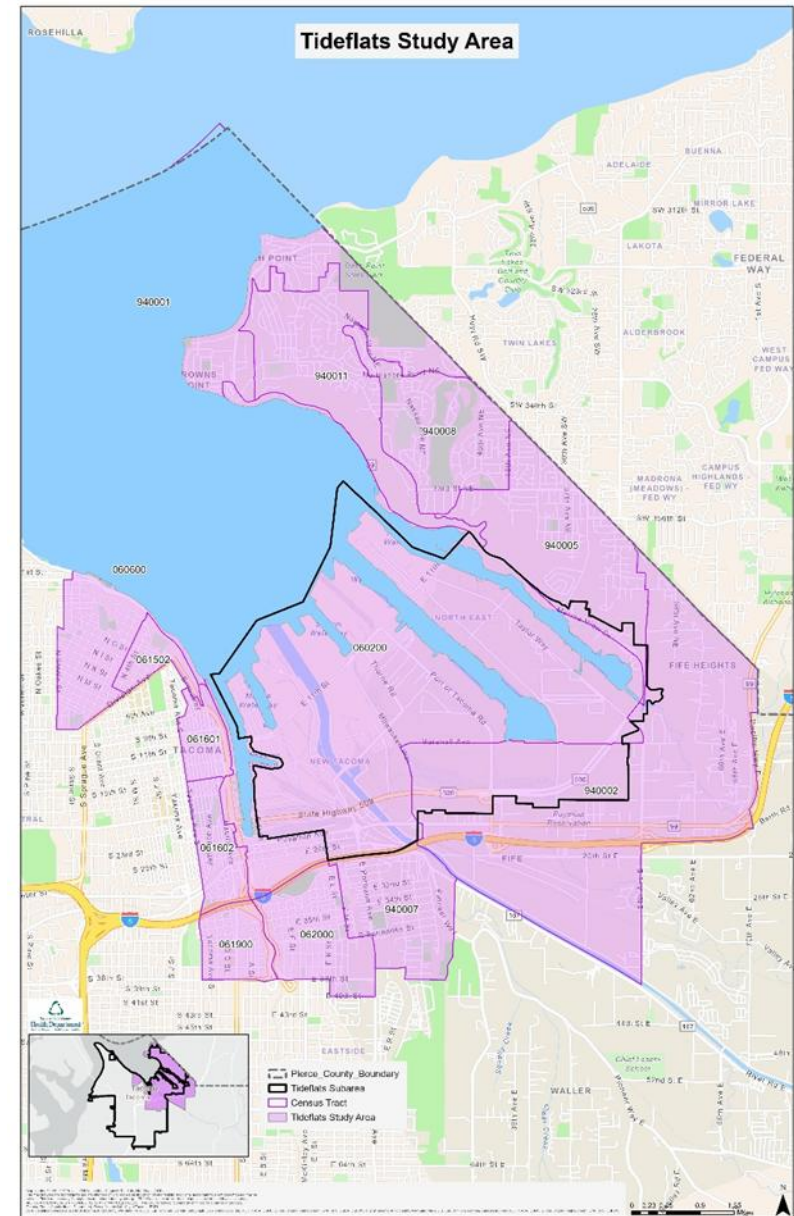
# Monitoring and Evaluation

## Monitoring

- Health indicators.
- Environmental determinants.

## Evaluation

- Process.
- Impact.
- Outcome.



# Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Timing.
  - Is there enough time to complete assessment before decisions need to be made?
- Collaboration.
  - Are partners aware of and amenable to the work?
- Buy-in from decision-makers.
  - Are the decision-makers and partners open to the HIA findings and recommendations?
- Scale of assessment.
  - Are intermediate or comprehensive HIAs needed, or can we broaden our reach by conducting more, less-intensive assessments?



# Questions?

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[tpchd.org/environment/community-planning/health-impact-assessments](http://tpchd.org/environment/community-planning/health-impact-assessments)



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