2024
Annual Report

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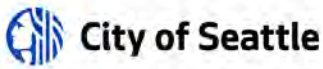
This document represents an incredible amount of work accomplished by a coalition of organizations committed to restoring the health of the Green/Duwamish watershed. Working alone we will not achieve our vision, but if we continue to work together, anything is possible.

Thank you!



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our Green/Duwamish (OGD) is a coalition of partners (Partners) focused on improving stormwater management in the Green/Duwamish watershed. This annual report represents a collaborative regional effort of actions taken to improve stormwater quality and control stormwater quantity from June 2024 through May 2025.

The OGD Implementation Plan laid out 675 actions taking place in the watershed by 21 different Partner organizations. This represents a staggering level of effort from Partners. For this annual report, Partners shared any challenges, proud accomplishments, and future plans they had for each goal. This feedback was collected over phone interviews and online form submissions. Of note was the impressive commitment to voluntary participation in the annual reporting process. A total of 10 Partners provided examples of work they accomplished to support the goals of OGD. Previous OGD annual reports included survey data about our governance dimensions, reflections about how well we felt OGD was functioning. This data is still collected annually from Partners, but is used for internal planning purposes and will now be omitted from the annual report.

The reporting format for our goals is meant to amplify the work completed by Partners throughout the watershed. There are inspiring stories about how Partners are improving water quality, changing regional behavior, and supporting each other in effective watershed-wide stormwater improvements. There is also honest feedback Partners shared about real challenges they are facing with meeting commitments, due to legislative, monetary, capacity, or other barriers.

This annual reporting process helps OGD to capture a snapshot of how we're meeting our commitments to each other and the watershed. A more extensive 5-year review in late 2025 will evaluate OGD's organizational structure, mission, vision, goals, uncertainties, and data gaps to reassess and make changes to the Implementation Plan as needed.

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Goal 1: Reduce priority toxics and other pollutants discharging to receiving waters

Summary: Partners continue to reduce priority toxics and other pollutants through projects and programs. Studies on managing 6PPDQ, the toxic chemical found in tire wear particles, are also underway. Two Partners received grants for projects designed to identify likely sources of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) on buildings. Other Partners have expanded street sweeping programs. Ecology also approved new best management practices (BMPs) for water quality treatment.

Challenges: Partners are facing challenges with staff capacity and access to funding. Several Partners relied on support from Environmental Coalition of South Seattle (ECOSS) to provide spill kits to businesses. This service is no longer available. In some cases, funding for larger Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) retrofit projects won't be available until 2029-2031.

Highlights:

- Seattle and Tukwila received grants from the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to identify sources of PCBs.
- Enumclaw identified and fixed a septic issue on 432nd Street.
- Ecology approved modified vegetated filter strips for basic and metals treatment.
- Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 9 lobbied to highlight the importance of stormwater retrofits and treating 6PPDQ.
- Seattle accomplished actions to remove sources of contaminants to the Lower Duwamish Waterway (LDW). These actions included sampling, stormwater pipe cleaning, and street sweeping.
- Tukwila installed engineered bioretention under Interurban Avenue for stormwater treatment. This location is upstream of an outfall to the Duwamish River.

Next steps:

Several Partners are beginning construction on stormwater treatment projects in 2025:

- Retrofitting a 1.3-acre stormwater pond in Maple Valley
- Treating 6 acres of impervious area in an overburdened community in the Longfellow Creek drainage basin
- 1.6 acres of treatment for stormwater discharging to Longfellow Creek

Several Partners will screen for pollution and study how effective treatment is. OGD will continue to focus on watershed-wide retrofit planning to address pollutant levels.

Goal 2: Foster partnerships, broad participation and collaboration amongst watershed stakeholders and communities

Summary: Partners participate in or manage strong, long-standing community programs related to stormwater, like Adopt-a-Drain, Storming the Sound, and Stencil A Storm Drain. Partners shared several examples of deeper collaboration with community groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in shaping and participating in stormwater improvements in their watersheds. Partners are committed to continuing and expanding partnerships with other agencies and community groups.

Challenges: While Partners value how they can share and coordinate their work through the OGD Partner Meetings, however competing demands can make it challenging to consistently attend.

Highlights:

- Several OGD Partners, including Des Moines, SeaTac, Normandy Park, and King County, continued to support StormFest, an annual interactive stormwater festival for Highline Public Schools 6th-grade students.
- Federal Way continues to have successful Storming the Sound event with over 1,600 fourth graders at 34 participating schools.
- WSDOT published a new Roadside Vegetation and Beautification Permit (WSDOT Form 220-018). One of the proposals is from ECOSS and Dirt Corps to treat stormwater from an I-5 ramp in the Georgetown neighborhood of Seattle. This proposal focuses on reducing sediment and contaminants of concern, as well as green infrastructure solutions.
- In 2024 Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) engaged 192 volunteers in stenciling 281 storm drains and supported 6 community partnership events. SPU also worked with a community group in South Seattle (in an area where stormwater discharges to the LDW) towards creating a future place-based and behavior-focused storm drain stencil.
- Tukwila continued to work with a variety of partners on debris cleanup, depaving feasibility, and shoreline revegetation.
- The Seola Pond project is an exciting example of deep collaboration between King County, the City of Seattle, and surrounding community members. This project is demonstrating how municipal stormwater managers can use the watershed collaboration project type in the stormwater management for existing development (SMED) permit requirements to inform future retrofit collaboration in the Green/Duwamish watershed.

Next steps:
OGD will continue to be a venue for collaboration and sharing between Partners. We will be particularly focused on identifying opportunities for collaborative retrofit projects both between Partners and between public and private entities.

Goal 3: Increase access to existing data, research, and resources

Summary: Jurisdictions within the watershed are continuing to improve the data available for existing stormwater assets and expanding use of databases for monitoring data. OGD can continue to advocate for compiling stormwater data and tracking new research and tools for retrofit planning. New tools like the Retrofit Prioritization Tool can support data-driven stormwater planning in the watershed.

Challenges: A lack of common nomenclature and data management structures continues to be a barrier to sharing and compiling data to support decision-making at a watershed scale. Funding constraints may also impact the amount of stormwater feature inventory work that is possible for some partners.

Highlights:

- OGD Partners continually show up to help advance our region's collective stormwater management capabilities. Several OGD Partners shared their knowledge and experience with other MS4 Permittees by presenting at the 2025 MuniCon conference. Partners shared their work on SMED points, PCB source identification, Adopt-A-Drain, Mobile Business Outreach and more.
- Jurisdictions including Enumclaw, Tukwila, and Federal Way, are continuing to map their stormwater systems, digitize older records, and streamline their process for updating mapped assets.
- The evolution of King County's Retrofit Prioritization Tool has a lot of potential to support funding and implementing retrofit projects in the Green/Duwamish watershed.
- Many Partners are involved in research and monitoring related to the toxic tire chemical, 6PPDQ, which is an emerging issue for stormwater management.
- King County developed a 6PPDQ screening model to support prioritization of roadway segments to retrofit with stormwater treatment.

Next steps:

Partners will continue to fold their data into existing databases, like Ecology's Environmental Information Management (EIM) database, and develop workflows to streamline mapping stormwater assets. OGD will continue to support compiling data and using new and existing tools to support watershed-wide retrofit prioritization. This includes coordinating with several groups to build decision support tools over the next couple of years related to SMED/Stormwater Management Action Plan (SMAP) planning and identifying and prioritizing 6PPDQ hotspots. OGD will also pilot using the Retrofit Prioritization Tool to support the start of a watershed-wide Regional Retrofit Program.

Goal 4: Restore natural hydrologic functions through reduction in uncontrolled stormwater runoff flows

Summary: Partners incorporated salmon recovery in actions that control stormwater runoff and improve hydrology. These efforts include riparian vegetation restoration and culvert replacement throughout the watershed. Several large stormwater management planning efforts throughout the watershed were also completed.

Challenges: Partners shared that there are challenges with implementing green stormwater infrastructure (GSI). There is a lack of public space available to install these GSI projects. Maintenance of both public and private infrastructure also poses a challenge. Private facilities can often go unmaintained or abandoned.

Highlights:

- WRIA 9 invested 15% of Cooperative Watershed Management fund awards in riparian revegetation.
- Ecology awarded grant funding to restore vegetation along the Green River and Soos Creek. The Green River at Horsehead project received $287,000 and the Soos Creek project received $196,000.
- Maple Valley received $300,000 in grant funding for stormwater retrofit projects that improve flow control adjacent to Jenkins Creek.
- Tukwila completed their 2024 Surface Water Comprehensive Plan Update. The plan will guide the City's priorities and investments over the next 10 years.
- WSDOT published the Fish Passage Performance Report. WSDOT also completed 32 fish passage projects for Federal Court Injunction barrier culverts. These improved access to over 67 miles of potential habitat upstream. WSDOT fish passage projects undergo a stormwater retrofit assessment to identify opportunities to ensure fish return to higher quality habitat after a barrier is removed.
- Enumclaw installed a new culvert under Battersby Road. This project primarily alleviates flooding and helps channelize sheet flow/stormwater runoff with fish passage as a secondary benefit.

Next steps:
Partners will be expanding stormwater management programs and implementing GSI and revegetation projects across the watershed. Ecology expects to complete the Soos Creek total maximum daily load (TMDL) plan by the end of 2025. OGD will continue to focus on watershed-level basin planning. Understanding areas of insufficient stormwater infrastructure will help shape retrofit programs.

Goal 5: Increase innovation in stormwater runoff

Summary: Partners have been supporting the watershed-wide Regional Retrofit Program by starting a draft list of project sites for retrofit locations. This pilot list is meant to support collaboration and multi-benefit projects and aid in prioritizing storwmater retrofit projects. Partners are also monitoring the effectiveness of new stormwater management BMPs.

Challenges: Partners didn't share any challenges with increasing innovation in stormwater runoff.

Highlights:

- In 2024, the Trees for Seattle program planted 1,079 trees with residents on residential properties and school campuses. This program supported 29 stewardship events that engaged 527 volunteers. Tree planting application outreach was directed to 997 residents in urban heat island neighborhoods, including South Seattle neighborhoods where stormwater discharges to the Duwamish River.
- King County removed invasive species and planted native plants within Glendale Forest, which includes a tributary of Hamm Creek. A total of 175 trees, 180 shrubs, and 149 groundcovers were planted. In addition, 2.6 acres of invasive vegetation were cleared, 22 invasive trees were injected with herbicide, and ivy was removed from 148 mature trees.
- Tukwila tested pre-construction water quality samples for the retrofit site at Fort Dent. The goal of this sampling is to serve as a baseline for comparison with post-construction testing results to gauge actual effectiveness of the water quality device in treating stormwater runoff.
- King County received about $419,000 in grant funding from Ecology to continue work on a community-based public-private partnership (CBP3)/alterative procurement program to support stormwater retrofit projects in the Green/Duwamish watershed.
- King County added bioretention using high performance bioretention soil mixes (HPBSM) in the 2024 amendment of the 2021 Surface Water Design Manual.
- King County received grant funding from Ecology to test existing wet ponds and ditches for effectiveness in removing 6PPDQ. This testing will help inform whether these existing facilities should be retrofitted.

Next steps:
OGD will continue to develop a Regional Retrofit Program, with increased stormwater retrofit planning across the watershed. In addition, Tukwila is completing its Ecology-funded Enhanced Maintenance Plan, which will guide stormwater managers and operations and maintenance staff about tools, techniques, and processes to accelerate stormwater management and improve water quality.

Goal 6: Increase awareness and an understanding of stormwater management

Summary: The Adopt-a-Drain program has been very successful statewide. There has been an increase in the number of jurisdictions participating in the Adopt-a-Drain program. Cities are continuing to host many community events across the watershed. These events raise awareness about stormwater management and stewardship activities. Many of these events are also providing educational opportunities to youth.

Challenges: ECOSS no longer provides spill kit services. As a result, cities pivoted to using other services, including partnering with the Hazardous Waste Management Program. King County recently developed a stormwater community engagement program and is exploring how stormwater management can support community priorities.

Highlights:

- Renton hosted two storm drain marking events with a total of 23 volunteers. Participant awareness about stormwater increased by 36% after these events.
- Federal Way and Tukwila joined the statewide Adopt-a-Drain program. Adopt-a-Drain now has 8 cities and King County participating in the program. Statewide over 3,500 drains have been adopted and nearly 42,500 lbs. of debris is kept out of waterways.
- King County hired a Stormwater Community Engagement Specialist.
- In 2024, SPU's Youth Service Learning program engaged middle and high school-aged youth in conversations and stewardship activities about stormwater. This included providing 38 lessons to 155 youth, working with Duwamish Valley Youth Corps to present stormwater information at 3 community events, hosting 2 storm drain stenciling events for youth groups, and leading 11 Duwamish River boat tours. The boat tours helped youth learn about sources of pollution to the river, stormwater infrastructure, and water quality sampling.
- Enumclaw continues to implement actions to achieve their city stormwater runoff goals, including planting buffers along laterals and streams and implementing low impact development practices.

Next steps:

Some jurisdictions are trying new behavior change campaigns for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements, such as Maple Valley's ShoreScapes program. Other jurisdictions are expanding existing behavior change programs in different languages, such as Seattle's Adopt-a-Drain program being promoted to 2 Mandarin and/or Cantonese speaking groups. King County will be managing community-defined stormwater retrofit planning in the urban unincorporated areas of King County. In addition, Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) is updating the water quality section of their Regional Transportation Plan. It will provide information on the impacts of stormwater on water quality, as well as best practices for managing stormwater related to transportation infrastructure.

Goal 7: Build a coalition or collaborative entity to carry out the vision for the Green/Duwamish Watershed-Wide Stormwater Strategy

Summary: OGD continues to collaborate to carry out the vision for a watershed-wide stormwater strategy. Partners made significant contributions individually and collectively that can be attributed to participation in OGD.

The average rating of effort from Partners on all goals has remained high for this annual report, even with documented resource and staffing limitations. The average rating of effort for each goal was higher than previously reported in 2022 and 2023. Partners put significant effort into advancing Goal 3 and Goal 6 in 2024.

Challenges: Participation in OGD has been a struggle for some Partners due to scheduling conflicts, budget constraints, and conflicting commitments. In addition, while OGD has been focused at the agency level, there is an interest in exploring how we can engage with the public to inform watershed priorities.

Highlights:

- OGD is proud of the progress made toward more collaborative stormwater retrofit work in the watershed. Between creating a Regional Retrofit Program project list, encouraging watershed collaboration for SMED points, and brainstorming innovative contracting methods for retrofit programs, there has been a lot of momentum for a Regional Retrofit Program.
- OGD reformatted Partner meetings to be more efficient. Now OGD meets virtually quarterly and then there will be an in-person meeting or restoration event in the fall.
- As part of the larger 5-year review, the OGD Core Team initiated conversations from a variety of agencies about the goals of the coalition. There is still strong agreement about the value of OGD and the sustained importance of its goals. Founding OGD members emphasized the importance of watershed-wide coordination on retrofit planning and source control.

Next steps:
OGD will continue to be a collaborative entity with regional participation. King County will continue a leadership role and is making progress to onboard a new program manager to support scaling up watershed-wide stormwater management programming and implementing retrofits.