



Passive Open Space Restoration Program

Passive open space properties comprise approximately 488 acres of City-owned forests, wetlands, streams, and wildlife habitat areas. Generally, these areas are undeveloped and covered with vegetation, and many of these areas have steep slopes. Most sites provide or have the potential to provide benefits to stormwater quantity and quality. Stormwater runoff is rainwater or snow melt that has not soaked into the ground. It carries pollutants from streets and lawns to lakes, streams and the Puget Sound without being cleaned. Too much stormwater runoff can cause flooding.



Natural Areas in Decline

Urban natural areas face unique pressures. Passive management is inadequate to maintain environmental health. Invasive species, litter, pollution, increased development, mismanagement and fragmentation reduce a forest's ability to thrive within cities. Urban natural areas are disappearing and declining, and with them go natural solutions to reduce stormwater runoff, absorb greenhouse gases, and provide habitat for local wildlife. Without restoration, the quality of our City's natural resources will continue to decline, while the cost and effort of future restorations will increase.

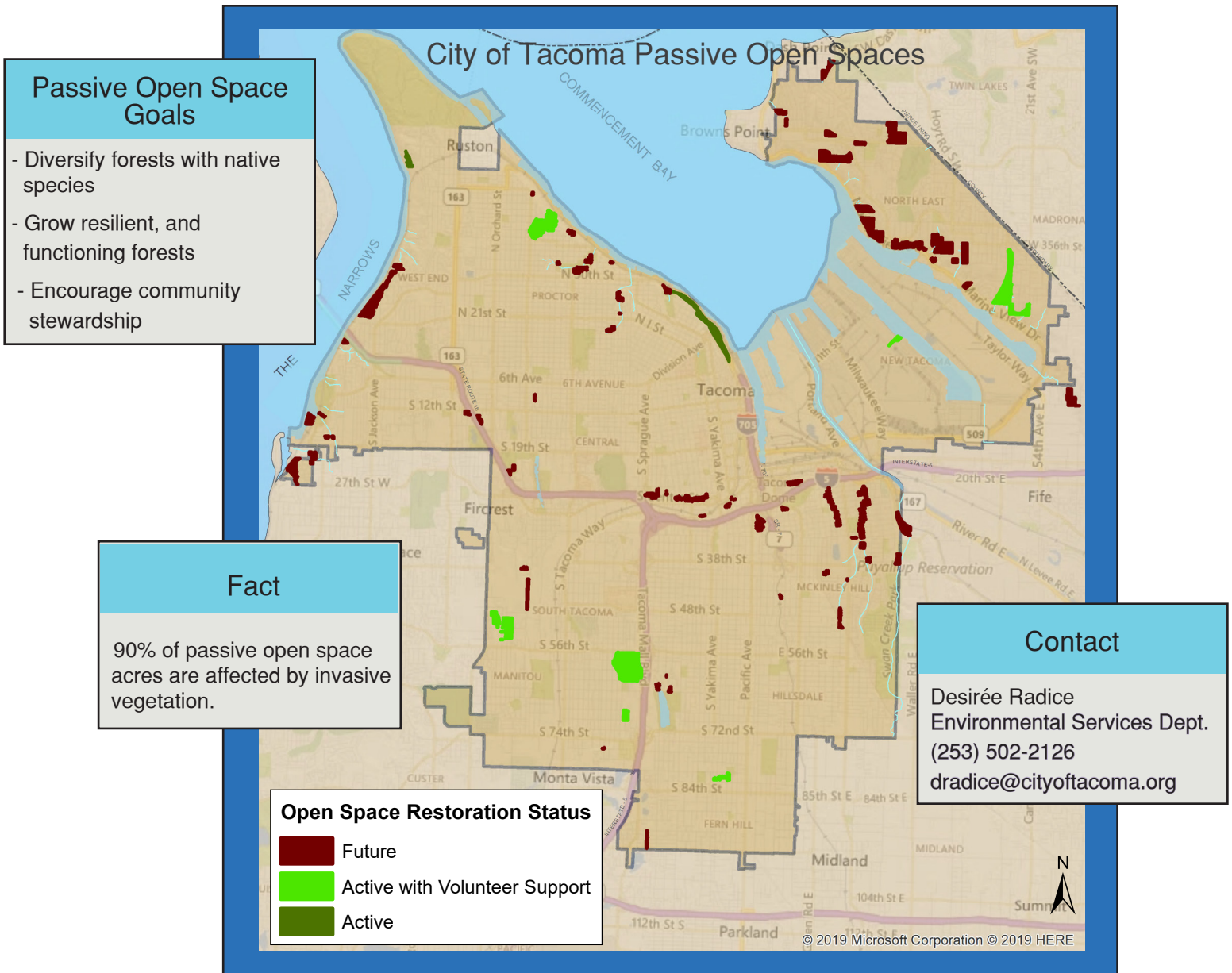
Aggressive non-native vegetation, such as English ivy (left) or Himalayan blackberry (below) will dominate passive open space unless removed. In 100 years, many trees in Tacoma's urban forests could be gone without intervention.



In 2014, the Environmental Services Department began to steward the City's passive open space.

Habitat Renewal in Progress

The primary goal for passive open space properties is that they have a native species dominated, sustainable, and functioning forest. Community investment and care is integral in the long term sustainability of these areas. Active management, restoration, maintenance, and monitoring is needed to reverse the trend of natural-area decline. Positive actions such as removing invasive species, planting diverse native plants, watering, mulching, and vigilant surveillance of sites are necessary for environmental improvement.



Additional Information: https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/environmentalservices/surface_water/open_space_program