

Environmental Services Department

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Project Name: Bayside Trail and Garfield Gulch Area

Date: 7/30/24

Background

The City of Tacoma is committed to fostering a safe and accessible environment for all residents, including ensuring the availability of open spaces like parks and trails. The Bayside Trail area, part of the Schuster Parkway Trail system, was closed in 2000 due to concerns about slope stability, ADA access, and emergency services access. The City is actively working to balance public access with safety and responsible resource management. Efforts include clarifying property boundaries, maintaining open communication with stakeholders, and exploring options to enhance public access to waterfronts, trails, and open spaces.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the City's commitment to natural open spaces, and who manages them?

The City of Tacoma is dedicated to ensuring safe and accessible open spaces for everyone. We work closely with community partners to maintain and enhance parks, trails, and other public spaces for all to enjoy. The City's Open Space Program works to conserve, activate, and manage open space and urban forest lands consistent with City policies and regulations.

2. What is the situation with the Bayside Trail and Garfield Gulch area?

The Bayside Trail, part of the Schuster Parkway Trail system, was completed in 1975 and runs alongside Commencement Bay, bordered by North Schuster Parkway. It was closed in 2000 due to concerns about slope stability, ADA access, and emergency service access. While some residents see potential in restoring the trail for public access, others have safety concerns due to its proximity to their properties.

3. What is the City doing to address the Bayside Trail situation?

The City is actively working on solutions that balance public access with safety and responsible resource management. The Schuster Parkway project, including the Bayside Trail, is led by the Public Works and Planning and Development Services departments. The Environmental Services Department is responsible for encampment and vegetation management. Our efforts include:

- Clarifying Boundaries: We are confirming property lines and easements to clearly define the City's responsibilities.
- Open Communication: We are maintaining open communication with community advocates, residents, Metro Parks, BNSF, and City departments.
- Exploring Options: We are exploring ways to enhance public access to waterfronts, trails, and open spaces, including the Schuster Parkway Trail project.

4. How is the City addressing budget constraints related to open spaces?

While the City's current budget constraints present some limitations, the City is working to find creative ways to enhance Tacoma's open spaces. This includes pursuing grant opportunities and innovative partnerships that could unlock additional resources. The City will continue to provide updates on its future plans as more information becomes available.

5. How can the community get involved and provide input on this and other open space management projects?

The City continues to recognize the importance of public input. The upcoming biennial budget development process provides an opportunity for community members to highlight the availability of safe, accessible open spaces – as well as any other issues they consider to be vitally important – as a priority. The City encourages active community participation in this important process, which aims to meet Tacoma’s present and future needs. More information and ways to provide input can also be found at cityoftacoma.org/openspace.

Supplemental Map:

(Note: The City has an easement on the BNSF property.)

