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## Building Cities in the Rain



*Photo: SvR Design*

**Heather Ballash, AICP**  
**Northwest Planners Forum**  
**October 2015**

# Overview

1. Context – project origin/desired outcomes
2. Permit Flexibilities:  
Regional Facilities/In  
Basin Transfers
3. Permit Flexibilities:  
Watershed Planning/Out  
of Basin Stormwater  
Control Transfers
4. Ecology Stormwater  
Control Transfer Guidance
5. Building Cities in the Rain  
- Prioritization Guidance



*Photo: SvR Design*



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# Puget Sound Regional Council

## “NPDES v. GMA”

**NPDES v. GMA:** Stormwater regulations are often more costly in ultra-urban areas than in green-fields.



**NPDES & GMA/Regional Growth Strategy:** How to encourage development in designated urban centers while being effective at recovering surface waters?



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# Puget Sound Partnership

## Action Agenda

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### **Commerce Near Term Action A1.2.1:**

“Land Use Planning Barriers, BMPs and Example Policies”: address barriers to policies that encourage compact growth, increased density, water quality standards, redevelopment.....”

**South Central LIO Near Term Action SC13:** “Develop recommendations for incentives and cost effective tools to meet stormwater management and GMA ... to encourage infill... in urban centers instead of greenfield... and to improve water quality.”





# Desired Outcome = Vibrant Designated Urban Centers + Clean Water + Restored Fish Habitat



Photo: SvR Design



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# Early Planning for Stormwater

- City of Tacoma  
Comprehensive Plan  
Capital Facilities  
Element – stormwater  
projects
- Tacoma Mall Subarea  
Plan



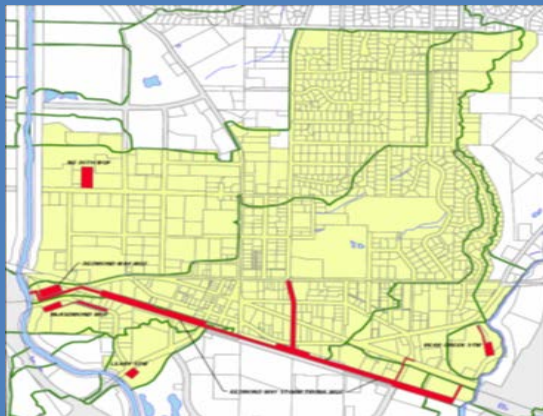
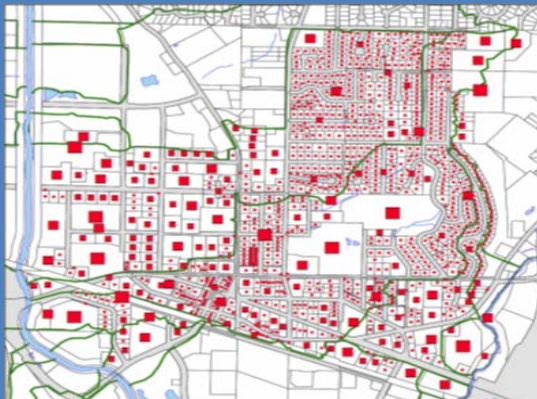
*Tacoma Mall Subarea*





# Flexibility in Regulations: “In basin” Alternatives

## Redmond Town Center



## Mountlake Terrace Town Center



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# Flexibility in Regulations: “Out of basin” Transfers

Stormwater control transfer program:

- Identifies stormwater retrofits with near term ecological benefits
- Addresses hydrology and water quality issues
- Carefully decouples mitigation from project site
- Developers/local governments pay fee-in-lieu of on-site controls to pay back stormwater retrofits



Large vault on site  
*Photo by King County*

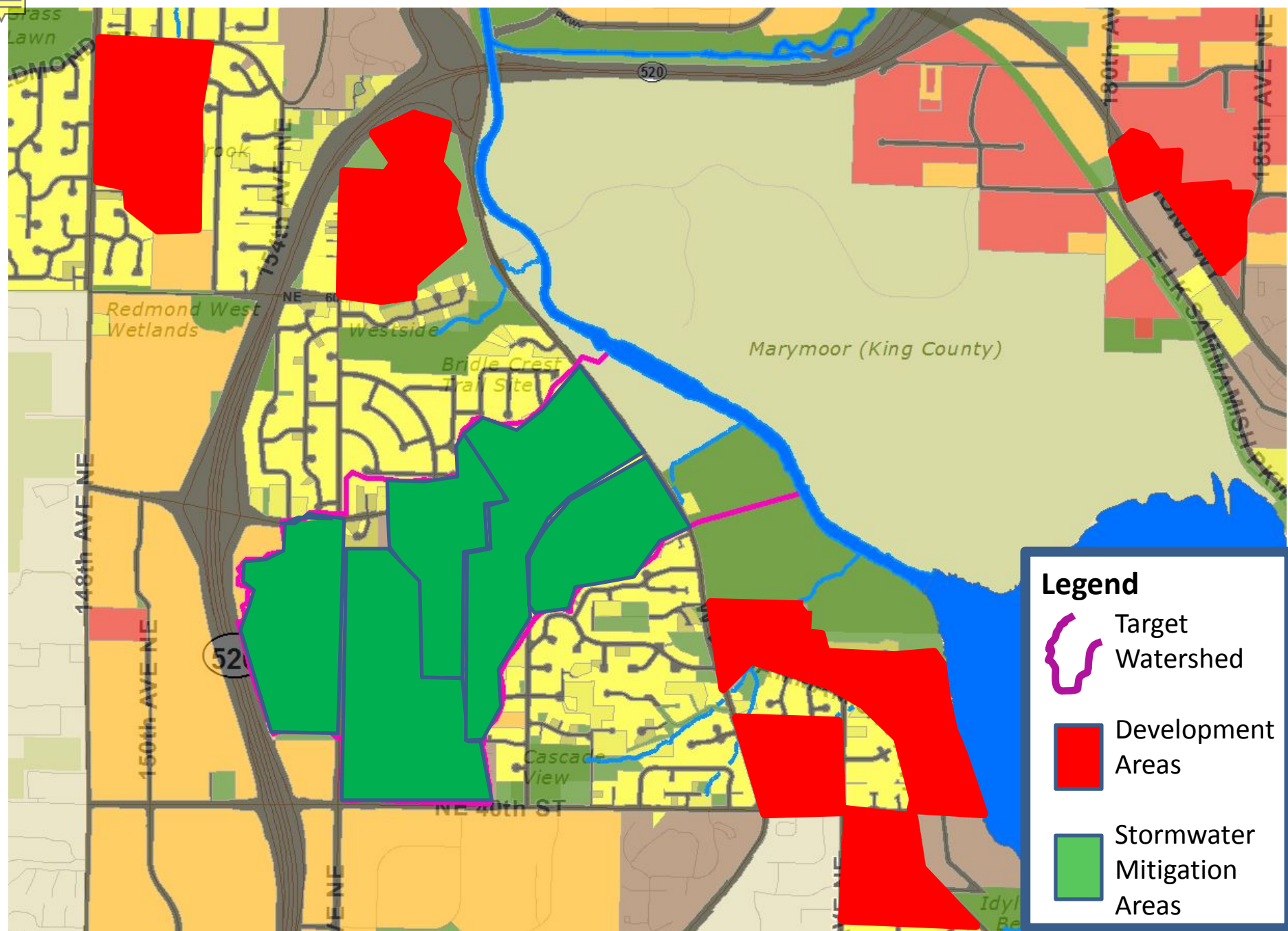


Or, retrofit of high-priority area  
*Photo by P. Chung*






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**Legend**

-  Target Watershed
-  Development Areas
-  Stormwater Mitigation Areas



# Stormwater Control Transfer Program

Anne Dettelbach, Water Quality Program





# Stormwater Control Transfer Program (SCTP) Background

- **Responds to:**
  - Recurring complaint that SW Req'mts discourage urban redevelopment
  - Building Cities in the Rain Initiative
  - Stipulated Order in settlement of municipal permit appeal
- **Articulates municipal permit flexibility**
- **Identifies Ecology expectations**
- **Consistent with PS Ecosystem Recovery Targets (improve lightly to moderately impacted basins)**





# General Program Principles

1. Environmental Goal: Full attainment of WQS
2. NO increased stormwater impacts to any receiving water
3. Directs stormwater improvements to “priority watersheds”
4. Prioritization is science-based
5. Ecology approval required; action is appealable
6. Other, more stringent requirements may still apply





# Stormwater Control Transfer Program

## Overview: *What it is*

- **An alternative approach** to satisfy municipal stormwater permit requirements associated with flow control at new and redevelopment sites that...
- **Accelerates environmental improvements** in priority watersheds and is...
- Implemented through a **water quality/quantity planning provision** in Phase I and II Municipal Stormwater Permits in...
- Western Washington.



# SCTP Overview: *What it is not*

- Relaxation of stormwater requirements
- Wetlands Mitigation Banking
- TMDL-driven pollutant trading
- An alternative to structural retrofitting required by Phase I MS4 permit

NOTE: Phase II permit does not require retrofitting existing development with stormwater controls





# SCTP Guidance Overview

- Section 1:
  - Overview
  - General Principles
  - Key Elements
  - Specific Guidelines
- **Section II: Prioritization Analysis Support & Principles**
- Section III: Effectiveness Monitoring Plan Considerations
- Section IV: Determining Debits/Credits & Tracking Transfers



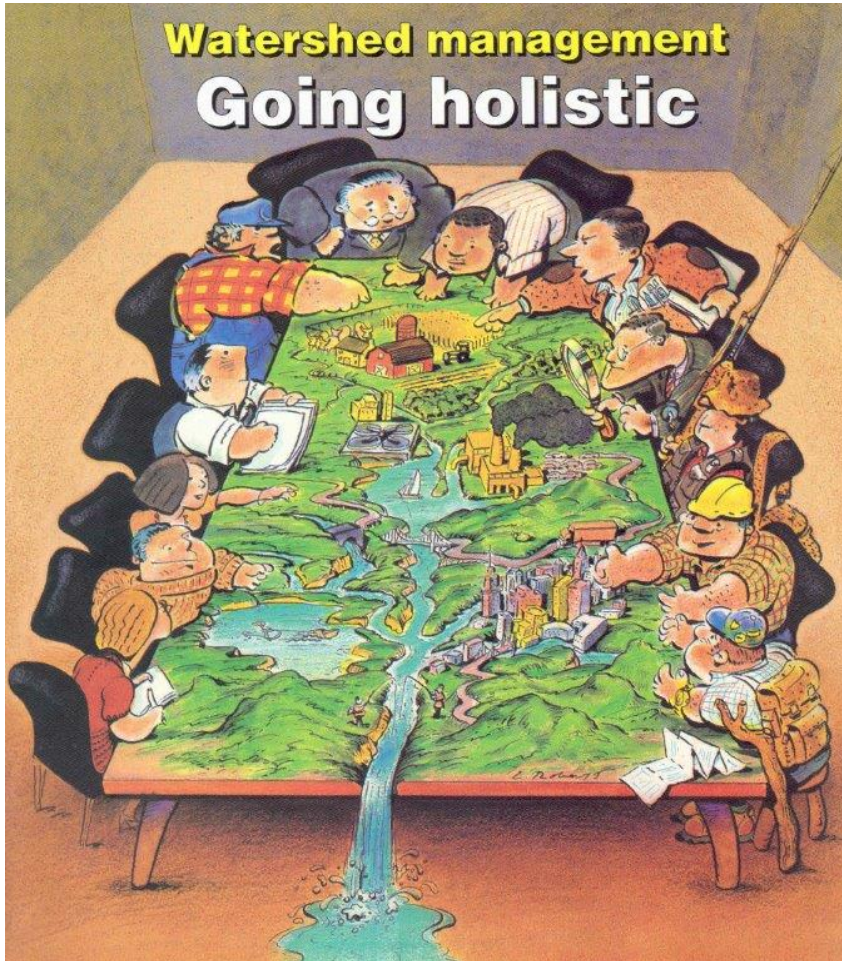
# Building Cities in the Rain

## Prioritization Guidance for Stormwater Retrofit Investment



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# Building Cities in the Rain Work Group



Tacoma      Issaquah  
Redmond      Bellevue  
King County      Thurston County  
Puget Sound Regional Council  
Futurewise      Ecology  
Puget Sound Partnership  
WDFW      Commerce  
EPA



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# Process and Data for Prioritizing Water Bodies

1. Establish prioritization goals.
2. Review regional-scale information as initial screen. Refine with local data.
3. Seek input from stakeholders (tribes, resource agencies, your neighbors)
4. Plan to invest where stormwater retrofits are expected to accelerate environmental improvement
5. Submit plan to Ecology for approval.

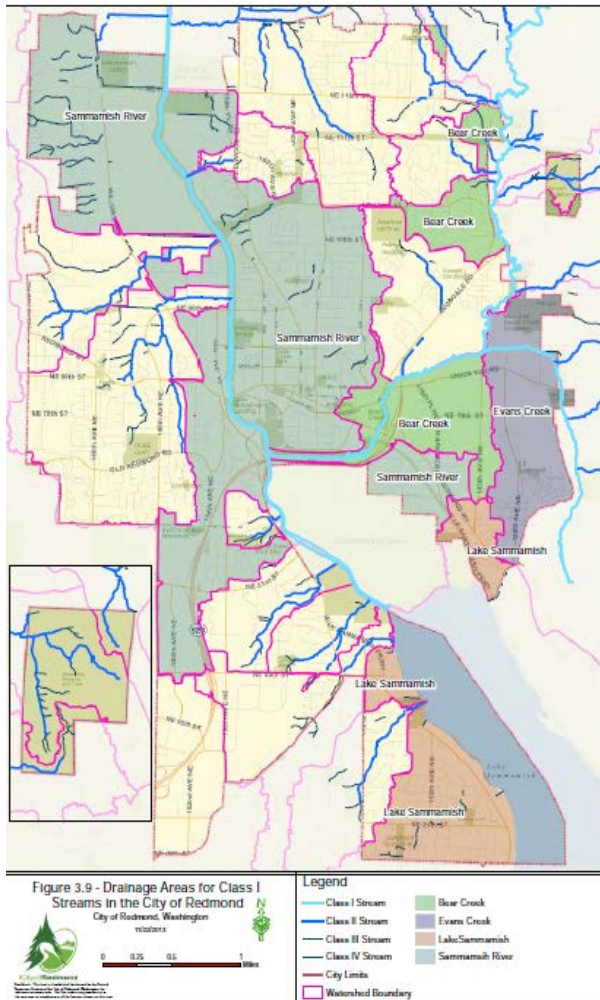


Puget Sound Characterization Project



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# Two-step Analytical Process Recommended



Use local data to refine prioritization:

Step 1 – Review receiving waterbodies or waters for actual or potential fish use.

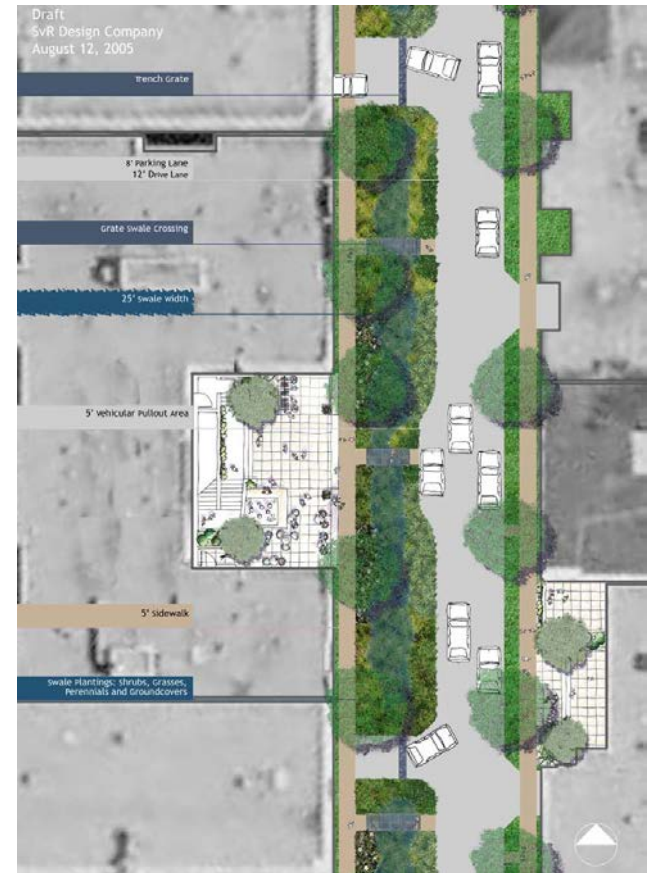
Step 2 – Give priority where stormwater improvements are expected to accelerate environmental improvement





# GMA – Local Comprehensive Planning

- Comprehensive plan policy/goal - healthy environmental assets at build out
- Capital Facility Planning – assess environmental assets and stormwater infrastructure together, especially for urban centers
- Stormwater investment - efficiently and intentionally invest in your community's environment




*Schematic: SvR Design*



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# For more information



## Building Cities in the Rain

[Portal ID #1780]

- Overview
- Contacts
- Events
- Library


### Summary of the project

The Washington State Department of Commerce, with funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program, is partnering with the South Central Sound Puget Caucus to identify approaches to managing stormwater in infill areas.

**Problem Statement:**  
Current regulatory and legal requirements, including stormwater management, provide important environmental protections but can also make development in urban centers more expensive than in less dense areas. What approaches can the region use to both encourage development in dense urban centers to meet land use goals, while meeting water quality requirements?

**Need:**  
The challenge of meeting growth management and stormwater goals is complex and involves many disciplines such as water resources, science and engineering, architecture, real estate development and finance, land use and environmental regulation, and urban design, among others. Infill development can include costs for demolition, brownfield remediation, historic preservation, aging infrastructure repair, and stormwater infrastructure. These types of requirements can ultimately make an infill project more expensive than a similar project in a less developed area.

*Pictures*



Courtesy SvR Design

Visit the project web site at [www.ezview.wa.gov](http://www.ezview.wa.gov)  
or contact Heather Ballash at  
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