



# SCHUSTER SLOPE RESTORATION

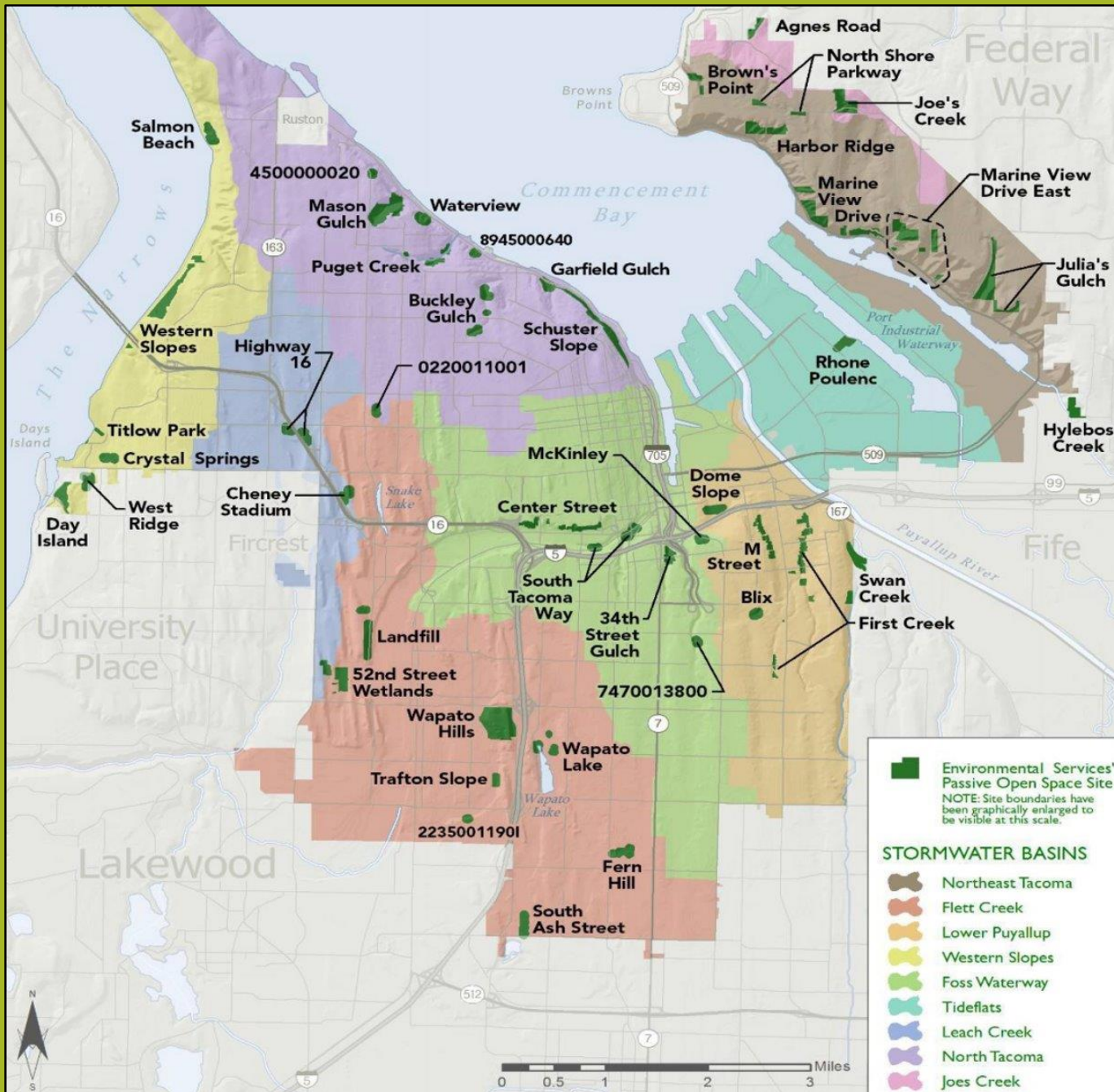
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Passive Open Space Program  
City of Tacoma,  
Environmental Services



# Passive Open Space Program

- Properties moved to Environmental Services department in 2014
- Managed for stormwater benefits, evergreen plant emphasis
- About 500 acres of forested steep slope, wetland, and oak woodland





# THEN AND NOW

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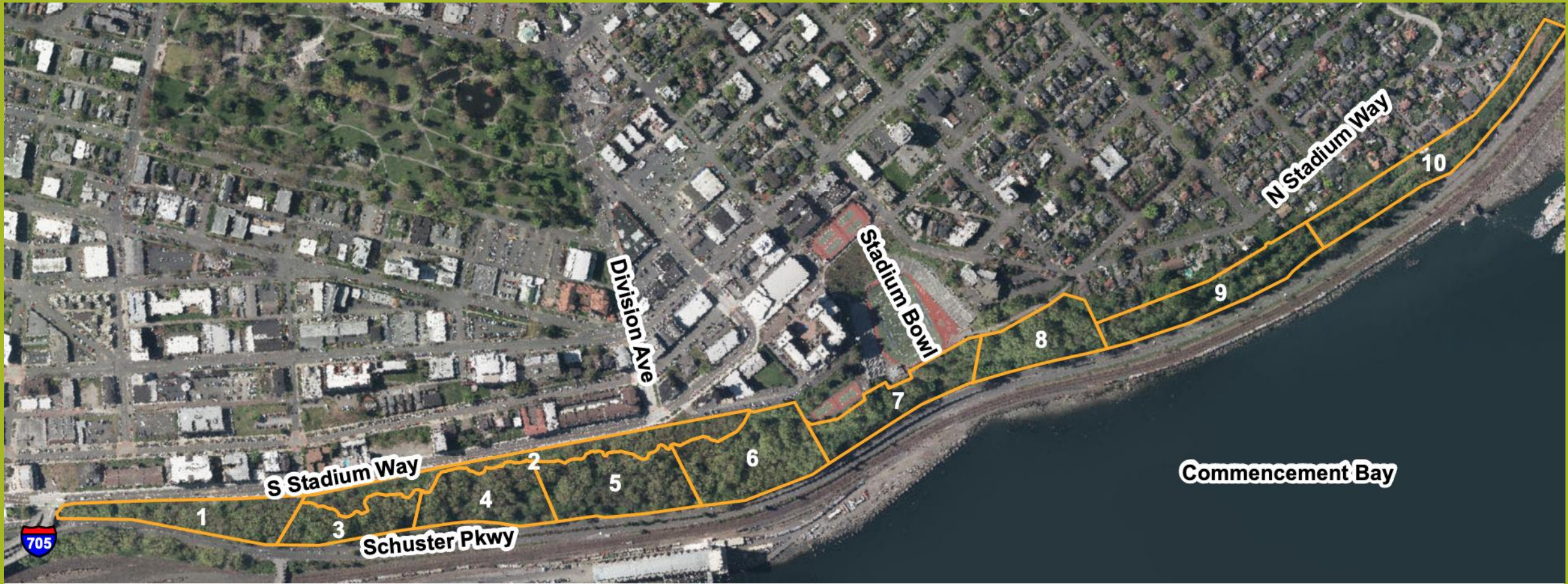


# Baseline Conditions

- Coppiced, even-aged stand of mostly bigleaf maple
- No evergreen trees or natural succession
- Repeatedly cut for views benefiting adjacent apartment owners







# LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Established goals, management units, phasing, and public engagement process





# CRITICAL AREAS MAPPING





# Challenges

- Erosion and slides
- Illegal cutting
- Large encampment impacts
- Dumping





# More Challenges

- Harmful vines and brambles
- Access limitations







# Initial Implementation

- Washington Conservation Corps crews got it done!
- Planted thousands of trees and shrubs, installed erosion control materials on steep slopes
- Survival was poor under maple canopy due to limited light, poor soils, inability to irrigate, encampment impacts
- Survival was better at top of slope where there is ample light and less disturbance





# Adaptive Management at top of slope

Infill with drought-tolerant native species and climate-adapted species/genotypes

E.g. shore pine, incense cedar, madrone, Ceanothus spp., mock orange, Mahonia spp., snowberry

mulch, mulch, more mulch to retain soil moisture, repress weeds that compete for resources, and support fungal partners





# Adaptive Management under canopy

opportunistic underplanting when and where bigleaf maples fail

Strategic underplanting along seeps and creeks using shade-tolerant species

E.g. western redcedar, grand fir, hemlock, incense cedar

shifting strategy away from planting south to north, avoiding very gravelly soils, maximizing positive impact where we can in order to re-establish native seed bank





# Homeless Outreach

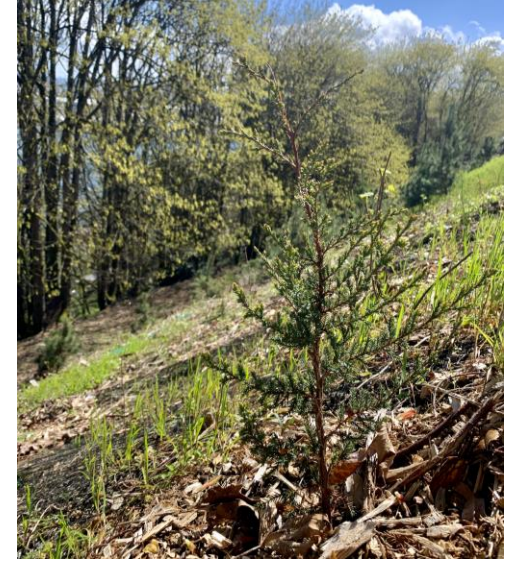
- Environmental Services department hired dedicated Homeless Outreach coordinator in 2021
- Regular presence and focus on connecting people with services
- Communicates environmental hazards
- Trash bag distribution
- Many contractor clean-ups





# Looking ahead

- ensuring success in current restoration areas before biting off next big chunk
- climate-adapted focus
- underplanting evergreens where opportunity presents under bigleaf maple canopy
- cutting invasive vines along Schuster Parkway using cherry picker
- delaying restoration at bottom of slope pending waterfront trail realignment plan





# Thank You

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