

2016 3RD QUARTER

# THE WATER LOG

QUARTERLY NEWS FROM THE CITY OF FEDERAL WAY'S  
SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

## TOWN SQUARE PARK LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT (LID) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Low impact development (LID) is a stormwater and land use management strategy that strives to mimic pre-disturbance hydrologic processes of infiltration, filtration, storage, evaporation, and transpiration by emphasizing conservation, use of on-site natural features, site planning, and distributed stormwater management practices that are integrated into a project design. Town Square Park has several LID features integrated into its design. The park serves as a regional example of how this technology can be integrated into a public space. The information below describes specific LID elements incorporated into Federal Way's Town Square Park.

### LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT ELEMENTS IN TOWN SQUARE PARK

#### Rain Garden

A rain garden is a planted depression or pond that allows rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas (like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawn areas) the opportunity to be absorbed. This reduces rain runoff by allowing stormwater to soak into the ground and filter out pollutants as opposed to flowing into storm drains which empty into our local streams, lakes, and Puget Sound.



#### Permeable Pavements

Permeable Pavement allows stormwater to percolate through or around the pavement and into the ground rather than directly running off into storm drains, local waterways or the Puget Sound. Permeable pavement is an environmentally responsible surface that provides groundwater recharge and reduces stormwater runoff. Permeable pavements, including permeable pavers, pervious concrete and porous asphalt, are all part of a broader development strategy of Low Impact Development and have been installed in Town Square Park.



#### Green Roof

A green roof or vegetated roof is a roof that is partially or completely covered with vegetation. Green roofs have several benefits such as absorbing rainwater, providing insulation, creating a habitat for wildlife and a more aesthetically pleasing landscape. They effectively utilize the natural functions of plants to filter water. The roof on the picnic shelter has both vegetated and conventional roof sections for demonstration and public education purposes.



#### Rain Barrels

Rain barrels collect and retain the precipitation that lands on rooftops. Eventually, the water is reused or released into a vegetated area. This reduces the total volume of runoff that enters the stormwater system and allows for filtering of pollutants out of the stormwater.

# IS THE NEIGHBOR'S VEGETATION GROWING ONTO YOUR PROPERTY?

BY RYAN THOMAS, SURFACE WATER MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

Have you ever taken a stroll out in your back yard and noticed your neighbor's tree or bush growing over the fence or property line and found it annoying? Perhaps you ask the neighbor to trim the vegetation back and they refuse. Well, according to Victor Merullo, an attorney and national expert on tree law, the reality is, they are not required to trim overhanging vegetation. In a July 11, 2004 article in the Seattle Times, Victor Merullo mentions that when it comes to tree laws, there are very few on the books, so most of the information is from State court decisions and common law. One of the issues the City faces is

whether the City is required to trim vegetation that grows over the property lines. While property owners are not required to trim any vegetation that grows onto another property, City Maintenance crews do work hard to maintain vegetation within property boundaries.

City of Federal Way Parks, Streets and Surface Water Management have maintenance crews and seasonal workers that are dedicated to vegetation management of designated areas during the spring and summer growing seasons. Examples of designated areas include public stormwater ponds, public parks, planter strips within roadways, and BPA trail buffer zones. Vegetation management varies with the function of City infrastructure, for instance a drainage area is maintained differently than a ballfield; and while a large percentage of vegetated areas are monitored for noxious and invasive weeds, there are many areas that are designated as wetlands, conservation, or woodland growth areas. These areas are not mowed, weed whacked, or groomed.

In order to maximize available resources, the maintenance crews have a set schedule each year for maintenance of city owned property and they try hard to stick to that schedule so that no facilities are missed and all public parcels are maintained in a consistent manner; however, vegetation doesn't grow according to schedule, mowers break, emergency projects derail available resources and as a result, there are areas that may become overgrown before the maintenance crews return for the next round.

This brings us back to what a property owner may do if they feel that overgrown vegetation needs to be trimmed. Of course, the best route is to communicate

with your neighbor about the need for vegetation management but if that fails, you do have the option of getting out the shears yourself. Be very careful if you choose this route. According to Victor Murello, a property owner does have the right to trim any vegetation that grows past the property line without permission from the vegetation owner; however, only the owner of the vegetation or tree controls the destiny of the vegetation or tree. If the neighbor cuts or sprays herbicide on a portion of vegetation or tree that is growing onto their property and kills the tree or plant, then they could be liable for damages.

If the overgrowth is along a City property boundary, notification to the City can be made through the City's website or by calling 253-835-2700. On the other side of the boundary, the City does have a policy for dealing with homeowner's vegetation that grows into City right of way. The City issues a trim notice letting the homeowner know what's needed and the limits of the trimming required. The City allows the homeowner seven days to complete the trimming themselves if they prefer, if they don't, the City trims the overgrown vegetation. This drawing explains the limit of vegetation trimming the City of Federal Way performs.

## SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT STAFF

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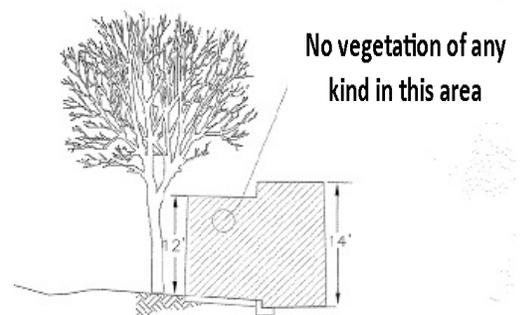
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## Sidewalk & Roadway Clearances



# DUMPING YARD WASTE IS ILLICIT DUMPING

BY RYAN THOMAS, SURFACE WATER MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR

The City of Federal Way owns and maintains 206 separate storm water retention ponds inside the City limits. The Surface Water maintenance crew's goal is to mow these properties three times a year. When the crew visits each site, they perform mowing, line trimming, and herbicide spraying to control the growth of vegetation. In addition to the vegetation, they also clean up the debris carried by storm water into the ponds. Often, the amount of debris found in the ponds is much more than could have possibly been deposited by just storm water. This debris is usually found in piles near boundary fence lines. In many cases, the debris is yard waste that appears to have come from nearby neighborhood yards.

While this may seem to be just an issue of illicit dumping, it is in fact a water quality issue. According to Water Quality Coordinator Mindi English, dumping of yard waste transports sediments, leaves, grass clippings, litter and other landscape waste (including fertilizers) into streets and gutters that lead to storm sewers and ultimately, area surface water like Hylebos Creek and Puget Sound. Fertilizers contain nutrients, which upset the natural balance in waterways, and can lead to algae

and plant growth in our water ways. The increased algae and plant growth can cause toxin production, strong odors, and reduce recreational activities, not to mention make it difficult for aquatic species to thrive.



## HOW BIG IS THIS PROBLEM?

According to Surface Water maintenance mow crew, there are one or two locations in every round of mowing that has layers of yard debris either within or near the pond.

The amount varies anywhere from a handful of branches to yards of material - enough to fill a pickup truck bed full to the rim. In addition, the maintenance crew encounters pounds of animal waste that has been dumped, which presents an even greater human health issue as well as a water quality issue. And finally, the additional debris pick up adds to the amount of time necessary to complete each pond maintenance, delaying the mow schedule and the ability to get through the mow schedule. The City does have a "No Dumping" ordinance that prohibits dumping but it is a challenging issue.

The lesson to learn here is that illicit dumping isn't just a matter of a few grass clippings and a bag or two of leaves. It's an issue that decreases water quality and increases maintenance costs. 206 City owned ponds are a lot to get through in a summer and cleaning up dumped yard waste has an impact on all residents of Federal Way.

## Yard Waste Disposal Options

- 1.) Self-haul: Load up the truck (yours, neighbor's or rental) and haul your branches to Bow Lake Recycling & Transfer Station at 18800 Orillia Rd S in Tukwila. Fees start at \$12 for the first 320 pounds—the lowest price around! You can also haul bulky branches to Federal Way's free Recycling Events (held in April and September).
- 2.) Curbside: Waste Management provides a variety of collection options, from extra pick-ups to large containers delivered to your driveway. Please call 800-592-9995 for pricing and details.
- 3.) Chipping: Borrow or rent a chipper and turn your branches into mulch on-site.
- 4.) Tree Service: There are many tree services that will trim your trees and chip or haul away all the yard debris for you. Remember to check if they are licensed and bonded before hiring.



SURFACE WATER  
MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
33325 8th Avenue South  
Federal Way, WA 98063

**Web Address:**

<http://www.cityoffederalway.com>



Help protect our *Natural Waterways* -  
**CD** **Call Our Spill Hot line to REPORT Spills or Illegal Discharges**

**253.835.2700**

## Public Works Surface Water Management Division



The mission of the City of Federal Way Surface Water Management Division is to protect, preserve, and enhance the health of our wetlands, lakes, streams, and Puget Sound. The following programs have been implemented in support of this mission:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Stormwater Controls
- Private Stormwater System Inspections
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Pollution Prevention for Operations & Maintenance
- Regional Water Quality Monitoring
- Conservation Property Acquisition
- Lake Management

**For information or to report water quality concerns please contact:**

Surface Water Management Division  
33325 8th Avenue South, Federal Way , WA 98063  
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[www.cityoffederalway.com](http://www.cityoffederalway.com)