



## News Release

From the City of Tacoma, Washington  
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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 23, 2012

### **Tacoma's innovative stormwater assessment program marks 1 year**

This week marks the one-year anniversary of Tacoma's Stormwater Rapid Assessment Program to determine the condition of the City's stormwater system infrastructure. Tacoma is the first city in the nation to use the German-made Kleen-Vue inspection system, which uses a hydraulically powered video camera to drive through the City's pipes and relay a wireless signal to a technician to find out where problems exist.

During the first year, City employees have examined 35 percent of the City's stormwater system. This inspection method is approximately five times faster than current industry standards and is being used to direct and prioritize stormwater capital projects. Inspection data is entered directly into the City's web-based mapping system, meaning results are available to staff instantly.

"This has changed how we do business," said project manager Rick Fuller, who credits teamwork among City departments with making this program so successful. "No longer are we just reacting to emergencies, we can take a proactive approach and make fixes before there's a problem."

By being able to plan major projects and avoid costly emergency repairs, the City is able to prevent problems and make its dollars go further. Emergency projects typically cost four times as much as when a similar project that goes out to bid.

"This system is a valuable tool that lets City employees have near-immediate access to the most recent, most accurate information," said Tacoma City Councilmember Ryan Mello. "When we know the exact condition of our surface water pipes, we can plan smarter and be better stewards."

City employees have reviewed nearly 170 miles out of a total 476 miles of stormwater pipe so far, and have confirmed that 22 percent of the City's system is in good condition, 9.8 percent needs limited repair and 3.4 percent needs to be replaced. Inspections of the remaining 65 percent should be completed within the next three years.

While the Kleen-Vue system is used to inspect municipal storm systems in some parts of Europe, Tacoma has been instrumental in working with the manufacturer to adapt the technology to work in the smaller pipes found throughout the United States and other parts of the world.

A number of cities, including Seattle and Paris, France, are now looking to Tacoma for knowledge and expertise on this new technology.

For more information, go to [www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/surfacewater).

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