



# Places for People Downtown

## Hot Tea, Rain City Winter Engagement Summary





Hot Tea, Rain City Cart at Granville Street

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# 1

## Context

### Places for People

Vancouver's public spaces — plazas, squares, streets, laneways, pathways, parks and waterfront — are where public life happens. These places and spaces are where we interact with the city on a daily basis, as we work, play, create, explore and connect with each other.

Places for People proposes an approach to public space planning that starts with an understanding and appreciation of public life and the people who use public space on a daily basis.

**Great public spaces are Places for People!**

### A strategy for public life and public space in Downtown Vancouver

Downtown is the heart of the city, and home to some of the most popular public spaces in Vancouver. It's also an area that's growing with more residents, businesses and visitors each year. This means increased demand on the existing public space network in the future. Since space and opportunities are limited in the Downtown core, we need to be creative and strategic in how we deliver public space.

Through Places for People | Downtown we will create a comprehensive strategy to coordinate and deliver Downtown public space over the next 30 years.



### Downtown Study Area

The strategy will cover the each neighbourhood area on the downtown peninsula, including: the West End, Yaletown, Coal Harbour, Central Business District, and Northeast False Creek (ongoing planning process: [vancouver.ca/nfca](http://vancouver.ca/nfca))



### Project Timeline

The 18-month planning process consists of four main phases:

- 1 SUMMER 2017  
Launch: Vision, values & favourite places
- 2 FALL 2017 **WE ARE HERE**  
Public space/public life study & policy testing
- 3 WINTER /SPRING 2018  
Strategic directions
- 4 SUMMER/ FALL 2018  
Draft strategy & report to council



## 2 Hot Tea, Rain City

### How do you keep shining in the rain?

In the winter of 2018, Hot Tea, Rain City popped up in public spaces around Downtown Vancouver to hear what people had to say about rain, public space, and green infrastructure.

A collaboration between Transformation Projects and the City of Vancouver's Places for People Downtown and Rain City Strategy teams, Hot Tea, Rain City adapted a mobile tea cart that had been created for a CityStudio Vancouver project.

Featuring some of Vancouver's top tea masters, Hot Tea, Rain City served up warm cups of tea in the Gong Fu Cha style. Gong Fu Cha or "Tea with Skill" is a way of tea making that originated in the Fujian Province of China and is practiced all over the world by tea lovers.

In exchange, passersby were invited to share their thoughts on how Downtown Vancouver's public spaces can perform better during the winter and how we can embrace Vancouver's rainwater as a valued resource for our communities and natural ecosystems.

Participant responses will inform the strategic directions in the City of Vancouver's *Downtown Public Space Strategy*. The questions were designed to start a dialogue on how Downtown Vancouver's public spaces can be better utilized, maintained, and managed during the winter.

Additionally, by collaborating with the City of Vancouver's Rain City Strategy team, Places for People Downtown was able to better identify issues and opportunities for how rainwater impacts public spaces and discuss opportunities for a sustainable and environmentally efficient public realm.



### Hot Tea, Rain City Cart

The Hot Tea, Rain City cart popped up four times throughout the Downtown. The locations included the Bute-Robson Plaza, Granville Street, Jim Deva Plaza, and outside the Vancouver Public Library. A variety of activation times and days were selected to capture various audiences. Approximately 1,200 people were engaged by City Staff and 96 feedback cards were collected.



Hot Tea, Rain City Cart at Central Library Square



Hot Tea, Rain City Cart at Granville Street

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## Key Findings

### Rain Cover or Sheltered Spaces

What we heard was that there is a need for dry spaces by having more areas with rain cover throughout Vancouver's Downtown. This includes features such as awnings, sheltered seating, and covered bike racks. These features would encourage use of underutilized public spaces during the winter months. Retractable awnings were identified as possible solutions for seasonal rain protection.



### Art & Cultural Spaces

Feedback emphasized encouraging local and First Nation art pieces within the public realm, which could be both interactive and kid friendly. Outdoor exhibits during the rainy months of the year were recommended as a way to get people outside and encourage greater social interaction. Painting parts of public realm in bright colours or with murals could provide more visually appealing public spaces and streetscapes.

### Gathering & Event Spaces

We heard that people would like to see more outdoor gathering and event spaces year-round. Events such as Dine Out Vancouver Festival, Lumière, and outdoor live music events were all considered desirable. It was acknowledged that year round activities can decrease loneliness and depression within the City. Encouraging rain dance parties, busker festivals, and games nights could also add a great deal of fun and entertainment to Vancouver's public realm.

### Lighting & Heated Spaces

Unique and compelling lighting in Downtown Vancouver was identified as an opportunity during the dark and rainy months of the year. Participants noted that light features and heated lamps could help promote the use of public spaces by offering comfort and visual interest, as well as provide lighting for safety. Encouraging the growth and development of artistic lighting events and festivals was also viewed as desirable. Lastly, the incorporation of tented or covered areas, with heaters, outdoor fire pits, and heated patios were recommended as a way to encourage people to stay outside longer and promote social activity during the winter.



### Green Infrastructure & Sustainability

Participants identified that rain capture could be a great way to reuse water while simultaneously sheltering people from rainfall. Captured and filtered rainwater could be used for irrigation, toilet flushing, or water features to help reduce the need for potable water, or could be captured to create electricity for buildings. Adding green amenities such as rain gardens, planters and/or rain barrels could reduce the amount of puddles caused by impervious surfaces. Using captured rainwater to generate sound or music was considered as an innovative way to attract users to come visit Vancouver's public spaces during the rainy season.



### Next Steps

The questions were designed to initiate a dialogue on how Downtown Vancouver's public spaces can be better utilized, maintained, and managed during the winter. Participant responses will inform the strategic directions and key themes in the City of Vancouver's Downtown Public Space Strategy. More details to be shared in Places for People Downtown's upcoming community workshops and open houses in the spring/summer of 2018.



*make the trees center piece in new developments*  
**How can we make Vancouver sing in the rain?**

*green roofs on signature buildings*  
*market granville islands*

*canopy on plaxas. - light clear*

*new buildings with accessible parks + gardens on ground floor.*

*more trees on broadway corridor + plants beautification*  
*indigenous native / local plants for black greenery*

**CITY OF VANCOUVER**  
**GREENEST CITY**  
#RainCityStrategy  
vancouver.ca/raincitystrategy

**How do you keep shining in the rain?**  
How can we better enjoy Vancouver's public spaces year round?

*→ heat lamps + (nice) covers for winter*  
*not plastic tents, can't see in feels intimidating & closed off.*

*→ markets w meaningful + interesting vendors*

*? → more live music*  
*→ food trucks*  
*→ more movable seating*  
*→ regular scheduled events (so become community night)*

**PLACES FOR PEOPLE**  
#PlacesforPeopleVan  
placesforpeople@vancouver.ca  
vancouver.ca/placesforpeople

Hot Tea, Rain City engaged approximately 1,200 people over four afternoons in Downtown Vancouver.

## Stay Involved

### Places for People Downtown

Help us create exceptional, welcoming, and memorable public spaces, places, and experiences in Downtown Vancouver. Places for People is working towards developing its Strategic Directions for Vancouver's *Downtown Public Space Strategy*. Visit us online to learn about ways to get involved and to share your thoughts.

[vancouver.ca/placesforpeople](http://vancouver.ca/placesforpeople)  
[placesforpeople@vancouver.ca](mailto:placesforpeople@vancouver.ca)  
[#placesforpeoplevan](https://twitter.com/placesforpeoplevan)

### Rain City Strategy

The Rain City Strategy is looking at how Vancouver can embrace rain as a resource to create a more vibrant, sustainable and healthy place to live, work and play. The goal of the Rain City Strategy is to capture and clean 90% of Vancouver's average annual rainfall by using green infrastructure tools and design guidelines on public and private property.

[vancouver.ca/raincitystrategy](http://vancouver.ca/raincitystrategy)  
[rainwater@vancouver.ca](mailto:rainwater@vancouver.ca)  
[#raincitystrategy](https://twitter.com/raincitystrategy)



# Places for People **Downtown**