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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
Date: 2/23/2023 5:36:42 PM  
Subject: Council Memo - Rain City Strategy Update - RTS 15199

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Dear Mayor and Council,

Please see the attached memo from Lon LaClaire. A short summary of the memo is as follows:

- The Rain City Strategy Update (RTS 15199) is in fulfillment of council's requirement for a three year report back
- The Rain City Strategy, approved by Council on November 2019, is a 30 year initiative that reimagines how we value and manage rainwater, responding to urgent imperatives around climate change, servicing growth, infrastructure capacity, water quality, vulnerable ecosystems, and affordability, equity and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.
- The Strategy lays out nine Transformative Directions and three Action Plans that articulate programs related to (1) Streets and Public Spaces, (2) Buildings and Sites, and (3) Parks and Beaches, calling for extensive use of green rainwater infrastructure.
- At the 3-year mark, good progress has been made, including 65 new GRI assets in the public realm and 93 new GRI assets in the private realm with approved Building Permits managing rainwater runoff volume and quality from 46 ha of impervious surfaces.
- This update is a product of multi-departmental tracking, review and approval, involving DBL, PDS, Park Board and Engineering branches.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lon LaClaire at 604-873-7336 or [lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca](mailto:lon.laclaire@vancouver.ca).

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱w̱ə7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

## MEMORANDUM

February 23, 2023

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Mellisa Morphy, Acting Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Director of Operations, Mayor's Office

FROM: Lon LaClaire, General Manager, Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Rain City Strategy Update

RTS #: 15199

The [Rain City Strategy](#) (the Strategy), approved by Vancouver City Council on November 2019, is a 30 year plan strategy that reimagines how we value and manage rainwater, responding to urgent imperatives around climate change, servicing growth, infrastructure capacity, water quality, vulnerable ecosystems, and affordability, equity and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. This memo fulfils Council's direction in 2019 for a progress report every three years.

### Background

The Strategy introduces a new paradigm that sets water as a foundation for city building, transforming rainwater management in the City by 2050 through extensive use green rainwater infrastructure (GRI). It also lays out nine Transformative Directions and three Action Plans that articulate programs related to (1) Streets and Public Spaces, (2) Buildings and Sites, and (3) Parks and Beaches. GRI is a cost-effective engineered, and nature-based asset that intercepts rainwater, and either directs it back into the ground or slows its conveyance into the pipe system, while capturing run-off pollutants and achieving multiple important community and environmental benefits. In doing so, GRI protects, restores and mimics the natural water cycle in the city. It incorporates soils, plants, and trees and can take many forms including bioswales, engineered wetlands, rainwater tree trenches, raingardens, and green roofs, which also delivers essential utility management services increased biodiversity and mitigate the urban heat island effect.

### RAIN CITY STRATEGY TARGETS

Manage 90% of  
Vancouver's average  
annual rainfall in public  
and private spaces

Manage 40% of  
Vancouver's impervious  
areas by 2050

The Strategy is aligned with the Vancouver Plan policy direction on restoring ecological health and providing resilient water, sewer, and drainage systems; the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; and the Climate Emergency Action Plan, in particular Big Move 6.

### Update

The Strategy has taken a learning-by-doing approach. At the 3-year mark, progress and notable achievements include:

- Accelerated implementation of GRI in both the private and public realms, delivered through a city-led projects, development, and partnerships.
- Development of utility planning capabilities and in sewer system monitoring and modelling to support data-driven decision making in fulfillment of the Strategy's Transformative Direction #7, including the servicing strategies for the Broadway Area Plan and the Cambie Corridor.
- Phase 1 of the [Healthy Waters Plan](#) was approved by City Council on Feb 1, 2023, in fulfillment of the Strategy's Transformative Direction #3. This work will provide the technical and decision making frameworks to guide the capital investments in the sewer and drainage systems in the coming years.
- Development of the GRI Pathways Study to advance GRI implementation on private property, and guide policy for consistent uptake of GRI solutions in development.
- Awarded \$22M federal grant to support green infrastructure projects, including: Woodland & 2<sup>nd</sup>, Hasting-Sunrise Neighborhood GRI, Tatlow Creek Daylighting, St. George Rainway, Broadway Complete Street, Gibby's Field GRI, Still Creek Watershed Enhancement Projects, and tree planting areas of the Strathcona neighborhood.

### Progress towards mandated targets

- Completed 65 new GRI assets in the public realm and 93 new GRI assets in the private realm with approved Building Permits managing rainwater runoff volume and quality from 46 ha of impervious surfaces. This is equivalent to 2% of the citywide 2050 implementation target (against the 4.5% set initially by the Strategy).<sup>1</sup>
- The 2023-2026 capital plan increased funds for GRI by 200%+. Concurrently, staff from across departments are collaborating with industry to extend rainwater management regulations to all new buildings further advancing toward the Strategy's goals.

Progress remains short of the initially projected goals, however a higher rate of progress is anticipated as ongoing projects are realized. Analysis will be undertaken by 2025 to bring recommendations to City Council for updated Strategy's targets as needed.

### Next Steps

The Strategy will undergo an internal review over the next three years and an update will be brought to Council. A shared leadership approach across departments and with partner engagement will continue, as will knowledge building through incorporation of technical studies and learnings from other jurisdictions.



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<sup>1</sup> Targets based on proportion of impervious surface ownership and redevelopment rate. Progress breakdown: public realm 22.8 ha and private realm 22.8 ha (respectively 50% and 33% of interim 2022 target).