



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: January 24, 2023
To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Joan Thomson
Report#: FIN23-008
Attachments: Map and Section 8.0 Grand Trunk Anchor District Zone

Title: Cooper Block Community Hub (the "Community Hub") Redevelopment Strategy Update for 2023 and proposed Action Plan

Objective: To support the expansion request in the 2023 Draft Budget and to recommend an Action Plan to guide implementation of the Cooper Block Redevelopment Strategy for 2023 and 2024.

The Expansion Request referenced in this Report is on page 9 of the "Expansion Requests" section of the 2023 Draft Budget binder.

Background: The Grand Truck Community Hub Master Plan was approved in 2018 to set the stage for the redevelopment strategy for the Cooper Block. This report is to provide Council with an update on the development of the Community Hub and provide an update to the previous reports to Council in 2021 (COU21-078; COU21-128) and 2022 (COU22-084) regarding the Community Hub project.

During 2022, the City achieved significant progress towards the complete redevelopment of the approximate 18-acre property including the restoration of the historic steel truss building. The following activities occurred:

- 1) The land expropriation compensation award process was concluded with the Ontario Superior Court, in a unanimous decision, dismissing an appeal filed by the former property owners (1353837 Ontario Inc) of the Ontario Land Tribunal decision finding in the City's favour;
- 2) After a four (4) year effort by the City, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) approved the redevelopment of a portion of the historic steel truss building for the proposed new YMCA/Community Hub facility and issued a Certificate of Property Use as it relates to that portion of the property;

- 3) The City commenced Phase 1 of the Capital Fundraising Campaign for the Community Hub to explore the feasibility and to lay the groundwork for a future fundraising campaign;
- 4) The University of Waterloo (UW) confirmed its continued interest in developing the property for student residence and academic buildings;
- 5) The conceptual site roadway and utilities design was completed and is now advancing to preliminary and detailed design phases;
- 6) For the historic steel truss building, the leaking asbestos-containing roof deck was completely removed (110,000 square feet/10,000 square metres) and the steel roof trusses braced, cleaned and restored. Additional detail on this project and overall building condition is provided below;
- 7) The City began environmental investigative tasks for a potential long-term care home near the proposed YMCA/Community Hub; and,
- 8) PeopleCare is interested in developing a 160 bed long term care home in Stratford either on a portion of the Cooper Block or the Vivian Line 37 property.

Historic Building Restoration

Roof deck removal and restoration efforts began in February 2022 and are now substantially complete. These actions:

- Eliminated any environmental liability relating to the asbestos roofing over trusses;
- Eliminated the safety concerns associated with the leaking/falling roof;
- Preserved some of the existing skylights and wooden planks for future assessment;
- Completed the repair and restoration of the steel trusses located in the Community Hub;
- Braced and stabilized all other salvageable trusses; and,
- Allowed for more detailed assessment of the physical structure.

The work discussed above proceeded largely as planned. Following the removal of the roof decking and skylight frames, the condition of the steel structure and historic steel trusses was determined to be far better than anticipated. The steel components were found to have no significant corrosion and only one repair was required for a bent support. Following a detailed inspection, the steel trusses required no restoration other than cleaning of old paint and application of new primer to preserve the steel.

It was also determined that the skylights were simply a steel "U" channel with a wooden insert to support the original glass. This means that there is no actual skylight frame to preserve. After consultation with Heritage Stratford and the local Architectural

Conservancy of Ontario branch, it was concluded that the steel channels have little to no historic value and cannot be repurposed as skylights. Approximately 30 of the “U” channels have been retained on site in a covered portion of building to maintain a record of this portion of the structure.

Most of the wooden roof decking was found to be rotted. However, some sound material was found in certain areas and approximately 10 pallets of these roof planks have been retained on site in a covered portion of the building. The bracing and stabilization of the building was completed as planned.

Generally, the liability associated with the asbestos roof covering has been eliminated due to its removal, and the City has gained considerable knowledge on the condition of the existing structure. As a result, it is now possible for future designers to properly assess the structure and consider any potential challenges to the redevelopment of the property.

Currently, it is anticipated that the work being performed under the tender awarded by the City will be completed for slightly less than the Council approved tender amount.

Analysis: As set out above, in 2022 the City eliminated several uncertainties surrounding the potential redevelopment of the approximately 18-acre Cooper Block property.

Key examples of this include:

- The land expropriation process is confirmed;
- The historic steel truss structure has been confirmed to be in good condition;
- Any risk associated with the leaking, asbestos-containing roof deck has been eliminated;
- University of Waterloo and the YMCA have both re-started their development initiatives;
- A long-term care home operator has shown interest in locating on and developing a portion of the site or at an alternate site in the City; and
- MECP provided environmental approval for the YMCA/Community Hub project, including confirmation of risk assessment and issuance of CPU (East section of the building).

The important lesson learned by the end of 2022 was that the four (4) year MECP approval process to permit development of **ONLY** the YMCA/Community Hub building has the potential to dramatically alter a reasonable redevelopment timeline for the entire site. We would however recommend discussions occur between City staff and the MECP as the delay occurred during COVID-19 emergency measures no longer exists

and we anticipate that the MECP will continue to work cooperatively when development initiatives get underway on the property.

Assuming a strict interpretation of the current environmental permitting process required by the MECP, City staff have been advised that each new building on the site may require a separate and independent environmental review process (which could be up to three (3) years) to gain MECP approval. Again, we would recommend discussing an overall strategy with the MECP District Office and discussion occur regarding expediting any review and approvals. Building construction typically cannot begin until MECP approval has been granted. However, building design often occurs while MECP approval is pending.

Ontario Regulation 153/04 (O.Reg. 154/04) defines the requirements to **change the use** of lands from former industrial to more sensitive uses being a residential use. This is referred to as the "Record of Site Condition" process. Change of use for a certain parcel of land to a more sensitive use as set out in O.Reg. 153/04 is a completely separate and distinct requirement from municipal zoning or Official Plan designation.

The University of Waterloo residence buildings are not exempt from the *Record of Site Condition* process. Therefore, the City will need to work collaboratively with the MECP in terms of the permitting to avoid any delay as a result of MECP review. It is also likely that further studies will be required (approximately \$250,000) for the University of Waterloo residence building and possible remediation costs.

Note: a reference to a **change in use** of the property does **not** include a change in the zoning of the property under a municipal by-law (s. 11(2) of the *Environmental Protection Act* (EPA) and has the meaning set out in section 1(3) of O. Reg. 153/04).

The zoning for the Grand Trunk Anchor District Zone is in place, eliminating the need to go through a rezoning process. Details on the Grand Trunk Anchor District Zone are noted below in this report.

Grand Trunk Anchor District Zone

The Grand Trunk Anchor District Zone in the City's Comprehensive Zoning By-law recognizes the unique qualities of the Grand Trunk site and fulfils the need for a tailored framework which will facilitate a positive transformation of the isolated and largely disused site on the edge of the Downtown Core. The zone is encouraging of reinvestment in the Downtown Core, seeking to facilitate and appropriately regulate a convergence of education, community, entrepreneurship, and innovating uses to strengthen and diversity the Stratford economy, providing housing, services and amenities for both residents and visitors.

The permitted uses in the Grand Trunk Anchor District are associated with Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Institutional and are specified in section 8.0 of the City's

Comprehensive Zoning By-law 10-2022. A copy of Section 8.0 is attached to this report for reference.

Proposed Action Plan for 2023

Given the challenges associated with the environmental condition of the property and the permitting and review required through the MECP. It is recommended that the City move forward with seven (7) discrete projects concurrently.

This Action Plan outlines seven (7) parallel projects to maintain the momentum achieved in 2022 as described below.

- Long-Term Care Home on Block 2D and 2C or the Vivian Line 37 property
- UW Student Housing Building
- YMCA/Community Hub Building
- Design of Site Roadways and Utilities/Services
- Update to Site Layout Drawing to Illustrate each Developable Parcel
- Community Hub Fundraising
- Record of Site Condition for the remainder of the building (West section).

Tasks and timelines for each of the seven (7) projects are highlighted below.

The Expansion Request Form found on page 9 of the Expansion Request section of the Draft Budget binder, itemized costs are provided. In summary:

- Site Servicing - \$1,200,000
- Fundraising Phase II - \$350,000 based on the proposal included with Phase I
- Environmental Work - \$750,000
- Site Servicing - \$200,00 for preliminary engineering and design

The total amount identified for the above noted work is \$2,500,000. This amount would not impact the 2023 tax levy as the intent is to use the Grand Trunk Community Hub (GTCH) reserve fund.

The Tasks and Target Dates listed in the next section of this Report will evolve and be subject to the appropriate Partner timelines (YMCA, University, Long-Term Care Home etc).

Long-Term Care Home - Target Dates as proposed by the City of Stratford

While no specific plans are available at this time, the City has incorporated the interest in additional long term care beds in Stratford in this report and estimated timelines for Council’s awareness. There has been no determination by Council as to the location on either Block 2D and 2C or the Vivian Line 37 property.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) Environmental Field Investigation	January 2023 (now complete)
2) Scoping and Costing of Remedial Measures	February-March
3) Strategy for Environmental Permitting	April – May
4) MECP Consultation	May – August
5) Streamlined Permitting Process	Fall
7) Agreement with Long-Term Care Developer	2024
8) Environmental Remediation	2024
9) Construction	to be determined

UW Student Housing – Target Dates as proposed by the City of Stratford

The University of Waterloo recognizes that student housing is an issue that needs to be addressed and will work collaboratively with the City and partners on student housing. While no specific plans are available at this time, the City has incorporated the need for student housing in this report and estimated timelines for Council’s awareness. For its part, the University has not brought these matters forward with its own internal governance bodies and therefore is not able to commit to timelines.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) Clarification of UW needs and timing	In process
2) Potential Environmental Field Investigation	June
3) Strategy for Environmental Permitting	July – September
4) MECP Consultation	September
5) Streamlined Permitting Process	To be determined
6) Receipt of Approval to Construct	Prior to Year End
7) Remedial Measures Completed by City	Early 2024
8) Construction	To be determined

Note: Based on a prior Agreement with UW, the City is responsible for remedial measures on the 8 acres designated as current and future UW lands.

YMCA/Community Hub Building

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) MECP Environmental Approval	Issued in 2022

2) Preliminary Scoping with YMCA Architect	February-May
3) Community and Stakeholder Input	May - September
4) Architectural Design and Costing	Fall/Winter
5) Community and Stakeholder Input	Winter/Spring 2024
6) Final Draft Project Details and Budget	June 2024
7) City Council and YMCA Endorsement	Summer 2024
8) Construction	2025

Design of Site Roadways and Utilities/Services

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) Detailed Topographic Survey	Completed by Staff in 2022
2) Legal Survey	Complete
3) Conceptual Servicing Plan	Complete subject to UW input
4) Preliminary Design	Spring 2023
5) Final Designs for Roads and Utilities/Services	Fall 2023/Winter 2024
6) Staged Construction Activities	Beginning Spring 2024

Update to Site Layout/Developable Parcels

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) Detailed Topographic Survey	Completed by Staff in 2022
2) Legal Survey	Complete
3) Conceptual Layout Options	Spring 2023
4) Confirmation of Priority and UW Parcels	Summer 2023
5) Options Assessment for Existing Building	Fall 2023
6) Completion of Updated Site Layout	Prior to Year End

*This Project will continue to evolve effecting projected timelines.

Community Hub Fundraising

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) Phase 1 – Campaign Feasibility	Complete by Spring 2023
2) Phase 2 – Campaign Plan	Subject to Feasibility
3) Phase 3 – Campaign Execution	To be determined

Record of Site Condition – West section of building

To facilitate future development of the West section of the building, Record of Site Condition work should begin in 2024 to initiate the RSC process. Challenges associated

with the environmental condition of the property and the permitting and review required through the MECP, will make this a multi-year project.

<i>Task</i>	<i>Target Dates</i>
1) Initiate Record of Site Condition process	Early 2024
2) MECP Consultation	Beginning 2024

Project Management

Given the pace of development and environmental activities, a Project Manager is essential to oversee and assist the CAO's Office with fulfilling the seven-(7) part Action Plan in 2023 and 2024. Ideally the Project Manager will be familiar with contaminated properties and have senior municipal and private sector experience in managing multi-stakeholder projects.

Project Management is expected to average 10-15 hours per week in 2023 to fulfill the Project Manager requirement. Existing staff resources from various Departments will assist the Project Manager on an as-required basis. The Project Manager is also required to engage in regular (bi-monthly) meetings with key staff. The cost for Project Management is projected to be under \$60,000.

It is the intention of Staff to retain the current Project Manager for the work identified in this Report due to familiarity with the project. This is consistent with Section 11.3 of the Procurement By-law which provides for Departments to hire directly where the consultant fees are less than \$60,000.

The tendering process will be used to contract for services such as site servicing and construction. The award of tenders requires approval of Council.

Communications Strategy

As part of the work related to this proposed Action Plan it is recommended that a communications strategy be developed and implemented to keep residents informed. An amount of \$20,000 has been identified for this purpose and is incorporated within the 2023 Expansion Request.

Financial Implications: The proposed 2023 project costs for the Cooper Block project currently includes \$2.5 million which is expected to be sufficient to fund the necessary environmental, servicing, design and management expenditures as outlined in the Action Plan. These funds are available in the Grand Trunk Community Hub (GTCH) reserve fund. Tasks identified with a 2024 Target Date are subject to 2024 Budget approval and are listed in this Report for Council's awareness.

Contingent on Council approval of the Action Plan, staff will report back in June 2023 with a detailed update on project financial needs and expenditures for 2023 and 2024.

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

Funds are available in the Grand Trunk Community Hub (GTCH) reserve fund.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There will be a significant financial impact on future year budgets to construct and then operate and maintain the new facilities. These have not been identified at this time.

There will also be financial impact on future year budgets for the new servicing infrastructure. Decisions will need to be made with respect to how to finance the City's portion of these new builds.

Revenue earned from rental of city-space will be used to off-set a portion of future expenses to operate and maintain the new City facilities.

Link to asset management plan and strategy:

Upon assumption of the infrastructure, these assets will be specifically added to the City's Asset Management Plan. The new assets' replacements will be planned for based on estimated useful life. The adjustment to the asset management plan will impact future capital planning forecasts and funding strategies will be updated accordingly.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Land and Nature

Protecting and restoring land for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Travel and Transport

Reducing the need to travel, encouraging walking, cycling and low carbon transport.

Material and Products

Using materials from sustainable sources and promoting products which help people reduce consumption.

Zero Carbon Energy

Making buildings and manufacturing energy efficient and supplying all energy with renewables.

Staff Recommendation: THAT subject to 2023 budget approval by Council, the Action Plan for redevelopment of the Cooper Block as described in Report FIN23-008 be approved;

THAT the CAO be authorized to proceed with the Action Plan including initiating discussions with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP);

AND THAT the CAO report to Council in June 2023 with an update on project financial needs and expenditures for 2023 and 2024.

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer