



## Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

<b>Working Group:</b>	<b>Communications, Public Engagement and Advocacy</b>
<b>Report Date:</b>	<b>Sept 13, 2024</b>

### **Requested Committee Direction:**

This is a request for the Committee to endorse a proposal to develop and execute small-scale tours (up to 30 people) of the Grand Trunk Building; the tours would be led by Ad Hoc Committee members and Working Group members.

### **Discussion Points:**

At the August 29 meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee, informal direction was given on the temporary activations proposal presented to the Committee. As a result, City Staff are currently working on the preparing the GTR site for larger events. Therefore, smaller and simpler activations are also possible, as they don't require the same infrastructure.

While City Staff work on creating the necessary conditions and permitting for temporary use of the Grand Trunk site and building, we propose designing and executing small-scale tours of the GTR site and building – hopefully starting this autumn.

This proposal would rely on the successful completion of this work to create clear guidelines on where tours could go in the building and the permits and conditions necessary to allow them to happen.

The benefits of these tours would be:

- Get more people in the building after the successful Open House held in 2023
- Grow public awareness and understanding of the history and significance of the site, as well as the unprecedented opportunities the site presents for the city
- Drive awareness of the possibilities for future development
- Grow public awareness and understanding of our Vision and Guiding Principles
- Drive future public awareness
- Set expectations for the pace and timeline of future development
- Increase viewing of the current site history signage
- Create excitement for temporary uses.

The hope is that getting more residents inside the structure, experiencing the building and seeing the potential for GTR renewal will work to mitigate negativity about GTR renewal, create advocates for the project and drive the perception that this site can be used and experienced before it's developed.

These tours would work best if the tour guides are volunteers from the AHC and Working Group, and not City Staff.

If this proposal is accepted, I can develop a script for tour guides that is grounded in John Kastner's GTR History slide deck and would also include some content about:

- AHC mandate and past work
- Vision and Guiding Principles
- Work Plan/Road Map for development
- Past and future public engagement
- Partnerships
- Temporary uses

It would be necessary to find and train tour guides, propose a workable schedule for tours (biweekly?), publicize and promote the tours and create a means for people to sign up for the tours (eg: use Event Brite website for tour tickets).

This would also be an opportunity to engage specific groups that might have an interest in learning more about the site and the renewal project. Such groups could include:

- Local arts groups
- School groups
- Seniors' groups
- Chamber of Commerce members
- Local and area real estate agents
- Destination Stratford & Invest Stratford Staff
- Employees of potential partners (YMCA, UofW, Library, etc.)
- Architectural heritage groups
- Housing advocates
- Local developers

The development of a script/talking points for tour guides would also integrate well with ongoing work to revise and expand the existing presentation on GTR history, the Ad Hoc Committee and GTR renewal that can be used for a wide variety of local groups.