



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Working Group:	Working Group Co-Ordinator's Report – Ray Harsant
Report Date:	December 8, 2024 (for December 16th Ad Hoc Cttee Meeting)

Information Overview of Previous Month:

- I. Provided some additional contact information to the Partnership Working Group for their follow-up.
- II. Participated in the Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group sessions.
- III. As per direction at the November Ad Hoc Cttee meeting, I have met twice with the four (4) Ad Hoc Cttee members volunteering to meet with me to review participants' output and comments provided in the recently conducted Ad Hoc Committee Survey Questionnaire. All members have reviewed the draft report and provided input//clarification on a number of points, as contained in this report

As previously noted, the purpose of completing the survey questionnaire was to "take stock": See what is working well and what suggestions there might be for enhancing what and how we continue with this critical transformational work, going forward in to our second year.

In brief, the group of four was tasked with reporting on their collective analysis regarding the entire survey's output. The mandate here is to utilize the information to identify changes that could be made to the committee process in order to make the process better/more effective.

In addition to the above, the group would also decide:

- 1. What the overall story might be from the participants' input/comments;
- 2. What "themes" might exist from a review of all participants' input/comments and discussion of these to;
- 3. Determine any significant observations or conclusions from this review;
- 4. Determine any potential recommendations for the Ad Hoc Committee's consideration and recommendations to Council for their approval; and
- 5. Make any other pertinent observations and suggestions as these come to light through their review and discussion of the materials.
- 6. Additionally, the group was asked to consider whether or not to "open up" the survey to give another opportunity to those who did not participate in the exercise, to do so.

The group's report also includes their review of the detailed report and presentation given at the Grand Trunk Renewal Committee's November 18th meeting.

As stated in that report, all participants' comments/opinions had been sorted by question, in alphabetical order (and where/if necessary de-personalized). This was done to further ensure that no person could be identified by name, as providing any number of comments.

Report to the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Request for Approval:

Through consensus, the group of four Committee members – Barb Cottle, Ron Dodson, Melanie Hare, and Paul Parlee – provide the following report. It includes recommendations for the Committee’s consideration and forwarding to Council for their approval.

First, Some Additional Context:

Through discussion with the Committee Chair, he supported the following recommendations:

1. My role as a Working Co-ordinator here, was primarily to facilitate discussion and process for the four Grand Trunk Ad Hoc Committee members in addressing the above items. If I had comment outside of this role, I would simply state that I was briefly stepping out of my facilitator role into that of a participant. This was seen as warranted having attended and participated in many different meetings from when the Ad Hoc Committee was first established.
2. We would not involve the Corporate Initiatives Lead in these discussions, such that this report would come strictly from the Ad Hoc Committee members to the entire Ad Hoc Committee. If some clarification on any point was needed from that role, we would ask for it. This was done in the most recent meeting wherein the Lead was invited to attend for approximately half an hour so the group could obtain clarification regarding questions related to municipal protocols/processes and the Ad Hoc Committee’s Terms of Reference.
3. All decisions and recommendations would be made by the four members through consensus. While the Working Co-ordinator would prepare the draft report, this report comes from them; the four members.
4. This Grand Trunk Ad Hoc Committee’s Survey Questionnaire Review Committee (!!) will be referred to in this report as “The Review Committee”.
5. Recommendations will be as specific as possible.

Decisions made by “The Review Committee”:

1. The survey participants’ comments and opinions are to remain private and confidential among the group assigned to review them. Notwithstanding this, if any Committee member wishes to see the comments, they can do so following the December Ad Hoc Committee meeting.
2. Actual details of the discussions among the four (plus one) of us would be confidential among the group and summarized appropriately in a report for the benefit of the entire Ad Hoc Cttee, non-voting members and staff resources (all of whom were invited to participate in the survey questionnaire), as well as, for transparency reasons, the public.
3. The survey questionnaire will not be re-opened for completion by those who did not complete it.

Rationale for this is that 8 of 12 of the Committee members (ie., 66,7%) indicated as actually responding to the survey. This is a reliable number of responders from the actual group membership, upon which to arrive at some conclusions and suggested recommendations. In addition, the actual number responding might be greater than 8 since 2 responders indicated they preferred not to indicate which demographic group they belonged to.

What's **the Story** Here:

Each member was asked to write one or two sentences of up to 25-30 words to describe the situation at hand, based on each member's reading of the survey outputs/comments/opinions.

Through discussion, the following statement was agreed to as "telling the story here":

Despite initial enthusiasm, hopes and some significant initiatives, we feel frustrated and overwhelmed with bureaucracy, formality, stretched staff, a senior leadership deficit and silo planning discussions done in a framework impeding a real sense of progress. (36 words!)

What **themes** are identified – and suggestions/comments/conclusions:

1. Poor communications – need to improve these – more clarity;
2. Cumbersome processes – especially for a Citizens' Committee (which the Ad Hoc Cttee is). We need extraordinary processes for this extraordinary project;
3. Questionable procedural structure to meet the mandate of this Ad Hoc Cttee – we seem pigeon holed into a structure that is designed for other purposes. Need to better understand what is meant by such things as "met with the university..."; "met with the Y...". If discussion/negotiations are taking place with the Y, the Library and the University by senior level City people without any of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee being involved, then there is a lack of transparency at the very least.
4. Unclear Roles and Responsibilities – "we seem to just passively receive Working Group reports and without any real meaningful discussion and informed *knowledge*, endorse requests for Council to approve certain motions". While there are plans with deadlines, we don't feel we really understand these plans.
5. Agendas don't allow for meaningful, dialogue/discussion. While presentations are good, we need time for actually having meaningful discussion. Example: Why/How can a decision be made to place the available Locomotive in the Shops building when Vision, Planning and Architecture Working Group or the Committee as a whole has not actually been involved in discussions as to what is actually to go in this repurposed building.
6. Room in which we meet is not compatible with full, open discussion.

Recommendations – Requested Grand Trunk Ad Hoc Renewal Committee Direction:

1. Approve: At the Ad Hoc Committee's December 16th meeting, approve our report either as submitted or as amended through discussion at this meeting, and approve recommendations to be sent to Council for their consideration.
2. Exempt: Request Council to pass a resolution to exempt this Community Ad Hoc Committee from the usual Ad Hoc Committee rules (for example, rules regarding Committee processes and agendas) to allow for robust Committee discussions resulting in improved overall communications and understanding of Working Group and Staff reports. If necessary, pass a by-law that states what this particular Ad Hoc Committee can and cannot do. Regular Ad Hoc Committee meetings will continue with altered structures and processes to facilitate more efficiency, flexibility and results beyond these meetings and to work more nimbly as a Committee and Working Groups.

3. **Find:** Request Council to direct Staff to find an alternative suitable room where we can meet in the round for more productive discussions, incurring costs if necessary to ensure transparency/live streaming to the public, virtual participation of any Committee members not able to be personally in attendance, and having suitable space for members of the public to attend.
4. **Review:** Direct Working Groups, Chairs, Co-Chairs, and Working Group Co-ordinators to review their roles, responsibilities and overall Committee processes/structures, providing suggestions to the Corporate Initiatives Lead for proposing amending these to more effectively undertake the Ad Hoc Committee’s mandate.

Next Steps:

Please see the next section of this report.

Overview of Upcoming Month:

Summary of work anticipated for the upcoming month.

Item #	Item/Action	By Whom	By When
1	Continue to be available to work with the four Ad Hoc Cttee members tasked with the review of the Ad Hoc Survey Questionnaire	Ray	As requested/required over the coming month
2	Be available to any Working Groups, Ad Hoc Cttee members, non-members and staff to discuss directions or items coming out of the preceding report.	Ray	Mid January