



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Working Group:	Staff Report
Report Date:	Monday, December 16, 2024

Purpose:

The Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee has been meeting for just over a year. In that time, the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee has developed a comprehensive list of frequently asked questions and provided a significant amount of information about the project to the community through the EngageStratford platform. The Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee delivered two large community events that explored the project itself and considered comparable project from neighbouring communities. The Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee collaboratively developed a vision and set of guiding principles to inform the project and delivered a series of ten community pop-ups to gather insights on this work. Members of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Working Groups have met with stakeholders from across the community and presented to various community groups and organizations.

While this work has been important and foundational, there are key actions that will drive the Grand Trunk Renewal Project into the next phase of its development. These actions include:

1. Finding ways to activate the Grand Trunk Site on an interim basis to bring excitement, community and imagination to this long-vacant site.
2. Determining the scale, operating model, funding structure and design of a new community recreation facility, as well as the partnership and financial arrangement to support it.
3. Enhance organizational capacity to manage and coordinate the Grand Trunk Renewal Project.
4. Assessing the opportunity for residential development on the site to support our community's need for housing supply and to bring the energy of new residents to this site.
5. Assessing the opportunity for mobility and parking solutions on the site to anticipate the future needs of new residents and community users, and the disruption that development will cause to current surface parking options.

To support the successful execution of the Grand Trunk Renewal Project, the creation of a new 1.5 FTE position has been proposed. This role will provide essential staffing resources to manage and coordinate various aspects of the project, including communications, stakeholder engagement, and administrative support. The request for this position has been included in the 2025 budget and is currently under review by the City Council. Once the budget is approved in January or February of 2025, the role will be finalized and recruitment will begin.

With feedback and insights from the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee, a series of recommendations will be presented to Council in February 2025. The recommendations are aligned with the project's Vision and Guiding Principles and Q3-Q4 2024 Workplan. These recommendations are intended to drive the Grand Trunk Renewal forward on key project components.

Requested Committee Direction:

- **THAT** Stratford City Council direct staff to pursue background research on temporary and interim uses for the GTR site and associated next steps including cost estimates and bring these findings back to Council for consideration.
- **THAT** staff provide Stratford City Council with an update on discussions between the YMCA, Stratford Public Library and the City of Stratford on a shared facility at the Grand Trunk site. This update will include an estimated range of municipal investment required to develop a shared recreation facility.
- **THAT** Stratford City Council directs staff (with support as needed from the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee) to develop an Expression of Interest to receive proposals addressing housing on the GTR site focusing on the Parcel known as 2D.
- **THAT** Stratford City Council directs staff (with support as needed from the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee) to develop an Expression of Interest in accordance with the to receive proposals to build and operate a parking/mobility solution on the GTR site.

Background Information, Analysis and Next Steps:

Interim use of the Grand Trunk Building

- Work Plan Item: Communications & Community Engagement
- Staff Lead: Corporate Initiatives

Background

The GTR site, a partially restored industrial structure, has been secured and restricted for public access due to safety considerations. Following major structural reinforcements and removal of the roof decking, temporary uses for the building are being explored to foster community engagement with the site, align with long-term revitalization goals, and generate public awareness.

The City is exploring options for temporary activations, including art installations, community events, and performances, which would bring people onto the site. The Communications, Public Engagement, and Advocacy Working Group suggested that the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee request City Staff to review temporary use concepts and develop a report for Council. The direction was provided at the August 29, 2024, meeting of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee.

Potential activations include diverse activities such as art installations, historical tours, community events, live performances, and public markets. Ideas also include small-scale tours led by Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee members to enable residents to explore the building safely (as proposed by the Communications, Public Engagement, and Advocacy Working Group at the October 21, 2024, Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting. These activations are intended to make the building more accessible, build community interest, and showcase the site's potential value for residents, visitors, and prospective developers.

To support these initiatives safely, adherence to Ontario Building Code standards or suitable alternatives is required. Discussions on this topic with Building and Planning started in June 2024. Over the course of many conversations with internal stakeholder and external experts, it has become clear that a change of use is required to have the public in the Grand Trunk building.

The team from Community Services has been engaged to provide operational support for the site once activations are possible. Staff from LightsON Stratford and Stratford Summer Music have been engaged to articulate site requirements for anticipated activations. External experts, including Clyde Wagner of TOLive and formerly of Luminato, David Stonehouse, Director of the Waterfront Secretariat and formerly of Evergreen Brickworks, Janet Sellery of Sellery Health & Safety, Azra Ross of Epiphany Engineering, have been consulted.

Analysis:

Occupancy and Use Considerations

- Public events in the building are not currently permitted. The CBO advised that the intended uses may require reclassification from industrial to assembly occupancy depending on public access and temporary use needs. All of this will affect compliance requirements under the Ontario Building Code.
- This will require recommendations on the on-site interventions needed to meet the building code requirements for assembly use.
- An engineer and architect have been engaged to determine the interventions needed to apply for a change of use. The building department has provided and will continue to provide feedback on this scope of work.

Health and Safety Recommendations

- An October 2024 health and safety report from Sellery Health + Safety outlines specific measures for safe site activation, including recommendations for securing hazardous areas, improving egress and emergency response capabilities, and managing crowd control for different levels of site activation. This builds on the Temporary Use Guidelines by articulating the specific requirements such as power and seating for events.

Guided Tours:

- Guided tours are possible without a change of use. PPE will be required as well as safety protocols.

Next Steps:

Building Assessment:

- Commission an assessment to determine necessary compliance measures, alternative solutions, and estimated costs for change of use. The results will support both CBO review and a cost-benefit analysis for public engagement opportunities.

Chief Building Official (CBO) Consultation:

- Submit the assessment to the CBO to determine if temporary occupancy can be granted.

Costing, Cost-Benefit Analysis and Report to Council:

- Develop a detailed cost estimate for all compliance requirements necessary for use of the building. This costing will include structural adjustments, safety installations, and any additional requirements identified in the architectural assessment and health and safety assessment.
- Complete a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate the financial implications and community impact of making the building compliant for temporary public use.
- Present a final report to Council summarizing the required investment, anticipated benefits, and potential funding options to secure the necessary funds to support phased activation of the site.

Implementation Plan for Broader Activations:

- Develop a phased plan, incorporating the health and safety recommendations and architectural assessment, to enable scalable, temporary public uses aligned with the CACE Working Group's proposed activation ideas (e.g., art installations, public performances, and outdoor markets).

Shared Community Recreation Facility

- Work Plan Item: Develop Key Partnership Model and Finance & Real Estate Model
- Staff Lead: Corporate Initiatives and investStratford

Background

The project aims to develop a new community recreation facility at the Grand Trunk site in Stratford. The YMCA has an MOU with the City to explore the potential of a new facility at the Grand Trunk Site. In March, the Stratford Public Library delegated to Stratford City Council, requesting that the library be considered as a core partner at the Grand Trunk. Council referred this decision to the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee, who received a presentation and request from the Stratford Public Library at its April 18, 2024, meeting.

Over the past year, the YMCA, the Library, and the City of Stratford, have been meeting regularly to discuss the vision, goals, and collaborative opportunities for the project. The primary objective is to assess space needs, potential operating arrangements, the required municipal investment and identify potential funding sources, including contributions from partners and government grants.

Establishing and maintaining strong relationships is crucial for the success of this collaborative project. By fostering open communication and understanding, these parties can ensure that the contributions from each partner align with the Grand Trunk Renewal project's overall goals and make the project financially feasible. This collaborative approach is key in leveraging resources, sharing expertise, and ensuring that the final design meets the diverse needs of the community.

The scope of work includes researching various funding models based on similar community recreation projects and understanding the roles that each partner can play in contributing to the project's success. The findings will help outline the investment required from the municipality and the potential support from other partners.

Analysis

Current research has been undertaken with the assistance of recent graduate of the University of Waterloo's Recreation and Leisure Studies Masters' program. The goal of this research is to provide the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Stratford City Council with a clear understanding of the municipal investment required for the new community recreation facility at the Grand Trunk site. Progress to date includes:

- **Amenities and Facility Considerations:** To meet the needs of the YMCA, Stratford Public Library and the City of Stratford, the facility would need to include a variety of amenities such as a pool, gym, walking track, daycare, library, meeting rooms, a café, community spaces, a shared kitchen, and a lounge. The planned size is between 70,000 and 110,000 square feet, excluding ice pads.
- **Funding Models:** Research on potential funding models for recreation complexes has been completed. This included a detailed analysis of funding contributions from municipalities, the YMCA, libraries, and government grants. The findings indicate that municipal investment ranges from 4% to full funding, depending on the project, with other partners like the YMCA contributing up to 43% in some cases.
- **Practical Implications:** Cost-saving measures, such as leveraging provincial and federal grants, including the Federal Gas Tax Fund, are being explored. Additionally, the City of Kitchener's Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) model, which streamlines design and construction, is referenced. This could potentially reduce costs and accelerate the project timeline.
- **Partnerships and Funding:** The research emphasizes the importance of partnerships to make this project feasible.

Next Steps:

- Further research on grants and funding opportunities.
- Finalize report on cost range of comparable facilities
- Prepare final report for consideration in January by the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and City Council in February.

Grand Trunk Site Blocks and Housing Opportunities

- Work Plan Item: Finance & Real Estate Model and Procurement/RFP Process and Site Analysis & Environmental

- Staff Lead: investStratford

Background

The land parcel known as 2D on the Grand Trunk Site is approximately 2.5 acres in size with access and frontage on Downie Street. It is identified as a former area of industrial buildings and rail spurs.

Preliminary investigations have been carried out.

- Environmental impacts related to heavy metals and hydrocarbons.
 - Initial investigation indicates that impacts are shallow.

A Record of Site Condition will be required to develop a more sensitive land use (from industrial to residential), and site remediation would proceed under 'Site Condition Standards'.

Housing of all types is needed in the City of Stratford. As our City continues to grow characteristics like walkability, connections to public transit, affordability, accessibility and inter-generational living (student and seniors) will be top of mind.

For an analysis of procurement options, please refer to the memo at the end of this package entitled "Procurement Options for the Disposition of City Land and Securing Development Partners", Policy P.3.1 Sale and Other Disposition of Land, and Policy P.5.1 Purchasing Policy.

Analysis

- Environmental & Due Diligence
 - Estimated range for consultant costs \$250,000.
 - Costs may increase if unknowns encountered.
 - Ministry may require more boreholes and monitoring.
 - Contaminant levels encountered could be higher than anticipated.
 - Soil remediation to site specific standards expected to reach and exceed \$2,000,000.
 - Anticipated timelines for record of site condition ~1.5 to 3 years
- Servicing
 - Alternative municipal servicing options could be available for this parcel (from Downie Street) and may not require the internal road network for connections.
- Student Housing
 - Stratford is home to four permanent post-secondary schools and private learning centres.
- Government Funding and Programs
 - Housing and Housing-Enabling infrastructure continue to be top of mind for Provincial and Federal Governments. With upcoming elections, shovel-ready properties will be the most desirable for any available funding.

Next Steps

- Seek direction from the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Council to begin due diligence, expressions of interest and development of housing solutions and parcel 2D.

- Work to define the overall proposed scope of the site to calculate the magnitude and density of housing, the return on investment and servicing and environmental consultations.
- Review the various procurement and partnership options available to the City for a housing development on the site.

Parking and Mobility Solution Expression of Interest

- Work Plan Item: Work Plan Item: Finance & Real Estate Model and Procurement/RFP Process and Site Analysis & Environmental
- Staff Lead: investStratford

Background

The Grand Trunk site (GTR), a partially restored industrial structure and surrounding lands – approximately 18 acres in total – currently has 437 parking spaces. The spaces located at what is referred to as the Cooper Site are currently unpaid or free parking spaces. The City of Stratford is responsible for the repairs and maintenance of the lot. There is currently no alternative in the downtown core to replace the 437 spaces when construction and development begins on the site. The most recent parking study was completed in 2015/16 and is included as a supplemental report entitled “Parking Study 2014”.

For an analysis of procurement options, please refer to the memo at the end of this package entitled “Procurement Options for the Disposition of City Land and Securing Development Partners”, Policy P.3.1 Sale and Other Disposition of Land, and Policy P.5.1 Purchasing Policy.

Analysis

- Replacing the existing 437 parking spaces
 - There is no current plan or strategy to accommodate the loss of spaces to development and construction on the Grand Trunk site.
 - It is our understanding that most parking is used by employees of downtown businesses, some patrons of downtown businesses and by visitors (mostly in the spring/summer Theatre season).
- Accommodating new development on the site:
 - Based on an assumption of 300 new dwelling units built on the site and the existing parking ratios of 1.25 spaces/unit, the site would need to absorb an additional 375 spaces.
 - Further accommodation of future community spaces – YMCA, City of Stratford, Stratford Public Library would add approximately 50-100 spaces.
- Cost to build and location:
 - Internal estimates to build modern parking structures range from \$40,000-\$50,000/space for above ground structures. Based on the spaces required, in the short term (5-10 years) this order of magnitude is \$29,000,000-36,250,000.
 - Further to an internal review of the site, the burnt-out portion on the west side of the site is the most ideal for a parking/mobility structure.
 - The approximate size of that space would allow for about 150 vehicles per level – replacing just the existing spaces would require 3 levels (~400 space).

- It is recommended that a structure consider future expansion opportunity to accommodate the new and proposed development.

Next Steps

- Seek direction from the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Council to begin due diligence, expressions of interest and development of a parking solution.
 - Work to define the overall proposed scope of the site to calculate the magnitude of the parking/mobility structure and the implications on parking in the downtown core.
 - Review the various procurement and partnership options available to the City.
 - Confirm the feasibility of a parking structure on the GTR and explore procurement/partnerships to deliver.



CITY of STRATFORD

BRIEFING MEMO

TO: Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

FROM: Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead
Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford

DATE: December 16, 2024

RE: Procurement Options for the Disposition of City Land and Securing Development Partners

Purpose:

To provide background to the committee on procurement options and to inform next steps for attracting development partners on the Grand Trunk site.

Background:

Many procurement options are available on the GTR site. This analysis references The City of Stratford Policy P.5.1 Purchasing Policy (purchasing policy) and The City of Stratford Policy P.3.1 Sale and Other Disposition of Land (disposition policy).

Sole Sourcing (Non-competitive)

- Description: Directly select a buyer or developer without a competitive process.
- Alignment with Policies: The purchasing policy permits single sourcing only under specific conditions, such as lack of competition, exclusive capabilities, or proprietary rights (P.5.1 section 37.0). Sole sourcing is an identified disposition method in the disposition policy (P.3.1 section 8.1.4).
- Considerations:
 - Justification: Clearly document the rationale for single sourcing, such as the lack of competition or unique contributions to community benefits.
 - Transparency: Address potential scrutiny by documenting the decision-making process and obtaining necessary approvals.

- Risk Mitigation: Include performance guarantees and ensure alignment with accessibility and environmental standards.

Broker or Third-Party Agent

- Description: Engaging a broker or agent to market the property with conditions for its use or development.
- Alignment with Policies: Not specifically indicated in the purchasing policy, but an identified disposition method in disposition policy (P.3.1 section 8.1.6).
- Considerations:
 - Market Reach: Leverage the broker’s network to attract diverse and qualified developers.
 - Costs: Negotiate clear terms to control brokerage fees and ensure value for money.
 - Oversight: Monitor activities to ensure compliance with the purchasing policy’s ethical standards (P.5.1 section 4.0).

Tendering

- Description: Inviting bids for purchase or lease of the land with clear specifications.
- Alignment with Policies: For projects exceeding \$100,000, competitive tendering aligns with the purchasing policy requirements (P.5.1 section 35.0). It is also identified method in the disposition policy (P.3.1 section 8.1.2).
- Considerations:
 - Specifications: Clearly define all requirement in the tender documents—residential type, number of units, amount of greenspace etc.
 - Evaluation: Focus on both price and qualitative factors, such as alignment with public interests and project sustainability.

Expressions of Interest (EOI)

- Description: Soliciting non-binding interest to gauge market capacity and innovation.
- Alignment with Policies: While EOIs are not identified in the purchasing policy, they align to Requests for Information (P.5.1 section 31.0) indicated in the purchasing policy. This approach aligns with the disposition method “call for proposals or offers” (disposition policy P.3.1 section 8.1.1).
- Considerations:
 - Creativity & Flexibility: Use EOIs to identify innovative approaches to achieve objectives.

- Open Process: Advertise widely to ensure a fair and transparent competition.
- Next Steps: Plan to transition successful EOIs into structured RFP or RFQ processes.

Request for Proposals (RFP)

- Description: Soliciting detailed proposals for developing the site, with criteria emphasizing priorities.
- Alignment with Policies: RFPs are ideal for projects requiring innovative or flexible solutions where price is not the sole determinant (purchasing policy P.3.1 section 36.0, and disposition policy P.3.1 section 8.1.1).
- Considerations:
 - Evaluation Criteria: Include community benefit contributions as a weighted factor in the RFP evaluation matrix.
 - Community Engagement: Engage the community and relevant stakeholders to align RFP criteria with public needs.

Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

- Description: Screening potential developer or organizations based on pre-defined criteria.
- Alignment with Policies: RFQs are useful for pre-qualifying vendors for complex projects (purchasing policy P.5.1 section 33.0, disposition policy P.3.1 section 8.1.1).
- Considerations:
 - Shortlisting: Prequalify vendors based on their experience with public benefit projects, financial stability, and compliance history.
 - Time Savings: Streamline subsequent procurement steps by focusing only on qualified vendors.
 - Transparency: Document the criteria and process for shortlisting to ensure fairness.

Public-Private Partnerships (P3s)

- Alignment with Policies: Though not explicitly outlined, P3s could be structured using the RFP process to attract long-term partners.
- Considerations:
 - Risk Sharing: Clearly define roles, risks, and responsibilities between the City and private partners.
 - Long-Term Benefits: Prioritize sustainable outcomes, such as affordable housing and green spaces.

- Council Approval: Seek Council endorsement for complex agreements exceeding five years (purchasing policy P.5.1 section 24.1.).

Disposal by Donation

- Description: Selling or donating surplus land for specific public uses (e.g., affordable housing or green spaces).
- Alignment with Policies: Disposing surplus goods through sale or donation aligns with the purchasing policy (P.5.1 section 40.1.). While the disposition policy does not address donation explicitly, it does allow for land exchange (P.3.1 section 8.1.7) and suggests that Council can determine alternative methods of disposal (P.3.1 section 8.1.8).
- Considerations:
 - Strategic Partners: Identify non-profits or organizations committed to achieving public benefits.
 - Conditions: Attach covenants or agreements ensuring land use aligns with community objectives.
 - Compliance: Ensure adherence to ethical and competitive standards (purchasing policy P.5.1 sections 3.2 and 4.0).

Considerations

Several consideration and factors are relevant to each of the described approaches.

1. Council Direction:

- Council provides direction at several points in the process of the sale and other disposition of land:
 - Declaring Land Surplus: Council must declare the land to be surplus to the needs of the City by resolution adopted at a meeting open to the public (P.3.1 section 3.3.1).
 - Determining Method of Disposal: Council determines the method of disposal at a meeting open to the public (P.3.1 section 3.3.2).
 - Granting Exemptions: Council may grant an exemption from any provision(s) of the policy by resolution (P.3.1 section 2.2).
 - Valuation: Council may authorize the disposition of land for other than the valuation if it is in the best interest of the City (P.3.1 section 7.4).
 - Methods of Disposal: Council determines the method of disposal of surplus land (P.3.1 section 8.1).

- Adjusting Sale Price: Council reserves the right to adjust the sale price and/or accept a proposal or offer for other than the sale price (P.3.1 section 9.1).
- Ratifying Disposition: Any disposition of land must be ratified by by-law of Council (P.3.1 section 9.3).
- In-Camera Sessions: Council may consider reports and give directions during in-camera sessions, including whether to declare land surplus, direct additional analysis, or proceed with disposal (P.3.1 Procedures for the Sale and Other Disposition of Land 6 and 7).
- Reviewing Submissions: Council reviews submissions received for selling surplus land and gives direction on which submissions to consider, further consultation or negotiations, or terminating the process (P.3.1 Procedures for the Sale and Other Disposition of Land 10).
- For purchasing, Council provides direction at several points:
 - Approval of Purchases: Council must approve the purchase of deliverables.
 - Exemption Requests: A department may request an exemption from any or all purchasing methods outlined in the policy by submitting a report supporting the exemption and outlining the reasons to Council. Such exemption may be granted by resolution.
 - Consultant Engagement: Approval to engage consultants must be received either in budget approval or by resolution of Council for projects where the consultant's fees are expected to exceed \$60,000.
 - Bid Protests: If a bidder disputes the staff award recommendation, an appeal shall be conducted by a Dispute Committee, and the decision of the Dispute Committee shall be in writing. The City will establish an impartial authority to review a complaint that cannot be resolved between parties.
 - Notification of Tenders and Quotations: Prior notification to Council through the Consent Agenda is required when calling tenders and seeking sealed quotes.
 - Sole Source Purchases: The CAO will determine if a purchase shall proceed by a sole source if there is a disagreement between the MFS and Department Head.
 - Disposal of Surplus Goods: Surplus goods may be disposed of by offering to any other department, sale by auction or consignment, sealed bid, or donation to a charitable organization, with Council's direction.

2. Community Engagement:

- Involve public consultations and the Ad-Hoc Committee to align project goals with community expectations.

3. Transparency and Fairness:

- Maintain detailed records and ensure decisions align with public trust (purchasing policy P.5.1 section 43.0).