



## Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

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| <b>Working Group:</b> | <b>Staff Report</b>          |
| <b>Report Date:</b>   | <b>Tuesday, May 15, 2025</b> |

### Purpose

This report provides an update on several streams of work underway as part of the Grand Trunk Renewal Project and seeks the Committee's feedback and general support for the direction. These updates are intended to keep the Committee informed and seek feedback as we prepare upcoming reports to Council on June 9 and July 14.

The report includes updates on the following streams of work:

1. Progress on interim use of the Grand Trunk site, including possible public access to the building and summer programming
2. An update on planning for the community facility
3. The approach to long-term development scenarios being prepared for the Ad Hoc GTR Committee and Council

### Requested Input from the Committee

To help guide the next phase of work and upcoming Council reporting, staff are seeking the Committee's input on the following:

- Does the Committee support the direction being proposed for interim use of the Grand Trunk site, particularly the summer programming idea?
- Are there any concerns or considerations the Committee feels should be addressed before these activities proceed?
- What feedback should staff keep in mind as this work is shared publicly and brought forward to Council?

### 1. Interim use of the Grand Trunk Building

One of the Committee and Council's directions in 2025 was to explore ways to activate the site on an interim basis (COU25-019, February 2025). The objective is to build public awareness and engagement while longer-term redevelopment planning continues.

### Updates

- Use of the Grand Trunk Building (Interior)
  - Staff have engaged a structural engineer, architect, and health and safety consultant to assess whether limited public access (e.g., guided tours, performances, installations) could be permitted inside the Grand Trunk building.
  - Initial assessments are nearing completion and have considered applicable building codes, space constraints, and safety requirements.

- A next step under consideration is the commissioning of a preliminary design and costing study to identify the building upgrades or alternative compliance solutions that may be required to allow temporary public use. This work is estimated to cost \$15,000.
- Summer Programming (Exterior Site Use)
  - Staff are preparing a summer programming plan for the adjacent parking lot area. This could include:
    - Temporary signage, lighting, and safety equipment
    - Portable washrooms and event infrastructure
    - Artist fees and programming coordination
  - Estimated costs range from \$30,000-\$40,000 with delivery led by the Grand Trunk Project Coordinator (investStratford) in collaboration with City departments and community partners.
- Building Siding Removal (Under Exploration)
  - The Communications, Advocacy and Civic Engagement working group and Staff are exploring the removal of sections of the building's steel siding to enhance aesthetics and allow visual access to the structure's interior. Costing and feasibility work is currently underway.

## **Budget**

These interim actions are supported under the Grand Trunk Renewal allocation approved in the City's 2025 municipal budget.

## **Next Steps**

- Report to Council for June 9, 2025, that will:
  - Seek direction to proceed with the next phase of building feasibility work
  - Provide an update on summer programming plans and associated costs
  - Present options related to siding removal

## **2. Community Facility**

Staff continue to work with the YMCA and the Stratford Public Library to explore a shared community facility on the Grand Trunk site. The focus at this stage is on financial feasibility, partner alignment, and site planning. The development strategy will impact the development of share community facility concept.

## **Updates**

- Continued meetings between partners to clarify space needs and potential operating models
- Development of a capital funding strategy, including anticipated municipal contributions, partner funding, fundraising potential, and government grants
- Incorporate the findings from the development strategy stream of work

## **Next Steps**

Staff intend to bring forward findings in tandem with the development scenarios to the Committee on June 16, 2025, and to Council on July 15, 2025.

### **3. Development Strategy: Factors Impacting Residential and Parking Solution Development**

To guide decisions about the Grand Trunk site, the City has retained Svec Group to develop a set of high-level development scenarios. These scenarios will consider what uses (community facility, public space, residential and parking and mobility) should be where on the Grand Trunk site. Each scenario explores:

- Potential configurations of housing, public space, a community facility, and structured parking
- Trade-offs associated with different uses and site layouts
- Cost, phasing, infrastructure needs, and value generation
- Market viability and delivery models

To complete this work, the City has retained Svec Group. To date, Svec Group has conducted several key meetings:

- February 13, 2025: Kick-off meeting with City staff, Ad Hoc Committee Chair, and Chairs of the Vision, Planning and Architecture, Real Estate, Legal and Finance, Communications, Advocacy and Civic Engagement, and Infrastructure and Environment Working Groups
- March 17, 2025: Development strategy workshop with the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee
- April 10, 2025: Site visit and discussion with City staff, Ad Hoc Committee Chair, and Chairs of the Vision, Planning and Architecture, Real Estate, Legal and Finance, Communications, Advocacy and Civic Engagement, and Infrastructure and Environment Working Groups
- May 13, 2025: Findings presentation and discussion with Real Estate, Legal and Finance Working Group

#### **Next Steps**

- May 20, 2025: Review and discussion of factors impacting development
- June 16, 2025: Review and discussion of development scenarios
- July 14, 2025: Council review and direction on preferred development scenario