



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Working Group:	Staff Report
Report Date:	Friday, August 15, 2025

Purpose

This report provides an information update on several streams of work underway as part of the Grand Trunk Renewal Project. It outlines progress in implementing the Committee and Council directions from February 2025 (*COU25-019: Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations*) and the Committee's June 2025 recommendation, endorsed by Council on July 14, 2025 (*COU25-084: Grand Trunk Site Update and Superstructure Scenario Considerations*), to advance Scenario Two (Keep Part).

The intent is to show how these directions are being actioned through interim site activations, and immediate technical work with Svec Group. Information is also provided on the end of the committee term celebration. This update is for information only.

1. Interim use of the Grand Trunk Building

As outlined in the February 2025 report (*COU25-019: Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations*), Council directed staff to explore interim activations to build public awareness and engagement while long-term planning continues. This builds on ongoing Committee discussions about using the site to tell its story and the familiarize the community with the project.

Confirmed Event: Trophy X Dream Weavers – Storytelling that Transforms Us

October 4–5, 2025 | Grand Trunk Site grounds, next to the Cooper Lot

This free, all-ages event will transform the site into a glowing village of ten intimate tents, each hosting a local storyteller sharing a personal moment of transformation, hope, or aspiration. Audience members will contribute reflections to a growing “community tapestry” inside each tent. Dedicated tents will feature youth storytellers. Co-presented by Trophy, Provocation Ideas Festival, City of Stratford, and investStratford, in collaboration with Pathways to Poetry Festival and Stratford Writers Festival. More details on this event are shared on the Provocation Ideas Festival page here: <https://www.provocation.ca/2025-events--stratford>.

Additional Activations in Development

- Destination Stratford generously offered their large, LED “heart” for installation on the building exterior, bringing a fresh energy to the site through the fall.
- Tying-in with the heart’s energy, Destination Stratford plans a virtual “Hopes for Stratford” wall to collect public ideas online during the heart’s loan period. The Grand Trunk Project Coordinator will provide final details once confirmed.

2. Celebrating the Committee’s Work: Committee Social

October 27, 2025, | Stratford Country Club | 4:00-6:00

The Committee’s term concludes at the end of September 2025, as per the Terms of Reference. This event will celebrate the Committee’s accomplishments and express appreciation for the expertise and time contributed to shaping the renewed vision for the Grand Trunk site. Food and beverages will be provided.

3. Council Direction: Immediate Next-Phase Work with Svec Group (Key Council-Directed Deliverable)

This section is the core deliverable now underway as a direct result of the Committee’s June recommendation and Council’s endorsement on July 14, 2025 (*COU25-084: Grand Trunk Site Update and Superstructure Scenario Considerations*). It represents the immediate work that will return to Council in Q4 for direction before proceeding to the next stage. Following Council’s decision to advance Scenario Two (Keep Part), two immediate and interconnected pieces of work will begin:

- **Initial Feasibility Study (Q4 – Oct/Nov):** Explore broad land use approaches and block configurations (residential, mixed-use, institutional)
 - Identify key servicing and environmental constraints
 - Provide order-of-magnitude cost estimates for major site components
- **YMCA + Library Options Study (Q4 – Nov/Dec):** Assess current and future program needs for both partners in order to evaluate renovation, expansion, and hybrid building options. This work will also include cost estimates, lifecycle implications and phasing strategies. This will be done in partnership with the YMCA, Stratford Public Library and Community Services.

Why focus on these now

Together, these two studies respond directly to Council's July 14 direction

- The YMCA + Library Options Study will define the space requirements, program elements, and preliminary costs for a shared community facility. This will inform the decision as to whether a new community facility should be a renovation and/expansion of the existing YMCA facility or built elsewhere.
- The Initial Feasibility Study will set the parameters for site-wide land use, servicing, and environmental considerations
- The results will form the scope of work and costing basis for the next set of deliverables: the Site Plan & Engineering Study, Grand Trunk Building Options Study (which will consider the costs associated with retaining a portion of the superstructure as an outdoor amenity), and Housing Market Package.
- Both studies will return to Council in Q4 for consideration before the City proceeds to the next project stage

Next Steps

- Late August or early September (timing TBD): Destination Stratford heart installation/launch
- October 4–5: Trophy X Dream Weavers event
- October 20 or 27 (TBD): Committee Social
- Q4 2025: Completion of Initial Feasibility Study and YMCA + Library Options Study; presentation to Council

GTR Strategic Timeline

Month	Meeting	Meeting Topics & Deliverables
April	<i>Cancelled</i> (April 22)	
May	AHC Meeting (May 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (DEFERRED TO JUNE) Proposal to revise the Master Plan from VPA WG • Presentation and discussion from Svec Group on development scenario work to date & feedback • Findings from engineering investigations for assembly occupation, summer programming proposal & recommendations
June	<i>Deferred</i> Council Meeting (June 9) AHC Meeting (Jun 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (DEFERRED) Management Report on findings from engineering investigations for assembly occupation, summer programming proposal & recommendations • Presentation on scope of work for developing community facility proposal in partnership with YMCA x SPL & any recommendations • Presentation and discussion of development scenarios & recommendations from Svec Group
July	<i>Complete</i> Council Meeting (July 14) <i>Cancelled</i> AHC Meeting (July 21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Report with update on Master Plan revision process, scope of work for developing community facility proposal in partnership with YMCA x SPL, development scenarios from Svec Group & recommendations • Discussion on Master Plan revision and recommendations
August	AHC Meeting (August 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion on Master Plan revision and recommendations

Month	Meeting	Meeting Topics & Deliverables
Sept.	AHC Meeting (September 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize Master Plan revision and recommendations
October	Council Meeting (October 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Report on Master Plan Revision and recommendations

Legend

Project AHC Master Plan Revision

Streams: Interim Uses & Activation

Community Facility Concept

Residential and Parking Development