



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Working Group:	Staff Report
Report Date:	Monday, September 8, 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 Committee and Council directions from February 2025 (COU25-019: Grand Trunk Renewal Project Key Recommendations) and from 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, immediate technical work with Svec Group, and preparations for the conclusion of the Committee’s term. This update is for information only.

Interim use of the Grand Trunk Building

As outlined in the February 2025 report (COU25-019), 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 familiarize the community with the project.

*Confirmed Event: Trophy X Dream Weavers | Storytelling that Transforms Us
October 4–5, 2025 | Grand Trunk west-side grounds, next to the Downie Lot*

This free, all-ages event will transform the greenspace next to the site into a glowing village of ten intimate tents. Each will host 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, with dedicated tents featuring youth storytellers.

Additional placemaking interventions are being explore and will likely include picnic tables, puppet-making, and chalk art. They draw on the concept of “pop-up parks” to create a welcoming and engaging community space.

Partnerships for this activation include Trophy, the Provocation Ideas Festival, SpringWorks, the City of Stratford, and investStratford, with support from Pathways to Poetry Festival and Stratford Writers Festival.

Performances:

- Saturday, October 4: Performances 3:00–5:00 pm & 7:30–9:30 pm
- Sunday, October 5: Performances 1:00–3:00 pm

Call for Volunteers: To support the event, volunteers are needed to serve as “front of house” greeters to welcome visitors before performances. Shifts are:

- Saturday: 2:30–5:00 pm and 7:00–9:30 pm
- Sunday: 12:30–3:00 pm

Site Readiness: Power has been brought to the site to support activations. Destination Stratford’s large LED “heart” will be installed the week of September 15.

Celebrating the Committee’s Work: Committee Social

October 20, 2025, | The Parlour Inn | 4:00-6:00

The Committee’s term concludes at the end of September 2025, as per the Terms of Reference. A social gathering 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.

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

As directed by Council on July 14, 2025 (COU25-084), two key streams of technical work are now underway with Svec Group.

- **Initial Feasibility Study (Q4 – Oct/Nov):** Svec Group has initiated the feasibility study process, engaging engineering and architectural consultants to assess site opportunities and constraints. Work has included discussions with environmental engineers (previously retained by the City) to leverage existing knowledge of remediation needs and environmental conditions.
- **YMCA + Library Options Study (Q4 – Nov/Dec):** A meeting has taken place between the YMCA, Stratford Public Library, Community Services, and Svec Group to begin analysis of:
 - Cost of a renovated and expanded YMCA
 - Cost of a new library
 - Cost of a shared facility (both as a renovation/expansion and elsewhere on the site)

Next Steps

Findings from both studies are anticipated in early 2026 and will return to Council for direction before proceeding to the next stage of work.

Next Steps

- Week of September 15: Destination Stratford heart installation/launch
- October 4–5: Trophy X Dream Weavers event

- October 14: Report to Council to provide recommendations from the Committee for the Master Plan and project implementation
- October 20: Committee Social at The Parlour Inn
- Q4 2025 or Q1 2026: 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 • COMPLETE Presentation and discussion from Svec Group on development scenario work to date & feedback • COMPLETE 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 • (DEFERRED) Presentation on scope of work for developing community facility proposal in partnership with YMCA x SPL & any recommendations—this was address in the development scenario work • COMPLETE 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"> • COMPLETE 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
Aug.	AHC Meeting (August 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COMPLETE Discussion on Master Plan revision and recommendations
Sept.	AHC Meeting (September 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalize Master Plan revision and recommendations
Oct.	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**