



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Working Group:	Vision, Planning & Architecture
Report Date:	September 8, 2025

Requested Committee Direction:

1. That the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee accept the Master Plan update recommendations outlined in this report;
2. That the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee accept the implementation recommendations outlined in this report; and,
3. That the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee direct that this report be forwarded to Stratford City Council for consideration.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee with the findings and recommendations of the Vision, Planning & Architecture (VPA) Working Group regarding updates to the Grand Trunk Master Plan (2018) and next steps for implementation.

Background:

The Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee was established by Stratford City Council to support implementation of the Grand Trunk Master Plan and advise on key areas including housing, mobility, community facilities, and interim activations. An element of the Committee’s terms of reference is to provide advice on the Master Plan itself.

Over the last two years, the Committee has learned a great deal about the project and related topics, including housing, infrastructure, brownfield remediation, Indigenous engagement, heritage, and community facility planning. This learning reflects input from community stakeholders and partners, as well as past technical studies and those now underway. While the Committee’s mandate is time-limited, city building is a longer endeavour. The Working Group views this report as a way of ensuring its findings and understanding can inform the project moving forward, beyond the life of the Committee.

The Grand Trunk Master Plan is the guiding framework for the site. It establishes a shared vision, defines land uses, and provides direction on design, infrastructure, and phasing. The 2018 Master Plan remains relevant, but now requires updating to reflect Council’s 2024 endorsement of the revised Vision and Guiding Principles, the work of the Committee, and current market and community conditions.

Analysis:

Master Plan Update Recommendations

The VPA Working Group has reviewed the Grand Trunk Master Plan (2018) to identify areas that should be updated to reflect the work of the AHC, in particular the Vision and Guiding Principles and Council's direction over the last 2 years and pending the outcome of the pre-development studies.

The following updates to the Master Plan document were identified:

- Create a concise and clear language document that can be easily read by multiple audiences
- Add Indigenous land acknowledgement and insight from First Nations engagement (pending)
- Update the context section to reflect the current community needs (diversity, housing needs, current economic context, etc.), community partners and interest in space (e.g. SLAAA, SAAC, ShelterLink) and acknowledging the potential role of the GTR in the City's future
- Replace the Vision and Guiding Principles with Council-endorsed 2024 version
- Expand the history of the site to acknowledge the traditional territories of the First Nations and the cultural/social significance of the Grand Trunk facilities for Stratfordians
- Update and consolidate the Process section to reflect recent AHC process and community input; revise language to remove the word "Community Hub"; potential to have a more detailed consultation process summary as an appendix if needed
- Update Vision and Guiding Principles to 2024 version; utilize colour code throughout other sections to demonstrate how the Guiding Principles are applied or implemented through the Key Elements and directions in later sections
- Revise Key Elements to reflect July Council direction and others (i.e. community facility to go on the site but not in the GT building and a strategy for the superstructure)
- Key directions and schedules to be updated (street and block network, etc.) to:
- Reflect outcomes of the development scenarios analysis
- Ensure alignment with the Guiding Principles (an emphasis on pedestrian/walkable environment, inclusive community and design principles related to universal design and accessibility)
- Include direction related to community space both indoor and outdoor open space
- Revise land use map to reflect revised uses envisioned and be less focused on academic and institutional uses
- Recommendations and next steps to be updated to reflect current status

Implementation Recommendations

In addition to the Master Plan updates, the VPA Working Group has identified process and implementation items to guide the next phase of work. These recommendations are intended to capture the Committee's knowledge at this stage of the project, recognizing that certain

detailed design and land use decisions remain dependent on future Council direction and technical studies. From the VPA perspective, next steps include:

- City Council and staff continue to advance the Indigenous engagement process in the next phases of the project
- Update the Master Plan to create a current Reinvestment Framework document (or new Master Plan) to inform next Grand Trunk Renewal steps in the process
- Determine the location and scale of the shared community facility
- Initiate the required environmental approvals (RSC etc.)
- Prepare/revise the conceptual street and development block schedule and infrastructure designs (streets, servicing)
- Identify phasing for long-term renewal
- Create a “meanwhile” and animation uses strategy and construct the infrastructure to support this (portables, electricity, initial remediation to create safe venue, lighting, etc.)
- Prepare a workplan and workback to Phase 1 of reinvestment of the GTR
- Prepare a concept design and strategy for gathering and event space/common in the superstructure
- Prepare a parking strategy and plan for the GT site and surrounding City facilities
- Ensure alignment with the City’s Official Plan review, in particular the amount and type of housing to be planned for on the Grand Trunk site

Findings & Conclusion:

The VPA Working Group’s review of the Grand Trunk Master Plan (2018) confirms that the document must be updated to reflect the Committee’s work, Council’s direction, and current community and market conditions. The Group has also identified process and implementation items to ensure the next phases of the project are grounded in clear frameworks, responsive to community needs, and aligned with the City’s Official Plan review.

The Working Group also notes that certain detailed decisions regarding land uses, building design, and phasing remain contingent on pre-development studies and future Council direction. These matters extend beyond the term of this Committee. This report is therefore intended to capture and carry forward the Committee’s knowledge so it can inform those future decisions.

The Working Group is therefore seeking the endorsement of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee for these recommendations. With the Committee’s endorsement, this report will be forwarded to Stratford City Council for its consideration.