

Report on Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal (GTR) Committee End-of-Mandate Survey Feedback

Part 1: Overview

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the survey was to collect reflections on the effectiveness of the GTR committee's work over their two-year mandate. The methodology included rating scales and paragraph form reactions. The survey was written with neutral language to eliminate built-in bias as much as possible to gather the widest range of honest opinions. No identification was asked, and anonymity was assured. Google Forms was used so that as many committee members as possible were able to access the survey online. The survey was also provided as a pdf file which could be printed, filled in and returned. The survey was not sent to City of Stratford or InvestStratford staff. Typos were not corrected.

1.2 Responses

The survey invitation was extended to all committee members and Working Group chairs. Twelve responses were received from the nineteen who received it. One person indicated they could not use the online survey, and an alternate form was provided.

The data and feedback which follows has been formatted so that anonymity is assured. There is no direct correlation among responses.

1.3 The Survey Results

As noted at the August 25 meeting, the Ad-Hoc GTR committee is coming to the end of its term. Because endings are often a good time to reflect and learn, this survey is an informal, non-scientific way for each member to give voice to their thoughts and to give final input to the Stratford City Council.

Please take a few minutes to respond to a series of short questions, and to reflect on how the Committee worked as representatives of segments of the public and as individuals who are committed to the continuous improvement of our city.

The survey has four brief sections:

- 1. Membership*
- 2. The Ad-Hoc Committee Mandate*
- 3. The Ad-Hoc Committee Purpose*
- 4. General Feedback, Moving the Project Forward*

The survey is completely anonymous, except for identifying the group to which you belong and an optional name at the end.

There is an expectation that all responses will be respectful of the work that everyone, including staff, have contributed, as per City policy.

1. Membership

Ad-hoc Committee member: 7

Working Group Chair or member: 7

Both Groups: 1

2. The Ad-Hoc GTR Committee Mandate

The committee's mandate was outlined in its Terms of Reference:

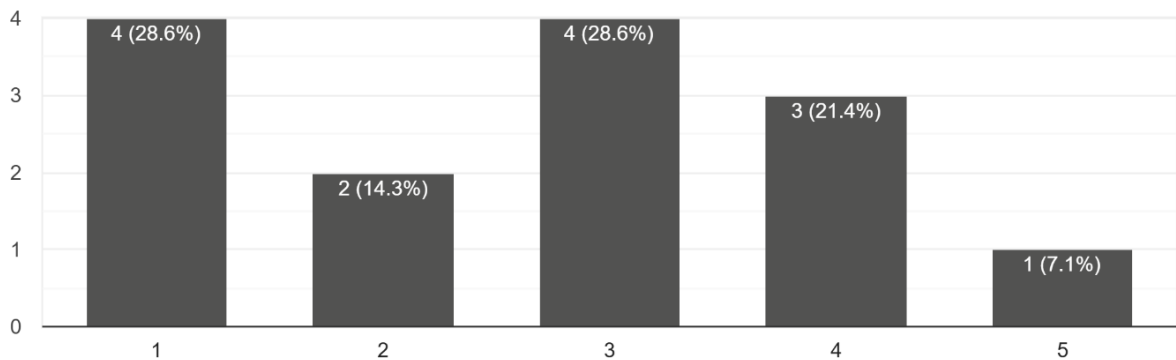
The Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee will provide support for and a forum for input and exchange of ideas on the renewal of the Grand Trunk building.

As with all Council-appointed committees within the City of Stratford, the Grand Trunk Renewal Committee will not have the authority to commit City Resources or direct the work of staff.

1 = Ineffective; 2 = Somewhat effective; 3 = Moderately effective; 4 = Highly effective;
5 = No opinion

To what degree do you feel the mandate was met, as outlined above?

14 responses



Reflections Summary

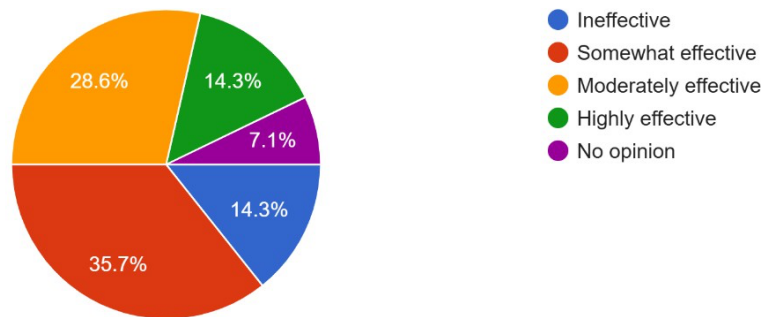
The working group consistently engaged with clubs and organizations to raise awareness about the project and encourage involvement, successfully meeting the core mandate. Committee members provided guiding principles and supported a forum for community input and idea exchange, leading to valuable contributions and discussions. While City bylaws limited idea sharing during formal meetings, alternative formats and sub-groups fostered creative thinking and effective collaboration. Overall, the group's work led to meaningful engagement and laid the foundation for ongoing renewal efforts, while remaining committed to addressing feedback and evolving project needs.

1. The Ad-Hoc Committee Purpose

The Committee's stated Purpose, as outlined in the Terms of Reference, included five points. How effective was the work that was done in relation to each Purpose?

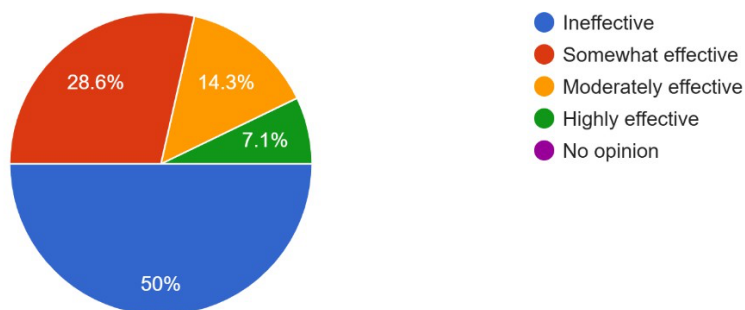
Purpose 1: To support the Grand Trunk Master Plan adopted by City Council.

14 responses



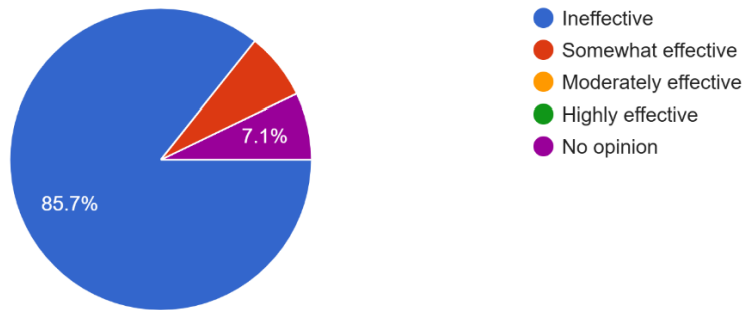
Purpose 2: To act as a sounding board to the City on matters dealing with the renewal of the Grand Trunk building, including building designs and architectural plans.

14 responses



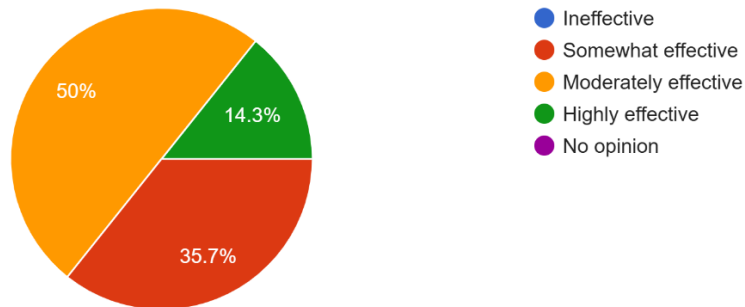
Purpose 3: To identify fundraising opportunities and support fundraising initiatives.

14 responses



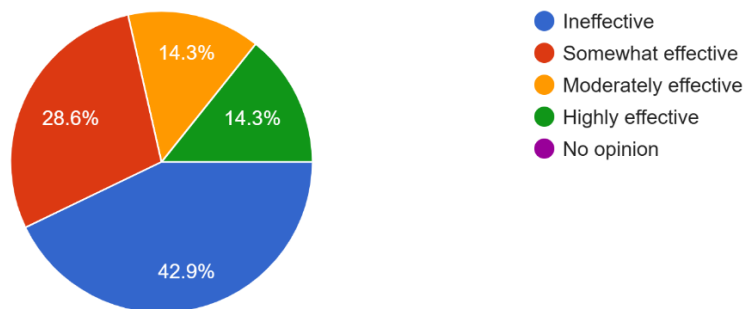
Purpose 4: To advise and assist with the development of a public engagement program and promote the activities of the Grand Trunk renewal.

14 responses



Purpose 5: To liaise with other committees or organizations with overlapping roles and responsibilities.

14 responses



Reflections Summary

The committee played a vital role in encouraging the City to secure expert consulting advice, which helped guide decision-making for the Grand Trunk building. Through presentations and outreach, members built connections with clubs and local organizations, supported updates to the Master Plan, and helped advance the vision and guiding principles for renewal. Early public engagement initiatives were well received, providing valuable feedback and further strengthening the committee's impact. The Vision, Planning, and Architecture Working Group, along with dedicated members, made noteworthy contributions that informed project directions and options for redevelopment. Despite some challenges, the committee's work established a foundation and essential framework for ongoing community renewal and future planning.

General Feedback Summary

Serving on the committee offered a tremendous learning experience, especially regarding the complexities of managing a large-scale redevelopment project. The group benefited from well-run meetings, effective sharing of information, and insightful presentations, which helped shape our understanding and approach. Improvements in meeting formats and facilities enabled more participation and collaboration over time. The committee made important strides by identifying opportunities for Indigenous engagement, gathering broad member input, and advocating for transparency and better planning. The collective dedication laid a foundation for continued improvement, and all efforts helped advance community discussion and inform future decision-making for the Grand Trunk site.

Moving the Project Forward Summary

The city has benefited from extensive input and advice provided by a dedicated citizen-based committee, which has helped shape the direction for the Grand Trunk renewal project. With discussions and planning ongoing for two years, it is now an opportune time for Council and staff to act decisively and move the project forward. Future progress could be enhanced by adopting a more focused and flexible committee structure, engaging experts as needed, and facilitating community consultation at key milestones. Maintaining transparency and communication, especially on decision-making and planning, is crucial for continued public support. A renewed emphasis on clear leadership, strategic contracting, and inclusive community engagement will help ensure the long-term success of this transformative initiative for Stratford.

Summary

A strong technical project manager, such as a city planner, is recommended to clearly define project components and lead future redevelopment efforts for the Grand Trunk site. Enhancing meeting formats—for example, open public comment periods and comprehensive community updates via local media—would foster greater participation and transparency. Improved committee protocols and more creative processes are needed to build momentum and ensure the community's vision is achieved. While some progress has been made in defining next steps and facilitating broad input, renewed commitment to inclusive planning and imaginative, non-traditional solutions will help deliver a truly transformative outcome for Stratford's future.

Part 2: Analysis

To try to eliminate as much bias as possible, the data was processed by ChatGPT with the following prompt: Analyze the data for major trends, themes and significant differences between responses of "members" and "working group chairs." Its analysis follows, without edits.

2.1 Introduction

This report summarizes and analyzes feedback from two groups within the Ad-Hoc GTR Committee:

- **Members** (Ad-hoc Committee participants)
- **Working Group Chairs** (leaders of working sub-groups)

Focus is on trends, themes, and key differences between the perspectives of these groups regarding the Committee's mandate, purposes, processes, and future directions.

2.2 Overall Mandate Assessment

- **Members:** Rated the degree to which the mandate was met at an average of **2.3/4**.
- **Working Group Chairs:** Similar, at **2.4/4**.

Trend: Both groups felt the mandate was only partially fulfilled, reflecting modest or limited success.

2.3 Effectiveness Across the Five Stated Purposes

Purpose	Members' View	Chairs' View	Key Difference
1. Support the Grand Trunk Master Plan	Somewhat effective	Moderately effective	Chairs rated slightly higher.
2. Act as a sounding board on renewal/designs	Somewhat effective	Ineffective	Members saw modest value; Chairs saw none.
3. Fundraising opportunities	Ineffective	Ineffective	Almost universal agreement: not achieved.
4. Public engagement and promotion	Moderately effective	Somewhat effective	Members more positive.
5. Liaise with other committees/organizations	Ineffective	Somewhat effective	Chairs valued liaison more than Members.

Overall Pattern:

- Members gave somewhat higher ratings for community-facing roles (supporting the Master Plan, public engagement).
- Chairs were more critical, especially of design input and liaison work.
- Both groups agreed fundraising was a failure.

2.4 Thematic Analysis of Open-Text Responses

Members

- Positive emphasis on breadth of effort (guiding principles, outreach to clubs, engagement successes).
- Recognition of challenges: vague mandate, too many purposes, steep learning curve.
- Process reflections: some valued well-run meetings but noted attendance gaps and lack of clarity.
- Future perspective: suggested smaller, more focused committees; cautious optimism about citizen inclusion.

Representative Quotes:

- *“We were able to provide the guiding principles that were needed.”*
- *“Perhaps the five purposes was too much, more focus would have been better.”*
- *“The meetings were well run. Information was shared openly.”*

Working Group Chairs

- Stronger critiques of structural and procedural flaws.
- Emphasized lack of tangible progress (“no shovels in the ground”).
- Highlighted ineffective liaison roles and insufficient follow-up.
- More skeptical about citizen engagement in future processes.

Representative Quotes:

- *“Mandate was vague, and I would argue that the Committee did not fulfill it.”*
- *“Not a shovel in the ground, no shovels at hand.”*
- *“Meetings should always be set up and run to ensure maximum participation.”*

Shared Themes Across Both Groups

- **Fundraising failure:** consensus that this purpose was unmet.
- **Mandate too vague/ambitious:** both groups struggled with unclear scope and responsibilities.
- **Process weaknesses:** attendance, structure, and follow-up were widely noted as issues.

2.5 Conclusions Summary

Committee members highlighted several achievements and the value of community engagement, while candid feedback from Working Group Chairs focused on areas for improvement such as structural inefficiencies and limited tangible outcomes. Feedback from both groups suggests that future committees will be most effective with a sharper mandate, narrower scope, and clearer expectations for participation and results.
