



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: Monday, April 15, 2024

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Location: Council Chamber, City Hall

Ad-Hoc GTR Committee Present: Dan Mathieson - Chair Presiding, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Andy Bicanic, Barb Cottle, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Paul Parlee, Ron Dodson, Stephen Mitchell, Trudy Jonkman

Staff Present: Joan Thomson - Chief Administrative Officer, Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Emily Robson - Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joani Gerber - CEO of investStratford, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Victoria Trotter - Recording Secretary

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order

Land Acknowledgement

Moment of Silent Reflection

Respect in the Workplace Policy

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

- 3. Adoption of Previous Minutes:** 4 - 10
- Minutes of March 18, 2024
- Motion by
THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated March 18, 2024 be adopted as printed.
- 4. Delegation Requests**
- None
- 5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes**
- 5.1 GRANDTrunk Dialogues & Community Engagement**
- Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead*
- Overview of recent events
 - Upcoming Council report on draft guiding principles
 - Community engagement
 - Site activation
- 5.2 Committee Workplan** 11 - 15
- Dan Mathieson, Chair*
- Review of 120-Day work plan & deliverables
 - Discussion on Q3 & Q4
- 6. New Business**
- 6.1 How Does Your City Play? A Framework for City Building**
- Paul Kalbfleisch, The Joy Experiments*
- Presentation on new city-building strategies; moving beyond traditional quality-of-life measures to prioritizing the economic, social and environmental benefits of infrastructure for the human spirit found in joyful cities
- 6.2 Stratford Public Library & the Grand Trunk Community Hub** 16 - 19
- Krista Robinson, CEO, Stratford Public Library*

- At the March 25, 2024 meeting of Council, Council directed that the Stratford Public Library's request to be considered as an anchor tenant in the Grand Trunk Community Hub be referred to the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee for consideration.
- Krista Robinson will provide a presentation and overview of the request

7. Reports of the Working Groups

7.1 Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group

Melanie Hare, Chair

- Update on draft Guiding Principles and next steps
- Focus for next 120 days

7.2 Communication, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

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John Kastner & Andrew Hilton, Co-Chairs

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is Tuesday, May 21, 2024 in the Council Chamber, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

THAT the April 15, 2024 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

DRAFT MINUTES

Date: Monday, March 18, 2024

Time: 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Location: Council Chambers, Stratford City Hall, 1 Wellington St, Stratford, ON

Committee Members: Barb Cottle, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman, Franklin Famme, Andy Bicanic

Absent: Dan Mathieson – Chair, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Paul Parlee, Mark Vandenbosch, Stephen Mitchell, Georgia Neely, Joani Gerber – CEO of InvestStratford

Staff: Tim Wolfe —Director of Community Services, Emily Robson – Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joan Thomson – CAO, Adam Betteridge – Director of Building & Planning, Krista Robinson – CEO of Stratford Public Library, Vicky Trotter – Council Committee Coordinator

Working Group Members: John Kastner, Steven Cooper

Coordinators: Alan Kasperski, Ray Harsant

Also Present: Paul Brown, Mike Ennis – CEO of the YMCA of Three Rivers, Jay Colquhoun – Operations Manager of the YMCA of Three Rivers, Media, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

Land Acknowledgment

Moment of Silent Reflection

Joan Thomson, CAO read the Respect in the Workplace Statement

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

None were declared.

3. Acceptance of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Frankin Famme

Seconded by Ron Dodson

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated February 20, 2024, be adopted as printed. Carried.

Ray Harsant requested that himself and Alan Kasperski be added onto the agenda as attendees moving forward.

4. Delegation Requests

4.1. Request for Delegation by Paul Brown

Motion by Trudy Jonkman

Seconded by Andy Bicanic

THAT the delegation by Paul Brown be heard.

Paul Brown presented regarding a Community Home Care Hub as part of the Grand Trunk Renewal project. He provided a history of the health care system in Canada and Stratford General Hospital.

Mr. Brown stated that 75% of healthcare is provided in the home and community.

A copy of the full presentation and notes will be provided to the committee members for their review.

Nic Flangan questioned which amenities on this site would provide something more than a regular home.

Mr. Brown stated the units would be similar to a small apartment and therefore if the homes are not required for the elderly in the future they could be rented out.

Franklin Famme questioned the concept of a non-profit facility as opposed to a for-profit facility.

Mr. Brown responded that he has worked in both non-profit and private and he has a bias towards non-profit. He believes health care is not a place to encourage making money.

Ray Harsant stated the working groups are diligent in ensuring health care, wellness, and well-being are part of the project. He encouraged Mr. Brown to be actively involved in engagement sessions.

Mr. Brown spoke regarding the importance of an integrated health network and ensuring the services are integrated.

Mr. Kasperski noted best use of space is a priority. He asked why the home care facility should be located on this particular site.

Mr. Brown stated currently the homecare services are at various locations throughout the City and this would allow a single location close to transportation and potentially supportive housing.

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1. YMCA of Three Rivers: A New Facility for Stratford

Mike Ennis, CEO and Jay Colquhoun, Operations Manager – Health & Wellness of YMCA Three Rivers presented to the committee regarding a new facility. Highlights of the presentation included the following:

- YMCA of Stratford-Perth merged with Guelph-Wellington and Kitchener-Waterloo to become the YMCA of Three Rivers;
- the first YMCA opened in Stratford between 1867 and 1869 in Market Square;
- in 1904 first YMCA on Downie Street was built;
- current building opened in 1968 and did not have a second floor;
- programming is challenging due to the age of the building;
- no family or gender neutral change rooms;
- over 2000 members and 300 children participating in swimming lessons each week;
- YMCA needs a partner to make a new building possible;
- 1 in 4 members are assisted to ensure access to services;
- 11 associations across Ontario currently have municipal partnerships;
- YMCAs in Waterloo and London are co-located with the public library;
- most common agreements are where the City owns the facility and the YMCA runs the operations;
- 80/20 principal where 80% of the facility is the same as other YMCAs and 20% is unique to the community;
- currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with the City to explore the new facility on this site.

A question and answer period took place. Highlights of the conversation included the following:

- partnership discussions would explore capital contributions for the initial build;

- the current YMCA building and land is owned by the YMCA;
- fundamentals for a new YMCA would include a pool, arts and culture and day care;
- ideally the build would be in the CN shops;
- YMCA has confirmed a pool can be installed without digging up the current foundation;
- to be shovel ready in 2026 requires determination of a shared vision, values and a sustainable business model;
- YMCA is currently working on EDI and the new facility design would be inclusive.

5.2. Generative Conversation on Vision & Guiding Principles

Melanie Hare stated three working sessions for the Guiding Principles have taken place. The Ad Hoc Committee will have the opportunity to review the draft Guiding Principles and provide their comment this week. After this feedback is integrated, the draft Guiding Principles will be presented to Council for their consideration and request for endorsement to take these out for community engagement..

Ms. Hare noted the Master Plan Guiding Principles were created in 2018. Guiding Principles from 2018 that have been completed have been removed from the current draft Guiding Principles, such as the transit terminal.

In the draft Guiding Principles before the Ad Hoc Committee, there are seven key themes or directions:

- Sustainable and Fiscally Responsible;
- Inclusive and Connected;
- Integrated and Hard Working;
- Celebrate Past and Future Forward;
- Thrive and Vibe;
- Distinct and Diverse;
- Inspiring and Placemaking.

Emily Robson led the committee in a discussion with three key questions:

- are we on the right track?
- are there any red flags?

- is there anything missing?

Trudy Jonkman stated her passion and focus is ensuring that 55+ age group of citizens are represented in this project. She noted a place which is safe, welcoming and inclusive is important to all ages. During the organization of the comments a theme of interlinking generations, fostering a sense of belonging and incorporating health & wellness was found.

Ray Harsant requested the colour coding of the document to expand to all information to ensure threads can be easily seen. He noted the concept of the value of space is not noted. The concept of space needs to be mirrored and balance off the requirement for intensification. He believes the committee has a responsibility to the land and urged the group not to lose sight of the concept of space. He suggested a map be created where the size of the Grand Truck Site is shown in a different location to illustrate the magnitude of the land size. Mr. Harsant stated an overall sense of well-being should be considered.

Barb Cottle noted the term Community Hub is not included in the document.

Ms. Hare stated conversation has taken place around the term and the potential political context it holds.

Franklin Famme requested it be noted the starting point for the Guiding Principles was 2018. He noted it is important not to pigeon-hole the committee with a perception of what it could look like and need to ensure adaptive reuse of the superstructure. Mr. Famme also noted urban farming was discussed twice in the document, however, there is an abundance of land at the edge of the City.

Nic Flanagan stated the document should include less specific examples of what will actually be built, for example, urban farming.

Ron Dodson noted the bullet points under each of the seven groupings is a great summary. He questioned if it would be possible to create an additional document that would explain each of them in a more detailed way.

Ms. Cottle questioned if the Guiding Principles are for the public or for the committee as the current document is a lot for the community to read.

Ms. Robson responded that the Guiding Principles allow for a number of different users. She noted the top-line information needs to be understandable and then we need to start to think about partnerships and additional detail to provide a decision-making framework for Council and the Committee.

Ms. Hare noted the document will be revised next week and be prepared to take to Council.

Stephen Cooper questioned the meaning of placemaking as used in the document.

Ms. Hare stated placemaking refers to the opportunity to model this as a new destination and contribute to the experience of Stratford.

6. New Business

None

7. Reports of the Working Groups

7.1. Partnerships

Alan Kasperski provided an update on behalf of Karen Haslam & Herb Klassen. Mr. Kasperski noted Mr. Klassen is stepping back for three months from the working group due to work commitments.

7.2. Infrastructure & Environmental

Stephen Cooper noted he is working with Emily Robson and Joan Thomson to gain access to existing information and reports. He noted he has been in discussion with an engineering firm that would like to donate the development of a virtual tour of the Grand Trunk building. The plan is to have this complete in the next few weeks and available on Engage Stratford afterward.

7.3. Real Estate, Legal & Finance

Franklin Famme confirmed there is no update at this time. He noted there is an excellent slate of enthusiastic citizens who wish to be part of the working group.

7.4. Vision, Planning and Architecture

Melanie Hare confirmed is no additional update beyond the draft Guiding Principles discussed under item 5.2.

7.5. Communication, Advocacy & Civic Engagement

John Kastner provided an update noting the Frequently Asked Questions are on the City website and on Engage Stratford. There are 18 specific to the project and over 40 additional which include history of the site. Two engagement meetings are scheduled for March 26 and April 13. The first meeting is a presentation about the project and the second includes a panel of subject matter experts.

Mr. Kastner noted Melanie Hare interviewed with the Stratford radio station to promote the meetings and the pre-registration totals are encouraging. He also stated the original YMCA at the corner of St. Patrick and Downie Streets had a pool which was heated by steam from the CN shops.

Ron Dodson stated there continues to be a large amount of negative comment regarding the project. He questioned whose responsibility it is to address the misinformation in the community and if there is a responsibility to monitor some of the local social media pages.

Mr. Kastner responded the five agreed on speaking points should be used by members of the committee to dispel misinformation in the community. He noted the Corporate Communication Lead has noted it is important to be mindful when choosing which public comments to weigh-in on. Mr. Kastner stated the two engagement meetings should assist with factual information being share in the community.

In response to a question, Mr. Kastner noted members can assist by being present at the upcoming engagement meetings and speak to the merits of the project.

7.6. Working Group Coordinators

Ray Harsant stated the important of bringing clarification regarding protocols, roles and responsibilities.

Alan Kasperski stated the working groups need a means of sharing information regarding who the groups are speaking with and inviting others to share in the conversation. He also noted there are two eco groups at the local high schools which they are meeting with in the coming weeks to encourage them to provide input.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 15th at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, City Hall.

9. Adjournment

Motion by Franklin Famme

Seconded by Andy Bicanic

THAT the March 18, 2024, Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn. Carried.

Meeting Start Time: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting End Time: 9:00 p.m.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: February 12, 2024
To: Mayor and Council
From: Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead
Report Number: COU24-015
Attachments: None

Title: Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Workplan and Update

Objective: To provide an update on the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and to consider the Committee's proposed workplan.

Background: At the October 11, 2022, Regular Council meeting, Council directed staff to develop terms of reference and composition of a Citizen's Advisory Committee to support the development of the Grand Trunk Site, its architectural design, development, and fundraising. Subsequently, staff returned to Council with management reports articulating the Terms of Reference for the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee (FIN23-009), the appointment of the committee Chair (COU23-075 & COU23-089), and the appointment of committee members and the establishment of working groups (COU23-120).

The first meeting of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee took place on November 23, 2023. After agreeing that the Committee wishes to meet monthly, the Committee has met subsequently on December 18, 2023, and January 15, 2024.

Topics and discussions addressed in the first three meetings include:

- The role of advisory committees, relevant operating policies and procedures, and consideration of the Committee's Terms of Reference
- An overview of the Grand Trunk Renewal project including its history, the 2018 Master Plan, environmental and engineering work, and partnerships
- Consideration of a communications strategy
- The development of a 6-month workplan, including a community engagement strategy

Through discussion and consensus, the Committee is offering a proposed workplan and three items for Council's consideration.

A future report will include recommendations for:

- Enhancing the clarity of the Terms of the Reference with suggested amendments
- Activating the Working Groups through the appointment of formal members

Analysis: *Policy C.3.1 Council Appointed Advisory Committees* articulates that the role of Council-appointed committees is to provide recommendations, advice, and information to City Council on specialized matters which pertain to the purpose of the Committee. While it is the legislative mandate of City Council to make final decisions on all matters that affect the municipality, citizen Committees play an important role in providing expert and resident input on City initiatives.

To ensure that the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee is providing Council timely and meaningful feedback and advice to inform the development of the Grand Trunk site, the Committee has prepared a workplan and reporting cadence for Council's consideration.

To support the development of the Grand Trunk site, the Committee and staff have identified a significant objective for 2024-2025: the preparation of a complete business case for the Grand Trunk site. This business case will build on the 2018 Master Plan and provide recommendations and insights on key project components, including: vision and development principles, partnership models for anchor tenants, financial modeling, community impact, financial implications, operating and capital pro forma budgets, and phasing. This business case will be presented to Council for consideration and provide Council with the analysis needed to make decisions regarding the site that might include the disposition of property, the procurement of development partner(s), investment of municipal funds, and the allocation of municipal resources.

The Committee has endorsed a 6-month workplan that drives toward the completion of the business plan. The workplan was endorsed by the Committee at their meeting on January 15, 2024.

The focus of the 6-month workplan is building on the 2018 Master Plan by considering the vision and key principles for the Grand Trunk Renewal project. While significant work was accomplished in 2018, this work needs to be considered in the current context. To this end the Committee will work together to develop a draft vision statement and guiding development principles. This work will be done collaboratively and reference a variety of important factors. The Committee will consider the findings of the 2018 Master Plan, recent plans and strategies adopted by the City of Stratford, current and emerging community issues, the learned and lived experience of committee members, feedback from Council and most importantly, insights from the community. The outcome of this work, which is anticipated to be concluded in the summer of 2024, will be a clear statement on the vision for the Grand Trunk Renewal project and a clear set of priorities to guide its development.

The Committee will concurrently develop a workplan for the 2nd half of 2024 and present this to Council in summer of 2024.

Month	Deliverables	Scope of Work
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee workplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop draft vision and guiding principles review process • Review Terms of Reference • Develop Working Groups • Communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop draft website content • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop draft community engagement plan
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Council on Workplan & Committee Update Status • Report to Council on Terms of Reference & Working Groups • Website update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committee Workshop ○ Community Engagement Event Planning ○ Online Engagement Planning • Terms of Reference: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revise Terms of Reference to reflect work and working style of the committee • Communications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop key messages ○ Post new content to GTR website • Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working groups explore key questions related to the project
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: Community Event #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update on project from select speakers ○ Open house with information panels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Committee Workshop ○ Draft vision & guiding principles ○ Prepare report to Council ○ Event planning & execution • Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotion of community event #1 • Ongoing Research

April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Council on Draft Vision & Guiding Principles • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community Event #2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examples of projects for inspiration & learning ○ Launch online engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Event planning & execution • Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotion of community event #2 & online engagement • Ongoing Research
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engagement activities on draft vision & guiding principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Event planning & execution ○ Analysis & synthesis of engagement findings ○ Revise vision & guiding principles • Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotion of community events & online engagement • Ongoing Research
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft vision & guiding principles for review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision & Guiding Principles Review Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis & synthesis of engagement findings ○ Revised vision & guiding principles ○ Prepare report to Council • Develop workplan for next 6 months • Ongoing Communications • Ongoing Research
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final Vision & Guiding Principles ○ 6-month workplan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop detailed workplan for next 6 months

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There are funds available in the 2024 City Budget to support the work of the Ad Hoc Committee of approximately \$12,000. The Ad Hoc Committee is proposing to complete Visioning and Guiding Principles Review work that will engage the community as outlined in the 6 month workplan. It is anticipated that there will be expenses incurred related to space rental fees for visioning sessions, advertising, community engagement and speaker honorariums etc.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

No future impact at this time.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Widening our Economic Opportunities

Strengthening Stratford's economy by developing, attracting, and retaining a diversity of businesses and talent.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Staff Recommendation: THAT staff be directed to work with members of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee and Working Group Chairs to implement the 6-month workplan as presented in Report COU24-015.

Prepared by: Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead
Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: March 25, 2024
To: Mayor and City Councillors
From: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer
Report Number: COU24-035
Attachments: Letter from Stratford Public Library Board

Title: Stratford Public Library Board – Grand Trunk Community Hub

Objective: To hear the presentation from the Stratford Public Library regarding their request, and to seek direction of Council.

Background: The Board has sent a letter to the City requesting that the Public Library be considered as an anchor tenant in the Grand Trunk Project.

Analysis: Please refer to the correspondence dated December 6, 2023 from the Board.

Along with the Board letter, attached is a link to the Space Needs Assessment dated 2022. [Library Space Needs Assessment 2022](#)

Following the presentation at the March 25 Council meeting regarding the Public Library, it is recommended that the request be forwarded to the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee for review and to make a recommendation to City Council. The Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee is currently in the first year of its mandate to be a sounding board to Council regarding the Grand Trunk site renewal.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

There are no immediate financial implications to the City 2024 operating budget related to this request from the Library.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

There will be a financial implication to the City's future operating budgets related to the operating and maintenance of a new public library or satellite as it represents additions to the current service delivery model. As part of the Library 2024 Budget submission, they included the capital costs of a new build in future years of the 10-year forecast, as

well as an ongoing capital budget ask to build the capital reserve fund for this, and future library facility needs.

The correspondence from the Board outlines their approach to a capital fundraising campaign, applying for grants for construction and other potential funding.

Link to asset management plan and strategy:

This proposed project and any works completed at the Grand Trunk site will represent both new assets and rehabilitation of the Grand Trunk building. The exact effects will emerge if the project proceeds.

A larger library or satellite will impact future capital planning forecasts and funding strategies will be updated accordingly as more information becomes available.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Culture and Community

Nurturing local identity and heritage, empowering communities and promoting a culture of sustainable living.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the correspondence from the Stratford Public Library Board requesting that the Library be considered as an anchor tenant in the Grand Trunk Community Hub be received;

AND THAT the correspondence be referred to the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee for consideration of the request and to provide a recommendation for Council's consideration.

Prepared by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

Recommended by: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



December 6, 2023

Joan Thomson
 Chief Administration Officer
 City of Stratford

Dear Joan,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write to you regarding the Grand Trunk Community Hub. Community Hubs are the lifeblood of a community, offering a diverse array of services from health and social support, to recreation, environmental engagement and education, all seamlessly integrated within a single facility. In many ways, this description perfectly encapsulates the essence of public libraries, and in our case, the Stratford Public Library stands as a testament to this alignment.

Libraries serve as vibrant community hubs where people gather, to learn, share, work, reflect, study, collaborate and to socialize, all of this without any financial barriers. The Stratford Public Library is no exception witnessing over 10,000 in-person visitors every month, each with a unique purpose. Our library is held in high regard both within the community and among our peer libraries, celebrated for its innovative programs and being the second most attended library in Ontario within our population range of 30,000 to 50,000 residents. We have cultivated partnerships with numerous local agencies, including the Stratford Perth Museum, the Connections Centre and Perth Community Futures Development Corporation to expand our reach and enriching the breadth of services we provide. Our MakerSpace, though small in size, exudes boundless creativity and serves individuals of all ages, offering invaluable support to entrepreneurs in Stratford. However, we've reached a critical impasse - not due to a lack of resources or staff, but, rather, a severe limitation of space.

In 2022, the Stratford Public Library Board commissioned Lemay to conduct a comprehensive space needs assessment, reinforcing what the Ventin Group's 2003 study concluded: **the library's current 12,472 net square feet is glaringly inadequate for a community the size of Stratford.** According to industry standards, we are short by 20,000 net square feet to meet the needs of our current population, a deficit that will only continue to widen as our community continues to expand. With our current location surrounded by constraints, there are no practical solutions to accommodate our burgeoning needs. To that end, the Library Board has made it a priority in their 2023-2026 Strategic Plan to address the library's space deficit.

With this in mind, the Stratford Public Library Board formally requests to be considered as an anchor tenant in the Grand Trunk Community Hub project. During our recent board meeting on December 5, the Library board unanimously approved a motion to take this step, reflecting our unwavering commitment to the community's betterment:

2023-65 Moved by K. Kochany, Seconded by D. Mackey

That the CEO send a letter to the CAO of the City of Stratford requesting that the Library be considered as an anchor tenant in the Grand Trunk Community Hub.

We believe that a library that is not only equitable but appropriately sized for the future, would be a valuable gathering space for the community. We aim to provide both public and private space for the community: meeting

rooms, an auditorium for performances and theatre, and flexible space for people gather and connect. Our vision encompasses ample seating, expanded collection space, and a more accommodating environment for entrepreneurs and local creatives in the MakerSpace. Furthermore, accessibility and parking concerns would become a thing of the past, making our library an even more welcoming destination for all, including those with mobility challenges and young families. Our library would be designed with energy efficiency, sustainability, and environmental awareness at its core, reflecting our commitment to a greener, healthier future.

In conversations with the YMCA of Three Rivers, both our organizations have recognized the immense potential for synergy that a shared presence in the Community Hub would bring. We cater to similar demographics and have cultivated numerous partnerships, which we anticipate will flourish even further in this new setting. This presents a unique opportunity to nurture both minds and bodies within a single, community-focused location.

The Stratford Public Library Board acknowledges that such a venture entails substantial costs. However, we are fully prepared to embark on a capital fundraising campaign and apply for grants from sources such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Green Municipal Fund to cover a substantial portion of the anticipated expenses. Additionally, we firmly believe that this project could be eligible for support from the Canada Community Building Fund. When combined with developmental charges and the sale of our current library building, we are confident that the necessary financial requirements can be met.

Libraries have a transformative impact on communities, fostering health, prosperity, and inclusivity. It would be a tremendous honour to be a part of the Grand Trunk Community Hub, showcasing that at the heart of any thriving community lies the library, a place where possibilities and potential abound.

Thank you for your consideration,



Krista Robinson
CEO, Stratford Public Library



Communications Committee Update

April 9 2024

Please accept the summary of the Communications Committee since the March 18, 2024 meeting.

- The Communications committee completed its role with the Guiding Principles – that being to provide editing and wordsmithing and adaptation for the intended audience for the series of updates.
- As part of the move towards public viewing the Communications Committee has commissioned the production of a “timeline” of the GTR/CNR Shops from inception to the current day. This is a reproduction and modification of the timeline that is part of the Stratford Perth Museum’s railway exhibit.
- These panels will be four feet by eight feet and will be placed on the fence on the east side of the site. The ETA for these panels is the end of April.
- Ideally, once the project moves along, these panels would go inside and would be repurposed as part of the historical messaging inside the completed building.
- There is a cost to these panels and the Stratford Perth Museum has agreed to cover the costs in as much as there is a reference to the exhibit at the Museum.
- The Communications Committee has also played a role in the two public meetings either with presentations or moderation.