



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

Date: Monday, September 15, 2025

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Location: City Hall Auditorium

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

Staff Present: Adam Betteridge - Director of Building and Planning Services, Andre Morin - Chief Administrative Officer, Emily Robson - Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joani Gerber - CEO of investStratford, Melanie Reasbeck - Project Coordinator, 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.

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 - 9

Motion by

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated August 25, 2025 be adopted as printed.

4. Delegation Requests

None

5. Business Arising from Previous Minutes

5.1 Refreshing the Grand Trunk Master Plan

10 - 12

Melanie Hare, Chair, Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group

Motion by

THAT the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee accept the Master Plan update recommendations outlined in this report;

THAT the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee accept the implementation recommendations outlined in this report; and,

THAT the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee direct that this report be forwarded to Stratford City Council for consideration.

6. New Business

6.1 End-of-Mandate Survey Report

Ron Dodson, Committee Member

6.2 Reflection Activity: Committee Timeline

Members will add reflections and insights to a timeline of the Committee's work, highlighting key moments and lessons learned. The purpose of this activity is to acknowledge our shared journey and bring the Committee's work to a close on a reflective note.

Please come prepared with 2–3 moments from the Committee's work that were meaningful to you.

7. Working Group and Staff Updates

7.1 Partnership

Herb Klassen & Karen Haslam, Co-Chairs

None

7.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture

See item 5.1

7.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance

13 - 14

Franklin Famme, Chair

7.4 Communications, Advocacy, Civic Engagement

Andrew Hilton & John Kastner, Co-Chairs

None

7.5 Infrastructure & Environment

Stephen Cooper, Chair

None

7.6 Working Group Coordinators

Alan Kasperski & Ray Harsant, Coordinators

None

7.7 Staff Update

15 - 17

Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead, City of Stratford

Joani Gerber, CEO, investStratford

8. Date of Next Meeting

This is the final meeting of the Ad Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee. The term of appointment for all members concludes on September 30, 2025.

9. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by

THAT the September 15, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.

DRAFT



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee
MINUTES

Date: August 25, 2025
 Time: 4:00 P.M.
 Location: City Hall Auditorium

Ad-Hoc Committee Present: Dan Mathieson - Chair Presiding, Mayor Martin Ritsma, Barb Cottle, Franklin Famme, Mark Vandenbosch, Melanie Hare, Nic Flanagan, Paul Parlee, Ron Dodson, Trudy Jonkman, Ryen Ropp-Robinson

Staff Present: Adam Betteridge - Interim Chief Administrative Officer, Emily Robson - Corporate Initiatives Lead, Joani Gerber - CEO of investStratford, Tim Wolfe - Director of Community Services, Victoria Trotter - Recording Secretary, Melanie Reasbeck - Project Coordinator, investStratford

Absent: Stephen Mitchell

Working Group Members Present: Working Group Members, Media, Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the Meeting to Order.

Land Acknowledgement.

Moment of Silent Reflection.

DRAFT

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

No declarations were made at the August 25, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting.

3. **Adoption of Previous Minutes:**

Barb Cottle noted her name was incorrect in two locations of the minutes.

Motion by: Melanie Hare

Seconded by: Franklin Famme

THAT the Minutes of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee of The Corporation of the City of Stratford dated June 16, 2025 be adopted as amended.

Carried

4. **Delegation Requests**

None were scheduled.

5. **Business Arising from Previous Minutes**

5.1 Thank you from Mayor Ritsma

Mayor Ritsma thanked members of the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee for their work over the past two years. He noted they have completed a tremendous amount of work and learning and have inspired Council to give direction on the project. He stated that the work that has been completed to date is very impactful and is a large part of this legacy project.

5.2 Staff Update

Emily Robson, Corporate Initiatives Lead presented on the staff report. Highlights of the presentation included:

- interim uses being undertaken at the Grand Trunk including a story telling event and the Destination Stratford LED heart being mounted to the outside of the building;
- Council providing direction to advance Scenario Two (Keep Part) including feasibility study and YMCA/library study.

Mayor Ritsma noted the Committee's work continues to inspire others and stated a request has been received to potentially use the site.

A discussion took place regarding the direction provided by Council to pursue Scenario 2, to keep part of the structure. Highlights of the discussion included:

- Council having a fulsome discussion when the recommendation was presented;
- having not made a final decision on how much of the structure is to be kept;
- Svec Group to scope and cost out what's required to develop a site plan including the YMCA/Library options and cost of current with expansion versus a new build.

Barb Cottle questioned why fundraising for the project has not commenced. She expressed concern that if fundraising is not undertaken the City will not be able to retain a large of the land.

Mayor Ritsma noted staff are working the YMCA as they will spearhead fundraising where donors can choose which portion of the project they would like to allocate their funds towards.

Ms. Robson stated they need to know the costs for in project in order to know what needs to be fundraised.

5.3 Refreshing the Grand Trunk Master Plan

Melanie Hare reviewed the Vision, Planning & Architecture Working Group Report noting a review of the Grand Trunk Master Plan 2018 was completed and areas to be refined and updated based on the work completed by the Ad-Hoc Committee were identified.

Emily Robson stated the updates identified will be the basis of a management report to Council to recommend these points be addressed when the Grand Trunk Master Plan is reviewed. In response to questions

Ms. Robson noted how the updates are completed can happen in various way depending on the direction from Council.

Barb Cottle noted community members have an understanding that the Committee will be making specific decisions for the site and questioned who will make the final decisions on what is placed where on the site.

Dan Mathieson confirmed the final decisions will be made by Council.

A discussion took place regarding the next steps and if there are sufficient resources to move the project forward once the Committee has completed their term.

Mayor Ritsma stated as the need for resources come forward Council can make suggestions to the budget process and considering funding resources.

Chair Mathieson noted the carriage of the recommendations made by the Committee and Council will be responsible for making decisions on how to proceed.

Paul Parlee questioned if there has been any consideration into extending the term of the Ad-Hoc Committee.

Mayor Ritsma stated at this time there has not, however, if there is a need one or more of the working groups could be requested to provide feedback.

Karen Haslam stated the Committee was given a specific job to give recommendations and it is now the responsibility of Council to move it forward.

6. Working Group and Staff Updates

6.1 Partnership

Herb Klassen & Karen Haslam, Co-Chairs

No report provided.

6.2 Vision, Planning & Architecture

Report included under Item 5.3 of the agenda.

6.3 Real Estate, Legal & Finance

Franklin Famme, Chair

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No report provided.

6.4 Communications, Advocacy, Civic Engagement

Andrew Hilton & John Kastner, Co-Chairs

No report provided.

6.5 Infrastructure & Environment

Stephen Cooper, Chair

No report provided.

6.6 Working Group Coordinators

Alan Kasperski & Ray Harsant, Coordinators

No report provided.

6.7 Staff Update

Report included under Item 5.2 of the agenda.

7. New Business

None noted.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Meeting is September 15, 2025 in the Auditorium at Stratford City Hall.

Emily Robson noted the main item for discussion at the September meeting will be the revisions to the Grand Trunk Master Plan 2018 and a recommendation to Council.

A discussion took place and it was determined that Ms. Robson will send out the current recommendations from the working group to all members to review and provide feedback prior to the September meeting.

9. Adjournment

Motion by: Franklin Famme

Seconded by: Barb Cottle

THAT the August 25, 2025 Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee meeting adjourn.

Carried

DRAFT

Meeting Start Time: 4:02 P.M.

Meeting End Time: 4:57 P.M.



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.



Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee

Working Group:	Real Estate, Legal and Finance Working Group
Report Date:	September 9, 2025

Requested Committee Direction:

The report is for information only.

Members:

Slyvia Chrominska
 Michael Doupe
 Franklin Famme (chair)
 Joani Gerber (investStratford)
 Jodi Meiering
 Paul Parlee
 Melanie Reasbeck (investStratford)
 Emily Robson (City of Stratford)
 Mark Vandenbosch

Carryforward From Previous Meeting:

As was discussed in the last report, the Working Group (WG) last met on May 13, 2025 with representatives from the Svec Group to discuss preliminary findings of the possible scenarios for development of the property. A follow up meeting was to have been held in advance of the June 16, 2025 Ad-Hoc Committee meeting, but the meeting was cancelled due to circumstances out of control of the group.

Final Summary:

The WG is grateful for the support provided by our City/investStratford representatives and also for the hiring of the Svec Group to provide project consulting services. Unfortunately, the WG's mandate is ending before any real work could be accomplished relating to discernment of fiscal realities for the project. The WG therefore urges City Council to ensure this project is not abandoned, and to encompass the following:

1. Any decision made relating to the future of the property should be performed through the lens of fiscal responsibility. Council is a steward of Stratford citizens' money and should therefore ensure that decisions affecting long-term finances are properly discerned.

2. The Svec Group has outlined phases for the project, and Council should ensure that these timelines are met, if not accelerated:

Phase 1 – Development Concept: Evaluate and select development concept based on feasibility; market, financials, environmental, structure, and community needs. [completed – July 2025]

Phase 2 – Test and Finalize Concept: Create one detailed development concept and go to market strategy.

- ▶ Initial Feasibility Study [Q4 – Oct/Nov 2025]: Explore broad land use approaches and block configurations (residential, mixed-use, institutional) including identifying key servicing and environmental constraints, and providing order-of-magnitude cost estimates for major site components
- ▶ YMCA + Library Options Study [Q4 – Nov/Dec 2025]: Assess current and future program needs for both partners to evaluate renovation, expansion, and hybrid building options. This work will also include cost estimates, lifecycle implications and phasing strategies and will be completed in partnership with the YMCA, Stratford Public Library and Community Services.

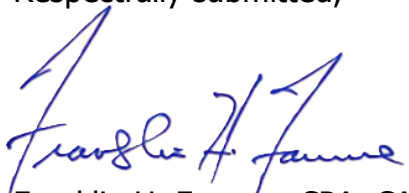
Phase 3 – Market Sounding: Create detailed project program and interview selected developers for upcoming RFP for residential sale. [Winter 2025/2026]

Phase 4 – Market RFP: Launch RFP, interview project teams, select proponent, negotiate program. [Spring 2026]

3. Now that the Ad-Hoc Committee is ending its term, Council should find the appropriate staff composition to continue exploring the project. While many alternatives are possible, it would most likely make sense if the City's economic development corporation (investStratford) take the lead role in managing the project and reporting to council
4. There have been many organizations interested in using the property, including the Library, but there have been few organizations with the means to assist with the capital outlays required to fund the project. Therefore, Council will need to consider the costs and benefits of including these groups as part of the overall project.

I wish to personally thank the members of the WG for their commitment to the project, regardless of the fact that few meetings were held.

Respectfully submitted,



Franklin H. Famme, CPA, CA

Chair – Real Estate, Legal and Finance Working Group



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 explored 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