



AD-HOC GRAND TRUNK RENEWAL COMMITTEE ADDENDUM

Adoption of Addenda to the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee Agenda:

Motion by

THAT the Addendum to the Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee dated September 15, 2025, be added to the agenda as printed to include the following:

6. New Business

6.1 End-of-Mandate Survey Report

Following the publishing of the agenda, the report on the End-of-Mandate Survey Report was made available for further information.

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

Part 1: Overview and General Analysis

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 open-text 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 required, 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.

The survey invitation was extended to all committee members and Working Group chairs. Fourteen responses were received from the nineteen who received it.

1.2 The Survey

The following text introduced the survey to the respondents.

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.

1.3 Analysis of Responses

To eliminate as much bias as possible, ChatGPT was used to analyze the open-text responses. After research to determine what criteria should be used to analyze the responses, a prompt was created which was applied to all questions, with the question itself inserted: Create a summary of the following text responses to the question [Insert each question here] to identify recurring and outlier themes and patterns; contextual understanding; and insights. Maximum 100 words. The Chat GPT summaries were then reviewed against the actual data to see if anything was missed or misstated. The data and feedback which follows has been formatted so that anonymity is assured. There is no direct correlation or apparent pattern among responses.

1.4 The Responses

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:

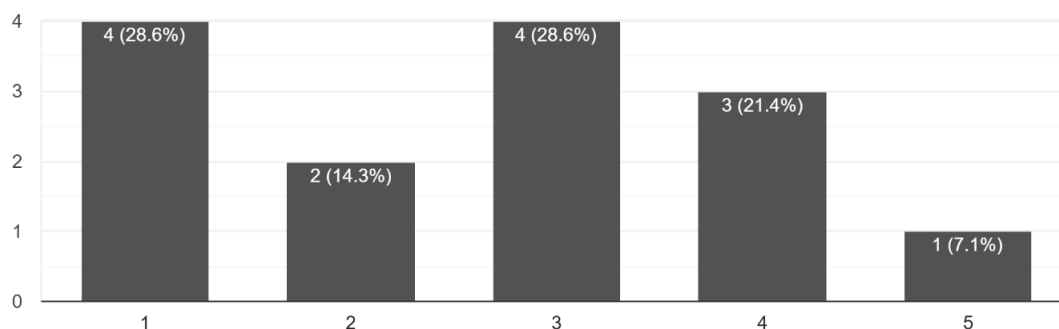
The Ad-Hoc Grand Trunk Renewal Committee will provide support for and a forum for input and exchange of ideas on the renewal of the Grand Trunk building.

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 =

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

14 responses



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

Outline your reflections regarding the degree to which the Committee met the stated mandate.

Summary of Responses

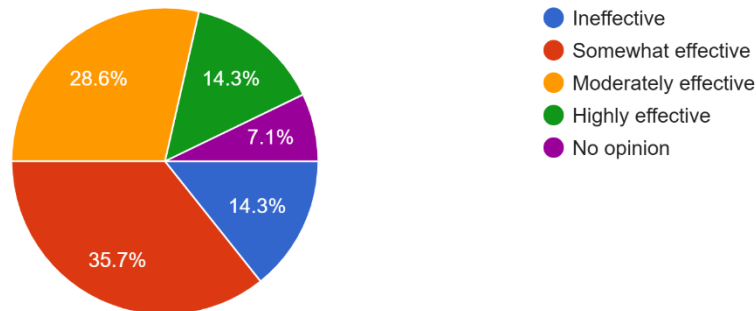
Responses show mixed views: some felt the committee partially met its mandate by providing guiding principles, outreach, and limited forums for input. Recurring concerns include vague mandate, lack of clarity (site vs. building), rigid processes, dominance of presentations over discussion, and minimal meaningful dialogue with Council. Many noted lost opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and comprehensive conversation. Outlier views describe the work as successful in engaging organizations or “met” simply, while others strongly criticized wasted time, misinformation, and lack of progress. Overall, reflections suggest the mandate was inconsistently met, constrained by process, and undermined by unclear expectations.

3. 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?

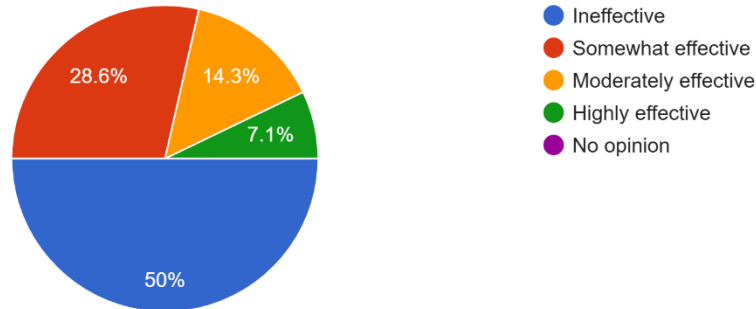
Purpose 1: To support the Grand Trunk Master Plan adopted by City Council.

14 responses



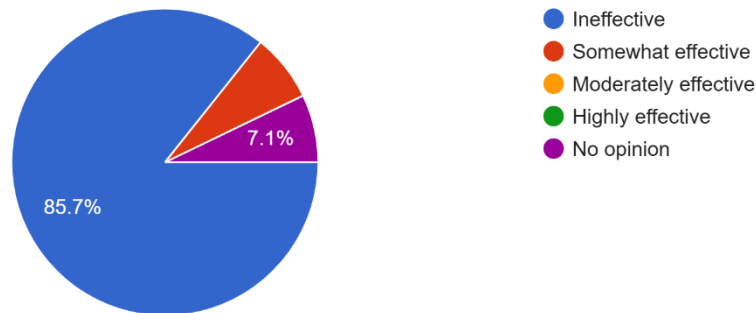
Purpose 2: To act as a sounding board to the City on matters dealing with the renewal of the Grand Trunk building, including building designs and architectural plans.

14 responses



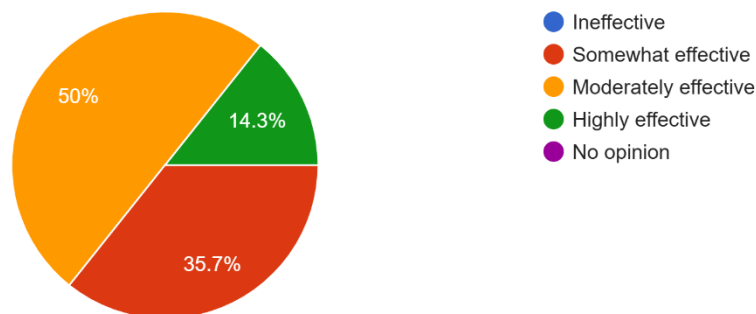
Purpose 3: To identify fundraising opportunities and support fundraising initiatives.

14 responses



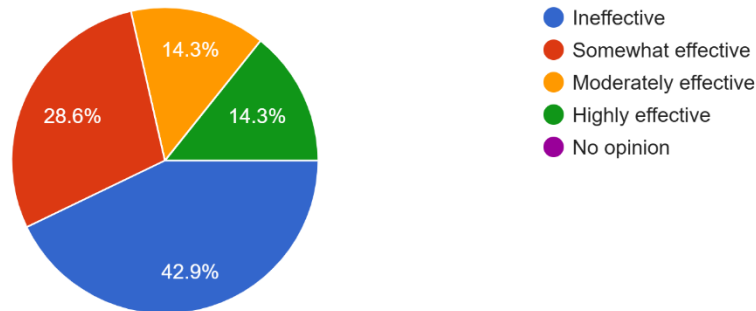
Purpose 4: To advise and assist with the development of a public engagement program and promote the activities of the Grand Trunk renewal.

14 responses



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

14 responses



Outline your reflections regarding the degree to which the Committee met the five stated Purposes.

Summary of Responses

Reflections reveal that while some progress was made—such as updating the Master Plan, early public engagement, outreach to clubs, and developing guiding principles—most felt the committee only partially met its five Purposes. Common themes include limited or inconsistent public engagement, lack of fundraising activity, absence of meaningful design or architectural work, and weak liaison with other committees. Several cited unclear or unrealistic Purposes, slow pace, and staff-driven processes that sidelined members' contributions. Outliers noted modest successes in advancing vision and communication. Overall, the Purposes were seen as too broad, poorly defined, and only partially achieved.

4. General Feedback

Over the past two years, the Ad-Hoc Committee has worked to provide Council with good information and advice on which to base their decisions.

Please consider the Ad-Hoc Committee's work from a process point of view such as meetings (location, frequency, attendance, format, structure, etc.), presentations (frequency, relevance, length, etc.), procedures, focus, transparency, decision-making and/or anything else that would be useful. What worked? What didn't work? What could be improved? How could it be improved?

Reminder: The committee is bound by the Respectful Workplace Policy of the City of Stratford.

Summary of Responses

Reflections highlight deep dissatisfaction with process. Recurring concerns include overly rigid, formal meeting formats that discouraged dialogue, limited transparency (especially around consultant selection, agenda control, and sub-committee decisions), and excessive presentations that displaced genuine discussion. The working group structure was confusing, uneven, and exclusionary, while onboarding and facilities undermined participation. Positive notes include some well-run meetings, improved settings after leaving council chambers, and valuable early presentations. Outliers emphasized Indigenous engagement as a major gap. Overall, members saw process as staff- or consultant-driven, with poor planning and decision-making, and recommend more open, roundtable-style, transparent, and participatory approaches.

5. Moving the Project Forward

Since the committee is coming to the end of its term, and considering the work it has done, the expertise that has been gained, the scope of the project, the political landscape and other factors, what are your thoughts regarding how Council should move the GTR project forward? Should Council incorporate citizens into its process? If so, how should that be done?

Summary of Responses

Reflections show tension between urgency for Council to act and the desire for continued citizen involvement. Some argue the community has spoken and it's time to move forward decisively, while others stress transparency, accountability, and ongoing public input at key milestones. Suggestions include smaller, more focused expert/task-based committees, or extending the current committee to preserve hard-won knowledge. Broader concerns highlight weak city leadership, risk of consultant dominance, and need for stronger governance structures. Outliers call for bold, long-term vision, firm decisions from partners (e.g., the University), and prioritizing community assets like the Library and YMCA.

6. Any last thoughts that have not been stated so far? Please be brief.

Summary of Responses

Final reflections were polarized. Many expressed disappointment, citing lack of meaningful participation, poor process design, unmet expectations, and frustration with consultants' conduct or influence. Several stressed the need for stronger leadership, clearer processes, better communication (including public updates), and opportunity for the committee to comment on consultant recommendations. Outliers noted gratitude for providing feedback and recognized some progress in capturing community perspectives. Broader insights point to fears that the project risks becoming unimaginative and ordinary, with the original "community hub" vision lost. Overall, members urge more creativity, transparency, and community-centered decision-making going forward.

Part 2: Analysis of Differences Between Groups

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

- Members leaned toward highlighting partial achievements and positive aspects of engagement, though still acknowledging shortcomings.
- Working Group Chairs were more candidly critical, focusing on structural inefficiencies and lack of results.
- Both groups' feedback suggests that future committees must have a sharper mandate, narrower focus, and clearer expectations.