



Grand Trunk Community Hub

Master Plan - Draft

November 2017

**URBAN
STRATEGIES
INC .**

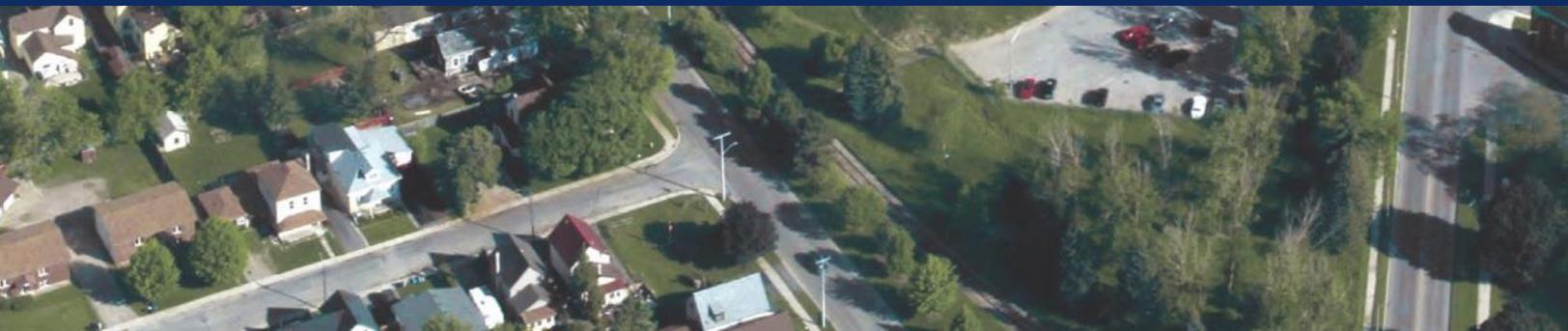


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01

INTRODUCTION

The Grand Trunk Railway site, an 18 acre site on the south edge of Stratford's Downtown, has long been an important site in the city. Once home to over a third of Stratford's workforce, the site lay vacant for a number of years save for the Stratford-Perth YMCA, which has grown into an anchor for the Stratford community, serving over 2800 members annually. Recently, the site has been given life again with the opening of the University of Waterloo's School of Digital Media, the first building of a planned University of Waterloo Stratford Campus. The Grand Trunk site stands to renew its place in, and as the heart of, the city and become a place for residents and visitors alike through the Grand Trunk Master Plan.

Urban Strategies Inc has been retained by the City Stratford to develop a Master Plan for the Grand Trunk site to guide its growth and development. The Master Plan will provide a framework for how the Grand Trunk site could develop over time and how it will address a range of urban planning and urban design matters such as parking, built form, open space provision, the public realm, and the street network. The Master Plan may also serve as a basis for future amendments to the City of Stratford Official Plan and any other regulatory documents, such as zoning, informing growth on the site.

This Master Plan builds from a wealth of work already completed to understand the site and the Grand Trunk Railway Shop (Grand Trunk Building) itself. Prior work includes a series of engineering reports and analyses, a heritage assessment, and a technical review of site opportunities and constraints. The Master Plan is also heavily informed and influenced by a multifaceted public engagement process which included community roundtables, open houses, online feedback, and "talking walls" set up around the site. The vision for the future of the site articulated in this document is a direct result of community feedback and input.

This report introduces the site's physical and regulatory context, provides an overview of the work completed to date including the public engagement process, establishes a vision and framework for the Grand Trunk site's evolution, and provides recommendations on phasing and next steps to implement that vision and framework.



Figure 1 ► The Grand Trunk Railway Lands Today



The Grand Trunk Community Hub will be a convergence of education, community, entrepreneurship, and innovation to strengthen and diversify the Stratford economy, providing services and amenities for both residents and visitors.

The Hub will facilitate a cluster of uses that create a strong identity, sense of place, and centre of gravity for the Grand Trunk site and Building, expanding and connecting to the existing Downtown. It will generate a critical mass of activity that appeals to a diverse cross-section of Stratford's population.

► Downtown Stratford

Downtown Stratford, or Stratford City Centre, measures approximately three and a half square kilometres and is defined by its remarkably intact heritage character. This character expresses itself as consistent and proud streetwalls comprised of three to four storey brick Victorian buildings which create an extensive “main-street” network typified by Ontario Street and Wellington Street and housing over 300 stores and businesses. Because of the triangular shape created by the main streets in Downtown Stratford, the “centre” of the City Centre naturally falls at the intersection of Downie and Wellington Streets. The intersection is anchored by Stratford City Hall, and Market Square behind it, which together create a coherent focus for the City Centre district.

Given the picturesque setting of Downtown Stratford, enhanced by the complementary natural setting Avon riverside to its north and the presence of the Stratford Festival, it is unsurprising that tourism is Stratford’s most significant economic driver next to manufacturing.

Much of that tourism is the result of the Stratford Festival which attracts over 500,000 visitors a year to the city and employs approximately 1,200 people, more than any other single entity in the city. The influence of the creative sector extends beyond the Festival to the dozens of smaller performing arts, musical, and artistic groups that practice and perform in the city.

Downtown Stratford is also the home for Stratford’s growing population, which increased from 30,903 in 2011 to 31,465 in 2016, a growth of 1.8%. Many new residents are coming in response to the city’s effort to further diversify Stratford’s economy and tap into the emergent technology sector centred on Kitchener-Waterloo. The opening of the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus and the provision of free wifi throughout the Downtown by Rhyzome Networks (the city-owned data infrastructure company) are reflective of this 21st century economic development strategy. As the city, and the Downtown, continues to grow and evolve, there is a need to ensure that the amenities, services, and community spaces that serve the community grow and evolve in turn.

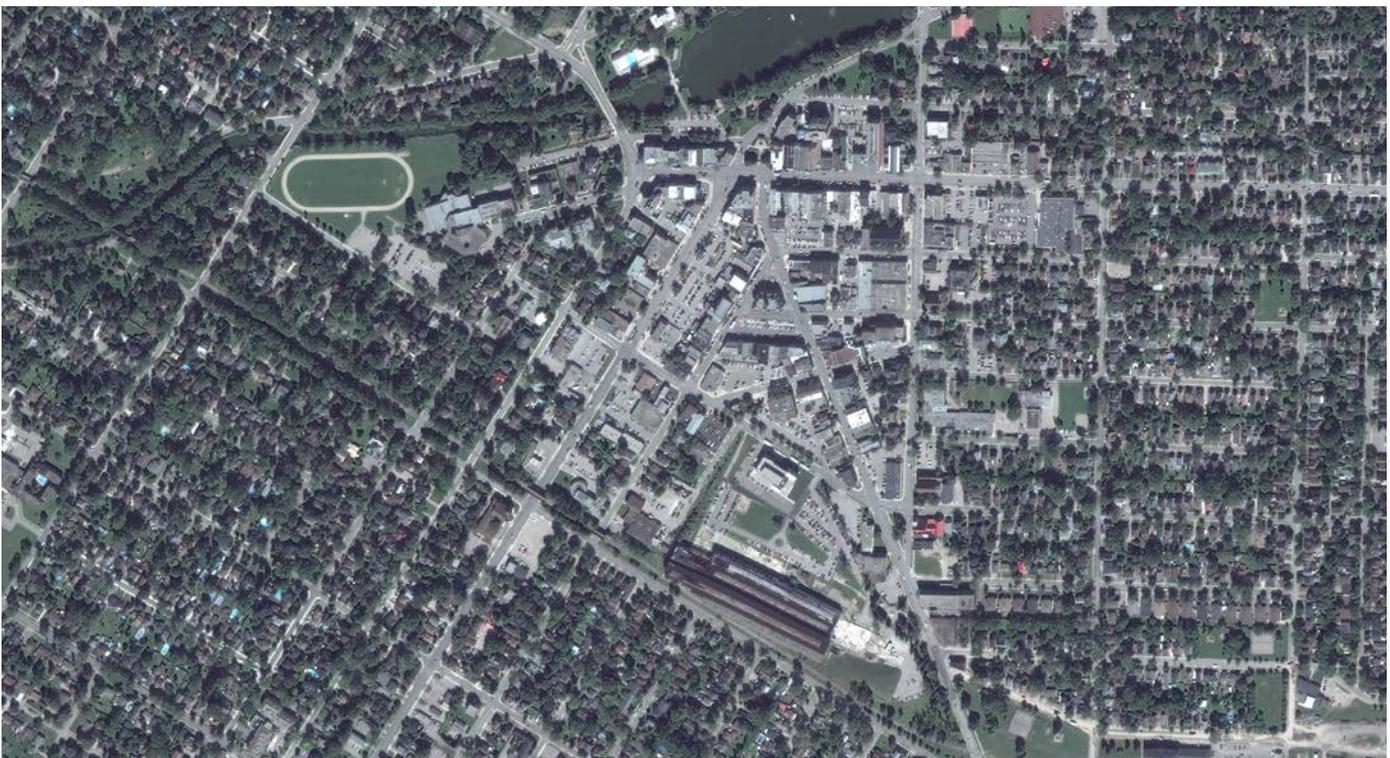


Figure 2 ► Downtown Stratford

► Recent Downtown Initiatives

There have been several recent initiatives and construction projects in, and proximate to, Downtown Stratford that help to inform the future context and design of the Grand Trunk site:

Market Square

The redevelopment of Market Square has transformed the space behind City Hall from a surface parking lot and bus drop-off to a public plaza. The pedestrianized area is supported by seating, high quality paving material, and several street trees, which will provide amenity for residents and support the hosting of special events in the Downtown.

Transit Terminal

The revitalization of Market Square created an opportunity to improve how bus transportation and parking is provided in Downtown Stratford. A new transit terminal with dedicated shading areas and washrooms will be constructed on the Grand Trunk site in proximity to Downie Street. The location was determined via public input and supported by City Council.

Tom Patterson Theatre Rebuild

Currently housed in a former curling arena, the Tom Patterson Theatre can no longer support the infrastructure and technological needs of a modern theatre facility. The Stratford Festival is proposing to rebuild a contemporary theatre facility on the same site. An opportunity exists on the Grand Trunk site to potentially accommodate some of the past users of the Tom Patterson Theatre.



Figure 3 ► Market Square Redesign

► Proposed / Recent Development

In addition to investments in public infrastructure, Downtown Stratford has also seen a number of recent private sector investments in the form of new residential development. These projects will add to the housing mix and population in Downtown Stratford:

245 Downie Street (Bradshaw Building)

On March 9, 2015, Stratford City Council approved a Brownfield Community Improvement Plan Grant application to support a Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment for the site. The Phase 2 ESA was required to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. An application for minor variance(s) was submitted in February, 2017 to allow the proposed development to construct a fourth storey where three are permitted and obtain relief from certain parking requirements. Minutes from the February 14, 2017 Heritage Stratford Committee indicate that 245 Downie Street is proposed to be renovated into a combination loft/hotel at a height of 20 metres.



Figure 4 ► 245 Downie Street Proposal Rendering

► **The Grand Trunk Lands in the City**

The Grand Trunk site (the “Site”) is the largest undeveloped site within downtown Stratford. It is located an approximately two-minute walk from the heart of Stratford, Market Square and City Hall, and is adjacent to Shakespeare Park. Because of its location on the southern edge of downtown Stratford, the Site acts as an interface between the city’s core and the surrounding neighbourhoods, in particular the St. David Street neighbourhood to the south. Moreover, the Stratford Via Rail Station is located an approximately five-minute walk from the site.



Figure 5 ► The Site in the City

► **A Confluence of Key Routes**

The Grand Trunk Site, and Downtown Stratford more generally, is located at the confluence of key routes into - and out - of the city. Travelling east along Highway 8 brings you to Kitchener within 45 minutes and further on to the Greater Toronto Area in approximately one hour. Taking Erie Street south out of Stratford, London is an approximately 45 minute drive away on Highway 7. And to the west, past Goderich, Sarnia and the United States border are approximately 1.5 hours away by car. Potential future transit investments in the GO Rail or existing Via Rail network would also better support Stratford’s role as a regional crossroads and cultural destination, and as an emerging “living lab” community that supports the Toronto-Waterloo Technology Corridor.



Figure 6 ► A Confluence of Key Routes

► Downtown Stratford's Public Realm

Although Stratford's downtown core is highly walkable and offers a variety of amenities to pedestrians including restaurants, entertainment venues, theatres and retail options, residents and visitors travel outside the core to access the city's riverside park system and other parks and open spaces. In addition to the revitalization of Market Square behind City Hall, the Grand Trunk site is significant opportunity to contribute new green and open space in the heart of the city.



Figure 7 ► Downtown Stratford's Public Realm

► Parking in Downtown Stratford

The economic viability of Downtown Stratford depends, in part, on the availability of parking, both for residents travelling to jobs in the core and for visitors arriving from elsewhere. As a result, parking represents a significant portion of the land uses downtown. Today, the Grand Trunk site provide approximately 40% of the municipal parking supply in Stratford, acting as a free parking lot for City of Stratford employees as well as playing a critical role as overflow parking during periods of high traffic volume in the city for visitors. As the Grand Trunk Site evolves, replacing and/or augmenting that parking supply, and considering new transportation demand initiatives, will be a core objective in order to support the overall success of Downtown Stratford.



Figure 8 ► Parking in Downtown Stratford

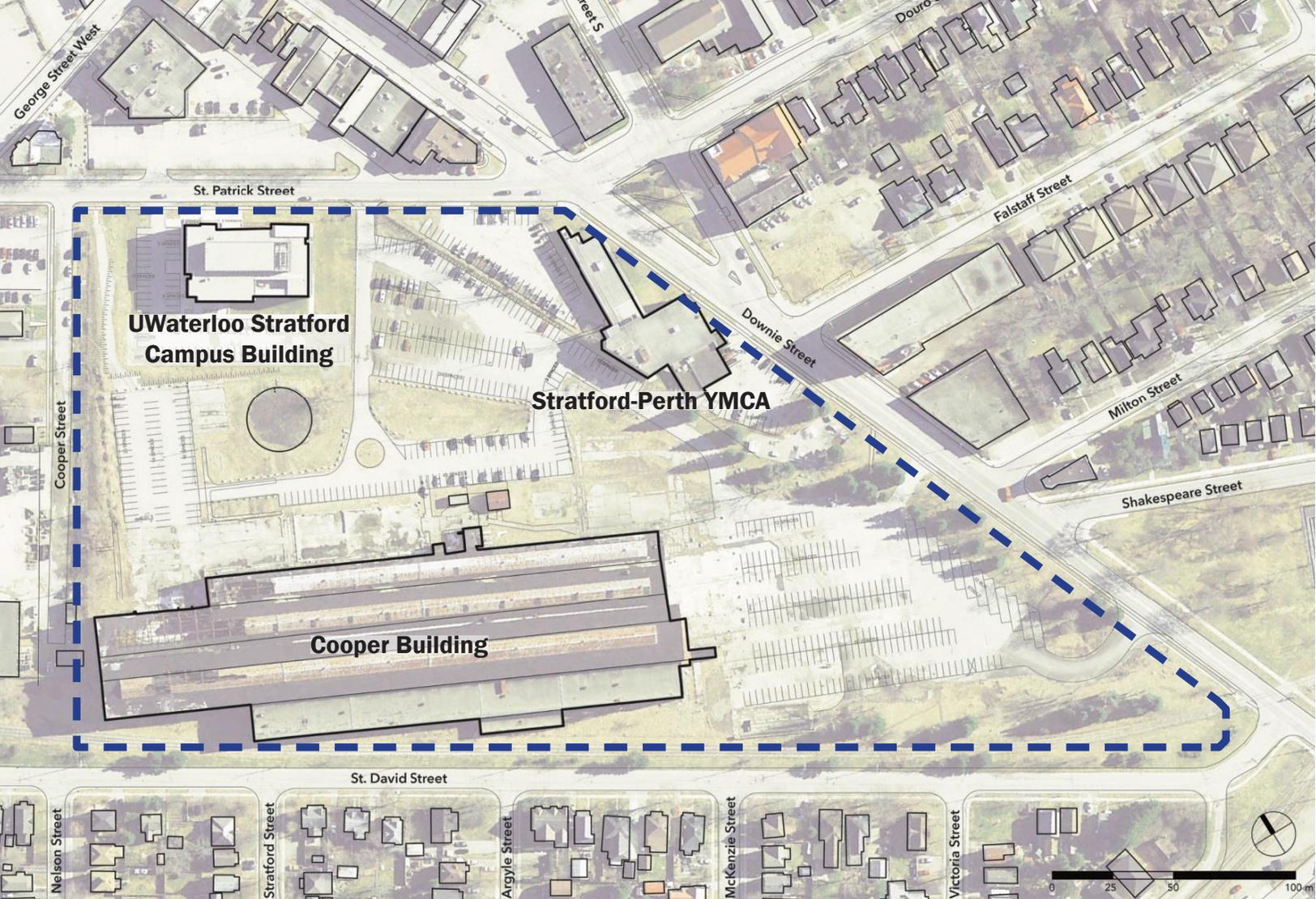


Figure 9 ▶ The Grand Trunk site Today

▶ The Grand Trunk Site

The Grand Trunk site (the Site) comprises approximately 18 acres within Downtown Stratford bounded by St. Patrick Street to the north, Downie Street to the east, St. David Street to the south, and Cooper Street and the west. The core of Downtown Stratford lies just north of the site, the site is surrounded by residential neighbourhoods to the east, south, and west.

The Grand Trunk site was developed as one large single parcel and, as a result, has poor internal connectivity and limited external connectivity. Currently, the site can only be accessed from St. Patrick and Downie Streets. A significant grade differential prevents access from the west side of the site from Cooper Street and an active rail line creates a connectivity challenge on the southern edge of the site between St. David Street and the site. Within the site, there is no rational street and block network. Instead, internal connections facilitate access between surface parking areas reserved for municipal parking.

Parking provided for the Stratford-Perth YMCA and for the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus building is separated from the municipal parking areas.

The Grand Trunk site is currently occupied by three buildings. The first phase of the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus is located at the northwest corner of the site and is approximately 42,000 square feet. The Stratford-Perth YMCA is located along the Downie Street frontage on the northern edge of the site and is approximately 45,000 square feet. The Grand Trunk Railway Shop, for which the Lands are named, is over 160,000 square feet and is located along the southern edge of the property. Other elements of historical industrial features are visible on the site, including the footprint of the original rail turntable and remnants of the original rail tracks, sides, and spurs.

A review of the provincial and local policy directions and initiatives supports the reinvestment and redevelopment of the Grand Trunk site.

» PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT (2014)

The proposed Grand Trunk Community Hub and associated development is consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (2014).

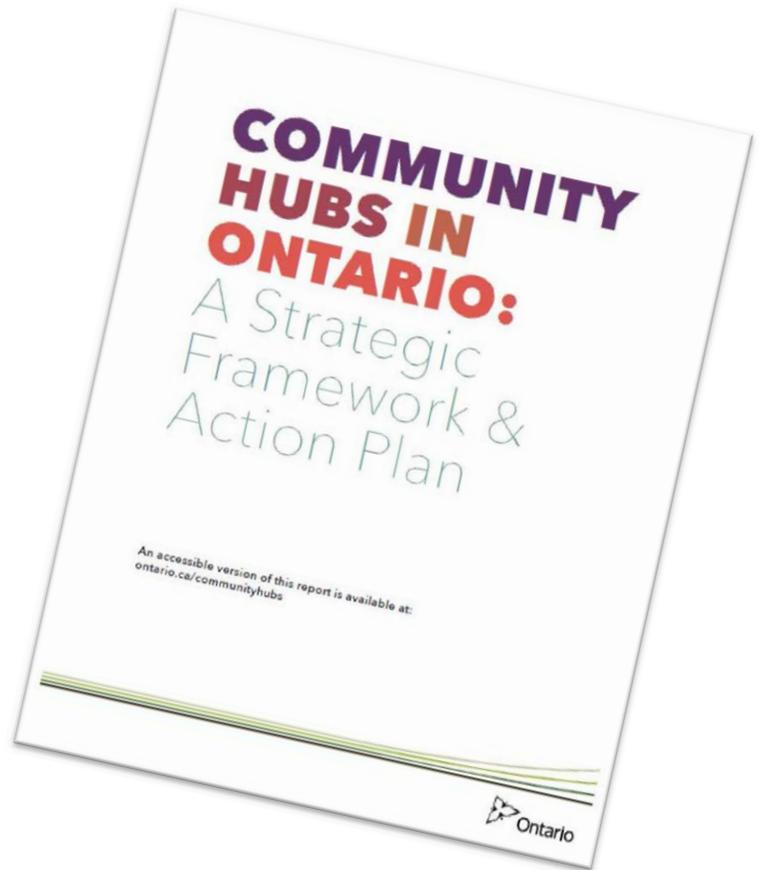
» COMMUNITY HUB STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN

In March, 2015 the Government of Ontario launched an initiative to improve and enhance community services across the Province by facilitating and supporting the creation of community hubs. Community hubs are described as central points within a community that provide a range of health, social service, recreational, environmental, and educational uses within an integrated facility. They can be located in existing schools, community centres, places of worship, libraries, or other public buildings.

The Grand Trunk Community Hub, in association with the Stratford Campus, is envisioned as a community hub in this model and is proposed to be located within the Grand Trunk site. However, given the range of uses envisioned for the Grand Trunk site as a whole, both the Building and the overall site could be considered a community hub depending on the context.

» CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Ontario's Five Year Climate Change Action Plan (2016-2020) aligns with the Community Hub Action Plan insofar as its aim is to, in part, support sustainable and resilient community services and facilities. Specifically, it identifies that the reuse of heritage properties is inherently sustainable and are excellent platforms to showcase low-carbon technology and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



» **STRATFORD OFFICIAL PLAN (2013) DOWNTOWN CORE**

Stratford’s Official Plan describes the Downtown Core as a place that is “vibrant, compact, multi-functional, attractive and people friendly”. In support of the continued success of the Downtown, Official Plan policies encourage the rehabilitation of older buildings and recognizes the significance of downtown heritage landmarks and their role in enhancing their surroundings. In addition, the Official Plan states that it is a policy of the City to maintain, make better use of, and increase, where feasible, the supply of parking downtown.

The vision for the Grand Trunk Community Hub meets the Official Plan policies with regard to the Downtown Core.

» **OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT 21 - COOPER SITE - MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL FOCUS AREA**

OPA 21, although under appeal, amends the Stratford Official Plan in part with respect to the ‘Cooper Block’ (the Grand Trunk site) as a major institutional use focus area. It permits a broad range of uses and states the following goals and objectives for the site:

- To encourage public and institutional uses which will restore a sense of purpose and vibrancy to the Cooper Site making it a focus of activity in the southern part of the Downtown Core
- To ensure that development in the Cooper Site complements and supports the role of the Downtown Core as the primary focus of the City with its own distinct character and identity
- To ensure that the historic use of the Cooper Site is appropriately commemorated with an emphasis on the importance of rail to the development of the City

Note: Although OPA 21 in its entirety is under appeal, the site specific amendments related to the ‘Cooper Block’ are not the focus of the appeal.

» **ZONING BY-LAW NO. 201-2000**

The Grand Trunk site is zoned C3-2 which is a mixed-use designation permitting a wide range of uses including apartment dwellings, commercial uses, senior’s housing, institutional uses, and industrial uses. A maximum height of 15 metres is permitted on the Grand Trunk site and any new development must include a minimum of 10% landscaped open space in the proposal.

The vision for the Grand Trunk Community Hub largely conforms to the existing zoning regulations. If future urban design investigations identify additional height could be accommodated on the Grand Trunk site, a zoning by-law amendment would be required to facilitate this outcome.

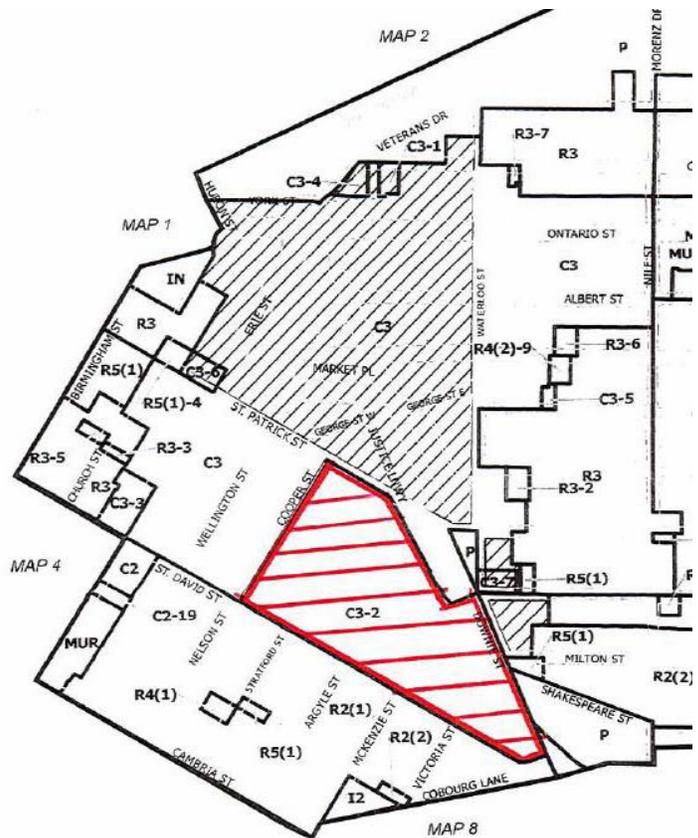


Figure 13 ► Stratford Zoning By-law No. 201-2000 Extract

The development of the Grand Trunk Master Plan has been supported by thorough research, background studies, and, crucially, an extensive community engagement process. For over a year, Urban Strategies, the City of Stratford, site partners, community members, and other consultants have worked together to understand the opportunities offered on the Grand Trunk site, coordinate efforts with regard to program needs, and develop and invite feedback on guiding principles and a vision for the Grand Trunk Community Hub. The first step in the development of this Master Plan was the undertaking of a technical review to understand the work performed to date with regard to the site and building's physical and environmental condition and to obtain clarity from the existing on-site partners of the University of Waterloo, the YMCA of Stratford-Perth, and the City of Stratford with regard to their priorities and plans for the future of their operations on the site.

As background, the technical review was itself informed by an intensive three-month process which involved a tour of the site and its surroundings, an extensive review of the previous body of work regarding the Grand Trunk site and Building, one-on-one interviews, and a two-day working session with key stakeholders and potential partners. The technical review also analyzed precedent community hubs elsewhere in Ontario.

► Document Review

The Grand Trunk site and Building have been studied extensively. In preparation for this technical review, Urban Strategies benefited from the following reports:

- *Potential Remedial Costs Related to the Redevelopment of the Cooper Site Property* (RJ Burnside & Associates Ltd., 2009)
- *Heritage Consultation and Report* (Goldsmith Borgal & Company Ltd., 2012)
- *Building Condition Assessment Report* (Read Jones Cristoffersen, 2012)

- *Community Workshop and Recommendations* (Malone Given Parsons Ltd., 2013)
- *Potential Salvage/Remediation Feasibility Study* (Read Jones Cristoffersen, 2013)
- *Roofing Components Visual Review* (Read Jones Cristoffersen, 2014)
- *Roofing Components Visual Review Including Hazardous Materials Abatement Costs* (Read Jones Cristoffersen, 2015)
- *Costing for Partial Demolitions Options* (Read Jones Cristoffersen, 2015)

► Technical Review Working Session

On December 20 and 21, 2016, Urban Strategies facilitated a two-day technical review working session at the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus. The purpose of this session was to discuss the technical considerations applying to the site, confirm the needs of the University of Waterloo and other potential partners, and to identify implementation options and an investment framework to support the achievement of the overall vision for the future of the site. Attendees at the session included representatives from:

- City of Stratford Staff
- Festival Hydro
- Stratford-Perth YMCA
- University of Waterloo Stratford Campus,
- Urban Strategies
- N. Barry Lyons Consulting
- CBRE

► Potential Partners

Along with the City of Stratford, the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus and the YMCA of Stratford-Perth are key partners in the development of the Grand Trunk Community Hub. Their program needs are summarized below and are integrated into the vision for the future of the Cooper Block.

University of Waterloo Stratford Campus

In 2009 the City of Stratford entered into an agreement with the University of Waterloo to establish a Stratford Campus on the Grand Trunk site. The agreement indicated that the Campus would be on a single site of at least 8 acres located in the Downtown Core; the Grand Trunk site was chosen as the location. The initial building occupies approximately 1.4 acres of these 8 acres. The University of Waterloo is interested in integrating a Student Campus Life component into the Grand Trunk Community Hub, in addition to new academic buildings and student housing which will be constructed on the Grand Trunk site as the Campus grows.

YMCA of Stratford-Perth

The YMCA of Stratford-Perth has served the Stratford community on the Grand Trunk site since 1869 and is an integral part of the city. The existing building is in need of drastic renovation and repair to address accessibility, space, and operating inefficiencies. In addition, the YMCA operates the only indoor publicly-accessible aquatic facility in Stratford. A new YMCA of Stratford-Perth will be integrated into the Grand Trunk Community Hub, accommodating a new pool and additional child-care spaces. The new YMCA is anticipated to require approximately 45,000 square feet of the Hub. The existing YMCA building is expected to be demolished.

City of Stratford Library

The Stratford Library also has an interest in participating in the Grand Trunk Community Hub. It intends to potentially expand its services to include a Maker Space, a place where users can access new technology and related services such as 3D printing machines and simple programmable robotics.



Figure 14 ► University of Waterloo Stratford Campus



Figure 15 ► YMCA of Stratford-Perth



Figure 16 ► Potential MakerSpace Activity

► Precedent Hubs

The technical review also entailed a review of precedent spaces across Ontario to better understand the roles and functions these hubs serve in their communities. Precedents reviewed include the following:

- Evergreen Brickworks, Toronto
- Wychwood Barns, Toronto
- The Tannery, Kitchener-Waterloo
- Lansdowne Park, Ottawa
- Market Square, Guelph

Although not all of the examples above are community hubs in the sense of a single building providing multiple services, they all share the following similar characteristics that inform the vision for the Grand Trunk Community Hub:

- Incorporate flexible and programmable open space for people to gather and for events to be held.
- Accommodate and anticipate activity in all seasons.
- Provide a range of uses and opportunities for both the private and public sector.
- Build from the unique characteristics of their site and context.
- Adaptively reuse landmark buildings to give them new purpose and new life.



Figure 17 ► Lansdowne Park, Ottawa



Figure 18 ► Evergreen Brickworks, Toronto



Figure 19 ► Wychwood Barns, Toronto



Figure 20 ► The Tannery, Kitchener-Waterloo

► Technical Opportunities and Constraints

The technical review process identified several opportunities and constraints for the evolution of the Grand Trunk site into the Grand Trunk Community Hub based on the input and advice of the technical review participants.

- given the site's industrial history, there are site and building contamination issues; however, the level of contamination varies significantly across the site: there is little contamination around the periphery of the site and towards the eastern extent of the property, but greater levels in the western portion of the site;
- it was confirmed by a qualified environmental engineer that locations with higher levels of contamination (the "hot spots") could be addressed through a combination of localized remediation and a risk assessment process which is already being undertaken;
- the existing rail line, operated by the Goderich-Exeter Railway, which separates the Grand Trunk site from the St. David Street Neighbourhood to the south is expected to operate into at least the near future, complicating the ability to connect the Grand Trunk site to the communities to the south;
- key partners, including the Stratford-Perth YMCA and the University of Waterloo, are committed to participating in the evolution of the Community Hub;
- other partners have indicated an interest in the Grand Trunk Community Hub;
- future investment in rail infrastructure could see the GO Rail network extended to Stratford, terminating at the existing VIA Rail station immediately adjacent to the Block;
- the "annex" and fire-damaged portions of the Grand Trunk Building should be considered for demolition to also facilitate the development of the Community Hub and rehabilitate the building;
- there is a desire to retain and/or augment the current supply of municipal parking currently available on the Grand Trunk site;
- both public and private sector uses will be required to realize the vision for the Grand Trunk Community Hub; and
- celebrate the long-standing history of the Grand Trunk site and Building through adaptive reuse of portions of the Grand Trunk Building and in other ways.

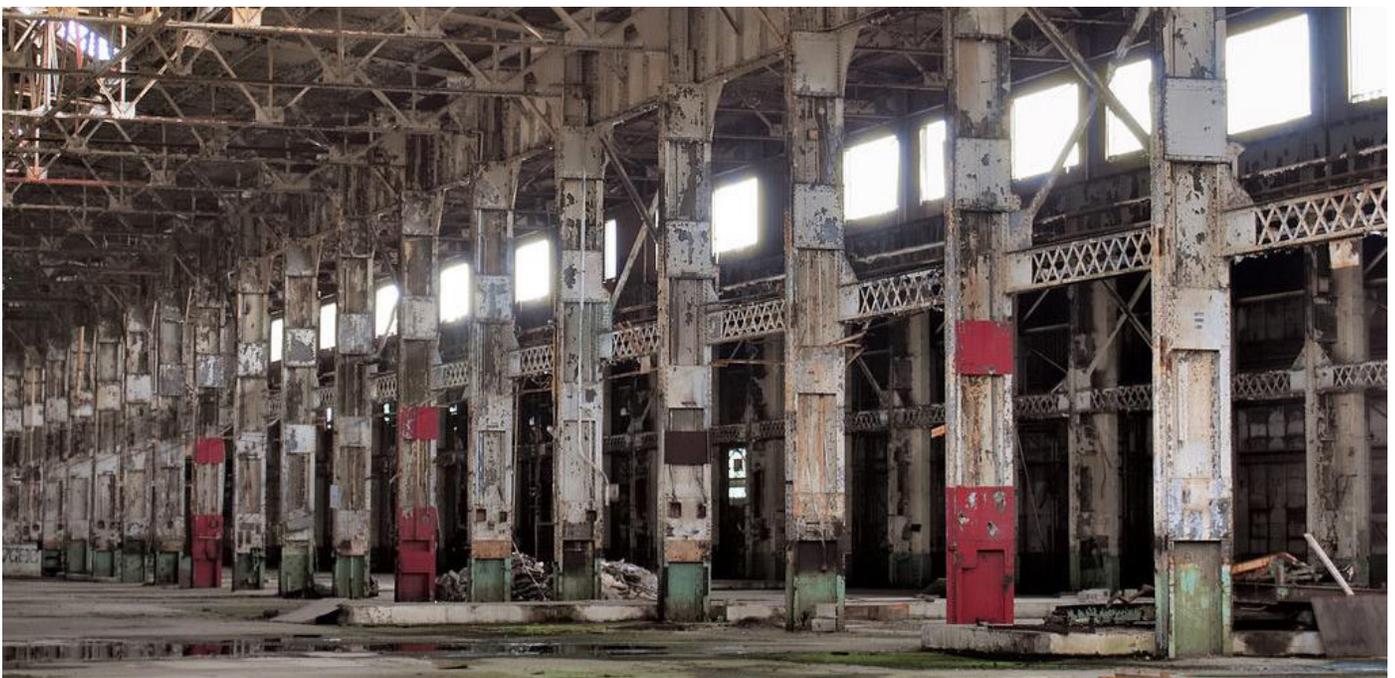


Figure 21 ► Grand Trunk Building interior

► Community Engagement Process

The community engagement process formally began in June, 2017, after the results of the technical review were presented to Stratford City Council in May, 2017. Community organizations, members of the general public, and other stakeholders such as Festival Hydro were invited to contribute their feedback in a number of ways in order to ensure that as many people could participate in this process as possible. The following public consultation tools and methods were utilized to invite feedback and input:

- Community Roundtables
- “Talking Walls”
- Kitchen Table Kits
- Online Feedback / Website / Email
- Public Open House

After the first round of consultation activities, the following statistics provide an indication of the robustness of the community engagement program and speak to the excitement Stratford residents have for a shared vision for the future of the Grand Trunk site. In total, this first phase of the community engagement program resulted in:

- 20+ different community groups and organizations consulted at community roundtables;
- 100+ attendees at the public open house;
- 50+ kitchen table kits received;
- 30+ unique ideas submitted via the “talking walls”; and
- 15+ direct emails received.

The feedback obtained through the community engagement process helped inform both the guiding principles of the Grand Trunk Master Plan concept as well as the particular proposed uses and physical structuring elements of the proposed Grand Trunk Community Hub.

A summary of the feedback received from the community is provided in the following pages.

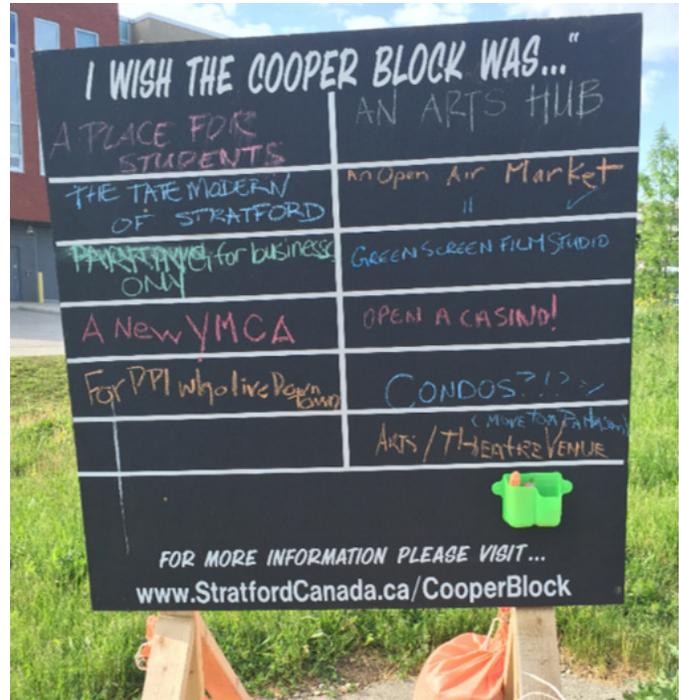


Figure 22 ► “Talking Wall” Example



Figure 23 ► Kitchen Table Kit

► What We Heard

Residents, community members, city staff, and other stakeholders provided a wide range of suggestions and ideas for the future of the Grand Trunk site. The top four ideas for program uses shared via the “talking walls” were:

1. A community centre / YMCA.
2. Public parking.
3. Entertainment uses (i.e. laser tag, mini golf, theatre).
4. Arts and culture space / performance venue.

At the community roundtables, representatives of local organizations such as the Kiwanis Club, the Chamber of Commerce, Heritage Stratford, and the Arts and Culture Collective shared their priorities, which included:

- Ensuring the site is inclusive and welcoming for young and old residents alike;
- Incorporating green and open space;
- Balancing the Grand Trunk Community Hub with the vibrancy of downtown; and
- Celebrating the history of the Grand Trunk Building.

Ideas submitted through the kitchen table kits echoed these sentiments. The most common responses provided through the kitchen table kits were:

- rebuild / integrate the new YMCA building;
- parking is a priority;
- find room for a community theatre / performing arts space;
- accommodate a large green space with seating and trees; and
- adaptively reuse a portion of the Grand Trunk Building.

At the public open house, held at the University of Waterloo’s Stratford Campus, in June 2017 attendees expressed enthusiasm and excitement for the idea of a Grand Trunk Community Hub and shared the following feedback:

- urgent need to capitalize on the momentum generated for the Grand Trunk Community Hub and ensure implementation;
- preference for a passive green space over a more urban-in-character plaza or square;
- significant support for flexible and multi-purpose programmable space for community groups and residents including a community centre, arts venue, and/or seniors’ centre; and
- desire for some form of adaptive reuse of the Grand Trunk site and Building to celebrate its important industrial history.

The results of the community engagement process clearly reveal a number of shared and critical priorities and issues that should inform the Grand Trunk Master Plan.



Figure 24 ► Attendees at the Open House

Overall, the following key directions were developed to inform the draft Master Plan and were presented to City Council in September 2017:

- Preserve a portion of the Grand Trunk Building to celebrate the important industrial heritage of this critical site and as an opportunity for adaptive reuse of the structure as a community hub.
- Explore the development a Community Hub potentially to include the following uses: The YMCA, Cultural / community space (including flexible meeting rooms), student life / recreational space and small-scale retail and commercial uses supportive of above uses.
- Develop a central passive and green recreational space as a focus for the Community Hub and university/ community-related uses.
- Develop a fine-grained street and block network that promotes ease of movement for pedestrians, cyclists, and motor vehicles.
- Introduce residential uses including University of Waterloo student housing, a range of mid-to-low density market-rate housing, and affordable and/or seniors housing.
- Seek opportunities for temporary / interim uses which do not preclude longer-term economic development opportunities for the City.
- Integrate the proposed bus terminal logically as a key mobility hub and early site animator
- Call the community hub the “Grand Trunk Community Hub”
- Maintain the site’s important parking function for the Downtown. This function should be consolidated on the western portion of the site where cap-and-cover is the most realistic solution for environmental conditions
- Continue to strengthen existing partnerships between UW, the Stratford-Perth YMCA, the City of Stratford, and the constellation of community groups and organizations through ongoing communication and participation in the process of refining the Master Plan.
- Create a place that reflects Stratford’s community, values, and aspirations.
- Plan for both the short and the long-term, with flexibility to respond to change securing early “wins” such as the location of the transit terminal and short-term leasing opportunities while protecting opportunities for longer term investments.
- Pursue design excellence in open space and architectural execution to create a unique and cherished destination in Downtown Stratford.
- Signal the importance of the site/community hub by retaining a significant view corridor from the intersection of Downie Street and St. Patrick Street to the entrance of the Grand Trunk Community Hub and the repurposed Grand Trunk Building.
- Development will occur and be planned through a phased process.



Figure 25 ► A birds eye view of the current site

THE GRAND TRUNK MASTER PLAN

The Grand Trunk Community Hub will be a convergence of education, community, health, culture, entrepreneurship, and innovation, will aim to strengthen and diversify the Stratford economy, and provide spaces, places, services and amenities for both residents, students, businesses and visitors.

The Hub will create a cluster of uses that create a strong identity, sense of place, and centre of gravity for the Grand Trunk block, generating a critical mass of activity that appeals to a diverse cross-section of Stratford's population and businesses.

The purpose of the Grand Trunk Master Plan is to provide a flexible framework for reinvestment on the Site as well as inform further policy, capital program and partnerships necessary to implement the vision and development concept presented herein. As the language of City of Stratford's Official Plan Amendment 21 states, the Master Plan needs to address

matters including land use, transportation, servicing and urban design.

The transformation of the Grand Trunk block, described in this Master Plan, is a city-building opportunity in the literal sense. Reinvestment on the Grand Trunk Site will complement the downtown and fill in a void in the heart of Stratford, revitalizing a key site that was for most of the city's history a landmark and destination. Recognizing the Lands' original role as a critical employer of Stratford residents, the Grand Trunk Community Hub will translate that function for the twenty-first century, providing space for community groups who enhance the city's quality of life, facilitating opportunities for learning, recreating, living, economic development and employment.



Figure 26 ► The Grand Trunk Master Plan - Demonstration Plan

Finally, the Grand Trunk Community Hub will continue to grow the Stratford brand and further position Stratford as a community that celebrates its industrial past and supports its contemporary manufacturing industry. The Hub will build off of the city's existing strengths in the arts and culture while supporting Stratford's diverse community and embracing the growth in digital and technology industries. From children and youth to students and seniors, the Hub will provide a range of services reflecting the community's day to day needs while supporting the emerging creative class economy.

► **The Essential Ingredients**

As outlined in Chapter 4, a key consideration in the Master Plan has been the program for renewal and expansion proposed by the existing users of the site, primarily the YMCA and University of Waterloo. These users will play an important role in the overall redevelopment of the site, anchoring the initial phases of redevelopment and providing ongoing activity and vibrancy to the site. In addition, consideration has been given to City-wide and community-based needs and opportunities for complementary and shared uses in the short and longer term. The program that has informed this Master Plan includes:

- Expanding the University of Waterloo, including a mix of academic uses, student housing, student living and incubator space.
- Relocating and upgrading the YMCA, replacing current facilities and including a day-care facility.
- Retaining a proportion of car parking and allowing for a more efficient approach to parking.
- Including potential new uses on the site, such as seniors recreation, community-based arts, culture and creative spaces, library-related facilities, private and affordable housing, learning and education space, businesses, offices, studios and short-term accommodation.
- Accommodating new investment to the Block in incubator, business and private development interest.

► The Guiding Principles

The following planning and development principles emerged as a synthesis of the background review of the site; its history; the policy framework; the opportunities and constraints identified during the technical review; and the feedback provided by Stratford residents, community groups, and other participants in the community engagement process:

- 1 Celebrate the history of the site by adaptively reusing portions of the original building and site as the Grand Trunk Community Hub.
- 2 Create a place that reflects Stratford's community, values, and aspirations.
- 3 Introduce a fine-grained street and block network that weaves the site into the City of Stratford, is pedestrian friendly and creates development blocks to accommodate future uses.
- 4 Establish a range of passive and green public spaces, anchored by a central, all season gathering commons.
- 5 Retain and enhance the significant view corridor at Downie and St. Patrick Streets as the entry portal to the Grand Trunk building and site.
- 6 Integrate a new transit terminal into the site to enhance mobility and transportation options for Stratford.
- 7 Explore the convergence and integration of program, activity and actors to establish a successful Community Hub.
- 8 Encourage complementary land uses, such as residential, student and senior living, incubator space, community-based recreation and cultural and hotel uses that can contribute to the long term prosperity of Stratford.
- 9 Demonstrate design excellence and sustainability in built form, public spaces, program and cultural landscapes.
- 10 Create a reinvestment framework that can accommodate phased development over time while providing certainty and accountability to the Stratford community and other partners.



Figure 27 ► View of the Grand Trunk Demonstration Plan

► **Demonstrating the Potential Outcome**

While the Master Plan establishes a flexible framework for reinvestment, it has been necessary to demonstrate how this framework may be implemented. In order to illustrate a potential implementation of the Master Plan, a demonstration plan has been developed, as illustrated in

Figure 26 below. This demonstration plan has been used throughout this report to illustrate a potential outcome using the framework layers and key directions of the Master Plan. It should be noted that the detailed development phases to be progressed under the Master Plan will be further refined in an ongoing manner and may differ from the demonstration plan shown.



► Key Moves and Components

The Grand Trunk Master Plan is a flexible framework designed to guide the phased reinvestment of the site and allow for an efficient, sustainable and logical progression of development to achieve the highest quality outcome for the City of Stratford.

Within this reinvestment framework there are distinct opportunities and directions, brought together and framed as Key Moves. These Key Moves will be important to the success of the Community Hub. The Key Moves include:

- Celebrating Stratford's history through adaptively re-use portions of the Grand Trunk Building.
- Facilitating a community hub of: learning, education, health, culture, recreation, innovation, entrepreneurialism, community and living.
- Rebuilding and enhancing the YMCA facilities.
- Expanding and enriching the academic offering.
- Integrating the new Stratford bus terminal.
- Creating a fine grain of streets and blocks.
- Extending the street pattern to connect the site into downtown Stratford and surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Creating The Common as a place of confluence and gathering of different users of the site.
- Introducing the Grant Trunk Spine as a visual and pedestrian connection.
- Attracting and unlocking private investment.
- Allowing for innovative parking solutions.

In addition to the Key Moves, the Master Plan identifies five site-wide framework 'layers' that will contribute to transforming the site from its current underutilized condition to a vibrant part of downtown Stratford. The overall guiding principles, transformative vision and key directions will be important in achieving this vibrancy. The Master Plan is structured to address and provide directions for each of the following framework layers:

1. Streets and Blocks
2. Public Realm and Open Space
3. Use and Built Form
4. Mobility, Parking and Servicing
5. Sustainability



Figure 28 ► The Grand Trunk Master Plan



The Vision for Transformation

The Grand Trunk Community Hub will be a convergence of education, community, entrepreneurship, and innovation to strengthen and diversify the Stratford economy, providing services and amenities for both residents and visitors. The Hub will create a cluster of uses, programs and activities that create a strong identity, sense of place, and centre of gravity for the Grand Trunk Lands and Railway Shop, expanding and connecting to the existing Downtown. It will generate a critical mass of activity that appeals to a diverse cross-section of Stratford's population.

The Grand Trunk Community Hub will be active throughout the day, on weekends, and in all seasons. With clusters of academic, learning, community and living uses, there will never be a dull moment. The Hub will be at the heart of the site and will provide something for everyone: green space for relaxing picnics, a gym for the fitness-inclined, meeting space for engaged groups, work rooms for busy students, child care services for doting parents, and parking for hardworking employees. The Hub be a "third place", not work, not home, for all of Stratford.

► Streets and Blocks

The Grand Trunk Master Plan seeks to establish a framework for a logical and hierarchical street network and block plan layout. The future design of the street network should encourage the phased reinvestment of the Grand Trunk site and establish flexible development blocks for phased delivery. A key basis of the Master Plan is to reconnect the site into the surrounding Stratford centre, overcoming issues of isolation and scale which have restricted the potential of the Grand Trunk site. Also central to the anticipated street network and block layout is the integration of the new bus terminal, enhancing mobility and transportation options for Stratford.

The Street Network

The anticipated street network is designed to create logical connections to surrounding streets and increase porosity and linkages through the site. A new north-south central road is anticipated, providing a spine through the heart of the Grand Trunk site and connecting St Patrick and St David Streets. From this, a finer grain street network will be achievable through connecting secondary roads / routes and pedestrian paths to development blocks. The anticipated street network, illustrated in the Street Network Map at Figure 28, is flexible and would allow for phasing of redevelopment and delivery.

The final design and composition of streets will be developed further as the Master Plan is implemented. Overall, a high quality street design should be delivered for each new street, consistent with the technical standards of the City of Stratford.

Block Layout

Logical and flexible development blocks are able to be created as a result of the street plan layout. These development blocks have been carved from the larger Grand Trunk site, creating a fine grain structure and enabling reinvestment to occur in a phased manner. The development blocks devised under this Master Plan, as shown on the Block Layout Map in Figure 29, are overall positioned and sized to allow for a range of built forms, land uses, programs, activities and publicly accessible landscaped spaces.

A key opportunity offered by this street network and block layout is the ability for the University of Waterloo to grow in a contiguous manner, with the ultimate phasing of this expansion to be determined by the needs of the University. Another key opportunity has been the creation of a substantial block for the adaptively reused and rejuvenated Grand Trunk Building. The size of this block will ensure that the Community Hub can be an anchor for the site, not only in the form of the Grand Trunk Building, but also as a number of new buildings and range of landscaped spaces around the rejuvenated building.

Street frontage opportunities for future buildings are able to be maximized in the blocks to promote activation. Ample opportunity for access, both pedestrian and vehicular, can be created through the block layout which would allow for flexibility in the future uses and built form outcomes on each block.

Key Directions

- *Establish a new internal street network as an extension of the existing surrounding streets, weaving the site into downtown Stratford and ensuring seamless connectivity.*
- *Focus on the development of a finer grain street network which allows for greater permeability through the large site and promotes pedestrian movements.*
- *Create logical, well-proportioned and flexible development blocks to facilitate reinvestment and accommodate a range of built forms and land uses.*
- *Optimize the available frontage for each block to key streets, in turn allowing for an animated and active built form which addresses the street.*

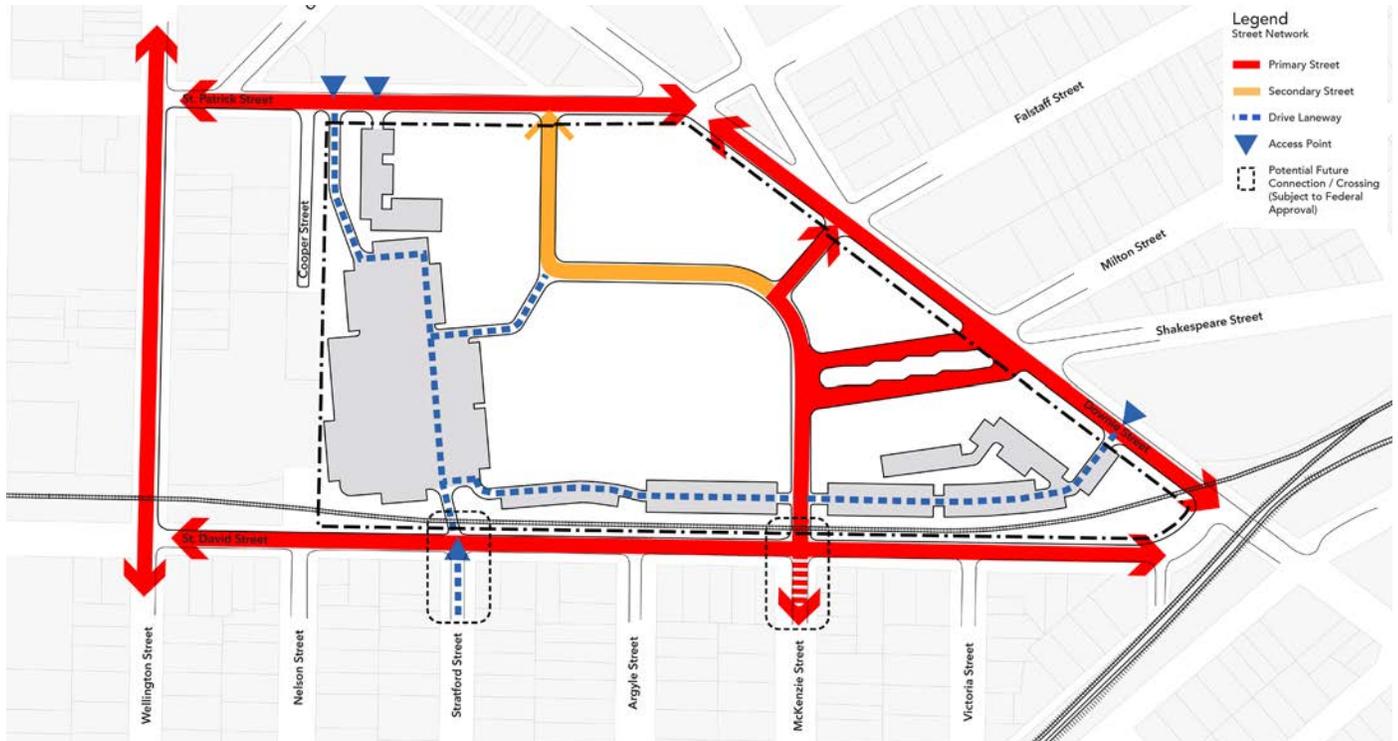


Figure 29 ▶ Street Network Map



Figure 30 ▶ Block Layout Map

► Public Realm and Open Space

A mix of green passive and recreational open spaces are envisioned in the Master Plan to enhance the public realm and experience, offering a complementary setting to the rejuvenated Grand Trunk Building and ensuring a dynamic atmosphere is created for the Grand Trunk Community Hub. These public spaces have been shown as part of the demonstration plan (refer to Figure 30).

A core public realm element envisioned in the Master Plan is the Grand Trunk Spine, a central public space which enhances the prominent vista connecting St Patrick / Downie Street to the Grand Trunk Building. New open spaces should be attractive, inspirational, cultural and focus on place making; promoting meeting, gathering and

recreational activities which contribute to the Community Hub and reflect the values of the Stratford community.

Overlapping and well-proportioned public spaces are anticipated to be delivered on the Grand Trunk site, integrating into a green and connected network and reflecting their purpose and immediate context. These spaces may include The Grand Trunk Spine, The Common, the YMCA forecourt, the University Green and the Bus Terminal Plaza as shown on the Public Realm and Open Space Map in Figure 30.

Whilst likely associated with separate users and potentially under different ownerships, these spaces are envisaged to be publicly accessible, encouraging interaction amongst all users and visitors to the site.



Figure 31 ► Public Realm and Open Space Map

Public realm design, including streetscape design, should be of a high quality, celebrating the sites history and contributing to greening of the block. Overall, the public realm and all open spaces should be designed to be inclusive and accessible to all users. The future design should also focus on sustainable initiatives, in particular when designing features associated with on-site water management, lighting, etc.

Enrichening the public domain should be opportunities for public art, both permanently and temporarily. Public art should reflect the range of different site users and visitors, facilitating greater connections between all users of the open space to be delivered.

Key Directions

- *Provide a series of vibrant, connected and diverse green spaces, such as the Grand Trunk Spine, The Grand Trunk Common, the YMCA Forecourt and the Bus Terminal Plaza.*
- *Retain and enhance the significant view corridor from Downie and St. Patrick Streets to the Grand Trunk Building, creating a central public open space.*
- *Ensure new buildings address and animate the landscaped and public spaces.*
- *Design new open spaces to be attractive, inspiring and publicly accessible.*
- *Achieve a high quality and sustainable streetscape design that effectively connects the Grand Trunk site into the Downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods.*

The Grand Trunk Spine

The Grand Trunk Spine is a public space and critical view corridor through the site from the corner of St Patrick / Downie Streets to St David Street. The Spine is both a journey and a destination connecting the Downtown and the St Davids neighbourhood with the Hub. This space would allow for a new vista, showcasing the rejuvenated Grand Trunk Building and welcoming visitors into the site.

The Grand Trunk Common

The Grand Trunk Common, an all season gathering place, should provide a green heart to the Block, creating a beautiful space that showcases the new Community Hub and anchors community interaction. The landscaping of the Common should include historical interpretations of the site's history, such as representations of the old railway tracks or key buildings which once operated on the site. A strongly defined quadrangle could be achieved in part of The Common, contributing to the institutional presence of the University and enhancing student life.

The YMCA Forecourt

Providing an address and green threshold to the signature building, the YMCA Forecourt could be a space where building form and landscaping can be truly integrated. The YMCA Forecourt would assist in bringing visitors into the site and providing a strong setting for the signature YMCA building as a key component of the Grand Trunk Community Hub.

The Bus Terminal Plaza

The Bus Terminal Plaza will be important in providing an attractive centrepiece to the new bus terminal located on the site. A landscaped setting should be provided to the northern and southern edges of the plaza, allowing for an attractive transition between the functional bus terminal and the future development blocks.

St Patrick and Downie Streetscapes

The streetscape design of both St Patrick and Downie Streets should be of a high quality and create a green edge to the Grand Trunk site. A consistent language should be applied in the streetscape design internally to the Grand Trunk site, and into these prominent existing streets.

► Land Use and Built Form

Clustering Uses

Fundamental to the Grand Trunk Master Plan is the integration and convergence of a variety of uses, programs and activities. Existing uses on the site, including the YMCA and University of Waterloo, will be retained, and are anticipated to be expanded and enhanced to capitalize on their success in the local community and to build on the rich history of the site and Stratford more generally. These partners will play an important role in facilitating a true convergence of use, with an overall desire to achieve the co-mingling of spaces and programs, with all users working towards a shared outcome of creating a vibrant Community Hub.

A centrepiece of the site transformation is the adaptive reuse and expansion of portions of the Grand Trunk building as a Community Hub – a representation of the historic, yet through adaptive reuse, new Stratford. This Hub will act as not only an anchor for the site, but for the wider Stratford community, allowing for a celebration of Stratford’s history from the arrival of rail in 1856 to the present day values and character of Stratford’s people.

Complementary uses which contribute to the creation of a Community Hub on the Grand Trunk site will be able to be provided in new well designed buildings.

Such uses may include: facilities for community and indoor recreation activities; parks and open space; public uses and infrastructure; community gardens; retail; cultural, entertainment and performance, dining and hotel accommodation; residential such as student and senior living; incubator space, parking.

As the Master Plan progresses, these new uses will be spread across the site to capture the value proposition offered by the entire site and allow for the creation of a vibrant new community where uses are not only integrated, but co-dependant on each other.

Whilst the intention is to encourage integration and convergence of uses across the site, the Master Plan envisions several ‘use clusters’ as illustrated in the Land Use and Program Map in Figure 32:

- Academic and Learning
- Community Hub
- Living
- Shared Parking

Key Directions

- ***Encourage the integration of uses, program and activities, both horizontally and vertically across the site and within blocks.***
- ***Promote a range of land uses that foster the convergence of education, community, health, culture, entrepreneurship, innovation and economic prosperity.***
- ***Recognize and foster through complementary land uses four areas of focus: Grand Trunk Community Hub: Academic and Learning; Living; and Parking.***
- ***Design the built form to create intensification opportunities that are sensitive to the surrounding community while encouraging reinvestment of this important site.***
- ***Animate and activate the site and public realm through building design and placement of active at-grade uses.***
- ***Seek to achieve design excellence and sustainability in buildings, infrastructure and public realm design.***

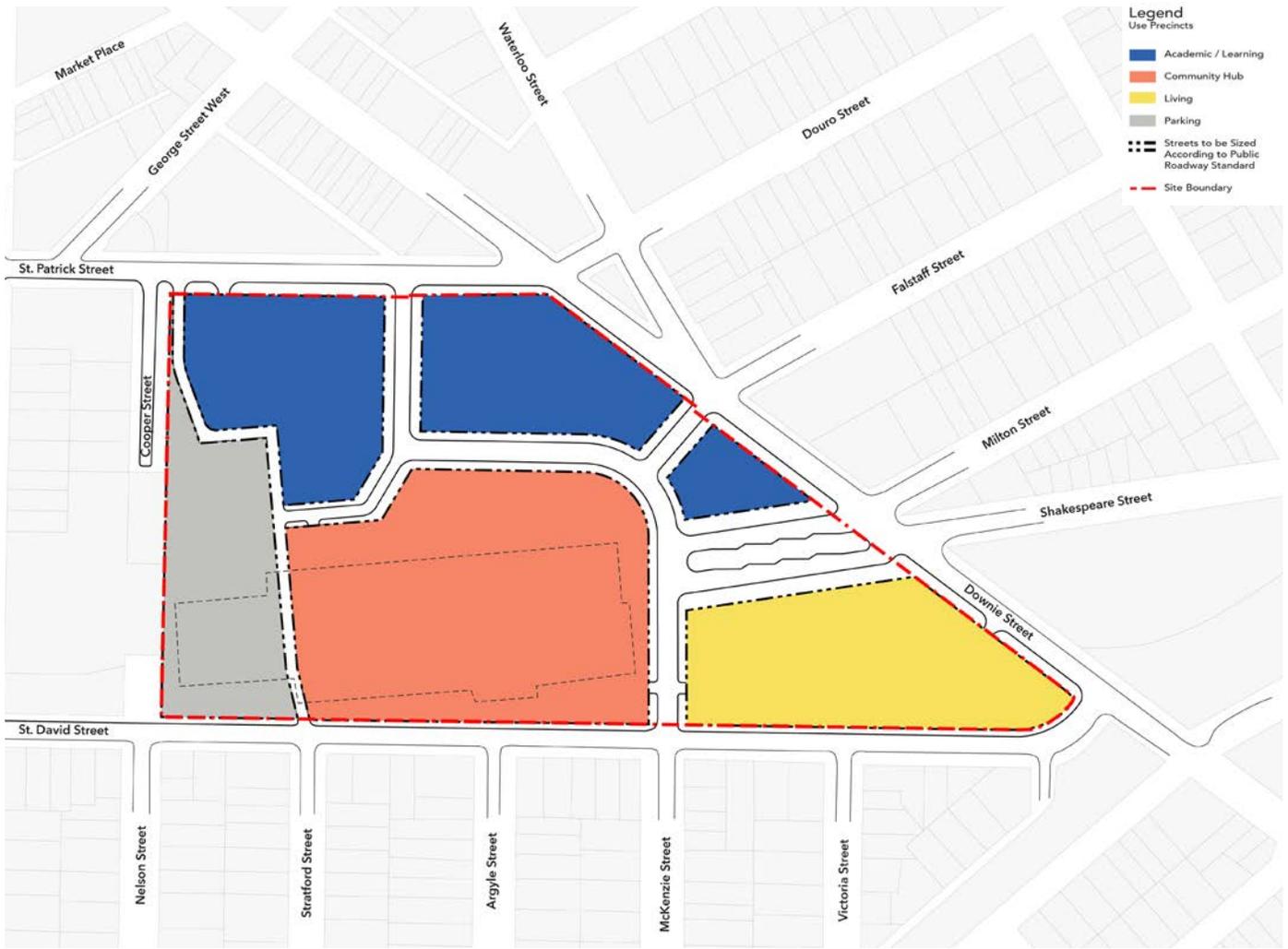


Figure 32 ► Land use and Program Map



Figure 33 ► A render of the potential signature building and rejuvenated Grand Trunk Building

Built Form

The Master Plan anticipates design excellence and sustainability to be achieved in all new buildings, programs, activities and open spaces. New buildings should be positioned on blocks to engage with ground level landscaping and the building design must contribute to and animate the wider public realm. Three distinct use and program clusters have been created under the Master Plan as illustrated in Figure 32 on the previous page, including the Academic and Learning Cluster, Community Hub Cluster and Living Cluster. Anticipated heights of buildings are illustrated on the Building Height Map in Figure 34.

The Grand Trunk Community Hub Cluster

The Grand Trunk Community Hub 'block' is anchored around a revitalized Grand Trunk building, adaptively reused where possible for community-driven purposes. The adaptive reuse of this building is expected to be similar to Wychwood Barns, where a portion of the building was required to be demolished, but remaining portions were retained and upgraded. The staging and progress of the adaptive reuse will allow for opportunities for temporary and/or interim uses which do not preclude longer-term economic development initiatives and the overall prosperity of community activities. This building will be able to be better appreciated through the retention of the important vista from the corner of St Patrick / Downie Street to the rejuvenated building.

Other new buildings on this block would include a relocated YMCA, to be positioned as a signature addition to the rejuvenated Grand Trunk building. There is also an opportunity for an additional building, one which may contain various complementary uses such as learning, educational, hotel, or seniors/student living. The exact arrangement and location of these buildings will be subject to further design investigation. Activation of building edges should occur to all key streets and public spaces.

The existing height of the Grand Trunk building should be retained, whilst the new signature addition to this building could reach a height of three storeys. It is anticipated that the third building on this block may be three storeys, but additional height could be considered following further urban design analysis as illustrated in the render of the demonstration plan at Figure 35.

Academic and Learning Cluster

Initially, the existing University of Waterloo building could be expanded on the same block, with an immediate addition to this building plus further built form, either in a connected structure or separate building. A contiguous expansion of the University could then occur across the St Patrick and Downie Street frontages, allowing for the University to increase their presence and achieve key requirements such as providing modern learning spaces, a new quadrangle, satisfying car parking demands and allowing for opportunities for living/complementary University uses, programs and activities. The ultimate design and placement of buildings for the University will be driven by their exact requirements and should be developed over time. A generally consistent height of three storeys would be anticipated for the University buildings, except in the block to the north of the Bus Terminal where four storeys could be achieved (refer to Figure 34). Activation should be focused at a minimum to St Patrick Street, Downie Street and new internal streets.

The Living Cluster

Complementary to the expanded university campus and new Community Hub on the site will be an opportunity for residential buildings, allowing for the injection of new site users and increasing the sense of ownership for the Grand Trunk site. Residential buildings could include such uses as seniors housing, student housing, private residential, affordable rental housing and the like. Residential opportunities in the form of lower rise housing could be explored on the south-eastern block, achieving a built form relationship with the educational development anticipated on the northern side of the bus terminal. Height in this portion of the Block is expected to be a maximum of four storeys, as illustrated on Figure 34. Activation and interaction with the surrounding streets is expected in any future residential buildings.



Figure 34 ► Building Height Map as shown on the Demonstration Plan



Figure 35 ► Extracts of building scales from the Demonstration Plan

► Mobility, Parking and Servicing

Mobility

Improved mobility has been at the forefront of the Master Plan, with an aim to connect users and visitors of the site to downtown Stratford and the surrounding neighbourhoods. An anticipation of the Master Plan is to maximize the vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian permeability of the site, as illustrated in the Mobility Plan at Figure 36. This is expected to be achieved both internally, and to the immediately adjoining transit network, through the delivery of key access points at the site edges and through the extension of McKenzie Street, Falstaff and Shakespeare/Milton Streets into the Grand Trunk site. The key access points will be logical and connect new streets and pathways to the existing streets in Stratford, as shown in Figure 36.

Both vehicle and cyclist movements should be accommodated within the new street network. Bus movements through the site are anticipated to be concentrated around the Bus Terminal, and whilst buses may use the wider street network, they should largely be contained within a small portion of the Master Plan.

The showcase movement of integrating the new bus terminal as a key component of the street network will be important to the success of the Master Plan.

This bus terminal will play a pivotal role in the transport connectivity of Stratford. Importantly, potential conflicts between buses, vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians should be avoided through the provision of a pedestrian pathway network internally within the site, allowing for a clear separation of these movements.

Pedestrian movements into, through and from the site will be important and it is recommended that further investigations are carried out to identify safe and attractive pedestrian routes to nearby attractions, such as Market Square to the north and the Via Rail Canada station to the east. Pedestrian paths from the bus terminal should be determined to ensure seamless and safe connectivity between the new terminal and the remainder of Stratford, in particular, at substantial intersections where vehicles and pedestrian conflicts may occur.

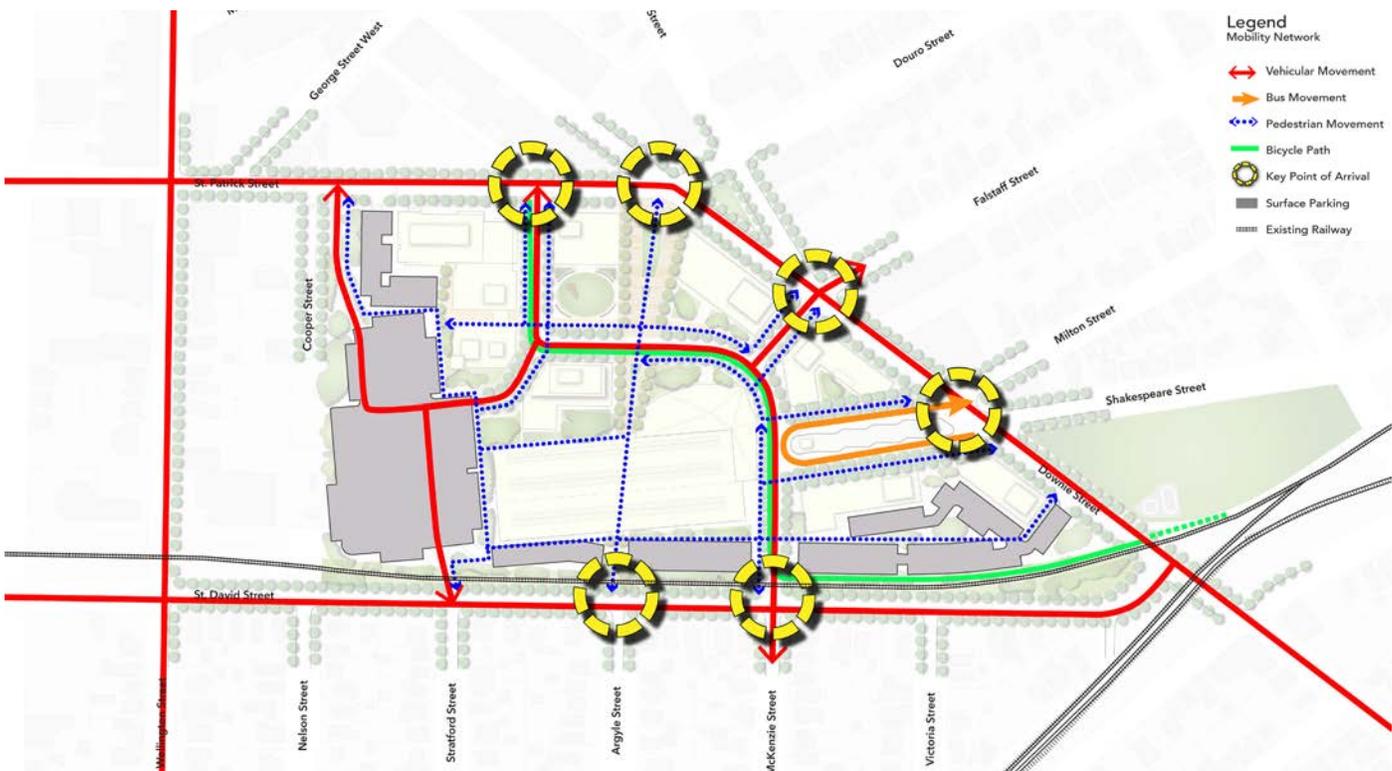


Figure 36 ► Mobility Plan

Parking

Car parking within the Grand Trunk site should continue to play a role in servicing downtown Stratford, as well as accommodating the needs of new users of the site. Parking provision is anticipated to evolve with the ongoing redevelopment of the Master Plan to reflect advancements in technology, such as Autonomous Vehicles, and to directly accommodate shifting demands. Flexibility and an adaptive management strategy should be adopted. It is anticipated that parking spaces could be shared across uses as the Master Plan develops. The basis of this sharing arrangement would be that different times of demand could be accommodated for different uses, maximizing the value of spaces and rationalizing the total number of spaces.

Under the Master Plan, parking is anticipated in the western portion of the site, reflective of constraining environmental conditions where a 'cap-and-cover' remediation strategy is required. Parking should also be situated along the southern boundary, within the 30 metre setback required to the adjoining railway infrastructure.

The anticipated car parking strategy, illustrated in Figure 37, allows for 851 spaces in the ultimate built-out situation, providing a higher number of spaces than the current 605 available on site. Additional temporary parking opportunities available throughout the phased development of the Master Plan.



Figure 37 ► Potential car parking strategy

Servicing

Preliminary investigations have identified that the site is currently connected to a number of services. Servicing of the future uses under the Master Plan should therefore be carried out through amplifying / extending existing available infrastructure, or implementing new infrastructure as required. Loading/unloading points for the future uses should not conflict with any traffic movements and should be as close as possible to building entries. Ideally, loading/unloading activities will be undertaken off the street network.

Key Directions

- **Promote the safety and ease-of-movement to, within and from the site for buses, vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.**
- **Design key entry points to maximize safety, accessibility, promote pedestrian movements and to celebrate arrival.**
- **Introduce and integrate the Bus Terminal as an early animator, enhancing the mobility and transportation options for Stratford.**
- **Plan for the extension of McKenzie Street, Falstaff and Shakespeare/Milton Streets into the Grand Trunk site to strengthen connectivity to surrounding neighbourhoods.**
- **Promote shared and phased parking solutions to address on-site needs and contribute to Downtown supply.**
- **Address environmental conditions of the site through strategic deployment of land use and localized mitigation strategies.**
- **Advocate for new crossings of the railway line to increase access to the site.**

► Sustainability

A benchmark development should be achieved on the site, not only providing exemplary design standards in built form and landscape features, but also in environmental sustainability, aligning with the Provincial Climate Change Strategy. Appropriate targets should be established for new development, such as aiming for a reduced carbon footprint. These targets could be achieved through a number of means, one which is the adaptive reuse of the Grand Trunk building.

Environmental stewardship is a core element of the Master Plan, both in terms of resolving past issues due to site uses and looking to the future to establish a new standard for sustainability in Stratford. The long history of the site and its past use for industrial rail purposes has an unfortunate consequence of environmental contamination over parts of the site. With this in mind, a comprehensive remediation strategy should be developed to overcome past contamination and ensure the site is suitable for the range of new uses. Where environmental conditions are most limiting, it could be decided to provide surface parking, allowing for a feasible solution of remediation in the form of 'cap-and-cover'. New developments under the Master Plan should focus on the development of green infrastructure to utilize low impact development (LID) solutions. LID solutions should be considered in the design of all landscaping and built form components of the site

The site, with its significant size and redevelopment opportunities, provides a once in a generation chance to implement new technologies and endeavour to achieve a highly sustainable outcome. Innovative design and sustainable excellence are priorities of the Master Plan and should be further explored in the development of the separate blocks.

Key Directions

- *Foster sustainable development and environmental stewardship in all new buildings, public realm and infrastructure.*
- *Resolve the effects of past uses and the resulting current environmental conditions through a detailed environmental strategy.*
- *Promote design excellence and encourage demonstration and innovation in sustainable redevelopment.*
- *Establish and monitor targets to address climate change and environmental conditions on the site.*



Figure 38 ▶ Examples of simple and effective sustainable measures (permeable paving: top left, electric recharge station: top right, green roof: bottom)

► Phasing

The transformation of the Grand Trunk Community Hub is expected to take place in phases and over time. Phasing of the Master Plan is important to ensure that reinvestment is able to occur at a pace consistent with market conditions and the needs of various users. The initial phase of the Master Plan, following the development of the bus terminal, is anticipated to deliver the beginnings of the overarching street and block layout and the Community Hub, facilitating the future delivery of separate phases in a discrete and variable manner. Flexibility has been at the forefront of the Master Plan design and various phasing combinations for reinvestment are available despite the strategy outlined below. As such, the phasing diagrams illustrated to the right are indicative only.

Key principles of the phasing strategy include:

- Allowing for the continuous operation of the YMCA throughout the redevelopment, with operations transitioning from the existing building to the new building with no displacement issues or reduction of services/activities.
- Optimization of the ability for different uses, programs and activities to interact and converge on shared spaces, both within the public domain and future built form.
- Maximizing transitional opportunities such as utilizing future development blocks for temporary uses, including car parking to support the initial phases of development (both for operational and construction activities)

The phasing strategy will include the following elements:

The Community Hub Phase

The Community Hub phase is envisaged to include the introduction of the bus terminal and the adaptive reuse of portions of the Grand Trunk building to house the new YMCA and complementary convergence and gathering spaces. Programatically, this may include the new YMCA facilities, recreation, student life space, incubator, meeting and performance space. Together these moves create the nucleus of the Community Hub. Together this program approximates 100,000 square feet of adaptively reused and new gross floor area, new street connections and xx parking spaces.

Academic Expansion Phase(s)

Other phases anticipate the expansion of the academic and learning focused blocks with the addition of new academic space, student housing and public spaces such as the Grand Trunk Spine and Grand Trunk Common. These phases will come forward along with funding and partnerships needed to implement these complementary uses.

Development Partner Phase(s)

Several blocks offer an opportunity to partner with private sector developers to deliver a range of uses, programs and activities including student housing, seniors housing, residential, hotel, office, commercial and community amenities such as daycare. Potential sites for this partnership are identified on the Phasing Strategy map but are not limited to these solely. Full build out of the site may also be accompanied by the introduction of a parking structure at the west end of the Master Plan.

The Community Hub



Academic Expansion Phases



Development Partner Phases



Figure 39 ► Indicative phasing options

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The creation of the Grand Trunk Community Hub is a once in a generation opportunity for the community of Stratford. This landmark historic site will be reborn as the heart of the city, building on the success of the University of Waterloo Stratford Campus and the legacy of the YMCA. The new Community Hub will be a place where residents and visitors of all ages can access services, start businesses, and explore the history of the city.

The City of Stratford is eager to advance the development of the site. In order to realize the vision of the Grand Trunk Master Plan, the following actions must be taken:

- Formalize the partnerships with the University of Waterloo, the Stratford-Perth YMCA, and others partners, for Phase 1 implementation.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships with other organizations and businesses.
- Advocate to senior levels of government with a view to secure partner funding.
- Implement the Bus Terminal as an early animator of the site.
- Complete the environmental due diligence process.
- Prepare detailed engineering and building design for the adaptive reuse of the Grand Trunk Building and YMCA facility.
- Implement first phases of site preparation including environmental remediation and Grand Trunk building stabilization.
- Establish targets for sustainable development as relevant to the Climate Change Action Strategy.
- Engage the community in public realm design / conceptual design processes.

This Master Plan satisfies the requirements of OPA 21, and will ensure that the development of this once isolated site is unlocked. A focus on community, learning, living, economic development and prosperity is born through this Master Plan and these values will be key to the ongoing redevelopment of the site.



Figure 40 ► The Grand Trunk Community Hub Concept Bird's Eye Rendering

