

**Meeting Date:** October 21, 2024  
**Department:** Community Services  
**Report No.:** CS-2024-45  
**Submitted by:** Robert Lilbourne, Director of Community Services  
Mark Ortiz, Director of Engineering and Public Works  
**Approved by:** Trisha McKibbin, Chief Administrative Officer  
**SUBJECT:** **137 Frank St.**

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**RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Council receive report CS-2024-45 “137 Frank St.” for information.**

**BACKGROUND:**

At the September 16, 2024, Council meeting, the following motion was approved, directing staff to bring back a report on a way to have a building assessment completed on 137 Frank St. efficiently, timely, and effectively.

Moved By: Colin Grantham  
Seconded by: John Brennan

**THAT:** Council ask staff to bring a report back to the second meeting in October with an efficient, timely and effective way of having a building assessment completed on 137 Frank Street.

Result: Carried

While conducting research for this report, staff discovered a 2010 document titled “Strathroy & Area Seniors Centre Discussion Paper” (attached). This paper provides a historical overview of the facility, which was originally constructed in 1902 by the Citizen’s Water, Gas and Electric Co. to house the Strathroy Water Works and Pumping Station. In the mid-20th century, it was converted for use by the Strathroy Public Utilities Commission, including expansions for offices, pumping sheds, and garages. In 2000, the building was repurposed to accommodate the newly formed Strathroy & Area Seniors Centre (SASC).

The discussion paper outlined the challenges the Centre and the SASC faced at the time, which included:

- The need to diversify programming to appeal to a wider audience.

- Board succession planning.
- Integrating alternative uses and user groups.
- A renewed focus on membership development to reduce dependence on fundraising initiatives.
- Addressing the negative perception of the "senior" label, contributing to declining membership.
- Recognizing changing attitudes toward aging, particularly from the Baby Boomer generation, and the need to diversify program offerings.
- Considering rebranding the Centre to appeal to a broader demographic.

The paper also explored potential opportunities for the facility, such as:

- Relocating the Strathroy & District Chamber of Commerce, BIA office, and visitor services to 137 Frank St.
- Relocating the Art Group from the Town Hall, Strathroy Library, and Museum facilities. (not realized)

These suggestions aimed to increase traffic and create mutual benefits for all groups involved. Some of the opportunities were realized, however, the centre continued to struggle with membership and the provision of direct programming, making the centre primarily a 3<sup>rd</sup> party rental facility. The SASC needed to conduct fundraising to meet their financial obligations.

In November 2020, a staff report noted that the SASC requested monthly financial assistance due to the facility's closure during the COVID-19 pandemic. With no timeline for reopening and fundraising activities halted, the Centre faced financial difficulties, having operated rent-free in the municipal facility since 2000. At the time, SASC had only 77 paying members and 8 lifetime members, with the average age of membership ranging from 75 to 79. The facility had been closed since March 2020.

The same report highlighted a 2019 Building Condition Assessment (BCA) (attached), which projected a Facility Condition Index of 14.3 (poor condition) for 2020. Without immediate attention, the index was expected to climb and exceed 30%, moving to a critical condition rating. The BCA estimated that nearly \$1,000,000 would be required over four years to maintain the building, with an additional \$700,000 needed over the next decade.

Staff and the Chair of the Council met to discuss programming, concluding that most activities provided to members could be relocated to existing municipal recreation facilities. During this time, the SASC chose to terminate its lease, effectively closing the Centre.

In December 2020, an additional report recommended that 137 Frank St. be declared surplus to the Municipality's needs [137 Frank Street, Strathroy By-law 85-20 - Declare Surplus Lands By-law 137 Frank St.](#)

For clarity, 3 separate parcels of land were deemed surplus to the Municipality's needs in By-Law 85-20. They include 137 Frank St., the big parking lot to the west, and the smaller parking lot to the south.



**COMMENTS:**

The Director of Engineering and Public Works, the Director of Community Services, and the Supervisor of Property Management, Cemeteries, and Horticulture recently toured 137 Frank St. During the visit, it was noted that none of the recommendations outlined in the 2019 Building Condition Assessment (BCA) had been implemented. Based on a non-destructive review, the building structure appears to be in generally good condition. However, several concerns were noted. There is visible brick spalling and mortar deterioration in multiple areas of the exterior, suggesting water infiltration which may be damaging the brickwork. Additionally, one section of the building seems to be sinking, and although efforts have been made to improve the flashing to prevent water intrusion, this may indicate underlying foundation issues. Since no repairs or improvements have been undertaken since the original BCA in 2019, the building's overall condition has worsened, based on the Facility Condition Index found in the BCA. Also given that 137 Frank St. has been deemed surplus to the Municipality's needs, staff have been repurposing various fixtures from the facility, such as toilets, AODA-compliant door openers, sinks, and counters, to reduce costs for other departments requiring replacement items.

If the Council wishes to obtain a precise and updated assessment of the building's current condition, the Director of Engineering and Public Works, along with the Director of Community Services, recommends conducting a detailed Building Condition Assessment. This could include more invasive testing, such as destructive testing, if necessary, to uncover potential underlying issues. The estimated cost for this assessment is between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

This assessment will offer a comprehensive evaluation of the building's current condition and outline the associated repair costs. However, it will not provide estimates for any potential renovations or upgrades necessary to restore the facility to a fully operational, programmable space. The exclusion of these costs is due to the fact that most of the building's furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) have already been repurposed within other areas of the Municipality's operations. Consequently, beyond the repairs identified in the assessment, additional expenses for acquiring new FF&E, as well as completing necessary renovations and upgrades, would be required to make the facility functional again. These costs will not be included in this initial condition assessment.

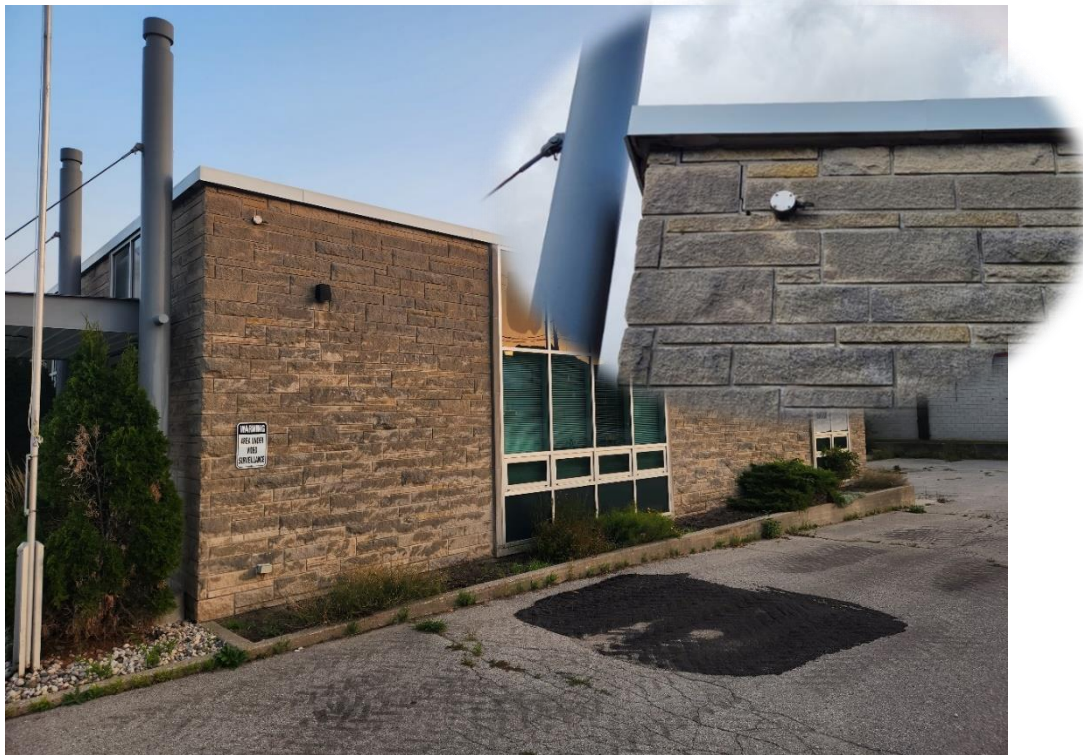
Below are a series of images depicting some of the items identified in the report.

### **Brick Spalling and Mortar Failure**





**Step Cracking**





**Addition Separating From Building – Attempt to improve flashing to stop water infiltration.**



**CONSULTATION:**

Supervisor of Property, Projects, Horticulture and Cemetery Services.  
Director of Finance

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

None at this time, unless Council chooses to conduct a BCA. If Council's direction is to conduct a BCA, the funds would come from the Asset Management Reserve Fund.

**ALTERNATIVE(S) TO THE RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Council to provide alternate direction.

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

**Local Infrastructure and Capital Investment:** Households and businesses in Strathroy-Caradoc will be supported by reliable, financially responsible, and well-maintained infrastructure networks.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Strathroy & Area Seniors Centre Discussion Paper  
2019 SASC Building Condition Assessment