



**Town of Aurora
General Committee Report No. CMS19-005**

Subject: Library Square Project - Update
Prepared by: Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services
Department: Community Services
Date: February 12, 2019

Recommendation

- 1. That Report No. CMS19-005 be received for information.**

Executive Summary

This report will provide an update on the Library Square project highlighting some of the changes since it was last before Council in June 2018.

Considerations include:

- Further consultation on the project has taken place to refine the design, cost estimate and project timeline
- Based on inputs from consultants and cultural partners, revisions have been made to the design of the Church Street School expansion
- Enhancements to the Outdoor Square include features for year-round attraction
- Heritage and Accessibility considerations are important in the development of the design
- Parking study, parking lot, laneway and accessible parking considerations have been incorporated in the latest design
- Applications for grants that may offset the capital costs will be submitted
- Project Management Model will be used for the Library Square project implementation

Following the presentation at tonight's Council meeting by The Planning Partnership (TPP), staff will incorporate any comments/inputs from Council and return in March for further direction.

Background

In June 2018 Council was presented the latest design concepts for the Library Square project and passed the following recommendations:

- That the current design of the Library Square is approved; and
- That the Option 1 schematic design for the expansion to the Church Street School which includes the three (3) floors and theatre be approved; and
- That the allocation of existing project funding for the tendering of the parking lot, the laneway and the components of the square which would provide connections to the square/library be approved, and that Council commit to funding for the square and building, which will come back in new year for final funding approval;
- That the above budget includes 1% contribution to the Town's Public Art Reserve Fund in accordance with the Official Plan requirements; and
- That on the eastern side of the property, at minimum, three (3) accessible parking spaces be installed.

Staff have continued to work with The Planning Partnership and other project consultants along with engagements with various cultural partners in refining the project details.

Analysis

Further consultation on the project has taken place to refine the design, cost estimate and project timeline

The concept design in June focused on space utilization to determine room size, building footprint, alignment with the original schoolhouse, parking considerations, etc. resulting in a Class D cost estimate at that time. With Council's direction in June 2018, staff continued to meet regularly with the project consultants discussing and revising the design of the 3-story addition and the outdoor square. With the inputs from cultural partners and specialized consultants (i.e. theatre specialist, acoustic consultants), further enhancements were made to the design while maintaining the objective of being a versatile and multi-purpose community cultural facility. The goal was also further refinement of the cost estimate.

The engagements with the cultural partners also provided significant information for the development of the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund (grant) application.

Based on inputs from consultants and cultural partners, revisions have been made to the design of the Church Street School expansion

Since June 2018, staff and consultants have continued to refine the features in each of the spaces of the 3-story model that includes the theatre space. Based on the inputs from the specialized consultants and cultural partners, certain aspects of the spaces became apparent and were identified as important to be included in the final design, and yet are known as typical features for cultural spaces (i.e. acoustic treatments, performance floor space, divisible rooms, museum exposure, connectedness to original building, etc.).

It was also important through the discussions that the 3rd floor theatre space be a multi-purpose space as it will serve much more than just theatre style uses. The word “theatre” brings to mind certain functions; however, the space is being designed to be very multi-functional. The space will be able to service functions such as musicals, theatre, dance recitals, concerts, movies, lectures, and ceremonies with the retractable seats extended, while the space will also service banquet or conference style with the seats retracted to provide an open hall for table and chair setting. Therefore, the theatre will be referenced as the ‘Performance Hall’ throughout the remainder of this report.

Special meetings were held with the theatre specialist, acoustic consultant and cultural partners to further refine opportunities. As a result of those discussions, a site visit was hosted at the Country Day School in King City which has a very similar performance space being proposed in this design. It provided firsthand information, suggestions and a visual interpretation of what the proposed space might look like. They also shared lessons learned and identified features that were important to the space. The acoustic treatments can be very different depending on the uses. For example, the installation of retractable curtains provides the ability to either absorb sound or when retracted, provide flat walls that enable sound to bounce. It was also identified that the tall ceiling height and long and narrow shaped spaces are very important and in fact, a longer space was preferred. Considerations for the acoustic treatments for the ceiling, walls, floor, and on other surfaces within the space have been captured in the revised design.

Through discussions with the cultural partners and the theatre specialist, it became evident that with the seats fully extended in the Performance Hall (approximately 250 seats), the size of the stage floor was less than desirable and functional (only 10'). A number of the partners stated that the limited floor space would restrict how often it would be used in that configuration. Therefore, the theatre specialist recommended a

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couple of options in order to ensure the floor space offered a minimum performance space of 16'. One option was to extend the seating by two (2) less rows resulting in approximately 210 seats, another option was to 'bump out' the facility length by an additional 1.9m enabling the desired floor space while keeping the desired seating capacity of 250 seats and yet additionally benefiting the acoustic interests with the longer facility. With the latter option serving more of the interests, staff included the 'bump out' in the latest designs.

Another option that needs to be further explored over the next few weeks is the option to add Gallery seating on both sides of the Performance Hall. This would require the north side of the building cantilever to be extended one (1) meter and yet would add approximately 28 additional gallery seating capacity. This could be done in combination with the bump out at the eastern side of the building or could take its place. If it is in combination, it would add 28 seats for a total of 278 (250 retractable plus 28 gallery), or it could take the place of the bump out. This would mean that the retractable seating would be extended two (2) less rows in order to maintain the 16' floor space, while the gallery seating would add in the extra seating for a total of 238 (210 retractable plus 28 gallery). The gallery area would require additional acoustic treatments but may provide additional seating and/or a unique viewpoint for the hall. The bump out and/or the gallery option needs to be further explored and confirmed in the next report in March.

Further enhancements to the 'back of house' for the Performance Hall were done to meet the needs of change rooms, storage and technical sound/lighting booth. Consideration of the need for 'catwalks' versus 'grid' system was discussed and based on improved technology, the design has been amended to use a 'grid' to support the sound and lighting equipment. This model not only provides improved lighting and sound opportunities, it increases the ceiling height, which benefits the overall acoustics and removes the need to add acoustic treatments to the catwalks. A catwalk would also add additional height to the exterior of the building which would further obscure the existing school house. This is not in keeping with best practices when working with heritage buildings.

Moving to the second floor of the design, consideration was given to enable the visual arts room and performing arts studio room to be divisible. This would provide options for smaller training, classes, rehearsals, etc. With the spaces divisible, a separate entrance was included to access both sides of the rooms. The visual arts room included a sink and counter but with it divisible, an additional sink and counter was added to the space so that both sides would have access to clean up capabilities. The performing arts studio space was originally equipped with sprung floor and mirrors;

through consultation with cultural partners, a basic speaker system was also added to the design for groups to hook up music to enable rehearsal space. In addition, a simple curtain system was included to cover mirrors as certain uses may prefer the mirrors out of view.

The 1st floor program room was also made divisible to provide options for community groups to either rent as one (1) large room or two (2) smaller rooms. Some cultural partners suggested this space may be suitable for dedicated space.

The museum and archives will be housed in the temperature/humidity controlled room on the 1st floor. In order to celebrate all of the amazing artifacts collected over the years, a special glass wall and shelving will be installed to enable patrons to view the artifacts as they enter the facility. Staff would regularly change out the artifacts as different elements are to be featured. In addition, in a few different locations near areas where patrons may gather (i.e. outside Performance Hall), special glassed cases will have artifacts on display.

The central atrium will be an excellent gathering space while celebrating the original building and the new addition. This space will be a multi-floor feature providing excellent visibility from Victoria Street entrance to the outdoor square. Access between the two buildings will be open concept through two connecting bridges. A central customer service kiosk will welcome patrons as it will be first point of contact whether they come from Victoria Street or the square. The 1st floor access off of the outdoor square provides a feature entrance into a simple refreshment counter that could be utilized during special events. Guests could mingle in the facility or head outside through the large retractable glass doors onto the patio and square.

Enhancements to the Outdoor Square include features for year-round attraction

Through consultation with cultural partners and event staff, elements of functionality were revised to the design that was last presented to Council in June 2018.

Originally Council approved the design without an ice rink, however, through discussions it became evident that to activate the square year-round (aside from the attraction of special events), an ice rink was needed to draw the public to the space during the winter months. This feature requires a refrigeration system, a mechanical building and a small ice resurfer. The ice rink would be located in the area where the summer water feature would take place. Approval of the addition of the ice rink would be required to proceed.

The outdoor square will serve as a place to gather to enjoy the peaceful environment or to take part in special events such as festivals, markets, fairs, movie nights, etc. Other features in the outdoor square include consideration for lighting, hydro, water sources, shade features and a pathway connecting the library and the new addition.

Heritage and Accessibility considerations are important in the development of the design

As noted in the June 2018 report, both Heritage and Accessibility Advisory Committees were consulted on the proposed project. As there have been revisions since they last provided comments, the latest versions will return to each committee for comment before it goes to tender.

In addition, staff have received comments from the Town's Accessibility Advisor and have shared those comments with TPP for consideration in the designs.

For additional heritage considerations, the project has received comments from both ERA Architects (specialists in Heritage architecture) and Ontario Heritage Trust (OHT). In both cases, they provided preliminary comments stating that they do not anticipate any concerns with the design. We are awaiting their final report, which is due in February.

Parking study, parking lot, laneway and accessible parking considerations have been incorporated in the latest design

In June 2018, Council approved construction of the parking lot and laneway and the inclusion of three (3) additional accessible parking spots on the eastern side of the building. The three (3) additional accessible parking spots have been included in the revised design, however, it has been determined that it would be best to coordinate the laneway construction with the outdoor square. The parking lot tender package specifications are drafted; staff will work with procurement to help prepare the document for issuance.

The Town completed a preliminary parking study for Library Square that examined the parking supply and demand for the proposed development and surrounding area. Additional analysis is required to ensure that the location of the available parking supply aligns with the requirements of the various onsite parking demand generators, most notably the Library. This analysis is expected to be completed in the coming weeks and presented to Council in March 2019.

Applications for grants that may offset the capital costs will be submitted

Since June 2018, staff worked diligently to prepare the comprehensive grant application for Canada Cultural Spaces Fund including consultation with the cultural partners and the development of the business plan. It was anticipated that the application would be submitted by December 2018, but in preparation of the submission we were recommended by the program officer to hold off unless we anticipated spending significant capital costs before the end of March 2019 (Federal governments fiscal year end). As this was not anticipated, staff will ensure the application is submitted in order to be considered for the Federal governments next fiscal year cycle that commences April 1, 2019.

In addition, staff have learned of another grant opportunity suitable for capital funding that would support the construction of the outdoor square. Staff will investigate this opportunity (Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage - Legacy Fund) and seek further direction from Council in March 2019.

Project Management Model will be used for the Library Square project implementation

The Town is developing a corporate project management model for all capital projects and the Library Square construction will be one of the first major projects that will follow this new model.

For most capital projects, internal staff with the necessary project management skills will oversee those projects. However, for projects the size and complexity of the Library Square, it is typical to hire a dedicated project manager (or project management firm) to lead the project through to completion. The funding for this role has been captured in the capital project cost estimate. Therefore, at the time of Council's approval to proceed with the construction, staff will issue an RFP for a project management firm. In this scenario, senior staff will lead the project, but the project management firm will manage and coordinate all aspects including preparation of tender packages, contractors, change orders, work schedules, payments, etc.

Advisory Committee Review

The Heritage Advisory Committee and Accessibility Advisory Committee were consulted earlier in 2018 on this design, however, the most recent designs will return to each committee for additional input.

Legal Considerations

Not applicable

Financial Implications

A Class D cost estimate for the Library Square project was provided to Council through the PDS18-076 – Library Square staff report on June 19, 2018. Since this date, staff have further refined its estimated cost for this project resulting in a Draft Class C cost estimate which has been included in the 2019 Draft Capital budget as a placeholder. In partnership with its consultant, staff plan to provide a Final Class C cost estimate to Council in March, 2019.

In addition, Financial Services will present to Council funding options for the Library Square project for its consideration in March 2019.

Communications Considerations

This report will be posted to the website to keep residents informed of plans and any future direction from Council will be shared via Council Highlights, Town website and social media.

Link to Strategic Plan

The development of Library Square supports the following Strategic Plan goals and key objectives:

Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- **Invest in sustainable infrastructure**
- **Celebrating and promoting our culture**
- **Encourage an active and healthy lifestyle**

- **Strengthening the fabric of our community**

Enabling a diverse, creative and resilient economy in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- **Promoting economic opportunities that facilitate the growth of Aurora as a desirable place to do business**

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may provide further direction.

Conclusions

This report and The Planning Partnership's presentation was intended to provide Council with an update on the Library Square Project, therefore, no direction is required at this time. Subsequent report will be presented in March seeking Council's approval to proceed with the project.

Attachments

None

Previous Reports

PBS17-066 – Award of Contract for Library Square Site Plan, September 5, 2017;

PBS17-096 – Preferred Design for Library Square, December 5, 2017;

PBS17-100 – Preferred Design for Library Square – Additional Information December 12, 2017;

PDS18-014 – Updated Design for Library Square, January 30, 2018; and

PDS18-076 – Library Square – June 19, 2018

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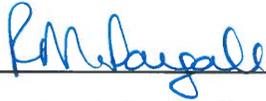
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Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on January 24, 2019

Departmental Approval



**Robin McDougall
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Approved for Agenda



**Doug Nadorozny
Chief Administrative Officer**