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Town of Aurora

# General Committee Report

No. CMS21-018

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**Subject:** Library Square Renaming

**Prepared by:** Phil Rose, Manager of Library Square

**Department:** Community Services

**Date:** June 1, 2021

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS21-018 be received; and
2. That the renaming of Library Square to Town Square, effective immediately, be approved.

## Executive Summary

This report details the process undertaken by staff to find an alternate name to Library Square.

- Staff developed a shortlist of five names based on engagement, internal discussion, research, and analysis.
- Following further consultation with stakeholders, colleagues, and the Community Advisory Committee, staff reduced the list of five names to four.
- An online poll was released seeking a vote for the favourite name out of the four, which concluded the latest consultation phase and informed staff's final name recommendation.
- Based on the sum of the feedback received, staff are recommending that Town Square be selected as the final name for the space.
- With Council approval, staff will undertake several next steps to raise awareness of the new name and align the renaming process with additional ongoing initiatives.

## Background

On March 2, 2021, Council received Report CMS210-010 that discussed the importance of choosing a new name to identify the property that encompasses the Library, 22 Church St. (Aurora Museum & Archives and Aurora Cultural Centre), including the new addition, the sky bridge, and outdoor square.

Staff committed to consolidating research data and conducting additional consultation before recommending an alternate name to Library Square for Council's consideration.

## Analysis

**Staff developed a shortlist of five names based on engagement, internal discussion, research, and analysis.**

As stated in the March 2, 2021 report, the name Library Square no longer captures the full extent of the cross-sectoral and collaborative nature of this project. While the Aurora Public Library remains a backbone organization, this project includes many other local and regional stakeholders that will work together to animate the space once open.

Since 2018, Town staff have taken numerous steps to find a new name for Library Square, including an online poll using the PlaceSpeak platform, numerous internal staff meetings, consultation with Mayor and Council, and engagement with stakeholders, which led to the development of the following shortlist of five names and corresponding descriptions:

1. **Constellation Square:** The Town's newest facility is a place of opportunity and learning, where people can aspire to be more creative, more artistic, and more connected to their community. Constellation Square is a name that reflects these aspirational qualities. The name also translates well to a dramatic visual identity that is inspired by the night sky and some of the facility's unique design features, such as the catenary lights and the backlit aluminum mesh around the Church Street School addition.
2. **Church Street Square:** Loaded with history and home to the Aurora Cultural Centre and Aurora Museum & Archives, Church Street Square honours one of Aurora's most iconic streets. The name is place-centric and speaks to how this area has grown into the Town's home for creativity, culture, innovative programming, and community gatherings.

3. **Town Square:** Town Squares exist across the globe and can be described as an open public space usually located in the heart of a town used for community gatherings. Although not unique, Town Squares have a long history and reflect the age-old desire for communities to share a space of belonging and celebration.
4. **Aurora Junction:** Junction can be defined as an act of joining as well as a place or point of meeting, making it a fitting name for Aurora's newest space, where people from all walks of life will come together to enjoy art, theatre, music, shopping, community gatherings, and more. The term junction is also associated with the railway and so this name is a nod to the importance of the railroad to the development of Aurora from a small town to a growing and diversifying municipality.
5. **C-Square:** Brought to you by the letter C, this name was inspired by all the ways Aurora's newest space has been described: Collaborative, Cultural, Community-minded, Central, Creative, and more. This name also presents interesting possibilities for a unique visual identity.

**Following further consultation with stakeholders, colleagues, and the Community Advisory Committee, staff reduced the list of five names to four.**

After developing the shortlisted names, staff shared them with Council in April and subsequently conducted additional consultation with the following individuals and groups, who are critical stakeholders of the space both now and as we move towards operationalization:

1. Executive Director, Aurora Cultural Centre
2. CEO, Aurora Public Library
3. Community Advisory Committee
4. Various Town staff

The following is a summary of the comments received during these conversations:

- Constellation Square received the most favourable response at this stage, including the following comments:
  - Speaks to the aspirational features of what this project should be
  - No "Constellation Square" in Canada so the name would be unique
  - Feels special, celebratory, inspirational, fantastical, has a good vibe, which speaks to the positive sentiments that the space is intended to convey

- Interesting concept and tie-in with the Town of Aurora (link with the sky, and Aurora Borealis)
- Complements the lights overhead shown in the design drawings and renderings
- Provides an opportunity for a creative visual identity and marketing campaign that makes it a destination within the Greater Toronto Area
- May not accurately convey what the project is in terms of a gathering space
- Constellation may give the impression that this may be a science centre
- Town Square also received a mostly favourable response, including the following comments:
  - Town Squares have a good tradition
  - There are very few town squares in Canada so it would be defining as a name
  - Connotes a special gathering space and it is clear what it is and what to expect when you visit
  - Nice synergies with Town Park close by
  - Would like to see Aurora at the front to provide the name a sense of place (i.e., Aurora Town Square); ATS is an easy acronym to remember
  - Might lead to confusion between Town Park, Town Square and Town Hall for those unfamiliar with Aurora
  - If the Town of Aurora ever grows to become a city, would the name Town Square become outdated?
  - Town Square is a little bland and has an old connotation
- Church Street Square received mostly positive, but mixed, feedback. Some celebrated the association with the Church Street School that houses the Cultural Centre and the Town's Museum and Archives, which is steeped in history and widely recognized throughout town. Others felt it was dull and that the use of Church Street in the name might lead to confusion with Church Street in Toronto.
- Aurora Junction received mostly negative, but mixed, feedback. Many did not like the association with the railway and thought it sounded old fashion and uninteresting. Like Church Street, others stated that the name Junction is already used to describe a neighbourhood in Toronto and therefore should be avoided.
- C-Square received overwhelmingly negative feedback and was the least preferred name out of the five.

In analyzing the feedback received, staff determined that C-Square should be removed from further consideration based on the consistent negative feedback.

**An online poll was released seeking a vote for the favourite name out of the four, which concluded the latest consultation phase and informed staff's final name recommendation.**

Between April 20 and April 28, an online poll was released to allow the public to vote for their favourite name from the following list: Aurora Junction, Church Street Square, Constellation Square, and Town Square. The poll was advertised through social media, a media release, an all-staff email, and emails directed to the Cultural Partners, Chamber of Commerce, BIA, and Aurora Economic Development Corporation. It should be noted that to ensure ease of access to the poll, registration was not required and users were able to vote multiple times. Staff are not able to determine the number of unique votes for each of the names.

Town Square received nearly half of all votes (49.4%) followed by Church Street Square (23.5%), Aurora Junction (17.7%), and Constellation Square (9.4%).

**Based on the sum of the feedback received, staff are recommending that Town Square be selected as the final name for the space.**

Constellation Square was the preferred name for stakeholders; Town Square appears to be the more popular choice based on the online poll. Based on the sum of the feedback received from staff, stakeholders, and the Community Advisory Committee, combined with the results of the online poll, staff believe that Town Square is the most popular choice to replace Library Square. Any of the other three names (Church Street Square, Aurora Junction, Constellation Square) could be considered as alternates to Town Square.

**With Council approval, staff will undertake several next steps to raise awareness of the new name and align the renaming process with additional ongoing initiatives.**

With Council approval, staff will begin immediately to raise awareness of the new name by updating the Town's website and other marketing collateral. Staff will also explore potential visual branding options to complement the new name. Furthermore, staff will align the renaming process with the capital campaign underway, recognizing that the new name may be leveraged for fundraising purposes. Any materials created for the capital campaign, such as the case for support, pledge agreement, stand-alone campaign website, and more, will feature the new name. Finally, staff will work with the design consultants and contractor to ensure all exterior and interior signage for the property includes the new name.

## **Advisory Committee Review**

Town staff presented to the Community Advisory Committee on April 15, 2021, and the feedback received was consolidated and summarized in this report.

## **Legal Considerations**

The renaming of Library Square is being informed by the Town's Public Facilities Renaming Policy.

## **Financial Implications**

The costs associated with the name change (e.g., changes to the website, construction banner updates, other marketing collateral, business cards, etc.) are expected to be minimal and will be funded by the town's existing operating budget and internal staff resources.

Exterior site signage for the property has not been created yet but will include the new name and its cost absorbed as part of the existing capital project budget.

## **Communications Considerations**

The Town of Aurora has used 'Inform' and 'Consult' as the levels of engagement for this project. There are five different levels of community engagement to consider, with each level providing the community more involvement in the decision-making process. These levels are: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower. Examples of each can be found in the Community Engagement Policy. These options are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum and assist in establishing guidelines for clearly communicating with our public and managing community engagement.

## **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**

### **Alternative(s) to the Recommendation**

1. Council may provide further direction.
2. Council may approve any of the other three names (Church Street Square, Constellation Square, or Aurora Junction) instead of Town Square as the final name.
3. Council may direct staff to include Aurora in the name Town Square, making the final name Aurora Town Square.

### **Conclusions**

Based on research and inputs from the public, stakeholders and staff going back to 2018, staff are recommending Town Square as the new name for the project currently known as Library Square.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Previous Reports**

CMS21-010, Library Square Alternate Names, March 2, 2021

### **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on May 13, 2021

### **Approvals**

**Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services Department**

**Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer**