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Town of Aurora

# General Committee Report

No. CMS21-010

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**Subject:** Library Square Alternate Name

**Prepared by:** Phillip Rose-Donahoe, Manager of Library Square

**Department:** Community Services

**Date:** March 2, 2021

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## Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS21-010 be received.

## Executive Summary

Finding an alternate name for the project currently known as Library Square is an important step that will help to better define the space as a downtown destination for community gatherings, arts, culture and heritage activities, special events, recreation and more.

- The Town has undertaken external and internal engagement that has built consensus regarding how to define and recognize the new space.
- Staff will provide Council with a recommended new name as well as one additional alternative for their consideration in spring of 2021.

## Background

The name Library Square has been associated with the parcel of property that currently encompasses the Aurora Public Library and the heritage schoolhouse at 22 Church St. since at least 1991, when Town Council formally declared that Browning Square would be renamed Library Square.

Given the property's historic ties to the library, it was fitting to use Library Square to identify this property. From 1945 until 1963, the Aurora Public Library was housed in Victoria Hall, and from 1963 until 2001 the Library was located on the east side of the property. Since 2001, the present-day Library has formed the west side of the property.

Library Square continues to be used to describe this parcel of land, as well as the capital construction project currently underway, which includes the following elements:

- A 32,000 square foot addition to the Church Street School that features performance space, visual arts studios, museum storage, multi-purpose dance studio, program rooms, café and catering kitchen;
- An outdoor square featuring Amphitheatre, water feature, skating loop and seating areas;
- An enclosed pedestrian link between the new facility and existing public library, with accessible connection to Yonge Street and downtown; and
- New library programming space and rooftop reading garden.

While the Aurora Public Library remains a key stakeholder, the project has evolved in such a way that the name Library Square no longer captures the full extent of its cross-sectoral and collaborative nature. Therefore, staff recommend that a new name be chosen 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.

## **Analysis**

**The Town has undertaken external and internal engagement that has built consensus regarding how to define and recognize the new space.**

In 2018, the Town solicited online feedback from the public regarding possible names for the Library Square project. At the time, the full scope of the project had not been finalized and so the public was asked to propose names for the outdoor square only. Approximately 30 suggestions were submitted using the PlaceSpeak platform on the Town's website. A number of the suggestions referenced historical figures that people felt were vital to the growth of the town and the nation, such as Machell, Doan, Pearson, Queen Victoria, and Chadburn.

Even though the Town recognizes the need to honour the neighbourhood's heritage, it is also important that the name selected for the new space speaks to Aurora's contemporary status as a progressive and diversifying municipality. Ultimately, the staff committee tasked with reviewing the proposed names were unable to reach a consensus regarding any one name.

In addition to soliciting online public feedback, staff also hosted a series of workshops with Mayor and Council in November 2020. The following is a summary of the key takeaways from these engagement sessions:

- The cultural context and heritage of the place should be considered when developing a name, while also taking into account the changing nature of the community and shifts in demographics;
- Different parts of the facility can be given different names and it is important that the names for each building/element be unique so that they can be clearly distinguished from one another;
- The name should indicate that this is a municipal project by including Aurora in the final name;
- The name should convey that the new space will be home to arts and culture activities but will also be a family-friendly community complex that is vital to economic development and downtown revitalization; and
- Some words that can be used to describe the space include: innovation, creativity, collaboration, community, future, modern, arts, unity, fun, bright, playful, inspirational, forward thinking, imagination, unique, moving, dynamic, connection, safe, inclusive, history, junction, cool, out-of-the-box, magnetic, geographical anchor, welcoming, special, culture, gathering, destination.

In addition to these points, staff also believe that names should be kept reasonably short and easy to pronounce, spell and remember, and that names of persons, living or deceased, should be avoided.

**Staff will provide Council with a recommended new name as well as one additional alternative for their consideration in spring of 2021.**

Moving away from the name Library Square will provide an opportunity to choose a different name that better reflects the types of services, programs and partnerships that will occur at the new and existing spaces.

Staff will be consolidating available and relevant research, as well as consultation data, and commercial comparisons, and will bring forward a recommended new name plus an additional alternative for Council's consideration in the spring of 2021. In selecting a new name, staff will follow the implementation process established in the *Public Facilities Renaming Policy* (2002). Moreover, staff will consider how the name chosen might be leveraged for fundraising purposes and ensure that the renaming process complements the upcoming fundraising campaign slated to begin in March 2021.

Following Council's decision, and consistent with a number of recognizable public squares across North America (e.g., Celebration Square, Mississauga; Yonge Dundas Square, Toronto; Centre in the Square, Kitchener; Times Square, New York City; and Logan Square, Chicago), once a name is selected for the project as a whole, staff will develop a brand for the new space that can be used for sales and marketing.

### **Advisory Committee Review**

Not applicable.

### **Legal Considerations**

The renaming of this facility is being done in accordance with the Town's Public Facilities Renaming Policy.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

### **Communications Considerations**

The Town of Aurora will use '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. In order to inform, this report will be posted to the Town's website and the Library Square dedicated web page.

### **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.

### **Conclusions**

Staff will undertake a number of next steps to determine the final name for the project currently known as Library Square and return in the spring of 2021 with a recommended new name as well as one alternative for Council's consideration.

### **Attachments**

None

### **Previous Reports**

None

### **Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on February 11, 2021

### **Approvals**

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

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