

Aurora Museum & Cultural Centre

BUSINESS PLAN



The Town of Aurora would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following organizations and individuals who assisted with the development of this document - Aurora Museum & Cultural Centre Business Plan.

- Cultural Partners Group
 - Aurora Public Library
 - Aurora Cultural Centre
 - Aurora Historical Society
 - Aurora Seniors Centre
 - Aurora Sports Hall of Fame
 - Pine Tree Potters Guild
 - Society of York Region Arts (SOYRA)
 - Theatre Aurora
 - Farmers Market
- Staff of the Community Services Department, Town of Aurora
- Project Consultants: Interkom Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	Executive Summary
4	Project Background and History
6	The Need for An Expansion
10	Population Characteristics
11	Economic Benefits
12	Relevant Town of Aurora Studies
17	Community Consultation
18	Potential Uses of Expanded Space
21	Town of Aurora Cultural Partners
30	Proposed Management Structure
32	Planning Considerations
34	Operational Considerations
39	Appendix

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Aurora is creating a new cultural hub in its downtown core that will serve as a focal point for residents and out of town visitors. The hub will be located within Library Square and will consist of an outside public square and an expansion to the historic Church Street School (CSS) which is currently home to the Aurora Museum & Archives and the Aurora Cultural Centre.

This Business Plan is for the building and operations of a three-storey expansion that will be connected to the CSS existing historic structure via a glass atrium and include a theatre/performance space on the top floor with retractable seating; multi-purpose performing arts and visual arts spaces; and a climate controlled museum storage space, among other features.

The proposed expansion will make the new, combined Church Street School facility a central hub for cultural activities in Aurora positioning the Town to be the lead entity that can help bring all of the cultural partners in Aurora together as envisioned through the Town's Cultural Master Plan.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the plan for the building and operations of a brand-new cultural hub in Aurora. The working name for this facility is the Aurora Museum & Cultural Centre (AMCC). This plan also clearly outlines the need for an expansion to the current Church Street School property and proposes how new spaces might be utilized. Finally, it outlines the required operational and financial considerations.

The proposed 32,013 square foot flexible, multi-use addition includes the following components:

1. 3,680 square foot multi-use Performance Hall with capacity for:

- 246 seating in a theatre/performance venue with retractable, raked seating
- Sprung floor, professional lighting and audio equipment
- A/V projector screen
- 192 seating with tables and chairs (banquet style)
- 300+ capacity for markets/fairs/tradeshows/corporate events

2. 1,585 square foot multi-purpose Performing Arts Studio

- Divisible into two separate studios with each space able to accommodate up to 60 people
- Sprung floor and mirrors
- Professional sound system

3. 1,198 square foot multi-purpose Visual Arts Studio

- Divisible into two separate studios each space accommodating 32 seated at art tables

4. 466 sq. ft Multi-Purpose Studio

- Space allows for small meetings, prep classes and rehearsal

5. 2,333 square feet of Environmentally Controlled Storage Space for the Aurora Museum's artifact collection

- Space allows for a glass wall allowing for visible storage and display opportunities

6. 1,567 square foot Program Room

- Divisible programming space with external access to outdoor square, each space able to accommodate up to 60 people

7. 673 square foot Café/Multipurpose Area with seating for 20-30 people

8. 283 square foot Catering Kitchen/Servery

Construction costs are projected to be \$28,000,000

Anticipated construction start will be Fall 2019 and construction completion will be in late 2021.

The operating budget for the new AMCC is projected to be \$2.6 million in year 1. The Town will be required to provide an additional \$620,000 operating grant to support the new AMCC. Required new staff to operate the facility is anticipated to be 4 full-time, 2 part-time and a variety of contract positions relating to programming.

The redesign of Library Square and expansion of the Church Street School, supports the Town of Aurora's Strategic Plan – goal of supporting an **exceptional quality of life for all** through the following key objectives:

- Fulfillment of the Cultural Master Plan that includes heritage, music, and art to promote more cohesive and coordinated cultural services;
- Expand opportunities and partnerships that contribute to the celebration of culture in the community; and
- Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown that includes Culture

This expansion also supports the strategic directions of the Town of Aurora's Cultural Master Plan:

- Expand Culture's role in economic development
- Build a strong and vital cultural sector
- Enhance access to cultural resources



PROJECT BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

In 1952, Aurora Public School moved from 22 Church Street to Wells Street School, after the high school students moved into their new building on Dunning Avenue. The Town purchased the building for one dollar in 1953 and rented it to the Whitchurch School Board as an overflow school. From 1955 to 1962 the building was used as a national training facility by Remington-Rand, an office machine company. After they vacated, the building was used again as an overflow school for Regency Acres and Aurora Heights public schools. From 1969 to 1976 the York County Board of Education used the building, then known as “Church Street School”, as headquarters.

Faced with an empty building after the York County Board of Education vacated the space, the Town undertook a feasibility study in 1978 to determine future uses. Guided by this study, the Town determined that the Church Street School should become a cultural and recreational centre. With council's approval, the Aurora Historical Society (AHS) opened the Aurora Museum on the second floor of the building in 1981, after their initial request for space in the building was granted. The museum shared the building with other groups including the Friendship Circle, Boy Scouts, Big Brothers, and the Pottery Guild. In June 1999 the AHS submitted a paper to the Town of Aurora senior staff entitled, “Policy Position on the Future of the Church Street School”. The paper advocated that the entire building become a museum creating more space for programming, exhibition and storage. By the year 2000 necessary repairs

to the building were mounting including foundation restoration, a drainage system, upgraded fire exit routes, new windows, and barrier-free entrances including an elevator. A plan for restoration was approved in 2002 with funding from the provincial SuperBuild grant and contributions from the Town. All tenants moved out of the building while the renovations modernized the interior of Church Street School while retaining the exterior architecture.

In 2003 after lengthy negotiations, the AHS signed a 10-year lease to be the sole tenants of the Church Street School to create the Aurora Heritage Centre. In 2004 architects Lynch & Comisso and project manager Ron McKnight of McKnight Associates were contracted by the Society to transform the building. Their first task was to remove the false ceilings and interior walls that had been built over the previous 40 years revealing the building's original tin ceilings. Several Open Houses were held for the public to come and see the building. The AHS applied for and received a Trillium Grant and a Museums Assistance Program Grant.

A capital campaign was launched in 2005 to raise the remaining funds needed to complete the renovations. The AHS contributed \$228,634 from their own funds along with a \$200,000 bequest from member Margaret Brevik which combined with other donations amounted to \$548,372. The Society also applied for capital support to the Cultural Spaces Canada Program on behalf of the Town and received a further \$775,000 in 2007.



When their fundraising efforts failed to meet the project requirements, the AHS turned to the Town for support.

In July 2007, Aurora Town Council resolved to support the renovation of the Aurora Heritage Centre. While the renovations continued, an Arts & Cultural Advisory Committee was formed and the Town commissioned a Strategic and Business Plan for an arts and cultural centre in the Church Street School with work beginning in January 2008. The AHS were not in a financial position at this point in time to operate the entire Centre.

Presented in June 2008, the Novita Report recommended the establishment of a separately incorporated entity and broadened the original mandate to include a wider set of arts and cultural programming including heritage programming in recognition of the Town's cultural development needs and goals. The report also recommended that the name be changed to the Church Street School Cultural Centre with the vision that The Cultural Centre will be a dynamic hub in the heart of Aurora, providing a focus for arts and culture in the town.

The AHS collection, which had been placed into storage in 2005, was moved back into Church Street School in 2009 and the building officially opened in January 2010. The name of the Centre was subsequently changed to the Aurora Cultural Centre.

While the Novita Report recommended that the Cultural Centre enter into an agreement with the Aurora Historical Society to exhibit the museum collection, such an agreement never came into force and the collection remained in storage in the building. In 2015, the Aurora Museum & Archives re-opened in the Church Street School as a municipal museum after the AHS transferred the Aurora Collection to the Town in 2013 for the sum of one dollar. Since that time the Town-run museum and the separately incorporated Aurora Cultural Centre have been independently operating within the Church Street School building.

THE NEED FOR AN EXPANSION

Over the course of many years, a variety of locations across Aurora have been used for community assembly, performances, and as cultural spaces. During Aurora's earliest days, there were plenty of spaces available for cultural assembly:

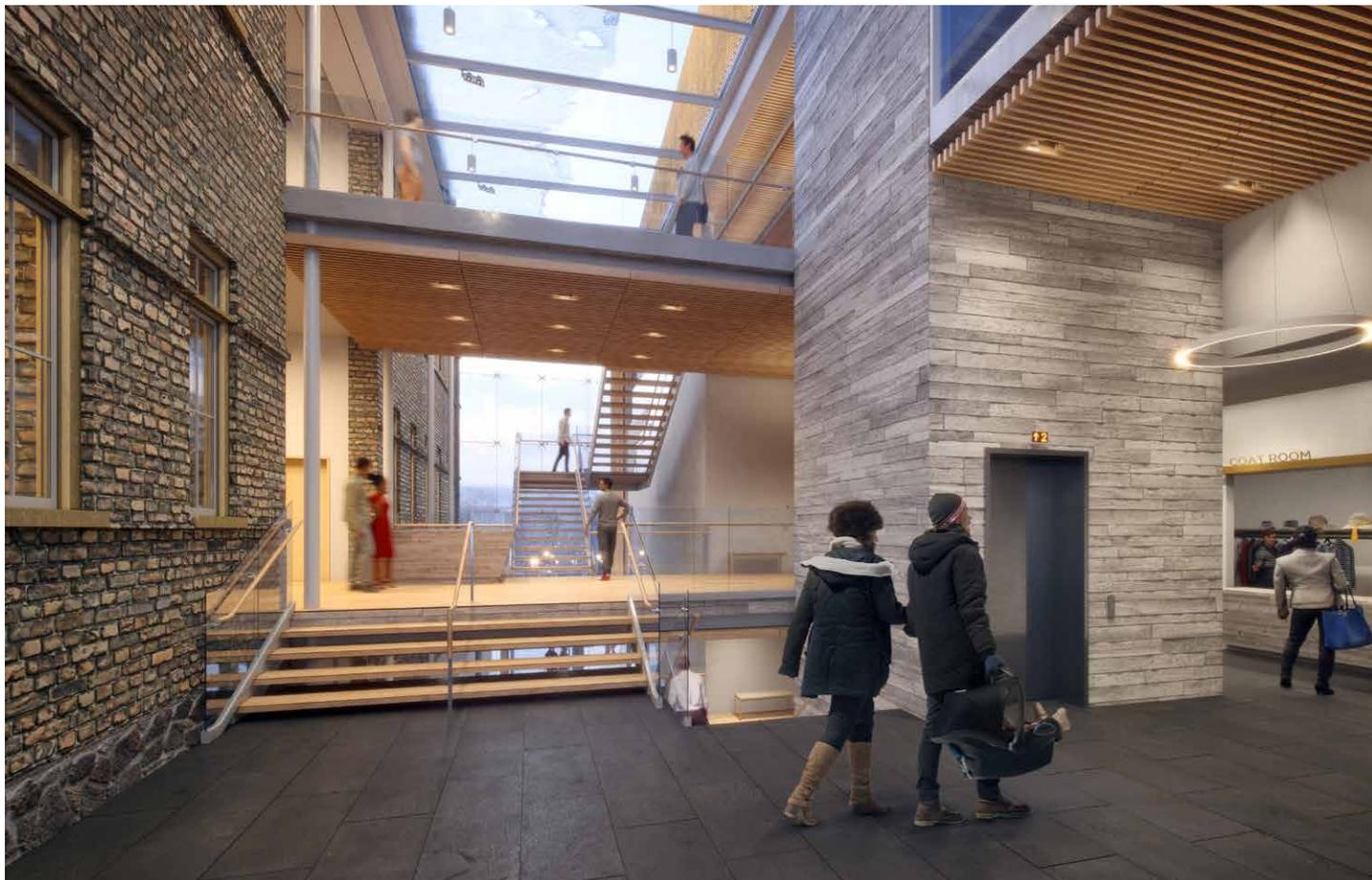
- Mechanics' Hall, built in 1870 and located on the south east corner of Mosley and Victoria Street, hosted a regular program of lectures, social gatherings, performances, music festivals and community classes.
- The Armoury, built in 1874 and located on the southwest corner of Mosley and Larmont Street, has served as a venue for live music, dances, parties, performance, and exhibition spaces.
- The second floor of the old Town Hall (1876-1956), that was located on the northeast corner of Yonge and Mosley Streets, was a large public auditorium that hosted a variety of events and programs.
- Beginning in 1877, the second floor of 15224 Yonge Street (known as the Faughner Block) was used as a music hall as well as a reading room.
- The Aurora Historical Society, established in 1963, operated a community museum in the old Town waterworks building.
- The Aurora Community Centre, built in 1967 and located off Aurora Heights Drive, hosted sporting events as well as a number of high-profile music performances and regular community events.
- Since 1973, Theatre Aurora, a not-for-profit community theatre, has been leasing the Town owned Factory Theatre on Henderson Drive for live theatrical productions
- In 1978, the old Church Street School located at 22 Church Street became a cultural and recreation center. It was home to the Aurora Historical Society, Friendship Circle, Boy Scouts, Big Brothers and the Pottery Guild
- Since 1992, the Aurora Historical Society have been operating a museum out of Hillary House after first acquiring the property from the Hillary family in 1981
- In 2001, the Aurora Public Library moved into a new building and their old location (56 Victoria Street) was used for recreation and cultural programming

After the Second World War, many of these spaces were no longer available. In their place, the community used the following locations for cultural purposes:

- The Aurora Armoury continued to serve as a venue for music, dances, parties and performance. In 2014, it was purchased by the Town.

During the beginning of the 21st Century, the availability of cultural space in Aurora changed:

- In 2001 the current Library was opened with two community rooms (the Magna and Lebovic Rooms) that were used by the Town and community groups as programming space. As of the end of 2019 these rooms will be managed by the Library only and Town programs will be displaced.
- In 2003, the Aurora Historical Society agreed to a 10-year exclusive use lease of 22 Church Street and embarked on a comprehensive renovation project. Ultimately, the project costs were taken over by the Town and a third party, now known as the Aurora Cultural Centre, was given use of the building to deliver cultural programs.
- In 2013, the Town assumed control of the municipal portion of the Aurora Historical Society collection
- In 2015, a municipal museum opened in the facility and currently occupies 3,200 sq./ft. of the 15,000 sq./ft. available
- In 2017, the Town of Aurora embarked on a partnership with Niagara College for exclusive use of the Aurora Armoury. Although there will be public space available, the facility will no longer be exclusively operated by the Town.
- In 2017, the old Aurora Public Library and former Senior's Centre/Fire Hall were demolished, which removed space that was used for community meeting space and Town-run programs.



While much investment has been made by the Town in sporting and recreational facilities, the creation of additional cultural programming spaces had not been a priority. Through its Community Services department, the Town runs approximately 65 arts and cultural programs serving a total audience of 134,150 in facilities that, for the most part, were not purpose built.

Space for Town programming is currently available in the following Town-owned facilities:



Aurora Community Centre

- Auditorium: 2,560 square feet (capacity 160)
- Meeting Room #1: 384 square feet (capacity 25)
- Meeting Room #2: 256 square feet (capacity 15)

Aurora Family Leisure Complex

- Meeting Room: 420 square feet (capacity 61)
- Program Room A: 375 square feet (capacity 35)
- Program Room B: 725 square feet (capacity 60)
- Program Room C: 650 square feet (capacity 59)
- Gymnasium: 5,460 square feet (capacity 300)



Aurora Seniors Centre

- Activity/Meeting Rooms (3) (capacity 20-60)
- West McKenzie Room: 2,224 square feet (capacity 200)
- Priestly Room A/B: 804 square feet (capacity 48)
- Craftroom: 969 square feet (capacity 60)
- Activity Room C: 425 square feet (capacity 24)

Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex

- Meeting Room: 507 square feet (capacity 25)



Victoria Hall

- Hall/Meeting Room: 962 square feet (capacity 60)

Aurora Public Library

(only available until September 2019, then may be booked for a fee)

- Lebovic Room: 930 square feet (capacity 45-60)
- Magna Room: 1,144 square feet (capacity 50-70)



Church Street School

- Aurora Museum & Archives – dedicated space for museum display and storage

Aurora Cultural Centre

(space available for a rental fee)

- Brevik Hall (capacity 180)
- Library Room (capacity 20)
- Red Gallery (capacity 60)
- Blue Gallery (capacity 60)
- Activity Room (capacity 60)



POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

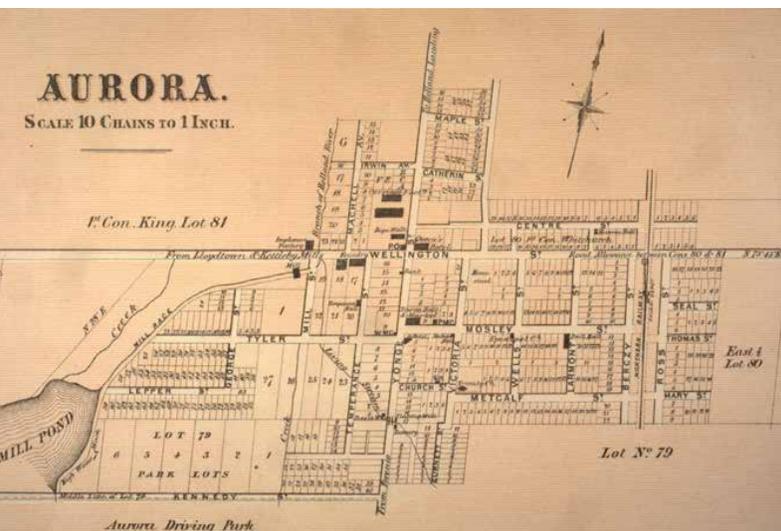
The Town of Aurora has seen steady growth since it was incorporated as a Village in 1863. Large periods of growth were experienced between 1951 and 1961 when the population rose by 161.8% and again from 1981 to 1991 when it rose by 81.1% (1996 Census of Canada: Electronic Area Profiles). Since 2001, the population of Aurora **has grown by over 15,000 people** and is projected **to grow by a further 14,000+ by 2020 to a total population of 69,688.**

As the population has grown, so too has interest and participation in arts and cultural events.

A 2018 study by Culture Track: Canada has found that Culture matters in the lives of Canadians: it has intrinsic lasting value that is a force for good in our society (<https://culturetrack.com/research/culture-track-canada/>). Results also indicate that Canadians

are cultural omnivores, viewing culture as a broad and diverse set of activities. Traditional definitions of high and low culture no longer exist for modern audiences who are more concerned with relevance. Lack of relevance, in fact, is the greatest barrier to participation. Of particular note is the study's finding that charitable giving to cultural organizations is on the rise from 33% of respondents in 2011 to 35% in 2014, and 41% in 2017. While audience participation is lagging for what they term "benchmark arts" (Art Museums, Ballet, Opera, and Classical Music), attendance at Community Festivals, Food & Drink Experiences, and Historic Attractions is high.

The population growth in the Town of Aurora and cultural programming increase has not been met with additional and suitable facilities to accommodate that growth. Facilities in fact, have been reduced through demolition and repurposing.



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Having a versatile multi-use cultural facility in the downtown core will have a significant positive economic impact on local businesses including restaurants, pubs, professionals, specialty stores and residential development. Many communities across Canada have realized the economic benefit of a strong cultural sector.

Ontario's first Culture Strategy, *Telling Our Stories, Growing Our Economy* notes that spending by arts and culture tourists generates about \$3.9 billion in GDP and supports about 61,000 jobs in the province. In the report's opening remarks, the Provincial Minister of Tourism, Culture, and Sport noted that "Arts and culture inspire us, bring us together and make our communities and economy stronger."

Released in 2016, Ontario's Culture Strategy focuses on four key goals:

- promote cultural engagement and inclusion
- strengthen culture in communities
- fuel the creative economy
- promote the value of the arts throughout government

The report notes that strengthening culture in communities relies on municipalities as key partners in supporting local arts, culture and heritage. Aurora is among the 69 municipalities in Ontario that have developed

cultural master plans to integrate cultural interests into municipal planning efforts.

Federally, the Provincial and Territorial Culture Satellite Account (PTCSA) was developed by Statistics Canada with the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage and its many partners to measure the economic importance of culture (inclusive of the arts and heritage) and sport by province and territory in terms of output, gross domestic product and employment, for reference years 2010-2016. The report found that the broader cultural sector represents 3.5% of the total GDP of Canada, with 41% coming from Ontario representing about 269,082 jobs in the cultural industries in Ontario (4.5% of all the jobs available in Ontario).

The addition and creation of a cultural hub in Aurora's downtown will act as a catalyst for redevelopment which will provide spin-off benefits to local businesses along Yonge Street.

Town Council recently approved the establishment of a Business Improvement Area within the historic downtown which the Cultural Hub is located within. The purpose of the BIA is to improve the attractiveness of the area and promote the area as a good place to shop, visit, and do business. The addition of the Cultural Hub will strengthen the value proposition of shopping, visiting and doing business in Aurora's downtown providing residents and visitors alike another reason to come downtown.

RELEVANT TOWN OF AURORA STUDIES

Town of Aurora Official Plan

A fundamental principle of the Town of Aurora Official Plan (TAOP) is promoting design excellence through high-quality buildings, and well-designed and functioning streetscapes. As the Town grows, the value of its public realm – its streets and publicly accessible spaces – as well as the design of infill development in creating a vibrant and livable urban environment, becomes more and more important. Appropriate transition, as well as the integration between existing and new development and connected open spaces, help define places and the spaces in between.

TAOP policy 4.0 'Ensuring Design Excellence' recognizes the importance of high quality urban design and architecture as an essential part of Town-building. Policy 4.2 encourages parking in the Historic Core to locate at the rear of buildings and screened to ensure the amenity of adjacent areas. Similarly, TAOP Policy 4.4 recognizes public art as an important component of the public realm in contributing to an overall sense of place and community, as well as improving and enhancing the built environment.

Community services and facilities (CS&F) are publically accessible, non-profit facilities whereby the Town and its agencies deliver programs and services that help build healthy, strong and complete communities and are designed for all stages of life. CS&F contribute to the social, economic and

cultural development of the Town, are vital in supporting a successful, functioning and vibrant downtown, and often serve as neighbourhood focal points and gathering spaces.

Church Street School Cultural Centre Strategic and Business Planning Study (2008)

The Town of Aurora commissioned a Strategic and Business Plan for an arts and cultural centre in the Church Street School and work began in January 2008. Through the Strategic and Business Planning process, the Consultants developed and presented to the ad hoc Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee of Council three plans: a Strategic Plan, a Business Plan and an Implementation Plan for the Centre to be created at the Church Street School.

Known as the Novita Report, this document brought together the three plans for the Church Street School Cultural Centre. Together, these reports provided a guiding concept and framework for the Cultural Centre and outlined steps for its implementation. The intent of this report was to establish the conditions that would allow the Church Street School Cultural Centre to be established and to be sustainable.

The study came to the realization that while there are many cultural needs in Aurora, not

all can be accommodated in the Church Street School. The renamed Arts and Cultural Centre was viewed as a useful and effective bridging project which would promote cultural development in Aurora and set the stage for the addition of future cultural facilities.

Promenade Study (2009)

In 2009, the Town initiated a secondary planning process for the Downtown Yonge/Wellington Street Corridor. This resulted in the creation of a Concept Plan – Urban Design Strategy for the area now known as “The Aurora Promenade”. Implementing policies were included in the Town’s Official Plan. The Aurora Promenade Concept Plan sought to leverage the distinct heritage and culture of Aurora as an attraction through enhancing the Cultural Precinct with additional facilities and enhanced public spaces. The Promenade plays a critical role in achieving the Town’s long-term growth objectives.

The Urban Design Strategy for the Aurora Promenade is intended to guide and manage growth through the revitalization of the Promenade area and improvements to the public realm. The Urban Design Strategy is premised on a number of objectives, which include:

- Protecting and enhancing the Promenade’s heritage core;
- Reinforcing and enhancing a Cultural Precinct and leveraging opportunities in this area;
- Creating new vibrant, transit-oriented focus areas;
- Creating a pedestrian friendly environment with great streets;
- Facing and Framing Major Open Spaces; and
- Creating a ‘Green Lattice’ of interconnected parks and open spaces.

Collection Review Process: The Aurora Collection (2013)

The Town of Aurora engaged Cultural Asset Management Group (CAM Group) in August 2012 to review and assess the historical collection (Aurora Collection) of art, artifacts, textiles, and archives as a component of a larger project in which the ownership and operations of the Aurora Collection was transferred from the Aurora Historical Society to the Town. In general, the review found that there are too many items for the available space which puts the collection as a whole at risk of physical damage and potential loss. The basement storage space is also used by Cultural Centre Staff, creating a security risk as they are not museum staff and are not trained specifically to work around the collection. Shared storage space is not museum best-practice and in fact, controlled access to storage is one of the key requirements for receiving operational funding through the Provincial Community Museums Operating Grant program.

The report recommended the creation of a safe and appropriate environment for the collection recognizing the importance of long-term preventative conservation strategies and methods, including increased appropriate museum storage space.

Cultural Master Plan (2014)

The Cultural Master Plan was initiated by Council in 2012 with the appointment of an Ad Hoc Working Group to oversee its development. Consultants were hired to guide the Working Group and their final report was presented to Council in May 2014. The plan is built on four Strategic Directions and corresponding Strategies and identified a wide

variety of arts and cultural groups in Aurora. Aiming to attract new and creative talents, boost tourism, and enhance quality of life, cultural resources and opportunities in Aurora, the plan cites the expressed community need for a cultural hub to support networking and collaboration through the development of a multi-use cultural facility within Library Square.

Building the Foundation: A Three-Year Plan (2015)

This plan was created by the Town's Curator to outline the growth, development and use of the Aurora Collection after it was transferred from the Aurora Historical Society to the Town in 2013.

The plan provides a blueprint for increased use and development of the collection that responds to local needs and objectives by *valuing the cultural heritage and history of our community*. It outlined measurable goals and specific objectives organized into Four Key Areas:

- Access
- Collections Management
- Conservation
- Outreach

Determining factors for the success of the plan included additional space, and the need to be compliant with the Standards for Community Museums, among other factors.

Music Strategy (2016)

Council endorsed a Music Strategy for Aurora in April 2016. The strategy identifies and addresses the main areas of focus for the development and support of the music industry for the Town:

1. Support an environment friendly to music creators
2. Encourage the business of music in Aurora
3. Promote Aurora's music sector locally
4. Foster alliances with other music cities
5. Implement a process for monitoring progress and measuring success

The Strategy cites the need in the community for rehearsal space, access to civic venues, and the creation of a physical Music Hub among other measures.

Cultural Precinct Concept Plan (2016)

In September 2015, the Town hired FOTENN to create a Cultural Precinct Concept Plan. The plan was developed to create a new cultural hub that will serve as a focal point for residents and tourists. It was stated that this revitalization will attract and boost tourism, enhance the quality of life for residents and expand cultural resources in the community. Library Square was included in this plan which proposed, among other things, an addition to the current Church Street School property.

In December 2016, Council provided direction regarding a concept plan for the Cultural Precinct that would involve the demolition of the former library and former senior's centre. This decision was made taking into

consideration public input obtained from the public consultation that took place in 2016 as part of the Council endorsed public consultation strategy with respect to the Cultural Precinct. FOTENN prepared two alternative revisions of the Library Square Concept Plans which were presented to Council in May 2017. At that meeting, Council received the revised concept plans and directed staff to move forward with the procurement process for design services in the next planning stages for Library Square.

Aurora Repurposing Study (2016)

In parallel with the work being conducted by Fotenn Consultants Inc., Council also engaged the consulting services of AECOM Canada Architects Ltd. to conduct a Repurposing Study and make recommendations on the use of five Town-owned structures – the former Library, former Senior's Centre, Victoria Hall, The Petch House and the Armoury.

The Repurposing Study was part of the background information to support the Council approved multi-stage planning approach to ensure a successful conclusion to the Cultural Precinct/Library Square project. The broad objective of this study was to identify and meet key stakeholders and recognize their needs for facility use. Furthermore, based on the information received from the user groups and after holding public meetings and conducting a survey to identify the needs of the community stakeholders of Aurora, the report will made recommendations to Council on the determination and disposition of use of the above mentioned facilities.

Library Square (2018)

The contract for the detailed design phase of Library Square was awarded to The Planning Partnership in September 2017. Through public consultation conducted over late summer/early fall, the largest theme was the demand for flexible, programmable public space that could be used by the Library, Cultural Centre, Town, and the public for events and programs.

Two design options were presented to Council in December, 2017. The first option included an elevated or upper square, while the second option included a lowered Square. Both options included a proposed addition to the Church Street School. At this meeting, Council also increased the budget for design work for the project to \$1,077,500.

As per Council's direction to proceed with designs, RAW Architects were brought into the project through The Planning Partnership. A further design for Library Square with proposed designs for the expansion was approved by Council in June 2018. A proposed three (3) floor addition would be connected to the existing building by way of a glass atrium which would serve as access into the square from Victoria Street. This design would also give prominence to the existing historic building by separating it from the proposed addition.

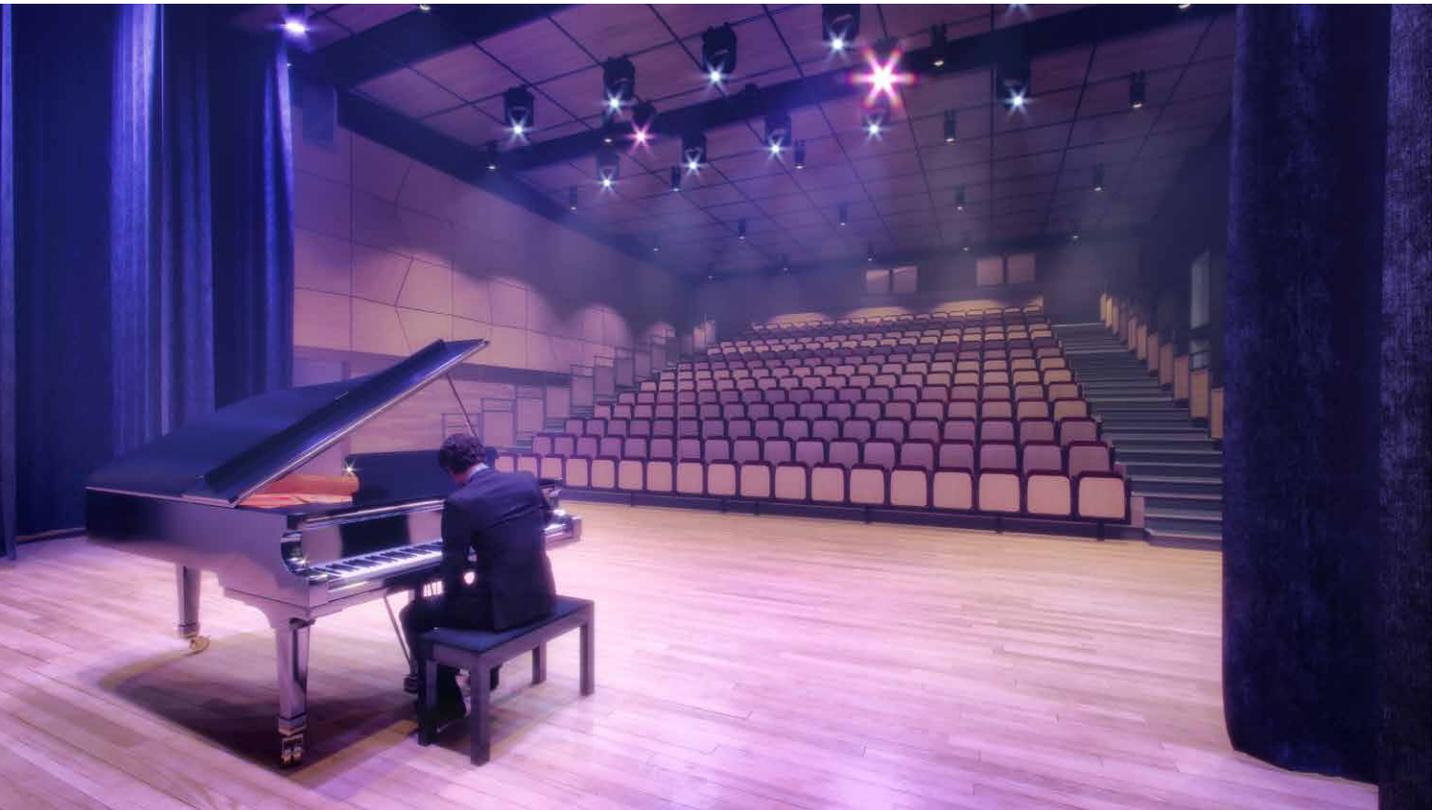


Cultural Partners Consultation and Workshop Facilitation (2018)

The Town conducted a facilitated workshop with its cultural partners to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of existing cultural partnerships and to gain an understanding of what cultural partners would like to see from the Town moving forward. Considerations included:

- Individual consultations with each partner prior to the workshop
- A facilitated workshop hosted with cultural partners to identify a baseline of services and determine future needs
- The workshop agenda and observations
- Short term action items

Through the Cultural Partners Consultation and Workshop, the Town met with key Cultural Partners to determine what cultural partners would like to see from the Town. The consultants from Interkom facilitated the workshop and summarized a number of key findings and recommendations. The short-term action items included revisiting the Cultural Services Master Plan and creating an implementation plan in cooperation with the cultural partners, and reviewing current partnership agreements and evaluating existing delivery models. This review is ongoing with an expected completion date in the fall of 2019.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The Town of Aurora views community consultation as a key component in understanding the needs, wants, and wishes of its residents as it strives to create an exceptional quality of life for all.

The most recent round of research conducted to address the wishes of residents in relation to arts and culture specifically began in 2013 as part of the Cultural Master Plan. The Cultural Master Plan was developed through an extensive community engagement process to ensure that the Plan's directions and priorities reflected the community's ideas and Municipal needs and opportunities. Community engagement included a community survey, interviews with key stakeholders, focus groups, and a visioning session.

Consultation was also a guiding factor in the development of the Cultural Precinct Concept Plan in 2016 which included:

- In person surveys during the month of August at Concerts in the Park, Farmers markets, Doors Open, at the Aurora Public Library
- Rate Payers Meeting: September 19, 2016
- Public Meeting: September 21, 2016
- Visioning Workshop was held with key staff, Aurora Cultural Centre staff and Aurora Public Library staff on October 6, 2015
- Councillor's Open House held on October 6, 2015
- Culture Walk (Public Engagement) was held on October 25, 2015
- Online Survey was launched on October 27, 2015
- Development Community review of Cultural Precinct Plan held November 17, 2015
- Aurora Chamber of Commerce: November 17, 2016
- Stakeholder/Area Residents Roundtable held on November 24, 2015
- CultureQuest! Aurora held on November 25, 2015
- Presentation of Concept Plan to Council held on December 8, 2015
- Accessibility Advisory Committee: October 5, 2016
- Economic Development Advisory Committee: October 13, 2016
- Heritage Advisory Committee: October 17, 2016
- Aurora Public Library Board: October 19, 2016
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee: November 17, 2016
- Trails & Active Transportation Committee: Nov. 18, 2016
- Environmental Advisory Committee: November 24, 2016

The proposed vision for Library Square also included consultation with a variety of stakeholders from October 2017 through September 2018, including the Mayor and members of Council, Town staff, cultural partners, business leaders, and residents.

POTENTIAL USES OF EXPANDED SPACE

The Town of Aurora prides itself on the quality programming it offers to the community. Cultural programming has been identified through corporate planning documents as an area to build upon and enhance as part of the effort to provide an exceptional quality of life for all.

Current Town Programming

The Town provides a variety of cultural programming through its service agreements with the Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Seniors Centre, but also offers cultural programs on its own account including music, art, theatre and dance for children, youth and adults.

It is important that the municipality provide and develop places and spaces for cultural and artistic activities throughout the community to create an environment that encourages a thriving artistic and cultural community. This includes providing affordable, grassroots, beginner level arts and culture programming for all ages all the way through to professional development. This is done through programming, alliances and partnerships that will increase and enhance the variety and diversity of creative cultural experiences.

The Town of Aurora currently offers the following arts and culture based programs to the community through its Recreation Division:

- Preschool Craft Time (ages 2-5)
- Spring into Summer (ages 2-5)
- Snugglebugs (ages 2-5)
- Crafty Kids (ages 2-5)
- Little Picassos (ages 2-5)
- Keyboarding beginners (ages 7-12)
- Summer Arts Camp – 8 weeks (ages 6-11)
- Dance Camp – 2 weeks (ages 6-10)
- Computer Animation camp – 1 week (ages 6-12)
- 3D Modelling and printing Camp – 1 week (ages 6-12)
- Ukelele Heroes (ages 8-13; 55+)
- Apple Game Creation Camp – 1 week (ages 8-12)
- Virtual Reality Avatars Creation Camp – 1 week (ages 9-12)
- Dynamic Dancers (ages 8-11)
- Intro to Guitar (ages 8-11; 12-14; 18+)
- Aurora Teen Idol (ages 12-17)
- Learn to Draw (ages 12+; 18+)
- Virtual Reality Design and Development Camp – 1 week (ages 13-16)
- Intro to Ballroom and Latin – Beginner and Intermediate (ages 18+)
- Ballroom Dance Party (ages 18+)
- Acrylic Painting – Beginner and Intermediate (ages 55+)
- Ballroom Dancing (ages 55+)
- Drawing Fundamentals (ages 55+)
- Guitar – Levels 1 and 2 (ages 55+)
- Painting and Sketching – Beginner and Intermediate (ages 55+)
- The Story of My Life (ages 55+)

There is an opportunity to expand programs in the AMCC, particularly those for preschoolers and older adults to deal with the increased demand for dance classes for preschoolers and art classes for adults and older adults.

Growth and enhancement in cultural programming has been limited by the availability of suitable, purpose-built space. The expansion of the Church Street School property would provide just such needed space and amenities and keep up with the growth of the community.

Adaptable Theatre Space

The proposed AMCC Performance Hall is designed to be an adaptable space (retractable seating) which would allow for a multitude of events from theatrical and concert performances to lectures, film screenings and ceremonies. The design also allows the room to be completely transformed into a space that could accommodate an endless array of activities including meetings, gatherings and banquets at an affordable cost for internal and external users.

Immediate Town uses for the Theatre space include:

- Aurora Teen Idol auditions
- Aurora's Christmas Market
- Aurora Art Show & Sale
- Town-run Summer Camps
- Culture Days Programming
- Community Awards
- Rain location for Concerts in the Park/
Movies in the Park
- Ballroom Dance Party (18+)

Future Programming could include:

- Live Performances (community and professional) including theatre, music, comedy, improv, variety acts, cabaret, etc.
- Acting Workshops/Lessons/Performances (Town and Community Run)

- Panel Discussions/Debates
- Lectures/Presentations
- Movie Screenings (Documentary Film Festival, Local Filmmakers)
- Presentations/Ceremonies
- Recitals/Rehearsals
- Community Dinners

Multipurpose/Community Programming Spaces

The proposed new design includes dedicated programming spaces for both "dry and wet" activities. Town programming in these areas is currently offered in facilities not purposely designed for these activities. A proper dance studio (including sprung flooring, mirrored wall, etc.) will enhance the Town's ability to offer dance, theatre and movement classes, while a properly equipped art studio will do the same for our visual arts programming. There is a clear lack of available space within existing Town facilities for both these types of uses.

Immediate uses of the multi-purpose/ community programming rooms include:

- Children and Youth Theatre and Music Programs (see above listing of current offerings)
- Summer Camps (Dance, Theatre, Arts)
- Visual Arts Programs
- Leadership Courses and Camps

Future Programming could include:

- gross motor programs for preschool
- language classes
- small seminars/presentations
- media arts (television, filmmaking, photography, etc.)
- music lessons

Environmentally Controlled Collection Storage Space

The expansion of the CSS facility will also provide much needed storage space for the Aurora historical collection. As cited in the 2013 Collection Review, the current storage facilities do not meet the needs of the existing collection with overcrowding and improper environmental conditions which serve as the biggest risk to the long-term survival of the collection. This lack of space was further compounded by the demolition of the old library building in which many larger items, such as the doors from the former Fleury Estate, Inglehurst, had been stored. These doors are now in the work offices of the museum with other large items stored in the crowded shared storage area in the basement.

The proposed designs for the expansion allocate just over 2,300 square feet in the lower level of the new building. This space would allow for the creation of appropriate

environmentally controlled storage for the museum's small and large artifacts and textiles. Moving the collection to the new space would free up much needed working space for documenting and researching the collection amongst other uses.

There will also be the opportunity in the new expanded space to showcase more of the collection. As it stands, there is only one room in the current Church Street School that is available for the display of objects. Working directly with the architects, the museum will be able to transform newly created walls and alcoves into valuable exhibition spaces. Additional, unimpeded areas will allow the stories of Aurora to be told to current and future generations.

More importantly, the expanded space will allow the Aurora Museum & Archives to provide heritage programming to schools and other user groups that is currently not possible due to lack of space. School and community groups will once again have a place to come and learn the stories of their own community.



TOWN OF AURORA CULTURAL PARTNERS

For the purposes of preparing this business plan, Town staff met individually with representatives of each of the cultural partners to discuss their thoughts on the proposed addition to the Church Street School. Draft plans for the expansion were reviewed and a series of questions were proposed that included current space utilization, future plans and need for space, and features that each would like to see included in the new facility. In addition, the consultants from Interkom interviewed various arts groups and conducted a rental survey with 40 different arts organizations to add to the community consultation and business plan financial budgeting.

Aurora Farmers Market & Artisans Fair

Established in 2002, the Aurora Farmers Market and Artisans Fair (the Market) was founded by a Councillor from the Town, Nigel Kean. At the beginning, the Market was a Town event operating out of a parking lot on Temperance Street and the small group of vendors paid a small fee to vend at the Market. In 2010, the Market became independent of the Town and were officially established by a Bylaw which required the Market to pay a \$60 fee per vendor per season to the Town. The Market also changed location moving to Wells Street and Town Park. The Market currently receive a reduced vendor permit and have exclusive use of a portion of Town Park and part of Wells Street on Saturdays from April-October.

The Market attracts hundreds of visitors from across the region. They have six special events including Soup Fest for Culture Days, which attracts over 1,000 visitors per event. Recently, Council extended the Market's approved hours so that they could collaborate with the Town on local events. A smaller version of the Market supported the Town's Concerts in the Park series this past season providing a welcome enhancement to this long standing tradition. This type of collaboration would further expand with the addition to the Church Street School, such as an indoor market at Christmas.

In the past, the Market has extended their season by offering indoor winter markets in space rented from the Aurora Cultural Centre and at the Armoury. As the Armoury is currently undergoing renovations, the Market is planning only one indoor market this season while they evaluate their plans for the future.

The Market also rents space at Town Hall for their annual general meeting and would like additional space for monthly meetings. Use of these spaces would be dependent on the cost as they are self-supporting, relying only on vendor fees and some sponsorships to pay for expenses.

While the Market does not have any immediate plans to expand their season beyond one indoor market, the members of the Board change each year and new Directors could sometimes take the Market in a different direction. Should the Market wish to extend their season, the adaptable theatre space would provide an ideal space during the winter

months. The large elevator from the loading area off Victoria Street provides ample space for moving vendor goods into the building. The new expansion also offers the opportunity for the Market to hold their monthly meetings.

Aurora Cultural Centre

Established in 2010, the Aurora Cultural Centre (the Centre) delivers high quality professional visual and live performing arts programming, community based artistic projects, and a diversity of educational classes to support the cultural, social, and economic well-being of Aurora. A registered not for profit charitable organization (legally under the Church Street School Cultural Centre), they continue to open doors to diverse community organizations, groups, and individuals, providing opportunities for community interaction and activities. As a strong cultural leader in the community and region, the Centre continuously assesses its effectiveness and seeks out opportunities to innovate and inspire the community. New and engaging arts opportunities are available for existing residents, newcomers, and a wide variety of diverse community and cultural groups through a proactive, strategic and collaborative approach.

The Centre currently functions under a *Provision of Cultural Services Agreement* to provide Cultural Services on behalf of the Town. The agreement provides access to the Church Street School heritage facility to operate artistic and cultural activities based on the vision, mission and values that the not-for-profit volunteer Board of Directors identifies for the community. Primary programs include professional live performing arts presentations, professional gallery exhibitions, arts educational classes, camps and lectures, volunteer engagement programs, and rentals of the facility for the community groups.

The Centre's current *Inspire, Engage and Transform 2018-2021 Strategic Plan* outlines the Centre's plan to focus its attention on professional visual and live performing arts and on educational programs that support this kind of programming. The Centre also cites a strategy to offer a diversity of classes that complement and build upon Town access programs. The Centre cites educational programming as the biggest potential for growth, but note limitations for this increased programming due to the current physical space constraints of the building. In particular, they see opportunities for expansion of current visual arts and performing arts educational programs taught by professional artists. Their defined strategy calls for increased programming to diversify and expand professional musical offerings, expand family performances, and launch new partnerships to work with the schools to support the arts curriculum through professional presentations and access to artists. There is also the appetite to add professional dance and theatre programming for the community.

Proposed programming spaces in the expansion such as the concert/theatre space, dance studio, and multipurpose/community programming spaces would provide the necessary room for the Centre to grow its program on behalf of the Town.

Aurora Historical Society

The Aurora Historical Society (AHS) was established in 1963 in celebration of the 100 year anniversary of the Town of Aurora. Throughout its 55 years history, the AHS has worked to preserve and share the history of Aurora, while acting as a leader for the future.

In 1963, AHS began collecting artifacts to create the Aurora Collection. In 1981, this collection was moved into the former Church Street School to open the Aurora Museum. The Aurora Museum served the community until

2007 when the building underwent extensive renovations and reopened as the Aurora Cultural Centre. In 2013, the Aurora Collection was given to the Town for the fee of \$1.00 and forms the main collection of the municipally run Aurora Museum & Archives.

Today the AHS owns and operates Aurora's 'hidden gem,' Hillary House National Historic Site. Hillary House was purchased by the AHS in 1981 and converted into a historic house and medical museum. The site acts as the headquarters for the AHS, and is also open year-round for historical tours, events, exhibits and more. Each year Hillary House welcomes over 2,000 visitors through its doors, and the AHS reaches over 1,900 more through a variety of outreach programs and events.

The AHS currently receives an annual grant from the Town to help offset the costs of maintaining Hillary House. Operating out of a historic building, the Society is continually challenged with the need for storage and programming space.

Until recently, part of the Society's archival collection was stored alongside that of the Town's Museum collection. The loss of storage space for the Museum at both the old library and the Armoury buildings has meant that the Museum is no longer able to store any of the Society's collection which has forced them to secure off-site storage for which the Town has granted them temporary funding to cover the additional costs. The creation of additional storage space within the expansion of 22 Church Street would allow enough room for part of this collection to be stored alongside the Museum's collection.

The Society also offers an annual monthly Speaker's Series whose attendance is severely limited by the amount of available space within their ballroom. Most of these sessions are packed beyond capacity. The adaptable theatre space would be an ideal venue for some of these talks.

In addition, the Museum and the Historical Society have increased their level of cross-partnership activities to support both of their mandates. Space within the new facility would provide additional opportunities for joint projects and activities.

Aurora Public Library

The Aurora Public Library (APL) has a long history in Aurora, with roots tracing back to 1855. It has since evolved into a multi-faceted organization that provides an essential public service to the community through a central library in downtown Aurora. The Library operates under the direction of a Board and the Public Libraries Act of Ontario. It is autonomous in its decision-making. The primary funder of the Library is the Town of Aurora.

The Library is community-led through ongoing consultation with the public and delivers rich, meaningful programs, services and collections to all residents of Aurora. The Library builds community by sparking connections, enriching lives and contributing vibrant spaces for all.

Aurora Public Library is a focal point of the community and is a key component of Library Square. With yearly visits approaching 260,000, circulation close to 728,000 items along with over 900 programs attended by 22,600 residents (2018), it is firmly infused in the ethos of Aurora.

APL's Strategic Plan 2017-2021 aims to create a *Place of Possibilities* for people of all ages and interests. One of their key strategies is to expand cultural initiatives to attract new users, and expand the Library's physical space based on the recommendations of their 2014 Facility Needs Assessment.

APL is in favour of a more collaborative approach to the use of space within the Town, featuring interconnectivity between the Library, the Museum and the Cultural

Centre. The creation of new cultural and performance space through the addition to the historic Church Street School provides the ideal opportunity to develop a cohesive, interconnected model of cultural and library services.

The Library looks forward to working with its partners on the Church Street School project.

Aurora Seniors Association

The Aurora Seniors Association was originally established in 1965 as the Friendship Circle, and met in Victoria Hall with a membership of 60. Increasing membership forced several moves into larger facilities including the main floor of the Church Street School in 1977, and the renovated old fire hall on Victoria Street in 1991. It was at this time that they joined with the Top of the Hill Seniors Club to form the Aurora Seniors Club. The group was renamed once again in 2004 as the Aurora Seniors Association and have been in their current purpose-built location on John West Way since 2006. Current membership stands at over 1,500.

The Aurora Seniors Association is a group of energetic mature adults who are very enthusiastic about the programs and activities at the Aurora Seniors Centre (ASC), which is operated in partnership with the Town of Aurora Community Services Department. The Centre's goal is to provide programs, events and activities that will benefit and enrich the lives of older adults. Dedicated volunteers devote 17,000 hours a year at the Centre.

The Association currently operates under a partnership agreement with the Town and are the principal users of the Seniors Centre with exclusive use of some spaces within. They offer 55 programs per week including a variety of art, theatre, music and dance classes.

Interest in the Association's programs and activities is strong and membership continues

to grow. While the majority of programming will remain at their present location, the Association have expressed interest in using the facilities in the proposed expansion for some of their activities including Silver Stars (theatre), Evergreen Choir, and drop in art classes. Their current space at the ASC limits growth of their programs including a demand to offer barre classes, guitar and voice lessons. The proposed CSS expansion would allow the Aurora Seniors Association the space needed to increase their programming.

Aurora Sports Hall of Fame

Founded in 2013, The Aurora Sports Hall of Fame (ASHoF) is a celebration of sport history and excellence; dedicated to the recognition of the important place that sport has assumed within the fabric of Aurora. Since its founding, ASHoF has inducted 29 honoured members into the Hall with a further 4 members being inducted every November at their annual induction dinner and ceremony.

ASHoF currently have use of space at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Centre (SARC) for the display of their honoured members and related sports history. As more inductees are added to the Hall, more space will be needed.

The Aurora Museum & Archives is the official repository for the Hall's collection and work in partnership with ASHoF to develop yearly displays at the SARC. Additionally, the *Moments in Sports* program is a partnership between ASHoF, the Museum, and Sport Aurora that tells the sporting stories of this community at venues throughout the Town.

ASHoF would like to increase the profile of the Hall through educational programming and exhibits in other buildings throughout the Town. The expansion of the Church Street School would provide another venue for ASHoF's programs which links sport, culture, and history.

Pine Tree Potters' Guild

Pine Tree Potters' Guild (PTPG) is a non-profit organization founded in 1979, dedicated to the preservation and advancement of ceramic arts supporting members from Aurora and the surrounding area. For the past 39 years, the Guild has rented space from the Town of Aurora for their activities including the basement of the Church Street School which they occupied for over 17 years. Currently they operate out of a studio in the basement of the Aurora Library under a lease agreement with the Town that has been in effect since 2003. Current membership stands at 80 with a waiting list of 20 individuals wanting to join. Preference for membership is given to Aurora residents.

In addition to two major sales events per year, the Guild supports community programs and charitable events such as Empty Bowls which has raised over \$142,000 over the past eight years, and the Canada Day 2017 Poppy Garden project which raised approximately \$8,000 for the Aurora Legion's roof repair.

PTPG hosts about 20 classes each year for adults and kids, taught by members of the guild:

- Adult classes are open to the public and members during both the day and evening each Fall, Winter and Spring. 3-6 different classes are offered in each 'Season' with 3-10 students per class. Topics include hand building, wheel, and sculpture.
- PTPG offers 3 kids clay camps per summer, with two teachers in attendance for maximum of 12 students. These are ½ day, week-long sessions that encourage a creative experience with clay. Participants range from 8-12 years old for hand building programs, and ages 13-18 for teen wheel classes. For the last few years, this has been in collaboration with the Aurora Cultural Centre.

- PTPG has facilitated the work of the Able Network by offering them hand building pottery classes to expand their recreational outlets and skills in a normal community setting.
- PTPG has also been called upon to provide classes to special organizations within Aurora such as the Aurora Women's Institute, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, Japanese wives of Honda executives (no English), Southdown, St. Andrews College, Devins Drive Public School, Aurora Senior Public School and Dr. G.W. Williams High School.

PTPG is financially sustained through its membership fees, sales, classes, grants and the generosity and support of the Town of Aurora in the form of manageable rent. In 2018, The Pine Tree Potters' Guild delegated to Council to provide information on the guild, its history, activities and community involvement. Current space constraints limit the opportunity to offer more programming or increase membership. Some of the Guild's existing activities could be held in the new building including their annual sales, bi-annual exhibitions, and Empty Bowls Fundraiser, which is always sold out within 48 hours of the 450 tickets becoming available. If PTPG is requested to leave their current premises, they would like to be considered for accommodation in the new space.

Society of York Region Artists

The Society of York Region Artists (SOYRA) is dedicated to providing interesting events, unique speakers and opportunities for local artists to showcase their work and attract new visitors to Aurora. They strive to produce professional quality exhibitions in specially chosen venues which leave a positive impression on the Town of Aurora residents.

The original 7-member group founded in 1987, has become a vibrant membership of 115 with the SOYRA name recognized throughout southern Ontario. They support their members and members of the public by offering educational workshops with recognized professionals. SOYRA provides the community with opportunities to view and enjoy art throughout the region. They encourage partnerships with local businesses to enhance corporate spaces. They enhance the Town of Aurora's public spaces with ongoing exhibits and partner with the Town under the 2014 Visual Art Partnership Agreement to run the Aurora Art Show & Sale, one of the longest running art events in Canada.

SOYRA views their relationship with the Aurora Cultural Centre (ACC) as mutually beneficial. SOYRA and their activities in the Church Street School act as a magnet for the community and beyond. The Society exhibits annually as part of the ACC's programming and offer workshops and courses in the basement studio space at the current Church Street School property. Their members have children, parents, relatives, neighbours who visit the annual show – all of whom have been introduced to the ACC's programming. Past SOYRA events have played a role in persuading families relocating to York Region from outside the area to choose Aurora as a desired community to live specifically because of the cultural events at the ACC.

The lack of facility availability hinders SOYRA's sustainability efforts. There is a growing market for workshops/community classes in Aurora that cannot be met with existing available space. Increased space within the new facility would allow a greater number of local artists to participate and would enable SOYRA to offer an increased number of workshops for the community including photography, sculpture, painting, drawing as well as other ways of making art. Larger spaces will accommodate more participants than the current studio

space and will mean that the rentals stay in town instead of seeking space elsewhere.

Theatre Aurora

Founded in 1958, Theatre Aurora recently celebrated 60 years as a Community Theatre Group. They are a not for profit registered charity that is governed by a board of directors who are all volunteers. At the present time, they have a 12-member board and a group of 250-300 committed volunteers working both on their stage and behind the scenes. Theatre Aurora usually mount five shows in a season that runs from September to May. Each show typically runs for 7 performances over 2 weeks with the majority of shows at the theatre capacity of 154. Overall annual attendance is approximately 4,250. This year in honour of 60 years they are mounting a 6th production.

Theatre Aurora is a member of ACT-CO (Association of Community Theatres – Central Ontario division). Over the past 60 years, they have presented over 300 shows, many of which have been part of the ACT-CO annual festival. They have a very long list of nominations and awards over the years including 21 nominations and 7 wins including Best Director of a Musical, Best Production of a Musical, and Best New Director for Drama, to name but a few.

For the past 5 years, Theatre Aurora have been involved with the Aurora Public Library (APL) with the "Page to Stage" initiative. All of the scripts from the presented shows at Theatre Aurora are available for the season to the general public at the town library as a reference book so people can read the plays either before or after seeing the plays. They have also held many "pop up" performances at the APL and have provided support to the library's "One Book One Aurora" with staged readings and performances.

Theatre Aurora have a lease agreement for exclusive use of the Factory Theatre building

on Henderson Drive, which they have been leasing from the Town of Aurora since 1973. Their existing space constrains their ability to increase programming and they are always looking for affordable rehearsal space. In addition, Theatre Aurora would like to work directly with the Town to develop programming for children/youth.

OTHER AURORA-BASED CULTURAL PROGRAMMERS

In addition to Council defined Community Partners, a broad range of groups and individuals will be able to make use of a new AMCC that is specifically designed for performances, creation, and community gatherings. The Cultural Master Plan identified 41 community cultural organizations including arts, heritage, performance and service groups among others. The following are some examples of feedback received from organizations that were directly consulted regarding the proposed expansion to the Church Street School property.

Music Aurora

Officially founded in 2016, Music Aurora is a registered not-for-profit organization whose mission is to foster a vibrant and active music scene in the community of Aurora and area for the benefit of its residents, local musicians, schools and businesses that support the music industry and live programming. Music Aurora was formed for the benefit of the music community, which is defined as music lovers, musicians, individuals involved in the music industry and those who are interested in music as an art form.

The Aurora Winter Blues Festival is the premier programming event for Music Aurora. Programming consists of award-winning Aurora Winter Blues Festival, Aurora Music Festival, standalone live music performances, music workshops and Pop up live performances. In addition, since its founding, Music Aurora has hosted 50+ live events/programs; partnered with 23 organizations to provide live music at community events including the annual Street Sale; offered 24+ programs/workshops/seminars; and has provided expertise/assistance for 50+ number of musicians/events.

Music Aurora currently rent space at St. Andrews College, Town Park, Aurora Cultural Centre, and Theatre Aurora for their programming.

Marquee Theatrical Productions

Marquee Theatrical Productions, a registered not-for-profit community organization, was founded in 2003 by its current General Manager, Sheryl Thomas.

Located on Industrial Parkway, they are an award-winning, registered charitable, community theatre group. Aside from teaching musical theatre, dance, acting, piano and voice lessons, their goal is to inspire excellence, motivate learning, uplift the human spirit, build confidence and spark a lifelong appreciation for the arts. By helping children develop their artistic talents and coaching them to strive for excellence, they teach them how to achieve – in the performing arts, in school, and ultimately in life. Marquee Theatrical Productions strives to provide an environment that meets the needs of all children. They believe in the interconnection of physical, mental, social and emotional health and work hard to provide an environment that promotes holistic health and wellness.

Operating year-round, Marquee Theatrical productions teaches valuable life skills to children age 4-18 through the magic of Musical Theatre programs. They reach an audience of over 18,000 and currently have over 750 students/year. Marquee has a successful track record for fundraising through their annual Golf Tournament, online auction, private donations, the Magna Hoedown, Canada Summer Jobs, and the Aurora Mayor's Golf Tournament. As Marquee is self-sustaining, funds raised are primarily used to support less fortunate children from their community partners allowing them the opportunity to attend programs with a partial subsidy or fee waiver. These partners include the Children's Aid Society, Foster Parents, Girls Inc, Yellow Brick House and Big Brothers Big Sisters as well as some lower income local schools.

Marquee proudly take part in annual local community events such as Movies in the Park, Concerts in the Park, Aurora Farmers Market, Halloween Haunted Forest, and Aurora's Christmas Market. One of their absolute favourite events is the Student Hoedown Event with the Magna Hoedown as they volunteer to dress up in character costumes and dance and take photos with all the amazing special needs students from York Region Schools who attend, regardless of whether or not they are a chosen recipient of Hoedown funding.

Marquee Theatrical Productions operate out of rented facilities on Industrial Parkway in Aurora. They rent space at St. Andrew's College and Newmarket Theatre for their production runs, and also rent space at Theatre Aurora, Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, and the Aurora Family Leisure Complex for other programs. Their current facilities are maxed out which limits their growth.

Marquee management feels that the proposed expansion has much to offer and would definitely use available rehearsal spaces (multi-purpose performing arts studio), and the

larger theatre space although it is somewhat limiting in terms of their current needs. They would really like to see the town invest in a larger facility that would house larger stage productions such as Newmarket Theatre in terms of the size of the stage.

Aurora Community Band

The Aurora Community Band (ACB) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to create beautiful concert band music with and for the citizens of Aurora. They welcome participants of all ages who have had some experience playing a concert band instrument.

The band was established in 2011 by founder and music director Gord Shephard, and has a membership of approximately sixty musicians. Their season consists of formal concerts as well as numerous informal performances in the town of Aurora. The band also participates in the York University Community Band Festival. The band has received support from the Town of Aurora, the Aurora Mayor's Golf Charity Classic Event, the Optimist Club of Aurora, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and individual donations under the "Friends of ACB" patron program. The band is also very proud to have received the Town of Aurora "Johnson's Cultural Achievement Award" in recognition of the band's significant cultural contribution to the Town.

Performances by the ACB feature the finest wind band repertoire (classical and pops), that celebrate music from all genres and cultures. They currently perform publicly at Trinity Anglican Church, the Farmers Market, and various Town Events including Canada Day and the Mayor's Anti-Litter Day.

The Aurora Community Band currently rents rehearsal space every Sunday evening at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Formal performances for the band occur at Trinity Anglican Church as this is the only venue in Aurora that provides

sufficient performance and audience space. The Borealis Big Band (an off-shoot of the Aurora Community Band) does not have a permanent home. Practices are held in space at various retirement homes that are provided free of charge. Borealis currently performs at the Newmarket Town Hall as Aurora does not have suitable space. The Cultural Centre is too small and Trinity Anglican Church is not appropriate for cabaret style seating. Gord Shephard cites a growing demand for additional ensemble groups including a New Horizon's Band for 55+ which is being formed this year. All of these ensembles require a flexible performance space.

The Aurora Community Band would like to see a performance area that is flexible and large enough to accommodate a performance ensemble of 60 to 80 performers. The opportunity to create extensive large ensemble community music experiences for Aurora residents of all ages and experiences has been hindered by the lack of access to appropriate rehearsal and performance areas. It is also important that the rental fee for both the rehearsal and performance areas is affordable for community music programs.

The Aurora Community Band is enthusiastic about the proposed expansion but would like to ensure that rehearsal and performance spaces are acoustically designed and dedicated to community music activity. The band also expressed a need for a dedicated secure storage space to store percussion equipment and a community music library.

Aurora Studio Tour

The Aurora Artist Studio Tour was founded in 2010 by Aurora resident Artist Deborah Campo. The tour began as a holiday studio tour and sale within her residence. With growing popularity her Artist Studio Tour idea became open to more artists starting with a telephone call to her friend and fellow artist

Christine Valentini who became involved. The Aurora Artist Holiday Studio Tour opened up on Saturday & Sunday December 4th & 5th with six studio locations featuring ten artists. Snowstorms did not hamper the turnout of excited guests looking for that one of a kind piece of artwork.

In 2011 The Aurora Artist Studio Tour changed to the fall season and has remained a much loved Aurora Cultural event. Now in its 9th year, the Aurora Artist Studio Tour is welcoming the general public to visit twelve artists in five studio locations through Aurora. The Tour is always looking for venues to promote the work of local artists and welcomes the opportunities for creation and exhibition that the expanded space provides, specifically, they would be interested in opportunities for creating works of art (studio space) and for exhibiting (lobby walls).

Aurora Film Circuit

The Aurora Film circuit is a volunteer initiative committed to enhancing arts and culture in the community of Aurora. They are a devoted body of local film enthusiasts who provide audiences with an alternative experience in cinema. Their program includes a wide variety of film choices – Canadian, Documentaries and International films.

The Aurora Film Circuit does eight screenings at a Cineplex Theatre (capacity 300 seats) on Monday nights, runs January to November, breaking in June, July and August. They have subscriptions for 250 seats and the rest are sold as single tickets. Proceeds from all ticket sales support special community projects and programs.

With the new addition to the Church Street School, the Aurora Film Circuit would like to increase their screenings from 8 to 16 in the new space, including matinees.

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The expansion of the Church Street School will effectively create a Cultural Hub as envisioned in the Town's Cultural Master Plan.

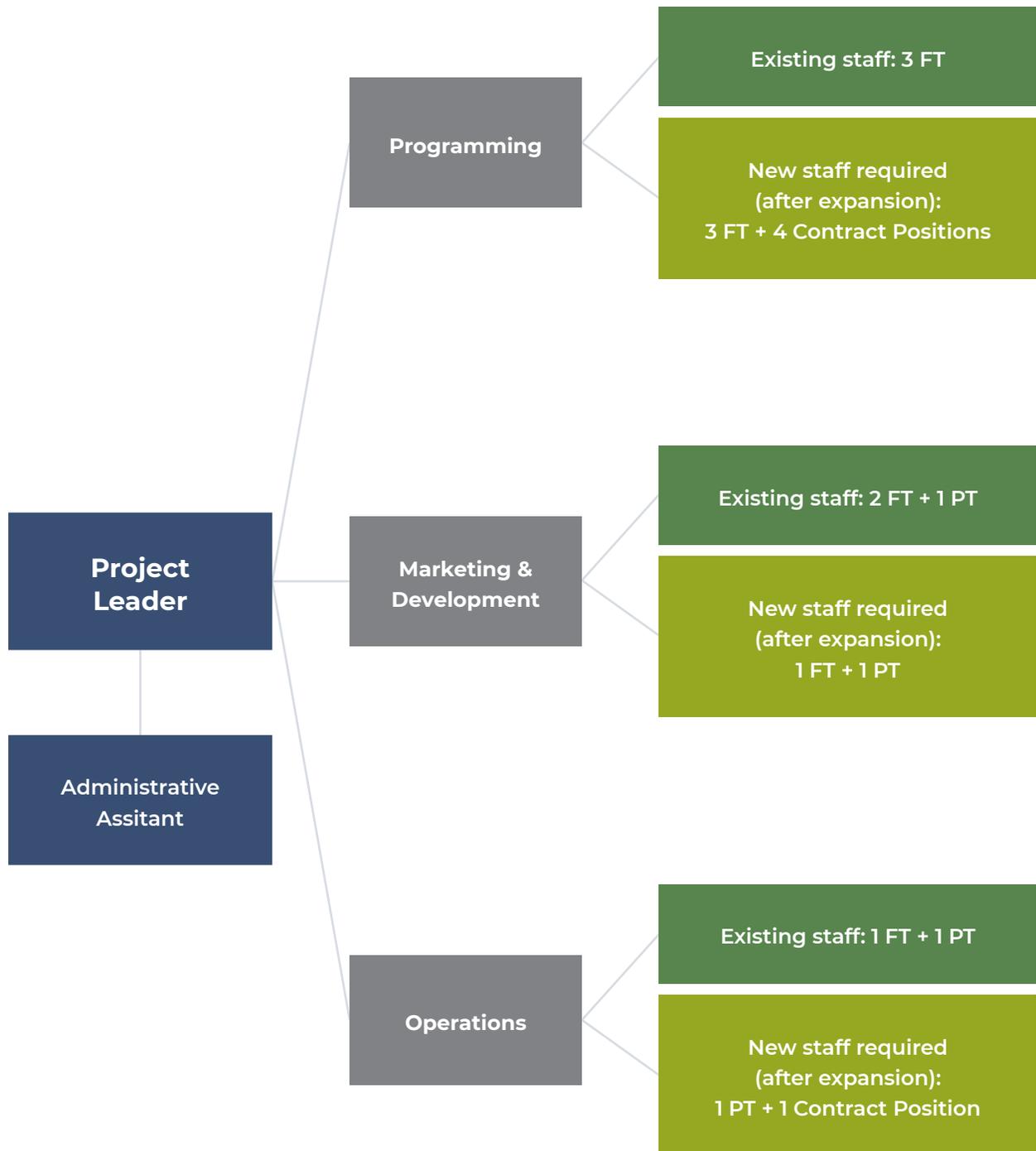
The Town supports a wide range of artistic, creative, and heritage practices through Cultural Partnership Agreements. While this operational structure has been in place for a number of years and is generally considered to be successful, the Town has engaged an outside consultant to review these agreements with the goal of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing cultural partnerships, and to gain an understanding of what cultural partners would like to see from the Town moving forward. This review is expected to be completed in Fall 2019 and will inform the funding, governance, and operation of the cultural hub.

It is anticipated that the new and expanded **Aurora Museum & Cultural Centre** will require an adaptive operating structure that will deal with the expanded "presenting" aspect of the performing and visual arts, function as a cultural service agency to community groups, a real estate and facility management entity, a fundraising and promotional organization and an advocate for culture in general.

The mandate will be defined with a focus on cultural programs for all community members delivered by experienced, qualified arts and heritage professionals. To carry out the proposed responsibilities, here is the draft organizational structure:

Under the proposed structure,

- The community will have a hub for artists & heritage supporters
- Collective in a hub should potentially have the support of centralized services like marketing & development, facility, reception/Box Office etc. – maximizing efficiency and impact
- Ability to be charged with implementing the Cultural Master Plan
- Maximize program development and delivery in all cultural area



PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Winter 2019

- Approval of the revised plan for Library Square including the ice rink
- Approval of the Schematic for the new building
- Tendering and construction of the parking lot and pedestrian connections

Spring 2019

- Commencement and completion of Design Development Phase for new building

Summer 2019

- Commencement of Construction Documentation Phase for Square and new building
- Construction of the parking lot and pedestrian connections completed

Fall 2019

- Approval of funding for tendering and construction of the Square and new building, including 1% of the capital budget for the Square and new building to be dedicated to public art, in accordance with 4.4.a.iv of the Official Plan
- Tendering for construction of the Square and new building

Winter 2020

- Commence construction of new building and laneway connection

Fall 2020

- Commence construction of portions of the Square not being impacted or used for staging for construction of new building
- Completion of laneway connection completed

Fall 2021

- Construction completion for both the Square and new building

RISK ASSESSMENT

There are numerous risks associated with a project of this magnitude. Notable risks include the following:

Increased costs – brought about by numerous factors including trade tariffs with United States and acute market conditions

- Cost Control measures will be put in place through the PMO ensuring that the scope of work is clearly defined via a detailed control budget
- Contingency funds have been included as part of the overall budget to help mitigate an increase in material costs

Construction Risks – risks that delays occur due to adverse weather conditions, resource availability (Labour, Equipment), and scope changes

- PMO will monitor and control schedule and scope of the project to ensure risks and issues are under control and will be addressed properly

Communication Risks – in adequate information flow within the project team

- A Project Governance Framework has been established and is being managed through the PMO for the Town with regular meetings occurring on an ongoing basis with all of the Functional Project Leads including Procurement, to ensure that each department receives the correct information

Labour Issues – potential for strike by trades

- An initial scan of the construction sector reveals no imminent strike potential

Site Conditions – soil/water issues

- A Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment will be conducted to identify potential issues; an allowance has been included in the budget to address any concerns that may arise

Issues Relating to the Tendering Process – Incomplete RFP tender documentation

- Project team will review and approve all RFP tender documents that are developed by consultants and procurement team prior to issue.

BUILDING COSTS

The building costs for the three (3) floor building would be approximately \$28,000,000 (HST excluded)

Material & Labour	\$18,516,840
Excavation & Site Preparation	\$935,000
Specialized Equipment	\$1,889,949
Consultants & Engineers	\$2,235,483
Project Management	\$324,741
Contingency	\$3,303,000
Furniture, Fixtures & equipment	\$415,300
Public Art Contribution	\$256,639



OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS (COLLECTIVE TENANTS)

ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS

- \$2,630,325 (Year 1 operation)

Salaries

- Operations - \$1,533,727
 - Based on Church Street School Museum, Archives and Cultural Centre annual operations actuals, plus increased staffing required as per business plan operations budget
- Artistic Fees, Marketing, Programming, Fundraising, Professional fees, Office and Facility Expenses: \$1,096,598

Programming Expenses

- Anticipated that programming expenses will be offset by program revenues
- The new Centre will require a new annual subsidy of \$620,000 from the Town of Aurora in Year 1

REVENUE POTENTIAL

Fundraising and Sponsorship

The AMCC will need to support their operations with a robust fundraising and sponsorship program.

Given the excitement regarding the development of the new cultural spaces in the AMCC as part of the Church Street School expansion, a fundraising feasibility study will be undertaken as early as possible to gauge the community capacity and assess the potential fundraising success of a multi-million-dollar capital and community fundraising campaign which could assist with the capital and future operating funds required to invest in this new downtown cultural jewel.

A separate consideration could be to raise funds to set-up a reserve (sustainability fund) which would be utilized during the first 3-5 years of operations to cover annual budget shortfalls or to be able to take some risks in delivering new artistic direction, sponsoring local professional artists or supporting new cultural start-up programs.

The new AMCC presents an exciting and pivotal moment for a donor/sponsor to invest in an unprecedented cultural facility. Where sport has been the focus in town, culture

is now being offered like never before in a historic, yet contemporary and magnificent facility. This is a completely unique opportunity for untapped markets to become a partner with the new AMCC on the ground level and as such will offer a donor/sponsor significant value to their business or personal philanthropic goals.

For example, the Stronach Aurora Recreational Complex, is named after its sponsor Frank Stronach who, 20 years ago, donated \$2,000,000 to the construction efforts. To date, his name is a household name associated with this centre. Indeed, we can do the same with our new expansion, creating a new household name for years to come.

Although the actual traffic statistics of the new addition are somewhat of an unknown, there are many other known factors that guides us to defining a confident and “sellable” fundraising campaign.

Known Facility annual traffic statistics:

ACC	30,000
SARC	600,000
AFLC	520,000
Library	260,000
Avg	352,500

One of the aspects donors may be interested in are the number of expected visitors to the AMCC. Some 290,000 patrons visit the current Aurora Public Library and Church Street School locations annually which are located within Library Square, the new home of the AMCC. It will make for a compelling business case to ensure the potential donors will know about this important aspect.

Other influential factors to Library Square area traffic may include:

1. Town Park

- a. Town specific Events
- b. Sporting events (soccer/baseball)

- c. Camps
- d. Farmers Market
- e. Armoury/New Niagara College Food Campus and Facility
- f. Splash Pad/park
- g. Winter Ice surface

2. Village traffic/restaurants – Yonge St.

3. United Church

Intangible Evaluation

When presenting to a prospective sponsor, there are a number of “intangible” considerations that increase the value and desirability of the naming rights opportunity. The new expanded facility offers many.

- Exclusivity
- Unique opportunity – once in a lifetime
- Community Landmark
- Cultural Hub not present before
- Social Media Exposure
- Organic Growth
- Household Name

Each of these considerations adds more dollar value to the equation and as previously mentioned, increases the desirability and therefore negotiation power behind the process. There is much to leverage.

The combination of traffic, external factors and intangible benefits bring us to the conclusion that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for a business to partner with our great community of Aurora; a chance to begin a unique story around the cultural and geographical hub where memories will be made for years to come for both the Sponsor, the Community and the growing Town of Aurora.

Rentals

The anticipated rental revenue for the AMCC will be nearly \$250,000 in year 1 of operations. This conservative forecast is based on current rentals at ACC, in-person meetings with local cultural stakeholders and a survey to the arts community in and around Aurora to estimate their needs for use of the various spaces.

There will be two sets of rental rates, one for not-for-profit organizations and one for corporate rentals.

Programs

Building on the current cultural programming from the Town, the Museum & Archives, the ACC, and other Cultural Partners, the new AMCC will feature robust programming year-round. From a spectacular “Presenting Live Entertainment” series, to expanded exhibits, courses, and camps for children, the new Centre will be bustling with cultural activities.

Other municipalities have shown, that once the AMCC project has been approved, there will be an increased demand from all kinds of community groups who will step forward to take advantage of this beautiful new facility.

This expanded Programming will generate \$185,000 in revenue in year 1, based on current ACC activities and forecasted expanded activities in light of the new and flexible spaces available for the Museum, Gallery, Education and Performing Arts Programmers.

Financial Plan

The Town of Aurora will be applying for any available grants from the various levels of government to fund the design and building for this much needed new cultural community asset.

A common formula for municipal cultural capital projects is one-third from the federal government, one-third from the province and one-third from the community. Often that one third of the community is split between the municipality and the community. The community aspect is often shared, half from the corporate sector, service clubs and foundations, and half from individuals in the community.

Depending on the outcome of the fundraising efforts from other levels of government, the Town will adjust its funding plan for the AMCC accordingly to ensure sufficient funding is available for this project.

A fundraising consultant will be hired as soon as the project has received final Council approval to conduct a feasibility study and to provide guidance in setting up a community fundraising plan that will work for the Town of Aurora.

Branding and Marketing

The new Aurora Museum & Cultural Centre will require a robust branding and launch strategy. The branding launch and inaugural performance and programming season of the AMCC will be crucial for establishing an ongoing and long-term success and sustainability.

Branding and marketing will be in line with a more comprehensive marketing plan for the Aurora cultural precinct and downtown core. In addition to this plan, a robust arts marketing plan will be developed to build initial awareness and ongoing promotion of the AMCC, ensuring long-term operational stability and success.

Engaging the entire Aurora community early on and undertaking market research prior to programming the inaugural year for the AMCC will be paramount. This should also include collaborating with every community cultural

partner and programmer that will be renting new spaces in the AMCC. These local and professional arts entrepreneurs will require ample support from the AMCC organization to ensure that their rental events and programs are successful. This in turn will ensure that the AMCC will be an operational and cultural success story, by supporting their operations with programming from a diverse group of stakeholders.

Some of the recommended marketing components:

- Actively promote the various arts forms presented at the AMCC to both local patrons and visitors
- Grow attendance by continuing to engage current patrons and cultivating new audiences
- Establish a presence in the local community as the arts and cultural leader
- Provide more opportunity to experience and generate performances, exhibits and classes that resonate with the local community and the broader region
- Embrace local multicultural groups that exist within the community, including the local Aboriginal Community
- Build partnership and collaborative marketing opportunities with cultural organizations

Communication Plan

The Library Square project, which includes the expansion of the current Church Street School property into a new home for culture in the Town of Aurora, and an important community transformation piece in the development of a Cultural Hub, has been talked about for many years.

The current Mayor and Council are committed to seeing this important new economic development initiative and cultural asset completed during this term of council for all residents to enjoy when it opens in late 2021.

In order for this investment to provide the cultural and economic impact that has been envisioned, a sound communication plan needs to be developed as soon as the project has been approved, which will include a project webpage, robust social media and digital engagement and even some traditional advertising, to continually update all stakeholders and residents with the latest information about the project.

Fundraising, rental agreements, building of new cultural capacity, pre-marketing and setting up an organizational infrastructure which will be able to lead, operate and support this new cultural investment, and many other aspects will require a continued presence and support by the Town of Aurora and its residents.

A sound communication plan will assist with making this project become a catalyst for downtown redevelopment and add to community pride while building the Town of Aurora's reputation as the most desirable community to establish a new corporate presence or new family roots.



AURORA MUSEUM & CULTURAL CENTRE 3 YEAR OPERATING FORECAST

	Current Status	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
REVENUES				
Federal Grants	-	52,000	53,300	54,633
Provincial Grants	-	25,500	26,138	26,791
User Fees	-	758,762	777,731	797,175
Fees & Services	-	84,581	86,696	88,863
Sponsorship/ Donations	-	177,736	182,179	186,734
Misc	-	12,100	12,403	12,713
TOTAL REVENUE	-	1,110,680	1,138,446	1,166,908
COSTS				
- Direct:				
Salaries & Benefits	255,925	1,533,727	1,572,070	1,611,372
Artistic Expenses	-	588,352	603,061	618,137
Program Expenses	495,188	25,918	26,566	27,230
		751,113	2,201,697	2,256,740
- Indirect:				
Marketing/ Fundraising	-	99,424	101,910	104,457
Office/Support Services	8,751	92,335	94,643	97,009
Start-up FF&E	-	-	-	-
Facility Costs	135,500	206,450	211,611	216,902
Specialized Equip Reserve	-	50,000	51,250	52,531
Cont'n	-	21,500	22,038	22,588
Insurance/ Permits/Licenses	-	12,619	12,934	13,258
Bank/Credit Card Charges	-	144,251	494,386	506,746
TOTAL COSTS	895,364	2,630,325	2,696,083	2,763,485
Required Contribution from The Town of Aurora	895,364	1,519,645	1,557,637	1,596,577
Current Town Contribution		895,364		

APPENDIX

1. BACKGROUND MATERIAL REVIEWED

Aurora Collection (Final Report)
Aurora Cultural Centre: Professional Arts Season 2018/19
Aurora Cultural Centre: Strategic Plan
Aurora Cultural Master Plan
Aurora Cultural Precinct Plan Presentation
Aurora Library Square Fact Sheet
Aurora Museum & Archives: Building the Foundation – A Three-Year Plan
Aurora Town Square (Library Square) Presentation
Church Street School New Addition: Architectural drawings (Draft)
Cultural Service agreements with various cultural partners
Church Street School Cultural Centre: Strategic and Business Planning Study (Novita Report)
York Region Arts Council Research: Creative Space Feasibility Study

2. RENTAL SURVEY OF CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

2 Thumbs Up Production	Aurora Seniors Association	Rotary Club of Aurora
A2Y Dance Inc	Aurora Sports Hall of Fame	Society of York Region Artists
Attitude Productions	Canadian Children's Theatre Company	St. Andrew's Scottish Country Dance Group
Aurora Artists Studio Tour	CDA Dance Academy	Star Productions
Aurora Camera Club	Elva's Piano Studio	Theatre Aurora
Aurora Community Band	European Club	Wavestage Theatre Company
Aurora Cultural Centre	Eva Folks	York Chamber Ensemble
Aurora Farmers' Market	Judy Sherman	York Dance Academy
Aurora Film Circuit	Marquee Theatrical Productions	York Harmony Chorus
Aurora Garden and Horticultural Society	Niagara College	York Region Arts Council
Aurora Historical Society	Northern Lights Dance Studio	Yunhong Art Studio
Aurora Music Academy	Ontario Registered Music Teachers Association	Yvonne Kelly Dance Academy (Formerly Irish Dance Studio)
Aurora Public Library	Pine Tree Potters Guild	

3. REVIEW OF RENTAL RATES OF SIMILAR ARTS & CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GTA MUNICIPALITIES

Town of Aurora

City of Orillia

Town of Stouffville

City of Barrie

Town of Newmarket

City of Vaughan

City of Markham

City of Richmond Hill

City of Burlington

City of Burlington

Town of Oakville

City of Mississauga

City of St. Catharines

City of Guelph

City of Brantford

Town of Caledon

City of Kingston

City of Brampton

Town of Orangeville

Town of Gravenhurst

Town of Huntsville

City of Ottawa

City of Sarnia

City of Windsor

Aurora Cultural Centre, etc – various cultural partners

Opera House – Studio Theatre

Lebovic Centre for Arts & Entertainment

Five Points Theatre, Georgian Theatre

Newmarket Theatre

City Playhouse

Flato Markham Theatre

Centre for the Performing Arts

Art Gallery of Burlington

Performing Arts Centre

Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts

Mississauga Living Arts Centre

FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre

River Run Centre

Sanderson Centre

Townhall Players

Grand Theatre, Tett Centre

Rose Theatre, Cyril Clark Theatre

Opera House

Opera House

Algonquin Theatre

Ottawa Art Gallery

Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery

Art Gallery of Windsor





100 John West Way, Box 1000
Aurora, Ontario, L4G 6J1

interkom.