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Town of Aurora
Information Report
No. CMS21-034

Subject: Public Art Master Plan – Status Update

Prepared by: Phillip Rose, Manager of Aurora Town Square

Department: Community Services

Date: November 16, 2021

In accordance with the Procedure By-law, any Member of Council may request that this Information Report be placed on an upcoming General Committee or Council meeting agenda for discussion.

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the initiatives undertaken since February 2021 to develop the Town’s first-ever Public Art Master Plan.

- The Town formed a Public Art Working Group, the purpose of which is to advise the municipality on the development of the Public Art Master Plan.
- The Public Art Working Group has met three times since May 2021.
- The Town released an online survey in June 2021 to gather data from the public that will inform the development of the Public Art Master Plan.
- The Public Art Working Group is currently organizing a Public Art Forum for early 2022.

Background

In February, Council directed staff to develop a Public Art Master Plan (PAMP) that begins with internal engagement and the formation of a Public Art Working Group (PAWG), followed by public engagement, consultation with Mayor and Council, and ending with the final draft of the PAMP for Council’s consideration. Since February, staff have taken several steps to advance the PAMP’s development.

Analysis

The Town formed a Public Art Working Group, the purpose of which is to advise the municipality on the development of the Public Art Master Plan.

Between April and May, staff released an online call for PAWG members. As a result, six individuals with a range of expertise and experience were selected to join the group alongside Town staff. The PAWG includes the following members:

1. Andrea Araujo, Artist, Special Events Program Assistant
2. Grazyna Tonkiel, Community Member, Performing and Visual Artist
3. Jennifer Worden, Community Member
4. Suzanne Haines, Executive Director, Aurora Cultural Centre
5. Lisa Hausz, Manager of Economic Development and Policy, Town of Aurora
6. Phillip Rose, Manager of Aurora Town Square, Town of Aurora
7. Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services, Town of Aurora

The Public Art Working Group has met three times since May 2021.

The first PAWG meeting was held on May 31 and focused on connecting as a group and setting an initial strategic intent for the group's work. During the second meeting in June, the PAWG discussed how best to inventory existing Public Art assets in Aurora, the need for a Public Art Survey, and public engagement opportunities throughout the summer. The third meeting took place at the end of September and the group reviewed the survey results and began to make plans for the Public Art Forum in 2022.

The Town released an online survey in June 2021 to gather data from the public that will inform the development of the Public Art Master Plan.

The survey included 12 questions and between June and October, the Town received 84 responses. The following is a summary of survey responses.

Question	Response(s)
What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of the Town of Aurora?	The following is a sample of the overall responses: safe, growing, friendly, privileged, big heart, nature focused, charming, old school, family oriented, clean, not a destination, divided, overcrowded, expensive, bedroom community, close-knit, interesting, boring, peaceful, active, quaint

<p>What makes Aurora special/unique (why do you choose to live/work in Aurora)?</p>	<p>The following is a sample of the overall responses: sense of community, access to everything, small town feel, community, subsidized housing, small but close to the city, nature, my roots are here, friends, changing demographics, central in York Region, close to family, low crime rate, the people that live here, quieter than most towns, all the amenities, great parks, variety of events and activities</p>
<p>What do you think the role of public art should be in Aurora?</p> <p>Note: Respondents could choose up to 6 responses from a list of 18 options. Only the top 5 responses are listed here.</p>	<p>Bring a sense of whimsy and delight to everyday spaces, 62%</p> <p>Provide people the opportunity to experience art, 61%</p> <p>Support and nurture growth of the local arts community, 56%</p> <p>Nurture art appreciation and participation in our youth, 36%</p> <p>Anchor local gathering places in the community, 35%</p>
<p>What kind of public art would you like to see in Aurora?</p> <p>Note: Respondents could choose all that apply from a list of 7 options.</p>	<p>Artful public spaces, 77%</p> <p>Permanent sculptures, 63%</p> <p>Murals, 63%</p> <p>Street Art, 56%</p> <p>Changing sculptures, 52%</p> <p>Temporary installations, 48%</p> <p>Other (please specify), 10%</p>
<p>What type of public art are you most interested in experiencing?</p> <p>Note: Respondents could choose up to 3 responses from a list of 9 options. Only the top 5 responses are listed here.</p>	<p>Art about nature, 55%</p> <p>Historical, 36%</p> <p>Whimsical, 38%</p> <p>Interactive, 38%</p>

	Reactive (i.e., reacts to environmental changes), 33%
Where in Aurora would you like to see public art? Note: Respondents could choose all that apply from a list of 10 options. Only the top 5 responses are listed here.	Historic downtown, 82% Public parks/playgrounds, 74% Outside on a building, 58% Sidewalks and alleyways, 52% Natural settings, 50%
What public art opportunities are important for Aurora? Respondents could choose all that apply from a list of 8 options. Only the top 5 responses are listed here.	Opportunity for local artists, makers, performers, entrepreneurs, 86% Art openings and events, 67% Interactive educational opportunities, 60% Hands-on community art making experiences, 55% Temporary art projects, 52%

The Public Art Working Group is currently organizing a Public Art Forum for early 2022.

The purpose of the Public Art Forum will be to seek additional input from leaders across various sectors during a day of presentations, discussions, and hands-on workshops. The Forum will be the last major piece of the project's public engagement strategy, following which time, staff will begin to draft the PAMP.

Advisory Committee Review

Staff will engage with relevant advisory committees and task forces to ensure their perspectives are incorporated into the final Public Art Master Plan.

Legal Considerations

None.

Financial Implications

To date, contributions totalling \$344,900 have been made to the Public Art reserve including all accumulated investment income to date. The Town has not used any of these reserve funds nor has it earmarked any of its funds for any future projects.

An important component of the Public Art Master Plan will be a financial strategy that will outline how public art projects may be funded.

Communications Considerations

There is an Engage Aurora page dedicated to the Public Art Master Plan. Engagement has been ongoing in this process and will continue as it evolves. As decisions are made regarding this Master Plan, the Town will also continue to inform stakeholders and residents by way of the Town's website, engagement portal, and social media accounts.

Link to Strategic Plan

The Public Art Master Plan supports the following Strategic Plan goal of celebrating and promoting our culture in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- **Develop a 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**
- **Actively promote and support a plan to revitalize the downtown that includes culture**

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may provide further direction.

Conclusions

This report provides an overview of ongoing efforts to develop Aurora's Public Art Master Plan and highlights next steps to be taken by the Town and the Public Art Working Group.

Attachments

None.

Previous Reports

CMS21-004, Public Art Policy and Public Art Master Plan, February 2, 2021

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on October 28, 2021

Approvals

Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services Department

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer