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**Subject:** Cultural Master Plan Status Report  
**Prepared by:** Phil Rose-Donahoe, Manager of Library Square  
**Department:** Community Services  
**Date:** October 15, 2019

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**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 information regarding the status of Cultural Master Plan (CMP) implementation activities between 2014 and 2019, as well as anticipated cultural planning initiatives for 2020 and beyond.

- Summary of Strategic Directions that anchor and provide a framework for the CMP
- Overview of key Actions over the past five years that demonstrate the Town's commitment to municipal cultural planning
- Highlight of ongoing and upcoming cultural planning efforts that continue to support the CMP implementation

## **Background**

Aurora's CMP planning process launched in August 2013 with a research phase that involved an examination of relevant Town plans and strategies to define the planning context within which the CMP was to be developed.

The Town also hosted a series of community engagement sessions that included surveys, face-to-face interviews, focus groups and a visioning session with key stakeholders. The feedback gathered during the engagement phase informed the development of the CMP's Strategic Directions and Actions.

The initial cultural planning process concluded with Council's endorsement of the Town's first-ever CMP in June 2014. Because cultural planning is a dynamic process

influenced by changing needs and opportunities within the municipality, the CMP was developed as a living document that requires regular updates to ensure it continues to reflect present needs and future aspirations.

## **Analysis**

### **Summary of Strategic Directions that anchor and provide a framework for the CMP**

The CMP is built on four Strategic Directions that provide a framework and set a context for a collection of associated Strategies and Actions.

- Strategic Direction 1: Define the Municipality's Role and Build Partnerships
- Strategic Direction 2: Expand Culture's Role in Economic Development
- Strategic Direction 3: Build a Strong and Vital Cultural Sector
- Strategic Direction 4: Enhance Access to Cultural Resources

### **Overview of key Actions over the past five years that demonstrate the Town's commitment to municipal cultural planning**

Over the previous five years, the Town has successfully implemented a number of the CMP's Actions. Of the Plan's 53 Actions, 20 have either been completed or are in progress.

The following is a summary of cultural planning accomplishments over the last five years (in no particular order):

- Key performance indicators and performance measures developed based on industry best practice that will be used to evaluate funding requests and the impact of cultural investments; to be rolled out in 2020.
- Development of a Cultural Asset Directory, the goal of which is to promote the cultural sector and facilitate the interaction and usage among cultural members and the community at large. The Directory is a continuation of cultural resource mapping efforts that coincided with the development of the CMP. It will be launched via the Town's refreshed website that is currently under development.
- Support of a cultural partners network that assists with the ongoing implementation of cultural planning initiatives. The most recent cultural partners gathering was held in July 2018 and a follow-up meeting is planned for November 2019.

- Approval of the Library Square Business Plan in March 2019 which complements the Promenade Plan and positions Library Square as an economic driver that will support local businesses within the Cultural Precinct.
- Transfer of the Aurora Collection to the Town which now resides with the Aurora Museum & Archives.
- Canada 150 celebrations in 2017 which provided an opportunity for collaboration among culture and heritage groups.

### **Highlight of ongoing and upcoming cultural planning efforts that continue to support CMP implementation**

Many of the Actions currently in progress or planned for subsequent years are associated with the development of the Library Square project, which addresses a number of cultural planning objectives identified in the CMP, including the following:

- Development of tourism packages offering integrated cultural, culinary and other experiences locally and regionally. Packages are to be developed in anticipation of the Library Square grand opening in 2022.
- Report PDS18-076 committed to include a 1% public art contribution in the Library Square budget. In parallel with the development of Library Square, staff will develop a Public Art Policy and Program in 2020 with a projected completion date of fall 2020.
- Continued exploration of how Library Square can support BIA efforts by highlighting the value of shopping locally and supporting cultural activities along Yonge St.
- Convene an annual Cultural Summit beginning in 2021 that brings together cultural stakeholders and community members to review progress on the implementation of the CMP, to identify new opportunities and initiatives, and spotlight local artists, musicians, artisans and cultural professionals.
- Consideration will be given to establishing a Cultural Awards program to recognize innovation and achievement in enriching the cultural life of the community.
- Strengthening of ties between sports and cultural tourism with ASHOF through the provision of curatorial services on behalf of the Aurora Museum & Archives. Additionally, the Aurora Sport Plan has continued its progress through the Town's Sports and Community Development Specialist.
- Build on existing efforts to strengthen cultural programming for youth. The Library Square project will provide new opportunities for youth programming, such as

filmmaking camp, pop-up youth lounge, music programs, volunteer fairs and more.

- In conjunction with the Library Square project, and in partnership with the local business community, signage and wayfinding will be developed to profile cultural resources in the downtown core.

## **Advisory Committee Review**

In 2013, an ad-hoc working group was appointed by Council to oversee and help guide development of the CMP. The working group was comprised of representatives from the municipality along with individuals representing a range of cultural, community, and business interests.

The Town's cultural partners have also been engaged over the last couple of years and will continued to be engaged when the CMP is revised in 2020.

## **Legal Considerations**

Not Applicable

## **Financial Implications**

Not Applicable

## **Communications Considerations**

This report will be posted to the Town website for the general public. Ongoing or new projects will be communicated following the development of communications strategies.

## **Link to Strategic Plan**

The Cultural 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**

While a number of Actions have been completed or are in the process of being implemented, the majority of Actions captured in the 2014-2019 CMP were not achieved. In part, this is due to competing corporate and departmental priorities and the absence of a staff person directly responsible for implementing the CMP on behalf of the municipality

Nevertheless, the Town has made progress on implementing a number of significant Actions identified in the CMP. Library Square has become a focal point of cultural planning efforts and its development will allow the Town to continue to address a range of cultural planning objectives in the coming years.

Staff remain committed to overseeing cultural planning initiatives currently underway and intend to refresh the CMP in 2020. The updated CMP will carry forward uncompleted initiatives and introduce new ones that reflect the current state of cultural development in Aurora. In developing the revised Plan, staff will undertake a series of public engagement initiatives to ensure it speaks to the needs of the cultural community and residents.

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1 – Town of Aurora Cultural Master Plan (2014 -2019) Status Update

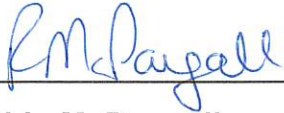
## **Previous Reports**

PRS 14-022 – Cultural Master Plan

**Pre-submission Review**

Agenda Management Team review on October 3, 2019

**Departmental Approval**



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**Robin McDougall**  
Director  
Community Services

**Approved for Agenda**



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**Doug Nadorozny**  
Chief Administrative Officer

Town of Aurora Cultural Master Plan (2014-2019) Status Update	Plan & Activities	Status
<b>Strategic Direction 1: Define the Municipality's Role and Build Partnerships</b>		
<b>Strategies: 1. Address Administrative and Resource Requirements to Implement the Plan</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
1.1 Add Culture to the name of the Parks and Recreation Department. Once established, the Director of Parks and Recreation will report on staffing and budget requirements in the 2015 budget.	N/A since department name was changed to Community Services	
1.2 Convene a regular forum for staff across departments to support working together to implement the Cultural Master Plan and support ongoing cultural development.		
1.3 Strengthen marketing and promote greater use of the Town's current Recreation and Culture Community Grants.		
1.4 Determine indicators and performance measures to demonstrate and evaluate the impacts of implementing the Cultural Master Plan in Aurora. Ensure these indicators are consistent with the Town's existing Key Performance Indicators.	Research key performance indicators in arts & cultural sector and benchmark best practice in the industry; consultation with key cultural partners about the current status and feasibility; communicate and roll out for data tracking and reporting	Ongoing; aiming for completion Fall 2019-Winter 2020
<b>Strategies: 2. Build and Sustain Public, Private and Community Partnerships</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
2.1 Recruit champions from the community to act as advocates to support implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and ongoing cultural development.	Organized and conducted a facilitated cultural partners workshop to identify CMP implementation status, to determine needs of the cultural partners & community, to identify short-term goals and long-term requirements	Completed July 2018
2.2 Ensure strong participation from business and community leaders in the recommended Annual Cultural Summit.	To plan for an Annual Cultural Summit in the coming years. Starting in 2021	Ongoing
2.3 Consider an application to artsVest, a Business for the Arts signature matching incentive and sponsorship training program, designed to spark new business sponsorship of arts and culture and to build capacity in Canada's cultural sector.		
2.4. Explore opportunities for establishing a Community Leadership Group to support implementation of the Cultural Master Plan. Look at models in other municipalities such as Richmond Hill for guidance. Ensure strong representation from Council and staff on the Community Leadership Group.	Recruitment and hiring of the Library Square Manager and defined the mandate of updating and implementation of the Cultural Master Plan in 2020	The Library Square Manager has been hired and work started in July 2019
<b>Strategic Direction 2: Expand Culture's Role in Economic Development</b>		
<b>Strategies: 1. Leverage Cultural and Heritage Resources to Support Downtown Revitalization</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		

Town of Aurora Cultural Master Plan (2014-2019) Status Update	Plan & Activities	Status
1.1 Advocate for implementation of the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan as a lever for putting cultural spaces and resources at the centre of downtown revitalization.	A pro forma operating budget and Business Plan for the Library Square project was developed by the consultant, working in collaboration with Town staff; approved by Council on March 21, 2019	The project is on track and ready to advance to the next stage of Construction Documentation
1.2 Actively promote the recommendation in the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan to establish a Cultural Precinct (encompassing Aurora Public Library, the Church Street School Cultural Centre, Trinity Church, The Wells Street School, the Armoury and the Town Park). Consider opportunities for marketing the Precinct as a focal point and key destination in the community.	A pro forma operating budget and Business Plan for the Library Square project was developed by the consultant, working in collaboration with Town staff; approved by Council on March 21, 2019	The project is on track and ready to advance to the next stage of Construction Documentation
1.3 Develop and implement a professional Public Art Policy and Program as recommended in the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan, the Town Strategic Plan and the Official Plan.	To plan for Public Art Policy and Program in 2020 in support of the Library Square project and Promenade Plan	Ongoing
1.4 Ensure the public art policy and program addresses the maintenance needs of current murals as well as establishing proactive plans to expand an Aurora murals program.	To plan for Public Art Policy and Program in 2020	Ongoing
1.5 Explore opportunities for enhancement of the Hillary House site.		
1.6 Consistent with recommendations in the Aurora Promenade Concept Plan, examine opportunities to extend cultural facilities and opportunities in Library Square. Options could include a public square as a venue for cultural programming to adaptive reuse of an existing building (the former Public Library or Senior's Centre) as a multi-use cultural facility that could address needs identified through community consultation including affordable rehearsal space, artists' studios, multi-purpose meeting spaces, etc.	A proforma operating budget and Business Plan for the Library Square project was developed by the consultant, working in collaboration with Town staff; it was approved by Council on March 21, 2019	The project is on track and ready to advance to the next stage of Construction Documentation
1.7 Explore opportunities for the adaptive reuse of suitable buildings/sites to serve as cultural hubs with potential artists' studio space, low cost space for emerging creative cultural industries, etc. Toronto Artscape5 is a potential resource for advising on such uses based on extensive experience with similar projects.		
1.8 Contribute to making Yonge Street a destination through expanded cultural and entertainment activities. Consider designating one day per month throughout the year (e.g. 'First Fridays') as a focused opportunity to program the downtown area with cultural activities. Pay particular attention to the potential of music as part of this regular programming.	To be considered as part of Library Square activities once opened	
1.9 Explore opportunities to involve artists in Town infrastructure/development projects in the community.	Development of a Town of Aurora's first Cultural Directory. To be launched on-line via the Town's refreshed website	Ongoing; aiming for completion in Fall 2019-Winter 2020
<b>Strategies: 2. Grow Aurora's Creative Cultural Industries</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
2.1 Establish a local 'Creative Minds' initiative providing an opportunity for creative enterprises (including creative cultural industries) to build networks and identify opportunities for collaborative initiatives. Successful models in other communities such as Prince Edward County and Hastings County can be examined as a guide to establishing such an initiative. The Aurora Chamber of Commerce would be ideally positioned to play a leadership role. Consideration might be given to exploring a regional initiative involving a number of surrounding municipalities targeting growth in creative cultural industries.	Development of a Town of Aurora's Cultural Directory	Ongoing; aiming for completion in Fall 2019-Winter 2020



Town of Aurora Cultural Master Plan (2014-2019) Status Update	Plan & Activities	Status
2.2 Explore opportunities to establish shared space for artists/artisans and new creative enterprises in empty or underutilized buildings in the downtown area.		
<b>Strategies: 3. Expand Tourism</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
3.1 Offer support and assistance in developing tourism packages offering integrated cultural, culinary and other experiences locally and regionally. Work collaboratively with the York Region Arts Council and Central County Tourism in the development of these packages.		
3.2 Consider opportunities emerging from building stronger ties between sports and cultural tourism.	Provision of curatorial services on behalf of the Aurora Museum & Archives. Additionally, the Aurora Sport Plan has continued its progress through the Town's Sports and Community Development Specialist.	Ongoing
3.3 Consider the development of a tourism strategy for Aurora		
<b>Strategic Direction 3: Build a Strong and Vital Cultural Sector</b>		
<b>Strategies: 1. Strengthen Collaboration Among Cultural and Heritage Groups</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
1.1 Convene regular networking sessions for culture and heritage groups at the Aurora Cultural Centre.		
1.2 Convene an annual Cultural Summit to bring together cultural stakeholders and wider community members to review progress on the implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and to identify new opportunities and initiatives. The Summit can be a vehicle for striking task-based working groups to advance recommendations in the Cultural Master Plan or new cultural initiatives.	To plan for an Annual Cultural Summit in the coming years (2021)	Ongoing
1.3 Explore a targeted community-wide program designed to recruit a new generation of cultural volunteers to assume leadership positions in support of cultural organizations and activities.		
1.4 Consider the opportunity for Aurora playing a leadership role in convening a meeting of municipalities in York Region that have completed cultural plans or cultural mapping projects with a view to strengthen communication and explore potential collaborative initiatives.	Cultural Summit in 2021	Ongoing
1.5 Undertake a systematic audit of places and spaces in the community where cultural activities currently or potentially could take place (e.g. religious institutions, schools, commercial spaces). Make this database publicly accessible to assist cultural groups in finding potential venues for their activities.		
1.6 Consider leveraging Canada's 150th Anniversary in 2017 as a vehicle for promoting collaboration among culture and heritage groups.	Celebrated Canada's 150th birthday in 2017 including collaboration among culture and heritage groups	Completed in 2017
1.7 Develop strong municipal direction in determining the future of the Aurora Collection.		
<b>Strategies: 2. Increase Awareness of Cultural Resources</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		

Town of Aurora Cultural Master Plan (2014-2019) Status Update	Plan & Activities	Status
2.1 Communicate and promote the Cultural Master Plan widely in the community.	Engage more stakeholders in development of next CMP	Ongoing
2.2 Ensure culture is well represented in the Town's broader marketing and promotion efforts.	Manager of Library Square to liaise with Town's Communication staff	Ongoing
2.3 Develop and publish a Cultural Guide comparable to the current Leisure Guide to promote cultural activities and resources.	Manager of Library Square to liaise with Town's Communication staff	Ongoing
2.4 Establish an interactive cultural map using cultural mapping data collected for the Cultural Master Plan.	Started a Cultural Portal initiative in 2016; currently developing a Town of Aurora's Cultural Directory; an interactive cultural map could be the next phase	Ongoing; aiming for completion Fall 2019-Winter 2020
2.5 Develop and implement an integrated and branded cultural marketing strategy to support increase awareness of cultural resources in Aurora.		
2.6 Leverage auroraculture.ca to build a centralized cultural website and portal, potentially linked to the interactive cultural map, as a central reference point supporting cultural development in the community. Ensure strong social media content and connections for the site.		
2.7 Establish a community-driven calendar of events to promote cultural activities. Ensure a link from the calendar to YorkScene.		
2.8 Continue to work collaboratively with YorkScene and Central Counties Tourism to support regional marketing and promotion of cultural activity.		
2.9 Strengthen signage and wayfinding in the community to profile cultural resources.		
2.10 Build on and extend current efforts in cross-promotion and marketing among cultural organizations and activities.		
2.11 Develop a 'Cultural Postcard' to be distributed to new residents by Welcome Wagon introducing cultural resources and activities in the community.		
2.12 Consider establishing a Mayor's Cultural Award to recognize innovation and achievement in enriching the cultural life of the community. The Award should be available to both individuals and organizations.	Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts event held at Aurora Cultural Centre since 2011	Ongoing
2.13 Continue to support and promote the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame.	Aurora Sports Hall of Fame is included in all Cultural Partners consultations and workshops. Provision of curatorial services on behalf of the Aurora Museum & Archives.	Ongoing
<b>Strategies: 3. Build on Current Activities to Strengthen Festivals and Events</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
3.1 Encourage greater collaboration, coordination and promotion among festivals and events.		
3.2 Consider establishing a new signature cultural festival to help create a unique cultural brand for Aurora.		
<b>Strategic Direction 4: Enhance Access to Cultural Resources</b>		
<b>Strategies: 1. Respond to the Cultural Aspirations of an Increasingly Diverse Community</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		

Town of Aurora Cultural Master Plan (2014-2019) Status Update	Plan & Activities	Status
1.1 Promote attendance and active participation of new residents and diverse communities at the annual Cultural Summit and in Working Groups struck to address specific tasks or initiatives.	To plan for an Annual Cultural Summit in the coming years (2021)	Ongoing
1.2 Encourage existing cultural institutions and activities in Aurora to continue their efforts to reach out to diverse communities in their programming.		
1.3 Consider establishing an annual event to profile diverse cultural traditions in the community.	To plan for an Annual Cultural Summit in the coming years (2021)	Ongoing
<b>Strategies: 2. Promote Participation in Cultural Activities From Across the Community</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
2.1 Consider the potential to organize cultural events or programs in new and emerging neighbourhoods in the community.		
2.2 Explore opportunities for making use of churches, schools and community centres in the delivery of these programs.		
<b>Strategies: 3. Address the Needs of Youth and Seniors in the Community</b>		
<b>Actions:</b>		
3.1 Consider establishing one or more festivals or events geared to the interests of youth. Engage youth in the determination of such an event(s).	Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts event held at Aurora Cultural Centre since 2011	Ongoing
3.2 Consider establishing an apprenticeship and mentoring program to connect young and emerging artists/artisans with experienced senior practitioners.		
3.3 Build on existing efforts to strengthen cultural programming for youth in all Aurora cultural facilities and activities.	Build on existing efforts to strengthen cultural programming for youth. The Library Square project will provide new opportunities for youth programming, such as filmmaking camp, pop-up youth lounge, music programs, volunteer fairs and more.	Ongoing
3.4 Explore opportunities for connecting youth (potentially through the schools) with seniors in establishing an oral history project. Collaboration and leadership roles could be played by the Aurora Historical Society and the Seniors Association.		