

Mayor floats potential of new Town Hall in Downtown Core

The Yonge and Wellington area was home to Aurora's seat of government from the Town's earliest days until the present Town Hall was opened on what is now John West Way in 1991.

But, would a move back to the historic downtown core benefit the community?

That's a question being posed by Mayor Tom Mrakas.

In a Notice of Motion which will be introduced at Council next month, Mayor Mrakas says this is an idea worth exploring.

The motion, if approved at the April 25 Council meeting, will task staff with investigating 'the potential' of a new Town Hall on the southeast corner of Yonge and Mosley Streets, currently occupied by two commercial and professional buildings purchased by the Town as part of the overall vision for Aurora Town Square, formerly known as Library Square.

The motion also calls for a look at the possibility of selling the existing Town Hall property at 100 John West Way and for the Town's Economic Development Board to be 'consulted' as part of the staff report.

'The Town purchased the lands at Yonge Street and Mosley Street with the intent to encourage redevelopment in support of Downtown Revitalization, and in support of Town Square,' says Mayor Mrakas in his motion. 'The redevelopment of the Town-owned site at the southeast corner [of Yonge and Mosley] as a home of the new Town Hall would assist in achieving downtown revitalization objectives.

'The redevelopment of the Yonge Street and Mosley site as the new Town Hall would contribute to the overall enhancement of the Aurora Town Square as an attractive, vibrant, people-focused local community hub in the Yonge Street Corridor. The redevelopment of the Yonge Street and Mosley site as the new Town Hall in Downtown Aurora would regenerate a destination, creating necessary foot traffic for a revitalized downtown area.'

The pandemic, he added, 'has led to alternative work arrangements in many office environments, including staff in municipal administration buildings, resulting in an opportunity to build a more efficient, effective and sustainable model for use of space on existing Town-owned lands.'

The sale of the current Town Hall would 'provide available land for a range and mix of housing opportunities for the Town, as encouraged in the Official Plan and Aurora Promenade Plan, and the sale of 100 John West Way' could generate the funds necessary to construct the new Town Hall.'

At the Town's inception, the municipal government met in several places in what's now the historic core, before finding a permanent location at the long-since-demolished Farmers' Market building across the street from the land now in question, at the northeast corner of the same intersection.

Town Hall was subsequently re-located a few doors down to a former bank building just north of the historic Post Office building before the Wellington Street West home of the York Region District School Board was built as a shared space for both the Board and the Town.

When the present Town Hall was completed in the early 1990s, it was on the outskirts of the more populated parts of the community, but it has since developed into the heart of one of Aurora's busiest residential and commercial quadrants with the Aurora Seniors' Centre built facing the municipal office.

By Brock Weir
Editor
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter