

Aurora seeks public input on Active Transportation Master Plan

If you're going to use municipal services, you should weigh in on the services you want.

This is the message from Town of Aurora staff who are currently seeking input on the municipality's updated Active Transportation Master Plan.

Public input is being sought to "create a more connected community where active forms of mobility are convenient, accessible and enjoyable," said the municipality in a statement.

"Aurora Connects will lay out a vision for an expanded network of trails, cycling facilities and other types of physical infrastructure to support walking, cycling and wheeling. It will also identify how the Town can support new programs to get more people moving actively as they make their way across Aurora, creating a healthier, more sustainable community.

"As the project gets underway, the project team wants to hear from you."

Feedback is being sought through survey and mapping tools available online at engageaurora.ca/atmp.

"The plan will be developed as a series of discussion papers which, when finalized, will be included as a chapter in the final Aurora Connects document," the Town notes, adding the first of those papers are now available for public feedback at the same website.

For those who aren't able to participate online, Project Manager John Firman says staff will be on hand at the Aurora Farmers' Market on October 1 to get the public to weigh in.

"These services are for you," says Firman. "You're going to use these services, so who better than you to say what services you need, want and want us to prioritize?"

The last time the Town looked at the master plan was in 2016.

It was originally intended to be a five-year plan, he says, so an update is overdue.

"It's time to re-look at everything," says Firman. "With population growth, with changing demographics, aging population, new families coming in - you want to make sure you're up-to-date and you want to see what the current community is looking for. There are some areas where (so far) we have seen more popular topics of conversation like off-leash dog parks, we have heard more about new sports like disk (frisbee) golf, and we're looking to get that public feedback we have on what services we have now: Are they meeting needs? Are there new things people want? Are there things people aren't using or aren't interested in anymore? We need all that information up-to-date."

The Master Plan update is now in its "information gathering phase," he adds. Staff have brought together previous staff reports that led to the current master plan and, with the launch of the public online survey, are now "preparing to get more information from the user groups", including sports organizations, that rely on municipal facilities.

A further stakeholder information session with groups like Aurora Minor Hockey, and groups representing soccer and rugby, is likely to take place this month.

"We're going to [have] a booth at the Farmers' Market on October 1 and for those members of the public who don't want to do an online survey - and we encourage everyone to do an online survey - for those who don't, they can come and offer their feedback to us at the Farmers' Market. We also have hard paper copies of the survey available for pickup at Town Hall, at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, and at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex.

?That's the key right now. We want to get that community feedback because ultimately these facilities and programs and all the amenities, they're for the community and the most important piece of this is the community input.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter