

Designs for Community Reflection Space approved for Town Hall

Work on Aurora's new Community Reflection Space is expected to begin in earnest this year after Council approved design concepts at its most recent meeting.

The Community Reflection Space was originally proposed by Aurora's Indigenous Relations Committee as a place for Truth & Reconciliation, and the vision expanded to be a peaceful place where community members can gather in times of tragedy and mourning.

The Community Reflection Space will be constructed on the south front of Town Hall, overhauling the forecourt, which is now dominated by an evergreen tree which was due to be removed for health reasons.

Work on the Community Reflection Space will be carried out in conjunction with a planned rehabilitation project on Town Hall's south parking lot.

\$250,000 for the Community Gathering Space was allocated as part of the 2024 Municipal Budget.

While the space in question outside of Town Hall is relatively small, the design incorporates native vegetation, increases accessibility, and easy-to-maintain water features.

'It's so small, but it's so innovative, it's beautiful, and I would say this is a very good use of taxpayers' money,' said Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner at last month's General Committee meeting ahead of Council's final approval on February 24, addressing the designers. 'I appreciate the design; I appreciate the concept and the thought you had put in place for the space at Town Hall.'

Ward 2 Councillor Rachel Gilliland also praised the designs, although she had questions about the ongoing maintenance and longevity of what's planned. Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese added that while he was initially not a fan of the location proposed for the Community Reflection Space, he was 'warming up to it.'

'The reason I wasn't a fan of it is because it's a very high-traffic area,' he said. 'John West Way has a lot of traffic going up and down. The Seniors' Centre across [the parking lot] is very busy almost all the time.'

Given the busyness of the area, Councillor Weese said he wanted a buffer from the noise and traffic so it would truly be a place for 'reflection, quiet, and thoughtfulness' - what it's really designed for.'

'If you're still in the design phase and you have some things that can start to make it a little more private, but not remote, you have my attention,' he told consultants.

By Brock Weir
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