

Indigenous Relations Committee projects set to transform landmarks

As Aurora puts the finishing touches on plans for its Red Dress Day Walking Vigil on the evening of May 5, work is continuing on other initiatives of the Town's Indigenous Relations Committee that are set to transform local landmarks.

This summer, residents will see work begin on Aurora's new Community Reflection Space, which will be built outside of Town Hall in conjunction with long-scheduled plans to overhaul the building's parking lot.

Featuring a showcase of native vegetation and a water feature, it's intended to be a serene place for the community to gather in times of tragedy and reflection.

Design plans were approved by Council this past winter and Michelle Johnson of the Aurora Museum & Archives, a member of the Indigenous Relations Committee, says work will begin in the next few months as will work on a memorial to Indigenous Veterans set to be constructed near the Cenotaph.

"The Indigenous lens has been, I think, instrumental in getting [the Reflection Space] approved, designed and eventually constructed," says Johnson. "I think the events that we do and the different cultural programming opportunities that we are trying to develop for the community, and have been developing, are fantastic. It provides the community with that type of experience, but there's also so much work that's happening behind the scenes [with the guidance of Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley] that is helping us work towards meaningfully implementing the Calls to Action and figuring out where we can try to make a difference."

The memorial to Indigenous Veterans is one more way the Town is honouring the Calls to Action stemming from the National Report into Truth & Reconciliation.

This Call for Designers on this memorial is open through April 26, says Johnson, and, from there, submissions will be evaluated.

By Brock Weir
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