

Library CEO Gorman set for Richmond Hill move

Long-time Aurora Public Library CEO Bruce Gorman will leave APL at the end of this to head the Richmond Hill Public Library.

The Aurora role will be filled temporarily by Jodi Marr, who currently serves as APL Manager of Customer Opportunity.

Gorman assumed the reins at APL in September of 2018 with a background of senior-level public library experience both in Ontario and Nova Scotia. He succeeded Jill Foster in the role upon her retirement.

At the time of the hire, Gorman was hailed for his skill at developing unique public and private partnerships and raising awareness of how libraries are impacting and influencing communities in different and distinct ways.

During his time at the helm of APL, he has helped the organization expand services and has overseen the development of the Library's position within the Aurora Town Square development, playing a significant hand in how the new public gathering space, set to open on Saturday, September 21, engages with the community.

"The Library is all in, we're ready to go, and now is the time for this fabulous project," Gorman told Council in 2020, almost two years into his tenure. "It has been planned for a long time and it is time for this project to start. This will be a community destination for activities, gatherings, and events of all kinds for generations to come.

"I have had the good fortune of working on many public infrastructure plans in my career and have experienced firsthand their transformative abilities. This is exactly the opportunity that we have with Library Square. Rarely do you get the opportunity to develop an iconic beacon to our Town where the community can come together under any and all circumstances. Rarely do you see a centre of excellence which includes a Library, Cultural Centre and Town partnership of this magnitude. In fact, we have already begun discussions of working collaboratively together to bring a more fulsome programming experience to the residents of Aurora. Rarely do you have the opportunity to significantly affect the economy of our Town with the ability to host conventions and conferences right in our downtown core."

A full recruitment process will take place to hire Gorman's permanent replacement.

The Richmond Hill Public Library said in a statement that Gorman will assume his new role on September 23.

"Aurora has been extremely lucky to have Bruce Gorman leading Aurora Public Library (APL) for the last six years," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "With Bruce as CEO, APL's profile was raised significantly in the community and major steps were taken to further modernize the library and ensure its offerings were reflective of the needs of all community members.

"Importantly, Bruce oversaw the much-needed renovations to the interior of APL, which made it a more inviting and accessible place. He harnessed new technologies that made APL processes more efficient, including Automated Material Handling, and upgraded the wireless network to improve connectivity and expand coverage. He oversaw new programs and initiatives, from APL's first student Hackathon to the Scholar's Hub to the Creative Studio, and significantly expanded others like the Summer Reading Club. He also made it a priority to bring in more diverse speakers and artists to reflect the changing demographics of our community. All of this led to a significant increase in memberships to APL as well as circulation numbers, with more residents taking advantage of the improved offerings.

"I also want to thank Bruce for his steady leadership of APL through COVID-19. This was an incredibly challenging time for all organizations, and under Bruce's leadership, APL quickly found new ways to stay connected and engaged with community members online. I sincerely thank Bruce for his significant and lasting contributions to APL and for fostering a love of reading and learning in our community."

By Brock Weir