

Saturday's Culture Quest puts new spin on Precinct plan

By Brock Weir

If a new vision for Aurora's Downtown Core has been collecting dust on your list for Santa, you can take it up with him yourself this Saturday at Culture Quest Aurora.

Culture Quest Aurora, the latest initiative of FOTENN, heritage consultants hired by the Town of Aurora to develop a vision for the Town's Cultural Precinct, encourages you to come out and embrace your inner gumshoe in looking at local landmarks a little bit differently.

Beginning at 9 a.m. at Victoria Hall (27 Mosley Street), members of the public are invited to fan out and follow a series of clues throughout the area, which radiates out from Town Park, solve the clues, and have a special passport stamped as you get put through your paces and provide feedback on what you'd like to see as the game continues.

"This is kind of a different way for us to engage the community in the Cultural Precinct Plan," says FOTENN's Sarah Millar. "We're working on an adventure race around the precinct and participants will be given clues to find different landmarks within the Cultural Precinct. When they find a different location, they will be given different aspects of the concept plan and be asked to give their feedback. Once they give us the feedback, they will be given the next clue [eventually] racing back to the finish line to have a chance to win some prizes."

It is a concept developed by FOTENN specifically for the Precinct project, she explains, with the objective of coming up with a new and different way of encouraging members of the public to come out, with a particular emphasis on youth. As they hammered out the fine details, they realised Saturday is also the same day as Aurora's Santa Under the Stars Parade and arranged to have the man in red pop by to lend the activity a festive air.

"The last public session was about what we want this area to be," says Ms. Millar. "We took what we heard in the last session and put that in the plan. This session will actually have some concept plans and models based on the feedback we got the first time. The concept plan builds on some of the existing cultural landmarks like the Church Street School, Victoria Hall and Town Park and looks at how to enhance those areas to bring more people in. We're looking at a lot of different uses, more residential, bringing more commercial in along Yonge Street, enhancing areas around Town Park and finding a new place for the Farmers' Market.

"One of the comments that came back very clearly was the Farmers' Market was an important part of this area, so how do we still ensure it is a signature piece and where is the best place for it?"

Once the feedback from the Culture Quest is compiled, FOTENN is still on track to meet their goal of presenting a final concept plan and vision document to Council next month, which will be further honed in the New Year.