

Town looks forward to ?all the amazing things? Aurora Town Square can provide following grand opening



Three weeks of Grand Opening celebrations related to Aurora Town Square have come to an end, and this ?test drive? of the new space has the Town excited for ?all the amazing things the space can do for the community.?

So says Aurora Town Square Project Manager Phil Rose.

Reflecting on the multifold party that was, Rose says he and his team were ?extremely pleased? with how things unfolded, particularly the sheer diversity of programs and performances that activated the space from the ribbon cutting on September 21, to the headlining performance by Sloan, to the concerts that helped make Thanksgiving Weekend one to remember.

?We were extremely happy with the results and extremely happy with the community's response to the space,? says Rose, noting that one of his favourite visuals from the program was seeing the public fill the outdoor amphitheatre for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. ?That was probably the most visceral reminder of the success of the launch and just how many people there were and how many different community organizations and members we had. Just thinking about how the space ages and adapts to the changing face and demographics of our community and what that means for the programs we're going to be holding inside the space, I'm excited to look back in 25 years and just see how we're keeping pace in the challenges of the community and the world at large.

?One of the things we want to do is support artists, performers and all the creative people that the space was designed to offer a platform for. Looking back and thinking fondly of the musicians, the artists, and people we have been able to support along the way will be a huge one, and I also think being able to look back probably sooner to see that Town Square has been able to support the downtown and some of the revitalization efforts that we have been talking about for so long ? seeing Town Square as an anchor to our Cultural Tourism portfolio and supporting local economic development that is focused on the creative sector.

?The grand opening made us feel like we have kicked things off and we're on a good trajectory for the future, short term and long-term. I think we all felt really happy with the results and what we're going to offer in the future. We kind of took the space for a test drive and were able to get a sense of how people interact with the space, the types of programs and performances they like to see.?

As they look ahead to the future, Rose says he's keen to enhance the heritage profile of the development, including the Church Street School, and the Aurora Museum & Archives spaces within, as well as fostering future heritage programs.

Another area of focus is education programs through an arts and culture lens.

?We also want to expand some of the programming Shelley [Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora] does in bringing more Special Events and expand some of the events she does like the Multicultural Festival and the Mayor's Levee,? he says, noting one such event on tap for the fall is the Aurora Christmas Market, which will begin activating the outdoor space at the end of November. ?We have also been working with the Aurora Black Community Association and the Aurora Black Caucus and we want to expand Black History Month [programs] and Emancipation Day ? and Town Square is really the platform to allow us to do that.?

Future Halloween programs are also on the radar, Rose adds, teasing that one such event for 2025 could be a 50th anniversary celebration for the perennially popular Rocky Horror Picture Show, in conjunction with Marquee Theatrical Productions.

By Brock Weir