

## Town Square timeline, park development announced in Mayor's address

Aurora will see a full week of celebrations this fall for the grand opening of Aurora Town Square.

Mayor Tom Mrakas announced a fall opening for the expansive, multi-million-dollar downtown revitalization project last week as part of his annual address to the business community hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to a general opening date for Town Square, the Mayor also began to outline the Town's vision for a 16-acre parcel of greenspace in Aurora's southwest, the purchase of which was announced last December, for parkland development.

?We're so close to finishing Town Square,? said Mayor Mrakas at the Royal Venetian Mansion on Industrial Parkway South on February 21. ?I know the community has waited a long time for this ? actually, two decades, in fact. I wish we had done it sooner, but with virtually all building and infrastructure projects in the past few years post-pandemic, there was a lot that was simply out of control and, as everyone knows, with regards to labour and supply issues.

?I am excited to announce today for the very first time that our official grand opening of Town Square is taking place this coming fall. This week's long celebration is going to give community members the chance to experience everything that Town Square has to offer. Town Square really will add so much to our community ? a place where people can watch a show, do a class, grab a coffee, go for a skate or a splash ? right here in our wonderful downtown. A real central community hub. I thank everyone for their patience as we work hard to finish this project.?

The Aurora Town Square project, he said, will be key in downtown revitalization, a vision he said was ?really important? to him as ?all great communities have vibrant downtowns.?

Also integral in this sense of community is an array of ?recreation and arts and culture offerings? which he said gives communities like Aurora ?a competitive advantage, attracting people to come live in Aurora, attracting more business owners because they (businesses) want to open in a place with strong programs and services for their own families and for their employee families, too.?

The acquisition of green space, he noted, could contribute well to these key recreation opportunities.

?Our outdoor spaces are so important to people's mental and physical health,? he said. ?I am really proud our incredible Parks staff maintain 475 hectares of parkland and 62km of trails?. I was thrilled to announce in December that Council approved the acquisition of [a] 16-acre property on the west side of Yonge Street just north of Wood Haven. Our vision is for this land to become a huge new public park and we will be engaging with community members on what they want to see there.

?This acquisition is part of a larger strategy we have to address our parkland deficit. Please stay tuned for a lot more in regards to the strategy and more exciting news to share in the coming year?. Protecting and expanding our outdoor spaces is something community members want. It sets us apart and it makes this an attractive place for businesses in Town.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter