

## Emerging Aurora plugs Town as 'up and coming player' for business community

The Town of Aurora was named after the Goddess of the Dawn, and local business leaders are hoping there is a renewed dawn on the horizon.

This is a guiding driver for Emerging Aurora, a new campaign led by the Town's Economic Development Board to target business investment, support existing business, revitalize the downtown core, and engage the community.

Emerging Aurora, it is hoped, will build awareness of new initiatives and business sports as the community continues to work through the fallout of the global pandemic, said Lisa Hausz, Manager of Economic Development and Policy for the Town of Aurora.

'It will help identify projects and programs that support economic development strategic plan initiatives,' she said. 'The intent is to run the Emerging Aurora campaign through the remaining life of the Economic Development Strategic Plan, which is 2023, and while I cannot believe we're speaking of 2023, that will be the year the Board will begin a new Strategic Plan, building on the momentum we're currently experiencing.'

'Emerging now as an up-and-coming player in attracting business and talent that will really position Aurora for the future.'

The Emerging Aurora campaign can be found on Instagram and Twitter @emergingaurora and in addition to promotion on social media and online, it will include several business stories and videos, highlights of which were recently presented to Council.

'As part of the video campaign one speaks to the history of the Town and downtown revitalization,' said Ms. Hausz, on the presentations that include testimonials from business leaders large and small, including Don Walker, former CEO of Magna International and Mae Khamissa, co-owner of Omars Shoes. 'Its aim is to encourage engagement and attraction of what is to come in downtown Aurora with a little insight on what makes Aurora special.'

'The second video takes off from the history of the Town and speaks to current business leaders in Aurora from a variety of industries, including manufacturing, technology, retail and professional services. Its intent is to share why Aurora is emerging as a great place to consider for a business location by the leaders that call Aurora home.'

The videos show Aurora's 'emergence' from what is described as a 'dusty crossroads' that ultimately became the heart of the Town, expanding outward.

The videos were received warmly by Council in the last meeting before the winter break, with lawmakers asking for more detail on strategy to ensure the videos reach their target audiences.

'We have a full plan,' said Ms. Hausz, responding to questions from Councillor Michael Thompson. 'Starting in January and throughout the whole year, we have regular advertising and a media push not only for residents to get that feel, but also for businesses who are looking to locate in Aurora and get that message across.'

'I look forward to hearing more about the results and continuing to hear from you,' said Councillor Thompson.

Also showing their support was Councillor Rachel Gilliland who said she was 'glad' to hear of the plan moving forward.

'Let's spread [the videos] as much as we can,' she said. 'I am glad to hear you have a plan moving forward with some media attention and it is not a one-and-done video we're throwing into cyberspace.'

Mayor Mrakas also voiced his support, singling out the video on the Town's historic downtown core as one that 'pulls a little bit on

the heartstrings? to show you a bit of where the Town has come from, where we're going, and the excitement we're about to embark on as a Town and a community.?

?When you look at the individuals who are in that video, from a global perspective, to a national perspective, to a local perspective, they represent all those different sectors in the business community and they're all right here in the Town of Aurora,? he said. ?Just hearing what they had to say, dedicated to innovation and leadership, when you hear these executives at such a high level speak about this Town? and the feeling like it is home, some of those words really resonate strongly and I think it will resonate very well across the GTHA.?

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter