

## Town Square Capital Campaign goes public as Grand Opening plans continue



Fundraising for Aurora Town Square has now exceeded \$3.5 million of its \$5 million goal, and members of the public can now contribute to the downtown revitalization project.

The Town held a reception for new donors last week just days before the formally announcing the grand opening of Aurora Town Square on September 20.

On Tuesday, the Town confirmed the September 20 grand opening date, noting the celebrations will continue through October 13.

"This momentous occasion will be marked by a variety of indoor and outdoor entertainment, including hands-on workshops, exclusive previews from partners and captivating performances," said the Town in a statement.

Artists set to perform as part of the Grand Opening and the series of events following September 20 are yet to be announced.

"The grand opening will draw audiences of all ages from Aurora and beyond, providing visitors with unique experiences and vibrant cultural offerings," the Town continued. "Opening celebrations will showcase the venue's state-of-the-art design and a diverse range of future programming, with a remarkable 32,000 square-foot addition and a 29,000 square foot outdoor community space."

Added Mayor Mrakas in a statement, "The grand opening of Aurora Town Square represents the culmination of our community's vision for a dynamic gathering space in the heart of downtown Aurora. We are thrilled to invite the community to join us in celebrating this milestone for our Town."

Last week, new and previous donors who have helped make Aurora Town Square a reality were celebrated at an in-site event.

New donors celebrated on June 17 included Delmanor Aurora, Jim McAlpine and McAlpine Ford Lincoln, and residents Steve and Carole Mirkopoulos. In their fundraising efforts, they join previously-announced donors Addison Hall Business Park, Charlieville Developments Ltd., Fieldgate Homes, Paradise Developments, Shining Hill Group of Companies, TACC Developments and Treasure Hill.

"We are closer than ever to reaching our Legacy Campaign goal, with more announcements to come as we ramp up to the grand opening of this tremendous venue this fall," said Mayor Tom Mrakas in a statement. "The future looks bright for Aurora."

Speaking to The Auroran following the recognition event, the Mayor said it's "encouraging" to see "how many people are stepping up" to make the project a reality "not just from the corporate world, but residents in our community who have stepped up with

major donations to the Square.?

?They see and they believe in what we're creating for our downtown and they want to invest as well to?be a part of this special moment, I think, in our Town's history,? he said. ?We're positive we're going to get there (the \$5 million goal) and we're going to see more and more community members who are going to be excited to step up and have their name on the donor wall that will be there forever.?

The Legacy Capital Campaign formally launched last week.

Here, residents of Aurora and people from further afield can see their names immortalized on the donor wall with a contribution of \$10,000 or more.

?It is to support the development of Town Square and all the programs we'll be having there,? says Aurora Town Square Project Manager Phil Rose. ?As a community cultural facility that is going to house and promote arts and culture, it's a chance to make your mark and leave your legacy by contributing to a community town project such as Town Square. In exchange, they will get their name and their recognition on the donor wall and tickets to our VIP (event) as part of the Grand Opening and other recognition as well.

?It's about supporting and sharing the vision of Town Square as an important community project that is tied to promoting and growing arts and culture in the community but also supporting downtown revitalization and other economic development.?

Big ticket donors will also see naming opportunities for various amenities that will be part of Aurora Town Square once it opens in September.

Amenities that have already been claimed include the visual arts studio, multipurpose studio, box office, atrium lobby, and the environmentally-controlled collections space for the Aurora Museum and Archives.

Still up for grabs are the 250-seat multipurpose performance hall, performing arts dance studio, program room, café and multipurpose area, kitchen and servery.

?I think anyone would be fooling themselves if they said they wouldn't want to see it (the fundraising campaign) reach the goal by opening day, obviously we would love to see that occur, but we know that even if we don't, the fundraising is going to continue until we reach that goal,? said Mayor Mrakas. ?Whether it is opening day or whether it is a couple of months, or a year, later, we're going to get there and I am confident that we will.?

**By Brock Weir**