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Town of Aurora  
**Memorandum**  
Community Services

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**Re:** 2026 Community Recognition Awards – Ceremony Logistics

**To:** Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee

**From:** Shelley Ware, Cultural Services Supervisor – Special Events

**Date:** February 11, 2026

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## Recommendation

1. That the memorandum regarding the 2026 Community Recognition Awards – Ceremony Logistics be received; and
2. That the Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee comments regarding the 2026 Community Recognition Awards – Ceremony Logistics and provide feedback to be referred to staff for consideration and further action as appropriate.

## Background

The Town of Aurora's Community Recognition Awards have traditionally been presented in the Council Chambers at Town Hall during a formal ceremony. This setting has been used consistently since the inception of the awards, with the exception of two years (2009 and 2010), when alternative arrangements were made.

As planning begins for this year's Community Recognition Awards, the Community Recognition Review Advisory Committee (CRRAC) expressed interest in exploring potential alternative venues for the ceremony, while remaining within the approved budget. The intent of this review is to consider whether another municipal venue could appropriately host the event while maintaining the significance and quality associated with the awards.

The Community Recognition Awards include multiple award categories presented annually, with the exception of the Lifetime Achievement Award, which is presented once every four years at the end of each Term of Council. The Citizen of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Awards are considered the Town's most prestigious community honours.

The event format includes:

- A pre-ceremony reception for former Citizens of the Year;
- A formal, invitation-only awards ceremony; and
- A post-ceremony licensed reception.

## Analysis

**Staff have identified two viable municipal venue options for consideration: the Council Chambers at Aurora Town Hall and the Davide de Simone Performance Hall at Aurora Town Square.**

Both the Council Chambers and the Performance Hall offer high-quality, municipally operated spaces capable of hosting a meaningful and well-executed Community Recognition Awards ceremony. Each venue presents distinct advantages and considerations related to prestige, logistics, operations, and cost.

### **The Council Chambers in Town Hall is a long-standing and symbolic venue.**

The Council Chambers provide a highly prestigious and formal setting. For many residents, being recognized in this space represents a unique and rare opportunity, as few community members are ever presented with an award in this environment. The Chamber setting reinforces the civic importance of the awards, particularly for the Citizen of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Awards.

Additional considerations include:

- **Live Streaming:** The Chambers are fully equipped for live streaming, which has become a valued component of the ceremony.
- **Prestigious Awards:** The Citizen of the Year and the Lifetime Achievement Award—two of the Town's highest honours—are traditionally presented in this space. The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented once every four years, at the end of each Term of Council.
- **Event Flow:** The pre- and post-ceremony receptions can be accommodated within Town Hall, with the licensed portion managed by Town staff.
- **Operational Context:** Town Hall would be dedicated solely to the awards event that evening, ensuring minimal operational disruption and full control over the environment.

**The Davide de Simone Performance Hall in Aurora Town Square would showcase the Awards in a contemporary cultural setting.**

The Performance Hall at Aurora Town Square offers a modern and engaging venue that has successfully hosted award ceremonies for various community organizations. The space presents an opportunity for a different aesthetic and atmosphere while still delivering a high-quality event.

However, there are several logistical considerations. Space within Town Square is more limited for hosting a pre-ceremony reception specifically for former Citizens of the Year. The post-ceremony reception would need to be relocated to the Bridge area within Town Square, resulting in a smaller overall footprint compared to Town Hall.

Live-streaming capabilities in the Performance Hall would require further review. While staff are confident that a technical solution can be identified, this would involve additional planning. There is a third-party bar service provider at ATS, so staff would need to ensure there are no issues with staff providing the licensed component of the reception. If staff were not permitted to deliver the licensed component of the reception there would be an increase to the cost. However, the difference in cost is considered absorbable within the event budget.

It should also be noted that Aurora Town Square is a multi-use facility. Other programs and activities—such as arts, cultural, or recreational classes—may be taking place in the building concurrently on the evening of the awards, which could affect the overall feel and exclusivity of the event.

**Perceptions of venue significance and the recipient experience would be different at each of the potential venues.**

While many community organizations have successfully hosted their award ceremonies in the Performance Hall, the Town of Aurora's Community Recognition Awards may be perceived differently due to the inclusion of the Citizen of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Awards. These honours carry a distinct level of civic significance that some recipients associate with the formal Council setting.

To better understand this perspective, staff consulted previous award recipients regarding their venue preference. All individuals indicated a preference for receiving their award in the Council Chambers, citing the limited public access to the space as a factor that enhanced the meaning and memorability of the recognition. At the same

time, all recipients acknowledged that a well-executed ceremony in the Performance Hall could still be impactful.

## Attachments

None