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Town of Aurora

General Committee Report
No. CMS21-022

Subject:	Library Square Governance Update
Prepared by:	Phil Rose, Manager of Library Square
Department:	Community Services
Date:	June 15, 2021

Recommendation

1. That Report No. CMS21-022 be received; and

2. That staff implement a unified Internet Technology network across the entire Library Square complex, including the Aurora Public Library; and

3. That staff assume responsibility for all aspects of the computer network for Library Square, including the wide area network, local area network, Wi-Fi, networking, and meeting room hardware/software across the entire Library Square complex, including the Aurora Public Library; and

4. That staff report back in September with an IT implementation status update, including service level agreements for the Aurora Public Library and Aurora Cultural Centre; and

5. That staff assume responsibility for all facility bookings across the entire Library Square complex, including the meeting spaces adjoining the Aurora Public Library, but not the remainder of the Library.

Executive Summary

This report makes recommendations regarding the delivery of IT services and space allocation responsibilities at Library Square and details the next steps to be taken to implement these recommendations.

*   Currently, the Aurora Public Library and 22 Church Street have separate networks, Wi-Fi, and IT support staff, which will pose various challenges once Library Square opens.

- To provide high quality customer service and operational efficiencies, the Town should assume responsibility for all aspects of the IT network for Library Square, including the Aurora Public Library.

- An integrated IT network across the entire Library Square complex will provide numerous benefits and efficiencies for all parties.

- To align with the construction schedule, Town IT staff should begin immediately to integrate the IT network across the entire Library Square complex.

- The Town has the experience and expertise to assume responsibility for facility bookings at Library Square.

- With Council approval, staff will make the necessary preparations to assume responsibility for facility bookings at Library Square.

Background

In June 2020, Council passed a resolution approving the Not-for-Profit/Municipal Hybrid Model as the governance model for the future operation of Library Square. Subsequently, staff formed three working groups dedicated to Space Allocation, Collaborative Programming, and Information Technology. Comprised of Town staff and representatives from the Library and the Aurora Cultural Centre, the purpose of these working groups was to develop strategies and build consensus regarding the optimal delivery of programming, integration of IT services, and venue management at Library Square.

In November 2020, staff prepared a follow-up report updating Council on the efforts made by the working groups since June 2020. The report focused mostly on the progress made by the Collaborative Programming Working group, highlighting the guiding principles they developed to serve as the framework for program and service delivery within Library Square. These principles include:

1. Program and service delivery is a shared responsibility that can be understood as a pathway or continuum. Whenever possible, stakeholders will work together to design programs that engage participants from the beginner stage through to the professional level, with an emphasis on accessibility for all ages and abilities. Ideally, Library Square will offer a seamless progression of programs where

participants can grow their knowledge base and develop their skills over the course of their lifetime.

2. Each stakeholder possesses a wealth of expertise and experience that can be drawn upon when developing programs. As partners in Library Square, it is important to consider if the competencies and capacity exist internally to assist in program delivery. Drawing upon our collective resources as a default position will lead to efficiencies in program delivery.

3. Duplication of programming is acceptable if stakeholders offer programs in a way that is complementary rather than competitive.

4. Given the dynamic nature of program and service delivery, and the ongoing need to collaborate, the Collaborative Programming Working Group will continue to meet over the next two (2) years leading up to the opening of Library Square and during its start-up period.

Since November 2020, staff and key stakeholders have continued to meet to consider how best to implement the Not-for-Profit/Municipal Hybrid governance model. Whereas the previous report highlighted the progress made by the Collaborative Programming Working Group, the recommendations of this report focus on IT governance and space allocation responsibilities.

Analysis

Currently, the Aurora Public Library and 22 Church Street have separate networks, Wi-Fi, and IT support staff, which will pose various challenges once Library Square opens.

At present, IT services at 22 Church Street are provided by the Town's IT Division. Both the Aurora Museum & Archives and the Aurora Cultural Centre are connected to the Town's Wide Area Network (WAN), and there is one network (wired and Wi-Fi) throughout the entire heritage schoolhouse. IT services at the Library, on the other hand, are provided independently from the Town using their own network and IT support staff.

Although this arrangement works at present, once Library Square opens, it is important that the business units that make up the entire complex are not disjointed and isolated from one another, which could lead to a lack of collaboration and coordination between groups, resulting in inefficiencies, duplication and gaps in technology resources, skills, and capacity.

To provide high quality customer service and operational efficiencies, the Town should assume responsibility for all aspects of the IT network for Library Square, including the Aurora Public Library.

Library Square is an exciting project that will link the Town, the Cultural Centre, and the Library into one cohesive space. Given the importance of this project, it is vital that the Town provide integrated technology across the entire complex so that visitors can take advantage of an accessible Wi-Fi no matter what space they are in. Moreover, each of the meeting and programming rooms available to the Town, stakeholders, and user groups should provide common A/V hardware and software, unified access, and a single support contact.

The solution is to join the Town's IT network with the Library's. This would require the Town to assume control of the Library IT Network Infrastructure, including all network switches, routers, network cabling, patch panels, and Wi-Fi access points. The network hardware would be replaced when needed based on the Town's standards.

An integrated IT network across the entire Library Square complex will provide numerous benefits and efficiencies for all parties.

An integrated approach to technology will result in enhanced customer service, operational efficiency, and staff productivity. Additional benefits of this approach as identified by the Manager of IT include:

- The Library would receive easy access to the Town's system and cost savings as the Library could eliminate their Internet Service Provider (ISP)
- Further cost savings to the Library as they would no longer need to purchase or maintain ethernet switches and associated network hardware
- Offloading of major support areas from Library IT staff to Town IT staff and the centralization of support through the Town's IT Department
- Commonality of access and clear understanding of roles, responsibilities, and service level expectations for all stakeholders (i.e., who does what, and how it is done) that would be documented in a Service Level Agreement
- Creation of a "trust relationship" between computer domains to facilitate ease of access and unified IT support structure for residents, user groups, and local businesses across all spaces that comprise Library Square
- Standardized meeting room A/V hardware/software and simplified business processes to support efficiency and underpin digital customer service
- In the future, the Library could also leverage the Town's new telephony system, cybersecurity system, and current Microsoft365 tenant

To align with the construction schedule, Town IT staff should begin immediately to integrate the IT network across the entire Library Square complex.

With renovations to the Library underway, it is important that IT staff begin to integrate the IT network immediately so that the new spaces can be operational by the time the construction is complete.

There will be a phased approach to the integration and the major steps are as follows:

1. Discovery
2. Architecture & Design
3. Procurement (if necessary)
4. Implementation

The Town has the experience and expertise to assume responsibility for facility bookings at Library Square.

Throughout the governance review process, a common message has been that the Town should obtain a degree of control over various aspects of day-to-day operations. Another prevailing message has been that as the Town collaborates with stakeholders to implement the Not-for-Profit/Municipal Hybrid Model, any duplication of services must be addressed. Furthermore, various processes must also be aligned with Town practices so that visitors receive a unified approach to customer service, parity in rates offered for programs and bookings, and consistent messaging and communication.

Based on this analysis, staff believe that the Town is best suited to administer facility bookings for the Library Square complex, including 22 Church Street, the bridge, outdoor square, and the meeting rooms adjoining the Library.

Benefits of this approach include:

- Of all the stakeholders, the Town has the experience and expertise to provide this service most efficiently. The Business Support Division administers this service at other Town facilities and are positioned to extend this service to Library Square. Under this arrangement, Town staff would be responsible for coordinating and administering all facility permits/contracts and respond to enquiries from the public, staff, and community groups for the spaces identified to be within the Library Square complex. Existing programs and services currently provided by the Library and Cultural Centre will be accommodated from a space allocation perspective.

- Allows the Town to offset the municipality's investment in Library Square via booking revenue of a Town-owned space; the Town would receive all booking revenue to offset operating expenses, which aligns with the principles of the Library Square Business Plan.
- Reduces the potential for confusion, duplication, and uneven approaches to service and program delivery. Centralizing the facilities booking process through the Town would lead to a unified customer service experience and create alignment with permitting requirements at other Town facilities.
- Ensures consistency in the allocation of all Town-owned spaces in accordance with Town allocation policies and procedures.
- By removing the facility booking responsibility from the Aurora Cultural Centre for 22 Church Street, the Centre would be better able to focus resources on providing cultural programs and opportunities to the public.

With Council approval, staff will make the necessary preparations to assume responsibility for facility bookings at Library Square.

Over the next few months, staff will finalize the Year 1 (2023) programming schedule and bring forward a Space Allocation Policy for Library Square for approval in the Fall. The policy will provide transparency and structure for user groups and individuals pertaining to the fair allotment and use of interior and exterior space at Library Square. It will apply to all permit holders, including Library Square stakeholders, to ensure consistency in access and use of space in a fair and equitable manner.

Staff will also present an organizational chart and fees schedule in the Fall that includes facility booking and programming rates for Library Square.

Advisory Committee Review

Not applicable.

Legal Considerations

If Council approves the recommendations, the Town will enter into an agreement with stakeholders to outline the roles and responsibilities relating to IT and facility booking services.

Financial Implications

There is sufficient capital budget authority available within the Library Square capital project to fund all initial investments required relating to the consolidation and installation of the Library Square's IT services.

Any savings recognized by the Aurora Public Library because of the IT network responsibility consolidation will be returned to the Town in support of the Library Square's ongoing operating costs. Similarly, all Library Square room booking revenue generated by the Town will be allocated in support of the Library Square's operations.

Communications Considerations

Should the approach be approved, the Town will communicate directly with affected stakeholders to ensure that there is clarity around roles and responsibilities. There will also be an internal communication component to ensure staff understand their role in this operating decision. There are no additional external communication considerations at this time.

Link to Strategic Plan

Library Square supports the following Strategic Plan goals and key objectives:

Supporting an exceptional quality of life for all in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- Invest in sustainable infrastructure
- Celebrating and promoting our culture
- Encourage an active and healthy lifestyle
- Strengthening the fabric of our community

Enabling a diverse, creative, and resilient economy in its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within these goal statements:

- Promoting economic opportunities that facilitate the growth of Aurora as a desirable place to do business

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. Council may provide further direction.

Conclusions

To provide high quality customer service and operational efficiencies, this report recommends that the Town assume responsibility for the IT network and facility booking responsibilities at Library Square. The report further recommends that staff should begin immediately to implement these changes and report back in September with an implementation status update.

Attachments

None

Previous Reports

CMS20-008, Library Square – Governance Review, March 3, 2020

CMS20-012, Library Square – Governance Review, June 16, 2020

CMS20-026, Library Square – Governance Review, November 3, 2020

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on May 27, 2021

Approvals

Approved by Robin McDougall, Director, Community Services Department

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer