

Showcase offers residents the chance to get behind the wheel of electric vehicles



If you've ever wanted to get behind the wheel of a Tesla or Magna founder Frank Stronach's compact Sarit, put Aurora's second-annual Electric Vehicle Showcase on your to-do list.

Set to take place at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC) on next Sunday, May 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. rain or shine, the event will include test drives of not just the Tesla and Sarit, but the Volvo XC40, Kia Sorento, Chevrolet Bolt EUV Premier, and the Hyundai Ioniq5, courtesy of Plug N'Drive, a non-profit organization focusing on electric vehicle (EV) education.

"Everything in our first year was trial and error, but we were successful with our partners like Plug N'Drive; I expect this year will be even better because we've got way more attractions this year," says Sebastian Contarin, Climate Change and Energy Analyst for the Town of Aurora. "We have Sarit coming in with a racetrack allowing participants to test the new EVs, we have Tesla, some returning members, including the EV Society, and a speaker from the Society who will be talking about EVs."

York Region Transit, he adds, will also be on site with a new EV bus. Attendees will have a chance to go inside, walk around the vehicle "and observe everything it has to offer."

"It is so much bigger an event this year and I can only anticipate it is going to grow as we make it common practice," he says. "Despite Tesla's very expensive offerings on their vehicles, the public is going to have various options to choose from. There will be lots of choices for people from different dealers and the dealers will provide different pros and cons on their vehicles."

Event sponsors, in addition to Tesla and Sarit, include McAlpine Ford, Pfaff Audi Newmarket, Pfaff MINI Markham, and Porsche Centre Markham.

While the event runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the presentation from Tim Burrows of the Electric Vehicle Society will be held inside the SARC at 10.30 a.m.

"Tim has owned and driven battery-electric cars for the past 10 years and has logged over 300,000 kilometres without the need for gasoline or diesel fuel," says the Town. "He now enjoys sharing his EV experience with others and breaks down many myths and misconceptions about EV ownership."

Burrows, they say, will explain why "we've reached a tipping point where electric cars are replacing those powered by gasoline," as well as where self-driving technology and autonomous vehicles fit into the puzzle.

The May 7 Electric Vehicle Showcase is just one of several ongoing environmental initiatives ongoing at the Town of Aurora. Within the next couple of months, Contarin says the Town will launch a phone recycling program for disused, broken or obsolete mobile devices, and are in the "very early stages" of exploring a home retrofit program.

Additionally, once complete, Aurora Town Square will offer even more EV chargers to allow residents to plug in to re-charge while they're enjoying the space.

"EV is definitely going to be growing in Aurora," says Contarin. "I have seen it coming in my commute in the mornings and in my afternoons coming home. I see EVs all over the place now and our response to that will definitely proliferate when we see that increased usage."

For more information on the second annual Electric Vehicle Showcase, visit www.aurora.ca/en/your-government/electric-vehicle-showcase.aspx.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter