

Santa Under the Stars set to return after COVID pause

Santa Claus is once again polishing up his sleigh for a return to Aurora and a return to the Santa Under the Stars parade.

The Town of Aurora announced Friday that they have received the go-ahead to once again host the traditional holiday parade on Yonge Street, after taking a year off and pivoting to a 'stationary parade' at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex last year due to public health restrictions stemming from COVID-19.

But, given declining numbers of new cases of COVID-19 and a rise in local vaccination rates, Santa will be making his way down Yonge Street from Orchard Heights Boulevard in the north to Murray Drive in the south beginning at 6 p.m. on Saturday, November 27.

'Santa and his reindeers cannot wait to visit our Town and see all of our residents, families and young children lining our sidewalks excited to once again celebrate this magical season,' said Mayor Tom Mrakas on Friday, announcing the return of the parade.

From the perspective of Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, this is yet another return to normalcy 'the community really needs.'

'The only way we could go to a traditional parade is because of the choices the community has made in getting vaccinated,' said Ms. Ware. 'I am really proud of the community to get to this state. We just really want this for the community.'

Community groups, businesses and individuals were already hard at work creating one-sided floats that people could drive by safely during their stationary parade. Now they are retooling their artistic visions so their floats can be enjoyed by residents lining either side of Yonge Street.

It might be a smaller parade this year simply given the lead time they have had to plan, but at press time this week five marching bands, four dance groups, and nine buskers have already been brought on board, in addition to floats that had already confirmed for the stationary parade. If you want to get involved in the traditional Santa Under the Stars parade with a float of your own, however, it is not too late.

'For those who have the ability to design and create a dynamic float, we really hope people will consider doing that this year,' says Ms. Ware, asking anyone interested to contact her at sware@aurora.ca. 'We need to make sure each entry has a complete 'wow!' factor because as we plan the parade we look at it through the eyes of a child; if we have kids lining the parade route an hour before it happens, we want to make sure that every entry is a 'wow!'

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter