

# STAFF REPORT

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF COBOURG



<b>Report to:</b>	Mayor and Council Members	<b>Priority:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Low
<b>Submitted by:</b>	Jackie Chapman-Davis Community Event Coordinator <a href="mailto:jcapmandavis@cobourg.ca">jcapmandavis@cobourg.ca</a>	<b>Meeting Type:</b> Open Session <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Closed Session <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	October 25, 2021		
<b>Report No.:</b>	Community Services-071-21		
<a href="#">Submit comments to Council</a>			

**Subject/Title:** 2021 Cobourg Santa Claus Parade Options

## RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receive this report for information purposes; and

FURTHER THAT Council provide approval for one of the following options:

OPTION "A" THAT Council authorize Staff to proceed with the Traditional Santa Claus Parade on King Street event to take place on December 4, 2021 in the evening, subject to the future Provincial Orders to be passed and subject to the finalization of details from Staff; OR

OPTION "B" THAT Council authorize the revamped Santa Claus event planned under the current Provincial Orders which includes Santa Claus and his elves touring our community on their own private float in residential neighbourhoods to limit gatherings to take place on December 4, 2021 in the evening, subject to the finalization of details

## 1. STRATEGIC PLAN

Not Applicable.

## 2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Staff are bringing forward this report to Council as an addition to the agenda based on new information received from the MPP Piccini's Office received on Monday October 25, 2021, regarding new information on the potential lifting of gathering limits for social gatherings in Ontario.

Staff is bringing this report forward at the October 25, 2021 Committee of the Whole meeting rather than the Regular Council Meeting, to allow the public an opportunity to provide any comments to Council or Staff during the week prior to the final decision that will take place on November 1, 2021.

### 3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Staff Report is to provide Council with the same information that Staff has received today from the Member of Provincial Parliament's office on the anticipated Provincial Orders that could be coming this week related to the lifting of restrictions on social gathering limitations.

### 4. ORIGIN AND LEGISLATION

The province of Ontario is currently under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c. 17 O. and in the context of this report the applicable regulation is Reg. 364/20: Rules for Areas at Step 3 and at the Roadmap Exit Step.

On Friday October 22, 2021 the Provincial Government made an announcement on a guideline to lift remaining COVID-19 restrictions by March 2022, and as of 12:01 am on October 25, all capacity limits and physical distancing rules will be lifted in restaurants, bars, gyms, casinos, bingo hall, and indoor meeting and event spaces. These are all settings where patrons must provide proof of vaccination to enter. Also, on October 25, 2021 other select businesses can see their capacity limits and physical distancing rules lifted if they choose to require proof of vaccination for customers/patrons.

In the same announcement, the province provided the following message on October 22, 2021 in a provincial press release:

"Social gatherings limits remain at up to 25 people indoors and up to 100 people at an outdoor gathering. Ontario is planning to allow for greater capacity at organized public events such as Remembrance Day ceremonies and Santa Claus parades. More details are expected soon."

As of today, the Town and all organizations and groups are operating under the current COVID-19 restrictions related to the social gathering limits. The Town cannot predict what the future Provincial Orders will look like, or what they will contain and when they will be released to the public. We did receive information in a the meeting with the MPP that we could expect to receive them this week, and could be in the early part of this week. It is important to note that once received, it also takes a few days for these Provincial Orders to be read and interpreted by Staff for introduction to the community.

### 5. BACKGROUND

Much like last year, COVID-19 continues to impact the ability to host in person events in 2021. While some event organizers, in their resiliency, have the ability to adapt innovative approaches to host their event and achieve compliance with the provincial and Health Unit (HKPRDHU) COVID-19 mitigation measures, the majority of events for the first half of this year have been cancelled or reimaged while the Town, and organizers continue to watch COVID-19 recovery and vaccination efforts and remain cautiously optimistic that some modified versions of an in-person event both indoors and outdoors may be possible in the later part of the year and into early 2022.

Municipal Staff have consistently been reviewing the current restrictions that are in place under provincial orders based on the community and special events lens. Over the last 18 months or more the rules have been changing rapidly to protect the public from the risks of COVID-19 during gatherings. In preparation for the holiday season Staff have been planning early under the current provincial orders that are in place in relation to 'parades'. In addition, the Town has sought clarification and confirmation from the local Health Unit to confirm the restrictions that are in place to make sure there is adherence to the rules and the Town is not in any way circumventing the current health measures.

The current measures are as follows under O. Reg. 364/20: RULES FOR AREAS AT STEP 3 AND AT THE ROADMAP EXIT STEP:

### SCHEDULE 3 ORGANIZED PUBLIC EVENTS AND CERTAIN GATHERINGS AT STEP 3

#### Gatherings

1. (1) Subject to sections 2 to 5, no person shall attend,

(a) an organized public event of more than,

- i) 25 people if the event is held indoors, or
- ii) **100 people if the event is held outdoors;**

On October 12, 2021, the Town of Cobourg issued a press release, canceling this years Santa Claus Parade. Due to the provincial restrictions and the large number of residents and visitors that attend the annual Cobourg Santa Claus Parade, the decision to cancel the event was in accordance with all provincial and public health guidelines. At that time, it was unknown when Ontario would enter the Roadmap Exit Step related to the lifting of social gathering restrictions.

As Council is aware, the previous Santa Claus Parade Organizers have stepped back from this event and the Town has assumed the role of the organizer and is now the lead organization with respect to the planning and delivery of the event. As Council and the public can imagine there are many details and logistics to consider and plan for which requires a great deal of time spent planning and coordinating with community groups and organizations to make the event

successful. In response to the restriction that had been in place until this week, Staff have been creating an alternative event to provide holiday cheer to residents, under the parameters that are set in the current Provincial Order that are in place. As of today, this event is still an option to deliver to our community. However, given the new information received today staff are bringing this forward to Council so that this information is shared and until direction can be provided to Staff on how Council would like us to proceed, with Option A or Option B.

## 6. ANALYSIS

On Tuesday October 19, 2021, MPP Piccini's Office issued an invitation to all Northumberland County Mayors to meet with his office and the office of the Medical Officer of Health for the local Health Unit at 8:00 am on October 25, 2021 to discuss the new information being released by the Province, and how we might be able to plan for Santa Claus and Christmas Parades occurring this year.

The following is a summary of that conversation:

- Piccini's office has indicated that restrictions will be lifted in the next few days regarding Santa Claus Parades and Remembrance Day. The understanding is the only restriction will be encouraging people to wear masks and stay in their family bubble as much as possible this will be noted in the messaging
- Health Unit will not be making the decision the Health Unit takes their direction from the Provincial regulations.

As noted in the recommendations of this report, Staff are proposing two (2) options for Council to consider based on the information that is contained within the staff report and based on the current restrictions and pending lifting of restrictions as follows:

### OPTION A – Traditional Parade

- Saturday, December 4, 6pm start – approximate
- Cobourg Police Service will assist Staff to determine the safest and most appropriate event route details and logistics.
- Main Street Cobourg (King Street).
- In the Town's messaging Staff will encourage those attending to stretch out down the parade route to space out as much as possible, and to take all recommended safety measures.

### OPTION B – Santa Tour

- Saturday, December 4, 6pm start

- 53 kilometers around the streets – Staff worked with the Roads Department and looked at the current plough maps to determine the most appropriate route with the best coverage.
- Cobourg Police Service will lead and follow Santa through Cobourg to ensure safety.
- We will be requesting that communities donate to the food bank as the tour passes through residential streets.
- Route activation activities will be encouraged such as, House decorating contests, and Food Drives, and requesting that our residents light up their decorations to spread the holiday cheer.

Both options require a great deal of planning and organization, and Staff are looking for direction as soon as possible to make sure that either option is successful and provides residents with holiday and community spirit.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/BUDGET IMPACTS

As with any community event there is a cost associated with the event organization and the delivery of the two (2) different options. Those costings are detailed below:

### OPTION A – Traditional Parade

- \$2000 Town of Cobourg
- \$3000 DBIA
- \$2500 Sponsorship

**Total: \$7,500**

*\*DBIA contribution as the Parade will be in the DBIA District.*

### OPTION B – Santa Tour

- \$2000 Town of Cobourg
- \$2500 Sponsorship

**Total: \$4,500**

## 8. CONCLUSION

THAT Council provide approval for one of the following options:

**OPTION “A”** THAT Council authorize Staff to proceed with the Traditional Santa Claus Parade on King Street Event to take place on December 4, 2021 in the evening, subject to the future Provincial Orders to be passed and subject to the finalization of details from Staff;

**OR**

**OPTION “B”** THAT Council authorize the revamped Santa Claus Event planned under the current Provincial Orders which includes Santa Claus and his elves safely touring our community on their own private float in residential neighbourhoods to limit gatherings to take place on December 4, 2021 in the evening, subject to the finalization of details from Staff.