

THE NIAGARA FALLS REVIEW

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Olympic torch to take scenic route to Horseshoe Falls

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Olympic torch bearers are going to get a workout going up and down the Niagara escarpment during the flame's stay in Niagara Falls.

City hall released details of the Olympic torch relay Tuesday, including the route the flame will take Dec. 20 when it comes to town from Hamilton and Dec. 21 when it proceeds through Chippawa on its way to Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Welland.

"Everywhere you look in Niagara Falls, excitement is building for the arrival of the Olympic flame and everyone is invited to come out and cheer on its journey to Vancouver," Mayor Ted Salci said in a statement issued by his office Tuesday.

The Niagara Falls portion of the relay is scheduled to start Dec. 20 at 6 p.m., at the corner of Victoria Avenue and Bridge Street. It will proceed along Victoria to Queen Street, then east to River Road. From River Road, it will travel south to Clifton Hill where torchbearers will carry it up the steep "street of fun" to Victoria Avenue. The flame will work its way along Victoria Avenue and Ferry Street to Stanley Avenue to Murray Hill, near the Fallsview Casino. The route goes down the hill to Niagara Parkway, south past the Horseshoe Falls to the Niagara Parks Commission's Table Rock parking area.

The route through downtown Niagara Falls, the Clifton Hill and Fallsview tourism areas, and Queen Victoria Park is expected to take about an hour, ending at 7 p.m.

Niagara Falls has organized a free celebration Dec. 20 from 6 to 8 p.m., at the brink of the falls. Special events include the illumination of the falls in Olympic colours, a special fireworks display, ice sculptures and buskers, giveaways from torch-run sponsors Royal Bank and Coca-Cola, free skating at the Rink at the Brink and musical performances by the Canadian Tenors, Justin Hines and other bands.

Each torch bearer carries the flame for about 300 metres through the city. Gord Singleton, a former Olympic cyclist from Niagara Falls will carry it for the final 300 metres to a stage where he will light a celebration cauldron.

On Dec. 21, the relay resumes on River Road at the Rainbow Bridge at 7:45 a.m. The procession travels south along the Niagara Parkway to Dufferin Islands, then up Mechanic Street to Portage Road. From Portage Road, it travels into Chippawa's Main Street. The route goes west on Main Street to Sodom Road and ends at the nearby Chippawa-Willoughby Memorial Arena.

At 45,000 kilometres, the relay leading up to the 2010 Winter Games in Vancouver is the longest relay in Olympic history, the Winter Games' organizing committee says.

The Olympic Torch is in Niagara Falls on days 52 and 53, the midpoint of the 106-day relay. It will visit more than 1,030 communities in every province and territory in Canada.

More information about the torch relay is available at www.vancouver2010.com and the city's website www.niagarafalls.ca.

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