



CITY OF  
**ST AUGUSTINE**  
EST. 1565


MEMORANDUM

TO: City of St. Augustine City Commission

FROM: John P. Regan, P.E., City Manager

DATE: June 8, 2020

SUBJECT: Fireworks Over the Matanzas, July 4 Fireworks



On May 11, 2020, the City Commission unanimously decided to postpone the annual fireworks display, Fireworks Over the Matanzas, possibly to a date in September. Subsequently, it was brought to my attention that I had misrepresented the status of Daytona Beach and Jacksonville Beach, and that information was a factor in your decision. Therefore, in light of the significance of this decision on our community, I suggested the City Commission reconvene at a later date to take into consideration the most current and up-to-date information, including the decisions of surrounding cities and counties.

As of June 5, 2020, the following decisions have been made by surrounding jurisdictions:

- City of Jacksonville – will hold expanded fireworks with no associated community event
- City of Fernandina Beach – will hold fireworks, but no associated event
- City of Key West – will hold fireworks
- City of Jacksonville Beach – postponed to New Years
- City of Orange Park – postponed to Labor Day
- City of Ormond Beach - postponed to Labor Day
- Altamonte Springs – postponed to Labor Day
- Naval Station Mayport – canceled
- City of Palatka – canceled
- Flagler County – canceled
- City of Flagler Beach – canceled
- City of Daytona Beach – canceled
- City of Orlando – canceled; televised virtual fireworks tribute

As of Friday, June 5, we began Phase 2 of the reopening of the State of Florida, as directed by Governor Ron DeSantis, in Executive Order 20-139. Section 2 (B) states that all persons in Florida are encouraged to avoid congregating in groups larger than 50 persons. While this allows for the opening of additional entertainment facilities, such as movie theaters, concert halls, auditoriums, etc., it still imposes capacity restrictions and social distancing recommendations and protocols as issued by the CDC and OSHA. This order is in effect with no expiration date.

Medical experts have predicted increased cases of COVID-19 as an expected result of reopening and holding to the phasing recommendations is key to managing the risk of that increase. In St. Johns County, since May 11, we have seen an increase in cases, but not anything that would suggest a risk of overloading our hospital and supporting healthcare system.

At a state level, on May 11, Florida has 40,982 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 7,224 hospitalizations and 1,735 deaths. As of Monday, June 8 there were 63,938 confirmed cases with 10,942 hospitalizations and 2,700 deaths, with an increase in volume of cases every day.

On May 11, in St. Johns County, there were 222 confirmed cases of COVID-19 with 36 hospitalizations and 4 deaths. As of Monday, June 8, there were 279 confirmed cases in St. Johns County with 42 hospitalizations and 6 deaths.

Historically, Fireworks Over the Matanzas, the city's annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration, draws tens of thousands of visitors. In addition to the fireworks display, we offer a musical concert in the Plaza de la Constitucion as part of the day's entertainment.

I would like to reiterate the framework that was inherent to your May 11 deliberation:

- Potential increased crowds due to the cancellation of fireworks in the surrounding coastal jurisdictions
- Increased demand on St. Augustine Police and Fire Departments, and additional public safety and law enforcement agencies from neighboring jurisdictions, in anticipation of the compression impact by having the only coastal fireworks display
- No expectation of enforcing social distancing standards
- No expectation of enforcing capacity restrictions at bars and restaurants

No new information has come forward that would materially change the basis of your May 11 decision.