



City of Elgin Office of the City Manager

City Hall · 310 North Main Street · P.O. Box 591
Elgin, Texas 78621

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In recent days, the City of Elgin has learned that the organizers of both the **Juneteenth** parade and festival and the **Western Days** parade and festival have cancelled those events for this year due to concerns related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These are historic annual events that are important to the community and enjoyed by all who attend and participate.

As difficult as they were to make, these decisions by the organizers were the correct ones: as they were focused on the safety of the community at large, not simply the events themselves. The organizers are to be commended for recognizing their obligation to our citizens, visitors - and participants in their respective festivals and parades.

The parades, in particular, would have represented a significant challenge for the City and the Elgin Police Department (EPD) at this time. Traffic management and public safety are the top priorities in the proper management of any parade on public streets. During the pandemic times we are currently living in, however, proper management of a parade would not be possible given the demands and resources the City and EPD have available at this time.

Furthermore, it is unlikely that the City can or will authorize *any* large gathering or accumulation of people beyond those stipulated in current social distancing protocols through the month June. It is important to remember that the City is compelled to abide by the Texas Governor's emergency executive orders which state, in part, that: ". . . every person in Texas *shall*, except where necessary to provide or obtain essential services or reopened services, minimize social gatherings and minimize in-person contact with people who are not in the same household . . ." Obviously, a parade or festival could not conform to those restrictions.

The City of Elgin is saddened - along with the community at large - that there will be neither a Juneteenth or Western Days parade and festival this year, but we fully support and endorse those decisions. We are thankful for the relationships we have with the organizers of both events - and now look forward to working with those organizations as they plan future celebrations that can be accommodated in the new landscape of COVID-19.

To view a complete copy of the *City of Elgin Coronavirus (COVID-19) Readiness Plan*, go to <https://www.elgintx.com/1065/COVID-19>. Please monitor the City's website for regular updates regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Thomas L. Mattis
City Manager