

PRESS RELEASE
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CANCELLATION OF TRADITIONAL 4TH OF JULY EVENTS **Alternative Neighborhood Events to be Announced**

Benicia, CA (May 17, 2021) — The City of Benicia announced today that, in an abundance of caution, the City will forgo hosting the 3rd of July parade and the fireworks show on the evening of July 4th due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The traditional Torchlight Parade on July 3rd and the Picnic in the Park and Fireworks Display on July 4th are events cosponsored by the City of Benicia and Benicia Main Street.

Unfortunately, Solano County remains one of the few counties still in the more restrictive Red Tier. Governor Newsom has announced plans to relax regulations and remove the tier system on June 15th. However, mass gatherings are currently not allowed, and the State has provided no indication that mass gatherings will be permitted with the forthcoming changes. Mass gatherings are of concern because Benicia's Torchlight Parade and Fireworks Display each draw upwards of 20,000 spectators.

The City and Benicia Main Street have been waiting for guidance from the Governor's Office to make a final determination but due to the need to have begun planning some time ago and the lack of specific details from the Governor's Office, the City wants to give families time to prepare for other celebrations.

"Those communities that have announced plans to host 4th of July festivities are able to do so because they have venues, such as amphitheaters or other spaces, where attendance can be limited and controlled. In Benicia, we don't have the facilities that would allow to limit the size of mass gatherings," said Erik Upson, City Manager. "The safety of our community remains our top priority. We have the end of this pandemic in sight and can look forward to celebrating again as a community next year."

Smaller neighborhood celebrations are encouraged. The City's Parks and Community Services Department will soon announce exciting details of fun 4th of July activities to bring neighborhoods together.

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