



NEWS Release

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CITY'S PARADE ROUTE POLICY CLARIFIED

ROCKPORT, TX – After the publication of the parade route for the upcoming Tropical Christmas Festival's night parade, a couple of Austin Street businesses and a few commenters have expressed to the City their displeasure of moving it from Austin Street to Magnolia Street. The decision to change the route was made at a City Council meeting on August 25th of this year and went into effect with the annual SeaFair parade, which was held in September.

According to Police Chief Tim Jayroe, the Police Department made the recommendation as a matter of public safety. “Over the past few years, we've seen the number of attendees increase at both of these parades,” he noted. “We've also witnessed numerous ‘near misses’ in terms of potential casualties among the crowds located along the narrow Austin Street corridor.

“Additionally, several of the vehicles pulling the floats actually drove over some of the curbs and bulb outs. Fortunately, no one was standing on those particular spots at that time, but many viewers were standing on the median and other street protrusions,” he added.

The potential for disaster came into clear focus at last year's Tropical Christmas Parade when an adult spectator sitting in a pickup bed fell into the street, injuring himself and causing the parade to come to a temporary halt. Before taking the recommendation to Council, a review of the 2014 accident prompted several discussions with the City Manager and senior staff officials. Among the considerations were roping off part of the street to contain crowds and closing the street several hours prior to the event and towing cars from the parking spaces. Rerouting the parade to Magnolia Street provided a wider venue, better flow for vehicles and participants in the parade, more space for viewers, a safer environment for all, and improved access for customers.,

“We realize that change is difficult,” stated Mayor C.J. Wax. “However, we have to take into account the safety of residents and visitors at all times. This is a very real risk which has been easily mitigated by moving the route over by one street. The Magnolia Street route changes the safety buffer for spectators from a couple of feet to nearly two traffic lanes.” Because of the popularity of the parade, City officials expect the Austin Street corridor to still be full of potential customers before, during, and after the parade while improving access for the public.