



## MEMORANDUM

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P.O. Box 4100 ♦ FRISCO, COLORADO 80443

**TO:** MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL

**FROM:** NORA GILBERTSON, EVENTS MANAGER  
VANESSA AGEE, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

**RE:** 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY FIREWORKS AND PARADE DISCUSSION

**DATE:** AUGUST 10, 2021

**Summary and Background:** Frisco's "Fabulous 4th of July" is a longstanding community tradition celebrating July 4th primarily on Frisco's charming Main Street and at the Frisco Bay Marina. Celebrations have included a free kids' fishing derby at Meadow Creek Park; a pancake breakfast benefiting Team Summit; a parade; several free concerts, often including a concert at Marina Park (held on Main Street in 2019 due to Marina construction); and a fireworks display over Dillon Reservoir.

In 2020, the Frisco July 4th parade was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in 2021, the parade returned in a format that was in harmony with the Promenade, which could not accommodate vehicles. Staff chose to plan a parade which embraced the community's love of bikes and dogs, as well as values around sustainability and walkability/bike-ability by staging a "Bikes and Barks" parade with just human and canine participants and bikes.

In March 2019, Frisco Town Council made the decision to suspend July 4th fireworks, as the Town of Breckenridge had made the decision to cancel July 4th fireworks into the future causing an anticipated influx of visitors to Frisco's fireworks which could not be supported by existing infrastructure. First responders anticipated that response to medical and other incidents would likely be significantly hampered by traffic gridlock, as attendees tend to leave fireworks displays at the same time. Town Council directed staff to bring back the July 4th fireworks discussion once infrastructure improvements had been made, such as completion of the GAP project on Highway 9.

**Analysis: 4th of July Fireworks**

Prior to 2019, both the Towns of Frisco and Breckenridge included fireworks in their annual 4th of July celebrations. In 2019, the Town of Breckenridge cancelled their 4th of July fireworks display indefinitely due to ongoing concerns about drought and wildfire, as their fireworks launch location is particularly exposed to flammable natural material. Frisco's site allows for fireworks to launch largely over Dillon Reservoir from an area near the Middle School, but is still subject to

cancellation when Stage 2 fire restrictions are in effect. In October 2021, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) anticipates completing the GAP project and widening Highway 9 to two lanes in both directions between Frisco and Breckenridge. This will alleviate, but not completely resolve post-fireworks traffic delays. Also, in years past fireworks viewing has already been spreading to areas around Frisco, such as the Frisco Adventure Park, Sapphire Point, and the Dillon Amphitheater, as spectators have realized that they can view fireworks from other locations and avoid longer traffic delays. While egress from festivals or even skiing can be spread over many hours, most spectators will want to leave a fireworks display at exactly the same time after a long day in the sun celebrating with family and friends, creating special challenges which demand careful planning and support from other jurisdictions.

In year's past after Frisco's July 4th fireworks celebration, the Frisco Police Department has needed 45 minutes to 1 ½ hours to clear pedestrians and traffic from the Frisco Bay Marina and from Highway 9. If a fireworks display were to return and Frisco were the only show in the county, then the Frisco Police Department anticipates that they would be able to clear the Marina and Frisco traffic more efficiently after a fireworks display if they were able to receive additional support from other police agencies. This support has not yet been secured and would be pursued if Frisco Town Council decides to resume July 4th fireworks. Also, Summit Fire has indicated that they would place additional ambulances and response crew in critical areas to more efficiently respond to medical emergencies.

#### **4th of July Parade**

Frisco's traditional July 4th parade typically saw over 150 vehicles and lasted between 1 and 1 ½ hours. As the narrow center lane of the Pedestrian Promenade on Main Street was not conducive to a traditional vehicle parade, it became evident that alterations would need to be made in 2021. Staff considered the Town's values and arrived at a July 4th parade with a more sustainable, human-powered "Bikes and Barks" theme, featuring costumes, decorated bikes and 4-legged companions. The 2021 Frisco July 4th parade down the Promenade had 418 people pre-registered and total of over 500 day-of participants for a parade that lasted a little over 30 minutes. Staff strategically scheduled the Frisco parade at the same time as the Breckenridge parade to better spread crowds over the two towns and discourage driving from one parade to the next, as has happened in past years. Chalk artists who created works of art on Main Street over Friday and Saturday were also included in the celebrations, which coincided with the mural being painted on 3rd Avenue. This effort further underscored the Town's values around public art.

#### **2021 July 4th Schedule:**

10:00 a.m. - Bikes and Barks parade with over 500 participants and canine companions  
 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Free caricature artists and a free balloon artist entertained on Main Street  
 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.- Gora Gora Marching Band had three performances up and down Main Street  
 1:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.- Roving aerial acrobats performed up and down Main Street

#### **For reference, this is how a typical 4th of July schedule looked during a year with a vehicle parade and fireworks:**

8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.- Summit Nordic Ski Club pancake breakfast  
 8:00 a.m.- Kid's Fishing Derby at Meadow Creek Park  
 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.- Summit Concert Band in the Historic Park Gazebo  
 12:30 p.m. -2:00 p.m.- 4th of July parade on Main Street

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.- Free concert at the Historic Park Gazebo  
 7:15 p.m. - 9:15 p.m.- Free concert at the Frisco Bay Marina  
 9:30 p.m.- Fireworks

**Financial Impact:**

- 1- The return of Fireworks would have the following impact to the budget:  
 Fireworks cost \$35,000 for 30-minute show  
 Six security guards for five hours (concert + fireworks) at \$38/person per hour would be \$1,140 total  
 Temporary lighting rental at the Marina to assist in moving pedestrians out of the Marina safely would be \$6,000  
 Portable toilet rental = \$2,200  
 Assistance from other law enforcement agencies – estimated cost \$4,000  
 Total = \$48,340
- 2- Both the vehicular parade and a bike parade could be planned for under \$2,000.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:** The return of fireworks supports a thriving economy by drawing visitors to Frisco who stay, eat, and shop. The July 4th fireworks also appeal to many community members who have expressed how much they cherish this component of July 4th and the vibrant culture it supports.

The “Bikes and Barks” parade aligns with goals for a sustainable environment by having a parade that produces less emissions and embraces walkability and bike-ability. Also, a simpler human (and dog) powered parade supports an inclusive community where the barriers for participation are minimized. Community celebrations, whether parades or fireworks, can support a vibrant culture, arts and recreation as long as they have community support and can sustain harmony between resident quality of life and visitor experience.

**Environmental Sustainability:** The return of July 4th fireworks has a negative impact on the environment as it creates noise pollution, light pollution, and disturbs wildlife. The “Bikes and Barks” parade would have a positive impact on the environment, as it reduces the amount of emissions created during the parade and inspires people to ride their bikes and walk more.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff is seeking direction from Town Council about July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations going forward:

- (1) Would Council like to see the parade return to a traditional vehicular parade or continue with the “Bikes and Barks” parade, as in 2021, even without a Promenade on Main Street?
- (2) Would Council like staff to pursue the possibility of bringing back July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks in 2022 understanding that there would need to be discussions and support from other law enforcement agencies?

**Approved By:**

Tony O'Rourke, Interim Town Manager  
 Bonnie Moinet, Finance Director