



# CITY OF BEDFORD

2000 Forest Ridge Drive - Bedford, TX 76021  
(817)952-2100 [www.bedfordtx.gov](http://www.bedfordtx.gov)

---

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020

Before we begin, I wanted to take a moment to say Thank You. Thank You to everyone. I recognize that there is no way to comprehend the sacrifices that you have made. Everyone has had made adjustments in their lives because of this unique world that we find ourselves in. I know that these sacrifices have been great. As many of you have lost your jobs, been forced to work from home, been turned into stay-at-home teachers for your children, have been forced to care for loved ones or for elderly friends and family, our lives have been changed forever. It is important for you to know, that while our daily lives have changed, that your City has not been standing idly by.

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, the City of Bedford declared its first ever Declaration of Local Disaster. The decision to do so was not taken lightly and it was in response to the Actions of the President and our Governor. During mid to late March, information regarding the coronavirus was rapidly changing, much like the virus itself. Information and direction from our leaders at the State and Federal level was scarce and without direction. But, the City of Bedford took action to protect its citizens and its employees. First and foremost, our duty was to take steps to limit possible exposures to you and to our staff. There were many unknowns at the time, but the City immediately started limiting public access to City facilities and reconstituted the work patterns and activities of all departments. Although public access to facilities was changed, business continued as usual for your City of Bedford team. Crews continued to repair water and sewer breaks, neighborhood services continued to work on code enforcement, economic development continued to process permits for new businesses, and most importantly emergency services continued to protect and to serve our City.

On March 25<sup>th</sup> the City of Bedford took the additional step of shutting down public access to all City facilities including the library and the parks. Again, this was a tough decision, but this was done in response to the increased threat that existed at that time. During mid to late March, the City began participating in the first of hundreds of conference calls with the County, with the State, with our other neighboring jurisdictions, and with our doctor and hospital community. Bedford was informed of the serious threat that this virus posed to our community and to the limited resources that our hospitals had available. So once again we took action.

As the City took decisive action to limit exposure opportunities at City facilities, staff was proactively contacting Bedford businesses and Bedford churches. Our staff took steps to support the HEB ISD as it changed its model and began distributing study packets to students at various locations throughout the City. Staff worked with non-profits on a variety of projects and in a supporting capacity. We increased our communication and co-operation with Texas Health HEB Hospital. And, we increased our communication and coordination with our neighboring cities. All while continuing the business of providing the City services that we all have come to expect on a daily basis. In the case of our emergency services personnel, "business as usual" meant having to adjust to increased requests on its manpower while taking precautions to protect themselves from possible exposures in an ever-changing climate. Your City has not been standing still during these chaotic moments. Quite the contrary.

During this time and up till now, the City has been communicating with you by using social media, by posting helpful information and updates on our City website, I have recorded phone messages that have been broadcast to nearly 23,000 phone numbers regarding our Executive Orders, and I have been providing daily messages and updates through my "Messages from the Mayor" posts. Unfortunately, there have been a few people who expressed their frustration with the lack of City information during this period. For that I am sorry. I and other members of the City Council have for years expressed our frustration with connecting to the residents and businesses. It should be the challenge of this City to find ways to reach you better. Not everyone participates in social media. Not everyone has internet access. If

there is one lesson to learn from these recent events, it is that we must rededicate ourselves to accomplishing the goal of reaching everyone. You have my word that we will take on this challenge as a Council.

Yesterday, Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced details regarding his plan to “re-open” Texas. In doing so, once again our definition of business as usual will change. The decision by the Governor to enact eased restrictions effectively takes away local authority. Life as we know it will change once again. As the City of Bedford shifts its attention to supporting our local businesses, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we must continue to look out for you. Our challenge is to re-open Bedford facilities safely and smartly. The coronavirus hasn’t gone away. It doesn’t know the difference between nationalities, political allegiances, or city boundaries. The City of Bedford will continue to act cautiously and in coordination with our neighbors and our health care professionals as we move forward. But to be clear, no City, State, or Federal government can force you to be smart or force you to use common sense. It is up to you to make good decisions to protect yourself and your loved ones from possible exposures to this virus. Please continue to be mindful that the virus is still out there.

Please know that in conversations with our medical community, we have been told that the actions that our community has taken and the sacrifices that you have endured, has made an impact. It is their belief that our actions in HEB has slowed the curve and the spread of the coronavirus. The scale of the virus’ impact in areas like New York will not occur here. Our hospitals believe that they have the capacity to handle the demands. They are grateful.

With all this in mind, now is the time for your City Council to pick up from where it left off. Prior to Declaring a Local Disaster, your City Council was actively meeting to address the needs and concerns of our City. At the beginning of the year, the Council agreed to take up the mantle of moving projects forward and to stop kicking the can down the road on several important matters. Council began meeting on a weekly basis to address old issues and new. Council had begun meeting with Bedford business leaders, meeting with our volunteer boards and commissions, inviting economic development professionals to work sessions, and have been active in re-focusing the City’s efforts regarding streets, water needs, Phase Next, and Bedford Commons. There is more work to be done and I ask Council and staff to be prepared to finish what we have started. Tonight is an example of Council’s will to take decisive action on difficult decisions, as we will vote on our commitment to move the idea of Bedford Commons forward in a fashion that you have chosen, not the developers. Next week, I have called for a Special City Council Work Session to work on ideas to help our Bedford businesses take the next step in their recovery. There is still more work to be done and we will do it.

Lastly, again let me say Thank You. Your patience, your compassion, and your sense of community has made a difference. Thank you to everyone that works for the City of Bedford. Your City staff responded to the ever-changing demands on its resources. Thank you to Police and Fire. You stepped up. Despite everyday risks to your health and welfare, you never wavered in your commitment to taking care of our residents. I want to give a specific thank you to our Interim City Manager Clifford Blackwell. He has shown special skills as a leader for our City throughout this crisis. Never before in my lifetime have we experienced such a challenge to our world. But, because of you we are going to be okay. There will continue to be bumps in the road as we re-open our community and our economy. Please continue to support your local businesses. But because of you I know that we will be fine. It is because of you, that in every conference call, I am proud to say that I am from Bedford. Thank you.