



MPC Newsletter

Summer 2020

The MPC is following CDC guidance regarding COVID-19 while continuing to remain open for business.



Photo by Steve Saunders

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MPC Conducts Canal District Public Survey

In May, Savannah City Council asked the MPC to lead efforts soliciting public input on the Savannah Canal District Master Plan and Action Playbook, as well as the Savannah Canal District Master Plan Update. MPC staff organized a 40-day outreach effort that allowed the residents of Chatham County to provide comments through both a public survey and two virtual public meetings. These methods allowed public opinion on the many different facets of the proposed Plan.



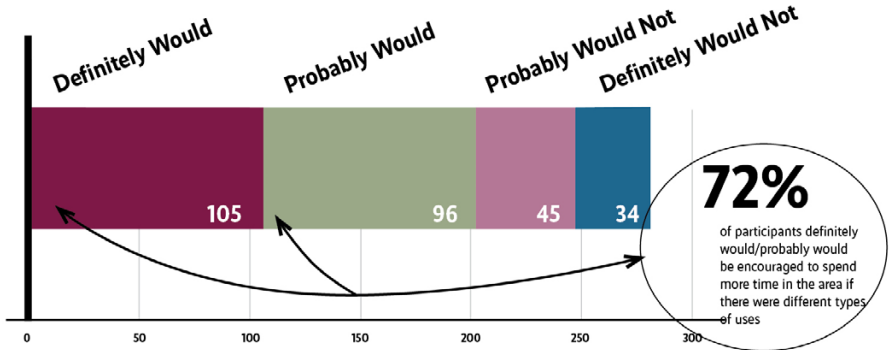
Courtesy of the City of Savannah

Over 280 individuals responded to the survey or participated in the feedback process over the 40-day period. A Technical Memo summarizing the data collected and the associated feedback was provided to the City of Savannah and the results were delivered to Savannah City Council by Executive Director Melanie Wilson.

You can view the Master Plan and get more information on this planning initiative at the City's website—www.savannahga.gov/2900/planning-initiatives.

Would different types of new uses and activities in the arena (residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or entertainment uses) encourage you to spend more time in the Proposed Arena and Canal District?

280 participants out of 282



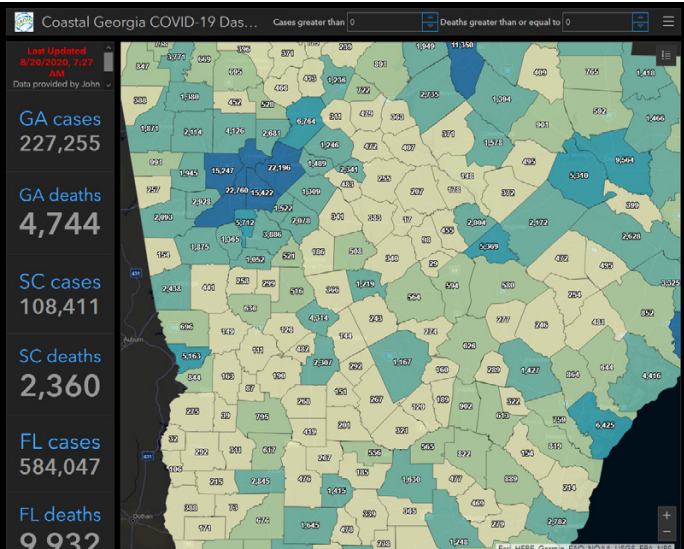
SAGIS's COVID-19 Data Hub and Dashboard

These resources made and compiled by our GIS staff receive an average of 2,500 hits per day.

SAGIS staff have been hard at work over the past few months creating resources to support the planning and response to the ongoing public health emergency related to COVID-19. To provide more local information regarding COVID-19, the SAGIS team developed the following informative maps and websites for use by the public:

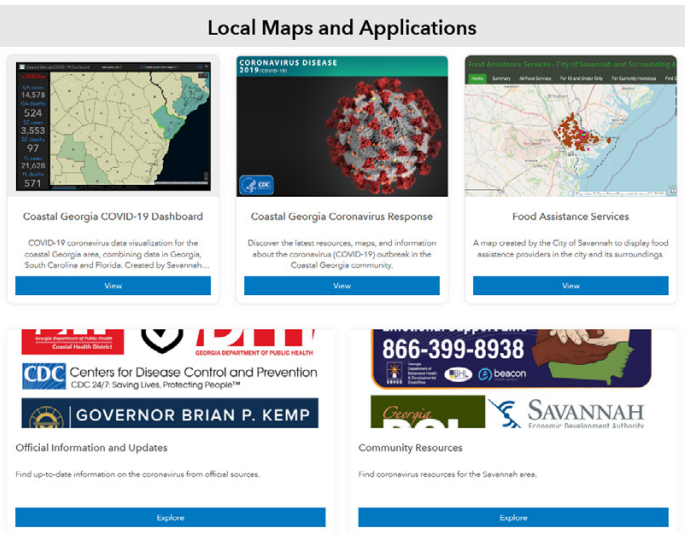
MPC-SAGIS COVID-19 Regional Dashboard

This dashboard shows daily counts by county of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida for a regional picture of cases. Data is updated daily using information provided by John Hopkins University and the Georgia Department of Public Health.



MPC-SAGIS Maps & Data Hub Site

This hub site provides links to the main dashboard along with other useful information and various dashboards. A zip code case map for Chatham County was recently added using information provided by the Coastal Department of Health.



SAGIS will be updating these resources and adding content as more information is provided. You can visit these resources using the links above or through www.SAGIS.org.

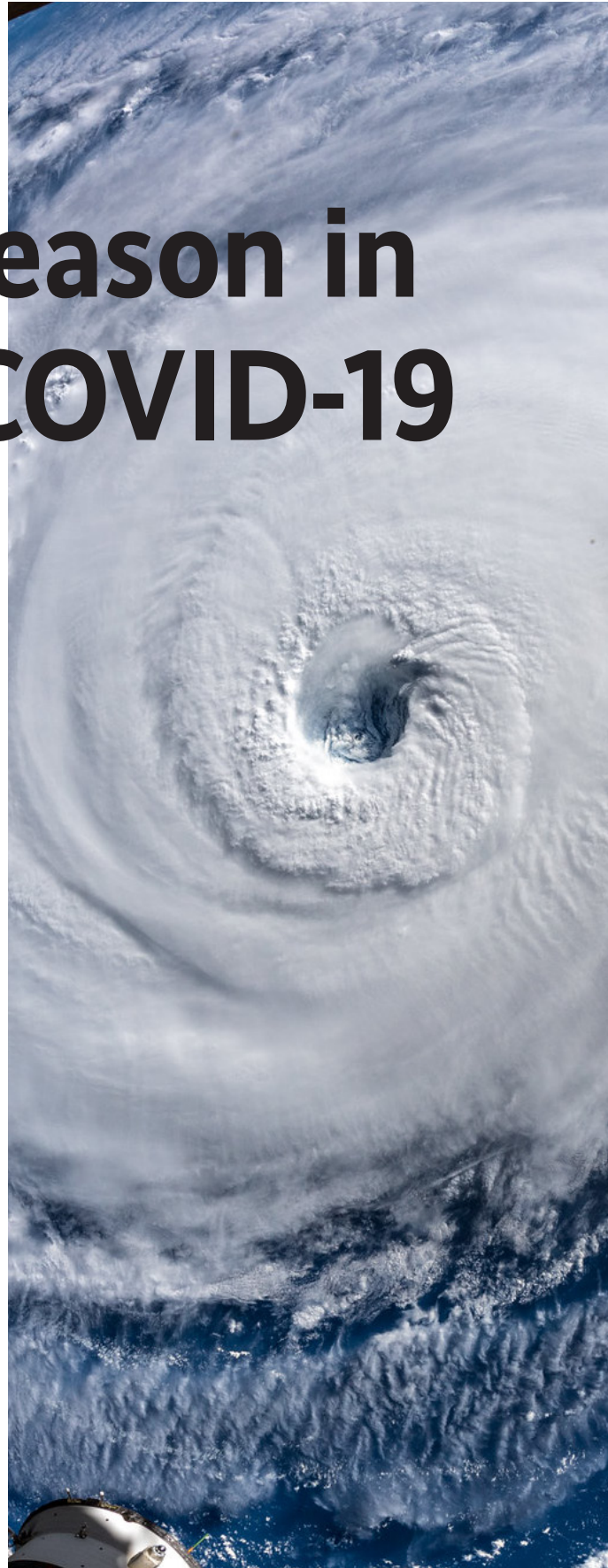
Hurricane Season in the Age of COVID-19

Hurricane season runs from June 1st to November 30th. Are you prepared to evacuate if a storm comes our way?

Forecasters at Colorado State University are now predicting an “extremely active” 2020 Atlantic hurricane season with 24 named storms, 12 hurricanes, and 5 major hurricanes—nearly double the amount in an average season. Because we are also dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, now is the time to make and/or review your hurricane plan in case a storm threatens the Georgia coast. Luckily, the Chatham Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) has information to help you safely prepare, evacuate, and shelter the storm while also protecting yourself and others from COVID-19.

Do you have an emergency kit ready if needed? If not, CEMA makes it easy by providing a [list](#) of everything you’ll need—don’t forget to include COVID-19 basics like cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer, and extra face coverings! Do you know which evacuation zone you live in or in which surge zone your home or business is located? If not, CEMA has [maps](#) to help you figure that out. What should you do when a hurricane watch has been issued? CEMA has your “[To Do List](#).” Do you need assistance evacuating because you have functional, access, or medical needs? Eligible residents can apply to be on the [Hurricane Registry](#) list maintained by the Health Department.

Don’t wait until a hurricane is headed our way! Plan ahead and visit www.chathamemergency.org to make sure that you and your loved ones are well prepared.



Hurricane Florence from the International Space Station (Credit: NASA)

It's Not Too Late to Complete Your 2020 Census!

If you have not completed your 2020 Census yet, there's still time to respond! Response forms are due by **September 30th**. Data from the census helps the government allocate funding for important resources in our community. It is critical that we all participate so that our community is not underfunded for schools, roads, hospitals, state representation, and more.

A promotional image for the 2020 Census featuring Rev. Tillman. He is a Black man in a dark suit and red tie, smiling. The background is a blurred indoor setting. Text overlays include: "The Census counts EVERYONE living in America.", "Our information is Safe, Confidential, and Required. It's protected by Federal Law for 72 years.", "CENSUS 2020 census.georgia.gov", "Every. One. Counts.", "You Count, I Count Chatham Counts 2020", and "Rev. Tillman".

A promotional image for the 2020 Census featuring Molly. She is a woman with long dark hair, wearing a striped shirt and a colorful scarf, smiling. The background is a blurred indoor setting. Text overlays include: "We need to make sure everyone is counted! The census is linked to important resources for children and families.", "The 2010 Census helped Georgia receive \$1.6 Billion for afterschool programs.", "CENSUS 2020 census.georgia.gov", "Every. One. Counts.", "You Count, I Count Chatham Counts 2020", and "Molly".

Our very own SAGIS team is helping get everyone in Chatham County counted! Staff created the [Chatham Counts Story Map](#), which allows users to view different demographic information about special populations in relation to the Low Response Score (LRS) and also shows the current Self-Response rate for the 2020 Census.

You can respond to the questionnaire online, by phone, or by mail. More information on ways to respond can be found at www.chathamcounts.com or www.2020census.gov.



Photo by Zbynek Burival

City of Savannah Passes Clean Energy Resolution

In March of this year, the Savannah City Council took a major first step in addressing the issue of climate change in our region. Council unanimously adopted a resolution that states that “there is a clear scientific consensus regarding the reality of climate change; the connection with human activities that create greenhouse gases; how it is presently harming our community; and the analysis of current trends confirming that future generations will experience an ever-escalating crisis.” The resolution further acknowledged that people of color, children and the elderly dispro-

portionately suffer the economic, environmental, health and social hardships of climate change. This resolution is the much-needed platform to launch initiatives that will result in meaningful programs and policies focusing on the reduction of the greenhouse gases we humans produce, which accelerate climate change.

Climate change does not simply mean warmer temperatures. Negative impacts of climate change that we see locally include extreme heat, warmer ocean waters that feed

and strengthen hurricanes, loss of property and flooding in our region due to sea level rise and “sunny day” flooding, as well as natural resource destruction. These effects of climate change negatively impact our quality of life. And we humans are mostly to blame due to our burning of fossil fuels as our main energy source, releasing large amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. It is imperative that we make changes to our energy consumption before it is too late, and this resolution by Council is a step in the right direction.

While most aspects of climate change are negative, it does provide us as a community an opportunity for innovation and job creation as we identify means to provide clean energy sources in our region. So far, the clean-energy sector has created 76,500 high-paying jobs in the State. The City, in making this resolution, has created an opportunity for economic development and job creation while increasing the City’s resilience and reducing costs associated with mitigating damage to public health and safety.

The resolution states that “One Hundred Percent (100%) of electricity consumed in the City of Savannah shall be generated from safe, clean and renewable energy by 2035, and all other energy needs shall be generated from safe, clean, and renewable energy by 2050.” The resolution also commits the City to developing a clean-energy action plan within 18 months of the adoption of the resolution. The action plan, which will be completed by October 2021, will be created through a partnership with utilities, institutional partners, industries, businesses, non-profit and community-based organizations, and residents. The City will also collaborate with surrounding communities to achieve aligned clean-energy and equity goals. City Council committed to re-evaluate the goals and associated planning efforts at least once every three years, as technologies, policies, and economic feasibility of these commitments change. You can read the full resolution [here](#).



The Wonderful Adventure Book

The MPC presents **The Wonderful Adventure Book**, an activity book full of challenging mazes, connect the dots, and word scrambles. As part of our Executive Director Melanie Wilson’s initiative for public outreach and education, **The Wonderful Adventure Book** has been created to educate youth about the MPC, our lovely cities and towns, riverfronts, and nearby attractions. This activity book is a perfect fit for kids aged 8-12 and great to have when you’re stuck inside on a rainy day.

You can find **The Wonderful Adventure Book** on our website www.thempc.org or by clicking [here](#).

Advance Planning

Introducing Plan 2040

We're updating the Chatham County – Savannah Comprehensive Plan and we need your input!



Top left: Causton Bluff (Photo by Tyler Edic); Top right: Bonaventure Cemetery (Photo by Stephanie Rossi); Bottom: City of Savannah as seen from Hutchinson Island (Photo by Tyler Edic)

Please take a few minutes to visit www.thempc.org and look at our department pages to see some of the exciting projects we are working on to help improve our community. One project, the Comprehensive Plan, encompasses all MPC departments and their various projects.

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for the short- and long-term growth, redevelopment, and preservation of Chatham County and the City of Savannah. It reflects the community's values and goals and lays out strategies to achieve them. Since the MPC's last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2016, the County and City have grown considerably. Continued progress of our community must follow a strategic approach that balances a desirable built environment, economic development, natural resources, transportation options, and a high quality of life for all of our residents. Plan 2040 is a five-year update of Chatham County and the City of Savannah's existing Comprehensive Plan that will be used by local officials as a guide to help make policy decisions regarding the community's growth and development for the next twenty years. This document will help shape our community by identifying issues, opportunities, and priorities and allocating resources accordingly.

The Comprehensive Plan covers a wide range of topics for the community including: Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation, Housing, Health, Education, Public Safety, Natural Resources, and Historic & Cultural Resources. You can read the previous Comprehensive Plan online [here](#) or visit www.compplan2040.org for information about our current plan, Plan 2040. Stay tuned for our public meeting dates on the draft plans.



Follow us on social media to keep up with our progress & learn about upcoming meetings



@Plan_2040



@MPCNatResources



@MPC Natural Resouces

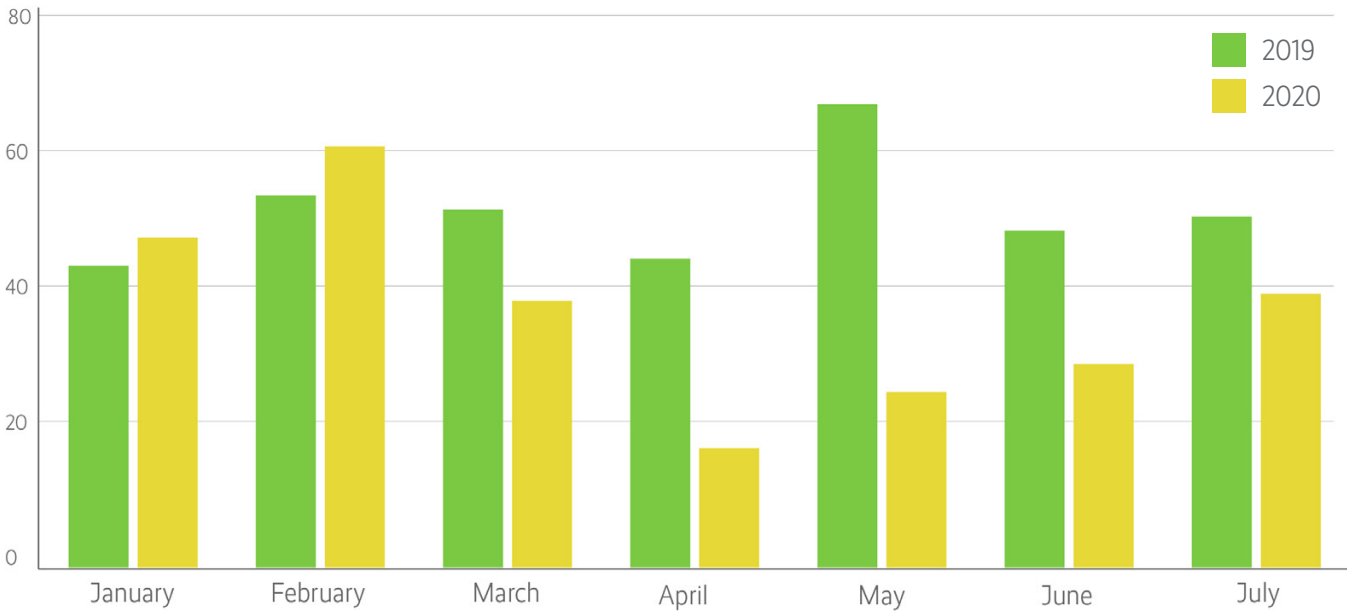
Impacts of COVID-19 on COA Applications

COVID-19 has changed, well, just about everything across the entire world. Social distancing became a part of our normal vocabulary, Zoom meetings became the new workplace, and in the planning world, the number of COA's decreased due to a lack of renovations and new construction..

So, what exactly is a COA? A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is an application that must be submitted before residents can make construction changes to their homes in the Historic District in Savannah. As shown in the graph below, there was a dramatic decrease in COA applications between March 2019 and March 2020!

While the numbers are recovering, it is still interesting to see the reach that this virus had, and that the virus has left an impact in the unlikeliest of places. This result is unsurprising, as families across the world shifted their thoughts from their regular activities to dealing with a global pandemic. We hope that as the world and Chatham County continue to bounce back, the number of COA applications also continues to grow.

To learn more about COAs, please visit www.thempc.org/historic/coi.



Above: City of Savannah c. 1930 (Credit: Georgia Historical Society)

Right: Original Odd Fellows' Building c. 1888, located at 206 W. State St., which was destroyed in the fire of 1889. (Credit: Georgia Historical Society)



Historic Preservation Month Highlights

Every year in May, local preservation groups, state historical societies, and business and civic organizations across the country celebrate Preservation Month! Preservation Month began as National Preservation Week in 1973, but in 2005, the National Trust extended the celebration to the entire month of May and declared it Preservation Month to provide an even greater opportunity to celebrate Historic Preservation throughout the country.

During the month of May, the MPC planned several virtual activities to engage the community in the world of Historic Preservation. This included webinars where you could learn interesting facts on the history of the Historic Preservation

Movement in Savannah. For example, preservation became an incredibly important topic in Savannah, as many historic structures were demolished during the 1950s and 1960s in a period called Urban Renewal. Much of this demolition was done to build parking structures and roads.

While many historic spaces were demolished, some still exist today. Johnson Square, for instance, was created in 1733. Two hundred eighty-seven years later, residents and tourists alike enjoy the same square as those born centuries ago. Visit the Historic Preservation page on www.thempc.org/historic for links to the webinars to learn more!

Cuyler-Brownville

Historic Resource Survey

The Cuyler-Brownville neighborhood was originally developed in the mid-19th century for freed slaves and survives as one of the most intact and continuously occupied African American neighborhoods in Savannah. Today, long-time residents continue to live in the Cuyler-Brownville neighborhood and maintain properties within the heart of the district. Their continued occupancy and maintenance have resulted in a high degree of historic integrity within the core of the district away from the busier commercial strip along Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. The closely spaced and similarly shaped buildings along the many block faces create a continuous rhythm of structures and have established a street character that is not found elsewhere in Savannah.

The Cuyler-Brownville Neighborhood Historic Resources Survey was conducted as part of an ongoing city-wide preservation planning initiative sponsored by the City of Savannah and administered by the MPC. All phases of the survey were conducted

jointly by Sarah Ward of Ward Architecture and Preservation and Robert A. Ciucevich of Quatrefoil Consulting. The survey identifies all historically significant buildings, structures, and sites within the Cuyler-Brownville Neighborhood and serves as an update to the 1994 historic resources survey of the neighborhood. The survey, which forms the basis for future preservation planning, was funded through a Certified Local Government (CLG) Survey and Planning Grant from the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and matched in part by the City of Savannah and the Historic Savannah Foundation.

For more information on the survey and a copy of a brochure on the study, please contact the MPC's Historic Preservation staff at 912-651-1440 or via our [website](#).



Left: Florence Street School; Above: Rest-A-While Inn (Photo by Georgia Historical Society)

Legislative Highlights

INFRA Discretionary Grant Program

The US Department of Transportation (DOT) is investing \$906 million into the Country's infrastructure through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) discretionary grant program. DOT Secretary Elaine Chao states that the funding is going towards improving the infrastructure of highways, bridges, ports, and railroads. DOT chose projects to fund based on how they worked with the nation's economic and transportation goals. Approximately 53% of funding will go to rural projects, to address the underinvestment in rural areas and \$293 million will be made available for areas at least partially located in Opportunity Zones. An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed area in which new investments can receive preferential tax treatment thus attracting more economic opportunities to the area. The funds were awarded to 20 projects in 20 states. While Georgia was not awarded a grant, projects in neighboring states, such as North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee were grant recipients.

BRIC Program

FEMA is providing federal funds to assist the Country in building protective infrastructure to prepare for potential disasters. Named the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), this program is distributing up to \$500 million in funds for pre-disaster hazard mitigation. Most of the money (\$446.4 million) will be allocated through a national competition, while \$20 million will be reserved for Indian tribal governments, and another 33.6 million will be reserved for states and US territories. To be eligible for this competition, the state, territory, or tribal government must have received a major disaster declaration under the Stafford Act within the past 7 years before the start date of the application period, which is September 30th, 2020. Under this Act, FEMA will assist in funding learning activities so the workforce can assist in disaster mitigation, funding for public safety and critical services, and management costs. The application deadline is January 31, 2021.

Stay Tuned For ...

The Historic Resources 2021 calendar focused on pandemics



Information on the MPC's upcoming Planning Academy dates



Upcoming Meetings

***Schedule may change. Please refer to the MPC website www.thempc.org for additional details & all application deadlines, including those pertaining to COVID-19.*

September

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 MPC 1:30 p.m.	2	3 Site & Monument 4:00 p.m.	4	5
6	7	8	9 Historic Review Board 1:00 p.m.	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 County ZBA 9:00 a.m. MPC 1:30 p.m.	23 Historic Preservation Commission 3:00 p.m.	24 City ZBA 10:00 a.m.	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Site & Monument 4:00 p.m.	2	3
4	5	6 SAGIS 9:00 a.m.	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 MPC 1:30 p.m.	14 Historic Review Board 1:00 p.m.	15 CORE MPO TCC 2:00 p.m. CORE MPO CAC 5:30 p.m.	16	17
18	19 CORE MPO ACAT 1:00 p.m.	20	21 CORE MPO Board 10:00 a.m.	22 City ZBA 10:00 a.m.	23	24
25	26	27 County ZBA 9:00 a.m.	28 Historic Preservation Commission 3:00 p.m.	29	30	31



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