

Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department

COVID-19 Meeting Procedures

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Purpose

This document describes a remote meeting process to host the Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) meeting on May 21, 2020 in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

The fourteen member Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Commission generally meets every two-weeks. The cases on the agenda typically include subdivision, zoning, vacation, and conditional use items. Nearly all of these items are public hearing items.

On March 20, 2020, the Sedgwick County Commission voted to close most County buildings, including the Ronald Reagan Building where the Metropolitan Area Planning Department (MAPD) offices are located, from Monday, March 23rd through April 5th. The closure was later expaended to May 1st.

On March 25, 2020, the Sedgwick County Local Health Officer's Stay at Home Order took effect. The Order limits all public gatherings in Sedgwick County to a maximum of 10 people. The Order is scheduled to end on April 23, 2020.

On April 7, 2020, Governor Kelly issued Executive Order Number 20-18, temporarily prohibiting mass gatherings of more than 10 people to limit the spread of COVID-19. The order is in effect until May 1, 2020.

In late March, the Kansas Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment started citing research from the University of Washington which projected that medical resource use due to COVID-19 virus infections would peak on April 28th. On April 13, 2020, the projections were updated to project peak resource use on April 26th.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, the following Planning Commission meetings have been canceled: March 19th, April 9th, April 23rd, and May 7th. The next Subdivision Committee meeting is scheduled for May 1284th and the next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for May 21st.

Considerations

Safety

The Wichita-Sedgwick County MAPC and MAPD are committed to public safety – including compliance with both the statewide and countywide orders prohibiting large public gatherings. The current stay orders prohibiting public gatherings are set to expire before the May 21, 2020 MAPC meeting date. This plan can be utilized to allow the MAPC meeting to occur if a stay at home order is in place/extended, or if there are concerns about gatherings larger than 10 people.

Transparency and Public Comment

The Wichita-Sedgwick County MAPC and MAPD are committed to transparency and public input. In addition, many of the items on the MAPC agendas are required to have public hearings per State law. This process has been created in order to provide multiple opportunities and ways for members of the public to provide comments. In addition, the MAPC and MAPD are aware that members of the public

may not have access to technology. Options are provided to ensure that they can participate in the process.

Process

Notification

The MAPD will provide notification of the upcoming meeting and agenda in a variety of ways, including but not limited to the following.

- **Public Notices**
The MAPD will mail out public notices to properties within the notification areas of each case. The notices will include information about protest petitions and how individuals can provide comment prior and during the MAPC meeting. The MAPD will re-send notices to properties that received prior notices indicating an earlier MAPC meeting date.
- **Website**
The MAPD will post information about the upcoming meeting and agenda items on the MAPC / MAPD website. It will include information about how individuals can provide comments both prior and during the MAPC meetings.
- **Email Distribution**
The MAPD will distribute an email to all agents and individuals who have signed up for email notification on MAPC meetings. The email will contain information about the meeting and refer recipients to the MAPC/MAPD website for additional information.
- **Phone or Email Messages**
MAPD staff will call and/or email people associated with each of the cases items, including: applicants, agents, and anyone who has submitted a petition.
- **Social Media**
MAPD staff will work with communications staff from the City and County to have information about the meeting and opportunities to provide input shared through social media.

Online Logistics

The MAPC meeting will be held online using an online conferencing solution that provides the following functionality.

- The ability for members of the public to listen and comment by phone.
- The ability for members of the public to listen, view, and participate by computer or smartphone.
- The ability for MAPD staff to moderate the meeting by:
 - muting individuals and groups;
 - dismissing people out of the meeting;
 - selecting who can share their screen during the meeting.
- The ability for MAPC members to participate in the meeting remotely and/or in conference rooms organized by MAPD staff.

The current recommended conferencing platform is GotoMeeting and the connection information will be distributed as part of the meeting invites.

In-Person Logistics

- The public is asked to limit in-person viewing only for people without computer or smartphone options.
- The MAPD will host opportunities for in-person participants at Century II.
 - It is estimated that two rooms will be used and a hallway will be available for overflow.
- Each room will be set up with...
 - A room monitor / staff person
 - A TV or LCD projector to display the meeting
 - A microphone for providing comments
 - A camera for sharing video to the online meeting
- Participants / attendees
 - Will be limited to 10 per room
 - Will be requested to wear a mask
 - Will be asked to utilize hand sanitizer
- MAPD Staff will have printed copies of the meeting agendas and agenda items available at the Century II.
- MAPD staff will also be stationed at the facility entrance, the entrance staff will be responsible for:
 - encouraging the use of masks and hand sanitizer;
 - tracking the number of people;
 - attempting to sort individuals for the same cases into the same room;
 - coordinating any over-flow needs.

Public Comments and Participation

The Wichita-Sedgwick County MAPC and MAPD encourages public participation during the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to allow for this, the following options will be available.

Pre-Meeting Public Comments

An important option to participate is submitting written comments ahead of time. This will require an earlier submittal of public comment in order to provide those involved with the meeting time to review those comments ahead of the meeting, as the volume of written public comment is expected to increase.

- Individuals and stakeholders can submit comments to MAPD staff up to 4 pm the day prior to the meeting. This will provide those involved with the meeting time to review those comments ahead of the meeting. The comments can be submitted to MAPD staff (at the contact information listed at the end of this document) in the formats listed below. The comments should indicate which agenda item they pertain to and be less than 3 minutes in duration.
 - Email
 - Letter
 - Video
 - Audio message (mp3, etc.)

The comments received ahead of the case hearing will be shared during the MAPC meeting during the relevant items.

During the Meeting –Online Public Comments

Those wishing to participate remotely with public comment, which will be accommodated via web conference (requires internet connection) or telephone, may connect using the information provided in the meeting agenda.

During the beginning of the meeting, the host will turn the microphones on for all of the participants and a verbal roll-call of those wishing to speak on items will be taken. Individuals who indicate a desire to speak will be asked to provide their:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number
- Item they wish to speak on
- At this time, the meeting host / administrator will be responsible for logging the conference call ID of the individual – to ensure that the person’s microphone can be turned on.

Following the roll-call for participation, the microphones will be turned off if there are too many disturbances. The host / administrator will be able to turn on the appropriate microphone when it is that person’s time to speak.

If during the meeting, an individual is creating a disturbance and is not following requests and directions provided by either the MAPC Chair or the event moderator, then the MAPC and event moderator will have the option to dismiss the individual from the meeting.

During the Meeting - In-Person Public Comments

In-person comment at the meeting is intended for those without other technology options, and who have not previously submitted recorded audio or video comments. Prior to the beginning of the meeting, MAPD staff will work with the attendees to identify ~~of~~ those wishing to speak and which items they wish to speak on.

When it is their time to speak, Individuals will be asked to provide their name and address.

Meeting Follow-up

- A recording of the meeting will be shared on Channel 7 and the City's YouTube channel.
- Minutes from the meeting will be posted on the MAPC webpage.

MAPC Public Comments Submission Information

Email	KWilson@wichita.gov
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