



## April 2, 2019 Department of Public Services

The following items are designed to present information on Public Services Department work items recently completed, those expected to occur during the upcoming month, and other items of potential interest to the public. Information is subject to change at any time due to staff availability, weather events or other emergency situations, or numerous other factors. Items are not necessarily in order of importance, and may not be repeated in their entirety from month to month unless there is a need for continued reporting.

1. Citizen Request Module (CRM) items - The City uses the "My Monroe on the Go" application to track citizen requests. During the month of March, a total of 41 service requests were entered requiring action from this department, down from 60 the previous month. The vast majority, 27, were forestry requests, as per normal. The remaining categories were five (5) street light outages, three (3) pothole complaints, two (2) signs requests, and one (1) each of dead animal pickup, storm sewer clog, garbage, and a yard waste question.
2. Forestry Activities - in the month of March, the Forestry work group completed ten tree removals and trimmed 89 trees, and removed four (4) stumps. Staff also continued to collect and dispose of limbs from February's storm events. From this point forward, since yard waste has started, these limbs can be collected by Waste Management, provided they are cut to within the yard waste guidelines. This year's Arbor Day celebration will be held on April 26 in partnership with Manor Elementary School, where we will plant five (5) new trees and host a brief program.
3. Street Sweeping - we are planning to begin street sweeping later this week or early next week with both primary sweepers. Typically, we will run a truck along with the sweepers on their first pass, which usually takes 2-4 weeks to catch all areas. The first sweeping of the year is charged to Winter Maintenance in the street funds as opposed to the Refuse Fund (consistent with MDOT practices). Due to the intensity of our cold patching activities and the excessive debris from the winter, our first pass is likely to take most of the month of April again this year. Again for the 2019 season, once the early season sweeping is completed, we will be focusing less on street sweeping and more on vector operations, both of which will be charged to the Refuse Fund, as we feel that this change may have an overall more favorable effect on storm system maintenance and street flooding prevention.
4. Vector Truck / Storm Cleaning - the City Council approved the purchase of a new vector truck to be used in cleaning catch basins and storm sewers, and we accepted delivery in September. Due to freezing conditions, this unit is typically not used much during the winter months, though some of our backlog was eased this past fall as we prioritized this work. We expect to place this on our regular activities schedule this month now that prevailing temperatures are high enough for regular use, likely after we have completed our first complete street sweeping of the season and personnel are freed up.

5. Yard Waste Collection – yard waste collection has now resumed for the season as of this week, and is scheduled to continue through the first week of December.
6. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout the year, but the month of March is normally especially hard on the City’s roadways, due to the extremely variable weather conditions and multiple freeze / thaw cycles. Citizens should feel free to contact Public Services staff via the citizen request module, phone, or email to report potholes, and we will do our best to handle complaints as quickly as possible. While ordinarily we try to address any complaints within 48 hours, during this time of the year, it is virtually impossible to do so even with all available personnel and equipment tasked with this work due to the sheer volume of necessary locations.
7. Winter Operations – the month of March was reasonably typical, in that there were only a few minor events requiring salting operations, and we had no storms requiring plowing. Barring an unusual pattern, our winter operations should now have come largely to an end.
8. Grass Contract Renewal – portions of the 2014–18 Lawn Maintenance Contract were extended to Ron Noel Lawn Service in 2018 for an additional term ending in 2021. The remaining work activities for Woodland Cemetery, Memorial Place, and the Ordinance Mowing, were part of a separate contract, and the vendor chose not to bid a new contract term. As no bids were received, the City Council approved adding these work activities to Ron Noel as a change order at their April 1 meeting. The start of mowing activities will depend on the weather conditions, but contractually must begin as early as April 8 if conditions dictate, though the first few weeks will likely be limited to prep work and minor cutting, as there does not yet appear to be much growth.
9. High Grass Enforcement – Ron Noel will be providing this year’s ordinance enforcement mowing per City Council approval on April 1. Within the next few weeks, the Director will be providing Council and the public with our full policy statement via email and web posting, respectively. Lot sizes have been grouped, so that the pricing will be the same for all lots of the same size (for example, under 0.25 acres, 0.25–0.50 acres, 0.50–1.00 acres, and per acre for 1 acre or more). The authorized start date of ordinance mowing is May 1. As with 2018, the Building Department will handle review and enforcement, whereas the Public Services and Engineering clerical staff will handle tracking and billing. Changes made in the administrative cost structure last year to increase the administrative fee to one commensurate with the City’s actual costs did seem to discourage violators and reduce the number of complaints.
10. Parks staffing – As with past seasons, one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker will be transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor again this year. The temporary assignment begins March 31 and will run through October 26 this year as per the adopted budget and approved organizational structure. Should the Parks Supervisor require additional assistance or for heavy projects, DPS staff will assist as able at their request, otherwise full responsibility for all parks items other than forestry issues, the grass cutting contract, and contracted capital projects will again fall under the Parks and Recreation Department.
11. Spring Banners – as requested by the Downtown Development Authority, the downtown banners were replaced with spring seasonal banners two weeks ago and will remain installed until summer when they are replaced with the jazz banners.

12. Hellenberg Boat Ramps – our previous MDNR grant funding at this location obligates us to maintain the boat launch from mid-April to mid-October. The ramps will be installed sometime within the next two (2) weeks as required.
13. Memorial Place Floral Display – we again plan to work with Ruhlig Farms in Carleton to supply flowers that can be placed in the traditional “MONROE” display by our staff as in past years, typically in time for the Memorial Day parade, provided that threat of frost has ceased.
14. Mosquito Control – as in previous years, Public Services staff is purchasing approximately 3300 briquettes that can be placed into catch basins for up to 180 days of larvae control City-wide, along with granular insecticide that can be placed into detention areas throughout the year for up to 30 days of protection. The City no longer performs adult spraying, as we feel we get a much greater return on investment by treating mosquitoes at the larval stage, and spraying must be done in specific weather conditions and generally on overtime. We usually start applying tablets sometime in May, though this is usually governed somewhat by weather conditions.
15. Lotus Fountain and Munson Park Fountain – staff is planning to install the decorative aeration fountain in the Munson Park pond sometime this month and start up the Lotus Fountain in Loranger Square sometime in late May or June, after the trees have dropped most of their spring debris that often clogs the pumps.
16. Alley Grading – one of the major maintenance items for which staff receives a number of requests this time of year is for grading of stone alleys. While this work could be done immediately after the spring thaw, these do need to dry out as much as possible to maximize our ability to grade them properly. It is the goal of staff to complete one thorough grading of each alley sometime in June, though we do address acute hazards such as deep potholes as complaints are raised.
17. Crosswalk signs – the warning signs that had been installed in the roadway itself at various mid-block crosswalk locations in the downtown area, particularly on Front Street between Harrison and Macomb, Macomb Street between First and Front, and Washington Street between First and Front, were removed for potential snow plowing operations. These will be replaced as time allows sometime this month. While in a few locations placing these signs in the crosswalks themselves can make maneuvering a little more difficult, they have proven very popular with downtown patrons. Casual observations made by City Hall staff indicate a drastic difference in vehicles stopping for pedestrians when these are present. Due to conflicts with turning traffic, the “in street” sign on Macomb Street by City Hall was replaced with curbside signs last year.
18. Downtown Development Authority (DDA) support – The DDA has set aside funding for DPS staff to provide enhanced tree trimming services in their boundaries, and staff has been working on this as time allows. Also, staff assisted with preparing the downtown planters for this year’s plantings.
19. Equipment Repairs – during the winter months, staff has been working on some inside projects that include completely rebuilding the motor for the Lotus Fountain, and performing rehabilitation to the electric service and numerous panels for the portable stage. These projects are not yet completed, but will be finished as time allows, certainly in time for the fountain to be put back into service.

*Prepared by: Patrick M. Lewis, P.E., Director of Engineering and Public Services*