



Monthly Activities Report

Department of Engineering and Public Services

December 6, 2017

The following items are designed to present information on 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. Action Line items – In total, 22 requests for service (out of a total of 46 for the entire City organization – for 48%) were logged into the Action Line requiring service from the Public Services Department during the month of November, which is the lowest month of 2017 thus far. The work categories requested in November were 10 requests for forestry items, 6 pothole concerns, 2 dead animal pickups and one each related to drainage concerns, yard waste pickup, traffic signals, and vandalism. As per the Department operations manual, all code enforcement items (particularly high grass) where property owners will eventually be billed are entered by staff and tracked within the Action Line system for record-keeping purposes, and other non-emergency requests for service received via phone call are logged into the system as well.
2. Forestry Activities – During the month of November, the Forestry work group trimmed 9 trees, removed 6 trees, planted 96 trees and ground 3 stumps. Humphrey Street between Murray and Jerome had 23 of the 96 trees planted. The Gateway Beautification project has been completed, which included the installation of new trees on North Dixie Highway and South Monroe Street, as well as new landscaping at Worrell Park. The Forestry Division partnered with Monroe County and Monroe Garden Club to design and install the landscaping around the new statue and relocated cannon at the Monroe County Courthouse. The holiday tree at the courthouse was also decorated by forestry staff. Stump removals are currently underway and this is a major focus area during the cold weather months. Finally, an application has been submitted for a grant under the Urban and Community Forestry Program administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
3. Cold Patching – this continues to be a major work activity, as it generally is for most of the year. Citizens should feel free to contact Public Services staff via the Action line, phone, or email to report potholes, and we will do our best to handle complaints within 48 hours. Obviously, during inclement weather, resolution of potholes tends to be more problematic but we do attempt to handle these as soon as the weather stabilizes after receiving the complaint.
4. Yard Waste – yard waste collection will continue through the week of December 11. Guidelines for yard waste collection are listed on the City's Refuse Reference document on the City's web page. Residents may continue to use the City-supplied yard waste bags, as well as those purchased from area vendors, along with re-usable cans with yard waste stickers, available free at City Hall. Yard waste collection is tentatively planned to resume on April 2, 2018.

5. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – We operated the vactor for the season more or less full time and focused on more regular activities in 2017 to attempt to make more headway on catch basin and storm line cleaning than in recent years and, of course, responded to any complaints related to street flooding during rain events. At the present time, the tank requires repairs and we are reviewing options for the most cost-effective solution for repair or replacement.
6. Street Sweeping – We are continuing to run the street sweepers as long as the weather allows or until the vast majority of leaves are collected that have fallen onto the roadway from City trees. Typically, for a period of about six to eight weeks (depending on the weather), we run two or three (if all of our older units are operable) sweepers along with two to four dump trucks in a rotating convoy to avoid having to continuously return the sweepers to dump leaves themselves each time the hopper unit is full. We have found this is the most efficient method, but residents should be advised that it does still normally take a full month to make a City-wide cycle, and all work is often not completed until the end of November or early December, depending on weather conditions and final leaf drop. This also unfortunately can tie up nearly half of our available personnel during this time, so our ability to respond to discretionary tasks is very limited. Obviously, removal of as many leaves as possible before the first major snowfall is a high priority to avoid plowing these back into the terrace, which makes for a larger mess in the spring depending on the quantity. We have been delivering our composted leaves to Snow's Nursery, who has agreed to process roughly 1,600 cubic yards for \$8,000 on our behalf. Leaf collection, like regular street sweeping activities, is charged to the City's Refuse Fund millage.
7. Parks staffing – As the Parks and Recreation Department has now hired a full-time, all season Teamster to assist the Maintenance Supervisor along with a number of seasonal employees, only one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker was transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor this year. The temporary assignment began April 3 and was completed October 28 this year as per the adopted budget and approved organizational structure, and this individual has now returned to the DPS general labor pool. Should the Parks Supervisor require additional assistance or for heavy projects during the winter months, 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 falls under the Parks and Recreation Department.
8. Holiday Events / Decorations – DPS staff again partnered with volunteers from the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to install decorations ahead of the downtown tree lighting, which was scheduled for November 18 but was postponed until November 25 due to inclement weather. As with last year, the DDA volunteers decorated any poles and locations that can be reached with ladders, and our staff installed the overhead decorations at the three (3) banner locations, the lights on the large tree in front of the courthouse, the light poles on the Monroe Street Bridge, and the installation of decorative lighted snowflakes, toy soldiers, and trees on those light poles with receptacles available. DPS crews will staff the holiday parade on December 16 as per normal as well. Removal of the decorations each year is always subject to weather conditions, though they are typically left up through the first week of January.
9. Refuse Contract – City Council awarded a contract to Waste Management for the next 5-year curbside refuse collection at their September 18 meeting. The new contract will begin March 1 and will include unlimited refuse collection and "opt in" for 64-gallon recycling carts. However, the actual start of unlimited collection will be delayed until the first week in May to prevent excessive collection the first few weeks during potentially poor weather. Staff will begin taking orders for recycling carts in February, to coincide with direct mailing and other public outreach efforts.

10. Mowing Contract – we are wrapping up the fourth year of a five-year mowing contract, and clean-up will continue as needed until completed, though mowing is no longer expected. The regular contract work was divided into 5 groups this contract, with US Lawns of Southgate handling mowing in Woodland Cemetery and Memorial Place, along with monthly weed trimming along more than a mile of riverbank, and Ron Noel Lawn Service of Monroe handling all other City properties. In total, the City contracts for mowing 613 gross acres (nearly 1 square mile), which is roughly 9% of the entire area of the City. We recently received a proposal from Ron Noel Lawn Service to extend their contract for an additional three (3) years at a substantial discount, so this will be reviewed by staff and the City Manager and presented to Council for action if appropriate.
11. Monroe Multi-Sports Complex assistance – Public Services staff have been assisting with numerous tasks for the eventual repurposing of the Monroe Multi-Sports complex, particularly within the past few months. During the past month, the Operations Supervisor and others have removed the scoreboard and disconnected the skate sharpener as well as moved a number of other large items, and will be tasked with removing the facility sign if time allows. Staff will also be coordinating an auction for the various items designated for sale that were not already sold through sealed bids, and this will likely occur in February.
12. Property Maintenance Assistance – the City has recently been acquiring a number of residential dwellings for eventual incorporation into the River Raisin National Battlefield, and in some cases, for general blight remediation. Public Services staff has been assisting other City departments as needed on a number of tasks, including securing / boarding up, gaining entry, re-keying locks, remediating residual blight issues, and some lawn maintenance, depending on the property. It is expected that this assistance will continue for the foreseeable future.
13. Vehicle Auction / Disposal – rather than stockpile a number of assets that have been removed from service to hold a larger on-site auction, the Department normally places a few items in an offset consignment auction hosted by local auctioneers Rollo Juckette and Brad Neuhart in either the fall or spring. This season's auction was held Thanksgiving weekend and included 2 trucks, 2 passenger vehicles, 2 large tractor type lawn mowers, and a few other items. We raised approximately \$9,700 and actually purchased a fork attachment for one of our loaders for \$2,500, which offset the sale proceeds by that amount.
14. Winter Operations Policy – the Department issued our official winter operations policy document this week, which is essentially the same as last year's policy. Also, the Clerk-Treasurer's office advertised the ordinance requiring sidewalk clearance in October as required by the ordinance, so that the City's legal notification is now met. DPS staff will meet with the Parks and Recreation Department to discuss some minor division of winter operations duties, as there is a desire to have the Parks Supervisor handle snow removal activities at Munson Park and the Mark Worrell Trail in particular for more targeted attention to our facilities that remain most heavily-used during winter and snowy conditions. At present, all 14 Teamster personnel are currently budgeted to remain under the supervision of the Public Services Department during winter operations, with Parks retaining one (1) Teamster assigned to their operations and available for winter activities.

15. Downtown curb line snow removal contract – after two (2) years with a dedicated service contract, the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) chose not to enter into a contract to remove the continuous row of snow from the top of the curbs in the downtown area that results from both roadway plowing and sidewalk clearance by property owners. As such, DPS staff will be tasked fully with this work in 2017-18. With these activities generally considered to be a lower priority than street and parking lot clearance City-wide, in larger storm events this activity may be postponed 3-4 days until it can be undertaken.
16. Miscellaneous Winter Projects – as with every winter, the Department keeps a list of potential projects that can either be accomplished inside, or could be addressed appropriately in a year without bitterly cold temperatures and / or excessive snow. Additional low-limbing of trees is always a major priority as it is probably the single most consistent departmental activity where proactivity will yield long-term dividends in the form of fewer emergency call-outs. We typically like to also make headway on sign replacement during the winter, specifically those stop and street name signs necessary to meet Federal retro-reflectivity guidelines and that may not require new channels to be driven into the ground. In 2016, due to the extremely warm winter, we were able to replace all of the “stop” and “no parking” signs on the south side of the river, and we plan to continue with the north side this winter as conditions allow.
17. Building Sewer Line Repairs – during November, DPS staff performed major work to unclog and repair / replace portions of the main sanitary sewer line into the DPS facility. The improvements made to the line should make it significantly easier to clean in the future.

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