



Monthly Activities Report

Department of Engineering and Public Services

January 1, 2018 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. Action Line items – In total, 20 requests for service (out of a total of 43 for the entire City organization – for 47%) were logged into the Action Line requiring service from the Public Services Department during the month of December, which is typically a slow month as most citizens with winter operations concerns phone the staff rather than use the Action Line. The largest number of requests in a single category is 9 in forestry, followed by 3 pothole concerns, and the remaining 8 were scattered across 6 different categories.

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. When the City's new web page launches shortly, this system will be replaced with a new program, but tracking should remain similar.

For the entire year 2017, DPS responded in one fashion or another to 1298 requests submitted through the Action Line, out of a total of 1683 submitted City-wide for the entire system, or 77% of all requests. The major categories were as follows (with previous year totals listed as well):

Category	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
High Grass and Weeds	653	919	1163	829	1434
Forestry Issues	346	360	474	433	536
Pothole	161	163	297	398	191
Other Items	138	185	276	322	270
Total Department	1298	1627	2210	1982	2431

2. Forestry Activities – Forestry Activities – During the month of December, the Forestry work group's main focus has been on stump removals, as there are 92 stumps that remained following tree removals this past year requiring removal city wide. In addition to grinding 26 stumps during December the work group removed 11 trees and trimmed 6 trees. Forestry staff also assisted with snow removal operations during the larger winter events in December. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has approved the City's application for a \$500 grant, and these funds will be used to purchase trees for the Arbor Day Celebration in April.

3. Yard Waste – yard waste collection has ended for the season as of the week of December 11 and is tentatively planned to resume on April 2, 2018.
4. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout 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.
5. 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. Public outreach efforts and notification will begin in early February, and we have determined the most efficient way to distribute the new 64-gallon carts is to drop them off at homes presently recycling rather than force residents to call to request them, though they can still be returned later if residents instead choose to remain with smaller bins. New requests for larger carts from new home owners or those wishing to begin recycling will go through the DPS clerical staff throughout the duration of the contract.
6. Winter Operations (specific to previous month) – the month of December was a relatively busy month, with the first major storm bringing approximately 6 inches of snowfall centered around December 13, which involved more or less full call out with staff working staggered 12-hour shifts on December 13 and 14 including an overnight. As the original forecast within 24 hours of the start of the storm was not definitely above 4 inches, we did not declare a snow emergency, though the storm conditions would have fallen well within our guidelines in totality. Due to warmer weather conditions, the snow from this early event had all melted by Monday of the subsequent week. While we had been extremely lucky in recent years that significant work on Christmas was not necessary, 2017 was not as kind, and staff essentially worked salting and eventually plowing from around 1 P.M. on Christmas Eve through 5 P.M. on Christmas Day. In general, staff resources were used a little more sparingly (though still running the 4 primary routes continuously until stabilized) to ensure adequate volunteers were available for the long term for the 5-6 inches of snow that subsequently blew and drifted throughout Christmas Day. In all, 10 of the 14 available Teamsters volunteered to work on these holidays, which allowed the City to serve its residents adequately, and all streets were passable with downtown parking lots also cleared before operations were ceased on Christmas Day. All remaining “clean up” work was completed by December 28 to ensure that we are set up well for the next event, though due to temperatures in the 00s and 10s, salting was not effective for much of the last week of December. While DPS did have to clear a few sidewalks on December 29 at the cost of the property owner where they were not done in a timely fashion, thus far we have fortunately achieved a high level of cooperation as the Engineering Department has been providing a 24-hour “courtesy” notice upon inspection of complaints.
7. 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.

8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.

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