



# Monthly Activities Report

Department of Engineering and Public Services

## July 5, 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. Citizen Request Module items – In total, 110 requests for service (out of a total of 167 for the entire City organization – for 66%) were logged into the City's new online citizen request module (My Civic) requiring some level of service from the Engineering and Public Services Department during the month of June. Requests included 68 forestry items, 18 pothole concerns, 14 garbage / recycling / yard waste issues, 4 signs requests, 7 street light outages, and 3 dead animal pickup requests.

As per the Department operations manual, all code enforcement items where property owners will eventually be billed are entered by staff and tracked within this system for record-keeping purposes, and other non-emergency requests for service received via phone call are logged into the system as well. Since the new web site launch on February 1, we have been using a new program associated with our web site upgrade, though City Council has directed a change to a different platform for better citizen interaction, and this will occur later this month or early next month.

2. Forestry Activities – Forestry Activities – the month of June was extremely busy for the Forestry crew as per normal. The work group completed the removal of 19 trees, trimmed 381 trees and planted 4 trees. Other maintenance tasks included flower watering, herbicide applications, tree watering and public lot clean ups. The Sawyer House's landscape was enhanced recently. Seasonal employees installed landscape edging, fertilized turf, applied herbicides and trimmed trees. One tree was removed. Finally, a tree planting ceremony was held at Cappuccelli Park. The City's garden club partially funded the planting. One tree was planted near the river.
3. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – At present, the tank on our unit has deteriorated severely and thus the equipment is presently unusable and must be replaced. We have received pricing and a demonstration from the two (2) available local vendors, and we are planning to make a recommendation for a new purchase at the July 16 City Council meeting. It is hoped that we are able to secure a new unit in time for part of the summer season. Rental of a unit is also an option, but will depend on the lag time between purchase and delivery of a new unit.
4. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout the year, even now that the weather conditions have stabilized. 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. We typically try to address any complaints within 48 hours most of the year.

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 includes unlimited refuse collection and “opt in” for 64-gallon recycling carts. All original requests have now been serviced for new carts, and new requests for larger carts from new homeowners or those wishing to begin recycling will go through the DPS clerical staff throughout the duration of the contract. As might be expected, with any new service roll-out, there have been some minor issues, particularly with recycling carts and the now-greater quantities of refuse being blocked by parked vehicles, but staff has been working with Waste Management to resolve issues as they arise to the best of our ability. Yard waste collection began the week of April 2, and will continue through early December.
6. Monroe Multi-Sports Complex assistance – Public Services staff have been assisting with numerous tasks for the eventual repurposing of the Monroe Multi-Sports complex, and May and June have been two of the busiest months in this regard. Staff coordinated pickup by vendors from an online auction on May 21, in which the City raised approximately \$65,000 from the various items designated for sale that were not previously sold through sealed bids. Staff has been spending significant time during June dismantling many of the larger items including the dasher boards and glass, scoreboard, and bleachers, and will be continuing to do so into July, as there is still some coordination needed with some purchasers.
7. 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 and likely ramp up for the foreseeable future, at least until demolition activities begin this summer.
8. Street Sweeping – we have been street sweeping with both primary sweepers through the first season pass, and have now dropped down to one sweeper for our maintenance level until October. Again for the 2018 season, once the early season sweeping is completed, we will be focusing less on street sweeping and more on vactor operations (provided we can secure a rental unit or new purchase shortly), 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.
9. Parks staffing – As with past seasons, one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker has been transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor again this year. The temporary assignment began April 2 and will run through October 27 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.
10. Mowing Contract – we are in the fifth year of a five-year mowing contract, and mowing activities started in late April. 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.

11. High Grass Enforcement - US Lawns of Southgate will again be performing our ordinance mowing, also in the fifth year of a five-year contract. The annual policy statement on Noxious Weed and Grass Procedures was issued April 24 and posted on the City's web page. 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 was May 1. As with 2017, the Building Department will handle review and enforcement, whereas the Public Services and Engineering clerical staff will handle billing. Last year, 653 complaints were received and logged into the Action Line for high grass with the vast majority turned over for enforcement, so this is no small time commitment for either department, despite ordinance changes that were made in 2017, such as increasing the administrative fee to one commensurate with the City's actual costs, that did seem to discourage violators and reduce the number of complaints by roughly 300 over the prior year. So far in 2018, there has been a drastic reduction in the number of violators (138 year to date versus 535 in 2017) so these efforts seem to be working quite well.
12. Memorial Place Floral Display - we again have worked with Ruhlig Farms in Carleton to supply flowers that have been placed in the traditional "MONROE" display by our staff as in past years. This work was completed in time for the Memorial Day parade, and staff will continue to maintain the display through September.
13. Mosquito Control - as in previous years, Public Services staff has purchased approximately 3300 briquettes that can be placed into catch basins for up to 180 days of larvae control City-wide, along with pellets 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. Work is now completed for the season.
14. Lotus Fountain - start-up of the Lotus Fountain in Loranger Square occurred last week, as the County of Monroe is assisting us with repainting of the inside, and Public Services crews made necessary plumbing repairs. Normally, this fountain cannot be effectively started up until early June in any event due to the large amount of debris dropped by the adjacent trees in May, but this year there were some delays due to the additional work that was found to be necessary.
15. 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, so work normally does not occur until June. It is the goal of staff to complete one thorough grading of each alley each year, though we do address acute hazards such as deep potholes as complaints are raised. All alleys are now completed with their thorough grading for the year.
16. Downtown Planters - at the request of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Public Services staff removed a large number of concrete planters in the downtown area that were in poor shape and consolidated the remaining ones to more visible gateway-type locations. The units in poor condition for display will be stored at the old DPS property on Winchester Street for eventual sale. Public Services staff has agreed to water the remaining units left downtown on behalf of the DDA this summer now that flowers have been planted.

17. Special Events – this past month the Public Services staff assisted with the ALCC Cultivate Community cleanup event on June 16 by providing and setting up the City stage and offering supplies and some yard waste / debris pickup that was not covered under the City’s contract. On July 29 we will be assisting with the Monroe County Fair Parade by providing traffic control and staging at the DPS yard on Jones Avenue. We will also be assisting with a River Raisin clean-up event on July 21, which may involve some log removal, and the “Ducky Dash” on July 26, which requires the use of the forestry aerial truck to drop rubber ducks into the water downtown.
18. Banners – the downtown spring seasonal banners will shortly be replaced with the summer jazz banners as per normal in preparation for the Jazz Festival on August 10-12.
19. Sinkhole repair – staff spent a considerable amount of time repairing a large sinkhole in the intersection of Winston Drive and Erie Street this past month, which was related to a storm sewer failure. The work is now completed.

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