



# Monthly Activities Report

Department of Engineering and Public Services

## **August 6, 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 July, a total of 126 service requests were entered requiring action from this department, up from 95 the previous month. The largest two (2) categories by far were 72 forestry concerns and 31 pothole or road hazard complaints. The remaining categories were three (3) street light outages, three (3) garbage concerns, two (2) signs requests, and one (1) each of standing water on Bayview Drive (see discussion later in this report), downtown planter maintenance, and an item asking staff to deal with raccoons rummaging through the trash.
2. Forestry Activities – in the month of July, the Forestry work group completed 42 tree removals, trimmed 97 trees, and removed 43 stumps. Seventeen (17) trees, mostly non-native pagoda trees, were removed on Maywood Avenue between Macomb and Hollywood due to advanced distress based on resident observations and subsequent review by the City Forester, and approximately 25-27 new trees will be planted in conjunction with the resurfacing project to replace those that had to be removed. An information meeting was held on site with the residents of this block on July 24.
3. Street Sweeping – We are running only one sweeper throughout the City in maintenance mode through September. Again for the 2019 season, we are focusing less on street sweeping and more on vactor 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. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – staff is continuing to utilize the vactor truck on a regular basis to begin to address the latent backlog in storm sewer cleaning activities. It is hoped that this will yield long-term benefits in storm sewer and street maintenance versus a more intense sweeping program. As always, we will respond to any acute issues that are brought to our attention.
5. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity throughout the year. 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 try to address any complaints within 48 hours, except during late winter and early spring when requests can overwhelm the system due to frost leaving the ground.

6. Yard Waste Collection – yard waste collection is underway and is scheduled to continue through the first week of December this year.
7. Grass Contract – Ron Noel Lawn Service is continuing as the City's grass contractor through the 2021 season, and work activities for Woodland Cemetery, Memorial Place, and the Ordinance Mowing that were held by a previous vendor from 2014-18 were added to Noel's contract at the April 1 City Council meeting. Weekly mowing activities will continue through the end of October, with the month of November generally designated for leaf clean-up and final cutting as needed under the contract.
8. High Grass Enforcement – Ron Noel will be providing this year's ordinance enforcement mowing per City Council approval on April 1, and our annual policy statement and procedures is posted on the City's web site. 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 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 in general, though the wet spring did not help matters.
9. Parks staffing – As with past seasons, one (1) DPS Maintenance Worker was transferred under the Parks Maintenance Supervisor again this year. The temporary assignment began 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.
10. Lotus Fountain start-up – the Lotus Fountain has been running now for the last three (3) weeks, and staff completely re-worked the electrical system and pump configuration into one less prone to clogging. It is hoped that if this can continue operation without incident, not only can the fountain operate later in the year but also be simpler to start up in the springtime. This year's pumps cost significantly less than the special order pumps that were required for the old horizontal configuration.
11. 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. 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. All alleys in the City have now received their comprehensive grading, and we will continue to respond to acute hazards throughout the summer and fall.
12. Mosquito Control – as in previous years, Public Services staff purchased approximately 3300 briquettes that were placed into catch basins for up to 180 days of larvae control City-wide, along with granular insecticide that are 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. Staff has completed tablet application and will continue to treat detention areas monthly.

13. Portable Stage Repairs – during the winter months, staff was working on performing rehabilitation to the electric service and numerous panels for the portable stage. Completion of this work is going to require a significant investment, so guidance will be sought as to whether or not repairs should be made or the stage should be sold.
14. 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 ramp up again this year, as additional grant funding has become available for additional acquisitions.
15. Roadway Flooding – Monroe County in general continues to experience some of the worst flooding in the last several decades, as higher lake levels coupled with easterly winds have been repeatedly pushing the elevation of Lake Erie several feet higher than normal for 24–48 hours at a time on multiple occasions this past spring. In fact, both May and, in turn, June set records for the monthly average mean lake level for any month since recording began in 1918. While the City is fortunate in that our effects are limited to backwaters from both the River Raisin and Plum Creek Bay rather than wave action and significant damage to homes and structure, nonetheless there are impacts on our residents. Even the standing water elevation of the lake is at present higher than a number of roadway catch basin rims, resulting in constant standing water, and this is expected to be the case for at least the next few months, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The most common locations of heavy roadway flooding and street closures are Front Street from I-75 to DTE and the Orchard East neighborhood. The flooding in front of the Wastewater Plant can impact the ability of the industries east of I-75 to access their facilities when it occurs. The most acute flooding area in Orchard East is Bayview and Glenwood, where standing water now covers the roadway continuously for 100–150 feet on Bayview, often up to 12 inches deep.

The storm system around the Wastewater Plant where flooding has been most acute drains to the river through a flood control structure that was installed in 1985. Fortunately, DPS staff worked with Solomon Diving of Monroe in early July to determine that the flap gate within this structure had fallen off its hinges and was inoperable, and was able to re-mount the gate, which appears for now to be holding back the high water. Staff has been pumping down the system daily since this time, and we believe it is now below a level that can accommodate several large rain events without roadway flooding since it also includes the lagoons on the port property to the south, which now have significant available storage.

While none of the effects in the City are catastrophic in nature, nonetheless the highest lake levels are forecast at least through the end of the year. Engineering staff will be working to review potential long-term options (if any are feasible) for within the next few months.

16. Special Events – during this past month the Public Services staff assisted with street closures for the Monroe County Fair Parade on July 28 by providing traffic control and staging at the DPS yard on Jones Avenue. Upcoming events for the month of August, which is typically our busiest month, also include the one-day River Raisin Jazz Festival on August 10, the River Raisin cleanup event on August 10, the Downtown Monroe Business Network (DMNB) art fair on August 10 and 11, and the “Ducky Dash” on August 15, which requires the use of the forestry aerial truck to drop rubber ducks into the

water downtown. Staff will be assisting with hauling away of debris for the river cleanup project, and our Jazz Festival preparations typically include a comprehensive cleanup of the downtown area, as well as the usual traffic control and electrical assistance. Staff will also be providing street closures and other support for the Labor Day parade on August 31.

It should be noted that our special event obligations are very significant in the summer months, and while they serve a broad community purpose, do impact staff ability to complete other tasks during this time frame.

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