

January 7, 2020 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 December, a total of 31 service requests were entered requiring action from this department, down from 43 the previous month. 16 of them were forestry-related, nine (9) of these were pothole concerns or other road hazards, three (3) were refuse collection referrals, two (2) were malfunctioning street lights, two (2) were signs issues, and one (1) was a signs concern.

As per the Department operations manual, all code enforcement items 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 generally logged into the system as well.

For the entire year 2019, DPS responded in one fashion or another to 756 requests submitted through the CRM. The major categories for both 2018 and 2019 were as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>2018 Items</u>	<u>2019 Items</u>
Forestry Issues	336	407
Pothole / Road Hazard	228	184
Refuse / Recycling / Yard Waste	97	38
Street Light Outages	61	56
Signs	36	29
<u>Other Items</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>42</u>
Total Department	798	756

2. Forestry Activities – in the month of December the Forestry work group completed 23 tree removals and trimmed 12 trees. Year-end statistics for 2019 are estimated at 316 tree removals (up from 252 in 2018), 729 tree trims (versus 804 in 2018) and 246 tree plantings (up from 231 in 2018). Winter activities tend to focus more on preventative maintenance low-level trimming and stump removal, as these are less weather dependent than other operations. We will also be focusing and work within the downtown area this winter.

3. Street Sweeping – due to the delays in our roadway leaf collection caused by a winter storm in mid-November, we have continued to run the sweepers as much as possible during the month of December, and are expected to be completed with our activities for the season this week, since we have been fortunate that weather conditions have allowed for a more thorough cleaning of our street system than would ordinarily be possible this time of year.
4. Vactor Truck / Storm Cleaning – staff is continuing to utilize the vactor truck on a regular basis 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. We typically will operate the vactor regularly until freezing temperatures preclude its operation, so it is likely that its use from now through March will be largely limited to emergency situations only.
5. Cold Patching – this continues to be a primary work activity, as it generally is for most of 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 typically try to address any complaints within 48 hours most of the year. 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.
6. Yard Waste Collection – Yard waste ended for the season with collection the week of December 2 and will resume on April 6, 2020.
7. Custer Airport Management – our longtime Airport Manager left City employment at the end of October. While City Administration and City Council continue to review long-term options, the Director of Engineering and Public Services is filling the Airport Manager role and will be working on formalizing several commercial operations permits and supervising the line staff with the assistance of the Assistant City Engineer. Public Services staff will assist, as always, with a variety of maintenance tasks, which for the month of December and early January thus far include replacement of some runway lights, maintenance on heating units and hot water tank, construction of protective housing for the Jet fuel pump, and maintenance on the communications antenna.
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 held on November 22. As with last year, the DDA volunteers decorated any poles and locations that could 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 lit decorations mounted on various light poles. As per normal, we also switched out the vertical fall banners with winter banners, and these remain up until March. Staff usually leaves these decorations in place at least through January 6, though the removal is often affected heavily by weather and staff availability. The overhead garland was removed January 3 to take advantage of favorable wind conditions, and the remaining work is likely to be completed by the end of this week. Staff was also responsible for traffic control, electrical connections, and other logistics related to the downtown Christmas Magic parade on December 15. As might be expected, significant staff time is spent preparing and removing each year's decorations, and staffing the events on behalf of the City.

9. North Custer Road Pedestrian Signage – the Engineering Department intended to install a variety of new signage related to the new marked crosswalks and to draw attention to the new on-street bicycle lanes on North Custer Road following project completion in June. Due to other project time commitments, the Director of Engineering and Public Services only provided the complete life of required signage to the Public Services staff in December. It is hoped that these signs can be delivered and installed prior to frost difficulties early this month, but if not, they will be installed in early spring.
10. Winter Operations – the Department issued our official winter operations policy document on November 14, which is essentially identical to last year’s policy in substance. The Parks and Recreation Department will again handle snow removal activities at the various park facilities, including Munson Park and 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. We all solicited a voluntary backup list from Water, Wastewater, and Parks Teamsters, so an additional four (4) employees are available in large events.

For the month of December, favorable weather required only spotty salting responses and no plowing.

11. 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. This year’s focus will be on parking and miscellaneous signs on the south side of the River. We are also considering replacement of most of the overhead lights in the main Custer Airport hangar with LED fixtures for energy efficiency, and we will likely be working on the replacement of approximately 40 downtown street lamps with LED bulbs as funded by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) board.

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