

TO: MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER
FROM: MARK MALONEY, PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR
DATE: MAY 18, 2020
SUBJ: PUBLIC WORKS MONTHLY REPORT

DEPARTMENT WORK PROGRAM ACCELERATES IN SPITE OF COVID-19



In spite of the mandated slow down in other aspects of the economy, the construction industry is taking full advantage of the season and is fast-tracking projects in Shoreview. While this is generally a good thing for the community, it is requiring a full response from the Department as we manage and administer these projects on behalf of the City. In addition to the higher profile public infrastructure projects, it appears that more home improvement or private property initiatives that require

Public Works permits and/or inspections (e.g. grading, erosion control) than normal are underway. Accordingly, all Public Works Office and Operations staff are transitioning to being back to work in their normal capacities, albeit with observance of all guidelines and policies for distancing, mask use, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Environmental Quality Committee (EQC)

The EQC decided to cancel their scheduled April meeting due to a light agenda and difficulties with making a remote meeting open to the public. They are anticipating continuing with the May meeting as scheduled, though likely using remote technology. The May speaker series event has also been cancelled. The scheduled speakers will be pre-recording their talks, with the help of staff, and allowing the city to post them online for resident viewing. That will conclude the 2020 speaker series with only the February speaker having been able to give an in-person presentation. The EQC would like to thank all participating speakers, especially March, April, and May for being so accommodating and willing to create recorded content remotely so the group could continue environmental education for Shoreview residents during this difficult time. May's speaker series topic will be on solar energy and those presentations are expected to be available online by the end of the month. City engineer Tom Wesolowski will speak on the city's recent solar installation and representatives from All Energy Solar will provide a how-to for any residents interested in installing solar panels on their properties. This talk will also include any

incentives currently available, and some data on average savings seen by solar users in an effort to motivate residents to install solar panels.

Because this year's Slice of Shoreview event has been cancelled, the EQC will no longer be pursuing their organics recycling pilot for that event. They do hope to pick their work back up for next year's Slice, but at the moment that initiative has been cut from the EQC's work plan for this year.

Forestry

The city's two forestry/natural resources interns started work on May 11th. Both were made aware of the essential nature of their work and verified ahead of time that they were willing to participate in the internship during the stay at home order. All available safety precautions are being taken by the interns, who have to share a vehicle, and the city has provided all needed PPE for them to safely do their work. Staff is grateful for their willingness to come to work and thinks this year's intern program will be a great success. The majority of the intern's work program will be to administer the city's emerald ash borer (EAB) tree injection program, though they will also be helping with disease tree inspections, invasive species removal, and public educational efforts around natural resources.

Staff has also started tree inspections for the season. This includes requests for support from residents as well as surveys for diseased and hazardous trees. With more residents spending time at home during the stay home order, staff has been receiving more calls requesting assistance with tree inspections and care advice.

Water

The city continued to receive applications for the smart irrigation controller rebate program this month. The rebate is paid for mostly through grant dollars. The grant was awarded to the city by the Metropolitan Council and runs through this year. With the uptick in applications, staff is hopeful that the city will be able to issue grants to residents for the full awarded amount.

In April the city sent out its annual "portal nudge" letters through the WaterSmart program. These letters are sent annually to all water accounts that have not yet registered with WaterSmart. The portal nudge letters are the city's alternative to mailed quarterly water reports, as part of the new contract with WaterSmart. Over 5,000 letters were mailed to residents and businesses in Shoreview in April. In the several weeks since the letters started arriving, 535 new portal registrations have occurred. That is the largest jump in portal registrations the city has seen since the program's inception in 2016. These registrations are attributed almost entirely to the portal nudge letters and a recent emailed group message sent by staff alerting residents to March water usage. The city now has over 27% of eligible accounts registered with WaterSmart. All water accounts are eligible to enroll, including irrigation, municipal, and commercial. These letters caused an increase in call volume and workload for staff as many residents were curious about the program and some were unhappy to have received letters. But because they are only sent once per year, and they had such a tangible impact on the number of registered accounts, staff is happy with the results even with the increased work load.

The League of Minnesota Cities continues to highlight Shoreview's water conservation achievements in its on-line and print publications. This article appeared this week:

<https://www.lmc.org/news-publications/magazine/may-jun-2020/ideas-in-action-may20/>

Recycling

Due to COVID-19 concerns, the city's spring cleanup day, scheduled for May 16, has been cancelled. Staff made that decision in early April and has been working to alert residents of the cancellation and come up with alternative means for disposal. Currently, a press release has been issued and website pages have been updated with the cancellation information. The cancellation was deemed necessary because of the close contact between city staff, vendor staff, and the public during the event. Because of the overall layout of the event, social distancing would not have been possible.

Due to the cancellation, staff has been working with vendors and Eureka Recycling to find alternative options for item disposal. The "How do I get rid of this?" page on the city website has been updated with information on businesses and organizations that are still operating during the virus. Alternatives have been found for curbside collection of appliances, exercise equipment, large electronics, mattresses and box springs, and general bulky trash. Unfortunately, these services will generally cost residents more money than the cleanup day event would have. Residents are also able to drop off furniture and other items suitable for reuse at certain Salvation Army locations, and also to drop off household hazardous waste at county collection sites. The county's yard waste sites are also still open. Staff has received some calls from residents inquiring about the event, but none have been upset about the cancellation and all appear to understand the city's reasoning for cancelling it. The fall cleanup day is scheduled for October 10.

MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES

Crews continue working with staggered shifts. They are doing a good job complying with social distancing efforts and are limiting exposure and personal contact with those working outside their shift. Without the DOC the maintenance facility is being cleaned by the maintenance crews. Each crew is cleaning their own assigned areas and common areas are cleaned according to a rotating schedule.

Two members of the utility crew completed a utility inspector program. They had attended the first class in person and completed the rest of the program online. Jamie Meyer and Mike Coyle both completed the program and received their utility inspector certificate.

The street division work program for the last month consisted of:

- Spring clean-up from plowing has been completed.

- Boulevard/sod damage has been repaired.
- Sod repairs along trails are almost complete.
- Permanent repairs to damaged mailboxes have also been completed.
- Storm sewer maintenance continues to ramp up for the season.
 - Crews are cleaning and opening catch basins as needed.
 - They are vacuuming out sumps as time allows.
 - They have been running the pump at Suzanne pond as levels increase.
- Street crews continue spot patching pot holes with hot mix asphalt.
 - They are also patching streets and trails where water main breaks were repaired.
- Street sweepers are both out sweeping streets as weather conditions and time permits.
- Sign maintenance is ongoing
 - Crews have been putting the new logos on vehicles and street name signs.

The utility division work program for the last month included:

- Each day utility personnel inspected all the wells, lift stations, water towers, the booster station and the water treatment plant. Regular/routine scheduled maintenance was performed and any necessary repairs were completed as needed.
- Utility crews continue to respond to location requests by marking underground City utilities in proposed excavation areas. Project demands continue to increase and require a number of utility crew personnel to meet the demand for utility locates. As owners of buried infrastructure, the City is required by law to locate these facilities within a certain time period of a Gopher State One-Call request. This has the effect of redirecting a significant amount of resources away from other elements of the Department's work program.
- Drinking water samples were collected and analyzed as required by the Minnesota Department of Health.
- All of the City's approximately 10,000 water meters are read every month. It takes one person approximately one week to drive the streets to collect all the water meter reads through radio transmission. That data is use for water billing statement as well as the WaterSmart customer portal.
- Crews also continue with the annual jetting/cleaning of segments of the sanitary sewer system.
- They are repairing and lowering curb boxes (water shut offs) as needed.
- They are performing annual routine maintenance and exercising of the gate valves.
 - They have been repairing valves as they come across ones in need of attention.

The Department of Corrections crew has been suspended throughout the response to COVID-19. This continues to create a backlog of important but not safety-sensitive or essential work.

PROJECT UPDATES

Wabasso Neighborhood Reconstruction – Project 19-01 – Contractor plans to move on site the week of May 18 to finish restoring the disturbed areas, installing sod, and complete punch list items. All work is expected to be completed by early June.

County Road E Trail and Water Main Extension – Projects 19-03 & 19-05 – The trail was paved and restoration of disturbed areas is complete. The contractor is currently working on punch list items. All work is expected to be completed by the end of May.

Schutta Road Sewer Improvements – Project 19-06 – Disturbed areas of the roadway were paved and concrete curb & gutter installed. The contractor is currently working on punch list items. All work is expected to be completed by the end of May.

North Owasso Blvd Reconstruction – Project 19-07 – The contractor has been installing the underground utilities on Arbogast Street and North Owasso Boulevard between Victoria Street and Chandler Road. After the utility work is complete the contractor will start preparing the roadway and installing the aggregate base.

2019 Street Light Replacement – Project 19-08 – The contractor has started the installation of the street lights in the Hamline area north of Lexington Avenue. Work is expected to take 2 to 3 weeks to complete. The contractor will then move to the Tomlyn/Churchill area.

Suzanne/Gramsie Stormwater Improvements – Project 20-01 – A preconstruction conference for the project was held and the contractor is in the process of ordering materials. Work is expected to start after Memorial Day.

Edgetown Acres Reconstruction – Project 20-02 – A construction contract was awarded for the project at the May 4 meeting. Once the contract process is complete a preconstruction meeting will be scheduled. Construction work for the project is expected to start after Memorial Day.

Turtle Lake Road Rehabilitation – Project 20-04 – The council approved the plans and specifications at the April 20 meeting and the bid opening is scheduled for May 19.

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
MAY 18, 2020

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