

CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS



ANNUAL REPORT  
2023

**CITY OF GROSSE POINTE WOODS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**  
**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**  
**James Kowalski, Director**  
**20025 Mack Plaza Drive**  
**Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236**

This report provides a general summary of the many services provided by the Department of Public Works. The department is responsible for water/sewer operations, major and local street maintenance, signs and parking meters, forestry, maintenance of city vehicles, and the oversight of solid waste disposal. In addition, the DPW is responsible for the maintenance of all city buildings and grounds including all city parks.

During 2023, the Public Services/Public Works staff included 26 full-time employees and eight part-time employees. Department management includes the Director and Assistant Director of Public Services and Foreman of Parks & Recreation. Full-time Public Works employees include six Crew Chiefs, 13 Operator II's, two Mechanics, one Confidential Administrative Assistant and one Administrative Clerk at the DPW. Part-time employees include five Operator I employees at Lake Front Park, one contractual Mechanic and two contractual Geographic Information System (GIS) Technician who inputs information for permanent city records. The Department also hires four seasonal gardeners each year to assist with general grounds maintenance throughout the city and its parks during the summer and may hire 1-3 seasonal employees to assist with the parks, if needed.

In 2023, Department of Public Services management, together with the city's consulting engineering firm, Anderson, Eckstein & Westrick (AEW), supervised approximately \$4.03 million in city infrastructure construction projects. These projects included:

- Resurfacing of Hampton Road (from Mack to Marter)
- Replacement of Vernier Road Water Main (north and south side)
- Sidewalk repairs caused from city issues, e. g., sewer/water main repairs, city trees, etc.
- in District #7 (Mack to east city limit, south city limit to Huntington and Fairford) and throughout city as needed
- Sewer Structure Repairs throughout the city (lining and open cut)
- Miscellaneous Concrete Pavement Repairs throughout the city, including various parking bays throughout the city

The following report offers information on special projects and tasks accomplished during 2023, as well as general tasks completed by DPW employees during 2023 as compared to 2022.

## SPECIAL PROJECTS

Department of Public Works employees worked on several special projects during 2023. These projects included:

### Robert E. Novitke Municipal Center

- Assembled chairs for Public Safety
- Assembled furniture for upstairs Absent Voters office
- Changed out water filters in water fountains
- Delivered bulk mail to main post office for elections in 2023
- Demolished Public Safety locker room, patched and painted walls
- Electrical repairs throughout Municipal Complex
- Installed art work for City Clerk's office
- Installed new dishwasher and removed old one in Public Safety
- Installed paper towel holder in men's basement restroom
- Loaded boxes from basement into car for Clerk's Department
- Moved boxes to basement for permanent record storage
- Moved lockers for Public Safety
- Moved old furniture from Public Safety Administrative office for disposal
- Patched wall in Public Safety Dispatch
- Plumbing repairs throughout Municipal Complex
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Annual Flower Sale
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Fall Fest
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Music on the Lawn events
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Polar Express
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Winterfest
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Woods Aglow
- Reattached desk to wall in Public Safety Dispatch
- Repaired ceiling fans in Court offices
- Repaired desk in Finance Department
- Repaired door at Community Center entrance
- Repaired door handle at Court entrance
- Repaired employee parking lot gate arm
- Repaired flag pole in front of Public Safety
- Repaired faucet in Public Safety men's room
- Repaired front counter tile at City Hall
- Repaired handrail at Community Center garden area
- Repaired hot water pipe in Community Center kitchen
- Repaired screen in Public Safety Administrative office
- Repaired urinal in Community Center restroom
- Repaired water fountain in Public Safety
- Replaced batteries in soap dispensers and paper towel dispensers
- Replaced ceiling tiles
- Replaced electrical access plate and wires on electrical pole
- Replaced heater in scout car garage

- Replaced paper towel holder in Public Safety women's restroom
- Replaced sink in women's bathroom at City Hall
- Replaced toilet in Detective Bureau
- Restocked paper and plastic bags at City Hall and Public Safety
- Set out ant traps in hallways and kitchens
- Set up chairs for Master Plan open house
- Winterized sprinklers

#### DPW

- Changed filters in server room monthly
- Electrical repairs
- Installed new surveillance cameras
- Monitored Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System and monitor for Torrey Road Pump Station
- Monitored water reservoir and resetting fill times for spring/summer and fall/winter operations
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for biannual Hazardous Waste Day/Shredding Service, assisted 355 vehicles on April 15, 2023 and 435 vehicles on October 21, 2023
- Removed old surveillance cameras
- Repaired and painted front offices and added a secure office for SCADA System
- Repaired and oiled chain on DPW yard gate
- Repaired shelf in DPW copy room

#### Torrey Road Pump Station

- Annual inspection and oversight on pump and motor maintenance
- Monitored level sensors and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System
- Monitored pump activity daily
- Switch gear maintenance and repairs

#### City Streets

- Annual replacement of batteries in parking meters along Mack Avenue
- Assisted the building department with miscellaneous inspections
- Changed out parking meter lenses as needed
- Delivered and picked up barricades for block parties
- Hot patch street repairs throughout the city
- Hung banners along Mack Avenue to promote shopping local for *The Avenue in the Woods* in the spring and winter
- Installed 104 flower pots in baskets on streetlights on Mack Avenue and Vernier Road
- Painted fire hydrants throughout the city
- Prepared butterfly garden and trim trees at Beaufait and Lennon island
- Removed graffiti from AT&T boxes
- Removed "Free Parking" bags from parking meters
- Removed road kill from city streets
- Replace signs removed or damaged throughout the city
- Winterized sprinkler

### Lake Front Park

- Collected water samples at marina for testing
- Electrical repairs throughout park
- Installed air conditioning unit in warming room
- Installed irrigation in flower beds behind pool
- Installed jet ski docks in the marina
- Installed new marina panel
- Installed televisions in bathhouse
- Installed windscreens around the tennis courts
- Opened and closed pool
- Painted filter room and filters
- Painted floors in bathhouse
- Painted the waterslide
- Painted traffic arrows and signs
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Egg Stroll
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for Hob Nobbin' with Goblins
- Removed bleachers from pool deck
- Repaired damaged sprinklers
- Repaired gate to pool deck entrance
- Repaired putt-putt carpet and wood
- Repaired roof on Concession Stand
- Replaced back flow preventer on water slide
- Replaced bolts on pool filters
- Replaced electrical breakers at gate house
- Repaired lifeguard chair at pool
- Repaired boardwalk lights and gazebo lights
- Winterized the sprinklers, marina, pontoon boat, and concession stand

### Chene-Trombley Park

- Supervised Construction Improvement Project
  - Removed fencing and back filled holes to make safe in preparation for renovation
  - Stumped large sycamore and prepared area for grade work
  - Trimmed trees
  - Site prepared and planned-set grade stakes
  - Installed water line and sewer line for bathroom
  - Graded area for 20' tall shade sails and bathroom
  - Excavated footings for shade sails 8' deep
  - Installed poles and set with concrete
  - Set grade for walking path and tot lot
  - Organized and pre-assembled tot lot features
  - Installed tot lot features and set with concrete
  - Painted existing play scape and repaired
  - Installed sprinkler system and graded and installed sod
- Preparation, clean up and set up/take down for opening of Phyllis A. Demars Tot Lot & Swing Area

### Ghesquiere Park

- General maintenance and repairs to Cook Schoolhouse
- Demolished dugouts and prepared area for new fence at Diamond #1
- Prepared new dog park for fencing, installed 400' electrical conduit to gate, regraded, installed water and sewer line, graded and poured 10' diameter concrete pad
- Repaired nets on first base line Diamond #1
- Reset scoreboard
- Weeded batting cages

### Sweeney Park

- Repaired play scape
- Replaced wood on benches

## BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

DPW employees perform many routine repairs and maintenance services for city buildings and grounds as well as general services to other city departments as needed.

These repairs and services include, but are not limited to:

- Custodial, maintenance duties, and repairs at City Hall, Public Safety, DPW and all city parks
- Report streetlights out to DTE as reported by residents
- Raise and lower flags
- Set up/take down signs and voting booths at precincts and errands for city clerk's office during elections
- Water line repairs, rubbing out and polishing water slide, and regular building and grounds repairs and all general maintenance at Lake Front Park
- Plant shrubbery and perform all general grounds maintenance at Chene-Trombly Park, Ghesquiere Park, Jules De Porre Park, and Sweeney Park
- Refresh play surface material around play equipment in city parks
- Maintain tennis courts in city parks

## WATER / SEWER

The DPW is responsible for the water distribution system of approximately 68 miles of various size water mains. The State of Michigan requires our city to have at least one certified water distribution operator with a title of S-2 or above. Department of Public Works employees currently hold two S-1, two S-2, two S-3 and four S-4 licenses. The DPW generates the water quality report, or Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) that provides water customers information on the quality of the drinking water and the sources of the water.

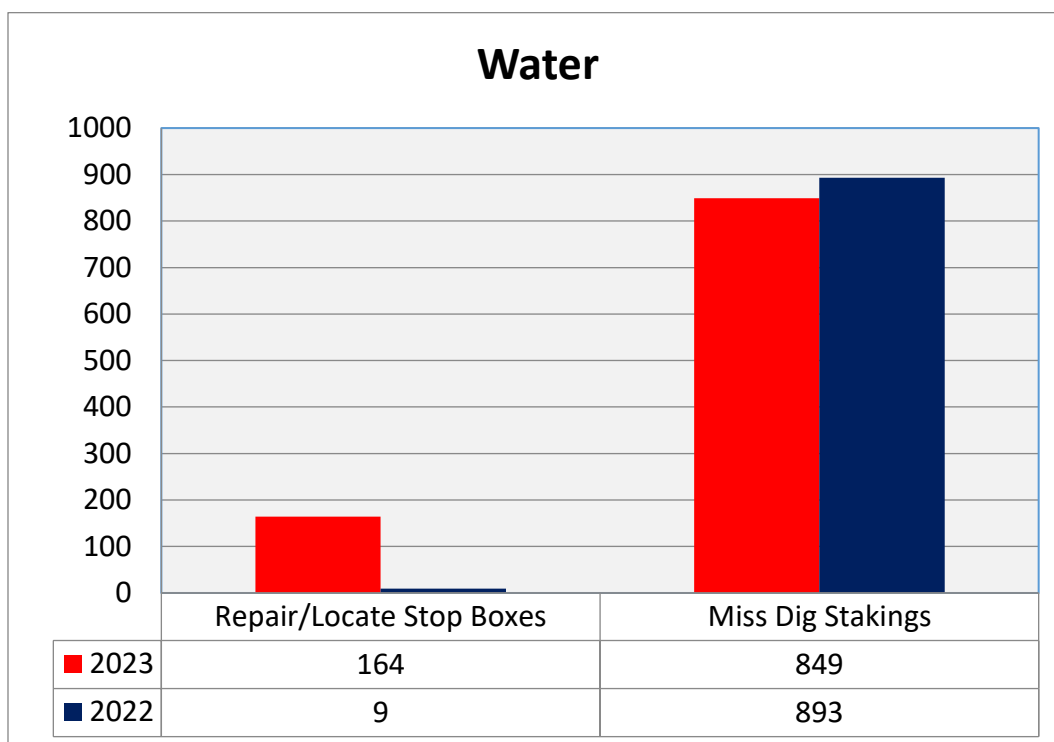
In 2023, DPW employees staked 849 water service locations for Miss Dig, a 5% decrease of the 893 staked in 2022 and completed 34 sprinkler system repairs compared to 25 in 2022. Employees installed five new water meters in 2023, a 64% decrease of the 14 new meters in 2022, and installed one new MTU reading devices in 2023, the same as 2022. DPW employees did not repair any meters and MTU reading devices in 2023, compared to three repairs in 2022.

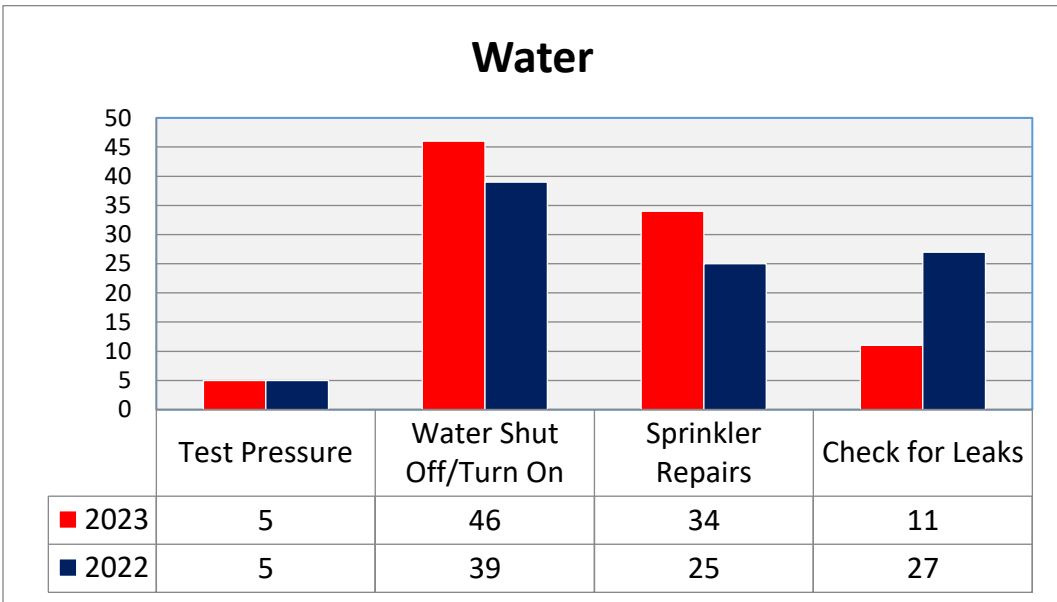
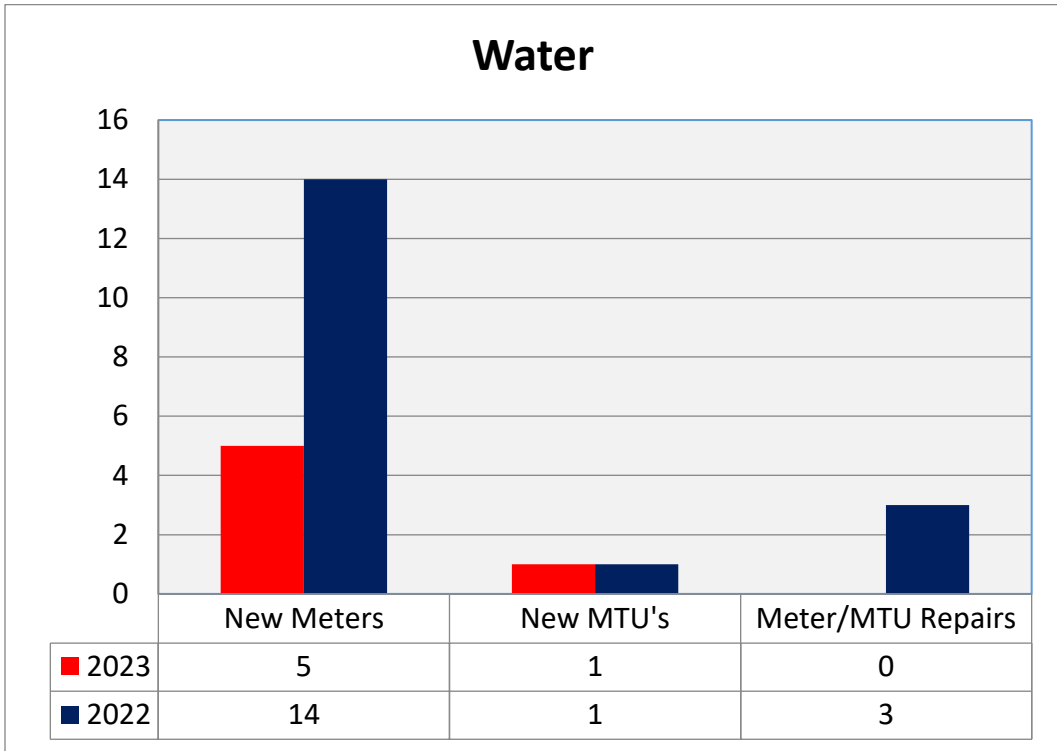
Employees repaired or located 164 stop boxes in 2023, compared to nine in 2022. The increase was caused from the Hampton Road Resurfacing and the Vernier Road Water Main Replacement. In addition, 46 water services were shut off and back on in 2023, an 18% increase from the 39 shut off in 2022. Eleven water services were checked for leaks in 2023 compared to 27 in 22.

In order to be compliant with the first requirement of new Lead and Copper Rule that was adopted in June of 2018 by the State of Michigan, DPW employees began a program to inventory all water service lines, including the portions on both public and private property, throughout the city. The second requirement is the city must replace all lead and/or galvanized service lines completely, at an average rate of five percent per year, not to exceed 20 years. Galvanized service lines are assumed to be hooked up to a portion of a lead line by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). In 2023, the DPW inventoried 787 service line compared to 1,376 service lines in 2022. Twelve additional lead and/or galvanized service lines were found, 25 were replaced, bringing the city's known total to 140, out of a total of 6,870 service lines.

Other water related services performed on a regular basis include:

- Assist in the daily operations of the Water Reservoir
- Testing malfunctioning water meters as requested
- Testing water pressure as requested throughout the city
- Regular maintenance, repairs and winterizing the city irrigation system
- Replacing lead water services between water main and stop box as needed





**WATER & SEWER REPAIRS/SERVICE**

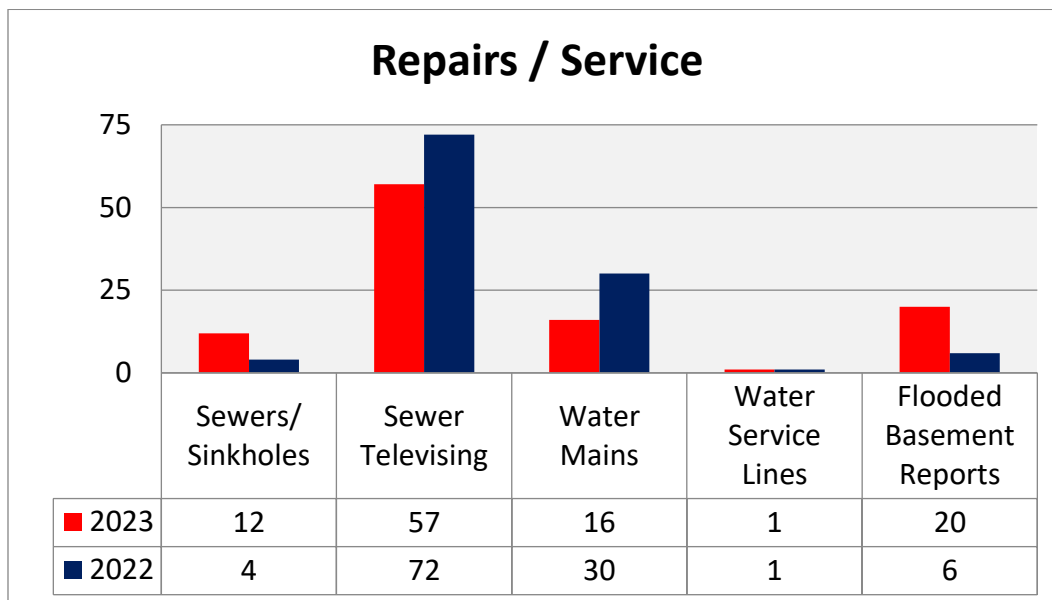
In 2023, DPW employees repaired 16 water main breaks compared to 30 in 2022. Six catch basins were repaired in 2023, an increase from one completed in 2022. One new water service connection was made in 2023, the same completed in 2022. As part of our 8-year rotating maintenance schedule, hydrants in District #3 (Vernier to north city limit, between Mack and Marter) were pressure tested, flushed and greased in 2023 as scheduled. During October and November of 2023, all 605 hydrants in the city were checked, pumped and winterized.

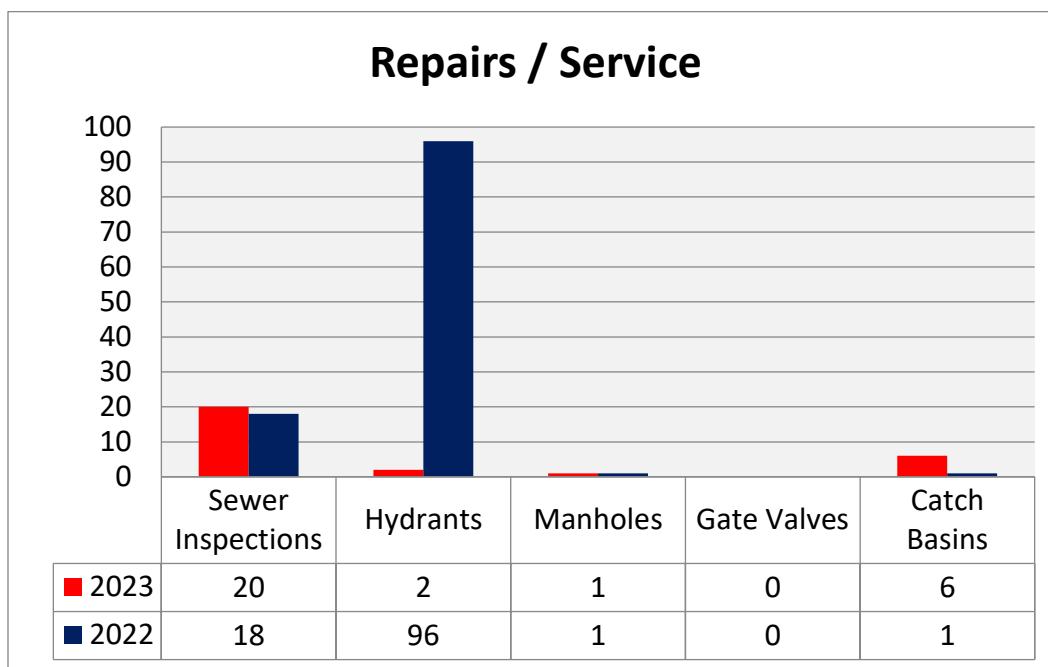


The department is also responsible for maintaining approximately 95 miles of sewer, 1,297 manholes, and the Torrey Road Pump Station (TRPS), which pumps sanitary, and storm water from Grosse Pointe Woods to the Milk River Pump Station. Department sewer related functions include repairing storm and sanitary sewer breaks, maintaining and rebuilding manholes and catch basins, and cleaning city sewer lines. Regular cleaning of catch basins and removal of debris after storms ensures proper street drainage. Twenty sewer inspections were performed in 2023 compared to 18 in 2022, and 12 sewer/sinkhole repairs were made in 2023 compared to four in 2022. Twenty flooded basements were reported in 2023 compared to six in 2022. Sewer-televising requests decreased in 2023 with 57 requests compared to 72 in 2022. There was one concrete inspection in 2023 and none in 2022.

Other repairs and services provided in 2022 included:

- Assist in the daily operations of the Torrey Road Pump Station
- Exercise water valves throughout the city so in an emergency the mains can be isolated for necessary repairs
- Sewer jetted/cleaned in various city locations
- Annual District sewer jetting to maintain free and clear running lines
- Annual cleaning of all catch basins throughout the city
- Repair damaged sod and/or square and lay sod at water main and sewer repair sites
- Flushing and pressure testing hydrants
- Winterizing hydrants
- Rebuilt spare hydrants





### TREES

The DPW forestry crew is responsible for maintenance and care of all city trees including trees in city parks, on all city properties and islands, and between the sidewalk and curb in residential neighborhoods. Crews regularly trim and remove trees and stumps, trim shrubbery and mulch city trees. In 2023, the Director and Assistant Director of Public Services condemned all city and private diseased trees.

In July of 2023, the DPW applied for the 2023 DTE Energy Foundation Tree Planting Grant and the city was awarded \$4,000.00 in October towards the 2024 Spring Tree Program. Landscape Source planted four trees throughout the city and 45 trees were planted in construction areas. Ten memorial trees were adopted in 2023 and the city’s Tree Commission held its memorial tree dedication ceremony on April 5, 2023 to recognize recipients of the memorial trees in 2023.

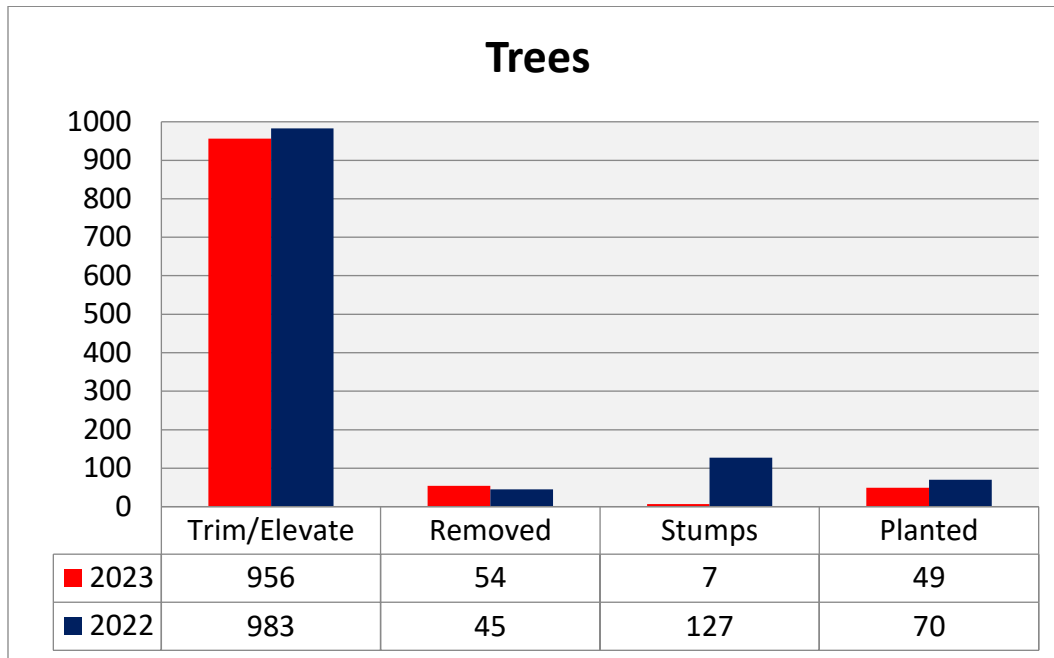
The DPW staff and city contractor Arbor Pro Tree Service removed 54 trees in 2023, a 20% increase from the 45 trees removed in 2022. The DPW staff also removed 7 stumps in 2023, compared to 127 in 2022.

In January and February of 2023, DPW crews trimmed and elevated trees in District #5 (west of Mack, between City Hall and south city limit). By year-end 956 city trees were trimmed and elevated as part of the regular annual maintenance program and throughout the city as needed.

DPW employees also provide a chipping service to residents for 39 weeks on a four-day schedule. In 2023, DPW spent 3,056 hours chipping brush, compared to 2,432 hours in 2022.

The DPW grounds crew also performed the following annual duties:

- Clean landscape beds on Mack and Vernier and all planting beds throughout the city
- Regular grounds clean up in city parks
- Restore dirt and seed where tree stumps are removed
- Grass cutting and weed whipping, till, fertilize and weed city beds
- Plant annual flowers throughout city and water regularly throughout the season
- Install memorial tree markers



### STREETS

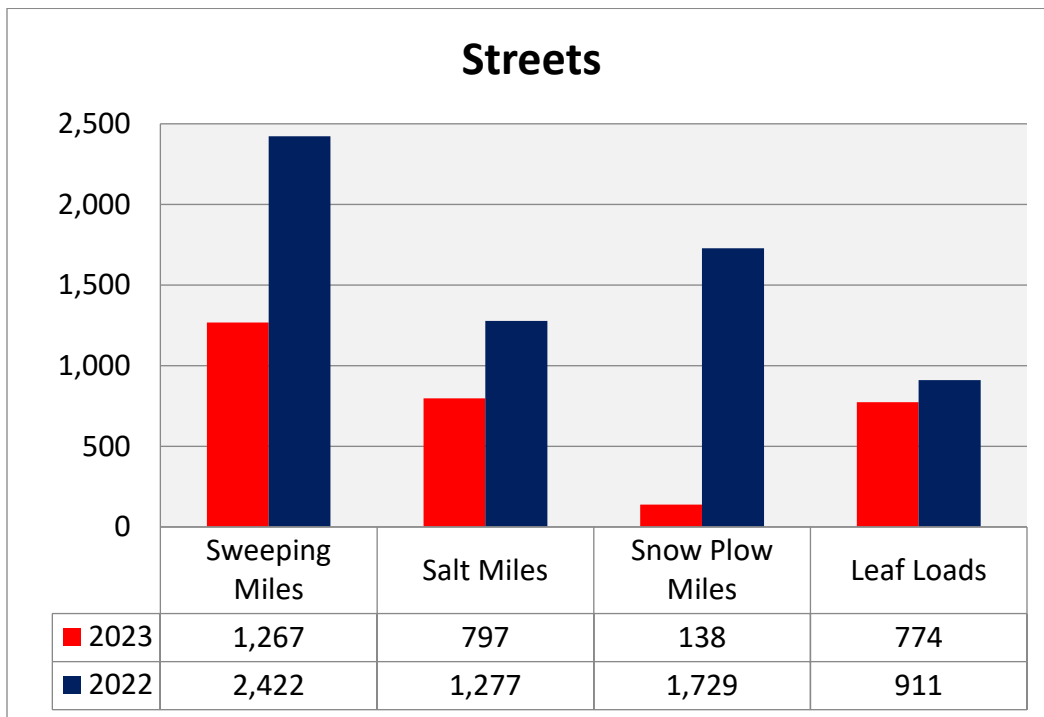
The Department of Public Works staff is responsible for approximately 54 miles of city streets. Regular duties consist of street sweeping, cleaning debris from alleys, parking lots and city boulevards, street painting/marking, and pothole repairs. The DPW administers the city’s yearly sidewalk replacement program and street repairs including maintenance of both concrete and asphalt streets and curbs. DPW employees continued to inspect all sidewalks in District 8 (south side of Vernier to Fairford, between Fairway and east city limit) and District 7 (Mack to east city limit, south city limit to Huntington and Fairford) in 2023, ground trip hazards wherever possible and added flags requiring replacement to the miscellaneous concrete street repair program. During the winter months Public Works employees plow and clear snow from city streets, school crossings, city hall, parking lots and bays, and sidewalks and roads are salted as needed to ensure public safety.

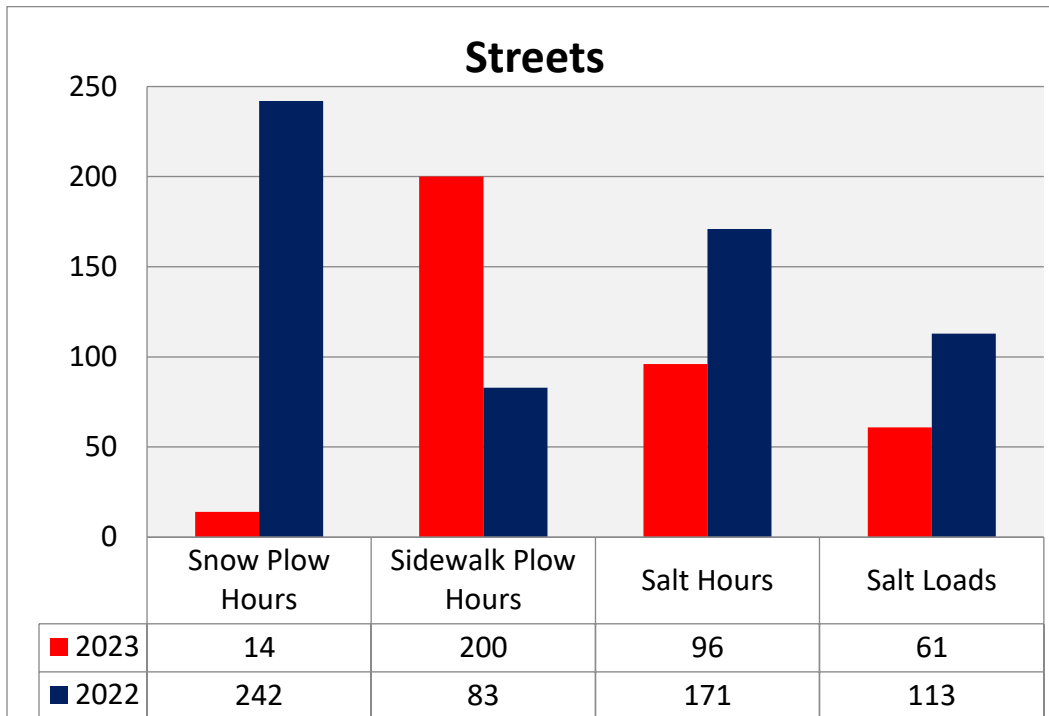
From October to December of 2023, 774 leaf loads, weighing slightly over 1,685 tons, were collected curbside. During the year, the city’s street sweeper registered 1,267 sweeping miles. Snow removal procedures implemented to reduce overtime expense were continued in 2023. Salt loads used decreased by 46% as a result of the historically warm winter weather. In total, DPW crews spread 525 tons of salt on city streets and sidewalks as needed, almost half of what

was used in 2022. Snowplow miles and hours also decreased significantly due to the winter weather in 2023.

Other tasks performed in 2023 included:

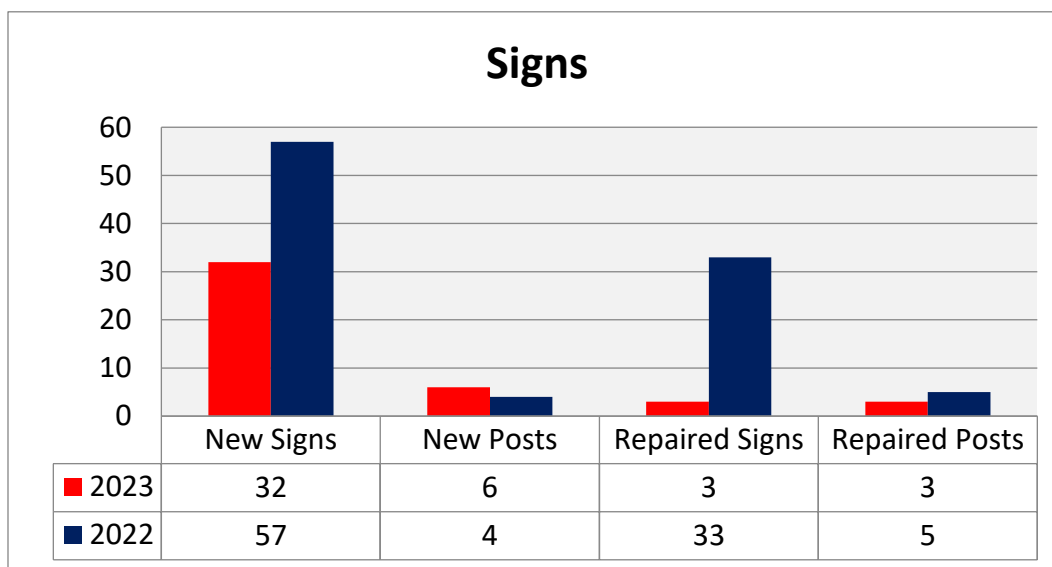
- Cleaning up debris in streets after accidents
- Painting curbs and striping street and park parking lots
- Painting and applying 3M reflective materials at school crossings
- Mulching leaves in city parks and island landscape beds
- Mulching trees in islands and city parks
- Put up and remove holiday decorations throughout the city, including installing 24 snowflakes to streetlights on Mack Ave
- Flood city park ice rinks and maintain throughout the winter
- Cleaning landscape beds on Mack, Vernier and at Lake Front Park
- Grass cutting and weed whipping
- Rototill, fertilize and weed islands and beds throughout city
- Plant annual flowers throughout city





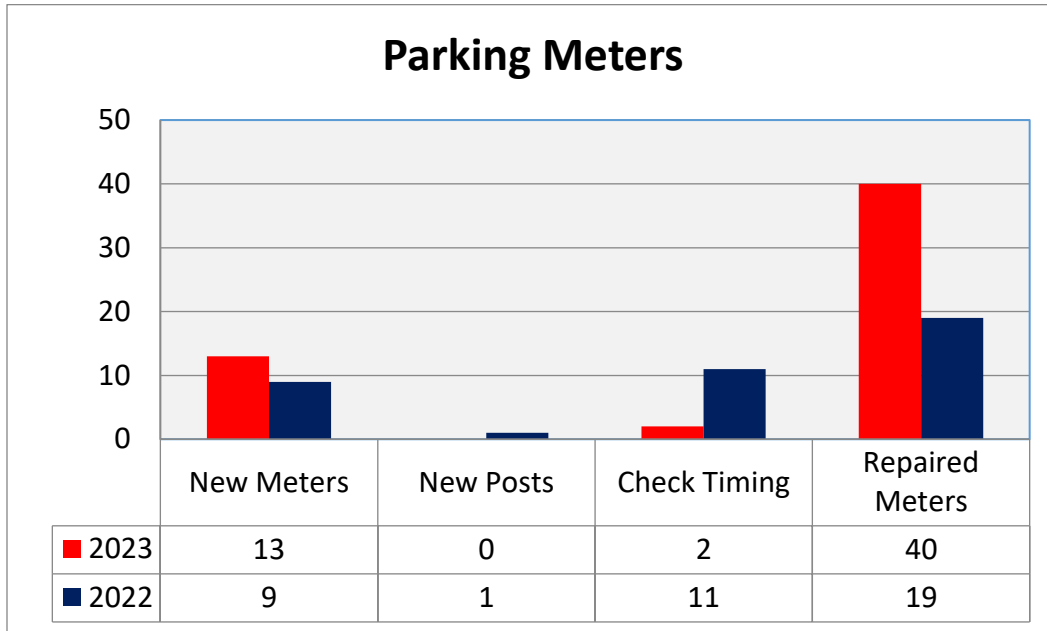
### SIGNS

Department of Public Works employees are responsible for the installation and maintenance of all city signs. During 2022, a physical inspection of all city street signs was performed in District #6 (Vernier to Torrey, between Mack and Fairway) to determine the need for replacement. As signs need replacement, they are being replaced with high-intensity prismatic signs to comply with federal laws. During 2023, 38 new signs and posts were installed compared to 61 in 2022. In addition, six sign and post repairs were completed in 2023 compared to 38 repairs completed in 2022.



## PARKING METERS

Parking meter repairs and maintenance, as well as the weekly collection of parking meters, also falls under the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. During 2023, 13 new meters were installed compared to 2022 when nine new meters were installed. There were 40 meters repaired in 2023, an increase from the 19 meters repaired in 2022. DPW employees also checked the timing on 2 meters in 2023, compared to 11 in 2022.

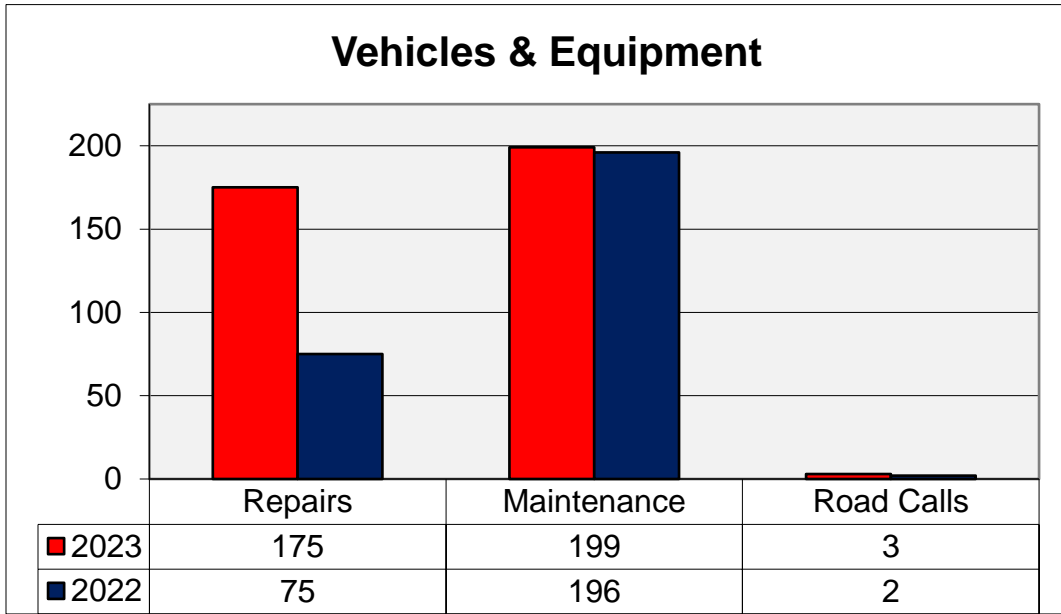


## VEHICLES & EQUIPMENT

The Public Works Department is responsible for providing preventative maintenance and daily repairs on approximately 175 vehicles and pieces of equipment that include autos, a bus, trucks, lawn mowers, tractors, street cleaning equipment, water/sewer equipment, fire trucks, and all other miscellaneous vehicles and equipment. All Public Safety vehicles are scheduled for safety inspections, oil changes and lubrications once a month. Other vehicles and equipment are rotated throughout the year for preventative maintenance. Repairs are made as needed.

The DPW mechanics completed 175 vehicle and equipment repairs in 2023, a substantial increase from the 75 repairs completed in 2022. Repairs increased as a result of aging vehicles and leaf equipment. In 2023, 199 vehicles were serviced for regular maintenance.

In 2023, the DPW updated the fleet with a truck and a riding mower. The new 2023 Ford F-150 VL regular cab pickup truck is utilized by the city’s GIS Technician and the water/sewer Crew Leader making a city’s heavy or mid-weight truck available for use. The new Scag 61” Turf Tiger Riding Mower replaced the 2014 riding mower that is used on a daily basis to mow grass in all city owned parks and grass medians located throughout the City of Grosse Pointe Woods.



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The Grosse Pointe Woods Department of Public Works continually strives to provide the highest quality of service to our residents and fellow employees. On behalf of the DPW staff and myself, I would like to thank the Mayor, the City Council, the City Administration and all of our residents for your continued support.