

# BC WORKS!

## The City of Battle Creek's Department of Public Works Newsletter

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textilegence.com

### New Wipes Law to Prevent Clogs

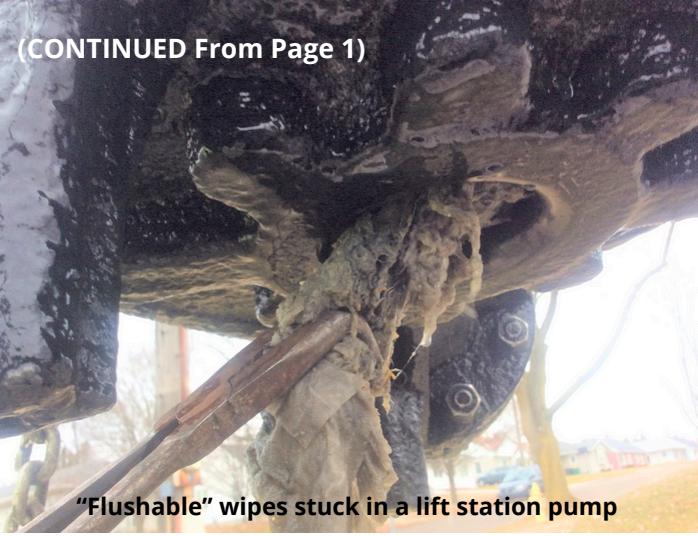
The State of Michigan passed a new law in May 2024 banning bathroom wipes - which are notorious for clogging sewage systems - from being labeled as "flushable" in Michigan unless they pass certain requirements. Starting in February of 2025, the packaging from those products will be required to include the words 'Do Not Flush' and a symbol discouraging people from throwing them in the toilet. The law applies to any "premoistened nonwoven disposable wipe" that is composed "entirely or in part of petrochemical-derived fibers" and is "likely to be used in a bathroom and has significant potential to be flushed." Because they do not break down like toilet paper when flushed, these wipes clog screens and pumps in sewer lines and wastewater treatment systems and cause costly and potentially hazardous sewage backups.

The City of Battle Creek has spent over **\$700,000** from January 2020 to July 31, 2024 cleaning pumps and wet wells in the City's lift stations (structures that keep wastewater flowing along the sewer lines to the wastewater treatment plant). This maintenance is due to "flushable" wipes and fats, oils and grease (FOG) clogging the pumps and building up in the lift station wet wells. When the pumps get clogged and fail, the sewage can back up into the streets and into homes, creating unsanitary and unsafe conditions.

**CONTINUED**

#### Contact us:

City of Battle Creek  
Department of Public Works  
150 S. Kendall St., Battle Creek, MI  
49037  
269-966-3343  
[battlecreekmi.gov/publicworks](http://battlecreekmi.gov/publicworks)



"Flushable" wipes stuck in a lift station pump



"Flushable" wipe clog

Also avoid flushing fats, oils and grease down your drains. When these materials cool, they solidify and create blockages which can result in clogged pipes and sewer backups.

Remember that **only** human waste and toilet paper are meant to be flushed down your toilet. Avoid flushing other materials like paper towels, tissues, diapers, and dental floss that won't quickly breakdown and will result in clogs in the sewer line.

Thanks for your help keeping the water flowing!



## Hydrant Painting



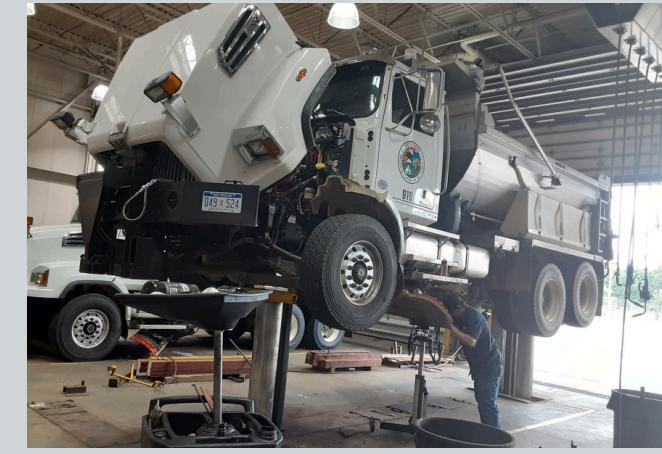
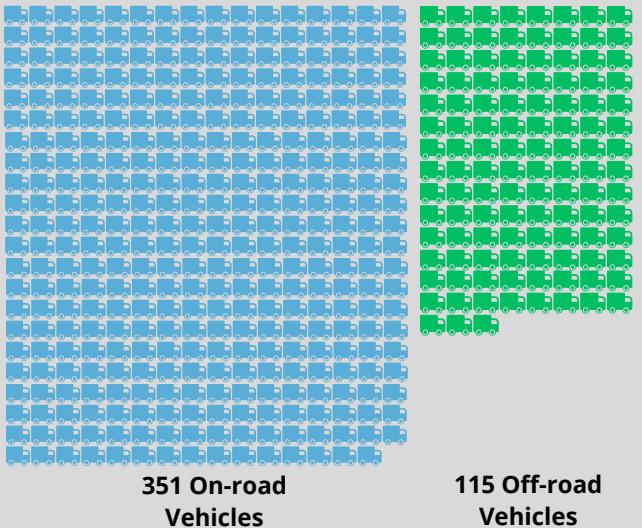
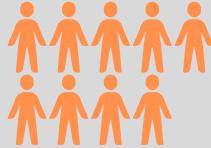
The City of Battle Creek has selected Olsen Contracting, LLC, a woman-owned business serving Michigan, Ohio & Florida, to paint fire hydrants for Battle Creek, Emmett Township & Bedford Township. Olsen Contracting will begin painting hydrants in late summer 2024. They are initially contracted to paint 500 of the 3,700 hydrants maintained by the City.

Most fire hydrants are made from cast iron material, which is susceptible to corrosion. Keeping a good coat of paint on our hydrants slows down the corrosion process. The City identifies public fire hydrants with chrome yellow paint to notify the fire department of its intended use. Keeping the hydrants painted a nice bright yellow, helps the fire department identify them easier in emergency situations. It also helps the fire department identify which hydrants are public (yellow) and private (red).

As Olsen Contracting works throughout the City painting hydrants, it is important to ensure there is five feet of space surrounding each fire hydrant. If you are a resident that has a fire hydrant in front of your home or business, please make sure there is no landscaping, bushes or trees within a five foot radius surrounding the hydrant. Maintaining and painting fire hydrants helps to improve public safety in more ways than one. Please be cautious and slow down when you see Olsen Contracting painting hydrants in your neighborhood.

# Meet the Fleet Division

The Department of Public Work's Fleet Services Division has the vital role of keeping the City's vehicles in good working order on (or off) the roads. Did you know that Fleet Services is responsible for 466 vehicles (351 on-road and 115 off-road)? All those vehicles are maintained by only nine Fleet Services technicians! (The City's Transit Department (buses) maintains their own vehicles.)



The team also provides mechanical services to our surrounding communities, including, but not limited to, the City of Springfield, and Bedford and Emmett Townships. Fleet Services staff are on call to respond to emergencies to keep our public safety vehicles on the road at all hours of the day, every day of the week. Staff also work during snow events to repair and maintain the snowplows and to replace the plow blades at regular intervals to keep them working efficiently. Thanks to Fleet Services for helping keep Battle Creek safe for its residents and visitors.

## Traffic Update

The City's Traffic Division is piloting a new detection system at the intersection of North Avenue and Emmett Street. The City has a free six-month trial of the Miovision Trafficlink system. The Trafficlink system allows City staff to monitor activity at the intersection in real-time from their offices. The system supplies information such as vehicle/pedestrian counts, vehicle class, turning movement counts and other data that helps illustrate when the heaviest traffic occurs and opportunities for improvement.

The system can also send City employees email notifications when an issue occurs. Within the first few weeks of system installation, Trafficlink alerted the City of issues with power, communication and the detection software. With the City's current detection systems, staff would not be aware of issues until a resident called to report it.

The City's existing detection systems include "loops" and "pucks" which are embedded in the road and require vehicles to drive over them to be detected. Many of our intersections utilize a four-camera system with each camera focusing on a single leg (lanes joining the intersection) to detect vehicles. The City also has some single-camera systems that cover the entire intersection. City staff will evaluate the Trafficlink system after the six-month trial period to determine if it is worthy of larger scale implementation in the city.



# Lead Service Line Replacement Requirement

The City of Battle Creek (and all community water supplies) is required to inventory every water service line - whether lead or other material - supplied by city water within the city limits. This information is required by the State of Michigan and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Property owners have two options for reporting: Self-reporting or scheduling an on-site inspection with Water Division staff.

## TWO OPTIONS

### Easy Self Report

Take the online survey  
[www.battlecreekmi.gov](http://www.battlecreekmi.gov)  
(Scroll down page to survey)

### On-Site Inspection Schedule an in-home visit

Call Lynette: 269-966-3355 x1801

Use the QR Code for the survey  
(see below)

Email Lynette:  
llwinstone@battlecreekmi.gov

Call the Water Division Meter Shop  
269-966-3355 x 1801

Thank you!



The online survey is short and provides guidance on identifying the service line material. Reporting your service line material saves the city both valuable time and resources. Thank you for helping "GET THE LEAD OUT" of our water system!



The City of Battle Creek  
needs your help to...



We use the  
information about  
water pipe material to  
help get the pipes  
made of lead out of  
our water system.



Scan this code or visit  
[battlecreekmi.gov](http://battlecreekmi.gov)  
for tips on how  
to identify your  
water pipe material  
and to **take our  
short survey**.

We want to know your  
pipe material, no  
matter what it is - and  
**you can help!** Please  
take our short survey  
today!

## Stormwater

The City of Battle Creek has an underground network of pipes that carries stormwater - and everything that washes off the surface with the stormwater - to a river, lake or wetland UNTREATED. So, all the trash, cigarette butts, pet waste, de-icing salt, lawn chemicals and debris that wash off the pavement have a direct connection to our surface waters.

**Here are a few simple things you can do to protect our waterways:**

- Collect and dispose of litter
- Pick up after your pet with waste bags and dispose in trash
- Keep grass clippings and leaves out of the streets
- Minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers
- Keep your vehicle maintained and check for leaks



# Department of Public Works Events

The City of Battle Creek hosts a number of events each year to help City neighbors with recycling and to provide opportunities for stewardship and enjoyment of our local natural resources. Highlights of our recent events are presented below.

- **Styrofoam (polystyrene #6) collection:** 183 visitors and 930 lbs of polystyrene #6 collected for recycling
- **Earth Day Clean-up:** 200 volunteers, removed 50 tires and lots of trash along the Linear Path, River Road and parks
- **Children's Water Festival:** 19 classrooms and 527 students participated
- **Rain Barrel Sale:** 44 rain barrels and 6 composters sold
- **Scrap tire collection:** 1,287 tires collected for recycling
- **Department of Public Works Open House:** 150 visitors
- **Electronics collection:** 200 visitors and 19,496 lbs of electronics collected for reuse and recycling
- **Tree planting:** Over 100 volunteers planted 500 trees and shrubs

To learn more about City of Battle Creek events and volunteer opportunities, visit [bcwater.org/events](http://bcwater.org/events) or contact Bessie Ploeg at: [beploeg@battlecreekmi.gov](mailto:beploeg@battlecreekmi.gov) or 269-966-3355, ext. 1889.

For a listing of collection events in Calhoun County, visit: [calhouncountymi.gov/departments/](http://calhouncountymi.gov/departments/) and scroll down to "Recycling and Solid Waste."

Thanks to all of you for taking the time to recycle and helping to keep our city looking good!



## Changes to Pizza Box Recycling

**YES!**



**NO!**

For years, we've been told that pizza boxes with any food residue are not recyclable. Well, all that has changed! New technologies and an increased demand for cardboard materials has resulted in new guidelines for recycling pizza boxes. **City of Battle Creek residents can now recycle the entire pizza box - even if there is some grease or cheese stuck on the cardboard.** Boxes **must be empty** of any pizza, dipping sauce containers, pizza savers (the little three-legged plastic tables that keeps the cheese from sticking to the top of the box), napkins and paper plates. Those items are **not** recyclable and are considered contamination.

There are approximately 3 billion pizza boxes used in the United States annually, which represents 600,000 tons of highly desired corrugated material that could be recycled and kept out of the landfills ([www.westrock.com/greasecheesestudy](http://www.westrock.com/greasecheesestudy)). Please be sure to check local guidelines if you are recycling outside of Battle Creek.

(Images from [sanjoseca.gov](http://sanjoseca.gov) and [falmouthma.gov](http://falmouthma.gov).)

# Forest Management

Forest management activities have started in two of the high priority areas in the city. Natural Capital Forestry, the City's contracted forester, completed a *Forest Management Action Plan* in 2023 to outline strategies for improving the long-term health of these valuable resources.

In early 2024, select harvesting of trees took place in the forest on the north side of West Jackson Street near Bedford Road. In April, volunteers planted 500 trees and shrubs to diversify the forest with a variety of native species and age classes. The 100+ volunteers protected the new plantings with a combination of tubes and mesh cages to deter deer and other wildlife from damaging the young plants. To date, the plant survival has been very encouraging with trees and shrubs already showing significant signs of growth.

The Fell Park forest is currently being surveyed to determine which trees to select for harvesting to ensure a healthy, sustainable forest. Trees are evaluated based on species type, age class, proximity to other desirable trees, potential source of seeds for future growth, and tree health. Without active management, forests can become dominated by species that can tolerate the shady understory (maples, black locust) with a loss of those desirable species that require sunlight for establishment (oaks). Harvesting at Fell Park is expected to begin in winter of 2025.

The City is applying for grants from State and Federal agencies to assist with funding future management efforts for the forests and community outreach and education programs. Responsible forest management will make these community resources more resilient to pests and diseases and help to ensure they will be a valuable asset in Battle Creek far into the future.



Sign up for the City of Battle Creek's **"NOTIFY ME" service** or **RSS feed** to get email and text alerts on the City's street closures, boil water advisories, solid waste collection news and much more.

Visit: [battlecreekmi.gov/AlertCenter.aspx](http://battlecreekmi.gov/AlertCenter.aspx)



# Fall Yard Cleanup

The City of Battle Creek contracts with Republic Services to collect residential yard waste and leaves from April to December. Leaves and other yard debris must be collected in a bin clearly marked "Yard Waste" or bagged in biodegradable yard waste bags and placed at the curb for pick up on your designated day. Yard waste stickers are available for free from the Department of Public Works or City Hall. Personal containers can be used, or carts can be rented for \$39/year from Republic Services. To rent a yard waste, garbage or recycling cart, call (269) 216-8008. (One recycling cart is provided at no extra charge to City of Battle Creek residents with a Republic Services account.)

Other alternatives to bagging leaves are mowing and mulching the leaves back into the yard, composting them on your property or taking them to the City's compost facility (Brice Pit, 715 W. River Rd., Battle Creek.) It is against Michigan law to dispose of leaves and other yard debris in your garbage. Leaves also cannot be placed in the roadways as the City's street sweepers do not have the capacity to collect all the leaves throughout the City. Leaves placed in the roadways can cause localized flooding, costly storm sewer maintenance needs and degradation of our waterways.

Branches, brush and other yard debris also will be collected curbside from April to December and must be placed in bundles no larger than 4 feet long and branches no larger than 2 inches in diameter. Plastic bags for yard waste will not be accepted.



Michigan State University Extension

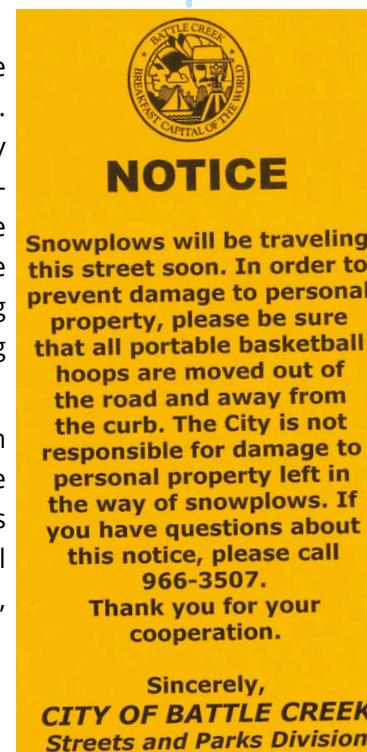


Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy

## Snow Plow Season

Basketball hoops in the street block access for the snow plows when they are clearing the roads. Please remove any hoops or other items that may keep the snow plows from servicing your street - before the snow falls. Plows need full access to the streets to keep the roadways safe for travel. Be sure to also keep garbage, yard waste and recycling containers on the curb and out of the street during the winter months.

The city will tag any basketball hoops that remain in the streets requesting removal to prevent damage to items and allow for snow plow access. Thanks for your help in keeping the streets safe for all Battle Creek neighbors! If you have questions, please contact: **(269) 966-3507**.



Keep up with the Battle Creek Area Clean Water Partners events and news at [bcwater.org](http://bcwater.org) or on their Facebook page.





## Looking for a Rewarding Career? Join Our Team!

### Is a career in public works right for you?

#### Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you feel a responsibility to improve your community's quality of life and protect the environment at the same time?
- Do you want to do something with your life that makes a difference to others?
- Can you make tough choices and put in the hours preparing for a career in a technical or professional discipline?

If your answer is **YES**, there are many interesting choices and combinations to explore. The City of Battle Creek's Department of Public Works offers exciting careers for:

- Laborers
- Equipment Operators
- Engineers
- Office Administrators
- Mechanics
- Plant Operators
- Electricians
- Scientists
- Foremen
- Managers
- and more!



Many of these positions come with on-the-job training and excellent municipal wage and fringe benefits in addition to opportunities for personal and professional growth. A career in public works provides many rewarding opportunities to earn the respect of others while keeping communities safe and healthy places for everybody.



Look for openings with our team at:  
<https://www.battlecreekmi.gov/jobs>

