



City of Spokane—Media Release

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CITY CREWS FILL 600 POTHOLES IN TWO WEEKS

Spokane City Street crews have filled more than 600 potholes in the two weeks since Mayor Mary Verner announced her plan to improve the safety and drivability of Spokane’s streets immediately and for the long-term.

From Jan. 1 through March 2nd, City crews filled 1,622 potholes including more than 500 that were rated as type 3, the most serious potholes which are generally several inches in depth. That’s up from the 975 potholes that had been filled through Feb. 14, including 438 type 3 holes.

“Our crews have done a tremendous job attacking this problem, and they will continue to work on potholes as long as necessary,” Mayor Verner says. “We are committed to making the streets better for citizens and visitors.”

Following lots of snow and numerous freeze-thaw cycles, the City has seen more weather-related potholes than usual this winter. The Mayor, in consultation with the City Council, directed the Street Department to increase the number of crews filling potholes to address the problem.

Crews have been using “cold mix” asphalt to complete these repairs. They will switch to “hot mix” asphalt, which provides a better seal on potholes and thus a better repair, when the local asphalt plants open usually sometime between the middle of March and the middle of April, depending on weather and demand.

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The City has two shifts of Street crews who are working on these repairs about 20 hours a day. Some crews move from large pothole to large pothole, based on information that has been called in by citizens. Other crews are assigned to repair holes for an entire section of street or traffic lane. The combination of deployments allows the City to be responsive to larger problems while also gaining the efficiencies from completing work on all the potholes in a single area.

Four, two-person crews currently are repairing potholes on paved streets, and graders are working on dirt roads.

City Street Director Mark Serbousek notes that some problems can't be repaired until hot mix asphalt is available. Some problems that citizens consider thin potholes are what Street crews would call "delaminations"—when the surface of the road essentially peels off. These sections will be repaired as hot mix becomes available, Serbousek says.

Citizens can report potholes that need repair by calling the City's **Pothole Hotline at 625-7733**. Please include as much information as possible about the location of the problem and its approximate size. The City will fill larger potholes (type 3's) on arterials within 48 hours of reporting and will add other potholes to its repair schedule.

In addition to the immediate pothole repair work, the Mayor is presenting to the City Council a plan to add \$500,000 to the Street Department's 2008 budget to pay for additional street repair work during the construction season, which gets under way in April. The repairs will include grinding and paving, cracksealing, and thin overlays. This work will enhance the safety and drivability of Spokane's streets and extend the life of the pavement.

The final piece of the Mayor's street plan will come in her proposed 2009 budget. The Mayor says she will include additional money for street maintenance, which will provide more resources for all maintenance activities—from pothole repair and grind-and-patch work to snow removal.

Street maintenance activities are just one way the City works to preserve and enhance its street system. The citizens in November 2004 approved the 10-Year Street Bond, which will rehabilitate 110 miles of streets, including arterials and residential streets. Since the bond passed, the City has repaired 30 miles of streets. The City also completes a number of capital street projects every year. Capital projects add traffic capacity or include major safety enhancements.