



Christine Clancy, P.E.
DPW Commissioner

TO: Eileen Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*
FROM: Christine Clancy, DPW Commissioner
DATE: March 31, 2022
RE: C. Yem – Request City Manager Create a Pothole Hotline

Potholes can be reported to the Department of Public Works (DPW's) main phone number (978-674-4111). DPW has staff in the office between the hours of 7 am and 11 pm to answer any calls, seven days a week. Calls to the DPW between the hours of 11 pm and 7 am are redirected to the DPW Deputy Commissioner of Streets but are meant for emergency purposes.

The City encourages the community to utilize CivicPlus to report potholes since it acts as a database for pothole record keeping. CivicPlus is located on the City's website and allows a community member to report a pothole by providing an address or intersection location of the pothole. A work order ticket is created and DPW's pothole response teams utilize the list of outstanding requests to plan their day. Calls that are made to DPW reporting potholes are also entered into the CivicPlus system by DPW staff. The DPW Administration staff closes out the work orders on at least a weekly basis and sometimes sooner and adds into CivicPlus any additional potholes repaired by the pothole response team. Any community member that reports directly through CivicPlus receives an email notification once the pothole has been repaired and the CivicPlus work order is closed out.

There was a discussion at the 3/29/22 City Council Meeting regarding potholes on Andover Street and the Parks Department. The Streets Department currently has 2 crews out each day to fill potholes. Approximately 5 tons of asphalt are placed around the City daily filling potholes. The pothole needs and number of CivicPlus work order tickets significantly exceed the number of potholes the Streets Department is able to fill on a daily basis. Beginning the week of 3/7/22, I added a two person pothole crew from the Parks Department to assist with the backlog of pothole repairs. The Parks Department team focused in the school parking lots. Over a period of 2.5 weeks, the Parks Department placed 27 tons of asphalt in school parking lots. This is work that would have otherwise pulled from the attention needed to repair potholes within the City streets. The reason Parks instead of Streets employees were pulled to complete this effort was because there were no additional laborers in the Streets department for a third pothole crew. There are two unfunded laborer positions in the Streets Department and I have proposed that they be funded in FY23. These two positions or any staff out of work due on injury are not accounted for in the current 82 vacancies recently reported to the City Council.



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The discussion on 3/29/22 inquired why Parks Department were pulled from their daily tasks to this effort. DPW Departments work in collaboration when critical needs arise and addressing potholes throughout the City was and is currently a DPW priority. 2 of 26 Parks staff members were redirected to assist with potholes in school parking lots. The other Parks members were able to continue with their daily tasks, which was limited to tasks that can be performed during winter conditions. Many spring preparedness tasks did not begin until the week of 3/21/22.

The discussion on 3/29/22 asked why Parks employees were performing duties outside of their job descriptions. The Parks employees that assisted with the pothole effort have the same job description (laborer) as the Streets department. There is not a specific job description other than the laborer's job description for filling of potholes.

The discussion on 3/29/22 asked why Andover Street was prioritized. Andover Street had been completed two times before by the Streets Department but potholes were still being reported through CivicPlus and by Councilors. There are other streets in the City that have been reported by Councilors and accordingly, the Streets Department has responded to those locations. The PyneArts School was mentioned by a Councilor and that was the first school parking lot for the Parks pothole crew addressed. Although pothole repairs have been made, there are still condition repair needs at some of these locations. The PyneArts School and the Sullivan and Reilly Schools are examples of where several tons of asphalt have been placed to repair potholes but capital projects are really needed to address the deficiencies. I will be submitting these parking lots to be considered for FY23 capital rehabilitation projects.

The discussion on 3/29/22 asked why the Superintendent of Parks was marking potholes and filling potholes on Andover Street. It is not part of the City's protocol to mark potholes ahead of them being filled, but the Superintendent of Parks had seen some potholes on Andover Street that he believed needed attention and were hazardous to vehicles and particularly motorcycles. The Superintendent of Parks spent approximately 5 minutes marking locations and coordinated with the Streets Department to have a nearby pothole crew that was working on the schools fill a few locations on Andover Street. The Superintendent of Parks did not fill potholes. The Parks pothole crew, as originally planned, spent the majority of their day at nearby schools and filled in a few potholes on Andover Street.

Cc: Andy Silva, Deputy DPW Commissioner, Streets
Shannon Cohan, Superintendent of Parks & Cemeteries