



POLICY: Pothole Repair Policy		SECTION
	Public Works and Utilities Department	
	Effective date: May 22, 2023	Approved by: 
	Supersedes: N/A	Written by: Chad Bednar

OVERVIEW

The City of Duluth has over 530 center line miles of City streets all varying in age and condition. The City of Duluth has an operational process to repair potholes using a set of metrics, some of those are: public safety, operational budgets, staffing levels, weather conditions, environmental impacts, and access to materials.


This policy applies to all City streets, roads, and alleys. It does not apply to other government entities’ roads that go through the City of Duluth, unless there are specific agreements between the City of Duluth and the other governing body.

The Street Maintenance Manager or their designee will decide when to conduct pothole repair operations in the City. Each City street will be inspected at a minimum of once a year depending on the availability of resources (see Maintenance Types) and other factors such as weather conditions, construction projects, and other scheduled or proposed Street Maintenance or Engineering activities.

PROCESS

The City of Duluth repairs potholes utilizing the same priority system that is currently in place for winter maintenance. City streets are classified based on street function, traffic volume, and importance to the welfare of the community. P1 streets (mains) will be inspected and patched to completion prior to starting bulk of operations in P2’s (residential). This operational process repeats itself for P3’s (alley). Below are some key points to make note of as they will cause a delay in service.

- ❖ **Priorities and scheduling**
 - All potholes repairs will be assessed in the following order:
 - Priority 1 Mains (P1)
 - Priority 2 Residential (P2)
 - Priority 3 Alley (P3)
- ❖ **Delays in patching operations**
 - Weather conditions such as snow, rain, ice, and extreme temperatures
 - Equipment breakdowns and staffing levels
 - Vendor availability and asphalt plant shutdowns

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❖ **Warning Signs or Traffic Control**

- At the direction of the Street Maintenance Manager or their designee, and only when deemed necessary, the city may temporarily detour traffic, to ensure public safety, if there is an area that is beyond temporary repair.

❖ **Documentation**

- City of Duluth keeps records of annual Patching operations across all city streets. These records will not necessarily identify each individual pothole, but may show streets sections where repairs were made.

CRITERIA OF A POTHOLE

The Street Maintenance Manager or their designee will have discretion to decide conditions of potholes and the repairs needed.

- ❖ Not every divot, bump, depression, or hole in a street’s surface is considered a pothole. In general, the criteria for defining a pothole may be based on the following metrics, a pothole must:
 - Reside in the road’s driving surface, not contained on the shoulder, sidewalk, or boulevard
 - Be deeper than 2” as this is required to have adequate bonding and compaction
 - Not be in part of or/a utility or ROW excavation
 - Not be part of a larger degraded/broken area that encompasses the width of the street


**For the purposes of this policy, a pothole will only be identified as a hole in an asphalt paved or concrete roadway. Holes or disturbances in gravel roads are NOT considered potholes and are maintained in a different way.*

MAINTENANCE TYPES

The City of Duluth has different operational processes to address the many different road problems in the City streets. Below are descriptions of our summer and winter maintenance practices.

❖ **Summer Season – HMA Product (May –October)**

In the summer we are able to utilize a Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) product for pothole repair. This material is the “standard” type of asphalt and is heated to between 280-325 degrees Fahrenheit

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and laid down while still extremely hot. This type of product allows us to repair a wider range of hole and also provides a more permanent repair than a CMA product. This product, however, does rely on the availability of outside vendors thus can lead to more delays that are out of our control.

Road problems that can be addressed using a HMA product:

- Potholes
- Utility Patches
- Alligator Cracking*
- Culvert/Road-way Dips*
- Cracks/Joint Separation*

**Depending on severity of the road issue, it may not be repairable using a HMA product.*

❖ **Winter Season – CMA Product (November – May)**

In the winter, our maintenance levels change due to the material that is available to us to repair potholes. When HMA plants close for the winter, we use a Cold Mix Asphalt (CMA) product. This asphalt uses a blend of oils and additives that makes it possible for the asphalt mix to be stored and applied during cold temperatures. The end result of this product is that it does not have the longevity or strength of HMA. Because of this, we concentrate on filling the larger, more aggressive potholes.

Road problems that can be address using a CMA product:

- Potholes*
- Utility Patches*

**Depending on the severity of road issue, they may not be repairable using a CMA product.*