



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council

DATE: May 12, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Public Works Department

PREPARED BY: Chantell O'Neal, Assistant Director, Engineering

PRESENTER: Chantell O'Neal, Assistant Director, Engineering

AGENDA TITLE: Report on Consideration of Equipment Purchase to Enhance City Capacity for Self-Performed Asphalt Pothole Repairs

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council review and consider the benefits of purchasing equipment to support the Public Works Maintenance Division's ability to self-perform more asphalt pothole repair work, and provide direction to staff on whether to proceed with procurement.

BACKGROUND

Currently, the City addresses minor asphalt repairs using cold patch materials applied and compacted in the field by driving over the patch. Larger-scale street repairs are contracted out as part of capital improvement projects. However, City Council and community members have expressed increasing concern over the pace of street degradation and the City's limited ability to respond quickly to pothole complaints.

In response, the City Manager directed staff to assess the feasibility and practicality of improving the City's in-house street maintenance capabilities. The City Manager and Public Works staff met with three senior Maintenance Division employees to evaluate current limitations and identify opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness. These discussions revealed that targeted equipment investments, combined with internal workforce capacity, could significantly enhance the City's responsiveness and quality of repairs.

DISCUSSION:

The maintenance team provided valuable insights into the practical, operational, and logistical implications of expanding our self-performed asphalt work. Key considerations are outlined below:

1. Equipment and Operational Logistics

- Staff identified several pieces of equipment that could enhance our ability to complete higher-quality pothole repairs in-house. A cost estimate table has been prepared (see attached).
- Equipment maintenance, mechanic support, and secure storage space will need to be planned and budgeted.

2. Renting vs. Purchasing

- A preliminary cost-benefit analysis suggests that while rental is a viable short-term solution, long-term cost savings and operational flexibility may justify purchasing the equipment outright.

3. Staffing and Training

- Currently, only one staff member has formal training in asphalt placement. Additional training will be essential to ensure repairs meet safety and quality standards.
- Only one maintenance employee holds a Class A driver's license, which is required to operate some of the proposed equipment.
- A seasonal laborer recruitment is underway. This role will temporarily relieve existing staff of custodial duties and allow for broader participation in complex field work, increasing departmental capacity and offering professional development opportunities.

4. Safety and Regulatory Compliance

- Handling hot-mix asphalt and operating heavy machinery requires strict adherence to Cal/OSHA safety protocols. Implementation of a training program and acquisition of proper PPE will be necessary before field deployment.

5. Construction Season and Competing Demands

- The City is entering an unusually active construction season. While major paving work will still be outsourced, City maintenance staff are frequently called upon to support these projects with urgent, on-call tasks (e.g., USA utility marking, site verifications, pipe inspections, and emergency repairs).
- These responsibilities will increase during upcoming broadband and street improvement projects, potentially limiting staff availability for self-performed pothole work unless staffing levels are adjusted.

6. Material Availability

- Hot-mix asphalt must be sourced from Ukiah, requiring a 2.5-hour round trip. While a tac pot can extend the usability of the mix to approximately three days, scheduling and material waste must be managed carefully.
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FISCAL IMPACT:

An estimated cost breakdown of the proposed equipment is shown below for Council review. Items with an asterisk* are estimated costs only; other costs are actuals based on recent quotes from local vendors. Funding options for this purchase may include using the unassigned funds earmarked for street project work at the mid-year budget, Local Streets and Roads (LSR) funds, or other opportunities.

	Common Name	Machinery	New/Used	Cost
1	Skid steer &Grinder	Compact Track Loader	New	\$ 121,804.81
2	Ditch Attachment*		U/K	\$ 6,500.00
3	Roller	Paving and Compaction	Used	\$ 45,727.50
4	Heavy Duty Trailer*	For Hauling equipment to the work site	U/K	\$ 25,000.00
5	Tac-Pot*	Oil Tackifier	U/K	\$ 15,000.00
6	Insulated Asphalt Trailer*	Thermo-Lay Slide In	New	\$ 140,000.00
			Total	\$ 354,032.31

CONCLUSION:

Enhancing the City's ability to self-perform asphalt repairs could offer greater responsiveness to community complaints, improve repair quality, and support internal staff development. However, these benefits must be weighed against staffing limitations, safety requirements, and the logistical challenges of hot-mix acquisition. Staff seeks Council direction on whether to proceed with equipment acquisition and expand self-performed pothole repair capabilities.
