

Downtown Gallup plagued by potholes

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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Cannot patch when wet; Need materials and staff

Drivers and pedestrians have likely taken note of the many potholes that dot Maloney Avenue, Second Street, Third Street, and other roads in and around Downtown Gallup.

While potholes can be avoided until they are filled, they can be especially problematic when it's wet since it is difficult to gauge how deep a puddle is until a person or vehicle passes through it.

Moreover, city maintenance staff is unable to tend to these potholes when it is wet outside, according to City Manager Maryann Ustick. And oftentimes when the city does patch the potholes using a cold mix asphalt, along comes a freeze-thaw and, combined with traffic activity, the patches pop out of the ground.

The city also cannot make repairs to Maloney Avenue and Second Street because they are state roads, Ustick said March 13. The New Mexico Department of Transportation is behind on tending to these two roads because their priority is Interstate 40, she added.

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Ustick's comment on certain streets was reinforced by Public Works Director Stanley Henderson.

"Highway 491, North Ninth Street, Maloney Avenue, Highway 66, New Mexico 602, Boardman Avenue, and South Second Street are all New Mexico State roadways and are maintained by the NMDOT," Henderson said in a written statement March 14. "However, I-40, as a Federal arterial, commands their attention and resources more often than not."

When asked about which streets are prioritized, Henderson said that they are scheduled based on street classification and roadway condition.

Arterial roadways come before collector streets, which come before neighborhood through streets, and then residential non-through streets, according to Henderson.

When asked what other problems cause a delay in patching potholes, Ustick says it is not so much a matter of funding, as it is materials and the staff on hand.

"Roadway reconstruction and milling and overlaying are the best solutions," Ustick said in a written statement. "We have a plan and priorities, but this is where limited funding is a huge problem."

Henderson said that until permanent repairs can be made to the roads with hot mix asphalt, the temporary fixes described by Ustick will continue to occur.

He also asks for the city's patience with this matter.

"We request that the public slow down and drive for conditions," Henderson said. "The city's Street Department crews put in long hours with snow removal operations followed by long hours

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repairing the potholes left over from winter storms.”

Ustick said that the permanent patching projects are scheduled to take place between spring and fall.

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