

# PETALUMA POTHoles



## RESPONSES



# CITY OF PETALUMA

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Approved: *[Signature]*  
Mayor

Superior Court Judge  
9/16/11

Date:  
Chris Albertson  
Teresa Barrett  
Mike Harris  
Mike Healy  
Gabe Kearney  
Tiffany Renée  
Councilmembers

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SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA,  
COUNTY OF SONOMA  
BY *[Signature]* DEPUTY CLERK

September 12, 2011

The Honorable Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge  
Superior Court, State of California  
County of Sonoma Hall of Justice  
600 Administrative Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Foreperson  
Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 5109  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

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RE: Grand Jury Final Report – Responses and Recommendations

Dear Judge Nadler:

The City of Petaluma is pleased to provide responses to findings and recommendations for the 2010-2011 Grand Jury Final Report, formatted in accordance with Penal Code Section 933. Responses are provided on the Grand Jury Report Form, copies of which are attached.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Grand Jury's report. If you have additional questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,

*[Signature of David Glass]*

David Glass  
Mayor

*[Signature of John C. Brown]*

John C. Brown  
City Manager

cc: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors  
Sonoma County Clerk  
Petaluma City Clerk  
Petaluma City Council  
Sonoma County Cities



## Response to Grand Jury Report Form

**Report Title:** Petaluma Potholes

**Report Date:** September 12, 2011

**Response by:** David Glass Title: Mayor and  
John C. Brown Title: City Manager

### RECOMMENDATIONS

*R1 The new departmental reorganization should result in improved cooperation between those employees responsible for repair of infrastructure buried in the streets and those responsible for the surface condition of the streets.*

**Petaluma's Response:** Recommendation R1 has been implemented.

One of the anticipated benefits of the Public Works/Water Resources consolidation is improved communication and coordination within all program areas, including operations and maintenance. The consolidation should result in clearer reporting structures, increased communication amongst personnel and the sharing of resources to more effectively accomplish operations and maintenance activities.

*R2 Cross training of Public Works and Utilities Department employees should be a major goal within the new combined administrative structure. The result should improve both service and efficiency.*

**Petaluma's Response:** Recommendation R2 has been implemented.

Cross-training of employees is another anticipated benefit of the Public Works/Water Resources consolidation. It should be understood that the technical nature of some positions, including associated certifications or licensure, may limit the cost effectiveness and/or practicality of wide-spread cross training. Cross training, however, is a goal, where it can be accomplished and has begun. The City Council recently equalized the pay structure between Parks Maintenance and Street Maintenance Workers. Immediately, this allowed the transfer of three Parks Workers into vacant Street positions, to reduce costs to the General Fund without corresponding loss of employees, and to provide much-needed staffing to the Streets Maintenance function. It is a longer term goal to align the pay structures and realign duties to allow for movement across these functions and in Water and Wastewater maintenance as opportunity and need arise. As indicated, the City is in the early stages of reorganization, and is currently recruiting a new director to lead the combined Public Works and Utilities Department. A priority for the new director will be to identify efficiencies within the new department that include further consolidation of functions, and more efficient and flexible use of existing staff.

R3 *Budget priorities should be set that provide the necessary funding to maintain the current minimal level of maintenance, and to prevent further degradation of infrastructure.*

**Petaluma's Response:** Recommendation R3 has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

Recommendation R3 may not realistically be achievable given current forecasts of future General Fund revenues and expenditures. Based on the 2009 City of Petaluma Pavement Condition Report it is estimated that the City needs to spend approximately \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000 per year just in order to maintain the current pavement condition. Improving pavement condition will cost even more. Given the economic challenges facing the Nation, the State, the County and particularly this City, it is highly unlikely this recommendation can be met within the next five years.. Over the past two years, unfortunately, it has been necessary for the City's budget to move in the opposite direction: certain expenditures that had traditionally been General Fund responsibilities have been shifted to the Street Maintenance fund, further reducing funding for pavement management responsibilities. These shifted expenditures include (1) street lights (about \$300,000 per year); (2) assigning additional percentage allocations of a Public Works Engineer, Traffic Signal technician, Operations Manager, and Office Assistant to the fund based on services to be performed (\$168,000) and (3) street median landscaping irrigation costs (\$40,000 per year). The City Council looks forward to the time when it can reverse these actions once a number of currently approved, and projects anticipated to soon be approved for development, come on line. However, this would still leave street maintenance far short of what is needed. Moreover, the current General Fund budget funds certain essential activities at unsustainably low levels. For instance, there is zero funding in the current budget for vehicle replacement. This is not a sustainable position: one fire engine and one ambulance are already two years beyond optimal replacement age. The City believes that once projected additional retail comes online in 2013, that will be the appropriate time to reassess realistic long-term funding possibilities and present funding options to the community for its consideration. Nonetheless, and in the meanwhile, the City recognizes the need to prioritize pavement maintenance and management, and will apply available resources toward a sound and focused pavement maintenance program. Please see Attachment 1 for the pavement projects completed or anticipated 2009-2012.

R4 *Future funding sources need to be found to acquire restoration, replacement and/or upgrading revenue.*

**Petaluma's Response:** Recommendation R4 has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.

City staff aggressively seeks any grants that provide improvement to City facilities and particularly funding that is pavement related. Over the course of the last couple years the City has generated \$5.6 million in grant funding specifically for pavement related projects, and has relied primarily on the Surface Transportation Program and Congestion Management & Air Quality Program (STP/CMAQ). Please see Attachment 1 for the typical funding sources for paving projects, noting that ARRA (America Recovery and Reinvestment Act "Stimulus") should be considered a one-time funding source. As noted in the illustration below, funds have been used for major rehabilitation or reconstruction projects on arterials and major collectors. In FY 2010-2011, \$375,000 was set aside to be used to pay for the local match portion which is required for most federal and state grants.

The funding that was not used for grant match was reprogrammed to fund a slurry seal project. \$500,000 is budgeted for match in 2011-12. Again, it is anticipated that any portion of this funding that is not needed for match will be used for an overlay project in 2012. This increased level of funding is expected to be supported by increases in the franchise fees charged to waste haulers. A portion of the franchise fee is intended to compensate the public for the deterioration to city streets caused by these haulers. The City is continually analyzing this fee to assure its sufficiency relative to the impact of such haulers on City streets. In addition to pursuing outside funding the City could reexamine the prospect of a voter approved tax or assessment that could be used to provide a dedicated and stable source of funding for much needed roadway improvements. While such an effort was defeated by a 2 to 1 margin in 2003, a successful campaign could go a long way toward funding necessary maintenance and repairs.

In addition to enhancing communication, creating a more efficient organizational structure and identifying funding sources of sufficient capacity to support the maintenance needs required of an aging infrastructure, it is important to understand other, less manageable factors contribute to the degradation of paved roadways in Petaluma.

As is often the case with older communities, the roadway structural section was not designed for current vehicular loads. In such cases, roadway failures are due to inadequate pavement thickness and/or base layers, and would optimally require full reconstruction to bring such a street back to a condition that would provide decades of useful life and minimize for several years any need to perform substantive maintenance on it. Street reconstructions typically entail removal of the entire asphalt section and often portions of the engineered base material.

As well, much of Petaluma is built on adobe soil, which expands in the winter, contracts in the summer, and provides a less stable foundation for road base than other soil types. The typical solution to building better roads on adobe soils is deeper excavation, and deeper road base, both of which increase the cost of a reconstruction project.

Taking these two factors into account, the cost of reconstructing a street may be as costly or moreso than installing a street where none has been before. Reconstruction is also more disruptive to homes and businesses located in such areas. Accordingly, to stretch limited funding as far as possible, and to limit disruption to neighbors, effort is made to treat the deteriorating roadways with some lesser rehabilitation, which does not provide the same pavement life.

Pavement maintenance activities (rather than Capital Improvement Projects) can typically be separated into two categories: preventative maintenance, and corrective maintenance. Preventative maintenance, such as crack sealing and seal coats, are used on a regular basis to maintain pavement in a good condition and to seal the surface to prevent water intrusion. Such maintenance serves to extend the life of the surface at a relatively low cost. Corrective maintenance is used to remedy a pavement distress and includes patching, localized repairs, and thin overlays. Such an approach provides timely mitigation of problems, and can, but doesn't always increase the useful life of the surface.

Pavement maintenance is a critical part of an overall pavement management strategy. Ideally, the City would be able to fund an ongoing program that combines regular preventative maintenance with pavement rehabilitation and reconstruction to continually

improve the City's pavement condition to a level that minimizes maintenance costs in the future. As indicated in the foregoing response, the City's resources are inadequate for this approach, thus the Public Works department attempts to conduct a maintenance program that seeks to expend limited resources on a combination of good streets, to keep them in better repair, and on worse streets that have not yet failed and which can be addressed by something less than a reconstruction. Unfortunately, due to the conditions of our streets, patching and repairs are frequently reactive activities, rather than proactive ones, and are often based on citizen complaints rather than on an established maintenance schedule. These activities usually occur on streets that are already in poor condition and provide only short term improvement. While temporary repairs may satisfy an immediate need, which is important to the satisfaction of our residents, they do little to improve the overall condition or life expectancy of such streets. Expending what is already inadequate funding on temporary repairs is necessary to avoid complete failure of some portions of our road system, but reduces resources and impairs our ability to complete full rehabilitation of street sections.

Regardless of the cause, the problem today is inadequate funding to maintain the current pavement condition, much less make significant improvements. What is being done is an effort to better inform the community and decision makers of proper pavement management strategies, and adjustments that serve to better organize the maintenance program to make the most efficient and cost effective use of all available resources.

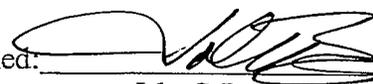
**ATTACHMENT 1**

ROADWORK PROJECTS COMPLETED OR PLANNED IN THE LAST TWO YEARS						
Project	FY Constructed	Grant/Bond Funded (Y/N)	Grant/Bond Type	Grant/Bond Amount	City Match	Total Project
Washington and Sixth Street Rehabilitation	09-10	Y	CMAQ	\$ 957,000	\$ 986,175	\$ 1,943,175
Crinella Drive Reconstruction	09-10 & 10-11	Y	Prop 1B	\$ 1,132,202	\$ 46,000	\$ 1,178,202
Mcdowell Boulevard North Rehabilitation	09-10	Y	ARRA	\$ 728,000	\$ 86,000	\$ 814,000
Ely Road and Sunnyslope Avenue Reconstruction	09-10	Y	ARRA	\$ 614,000	\$ 51,188	\$ 665,188
Slurry Seal - 27 Streets	10-11	Y	Prop 1B	\$ 292,046	\$ 67,954	\$ 360,000
Petaluma Boulevard South Road Diet - Surface Treatment	11-12	Y	TLC/Prop 1B	\$ 877,400	\$ 28,839	\$ 906,239
Sonoma Mountain Parkway	11-12	Y	CMAQ	\$ 1,036,000	\$ 162,310	\$ 1,198,310
<b>TOTALS</b>				<b>\$ 5,636,648</b>	<b>\$ 1,428,466</b>	<b>\$ 7,065,114</b>

Date: 9-14-11

Signed:   
David Glass, Mayor

Date: 9-13-11

Signed:   
John C. Brown, City Manager