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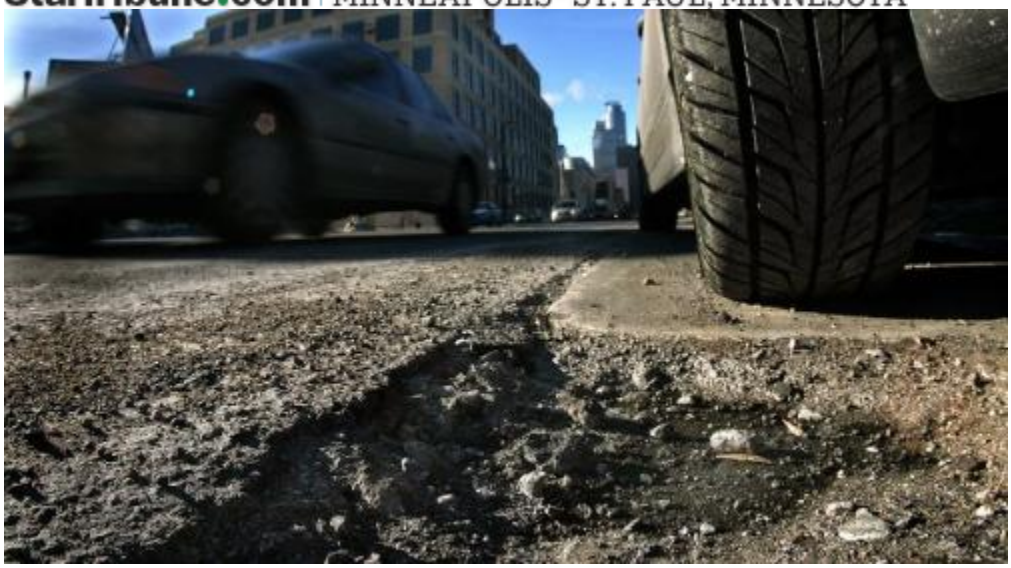

Jim Gehrz, Star Tribune - Potholes are abundant in downtown Minneapolis

Minneapolis OKs more spending on its 'pothole problem'

Minneapolis taps rainy day fund, saying: "Now, it's pouring." -By **PAUL WALSH**, Star Tribune Last update: April 1, 2011 - 10:34 PM

Up to $1 million will be available to accelerate pothole repair on many of Minneapolis' craggy streets.

The City Council's vote to approve the extra money Friday means crews should be patting down permanent asphalt patches as soon as Tuesday. Thoroughfares will come first, then side streets.

In announcing the funding, the city pinned the "significant pothole problem" on the harsh winter that is pretty much in the rearview mirror of Minneapolis' jostled motorists.

"We all drive the same streets that our constituents drive," said Council Member Betsy Hodges, who proposed the funding increase.

This is the second consecutive year that the city has bolstered its patching crews in response to driver complaints about potholes. The number of crews on crater patrol will double from four to eight.

Nearly half of the funding is coming from money left over from the city's 2010 budget. The rest will come from the accelerated five-year program to make more permanent repairs to city streets by repaving them.

The money comes from a "rainy day fund," Hodges said. "Now, it's pouring."

To report a pothole for repairs, call 311, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Reports can also be made online at www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/311.

The Public Works Department uses reports from the public, as well as staff observations in the field, to prioritize repair needs.

Katherine Lymn, a University of Minnesota student on assignment for the Star Tribune, contributed to this report. Paul Walsh • 612-673-4482

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