

AUDIT REPORT



CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
BUREAU OF MANAGEMENT AUDIT
WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR., COMPTROLLER

Follow-up Audit Report on the Performance of the Department of Transportation's Pothole Repair Program

MJ05-097F

June 6, 2005



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
1 CENTRE STREET
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007-2341

WILLIAM C. THOMPSON, JR.
COMPTROLLER

To the Citizens of the City of New York

Ladies and Gentlemen:

In accordance with the Comptroller's responsibilities contained in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter, my office has audited the Department of Transportation (DOT) to determine whether it has implemented the eight recommendations made in a previous audit of the performance of its pothole repair program. The Department of Transportation is responsible for providing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in the City and for maintaining and enhancing the City's transportation infrastructure. The results of our audit, which are presented in this report, have been discussed with DOT officials, and their comments have been considered in the preparation of this report.

Audits such as this provide a means of ensuring that City resources are used effectively, efficiently, and in the best interest of the public.

I trust that this report contains information that is of interest to you. If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact my audit bureau at 212-669-3747 or e-mail us at audit@comptroller.nyc.gov.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William C. Thompson, Jr.".

William C. Thompson, Jr.

WCT/fh

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*The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
Bureau of Management Audit*

**Follow-up Audit Report on the
Performance of the Department of
Transportation's Pothole Repair Program**

MJ05-097F

AUDIT REPORT IN BRIEF

This is a follow-up audit to determine whether the Department of Transportation (DOT) has implemented the eight recommendations made in a previous audit of DOT's pothole repair operations and corrected the conditions identified in that audit. DOT is responsible for providing for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in the City and for maintaining and enhancing the City's transportation infrastructure. All identified street defects (including potholes) are entered into the DOT computer system, Management Oriented Street Attribute Information Control Systems (MOSAICS). Pothole repairs are tracked on the Field Information Tracking System (FITS), a component of MOSAICS. For Fiscal Year 2004, DOT reported that it completed 54,011 pothole work orders and repaired 190,626 potholes. It also reported that 96 percent of the potholes were repaired within 30 days of notification.

Audit Findings and Conclusions

The previous audit made eight recommendations to DOT. Of the eight recommendations, four were implemented and four were partially implemented.

DOT has corrected most of the conditions identified in the previous audit. DOT has increased the percentage of pothole repair orders completed within 30 days and reduced the percentage of repair orders that remain open for long periods of time. DOT concentrates its pothole repair efforts during certain parts of the year, affecting its overall performance figures. We reviewed DOT's performance for an initial sample from May 2004 for this follow-up audit. From the May 2004 sample, we found that DOT completed 60 percent of the repair orders within 30 days, taking an average of 33 days to complete them all. This represents an improvement from 58 percent and 57 days on average, respectively, from the previous audit. However, DOT officials stated that the agency concentrates its pothole repair efforts during certain parts of the year (November through February), affecting its overall performance figures. Our review of DOT's performance for a second sample of repair orders, completed during the period of November 2004 through January 2005, substantiates DOT's statement. For that period, DOT completed 99 percent of the sample repair orders within 30 days, taking an average of only 3.4 days to complete them all.

DOT is also doing a better job of ensuring that completed repairs are recorded promptly on FITS. In that regard, all of the repairs observed by the auditors when accompanying the work crews were recorded on the gang sheets¹, and 95 percent of the repairs (including pick-ups²) sampled were recorded in FITS within one day, an improvement from the 70 percent recorded from the previous audit.

However, a number of operational weaknesses remain, although not as significant as were found in the previous audit. We still found instances in which crews were assigned to complete orders that were already completed. Of the 698 repair orders in our sample, 189 were assigned to work crews by their supervisors. (Of the remaining 509, 465 were pick-ups and 44 were unknown.) Of these 189 repair orders, 25 (13%) had already been closed and reported as repaired previously. This represents an improvement from the 34 percent identified in the previous audit. Of the 641 sampled orders (including pick-ups) for which the potholes were reportedly filled by crews, 19 (3%) had reportedly been completed by different crews on other days. This represents an improvement from the eight percent identified in the previous audit. Additionally, 12 percent of the repairs conducted during our observations of the work crews were entered in FITS incorrectly by data entry clerks.

Audit Recommendations

To address the issues that still exist, we recommend that DOT:

1. Ensure that the information entered on FITS from the gang sheets is accurate.
2. Ensure that completed repair orders are counted only once when reporting DOT's productivity in repairing potholes.

¹ Log used by the work crews to record work completed.

² Street defects identified by work crews and repaired during the course of their tours.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Department of Transportation is responsible for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in the City by maintaining and enhancing the City's transportation infrastructure. Street defects fall under various categories, including potholes. The DOT Roadway Repair and Maintenance (RRM) division is responsible for repairing street defects.

Potholes are generally reported in two ways: through calls received from the general public on the City's 311 system and by reports from DOT work crews.

Potholes and other street deficiencies (e.g., depressions) are entered by 311 or DOT personnel into DOT's computer system, the MOSAICS, which assigns a repair work order number. This information is tracked and reviewed by RRM on the FITS, a component of MOSAICS.

In Fiscal Year 2003, our office issued an audit report on DOT's pothole repair operations—*Audit Report on the Performance of the New York City Department of Transportation's Pothole Repair Program* (MJ02-119A, issued November 14, 2002)—that disclosed several weaknesses. That audit found that DOT had an informal standard for guiding its pothole repair operations and measuring its performance. This standard stipulated that 65 percent of repair orders would be completed within 30 days. However, the audit found that this standard was used only for reporting purposes in the Mayor's Management Report (MMR). Further, the 30 day time frame was chosen arbitrarily, and the standard did not account for the remaining 35 percent of repair orders and how long it took for them to be completed. That audit also found that DOT did not prioritize repair orders by age resulting in some pothole repair orders remaining open for years. DOT did not update its computer system, FITS, in a timely manner to ensure that all completed repairs are recorded promptly. As a result, during their observation of pothole repair work crews, the auditors identified 34 percent of previously completed repair orders being reassigned to crews for repair.

That audit made eight recommendations to DOT: the agency agreed to implement all but one recommendation. For that recommendation, which was to develop a useful time standard to guide its pothole repair operation, DOT responded that the 30-day standard that the agency called a "reporting standard" during the course of the audit was in fact their performance standard.

For Fiscal Year 2004, DOT reported that it received 54,015 pothole work orders and repaired 190,626 potholes. The agency also reported that it repaired 96 percent of potholes within 30 days of notification.

Objective

The objective of this audit was to determine whether DOT has implemented the eight recommendations made in New York City Comptroller's earlier report, *Audit Report on the Performance of the New York City Department of Transportation's Pothole Repair Program* (MJ02-119A, issued November 14, 2002), and corrected the conditions identified in that audit.

Scope and Methodology

We audited DOT pothole repair operations from May 2004 through February 2005 in order to determine whether DOT has implemented the previous eight recommendations.

For the purposes of this audit, the term "defect" will apply to the potholes or other street deficiencies associated with a repair order. A defect may consist of several potholes; however, the repair of the potholes falls under one repair order number.

To gain an understanding of the procedures for repairing potholes, we conducted walkthroughs of all five DOT Roadway Repair and Maintenance Units. We interviewed DOT personnel, including the borough directors, deputy directors, and supervisors. We also conducted interviews of the Director of Resource Management and the Executive Director of Technical Services. In addition, we accompanied work crew teams from each borough (one day for each borough for a total of five days) during the period November 2004–January 2005 in order to observe the actual repairs of the potholes and the documentation process.

To determine the changes made to DOT's computer system in implementing the recommendations made in the prior audit, we interviewed DOT Management Information System (MIS) personnel, including the assistant commissioner of the MIS department. We obtained program specifications written by MIS to enact the changes to the system.

To determine whether DOT improved its timeliness in completing pothole repair orders, we examined a sample of repair orders that were open as of May 22, 2004 and calculated the average response time for those orders. We selected a random sample of 118 defects from a list of 785 pothole repair orders that were open as of May 22, 2004 and calculated the average response time.

To assess the reliability of pothole information shown in FITS, we obtained the gang sheets of all pothole crews in all boroughs for the days we observed the crews over the November 2004–January 2005 period, as well as gang sheets for the day before and the day after we accompanied the crews. In total we obtained and reviewed gang sheets for 15 days of activity that covered all five boroughs. For the 15 days for which we received all gang sheets submitted by DOT work crews, there were 713 pothole repair orders handled by the crews. We reconciled the information entered into FITS to the information on the gang sheets to ascertain whether all defects listed on the gang sheets were entered into FITS along with the date, the time, the crew information, and the disposition of the defects. Of the 713 repair orders, DOT did not assign repair order numbers for 15 of them for which we were unable to review the histories and

calculate response times. For the remaining 698 orders, we calculated the average response time for these defects to determine whether there was a significant difference in performance level from the sample taken from May 2004.

* * * * *

This audit was conducted in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) and included tests of the records and other auditing procedures considered necessary. This audit was performed in accordance with the audit responsibilities of the Comptroller, as set forth in Chapter 5, § 93, of the New York City Charter.

Discussion of Audit Results

The matters covered in this report were discussed with DOT officials during and at the conclusion of this audit. A preliminary draft report was sent to DOT officials and was discussed at an exit conference on May 2, 2005. On May 4, 2005, we submitted a draft report to DOT officials with a request for comments. We received a written response from DOT on May 18, 2005. In its response, DOT agreed with the audit's findings and recommendations. DOT stated:

“We agree with your findings and concur that there has been significant progress made in the Department's pothole repair program. We also agree that there is room for improvement in the recording of this work.”

The full text of DOT's comments is included as an addendum to this report.

RESULTS OF FOLLOW-UP AUDIT

Previous Finding: “DOT Does Not Have a Useful Performance Standard for the Timely Completion of Pothole Repairs”

The previous audit found that DOT lacked a useful standard for measuring its performance related to the timely completion of pothole repairs. Therefore, DOT had no benchmark to guide its operations and to help ensure that all potholes are repaired in a timely manner, and that pothole repair orders did not remain open for lengthy periods of time.

We asked DOT to provide us with its guidelines regarding timeliness for pothole repairs, but officials told us that the agency did not have any such formal timeliness standard. Instead, officials said that DOT had an informal measure related to a 30-day criterion that was used only for reporting purposes in the MMR. For Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001, DOT’s goal as stated in the MMR, was to complete 65 percent of pothole repair orders within 30 days. DOT did not gear its operations to meet this MMR-reporting standard. We took a sample of 1,788 pothole repair orders and found that 1,774 were completed in 57 days on average (the remaining 14 were still open when the audit fieldwork ended).

Previous Recommendation #1: “DOT should establish an operational standard for completing all pothole repairs (not just the 65 percent covered by the current MMR-reporting standard) within a specific period of time and gear operations to meet that goal.”

Previous DOT Response: “The Department’s operational standard is to complete all pothole repairs within 30 days. The 65 percent is the performance measurement of repairs within 30 days of notification. The performance is a result of allocating resources between various operations that are seasonally affected. During January, February and March, resources are almost exclusively devoted to pothole repairs and expected and actual performance is much higher than the overall annual average. Conversely, during the other months, the same employees are primarily assigned to resurfacing operations and the performance on pothole repair is adversely affected while resurfacing goals are achieved.”

Current Status: IMPLEMENTED

As DOT officials stated in their response to the previous audit, the agency has a 30-day performance standard for completing pothole repair orders from date of notification. In addition, DOT reported this performance standard in the MMR; for Fiscal Year 2004, DOT reported that 96 percent of potholes were repaired within 30 days of notification.

* * * * *

Previous Finding:

“DOT Does Not Prioritize Outstanding Repair Orders by Age, Thus Increasing Risk of Accidents”

The previous audit found that DOT did not prioritize the repair of reported potholes based on their age. As a result, some pothole repair orders were allowed to remain open for years. By not prioritizing the repair of reported potholes by age, DOT increased the risk that personal injury or property damage may have occurred at some potholes because they were allowed to remain unrepaired for long periods of time.

Potholes were not repaired in the order in which the complaints were received. Although the majority of pothole repairs in our sample were open no more than 60 days—1,379 of the 1,788—a significant number of orders (409) were still open after 60 days, many of them (132) open for more than six months. The only borough that prioritized its repair orders by age was Queens, which also appeared to be the borough that was most effective in repairing potholes in a timely manner. The borough managers of the other four offices stated that they did not prioritize repair orders by age because they did not know how to manipulate FITS to do so.

Previous Recommendation #2: “DOT should prioritize pothole repair orders by age, when feasible.”

Previous DOT Response: “The pothole repair orders are generated based on several criteria, including location, age, and severity. Borough managers seek to maximize the productivity by grouping the orders geographically. Directors and Deputies have been reinstructed on how to establish priorities.”

Current Status: IMPLEMENTED

According to DOT officials, they prioritize pothole defects by safety and severity, then by location, and then by age. Also, each facility receives a daily aging report, which is generated from FITS by the director of the Queens Roadway Repair and Maintenance Unit. This report lists the open pothole defects in each borough by date order, which helps each borough to address and comply with its standard of 30 day criteria.

DOT has improved its timeliness in closing repair orders, an indication that DOT is doing a better job of prioritizing pothole repair orders by the date they were received (age). To determine DOT’s timeliness in closing orders, we took a random sample of 118 repair orders from a list of 785 orders that were open Citywide as of May 22, 2004. DOT closed out 60 percent of these orders within its 30-day standard; the average number of days that these orders were open was 33. The average response time of 33 days is a marked improvement over the 57 days calculated in the prior audit. However, DOT’s performance represented by our sample does not reflect the agency’s overall improvement in this area. According to DOT officials, the agency concentrates its efforts on pothole repairs during the months of November through February; during this period, the performance rating improves significantly. Our review of a sample of pothole repair orders that were completed during November 2004 through January 2005 substantiates DOT’s statement. Of the 698 sampled repair orders that crews closed out, 99 percent were completed within 30 days; the average number of days that these orders were open

was only 3.4 days. This represents a dramatic improvement of DOT's performance from what we found for our initial sample from May 2004.

Previous Recommendation #3: "DOT should provide additional training on FITS to personnel at the borough offices to ensure that they are proficient in its use, particularly in regard to prioritizing repair orders by age."

Previous DOT Response: "We agree and training has been provided to applicable personnel."

Current Status: IMPLEMENTED

As stated above, the director of each borough receives a daily aging report from the director of the Queens Roadway Repair and Maintenance Unit. Each director extracts and assigns the work from this listing. According to DOT officials, borough supervisors also have received additional training on FITS and prioritizing the work load, which is reflected in the improved timeliness figures.

* * * * *

Previous Finding: "FITS Is Not Updated in a Timely Manner to Reflect Work Completed"

The previous audit found that DOT staff members did not update FITS on a timely basis to ensure that all completed repairs were recorded. While accompanying work crews, we observed that some potholes assigned to crews had already been repaired when we arrived at the pothole sites. Of the 151 repair orders assigned to the crews, 51 (34%) of them had already been completed. Further, 38 (30%) of the 126 defects that we observed crews repairing (both assigned repair orders and pick-ups) were not recorded on FITS the next day.

By not updating FITS in a timely manner, crews were sent to make repairs that were already completed, an inefficient use of the crews.

Previous Recommendation #4: "DOT should ensure that work crews record all completed pothole repairs, including pick-ups, on their gang sheets."

Previous DOT Response: "We agree and crew supervisors have been retrained on how to complete gang sheets including how to properly account for all pothole repairs. The procedures will be formalized in a manual. Additionally, gang sheets are routinely reviewed to ensure compliance."

Current Status: IMPLEMENTED

During the period November 2004 through January 2005, we accompanied DOT work crews on five occasions in order to observe their daily procedure. We observed the supervisors'

process of assigning the daily work schedule, the crews’ process of repairing defects, the process of conducting defect pick-ups, and the process of recording the work done on the gang sheets. On those five occasions, we observed the work crews complete 84 pothole repair orders, encompassing 342 potholes. The 84 orders included 44 pick-ups. Our review of the gang sheets completed by the work crews indicated that all of the repairs were recorded.

Previous Recommendation #5: “Ensure that all completed pothole repairs are recorded in FITS at the end of each workday.”

Previous DOT Response: “The Department has ensured, by changing clerical shifts and assignments, that all pothole repair data will be entered in FITS either at the end of the work day or before assignments are given for the next day.”

Current Status: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

DOT did a better job of ensuring that completed work is entered in FITS in a timely manner; 95 percent of the information on the sampled repair orders completed during the period we accompanied the work crews was entered in FITS within one day. However, we found that there were problems with data entry, and supervisors do not reconcile the information entered into FITS by the data entry clerks to the information on the gang sheets.

We reconciled the information entered into FITS by data entry clerks with the gang sheet information for the 15 days mentioned earlier. For the 15 days for which we received all gang sheets submitted by DOT work crews, there were 713 pothole repair orders handled by crews. In reconciling the information entered by the clerks with the information recorded by the crew supervisors on their gang sheets, we identified 85 (12%) errors in data entry for the 713 pothole repair orders. These errors were grouped into five categories according to similarities. Table I below summarizes the problems identified.

Table I

Problems Identified in Entries with Sampled Repair Orders

Attribute	Number of Repair Orders in Our Sample With Problems	Percentage Of the 713 Repair Orders Sampled	Percentage Of Repair Orders In Sample With Problems
Not entered in FITS correctly, if at all	85	11.9%	100.0%
Breakdown of the problems associated with the 85 repair orders:			
○ Not entered at all	34	4.8%	40.0%
○ Incorrect quantity of potholes filled	27	3.8%	31.8%
○ Transposition errors	15	2.1%	17.6%
○ Incorrect disposition code	8	1.1%	9.4%
○ Other	1	0.1%	1.2%

* * * * *

Previous Finding: “Source for Productivity Figures Reported in the Mayor’s Management Report May Not Contain Reliable Data”

The previous audit found that some repairs appeared to be counted more than once in DOT’s pothole productivity figures, based on our review of the supporting documentation. The productivity figures are reported to the public in the MMR, and FITS is the source for the figures. According to information recorded in FITS and on work crews’ gang sheets, some repair orders were closed numerous times, possibly overstating productivity.

The previous audit found that supervisors did not ensure that repair orders remained open until the potholes were completely repaired or until some other type of permanent solution was made; FITS allowed additional data to be entered for orders that had already been closed; and supervisors reassigned closed repair orders, using the same order numbers. The audit also found that temporary measures taken by work crews were credited as completed repairs by DOT.

During our reconciliation of FITS data with source documents, we noticed several instances in which the same repair orders were reported to have been completed several times. Of the 374 orders that were closed during the days reviewed, 29 (8%) had been closed more than once. In one example, a repair order for potholes was reportedly completed by three different crews over a 38-day period; moreover, all of the repairs were recorded as temporary, based on the MST (“make safe temporarily”) action code used by the work crews. Nevertheless, for this order that consisted of 12 potholes, DOT took credit for repairing 36 potholes (based on three visits) during Fiscal Year 2001.

Previous Recommendation #6: “DOT should modify FITS so that personnel cannot enter additional data for closed repair orders.”

Previous DOT Response: “We agree and the MIS unit is currently modifying FITS to prevent people from entering data for a closed work order.”

Current Status: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

According to DOT officials, this problem had been addressed by modifying FITS so that a supervisory override would be needed to edit a closed repair order. We observed a DOT official demonstrate this safeguard. However, when we researched FITS to review the histories of the repair orders that work crews completed during our field observation, we found instances in which this safeguard was not in effect.

According to DOT officials, there are several action codes that can be used to close out a repair order in FITS. The most common include the following:

- XCL—filled pothole or other street deficiency
- DNF—did not find the street deficiency

- FRE—found restored; crew finds the street deficiency already repaired
- XCP—closed by capital project (e.g., entire street repaved)

Of the 84 pothole repair orders that were completed on the five days we accompanied the repair crews, three of them had been closed twice, according to FITS. In fact, we observed a data entry clerk close out a repair order with the XCL code that had been previously closed with the same code, according to its history recorded in FITS. Overall, according to the gang sheets for the 698 repair orders sampled, crews completed 641 of them; of these, the histories on FITS revealed that 19 (3%) had been closed more than once with the XCL action code, meaning that two crews reported that they filled the potholes associated with those orders.

We shared this information with DOT officials. The MIS Director stated that one possible cause of repair orders being closed more than once with the XCL action code is that the persons who are performing data entry at the yards are using a supervisory override authorization to allow them to close defects more than once. He agreed that a defect should not be closed more than once and stated that the situation would be investigated.

Previous Recommendation #7: “DOT should ensure that supervisors do not reassign a closed repair order to a crew unless adequate justification is provided and the order is reopened.”

Previous DOT Response: “We agree and supervisors will be so instructed.”

Current Status: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

In reconciling the crews’ gang sheets with the printouts of the defects from FITS, there were numerous instances in which the same defect numbers were being reassigned by supervisors to the crews. Of the 698 pothole repair orders listed on the sampled gang sheets that we reviewed, 189 were assigned to work crews. (For the remaining 509, 465 were pick-ups and 44 were unknown.) Of the 189 repair orders, 25 (13%) had been closed more than once with the XCL action code. This represents an improvement from the previous audit when we found that 51 (34%) of 151 completed repair orders were reassigned to work crews. However, room for improvement remains.

Previous Recommendation #8: “DOT should ensure that only completed repairs (not temporary repairs) are included in the repair-related productivity figures it submits to the Mayor’s Office of Operations for inclusion in the Mayor’s Management Report.”

Previous DOT Response: “We agree and temporary repairs are not included in the productivity statistics provided for the Mayor’s Management Report.”

Current Status: PARTIALLY IMPLEMENTED

According to DOT officials, the agency no longer makes temporary repairs and no longer uses the action code MST (made safe temporary) on their gang sheets. For the 698 pothole repair orders reviewed, we found no instances in which this code was used.

The purpose of reporting performance indicators in the MMR is to inform the citizenry about the services that a specific agency provides. DOT reports three line items for pothole work: (1) “pothole work orders” (the number of new repair orders opened during the reporting period), (2) “potholes repaired,” and (3) “potholes repaired within 30 days of notification.”

The source data for the figures in the MMR comes from FITS. To ascertain whether the productivity figures can be supported, we obtained a workload productivity report from FITS for our 15-day sample covering the period November 2004 through January 2005. (For each borough, our sample included the day we accompanied the work crew, as well as the day before and the day after.) We compared the information on this report with the information recorded on the gang sheets for those days. The results of our comparison are shown below.

Category	Recorded in FITS for the MMR	Recorded on Gang Sheets	Difference	%
Potholes filled	2,426	2,545	119	4.7%
Repair orders completed	744	737	(7)	(0.9%)

In reviewing the 744 completed repair orders recorded in FITS for the MMR, we found 22 orders that were closed more than once. Nevertheless, as shown in the chart, DOT appeared to underreport its productivity regarding filling potholes but slightly over-report its productivity regarding closing out repair orders. We were unable to determine whether these errors would be corrected before the figures were reported to the Mayor’s Office of Operations (Operations) for inclusion in the MMR, because DOT was unable to supply the supporting documentation (including daily reports and gang sheets) for the most recent submission to Operations. Nevertheless, DOT should modify its system, or put appropriate checks in place to prevent double-counting or under-reporting of work completed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the issues that still exist, we recommend that DOT:

1. Ensure that the information entered on FITS from the gang sheets is accurate.

DOT Response: “We agree. The report indicated several categories of data entry errors which contributed to the overall error rate of the sample. Some errors can be expected, particularly when capturing the volume and type of data our pothole repair program entails in any given year. The report indicates the largest contributor to the overall error rate was work not captured at all, followed by various transcription errors. As a result, DOT will institute a check-off system to review work for completeness of entry to more fully capture our performance.”

2. Ensure that completed repair orders are counted only once when reporting DOT's productivity in repairing potholes.

DOT Response: "DOT compiles its data on a monthly basis, relying on pre-established reports written for our mainframe data system. The monthly figures are cumulatively combined annually. We will strive to further increase the accuracy of the reports and the statistical data. To do so, we will continue to modify our mainframe database, the Field Information Tracking System (FITS), to further prevent the unauthorized modification of completed work orders."



**New York City
Department of Transportation**

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Iris Weinshall, Commissioner

May 18, 2005

Mr. Greg Brooks
Deputy Comptroller
Policy, Audits, Accountancy & Contracts
The City of New York
Office of the Comptroller
1 Centre Street Rm 530
New York, NY 10007-2341

Re: MJ05-097F

Dear Mr. Brooks:

This is in response to your draft "Follow-up Audit Report on the Performance of the New York City Department of Transportation's Pothole Repair Program".

We agree with your findings and concur that there has been significant progress made in the Department's pothole repair program. We also agree that there is room for improvement in the recording of this work. As such, we are implementing several measures to improve data entry and modifying the mainframe database controls.

The following are the recommendations included in the report and our comments:

- 1.) "Ensure that the information entered on FITS from the gang sheets is accurate."

We agree. The report indicated several categories of data entry errors which contributed to the overall error rate of the sample. Some errors can be expected, particularly when capturing the volume and type of data our pothole repair program entails in any given year. The report indicates the largest contributor to the overall error rate was work not captured at all, followed by various transcription errors. As a result, DOT will institute a check-off system to review work for completeness of entry to more fully capture our performance.

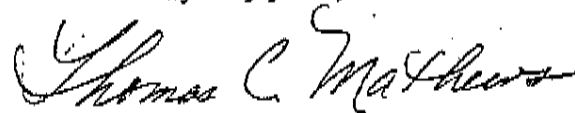
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2.) "Ensure that only completed repairs are counted only once when reporting DOT's productivity in repairing potholes."

DOT compiles its data on a monthly basis, relying on pre-established reports written for our mainframe data system. The monthly figures are cumulatively combined annually. We will strive to further increase the accuracy of the reports and the statistical data. To do so, we will continue to modify our mainframe database system, the Field Information Tracking System (FITS), to further prevent the unauthorized modification of completed work orders.

If you have any questions concerning this response, I can be reached at (212) 788-8162.

Very truly yours,



Thomas C. Mathews
Auditor General

cc: Commissioner Iris Weinshall
F/D/C Judith Bergtraum
D/C Joseph Cannisi
George Davis (MOO)