

Statement of Ald. Ashanti Hamilton September 2, 2008

An investigative article published by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* on Sunday (August 31) showed evidence of a disturbing discrepancy in the city's response to pothole patching requests. Using city records – including database info that tracks when a repair request is made and when the repair is actually made – the newspaper was able to detail how potholes in predominantly African American Milwaukee neighborhoods are repaired at a slower rate than those in other parts of the city where whites typically live. In some cases, the article showed that largely white areas of the city had four-day response times while repairs in some African American neighborhoods took 14 days.

On the issue of a possible discrepancy in the city's response to pothole repairs, Ald. Bob Bauman, chair of the Public Works Committee, has asked the Department of Public Works to have representatives appear before the committee on Thursday (Sept. 4) to answer questions about the discrepancy. However, I believe the apparent discrepancy outlined in the article calls into question our priorities and whether or not every section of the city has the same priority or importance with our departments.

This inquiry has caught my full attention and has led me to believe that there's a strong possibility that there may be other similar service discrepancies in other areas of city services involving other city departments. For that reason I will be engaging in fact finding and in discussions internally with the possibility that I may request a formal audit and review of response times across a wide array of city services. As always I will base my decision on the facts and the evidence and information I receive in the coming days.

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