

Providence Announces “Adopt-a-Pothole” Program



Pothole ready for adoption outside Providence Animal Rescue League.
(Photo: Michael Bilow)

Providence considered a number of solutions to its scourge of potholes.

According to Mayor Jorge Elorza, rejected proposals included filling several million potholes with helium and releasing them to the winds, but when Cleveland tried something similar, damages had to be paid for an injured horse and a wrongful death. The Oregon Highway Department recommended that using a half-ton of explosives to blow potholes to tiny bits was unlikely to succeed. Extending the city's network of swimming pools using potholes did not seem to translate well from Ireland. The educational short film market exploring the natural history of potholes was already cornered by the West Virginia Department of Transportation.



Entire family of potholes in a makeshift camp at the corner of Hospital St and Elm St, near the Providence Animal Rescue League

(Photo: Michael Bilow)

Ultimately, the mayor said, he looked to history as he often does when facing challenging problems of governance, asking himself “What would Buddy Cianci do?” Was he taking inspiration from when Edward “Buckles” Melise of the Department of Public Works diverted thousands of tons of city-owned asphalt, worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, to mobster Frank “Bobo” Marrapese’s paving company, accepting kickbacks at Marrapese’s Acorn Social Club on Federal Hill (where Marrapese killed rival mobster Richard “Dickie” Callei by shooting him five times in the back and then stabbing the corpse?) “No, no, we don’t do that anymore,” Mayor Elorza said. “Besides, Buckles was unavailable.”



Feral pothole on Hospital St outside Providence Animal Rescue League headquarters
(Photo: Michael Bilow)

Trinity Rep, which recently announced a forthcoming stage version of the book by Mike Stanton, *The Prince of Providence: The Life and Times of Buddy Cianci, America's Most Notorious Mayor, Some Wiseguys, and the Feds*, was reported to be considering ticket discounts for patrons who donated a large bag of asphalt to feed hungry potholes.



John F. Bunnedy
(Photo: PARL)

In an unprecedented move, the city announced a partnership with the Providence Animal Rescue League (PARL) in an innovative Adopt-a-Pothole program. “We were appalled to see feral potholes right outside our headquarters along Hospital Street,” said executive director John F. Bunnedy, a male Himalayan rabbit who has been house-trained and neutered.



Powder Puff
(Photo: PARL)

Although usually focusing on more conventional pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, and rats, the pothole program was just too close to home to ignore. “It really broke our hearts, not to mention our suspension and steering mechanisms, that there were unloved vast, yawning chasms just outside our windows,” said staff member Powder Puff, a female pit bull terrier mix whose vaccinations are up to date, is spayed, and is good with children, but is undergoing treatment for heartworm.



Pooh Bear
(Photo: PARL)

"I almost fell into one the other day! I would never have been able to climb out, and it's totally a myth that I have nine lives," said volunteer Pooh Bear, an elderly male tabby whose vaccinations are up to date, is neutered, but has special needs including a urinary health diet.



Princess and Peach
(Photo: PARL)

"Providence has always taken good care of us," said Princess and Peach, a same-sex female rat couple. They, too, miss "Buckles" Melise who spent city money to buy tons of rat poison by the truckload but never seemed to use it effectively, allowing the rat population to increase and thrive. "We never figured out what he did with the stuff, but it worked out for us," they waxed nostalgically.



Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza (5th from left) demonstrates proper spaying and neutering technique using giant ceremonial scissors, accompanied by former school superintendent Dr. Susan Lusi (6th from left) and URI professor Dr. Albert Kausch (2nd from left), both of whose doctorates have absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with veterinary medicine.
(Photo: Providence School Department)

Outreach workers will be criss-crossing city roadways looking to prevent the pothole population from getting any worse. "It's essential that as many potholes as possible be spayed or neutered to stop them

from reproducing and swamping city resources,” Mayor Elorza said. “Union firefighters have volunteered to put in extra hours without pay to perform this critical task, even though despite EMT certification they’re completely untrained in veterinary medicine, as long as they can go in groups of four at a time. They’re a lot nicer to me than the teachers, who want to cut off MY balls.”



Feral potholes awaiting adoption queued along Hospital St from Elm St, near the Providence Animal Rescue League
(Photo: Michael Bilow)

The Adopt-a-Pothole program will be accessible via telephone and the web as an extension of the city’s existing PVD311 system, currently useful to complain about pretty much anything including potholes, graffiti, trash and litter. The app can also be downloaded for Google Android and Apple iOS. After creating an account on the system, citizens can see hundreds of public reports, displayed in a choice of either map view or list view, classified as either “submitted,” “received,” “in progress,” or “completed,” and then receive personalized tracking notices as nothing is done by city government.



L-R: Former RI Gov. Lincoln Chafee, current RI Gov. Gina Raimondo, former Providence Mayor Angel Taveras, current Providence Mayor Jorge Elorza, and Brown University President Christina Paxson at the ceremonial opening of Providence’s new Adopt-a-Pothole project.
(Photo: Mike Cohea, Brown University)

Governor **Gina Raimondo** found one pothole at the shelter that made a particular impression on her: “It was so cute, like staring into a bottomless abyss.” She planned to name it “Uhip” and take it home to

remind herself of the state economic situation.

At the opening ceremony, one particular pothole took a shine to the mayor after snagging a tire on his official SUV. Said the pothole, "I will hug him and kiss him and squeeze him and call him Jorge."