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***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

BREWER TALKS POTHOLES COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER REPORTS ON THE WEST SIDE STREET DAMAGE SURVEY

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Tuesday, July 26, 2011 – Today, Council Member Gale A. Brewer released her 2011 Street Damage Survey outside of her District Office, located at 563 Columbus Avenue at West 87 Street, Manhattan.

In a recent study by The Road Information Program (TRIP), New York City roads were found to be the seventh worst among U.S. metropolitan areas. It has been estimated that the poor condition of many of New York City's roads causes drivers to spend six hundred dollars a year in automobile maintenance. In addition, potholes and cracked streets in crosswalks can be difficult impediments to cyclists, pedestrians and particularly people with disabilities as they navigate the neighborhood.

At the June 2, 2011 New York City Council Executive joint Budget Hearing with the Committees on Transportation and Finance, the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) presented the Council with information that cited the upper West Side as one of the areas with the highest number of pothole complaints in all of Manhattan. DOT Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan testified that while DOT is filling 27 percent more potholes than in 2010, the overall number of reported complaints has increased due to consecutive harsh winters and the need to split work crews between pothole repair and street repaving.

To determine the prevalence of road damage on the upper West Side of Manhattan, Brewer's office evaluated the current condition of recent district 311 pothole complaints and noted unreported potholes and street defects. During the second week in July, the Council Member's staff and interns combed each street in Brewer's Upper West Side and Clinton district to document potholes and street repairs that had been both reported through the 311 system and newly found. The 6th Council District runs from West 54 Street to West 96 Street, from the Hudson River to Central Park.

Of the 224 upper West Side street damage complaints reported to 311, it was concluded that 168 sites (about 75%) had been repaired within the two month window of May to July 2011, during which they were reported. Of this amount, three quarters were repaired by the Department of Transportation, and the rest were assigned to other agencies. This rate of repair is encouraging, and helps to ensure the safety of drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

However, 20% reported sites remain unrepaired, and slightly over 3% of “repaired” sites are already deteriorating (see “Repaired*” in Appendix A). The survey does not determine whether the deterioration is due to flawed materials or inadequate repair work. Overall, street damage was most common in intersections and near construction sites.

The survey also found 111 sites of street damage unreported to 311. Most were minor, but likely to grow worse without prompt repair.

“My office receives complaints about potholes from pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike. NYC DOT and DEP are doing a good job but there are more potholes on our streets than ever before,” said Council Member Brewer. “They start small and don't get attention until they grow into big problems that cost the city significant resources to repair. To be proactive, we conducted a survey of potholes and other street damage and are now releasing ‘The Street Damage Survey’.”

Council Member Brewer's Street Damage Survey is intended to raise awareness about the condition of our streets and sidewalks, and to show how their maintenance and citizen safety can be improved through better coordination.

1) The quality of work and materials used by private contractors needs to be closely monitored.

2) 311 reports need to be supplemented by survey work to ensure a high level of street maintenance.

3) The agencies and the New York City Council working together can improve street conditions, citizen safety and the quality of repairs.

The data collected will be given to the NYC Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection to assist in repairing the streets.

Brewer also jointly announced with the Department of Transportation that several streets, including West 60 Street between Broadway and Columbus Avenue and West 89 Street between Central Park and Columbus Avenue are scheduling for milling and repaving in August 2011. Residents of these blocks reached out to Council Member Brewer regarding the deteriorating street conditions and Brewer reached out to DOT requesting its assistance.