

City pours first batch of “poticrete” made from recycled toilets



Public works project engineer Freeman Anthony holds up the toilet seat that will be placed in the new section of sidewalk. The sidewalk is made from a special concrete mix dubbed poticrete because it's made from more than 400 recycled toilets. Isaac Bonnell | BBJ

by [Isaac Bonnell](#)

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Bellingham's newest stretch of sidewalk, located along Ellis Street near the Bellingham Food Bank, looks like any other sidewalk, but it's what's inside that makes it unique. The special concrete mix, dubbed "[poticrete](#)," is made from crushed toilets rather than aggregate rock.

Through the recent Green Communities project at the Bellingham Housing Authority, Dawson Construction salvaged more than 400 toilets that would otherwise end up in a landfill. Cowden Gravel and Ready Mix crushed them, and city of Bellingham engineers developed and tested Bellingham's own poticrete concrete mix.

The poticrete mix is just one of the experiments the city is doing to meet Green Road Certification Standards. Other parts of the road improvement project include sections of sidewalk made with 40 percent recycled concrete, porous pavers for parking, and small rain gardens.

“The bigger story is that we’re working on making this mandatory for public works projects — not just poticrete, but recycled crushed concrete,” said Freeman Anthony, public works project engineer. “We’ll give it a year to see how it behaves.”

Construction crews poured the poticrete Sept. 15 and the city will have an official opening ceremony Sept. 29. The new section of sidewalk will include an inlaid toilet seat that explains the unique poticrete mixture.

The next stage of the project is to work out a donation site where people can drop off pieces of concrete or old toilets to be crushed, Anthony said.

“About two hours after sending out the press release, I got a call from a guy who said ‘Hey, you want my toilet?’” he said.