

# Your World

News and commentary from the Lower Hudson and beyond

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## 'Green asphalt' put to the test

When I say "green asphalt," it makes me think of the story a college friend told me about his childhood neighbor in Danbury, Conn., who got so tired of the plant life around his rural home that he paved his entire yard and painted it the color (roughly) of grass.

These days, of course, "green" has a new meaning, and it's being tied to asphalt by the company Cold Mix Manufacturing of

Queens. The company has created GreenPatch, a new type of cold mix asphalt used for filling potholes and other patchwork that uses no diesel, kerosene or other solvents that are harmful to the environment, said Glenn Shapiro, head of business development for the company.



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Going Places Works, says they've bought 16 tons, about two truckloads, to test it. They started using it in November, making sure to apply it on well-traveled roads, like June and Bloomer roads in North Salem and North Broadway in White Plains. It seems to be working, he said.

At least three public works departments in our area are checking it out — Yonkers, Mount Vernon and Westchester County itself.

James Statini, superintendent of road maintenance for the county Department of Public

"I'd like to see it through a couple of freeze-thaw cycles," Statini said. "But so far, so good."

Representatives of the state Department of Transportation and for the Yonkers and Mount Vernon mayors said their road chiefs were aware of GreenPatch and are testing or monitoring its use to see if it would work.

When a new road or parking lot is set, or a major section replaced, the workers spread hot asphalt. But that asphalt hardens when it gets cold, Shapiro said. Asphalt used for patches needs something to keep it pliable until it's in place because by the time a truck drives around to several potholes, the material will cool off, Shapiro said. Many asphalt types use diesel or kerosene to keep it workable, but those substances can leach out into the ground. GreenPatch uses plant oil, Shapiro said. He didn't want to say exactly which plants — that would give up the secret to his product — but he said that if it leached into the ground, it would be similar to vegetable oil seeping out.

"Our solvents are derived from sustainable sources," Shapiro said. "The solvents themselves are biodegradable and nontoxic."

David Simpson, a spokesman for Yonkers Mayor Phil Amicone, said the Public Works Department bought a "very limited quantity" and planned to test it when the weather warms. A spokesman for Mount Vernon Mayor Clinton Young said the department has not used any yet. The spokesman, Brian Bochow, said Public Works Commissioner Terrence Horton, "is interested in looking into its benefits."

State DOT spokeswoman Sandra Jobson said the agency is testing the material. If it performs well enough, it will make a list of approved products that the agency's maintenance workers and contractors can use. Local road crews like those working for Yonkers and Westchester County don't have to wait for the state's decision, Jobson said. They can use the asphalt

Please see GOING PLACES, 2B

## Local departments of public works test new 'green asphalt'

GOING PLACES, from 1B

as long as it's not for projects that are paid for with federal funds, Jobson said.

While others try it, Shapiro said the company was confident in it. It was tested for two years before the company began selling it late last summer, he said.

"We know what its performance is," he said. His company's Web site describing GreenPatch and its benefits is [www.greenpatch.com](http://www.greenpatch.com).

A substance that makes for more environmentally friendly asphalt patches may sound like an incremental gain in the green movement. Environmental groups would love to see less asphalt, period, not because of what it contains but because rain won't soak through it. Instead, rains rush off the roads and parking lots and oth-

er hard surfaces, washing pollutants toward local rivers or Long Island Sound.

But nobody's talking about getting rid of all the asphalt. So for that which we need, GreenPatch hopes to bring the benefit.

If it proves successful, it could become one part of the solution. Then, instead of a paved and painted yard, the idea of green asphalt would make me think of so many other advances that appear to bring us toward a greener future one step at a time. Think of the hybrid vehicles that run partially on electricity to ease the need for gasoline.

In fact, Mount Vernon, while looking perhaps casually at the green asphalt, is taking other steps with more gusto. Bochow said the latest is a plan to retrofit

garbage trucks and other city vehicles with electric motors that give the vehicles their initial push after they've come to a stop. That avoids the need to rev the engine with the initial burst of force that is responsible for more than its share of the emissions. The gasoline power would take over once the vehicle is in motion, when it needs relatively little umph to keep it going.

Add that to the other developments — the two hydrogen-fueled Equinox SUVs that White Plains uses as city vehicles, the Westchester County Airport vehicles that run on electricity and the Mamaroneck town garbage truck that run on used, filtered vegetable oil.

In the future, expect more cars using more energy that comes

from sources other than gasoline.

Will they be driving over patches of asphalt that are gentler on the environment? Like so much else in the green trend, we'll have to wait and see.

"Going Places" runs Mondays.

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