

PUBLIC WORKS ACCREDITATION REPORT 2016

As part of our continuous assessment and improvement process, the Public Works Department participates in a management audit every four years through the American Public Works Association (APWA). APWA developed this audit program to accredit public works departments. The purpose of accreditation is to promote excellence in operations and management. Schools, hospitals and other institutions have long enjoyed the opportunity to become accredited, yet until the 1990's, there has been no program accrediting a public works department.

Accreditation is a mark of professionalism that indicates a commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of public works operations and services to the community. Accreditation is recognition that a department's policies, procedures and practices have been evaluated against nationally recognized management practices, and meet or exceed the established standard.

Currently there are 114 APWA accredited agencies in the United States and Canada. Contra Costa is one of only five accredited counties in California.

The accreditation program has five phases: application, self assessment, improvement, evaluation, and accreditation. A department seeking accreditation is given three years from the date of application to become accredited.

Once the department believes it has complied with all applicable practices, an APWA evaluation team conducts a site visit to confirm compliance. The site visit involves documentation review, staff interviews and facility tours to evaluate the level of compliance.

The evaluation team reports its findings to the APWA Accreditation Council. Once the Council approved the department's accreditation, the department is accredited for four years, after which the department will need to seek and achieve re-accreditation to maintain status.

The Public Works Department received the Certificate of Accreditation in July 2001 and was Re-Accredited in 2004, 2008 and 2012. We continue to review and improve our work processes and are now re-evaluated for Accreditation on a four-year cycle. Our Re-Accreditation site visit is scheduled for October 3-5, 2016.

This re-accreditation marks the full merge of the traditional Public Works and General Services Departments. As part of this re-accreditation process the Department reviewed all practices, policies, and procedures, removing redundancies and combining documentation creating a more cohesive department and a better understanding of individual divisions.

In addition to the Public Works Department, the Flood Control and Water Conservation District (District) has applied for independent Accreditation. The District has gone through the same process of self-evaluation and will be evaluated as an independent entity by the APWA in October.