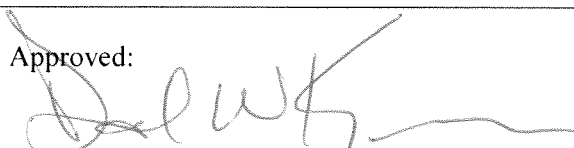


<b>Subject: CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT</b>	Departmental Policy No. 1-35	
	Effective: <b>Upon Approval</b>	
<p><b>I. Purpose</b></p> <p>To improve organizational performance within department, operations, maintenance, planning, design, construction, regulatory, administrative and financial functions.</p> <p>To establish a methodology to identify, analyze, improve, test and document changes to department processes; to periodically review existing processes; to determine need for new processes that currently do not exist; and to foster the practice of reducing any new process to writing. The methodology also includes verification that current processes, procedures, policies, plans and programs as documented are disseminated, implemented and practiced consistently within the department.</p> <p>To leverage the Department's implementation of the American Public Works Association (APWA) Management Practices and the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) Criteria for Performance Excellence (Baldrige) as a structure and doctrine for comprehensive and continuous performance improvement.</p> <p>To further integrate the APWA Management Practices and NIST (Baldrige) Criteria for Performance Excellence into the culture of the department.</p> <p><b>II. Scope</b></p> <p>This policy applies to all Department of Public Works and Engineering (PWE) employees and supersedes any other former Departmental policy, procedure or directive.</p> <p><b>III. Definitions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Process – systematic series of actions promulgated and directed to some end including what needs to be done, which roles are involved and resources needed to accomplish the actions.</li><li>b. Practice – method used to carry out a policy or procedure and provides proof that the policy or procedure has been followed; how we routinely accomplish functions.</li><li>c. Management Practice—as defined by APWA in current manual edition. APWA Management Practices are a comprehensive listing of functions for which the Department is responsible.</li></ul> <p><b>IV. Background</b></p> <p>Per 2012 Strategic Direction Objective #7, "Develop and improve department-wide process management" the Department has fulfilled the action plan by gaining Accreditation by the APWA Accreditation Council on June 15, 2013. As such, the department has documented</p>		
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full compliance with all management practices applicable to its operations. Re-Accreditation will take place in 2017 and every four years thereafter. A Mid-Term Report to the APWA is due by June 15, 2015.

Obtaining APWA Accreditation verified that the Department through its documentation was in compliance with recommended management practices. The process improvement effort will take the department to the next level to ensure over time that all processes are effective and efficient in providing direct or support services.

### V. Policy

It is the policy of the Department of Public Works and Engineering to continuously review, improve and document its processes to ensure it is providing the most effective and efficient service to the citizens of Houston.

### VI. Roles and Responsibilities

The following table lists those stakeholders who will be affected by this policy. It is essential that all stakeholders understand the goals of the policy and their role.

Stakeholder Name	Duties
Director	Catalyst for success through regular communication, direction and guidance to all stakeholders on value of process improvement.
Deputy Directors	Identify processes within division to be reviewed, identify team to analyze current process and make recommendations for improvement and to establish testing methodology. Communicate importance of this effort to staff and meet regularly with division Process Improvement Team to provide guidance and support. Ensure improvements are documented and forwarded to APWA Accreditation Managers.
Assistant Directors	Support division process improvement effort and identify additional processes within the branch to undergo process improvement, communicate value and results up and down chain of command and ensure change documentation is maintained and submitted.
Managers/Supervisors	Convey to senior level management employee recommended changes to processes; communicate importance of process improvement to staff and ensure implementation of new or revised processes. Document new processes in writing and submit to management for review and implementation.

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Employees	Communicate ideas for improvement to processes to supervisor. Review and implement existing processes as written.
Accreditation Managers	Oversee maintenance of documentation, implement communication plan, and meet regularly with Accreditation Team Members.
Accreditation Team Members	Monitor changes to processes, within division and submit change forms to Accreditation Managers
Team Administrative Assistant	Serve as centralized repository of Change Documentation Form to update applicable websites and written documentation upon receipt. Notify Accreditation Manager and Team member of completion. Communicate with Accreditation Team Members as necessary to accomplish duties

## VI Continuous Improvement Procedure

All Divisions and Branches will record all organizational processes within the Department Continuous Improvement system, available on the PWE intralan.

Each division shall take responsibility for managing its process improvement efforts in accordance with this procedure.

- a. Each division will identify two Management Practices for improvement annually. These practices must be related to one of the 8 Key Processes identified in the Performance Foundation and must be in substantial need of change, result in cost savings, or improve economies of scale. Cost to improve the practice must be supported by the division's annual budget.
- b. This process improvement effort will be tracked at the department and division level through periodic or established operational review meetings.
- c. Each branch within a division should identify other procedures, practices, plans or programs that should be reviewed for improvement.
- d. Each branch will implement the APWA management practices as described in compliance section and attached documentation. An assessment of the implementation of selected practices will be conducted by a team of employees.
- e. Each branch will document all new processes on a timely basis and submit the documentation in accordance with the change management procedures in this policy.
- f. Every written procedure, policy, plan, practice and program must be reviewed on a periodic basis of every three years or in accordance with the review timeline that is incorporated into the document. The approval level may vary by division as determined by the Deputy Director.

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Using the Plan, Do, Check, Act (PDCA) method for process improvement, follow these steps or a comparable variation thereof depending upon the process selected:

- a. Appoint a team of employees involved in the process as well as knowledgeable employees from other areas
- b. Identify references, standards, resources, inputs and outputs
- c. Review current process map or map practice
- d. Review/refine process title—must be verb-predicate syntax. (Inferred subject is the process owner or organizational element at-large)
- e. Analyze the process using the process map developed in previous step and determine the root cause:
  - i. Are the process tasks/steps clear
  - ii. Who is primarily responsible for each task/step? Who assists/contributes as applicable?
  - iii. What is the result of each task/step and the standards for that result?
  - iv. Where are the opportunities for improvement?
  - v. What is customer and staff feedback telling us?
  - vi. Do any of the steps create a bottleneck?
  - vii. Are their duplicative steps?
  - viii. Where can funds be saved?
  - ix. Where can quality be enhanced?
  - x. Which steps require most time or greatest chance for delay?
- f. Review, revise and/or redesign the process
  - i. Identify impact on other divisions, processes, customers
  - ii. Conduct risk analysis to identify potential threats or problems, identify methods to minimize, control or accept the risk
- g. Identify resources needed to implement new process and prepare a business case
- h. Develop performance measure(s)
- i. Implement new process as a pilot
- j. Review the process at end of pilot
- k. Communicate the change and implement new process
- l. Continuously monitor process and metric(s)
- m. Document status of Management Practices as follows:
  - i. Rating of practice by last external review
  - ii. Rating of practice at last internal assessment
  - iii. Rating as of current time period

In addition to implementing a new or revised process, each division will train all employees impacted by the new or changed process. Managers shall monitor implementation to ensure that the desired results are achieved.

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## **VII. Change Management Procedures**

For those processes that have been included in the APWA compliance documentation (hereinafter APWA process), the change control procedures are detailed in two documents which are incorporated herein by reference:

1. Change Management Flow Chart
2. Change Documentation Form

Each division shall take responsibility for change management within their division in accordance with this procedure. Every process must be reviewed on a periodic basis of every three years or in accordance with the review timeline that is incorporated into the document. The approval level may vary by division as determined by the Deputy Director.

Any approved changes to existing Management Practices will be documented in writing and submitted immediately by the appropriate Accreditation Team member to the Department Accreditation Managers using the Change Documentation Form.

All new and approved Management Practices will be submitted by the Accreditation Team member to the Department Accreditation Managers if applicable to one of the APWA management practices. Whether or not applicable to an APWA best practice, each division shall be responsible for the review and maintenance of the documentation of their processes, policies and procedures.

All process changes applicable to APWA best practices will be tracked on the Document Tracking spreadsheet.

In addition to implementing a new or revised process, each division will train all employees impacted by the new or changed process. Managers shall monitor implementation to ensure that the desired results are achieved.

Any changes to technology or division/branch responsibilities will be conveyed to the Department Accreditation Managers using the Change Documentation Form for recording and communication purposes.

## **VIII. Communication**

In order for management and employees to execute this policy, its scope, value and goals shall be communicated timely and effectively to all employees. Maintenance of up-to-date documentation of any change or new process and ensuring its availability to employees is a key component of process improvement.

Two way communications up and down the chain of command is critical to its success. On a quarterly basis, a status report will be:

- displayed on the department's digital signage and content management systems,

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- transmitted by broadcast email and
- included as an agenda item at staff and tailgate meetings

A primary method of communication will be between supervisor and employee. Supervisors will explain to and train employees on new or revised processes to ensure correct and consistent implementation.

Further, supervisors will consider all recommendations or suggestions made by employees, and communicate reciprocally with employees concerning such recommendations and their consideration/implementation.

New employees will be informed during New Employee Orientation of the availability of department and division processes on the Content Management System. Supervisors will reinforce this communication and encourage employees to review those best management practices applicable to their jobs.

Changes in division or branch responsibilities and major upgrades or changes to technology will also be communicated to all employees using the three methods listed above. In this way, all employees will remain informed of changes, the direction the department is taking and how it impacts their role.

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