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ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT OPERATIONAL INTERNAL AUDIT

August 11, 2026

AUDIT AUTHORIZATION

This operational departmental audit was authorized by the City Council on January 13, 2026. Fieldwork began on March 19, 2026, with the audit completed by forensic auditors Benjamin Meadow & Grant Conaway.

AUDIT PURPOSE

The purpose of this audit was to evaluate the Engineering Department's operational effectiveness, internal controls, administrative processes, and resource management. The audit was conducted to identify opportunities for improving efficiency, communication, accountability, and service delivery while assessing whether current practices adequately support the department's mission and responsibilities.

As part of the City's internal audit plan, this review provides an objective assessment of departmental operations and presents recommendations intended to strengthen organizational effectiveness and support continuous improvement.

AUDIT SCOPE

The audit included a review of departmental operations, administrative processes, fleet assets, facility operations, staffing considerations, purchasing practices, and selected financial controls. Multiple divisions within the Engineering Department were included in the review to obtain a comprehensive understanding of departmental functions and operational challenges.

The review focused on operational activities occurring during the audit period and included observations of day-to-day practices, documentation reviews, interviews with personnel, and physical verification of selected assets. Technical engineering design standards and project-specific engineering decisions were outside the scope of this audit unless they directly affected departmental operations or internal controls.

AUDIT PROCESS

The audit consisted of interviews, field observations, documentation reviews, and physical verification of departmental assets. Employees representing a broad range of positions and responsibilities participated in the review, including technicians, inspectors, supervisors, engineers, managers, and executive leadership.

Each interview focused on understanding departmental responsibilities, operational workflows, administrative processes, communication between divisions, and opportunities to improve efficiency. Information gathered during interviews was supplemented through on-site observations and reviews of available documentation to validate operational practices.

Site visits included inspections of departmental facilities, verification of fleet assets against inventory records, observations of physical security measures, and reviews of operational procedures. Collecting information from multiple sources allowed the audit team to identify recurring themes and evaluate how administrative processes support daily operations.

AUDIT ACTIVITY AND OBSERVATIONS

Department Operations

Overall, the audit found the Engineering Department to be staffed by knowledgeable employees committed to maintaining the City's infrastructure and providing quality public service. Employees across multiple divisions demonstrated a strong understanding of their responsibilities and expressed a commitment to improving departmental operations.

The audit identified generally positive observations regarding the department's operational direction following recent leadership changes. While improvements have been noted in several administrative areas, opportunities remain to strengthen internal communication, administrative consistency, and organizational support across the department.

Purchasing and Budget Administration

The audit identified opportunities to improve purchasing procedures and budget administration throughout the department. Current purchasing practices, while maintaining appropriate financial oversight, can occasionally delay the acquisition of equipment and materials necessary for daily operations.

The review also identified opportunities to improve communication regarding purchasing authority and budget allocations. Increasing transparency regarding available funding and standardizing purchasing procedures would allow supervisors to better plan operational needs while maintaining accountability for public resources.

Administrative Support Staffing

The Administrative Support Specialist II position was identified as an area warranting further evaluation. The position has experienced frequent turnover over the past several years, suggesting that the current structure, responsibilities, or classification may not adequately support long-term employee retention.

With the position becoming vacant once again, the department has an opportunity to review the role before recruitment begins. Evaluating the position's responsibilities, workload, reporting structure, and classification may improve retention, operational continuity, and administrative support throughout the department.

Facility Visit and Fleet Verification

A site visit was conducted at the department's recently occupied facility to verify fleet assets against departmental inventory records. Vehicles located on-site were inspected to confirm assigned fleet numbers, vehicle make and model and required equipment.

Although some vehicles listed on inventory records were not present during the inspection, reasonable explanations were provided, including active deployment to job sites, maintenance activities, and storage of specialized equipment at alternate locations due to size limitations.

Overall, fleet records appeared to be consistent with observed assets, and the department demonstrated appropriate accountability over fleet inventory.

Facility Security

The department's new facility provides a modern and functional work environment; however, several opportunities exist to strengthen physical security.

While badge readers control access to portions of the parking structure, observations indicated that unauthorized individuals could potentially access secured areas by following authorized personnel through controlled entrances. Additionally, the parking garage elevator currently provides unrestricted access to employee parking levels without requiring badge authentication.

Although no security incidents were observed during the audit, implementing additional access controls and enhanced monitoring would better protect City employees, fleet assets, and departmental equipment.

Traffic Operations

The Traffic Operations Division continues to face staffing challenges resulting from multiple vacant positions and increased competition from neighboring municipalities and private-sector employers.

The division is responsible for maintaining traffic signals, roadway signage, pavement markings, and responding to emergency infrastructure issues throughout the City. These responsibilities frequently require employees to work outside normal business hours and respond to emergency situations with limited notice.

Current staffing shortages increase workload demands on existing personnel and create challenges in maintaining service levels. Evaluating recruitment strategies, compensation competitiveness, and long-term staffing needs may improve employee retention and operational effectiveness.

Engineering Inspection

The audit also reviewed the Engineering Inspection function. This area demonstrated effective coordination, clearly defined responsibilities, and generally stable operations.

No significant operational concerns were identified during the review. Continued support through appropriate staffing, ongoing professional development, and access to necessary resources will help maintain the division's effectiveness as development activity and infrastructure needs continue to grow.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The audit did not identify significant concerns regarding financial accountability or asset management during the review. Fleet assets inspected generally aligned with departmental inventory records, and existing purchasing controls provide an appropriate level of oversight for departmental expenditures.

Opportunities for improvement were identified regarding purchasing efficiency and communication surrounding budget allocations. Standardizing purchasing procedures and improving communication between management and operational staff may reduce procurement delays while maintaining strong financial controls.

Continued monitoring of staffing costs, overtime expenditures, and operational resource allocation will help ensure that departmental resources are utilized efficiently while supporting the City's long-term financial objectives.

ENGINEERING INVOLVEMENT

The Engineering Department provides a wide range of services essential to the City's daily operations and long-term infrastructure planning. Responsibilities extend beyond traditional engineering functions and include traffic signal maintenance, roadway signage, pavement markings, construction inspection, fleet operations, infrastructure support, and emergency response activities.

Many divisions provide services that require immediate response regardless of the time of day, weather conditions, or unforeseen events. These responsibilities emphasize the importance of maintaining adequate staffing, reliable equipment, effective communication, and efficient administrative processes to ensure uninterrupted service to the public.

The audit demonstrated that departmental operations rely heavily on coordination between administrative staff, engineering personnel, inspectors, field technicians, and supervisory personnel. Continued investment in these operational areas will support the department's ability to meet current demands while preparing for future growth.

AUDIT SUMMARY

The Engineering Department performs a critical role in maintaining the City's infrastructure and supporting essential public services. Overall, the audit found dedicated employees, effective operational practices, and a strong commitment to serving the public.

The review also identified opportunities to improve purchasing procedures, administrative communication, staffing stability, recruitment efforts, physical security, and long-term organizational support. Addressing these areas will strengthen internal controls, improve operational efficiency, and enhance the department's ability to provide reliable services to the city.

The observations contained within this report are intended to support continuous improvement and provide management with practical recommendations that promote accountability, operational effectiveness, and responsible stewardship of public resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Evaluate and reinstate the Administrative Support Specialist II position** by reviewing its classification, responsibilities, workload, and reporting structure to

improve employee retention, operational continuity, and administrative support throughout the Engineering Department.

2. **Address staffing shortages within the Traffic Operations Division** by evaluating recruitment strategies, compensation competitiveness, and long-term workforce planning to improve employee retention, maintain service levels, and support emergency response capabilities.
3. **Improve purchasing and procurement processes** by delegating appropriate purchasing authority to Division Leads, enabling them to procure essential PPE equipment, and operational supplies in a timely manner for the employees they supervise. Providing Division Leads with designated purchasing cards and defined spending authority will reduce delays, improve responsiveness to operational needs, and strengthen the working relationship between supervisors and their teams by allowing leaders to directly address employee safety and resource requirements. Appropriate purchasing limits, approval requirements, and regular expenditure reviews will ensure fiscal accountability while maintaining effective checks and balances.
4. **Strengthening physical security at the Engineering Department facility** by evaluating badge access procedures, parking garage access controls, visitor management practices, and other measures that reduce the risk of unauthorized access to employees, fleet assets, and departmental equipment.
5. **Continue investing in organizational resilience** through ongoing workforce planning, professional development, cross-training, and regular evaluation of staffing levels and operational demands to support continuity of operations and the department's long-term effectiveness.

AUDITEE RESPONSE

1. Interviews are Friday for the position (it doesn't need to be reinstated) Going digital moving forward should lessen the load on the position especially with interaction with the public
2. Traffic Operations positions were re-classified during budget, and we are fully staffed except for one experienced signal technician.
3. We prefer one purchasing card for conformity. We do not delay the procurement of needed items.
4. This is a Sheriff's department and city issue not Engineering.
5.