

## **Department of Public Works**

### **Summary**

The Department of Public Works (DPW) is a massive enterprise integral to the quality of life in San Francisco. To some degree, its bureaus touch every citizen -- whether because of water and sewer services, streets and sidewalks, environmental health, or civic buildings and facilities. DPW has grown, changed, and reorganized constantly throughout its long history, often in response to emergency situations or political pressures rather than by any long-range management planning.

Although nearly every city department is, in some manner and at some time, a client of DPW, there is no coherent, standard policy in effect across all bureaus to monitor client relations and obtain the feedback necessary to maintain customer satisfaction. The individual parts of this enterprise seem, at times, to operate without a true centralized administration. The Civil Grand Jury realizes that a bureaucratic organization, because of its mission to serve all of the public equally, operates with different strategies than a private enterprise. There are, however, economies and efficiencies which could be gained by prudent reorganization.

### **Background**

DPW is responsible for the safe and clean operation and maintenance of city streets; safe and efficient operation and maintenance of the sewerage system; proper design, construction, and maintenance of city-owned facilities; and enforcement of applicable sections of the Municipal Code for street and sidewalk use. It is committed to compliance with environmental and other legal mandates. Its client base includes nearly all city departments. It has a budget of \$208,156,042 and approximately 1,647 budgeted staff (FY 1995-1996).

DPW is organized in the following manner:

#### **General Administration**

- Office of the Director
- Claims Investigation
- Environmental Health & Safety
- Financial Management &

#### **Engineering Bureaus**

- Office of the City Engineer
- Bureau of Architecture
- Bureau of Construction Management
- Bureau of Engineering
- Office of Capital Resources

#### **Operation Bureaus**

- Bureau of Building Repair
- Bureau of Street & Sewer Repair
- Bureau of Street Environmental Svcs
- Bureau of Water Pollution Control

#### **Public Services Bureaus**

Bureau of Environmental Regulation & Management  
Bureau of Street-Use and Mapping  
Bureau of Building Inspection (became a separate department 1/95)  
Findings and Recommendation

DPW is one of the City's largest departments and has overlapping areas of responsibility among its bureaus, which necessitates a great deal of coordination among staff within different bureaus. No internal structural changes were made as a result of the spin-off of the Bureau of Building Inspection in January 1995.

DPW needs to continue improving cost-effectiveness in providing services to its clients. The department has instituted steps to begin addressing client concerns regarding schedules and costs for the project design and the implementation processes. It has also instituted some policies and procedures to ensure quality products.

Recommendation

A management audit should be performed to evaluate the structure of DPW, with an emphasis on consolidating bureaus, reducing the number of upper management positions, effecting better coordination where required, and clarifying the areas of responsibility for each bureau. By doing this, DPW should be able to provide more cost-effective service and potentially reduce the indirect rate charged to its clients. Bureaus which provide services to city departments should maintain a customer satisfaction program and receive effective input regarding the services provided. This would provide bureau managers and staff with positive feedback when clients receive good service, and with suggestions for areas that may need improvement when they do not. It would also facilitate communication between clients and the DPW staff during the course of contracts.

Finding

The Bureau of Construction Management oversees the construction of projects. This bureau is responsible for ensuring that all construction projects, whether the work is done by city employees or by outside contractors, are completed in a timely manner, are consistent with technical plans and specifications, are within budget constrictions, and still mitigate public impacts. Many of the staff within this group are registered engineers.

Recommendation

The Bureau of Construction Management should have sufficient staff, with the requisite background, who are qualified to conduct the inspections required by the Department of Building Inspections (DBI). DBI could audit their work by conducting inspections on a limited subset of the inspections performed. This would allow the DBI to focus more of its time on servicing the private sector.

Finding

DPW has no formal process or criteria for evaluating contractor performance on contracts let by the city.

Recommendation

Performance standards for contractors on city projects should be established and a

formal review process instituted for each contractor and subcontractor. This information should be indexed by job type and by contractor. These records should be available to assist department staff in preparing future contracts and in pinpointing possible problem areas and functions to be watched during the construction and inspection process. It can also provide invaluable factual information in awarding contracts.

#### Finding

The Recreation and Park Department (R&PD) is required, under the city's Administrative Code, to obtain all design, engineering, and construction services from DPW. The R&PD's architectural staff was folded into DPW in a consolidation move several years ago without allowance being made for small jobs to be processed internally. Many of the projects undertaken by R&PD involve playground and neighborhood recreation facilities -- small contracts, standard and reused designs, maintenance, ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements, etc. R&PD needs to maximize the use of limited funds in order to meet its mission. In addition, there are instances where pro-bono design assistance is offered from interested professionals. DPW and R&PD have also discussed using combined design/construct contracts to streamline the implementation process and increase cost-effectiveness. The ability to move quickly and utilize internal staff on projects budgeted under \$50,000 would greatly enhance the replacement of the City's recreation infrastructure at an overall cost saving.

#### Recommendations

DPW and R&PD should work together to establish performance standards for projects under \$50,000. R&PD should be allowed to use outside contractors or their own staff to perform the design and/or construction of these projects.

The DPW and R&PD should work together and try innovative strategies which meet the needs of R&PD during FY 1996-1997. This should include at least one major project using a "design/ construct" contract.

Procedures or guidelines should be developed during FY 1996-1997 which allow R&PD to use the pro-bono design and/or construction services of interested, qualified professionals.

#### Finding

DPW does not maintain a centralized inventory of equipment purchased or leased. Some of its bureaus maintain a degree of inventory control, others do not. The nomenclature and format for recording inventory information is not standardized within DPW.

#### Recommendation

A standard for identification of all equipment owned or leased by DPW should be established, together with an inventory control by both bureau and department. This information should be computerized, updated regularly, audited annually, and available as a public record. It should include all major items of equipment and vehicles.

#### Finding

DPW uses a large number of motor vehicles. There does not appear to be consideration given to bulk purchases of such vehicles in order to obtain a fleet rate from providers. Purchasing appears to be conducted at random by each bureau.

Recommendation

Centralized purchasing of all equipment, including motor vehicles, should be instituted to avoid duplication, effect cost-savings, and ensure standardization. The bureaus should be directed to procure the least costly equipment that will meet a given function. For example, sport utility vehicles may not be required if the purpose of the vehicle is only to transport a person around the city.

Finding

DPW staff who are on-call are allowed to use city-owned motor vehicles for transportation to their homes whether in or out of San Francisco. Some managers also use city-owned motor vehicles for transportation to and from their homes. (See Appendix A.)

Recommendations

DPW staff and managers who use city-owned motor vehicles for transportation to and from their homes, whether or not they are on-call, must be required to conform fully with San Francisco Administrative Code, Sec. 4.11 (see Appendix A) and each of its subsections. The penalty contained in Subsection (c) must be vigorously enforced. All DPW employees should be encouraged to use public transportation (in accordance with the City's Master Plan) and obtain a city vehicle from a motor pool when necessary for work-related responsibilities.

A detailed inventory and usage record of each vehicle operated by the department should be kept showing to whom it is assigned at any time, its intended usage, mileage, etc. This would be a public record.

Responses Required

Mayor

Board of Supervisors

Department of Public Works

Recreation & Park Department

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APPENDIX A

SAN FRANCISCO ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

SEC. 4.11. USE OF CITY-OWNED VEHICLES.

(a) Vehicles owned, leased or rented by the City and County and assigned to, or under the jurisdiction of, any department of the City and County, shall be used only in the discharge and transaction of municipal business. No officer, employee or authorized volunteer of the City and County shall use any such vehicle without the consent of the head of such department. The head of the department which has jurisdiction over any such vehicle may not assign any such vehicle to any individual officer or employee unless a written request justifying the need for personal assignment is made by the individual officer or employee and approved by the Chief Administrative Officer.

(b) No vehicle owned, leased or rented by the City and County and assigned to, or under the jurisdiction of, any department of the city and County shall be used for transportation to and from an employee's place of residence except as provided below:

- (1) The employee resides in or both resides and works outside of the City and County and is on call for work after his or her normal workday is completed and the nature of the work has required the use of a City and County vehicle after hours on at least five occasions in the preceding 12-month period; or,
- (2) The employee resides in or both resides and works outside of the City and County and must leave his or her residence prior to 8:00 a.m. on City and county business away from his or her normal place of work; or
- (3) The employee resides in or both resides and works outside of the City and County and would return to his or her normal place of work from an appointment on City and County business after 6:00 p.m. or on a weekend; or,
- (4) The employee is a member of the San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco Sheriff's Department, San Francisco Water Department, San Francisco Department of Public Works, or San Francisco Department of Emergency Services, and has the prior written permission of the department head to use a vehicle equipped with emergency equipment for such purpose, subject to such restrictions and regulations as the Chief of Police, Sheriff or Director of Emergency Services may provide for the respective departments. The departments shall keep detailed records of all vehicles used pursuant to this paragraph; said records shall be open to inspection by the Office of the Mayor and Board of Supervisors; and provided further that the number of vehicles so exempted shall not exceed:

San Francisco Water Department -----	42
San Francisco Police Department -----	33
San Francisco Sheriff's Department -----	5
San Francisco Department of Emergency Services -----	2
San Francisco Department of Public Works -----	17

- (5) The employee is a forensic pathologist employed by the Office of the Medical Examiner/Coroner and has prior written permission of the Medical Examiner/Coroner to use a City and County vehicle and is on call before or after normal work hours in order to respond to and investigate death scenes. The Medical Examiner/Coroner shall keep detailed records of all vehicles used pursuant to this subsection: said records shall be open to inspection by the Chief Administrative Officer and the Board of Supervisors; and provided further that the number of vehicles so exempted shall not exceed two vehicles; or,
- (6) The employee is a resident of the City and County of San Francisco and is driving the vehicle to and from the employee's place of residence during non-work hours, with the approval by resolution of the Board of Supervisors, upon the recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer, where the head of the department which has jurisdiction over such vehicle finds that the public interest will be best served by permitting the employee to take the vehicle home, rather than require the City to garage the vehicle.

(c) Penalty. Any employee violating the provisions of this section shall pay to the City and County an amount equal to three times the City and County's mileage reimbursement rate times the number of miles driven in violation thereof.

(d) Except as otherwise provided by ordinance, an authorized volunteer, while operating a motor vehicle owned by the City and County pursuant to authorization by the head of the department to which said vehicle is assigned or which has jurisdiction over said vehicle, shall be deemed to be an employee of the City and County solely for the purposes of California Vehicle Code Section 17001 and Division 3.6 of Title 1 of the Government Code of the State of California, and for no other purpose; provided, however, that nothing herein contained shall be deemed to permit the authorization to operate a motor vehicle owned, leased or rented by the City and County contrary to the provisions of the Vehicle Code of the State of California. (Amended by Ord. 562.79, App. 11/16/79; Ord. 358.93, App