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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **CITY OF GULFPORT PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT ACHIEVES AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION ACCREDITATION FOR THE SECOND TIME**

GULFPORT, MS – On June 21, 2021, the American Public Works Association (APWA) has officially granted the City of Gulfport Public Works Department accreditation status for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive time. This process includes the completion of a Department Wide Self-Assessment (385 practices), application for Accreditation, a Site Review, and a vote by the APWA Accreditation Council. The APWA is the only International Accreditation Agency for Public Works Departments of cities, counties, and towns. There are currently 171 accredited public works agencies in North America. The Gulfport Public Works Department was the 118th agency in North America to be awarded APWA Accreditation back in 2016, and is the sole accredited public works agency in Mississippi.

Accreditation is the mark of professionalism that indicates that a public works agency adheres to or exceeds standards established by peer agencies across the nation and has made the commitment to continuously improve in the delivery of public works operations and services in the community it serves. “Gulfport’s Public Works Department has dedicated itself to continuous improvement and excellence, and the heroes of this accomplishment are the staff whose mission is to provide services and programs that contribute to making Gulfport, Mississippi a great place to live and work”, says Wayne E. Miller, P.E., Director of Public Works and Engineering.

The City’s Public Works Department has a system based on performance criteria, rewards, benchmarks, and measurements for all their work. The department underwent its 2<sup>nd</sup> Accreditation Site Review in April 2021 and was found to be in full compliance. Among our practices, the City of Gulfport Public Works Department Equipment and Fleet Management “Operator Inspection”, Potable Water “Long Range Water Resource Plan”, and the Traffic Operations “Traffic Control Device Installation” were all earmarked as "Model Practices" by the Site Review Team to be presented to other agencies wishing to become accredited.

The APWA will conduct a Site Review every four years; this process ensures that an agency, once accredited, continues to maintain the standards of excellence that allowed it to become accredited.

**What is accreditation...** According to the American Public Works Association, accreditation is *“The purpose of the accreditation program is to provide a means of formally verifying and recognizing public works agencies for compliance with the recommended practices set forth in the [Public Works Management Practices Manual](#). It is a voluntary, self-motivated approach to objectively evaluate, verify and recognize compliance with the recommended management practices. The objectives of the accreditation program are to:*

- *create impetus for organization self-improvement and stimulate general raising of standards*
- *offer a voluntary evaluation and education program rather than government regulated activity*
- *recognize good performance and provide motivation to maintain and improve performance*
- *improve public works performance and the provision of services*
- *increase professionalism*
- *instill pride among agency staff, elected officials and the local community”*