Glossary of Terms

Aquifer
A porous, water-bearing geologic formation. Usually refers to materials capable of yielding a substation amount of water.

Booster Pump Station
A pumping facility throughout the distribution system for the purpose of ensuring sufficient water pressure.

Capacitor
A device, which helps to improve the efficiency of distribution, lines to carry power by reducing energy losses.

Cape Seal – The application of a chip seal followed within a few days by a slurry or microsurface overlay. It is used where a chip seal is too rough and a smooth finish is required, such as on a residential street.

Circuit
A conductor or a system of conductors through which electric current flows.

Circuit Breaker
A switch that automatically disconnects power to the circuit in the event of a fault condition. Located in substations. Performs the same function as a circuit breaker in a home.

Conductor
A wire, cable, which serves as a path for electric flow. Conductors can be either used overhead or underground.

Demand
The total amount of electricity required at any given time by a utility's customers.

Elevated Storage
A water storage tank raised at least 100' above ground and support on a tower.

Feeder
A distribution line that originates at the substation.

GIS
Geographical Information System. Allows for the accurate locating of all facilities through the use of global positioning system technology and is used to update the system circuit diagrams and detail maps of the city.

Ground Storage
A water storage at or below ground.

Kilowatt (kW)
Equals 1,000 watts.

Kilowatt-Hour (kWh)
A basic unit of electricity equal to one kilowatt, or 1000 watts of power used for one hour.

Infiltration and Inflow (I&I)
The seepage of groundwater into a sewer system, including service connections. Seepage frequently occurs through defective or cracked pipes, pipe joints, connections or manhole walls.

Infrastructure
The City's underlying foundation of framework (buildings, streets, electric, water, wastewater, and drainage utilities).

Lift Station
A series of wastewater pumping stations that raise wastewater from areas too low to drain to higher elevations and to the wastewater treatment facility.

Load Factor
The ratio of average demand to peak demand. A high load factor is better than a low load factor, because it means the electrical system is being used closer to its full capacity.

Microsurface Overlay – A polymer-modified cold-mix paving system consisting of a mixture of dense-graded aggregate, asphalt emulsion, water, mineral fillers, advanced polymers and other additives which provides a stable, skid-resistant surface.

Overlay
A layer of asphalt added to the road to correct more serious flaws and to add strength. This process is used on streets that cannot be corrected with lesser treatments.

Pavement Condition Index (PCI) – A ranking tool for categorizing the inspected pavement sections from poor to good (0 to 100) which allows the user to communicate the relative condition to others. By using appropriate rating techniques, a properly scaled PCI provides an index which can be used to project the future condition, measure the impact of various maintenance procedures, and determine maintenance and rehabilitation needs.

Pavement Management Information System (PMIS) – An established and documented procedure for collecting, storing, processing, and retrieving the information required in a pavement management system. It represents a foundation for PMS since all pavement decisions must be based on a common, integrated source of information derived from reliable, good quality data.

Peak Demand
The maximum amount of electricity required to supply utility customers.

Power Factor
The ratio of real power to reactive power.

Reconstruction – Construction of the equivalent of a new pavement structure which usually involves complete removal and replacement of the existing pavement structure including new and/or recycled materials.

Recloser
A switch which functions like a circuit breaker, protecting primary circuits from fault conditions. A recloser will automatically restore the circuit in the event of a temporary fault. Temporary faults can be caused by such things as a tree branch falling on the lines then to the ground.

Rehabilitation – Resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation work undertaken to restore serviceability and to extend the service life of an existing facility. This may include partial recycling of the existing pavement, placement of additional surface materials or other work necessary to return an existing pavement to a condition of structural or functional adequacy.

Regional Detention Pond
A pond capable of providing detention of water on a watershed basis. These types of ponds will prevent increases in water run-off and will eventually replace small detention ponds that presently occupy developable space in subdivisions and commercial sites.

Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) of 1974 was established to protect the quality of drinking water in the United States. This law focuses on all waters designed for drinking use, whether from above ground or underground sources. The Act authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to establish safe standards of purity and requires all owners or operators of public water systems to comply with primary (health-related) standards.

Seal Coat – An asphalt emulsion applied to an existing paved asphalt surface to replace lost surface fines, create a barrier to moisture, slow the deterioration process of the pavement, protect surface fines against wear and tear, and improve appearance.

Sectionalizer
Similar to a recloser but only opens when line is “dead” due to the operation of a recloser or breaker upstream. Serves to isolate the section of the circuit in a fault and allow the remainder of the circuit to be re-energized.

Seal Coating
An asphalt paving process that involves placing a layer of oil followed by a layer of rock on the road surface. This process is less expensive than microsurfacing or overlay processes, however, it is a less desirable process for urban streets.

TxDOT
Abbreviation for the Texas Department of Transportation.

Type I Water
Reuse water that is safe for use in areas in which public access is not restricted, such as parks, playgrounds, and residences.

URD
Underground Residential Development.

Wastewater Interceptor
A sewer that receives flow from a number of other large sewers of outlets and conducts the water to a point for treatment.

Water Reuse
Water reuse is the process of using treated wastewater for beneficial purposes, such as agricultural and landscape irrigation, and industrial processes. Reuse water is typically reclaimed from wastewater treatment facilities for multiple uses. The term water reuse is used synonymously with water reclamation and water recycling.

WATT
The basic unit of electricity is the watt. It is the smallest unit of measure normally used to measure electricity. A measure of the work electricity can do.