

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION



2020

Building Standards

YEAR-END REPORT





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***Welcome** to the 2020 Year End Report for the Building Standards Department. The 2020 report is intended to provide an overview on the past year and information about the programs and services offered by Building Standards, highlight how industry performed, and look ahead to 2021.*

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# WHO WE ARE

Building Standards provides exceptional customer service to the citizens and visitors of Saskatoon. Building Standards ensures homes, businesses and other buildings are constructed to design, and meet all necessary federal, provincial and municipal codes, thereby giving Saskatoon residents the ability to live, work and play in safe, comfortable structures.

## DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Great success has been achieved through the ongoing work of the Cornerstone Project and its project team. Key project successes realized in 2020 include:

- Full implementation of electronic drawing submission, concurrent plan reviews and a temporary customer facing portal.
- Creation of a single point of customer contact assigned to each commercial permit file.
- Updated our website to target communications to two key user groups, professional builders and Do It Yourself builders (DIY's).
- Creation of a Stakeholder Advisory Group to provide input on ongoing program changes.
- Implementation of an upgraded system software, referred to as Posse Winchester.
- 80% Configuration and setup of new Land Management System. Phase one of the system, which is focused on the permitting and inspections module, is set to go live in 2021.

### ***Message from Kara Fagnou, Director of Building Standards***

2020 is officially in the books! It was a year of ups and downs as our team worked to adapt our programs and services to the changing community needs. We made significant strides towards our goal of becoming a national leader in the delivery of Building and Development Permits and achieving our new service level of 2 – 5 weeks for the review of typical commercial permits.

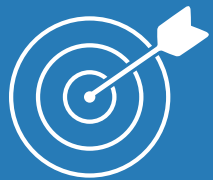
Through our initiatives we had great success within the commercial permit program and are not far off from achieving our goal - check out the year-end numbers below. Within our residential program, there is work to do to get back on track for the 2021 construction season to meet our 5-7 day review times. Additional resources and review of permit requirements are both underway.



# 2020 YEAR IN NUMBERS

## RESIDENTIAL PERMITS

**2,836** Total number of Residential Permits processed



Goal Turnaround Time

**5-7 Days**

**10-13**

# of days over turnaround time



2019

**42%**

Per cent of permits over turnaround time

2020

**84%**

Per cent of permits over turnaround time

## COMMERCIAL PERMITS

**910**

Total # of Commercial Permits processed



**6 out of 10**

Commercial Permit types with turnaround at target December 1, 2020

Average days over turnaround time

**2 days**



**9 months**

Major projects and demolition permits at target

# 2020 YEAR IN NUMBERS

## PERMIT TURNAROUND TIMES AT GOAL\*

Alternative Care Home New **15** | **8** Alternative Care Home Alterations

Major Projects **25-30**  Demolitions **5-8**

**5-8** Group Dwelling Site - Post Site Development Alterations

**10-15** Group Dwelling Site - Post Site Development New

**15-20** Group Dwelling Site - Including Site Development



## PERMIT TURNAROUND TIMES ABOVE TARGET\*

Commercial, Industrial & Institutional New **+2-3**  
*Goal: 17-22*

Commercial, Industrial & Institutional Alterations **+2-3**  
*Goal: 10-15*

Apartment Buildings New **+2-3**  
*Goal: 17-22*

Apartment Buildings Alterations **+1-2**  
*Goal: 10-15*

Residential New **+10-13**  
*Goal: 5-7*

Residential Alterations **+10-13**  
*Goal: 5*

\*Represented in business days



# OUR BUSINESS

Building Standards works in partnership with industry associations and customers to identify the needs of our changing community and to align programs and services to meet those needs. Our key programs and services include:

## BUILDING PERMIT PROGRAM

The Building Permit Program is made up of two areas – the residential building permit section and the commercial building permit section. Each section offers tailored customer service support and several resources and guides to help keep projects on track and up to code

The residential section is focused on single lot residential construction and is committed to helping DIY's and professionals complete their building projects - large and small. The section issued 2,836 permits and operates with a targeted service level of 5 to 7 business days.

The commercial section is focused on industrial, commercial, institutional (ICI) and multi-residential construction, as well as residential construction occurring on group dwelling sites. The section is committed to helping professionals navigate city-wide construction standards and permits and serves as the single-point-of-contact for coordinating permit applications. The section issued 910 permits and operates with a targeted service level of 2 to 5 weeks.

## BUILDING PERMIT INSPECTION PROGRAM

The Building Permit Inspection Program is made up of residential and commercial building inspectors, who are experts in construction, code requirements, and legislation. Inspections are performed to confirm individuals have safe and healthy places to live, work, learn and play by, ensuring issues of structural sufficiency, life safety, fire safety, health and barrier-free accessibility are addressed.

The service level for residential inspections is next day inspections, which is a target the program strives to meet a 100% of the time; while inspections for ICI and multi-residential construction occurs every three to four weeks until the permit is closed.

In total, the building inspection program completed 18,226 inspections in 2020.

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

### PROGRAM ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ 3,495 building and development permits issued, with a value of construction of \$593.3M
- ▶ 251 demolition permits issued, with a construction value of \$2.3M
- ▶ 1,926 plumbing permits issued
- ▶ Completed 20,152 building permit and plumbing permit inspections
- ▶ Issued 3,239 Property Information Disclosures
- ▶ Stabilization reserve was reduced by \$1.4M, leaving a balance of \$2.1M



## PLUMBING PERMIT AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

The Plumbing Permit Program is committed to helping certified plumbers complete the construction, changing, renewing or repairing plumbing systems.

The program issued 1,926 plumbing permits and completed 4,768 inspections.

## BUILDING AND PROPERTY INFORMATION

### Property Information Disclosures

Building Standards issues Property Information Disclosure reports which contain information related to:

- Building and plumbing permit history and deficiencies
- Occupancy permits for existing suites in one-unit dwellings
- Outstanding fire orders
- Heritage and zoning designations

- Outstanding landscaping and parking requirements
- Presence of additional zoning requirements

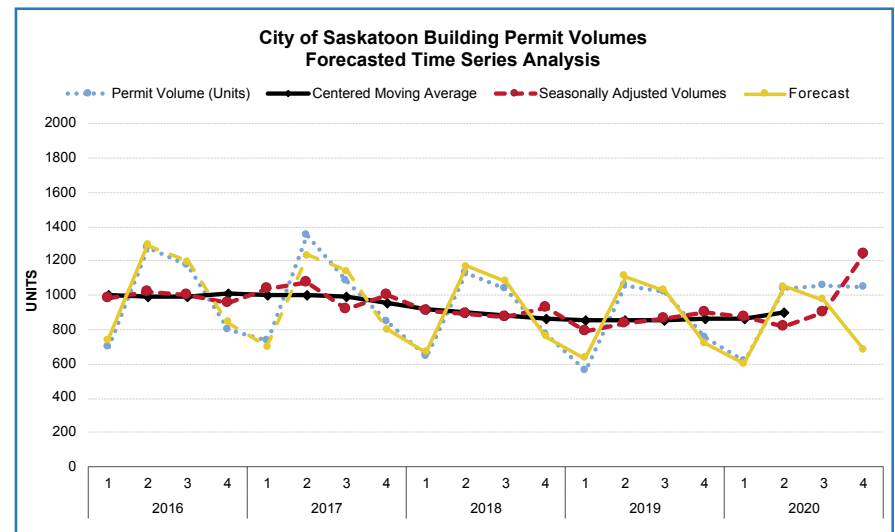
The service level is 3 business days. The program issued 3,239 reports, of which 2% exceeded the targeted turnaround time.

### Construction Activity in 2020

In the last twelve months, Building Standards issued 3,746 permits at a construction value of \$541.7 million, which is an increase of 12% and a decrease of 16% compared to the activity seen in 2019.

Permit volumes increased largely due to increased demand for residential dwellings. Permits issued will result in the creation of 2,243 new residential units, as compared to 1,313 units in 2019.

The following graph outlines quarterly building permit activity for the last five years. The centered moving average and seasonally adjusted volumes smooth actual permit volumes to demonstrate data trends. The graph below demonstrates over the past few years, permit volumes have averaged around 950 permits per quarter.



## Building Standards Stabilization Reserve

The Building Standards Stabilization Reserve was approved by City Council for the purpose of accumulating funds to offset any deficits in the divisions operations, due to revenue shortfalls from the decline in the number and/or type of permits issued and program improvement expenditures.

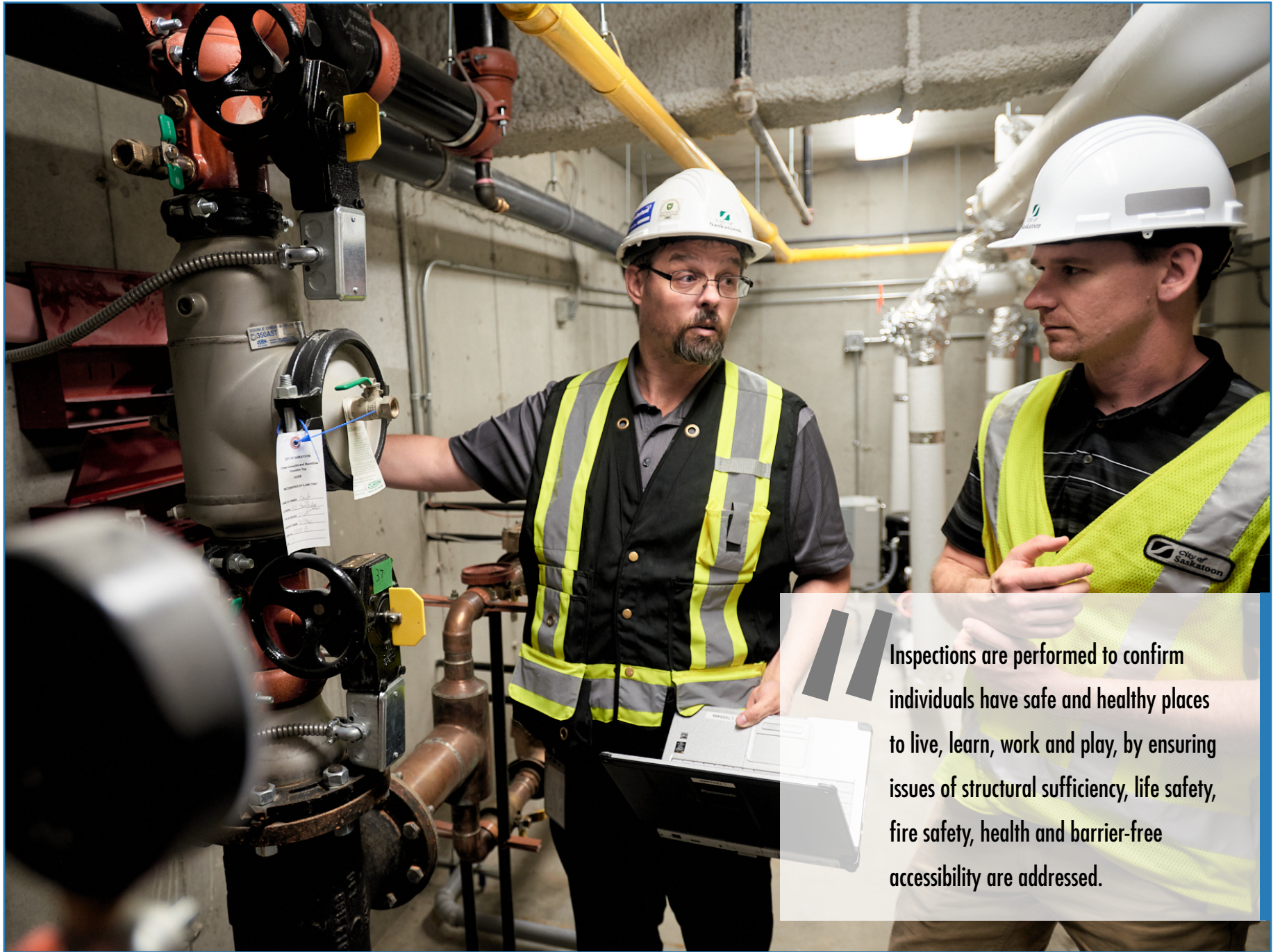
Revenue received from operations was \$4.6 million, which was 24% lower than operating expenses. The shortfall in revenue resulted in a \$1.4 million transfer from the reserve.

### LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

- **Implementation of a Land Management System** – A new permitting and inspections software is set to be released in 2021. The new system provides out-of-the-box industry leading permitting and inspection processes and offers a robust online portal for customers to submit permit applications, receive real-time status change notifications, pay online, book inspections, and access information on their permits.
- **Improved Customer Service at the Front End** – the goal is to improve the way we deliver service to our customers, specifically at the front-end of the permitting process.
- **Online Resources and Guides** – the key area of focus is to improve the application process by clearly defining the submission requirements for each project type. The work in this area will build on the success of the new process introduced in the past year.







Inspections are performed to confirm individuals have safe and healthy places to live, learn, work and play, by ensuring issues of structural sufficiency, life safety, fire safety, health and barrier-free accessibility are addressed.



Prepared by:  
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Printed April 2021