

2021 Annual Report – Building Standards

ISSUE

This report highlights work completed in 2021 by the Building Standards Department (Building Standards), and looks ahead at the priorities for 2022.

BACKGROUND

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. Building Standards ensure 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.

Building Standards is also committed to helping homeowners, professional consultants, business owners, developers and contractors navigate the City's construction standards and permitting system to help keep their projects on track and up to code.

CURRENT STATUS

Building Standards offers a variety of programs and services related to the building construction industry, including:

- Building Permit and Inspection Program;
- Plumbing Permit and Inspection Program; and
- Property Information Disclosure Program.

This Report provides an overview of initiatives undertaken in 2021 and highlights 2022 objectives (see Appendix 1).

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

In summer of 2019, Building Standards kicked-off the Cornerstone Project. The intent of this project is to consolidate initiatives from the City of Saskatoon (City) Strategic Plan, Building and Development Permit Operational Review, Infill Roundtable and Development Civic Service Review into one actionable project with clear deliverables.

The goal of the project is to become a national leader in building and development permit timelines, which will see planned improvements to the building and development permit program and permitting practices within Building Standards, Planning and Development and Community Standards Departments. This will be done through:

- Use of tools to aid in delivering improved customer service throughout the permitting process;
- Creating a system for online submission of permit applications;
- Concurrent digital plan review; and
- Streamlining business processes.

Building Standards created an Advisory Group for strategic engagement, made up of industry representatives from all areas to build bridges between industry, the Cornerstone Project Team and City Administration. The Advisory Group meets regularly throughout the project to provide advice, input and recommendations to the Project Sponsor and Cornerstone Project Team regarding business process changes and project deliverables.

Building Standards is pleased to announce Phase One of the project was implemented on March 1, 2022. This phase saw the implementation of the building and development permitting and inspection process, as well as implementation of the plumbing permit and inspection process into the new ePermitting software. Customers can now use a robust online portal to submit, monitor, make payments and manage their permit applications and inspections.

To measure the effectiveness of the change, Building Standards will begin surveying customers on their experience after each permit. The survey results will be reported to the Advisory Group on a regular basis and be used by the Department to focus on changes to improve the customer experience. The surveys will be measured against a baseline survey, which was completed at the end of 2021 (see Appendix 2).

Work is underway to begin Phase Two of the project. This phase will focus on the onboarding and implementation of Planning and Development, Business Licensing and remaining Building Standards workflows.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Revenue received from Building Standard's operations was \$6.9 million. This, in combination with a reduction in operating expenses related to moving systems online, resulted in a revenue surplus over expenditures of \$267,211. The surplus in revenue was transferred to the Building Permits and Inspections Stabilization Reserve, leaving a balance in the reserve of \$2.26 million.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no options, policy, financial, environmental, privacy, CPTED implications or considerations. A communication plan is in place.

NEXT STEPS

Building Standards will continue to focus efforts on the objectives for 2022 and Phase Two of the Cornerstone Project.

APPENDICES

1. 2021 Building Standards Year-End Report
2. Customer Experience Survey Findings

REPORT APPROVAL

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