

COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION



2021

Building Standards

YEAR-END REPORT





Welcome to the 2021 Year End Report for the Building Standards Department. The report provides an overview of the past year in Building Standards and looks ahead at the priorities for 2022.

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WHO WE ARE

Building Standards provides exceptional customer service to the residents 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 staff, the Cornerstone Project, and the project team. Key successes realized in 2021 include:

- On track to achieve the new service level of 2-5 weeks for the review of industrial, commercial, institutional, multi-storey buildings, and group dwelling site construction.
- Centralizing walk-in customer service to the lobby of City Hall.
- Placing focused effort on increasing first time approval rates for industrial, commercial, institutional (ICI), and multi-storey building and development permits.
- Implementing key recommendations from the Cornerstone Stakeholder Advisory Group to improve the building and development permit customer service experience from end-to-end.
- Implementing fulltime telework for the customer service, plumbing inspection, and building inspection teams — in turn reducing the department office footprint and operational costs.

Message from Kara Fagnou, Director of Building Standards

This year we made significant progress towards our vision of being a national leader in permit turnaround times with many of the permit turnaround times at target, and the remainder trailing an average of up to 5 days over target. This is the result of improved processes, a focus on customer service and the support of our stakeholders.

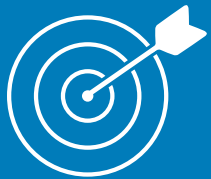
There is room for improvement, and we head into 2022 with a renewed sense of commitment to our vision of being a national leader in permit turnaround times with a focus on increasing first time approval rates and the customer service experience.



2021 YEAR IN NUMBERS

RESIDENTIAL PERMITS

2,793 Total number of Residential Permits processed



Goal Turnaround Time

5-7 Days

2-4

of days over turnaround time



COMMERCIAL PERMITS

969

Total # of Commercial Permits processed



Goal Turnaround Time

2-5 Weeks



Average days over turnaround time

5 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 AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

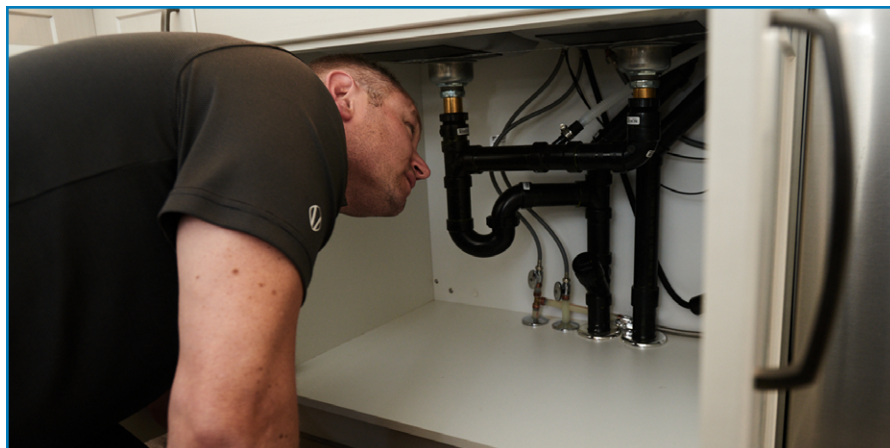
The Building Permit and Inspection Program is made up of three areas: residential plan review, commercial plan review, and inspections.

The residential section is focused on single-lot residential construction and is committed to helping DIYs and professionals complete their building projects — large and small. The section issued 2,793 permits at a construction value of \$270,413,000. The program operates with a targeted service level of 5 to 7 business days and provides consistency for industry by maintaining a maximum of +5 business days above target, or better, through the spring construction season.

The commercial section is focused on ICI and multi-storey 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 across multiple departments. The section issued 969 permits at a construction value of \$454,615,000. The commercial program operates with a targeted service level of 2 to 5 weeks with a goal to maintain a +5 business days above the regular service level or better during the spring construction season.

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-storey construction occurs every three weeks until the permit is closed.

In total, the building inspection program completed 21,035 inspections in 2021.



PLUMBING PERMIT AND INSPECTION PROGRAM

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

The program issued 2,244 plumbing permits and completed 5,744 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 4,027 reports.

2021 PROGRAM ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

3,762 building and development permits issued,
with a value of construction of \$725,028,000

2,244
plumbing permits
issued

21,035
building permit
inspections
completed

5,744
plumbing permit
inspections
completed

4,027
Property Information
Disclosure reports
issued

\$276K
2021 Stabilization
Reserve increase

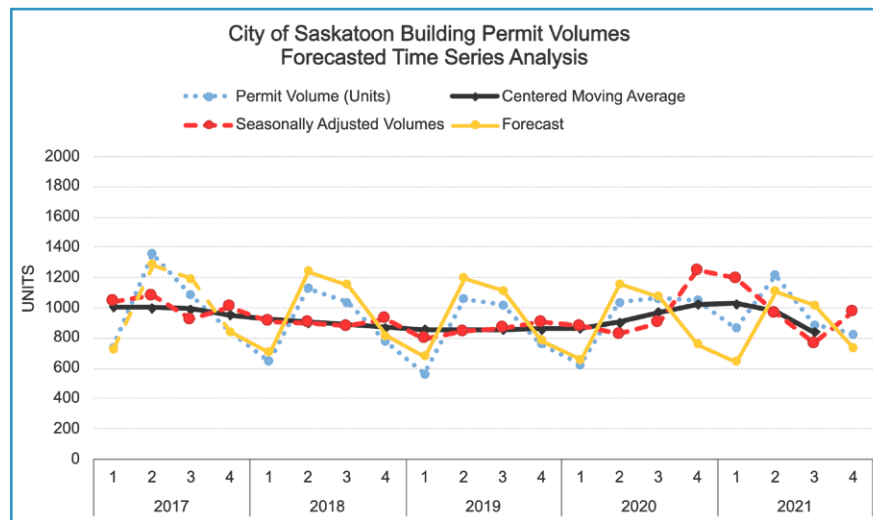
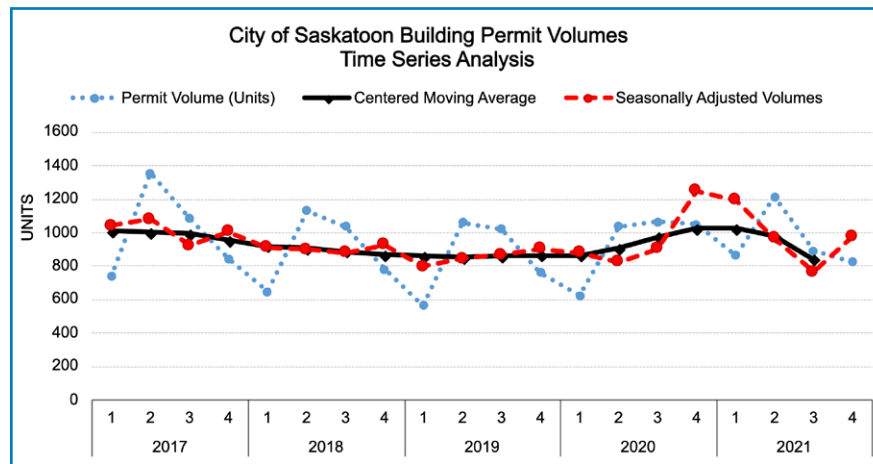
\$2.26M
Stabilization Reserve
balance
(Dec 31, 2021)

Construction Activity in 2021

In the last twelve months, Building Standards issued 3,762 permits at a construction value of \$725,028,000, which is an increase of 0.4% and 34%, respectively, compared to the activity seen in 2020. Permits issued will result in the creation of 2,012 new residential units, as compared to 2,243 units in 2020. The increase in construction value is attributed to both an:

- Increased demand for ICI permits, which was offset by a slight decrease in demand for residential permits
- Increased cost of construction material, due to pressures placed on the supply chain from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following graph outlines quarterly building permit activity for the last eight years. The centered moving average and seasonally adjusted volumes smooth actual permit volumes to demonstrate data trends. The graph on the top demonstrates over the past few years, permit volumes have averaged approximately 950 permits per quarter. The graph on the bottom maps permit data to forecasted values.



Building and Inspection Permit Stabilization Reserve

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

Revenue received from the issuance of building and plumbing permits was \$6.9 million, which resulted in a revenue surplus of \$267,211. The surplus in revenue was transferred to the Building and Inspection Permit Stabilization Reserve.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2022

- **Implementation of the ePermitting System (Phase 1)** – As of March 1, 2022, the new permitting and inspections software is now live. 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, by focusing improvements on increasing first-time approval rates and tracking customer experience ratings closely. Through our programs and services, the vision of customer service is to achieve high customer experience ratings, with positive customer experience stories.
- **Online Resources and Guides** – Continuing 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.
- **ePermitting System (Phase 2)** – Continuing our work with the Cornerstone Advisory Committee and adding workflows related to the full suite of planning applications, business licencing, property information disclosure reports, and code enforcement.
- **Adoption of the Construction Code Act** – The Government of Saskatchewan has repealed and replaced *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* with *The Construction Code Act* (the CCA) as the legislation which governs the development, adoption and implementation of construction standards in Saskatchewan. The CCA focuses on modernizing legislation to meet the goals listed in the Government of Saskatchewan's Plan for Growth, and commitments under the New West Partnership Trade Agreement and the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Throughout 2022, Building Standards will focus on updating processes and procedures to align with the new legislation.





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.



Prepared by:
Building Standards,
Community Services Division

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