

# Building Safety

Led by: Director of Development, Business & Building Services

## Description

Our service is responsible for building safety in Calgary. We serve customers and Calgarians during the building permit process, from issuing the building permit to performing site safety inspections to ensure buildings meet provincial safety code requirements. Our service creates programs and strategies focused on keeping buildings safe. We work with industry and partner agencies (provincial and regulatory) to enable development by identifying, educating and promoting safety best practices with the goal of preventing public safety incidents. We identify required changes to codes to support climate policy, affordable housing, and safety and work on a provincial and national level to update safety codes.

## Value and benefits

Value is provided through the building approvals and inspections process, ensuring that Alberta's building safety codes are met from design, through construction, to occupancy. Staff assist customers on applications, code requirements and regulatory changes to support their project's success. Our partnerships with industry help develop best practices and identify common safety concerns for correction. Building safety is our priority. We provide urgent response services for public safety concerns related to construction sites and existing buildings. We administer important bylaw and safety requirements through the Building Maintenance Bylaw, Public Protection Site Safety Plans, and support affordable housing programs through the Secondary Suite Program and advancement of the Climate Strategy.

## Customers

Our direct customers include business owners, homeowners, land developers, builders, contractors, trade professionals and supporting professionals. Customers also include property owners and renters, and all Calgarians who occupy and use buildings.

## What we deliver

Our goal is to deliver permits and inspections to ensure safe buildings. Building Safety provides Calgarians, communities, and customers assurance that new construction projects have been reviewed and inspected to meet Alberta's building safety codes prior to granting occupancy. The service also addresses inquiries by Calgarians regarding construction sites and responds to urgent calls related to public safety.

## Partners

We partner with Calgary Fire, Community Planning, Community Services, Law, Transportation, Water Resources, and ENMAX. We work closely with first responders and external agencies such as Alberta Health Services to identify and investigate public safety concerns. We work with industry to improve construction safety and participate in safety code changes with the Province and the National Research Council.

81,094	Safety Code permits reviewed and issued
168,803	Annual safety inspections
2,610	Secondary suites registered (2021)
\$5.7B	Issued construction value (2021)

## Key assets

Workflow system: POSSE  
 Fleet vehicles  
 IT server  
 Software: MyInspections, LIVElink, ePermits, phone system, 311 (SRs), Direct Access, Global Protect, Citrix, Microsoft Office  
 Hardware: tablets, cell phones, laptops, peripherals, cables, computers, networks  
 Data: CFOS (operating system for work alone)  
 PPE: supply disruption  
 Corral: reporting database  
 Front counter appointment: software/service

**Building Safety**  
 2022 Budgeted Gross Operating Expenditures Funding Breakdown (\$ Millions)\*



\* Gross operating budget may include internal recoveries that are also included in other services' gross operating cost.

Note: Internal recoveries is how The City accounts for the costs of goods or services between services.

# What we have heard & what we are watching

## What we have heard

Safety is ranked first by survey respondents as the highest priority for this service, followed by responsiveness. Customers want fast, simple, and valuable service that results in a safe building. They value knowledge, expertise, guidance and certainty to ensure their project's timelines will be realized. Timely responses, sequencing or aligning of inspections, and immediate response to safety situations are expected. Our customers have high expectations of our service and that it will be delivered in an equitable and inclusive manner. They look to us to seek out efficiencies and cost reductions without lowering service levels. Operating in a global economy means ensuring Calgary is a business and investment-friendly community valuing diversity across all aspects of our service offerings and delivery. By doing so we will attract and retain a workforce Calgarians expect and continue to tell us is important.

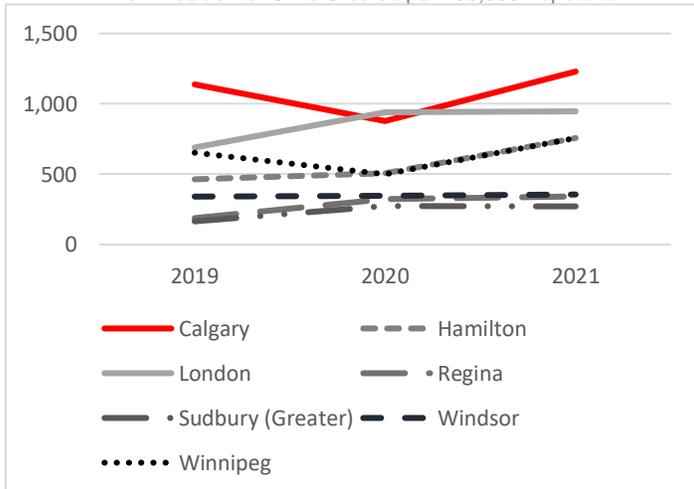
## What Council has directed

Council has directed the Service to assist with implementing of the City's climate strategy, for example programs that manage the impacts of severe weather events and reduce emissions. The Service has been directed to enable increases in the number of safe secondary suites, an important affordable housing type. Continued efforts are required to ensure buildings do not compromise the safety of public streets and sidewalks. This is to be done through monitoring compliance with the Building Maintenance Bylaw and problem properties, and by ensuring contractors implement Public Protection Site Safety Plans. Efforts to support the work of other Services to revitalize Downtown, reduce red tape, and create a more business-friendly environment are to be continued. The Service has been directed to continue to remove barriers and reduce timelines associated with obtaining building approvals and inspections. Improvements to the consistency of building safety code compliance monitoring are to be continued. The Service is to continue to use technology to streamline service. The Service is to continue succession planning efforts for Safety Codes Officers.

## What we are watching

Economic trends can significantly impact construction activity resulting in unexpected changes to permit volumes and fee revenues which can strain staff resources and service levels. This service continually monitors and tracks economic indicators to minimize impacts on service. Safety and energy codes are updated periodically, and just before this happens, permit volumes increase, which may impact service levels. The service will continue to expand online services to better meet client expectations. The digital shift will see us consider new and transformative ways to better deliver our service efficiently and effectively. Reducing our service impact on the environment by using electric vehicles and reducing staff commutes is planned. When severe weather happens, existing resources are diverted for Emergency Management purposes impacting business continuity.

New Residential Units Created per 100,000 Population



MBNCanada

## Comparing our service

Calgary is a city of intensive development, even when accounting for population. It consistently leads amongst comparators in the number of new residential units created, in response to high demand (household formation). Much of the construction that occurs in Calgary is geared toward housing starts and creating new residential units. Townhouse, semi-detached, apartment and row house units increased substantially in Calgary in 2021 over 2020 levels.

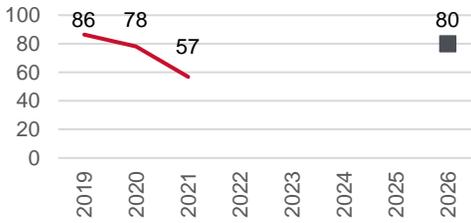
# Measuring performance & where we want to go

For Council Approval

Actuals

Expected Future Performance

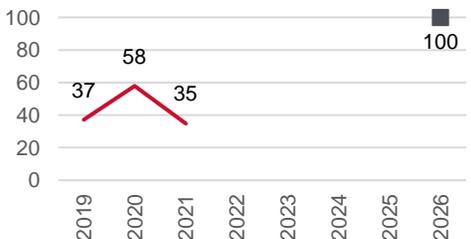
PM1: Building permit applications where issuance timeline commitments were met (per cent)



PM2: Inspection booking dates with appointments available within the next two business days (per cent)



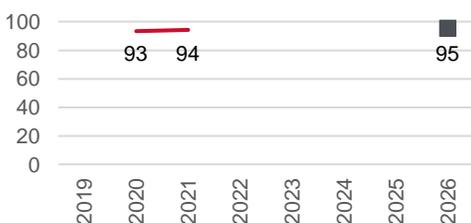
PM3: Issued permits for new buildings with 5 or more storeys with an approved Public Protection Site Safety Plan (per cent)



PM4: New low-density dwellings with energy labelling (per cent)



PM5: Average customer satisfaction survey result (per cent)



## Story behind the curve

Toward safety for building occupants and users, application reviews ensure building code and associated safety provisions are met. Processing timelines are affected by the completeness of the building permit application, the number of amendments or resubmissions needed from the applicant and impacts to the approved development permit. Historically, approximately 16,000 building permit applications were submitted per year. Between 2019 and 2021 we responded to a 25% surge in volumes with existing resources. In 2022, performance is improving due to investments in our service and technology, pursuing continuous improvement.

Contractors use The City's inspections booking system to manage inspection requests through a streamlined online experience, where they can book up to 10 business days in advance. The City accommodates the demand for service by managing the daily capacity of inspection teams. Contractors benefit at all construction phases from predictable inspection booking appointments. This measure considers inspection booking dates for residential home construction and for commercial & multi-residential projects.

Public Protection Site Safety Plans are established during the building permit and plans review to mitigate risk to the public during demolition and/or construction and help builders minimize construction impact and ensure public safety. The plan is put in place before above-grade construction begins. This measure facilitates the identification of construction site safety trends and mitigates increasing risk exposure.

As part of the move to a Net Zero Emissions Building Standard for Calgary, the Calgary Climate Strategy calls for a mechanism to require that all new residential buildings establish and disclose a building energy label. To meet our 2030 and 2050 emissions targets, building energy performance must improve faster than energy codes currently dictate. A program to administer the information, incentives and communications with home builders regarding labelling could incentivize investment in better energy performance in new buildings, and promote education among current and prospective homeowners.

Customers that submit building or trade permit applications expect convenient service access, easy understanding of application requirements, a consistent customer experience, predictable timelines, and flexibility to meet their specific needs and situations. Property owners and their agents expect a seamless experience through the continuum of approvals from land use to occupancy to post-occupancy uses. Satisfaction with each application across the continuum is measured through post-application surveys of direct customers at approval milestones.

## What we plan to do

### Result for 2023-2026

We are focused on ensuring building safety by providing excellent customer service and timely service delivery through permit intake, approvals, inspections, and response to urgent safety requests. We are committed to following all Council direction and will play a key role in Downtown revitalization and the implementation of the Climate Strategy.

### How we are going to get there

Reduce building permit approval timelines by applying capacity, risk, and performance management.

Protect the public during construction through the revision of the Public Protection Site Safety Plan and monitoring of key safety indicators.

Increase the supply of safe and affordable housing options by improving the regulatory environment for secondary suites.

Provide time-saving, easy and convenient options through education for builders and developers, and investment in customer self-serve capabilities.

Improve building energy performance by delivering on the Climate Action Plan through education, and incentives.

Manage inspections by providing industry leadership in risk management techniques that follow the Alberta Safety Codes Council's directive.

Support the Greater Downtown Plan by dedicating resources to the reviewing, approvals and inspections process.

Contribute to Calgary's environmental sustainability by lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the conversion of fleet vehicles to electric vehicles.

Improve convenience for customers and save fuel by enhancing inspection services through the use of remote video inspection.

Improve employee engagement through a sustained and meaningful coaching and development program.

Act on the intent of Truth and Reconciliation by continuing to grow our partnership with Siksika Nation.

Build and maintain a respectful, inclusive and equitable workplace that is representative of the community by ensuring our policies and services support The City's commitments to our employees and Calgarians.

# Operating budget needed to achieve results

For Council Approval

## Breakdown of net operating budget (\$000s)

	2023		2024		2025		2026	
	Base	One-time	Base	One-time	Base	One-time	Base	One-time
Previous Year's Net Budget	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Previously approved One-time budget		-		-		-		-
2022 One-time carry forward		-		-		-		-
Revenue Changes	(6,130)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Internal Recoveries Changes	(112)	-	-	-	(488)	-	-	-
Inflation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Impact of Previously Approved Capital	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Operating Impact of New Capital (Incremental)	112	-	-	-	488	-	-	-
Service Reductions	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Service Increases	6,130	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total net budget*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

\*The previous year's One-time Budget is not carried forward to the following year.

## Total Operating Budget (\$000s) for Approval

	2022 Budget	2023			2024			2025			2026		
	At April 30	Base	One-Time	Total									
Expenditures	44,257	46,800	-	46,800	46,800	-	46,800	47,288	-	47,288	47,288	-	47,288
Recoveries	(2,488)	(2,600)	-	(2,600)	(2,600)	-	(2,600)	(3,088)	-	(3,088)	(3,088)	-	(3,088)
Revenue	(38,071)	(44,201)	-	(44,201)	(44,201)	-	(44,201)	(44,201)	-	(44,201)	(44,201)	-	(44,201)
Net	3,699	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Base	-												
One-Time	3,699												

Note: Figures may not add up due to rounding.

## Capital budget needed to deliver service

For Council Approval

Activity	Investment Name	2023 Request (\$000s)	2024 Request (\$000s)	2025 Request (\$000s)	2026 Request (\$000s)	2027+ Request (\$000s)	Total Request (\$000s)
<b>Annual Investment Program(s)</b>							
470140	Building Safety Technology Enhancements	-	-	-	2,200	-	2,200
<b>Program(s)</b>							
470150	Modernizing Service Delivery	3,250	3,250	3,250	3,000	-	12,750
<b>Projects(s)</b>							
470002	Building Safety Vehicle Acquisition	1,088	1,088	3,286	99	-	5,561
Sub-Total (New Budget Requests)		4,338	4,338	6,536	5,299	-	20,511
Previously Approved Budget Remaining		11,195	-	-	-	-	11,195
Total Capital Investment		15,533	4,338	6,536	5,299	-	31,706

### Explanation of capital budget requests

#### Annual Investment Program(s)

##### Activity 470140: Building Safety Technology Enhancements

Improve customer interactions through a variety of channels. Customer interactions will improve through efficiencies in our business process, system maintenance, and enhancement.

Funding From: Capital Reserves (\$2,200 thousand)

Contributing Services: None

Operating Impact: None

#### Program(s)

##### Activity 470150: Modernizing Service Delivery

Leverage technology, automation, data and artificial intelligence to improve service delivery. Customers want fast and easy-to-use service delivery and access to information.

Funding From: Capital Reserves (\$12,750 thousand)

Contributing Services: None

Operating Impact: This request requires \$112 thousand base funding of operating costs starting in 2023, and \$488 thousand base funding of operating costs starting in 2025.

#### Projects(s)

##### Activity 470002: Building Safety Vehicle Acquisition

Lifecycle current non-electric vehicles to electric vehicles. Lifecycling over 100 vehicles to electric vehicles will contribute to emission reduction goals.

Funding From: Capital Reserves (\$5,561 thousand)

Contributing Services: None

Operating Impact: None