

Building Safety

Led by: Director of Development, Business & Building Services

Service 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 owners, designers and contractors are enabled 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.

Service Updates

Key service results

Received over 14,000 permit applications, an increase of 23% year-over-year. Issued over 11,000 building permits, an increase of 20% year-over-year. Granted occupancy on over 8,400 new dwelling units, an increase of 28% year-over-year.

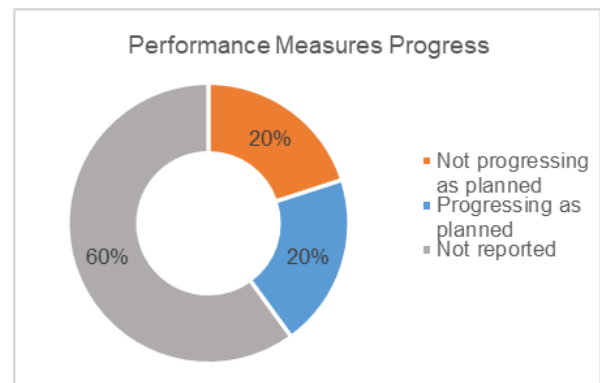
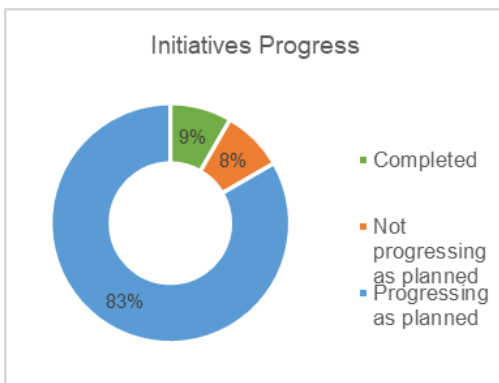
Officially launched the Secondary Suite Incentive Program aimed at providing qualifying homeowners funding to build and register a secondary suite. In the first week of the incentive being rolled out, over 1,200 applications were received, bringing the total number of Registered Secondary Suites to nearly 14,000 by the end of Q2. (Initiative #3)

Enhanced the Inspections Booking System to improve homeowners, building professionals and tradespersons ability to book and manage inspections easily from anywhere, at any time. (Initiative #4)

Launched an Inspections Call Centre with dedicated staff to assist customers with booking and managing their inspections on the Inspection Booking System, a support previously provided by 311. (Initiative #4)

Expanded our Codes Office to further support the team and industry in interpretations and communication around current building codes. (Initiative #6)

Progress summary



Risk(s) impacting the progress

Construction Site and Building Safety
Code Updates Resulting in Increased Permit Application Volume
Supply of skilled and experienced trades



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

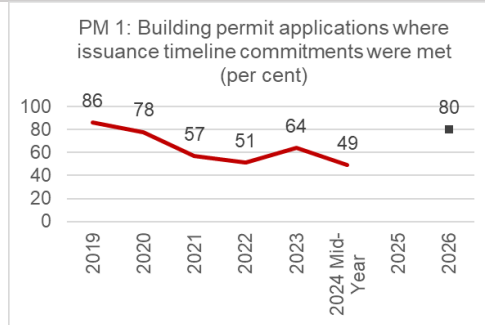
➔ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

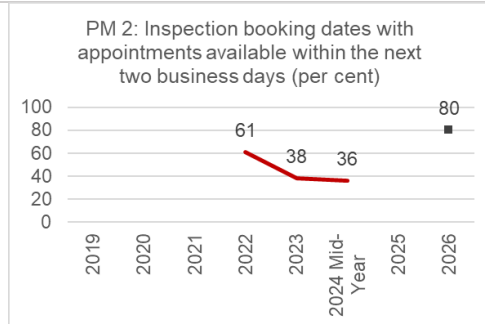
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

Status

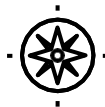


Performance in meeting timeline commitments is sensitive to service demand and was significantly impacted by a 23% year-over-year increase in permit applications (over 14,000) received during the first six months of the year. In the time period, 20% more permits were successfully issued than in the same period last year. To address increasing permit volumes, several initiatives have been undertaken: 1) Additional staff have been added to key areas of the business. 2) The City has expanded the Codes Office to support officers with interpretations of building codes. 3) Two new "Guides to Complete Application" have been released for customers.



The number of building inspections booked in the first half of the year increased by 9%, reaching over 34,000. Despite the rise in demand, the average time to book an inspection remained consistent with last year at four business days. However, the increased demand continues to put pressure on booking availability within two business days. To improve inspection booking capacity, the City hired additional staff and rolled out a non-standard 40 hour workweek for safety codes officers. The City has also introduced enhancements to the Inspections Booking System and opened a dedicated Inspections Call Centre.





Progress on Service Delivery

PROGRESS STATUS



Completed



Progressing as planned



Not progressing as planned



Not started

FUNDING TYPE
















Capital



Operating

Initiative 1		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Reduce building permit approval timelines by applying capacity, risk, and performance management.			
UPDATE 	To expedite the building permit approval process, we've adapted the team's work hours to a non-standard work week, adding 5 hours to each member's capacity. We've set clear expectations for applicants, requiring complete applications within 30 days and all necessary information within an additional 90 days. We've introduced a new partial permit program, allowing small business customers to start work faster, and developed two Guides to a Complete Application to ensure faster and more accurate submissions.		
Initiative 2		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Protect the public during construction through the revision of the Public Protection Site Safety Plan and monitoring of key safety indicators.			
UPDATE 	Additional Public Protection Site Safety Plans (PPSSP) processing improvements have enabled visibility of PPSSP performance. From application review to occupancy, constructor performance for safe construction practices can be easily monitored to enable engagement and education, mitigating safety risks to sustain public safety proactively. The initiative is complete/ implemented, this will be an ongoing focus for the service line.		
Initiative 3		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Increase the supply of safe and affordable housing options by improving the regulatory environment for secondary suites.			
UPDATE 	The Secondary Suite Incentive Program aims to support all Calgarians by providing qualifying homeowners with funding to build and register secondary suites. Since the program's rollout in 2024 the number of registered suites has increased to nearly 14,000. In late June, a dialogue was opened with the Provincial government regarding secondary suite building codes. Obtaining additional clarity on these codes, along with minor adjustments, will provide more options for customers wishing to develop secondary suites.		
Initiative 4		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Provide time-saving, easy and convenient options through education for builders and developers, and investment in customer self-serve capabilities.			
UPDATE 	The City launched several initiatives in late 2023 and early 2024: 1) The City hosted another successful Customer Experience Workshop focused on mobility storage for middle housing, bringing together subject matter experts from both the City and the industry. 2) The City enhanced the online Inspections Booking System and established a dedicated Inspections Call Centre. 3) Two new 'Guides to Complete Applications' were released to improve support for customers preparing building applications.		
Initiative 5		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Improve building energy performance by delivering on the Climate Action Plan through education, and incentives.			
UPDATE 	The Home Energy Labelling Program (HELP) is designed to provide homeowners with knowledge of their building's energy performance to inform home improvement decisions. Since the initial launch of the HELP pilot in 2023, we have observed active industry participation in utilizing the program to support the Calgary Climate Strategy Pathways to 2050. Despite its current voluntary nature, nearly 25% of new low-density dwellings completed this year have implemented energy labelling.		

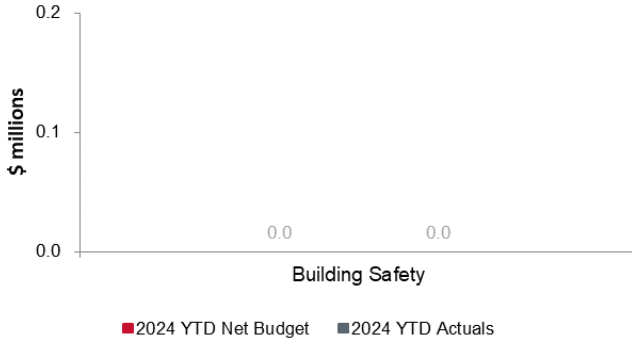
Initiative 6		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Manage inspections by providing industry leadership in risk management techniques that follow the Alberta Safety Codes Council's directive.			
UPDATE 	To expedite the building review processes, the city is planning to roll out two new initiatives. The Expedited Review for Builders (XRB) will streamline approvals for builders constructing homes similar to previous builds. The Expedited Review for Professionals (XRP) will simplify the approval process for architects and engineers with a proven track record from previous submissions and builds. The XRB is scheduled to roll out in late Q3 2024, while the XRP will be released in early 2025.		
Initiative 7		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Support the Greater Downtown Plan by dedicating resources to the reviewing, approvals and inspections process.			
UPDATE 	We continued to support the Greater Downtown Plan by promptly assigning a File manager upon receiving an application. We offered pre-application meetings, provided DP comments and conducted expedited plan reviews to ensure files moved smoothly through the process.		
Initiative 8		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Contribute to Calgary's environmental sustainability by lowering greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through the conversion of fleet vehicles to electric vehicles.			
UPDATE 	PDS is moving forward with pilot testing an existing full Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) fleet unit out of Whitehorn to facilitate real-world consumption and driver acceptance testing. This unit is expected to be deployed by the second half of the year. Additionally, progress has been made in establishing city sites capable of supporting dedicated PDS-unit charging using either existing infrastructure or relatively simple upgrades. Recommendations are expected to be completed by the end of July and will support early 2025 EV pilot deployment.		
Initiative 9		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Improve convenience for customers and save fuel by enhancing inspection services through the use of remote video inspection.			
UPDATE 	The Remote Video Inspection Service (RVI) was expanded by extending working hours and the scope of inspections offered. These extended hours and expanded scope were communicated through industry partners such as The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD).		
Initiative 10		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Improve employee engagement through a sustained and meaningful coaching and development program.			
UPDATE 	With demand for permitting and inspection services continuing to rise, the City has made concerted efforts to staff key leadership roles by promoting experienced employees. To prepare for the 2023 National Building Code coming in effect in Q2, our staff received comprehensive training to fully understand all code adjustments. Additionally, the City has partnered with SAIT to provide training on the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings (NECB). The City has also expanded the codes office which continues to support our officers with communication and interpretation of building codes.		
Initiative 11		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Act on the intent of Truth and Reconciliation by continuing to grow our partnership with Siksika Nation.			
UPDATE 	After a productive meeting with the Siksika Nation in May 2023, we made concerted efforts to establish ongoing communication channels. Regrettably, we did not receive any responses or updates. Throughout the year, we persisted with monthly emails and also sought guidance from the City's Indigenous Affairs office. Unfortunately, maintaining active engagement has posed significant challenges. As a result, by the end of 2023, we made the decision to temporarily		

	suspend our efforts. We continue to monitor communication channels and remain optimistic about the potential for future collaboration.	
Initiative 12	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
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.		
UPDATE 	PDS People Committee delivers on the departmental goal "Our People". In Q1&2 BU's completed Corporate Employee Survey Action Plans through engagement and listening addressed respect, inclusion, and equity. BU's are working now to understand current state and prepare for engagement on development of EDIB workplans. The April and May leader connect sessions focused on talent acquisition and safety for leaders both of which include inclusion and belonging. This January saw the launch of the second "Seasons for Reconciliation" and continued work on the Indigenous Cultural Heat Map project.	



Service Updates on Financial Performance

Net Operating Budget and Actuals
as of June 30, 2024



Operating Budget Updates - 2024 YTD net operating budget vs actuals:

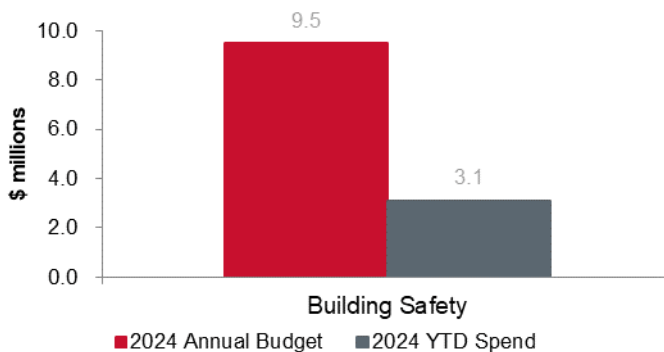
Building Safety has no operating budget variance for the reporting period. Building Safety is a self-supported service line and any operating surplus or deficit would be contributed to the Planning & Development Sustainment Reserve.

The operating budget is driven by customer demand for permits and inspections based on the cyclical variation in construction sector activity. Staffing levels are managed based on the highs and lows of these cycles.

The service faces an operational risk where code revisions result in an influx of permit applications prior to revised codes adoption. In the first half of 2024, service demand grew over 20 per cent from the previous year. The service is facing a challenge addressing increased workloads to review applications, issue permits, and perform inspections. Additional staff have been added to key areas of the business, and work hours were extended for operational staff to meet this demand.

The service has successfully granted occupancy on 28 per cent more housing units than during the same period in 2023, and also successfully launched an incentive program for homeowners to build and register secondary suites. The service also prioritized customer service and service quality, launching an internal call centre for inspection requests, and also expanding the codes office to improve interpretation and communication of current building codes.

Capital Budget and Spend as of June 30,
2024



Capital Budget Updates - 2024 total capital budget vs 2024 YTD spend:

Building Safety has spent 32.6 per cent of the 2024 approved capital budget, funded from the Planning & Development Sustainment Reserve.

In 2024, the capital expenditures have been used to deliver on three priorities:

\$1.6M has been spent on vehicle acquisition, with a plan on track to have vehicles arrive this year to maintain the optimal level of fleet for field staff.

\$1.2M was spent on innovation and continuous improvement projects related to customer notification, code enforcement, and the inspection booking system. Customer notifications will improve staff productivity in reviewing permit applications, which will help the service manage operational risk related to influxes of applications. This work is also anticipated to improve timeline performance for building safety approvals. \$0.3M of this \$1.2M was spent in support to improvements to the Business Licensing service. A budget adjustment will ensure that such improvements are tracked in the Business Licensing capital budget in the future.

\$0.3M was spent to advance the digitization of historic paper documents and plans related to permits and inspections, which is anticipated to increase ease of access to information for both staff and customers. The request-for-proposals has been sent out to potential vendors.