

Business Licensing

Led by: Director of Development, Business & Building Services

Service Description

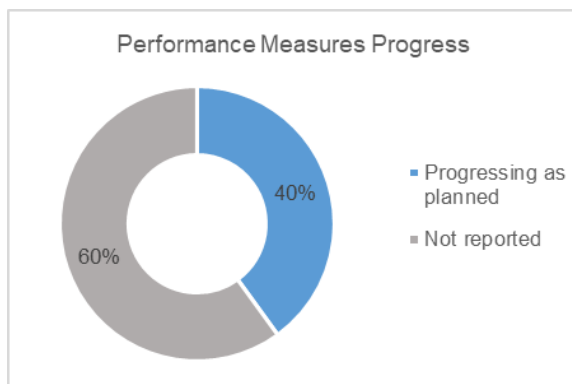
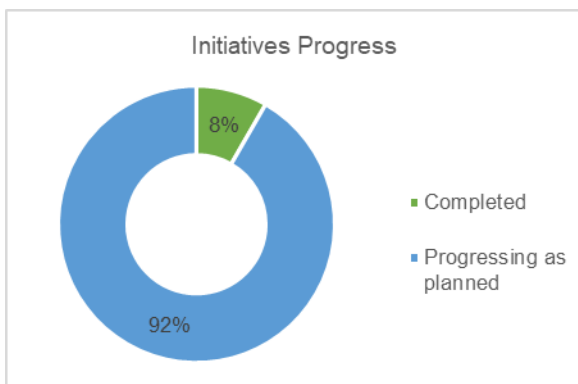
Business Licensing ensures that businesses are licensed, safe and able to open, grow and invest in Calgary. Business Licensing maintains relevant bylaws to ensure Calgarians' expectations for safety and consumer protection are met. Business licensing peace officers play a key role by supporting and educating businesses to ensure compliance with bylaws and provincial statutes.

Service Updates

Key service results

- The percentage of business licences meeting their timeline commitments has kept pace in the face a 22 per cent increase in new commercial business applications and a corresponding 19 per cent increase in commercial licences issued.
- We have seen an increase in both the number of customer surveys submissions and results. Peaking at 92.5 per cent, the average rate of satisfaction was 91 per cent, based on responses from 491 completed surveys.
- Videos, webinars, and awareness campaigns remain effective in engaging and communicating with current and potential business licensing customers. Notably, there were 8,167 visits and 9,283 views on the Home & Small Business Webinars webpage.
- In 2022, Council unanimously voted to approve funding from the Council Innovation Fund to engage the U of C in a multi-year study to improve how short-term rentals are regulated in Calgary. Since the collaboration, the What We Heard Report: Phase 1 and Final Report has been received. We are now preparing Phase 2 engagement and developing policy recommendations to present to Council in 2024.

Progress summary



Risk(s) impacting the progress

Regulation impacts of sharing economies
Economic impacts of sharing economies
Regulation Fatigue



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

➡ Progressing as planned

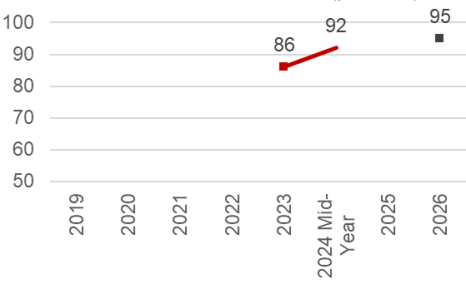
⬅ Not progressing as planned

Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

Status

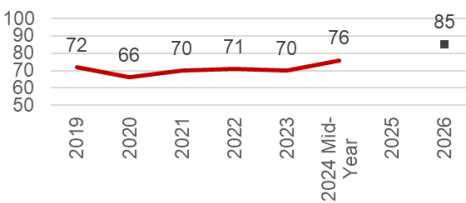
PM 2: Customer Satisfaction (per cent)



Peaking at 92.5 per cent in May 2024, the average rate of satisfaction in 2024 Mid-Year was 91 per cent, based on responses from 491 completed surveys. Notably, we have seen a significant increase in both the number of customer surveys submitted and the positive survey results. Addressing areas of opportunities identified through survey feedback, such as intakes, and enhancing file management processes and accountability, will be the primary focus and motivation in pursuit of the determined 2026 target of 96 per cent satisfaction.



PM 3: Licence Issuance Timeline (per cent of business licence applications where issuance timeline commitments were met)



As the volume of licences has steadily increased, the percentage of business licenses meeting their timeline commitments has kept pace. This performance extends to commercial licensing as well, noting a 22 per cent increase in new applications.

The average performance rate for the first five months of 2024 of 76 per cent has shown a significant increase compared to the same period in the previous year of 69.9 per cent. This upward trend shows our efforts are effective, but there's still room for improvement, highlighting the need for ongoing refinement of processes based on customer feedback.





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: 
Help businesses open on time by educating them on what they need to do to get a business licence, and by providing fast and predictable timelines that are measured and monitored with clear metrics.			
UPDATE 	The Business Experience Improvement Program continues to support businesses by allowing applicants to work directly with a licensing representative. Through this personalized approach, representatives educate applicants and support their progress. From Jan-May 2024, the team assisted more applicants, with a year-over-year growth of 22% in the same period for new commercial BL applications. Webinars have also proven effective, with increases in both the number and participation rates. Most notably, the Home-Based Food Business webinar had a record 709 registrants.		
Initiative 2		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Provide customer service that is knowledgeable, prompt, and tailored to different business types, ensuring sufficient information is always available and accessible.			
UPDATE 	Ongoing and formalized training for the business licensing teams continues to evolve, offering increased on-the-job learning to enhance knowledge retention. This initiative, supported by effective communication materials and robust file management, provides front line workers with more hands-on practice, helping them become more knowledgeable. Training begins with basic applications to build a strong information base and then expands into the specifics of different business types and more complex situations.		
Initiative 3		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Improve communication with the business community by focusing on clearly communicating the relevant information that is required for a business customer to be successful in their journey and the internal information to staff in order for them to deliver a consistent and fast service.			
UPDATE 	Webinars for business owners remain effective in engaging customers as both the number of webinars and participant engagement have increased. Notably, from Jan 1–June 30, there were 8,167 visits and 9,283 views on the Home & Small Business Webinars webpage. Additionally, with the expansion of the Business Experience Improvement Program, customers receive clear, consistent, and expedited communication throughout their journey, with a designated representative providing customized support, identifying potential issues, and serving as a single touchpoint for specific inquiries.		
Initiative 4		Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Make it easier for businesses to navigate getting a business licence through the Business Experience Improvement program (a one-stop support for business applicants) by expanding it to more business sectors.			
UPDATE 	The Business Experience Improvement Program has been expanded to support all business sectors that require a business licence. Business Licensing tracks and compares the number of licences issued to comparable municipalities. This comparison helps to inform whether Calgary is overregulated compared to other municipalities. Comparing to other municipalities helps to establish and maintain a baseline of standards so that Calgary is viewed as a desirable city to own and operate your own business while living and playing here.		

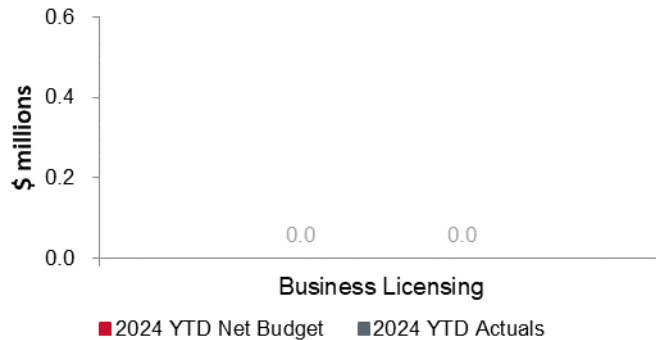
Initiative 5	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Provide a more tailored customer service, including process improvements, specialized education by business type or need, and targeted communication by taking a customer-focused approach to delivering our service through proactive engagement with business and enhanced customer service data.		
UPDATE 	<p>The Business Licence Research Project final report was completed May 2024, gaining a deeper understanding of customer experiences when obtaining business licenses and permits. Key findings included applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Had positive experiences dealing with City staff. - Are highly satisfied with the process of having a fire inspection completed. - Turn to multiple sources for information about applying for a business licence, from The City to the internet to word of mouth. <p>We will look to implement research recommendations in the second half of 2024 to improve upon challenges and pain points.</p>	
Initiative 6	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Respond to emerging markets and changing legislation by developing adaptable processes that can be expanded or adjusted to include new business types, including new sectors in the shared economy (e.g., short-term rentals, waste & recycling businesses, home-based childcare).		
UPDATE 	<p>The short-term rental (STR) market has grown and evolved, along with regulations since the adoption of STR rules in February 2020. As part of the Urban Alliance partnership, The City is collaborating with the University of Calgary on a multi-year STR study. This will provide the evidence necessary to enhance the regulatory modernization process for the market. Additionally, we continue to look for opportunities to engage with Calgary's real estate industry, offering information sessions on business licensing requirements for STR.</p>	
Initiative 7	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Enable a vibrant and safe business sector by reviewing the Business Licence Bylaw for gaps and opportunities and recommending changes to Council, as identified by the Financial Task Force to modernize our approach.		
UPDATE 	<p>New business license requirements were introduced on January 1, 2024, to strengthen the accountability of short-term rental hosts and property owners, reducing negative impacts on the community, and enhancing guest safety. Ongoing review and evaluation will ensure alignment with the Business License Bylaws. Continued collaboration with the Fire Department and Business Safety will ensure safety in short-term rentals.</p>	
Initiative 8	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Ensure that businesses see value for money in their business licence by understanding business needs, communicating what a business licence does for them and for Calgarians, and analyzing revenue and reviewing fees.		
UPDATE 	<p>Specific business types are targeted with "How To" videos, webinars, and awareness campaigns, demonstrating the value of business licenses. These interactive communications allow for increased understanding of the requirements to help owners make a more informed decision when opening. For business owners and Calgarians, a valid business licence provides value as it signifies the business has met the regulatory, safety, and other requirements to open. Furthermore, the business licensing fees are reviewed throughout the budget cycle to balance affordability, competitiveness, and value.</p>	
Initiative 9	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 

Create more ways for businesses to interact with Business Licensing services by enhancing the use of technology and digitizing processes. This includes improved self-serve functions, a fully online customer support model, digital licence, and businessMyID.		
UPDATE 	Through the Business Experience Improvement Program, business licence applicants are encouraged to leverage the online and self-serve functions to complete their business licence applications. Furthermore, business licence representatives educate customers on the benefits of creating a MyID business account. The percentage of online applications continues to increase. There will be ongoing conversations with IT to enhance the functionality of MyID business accounts in the second half of 2024.	
Initiative 10	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Improve availability of information for businesses to understand what buildings might be suitable for their business through data sharing and business maps.		
UPDATE 	External (i.e., website) and internal information undergo regular review and updates to ensure it provides the most current information for business licence applicants. The business licensing team remains actively involved in the ongoing Land Use Bylaw review. Furthermore, efforts are concentrated on enhancing the usability of the Business Map and seamlessly integrating it into the user experience.	
Initiative 11	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Meet Calgarians' desire for safety and consumer protection by monitoring compliance with bylaws and provincial statutes. Our first goal is voluntary resolution through education, using enforcement where it is necessary.		
UPDATE 	Through the Business Experience Improvement Program, representatives ensure business licence applicants are informed of all safety, regulatory, and other requirements related to their specific business applications, and ensure these requirements are met prior to issuing a business licence. Furthermore, supported by the June 2024 launch of the One City Records Management System, citizen complaints are now streamlined, offering a comprehensive approach that enhances efficiency and effectiveness for our enforcement and peace officers.	
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 commitment to (our employees).		
UPDATE 	Planning & Development Services' People Committee delivers on "Our People" departmental goal. Business Units (BUs) completed Corporate Employee Survey Action Plans in Q1/Q2, addressing respect, inclusion and equity. BUs are assessing current state and will engage employees on equity, diversity, inclusion & belonging workplan development. The second "Seasons for Reconciliation" series was launched in January. Work continues on the Indigenous Cultural Heat Map project. The April & May leader connect sessions focused on talent acquisition and safety for leaders, focusing on inclusion & belonging.	



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:

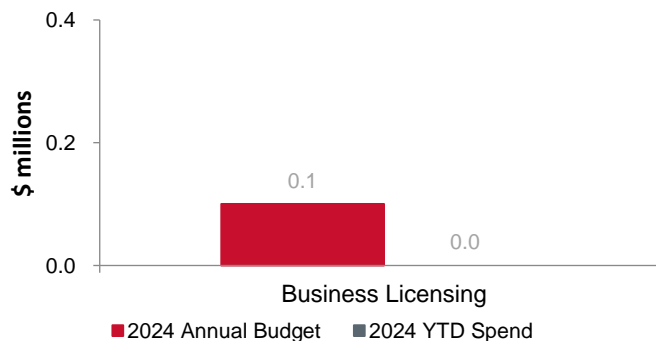
Business Licensing has no operating budget variance for the reporting period.

Business Licensing is a self-supported service line and any operating surplus or deficit would be contributed to the Business Licence Sustainment Reserve.

Key service accomplishments are as follows:

- The percentage of business licences meeting their timeline commitments has kept pace in the face of a 22 per cent increase in new commercial business applications and a corresponding 19 per cent increase in commercial licences issued.
- Enhanced communication with the business community was achieved through engaging videos, informative webinars, and impactful awareness campaigns.
- The launch of the One City Records Management System has streamlined citizen complaints, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness for our enforcement and peace officers.

Capital Budget and Spend as of June 30, 2024



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

Business Licensing service line has spent 0 per cent of the 2024 approved capital budget, however this will be spent in the coming months as costs for the One City Records Management System are charged to the Emergency Management & Community Safety business unit.

Annual acquisition and lifecycle of equipment required for Business Licensing Peace Officers is being done under a larger program for which Bylaw Education & Compliance is the steward.

Work is ongoing to support to improvements to the Business Licensing service. This included the upcoming migration to a third-party enterprise application platform (JBOSS) for a more efficient digital automated financial model system, which will reduce manual financial reconciliation activities. Reducing the need for manual invoice creation will prevent delays in processing applications and refunds for business customers. A budget adjustment will ensure that such improvements are tracked in the Business Licensing capital budget in the future.