

2023

Building Services Statistical Report



Building Services

Planning and Building Services

Infrastructure, Development and
Environment

City of Guelph

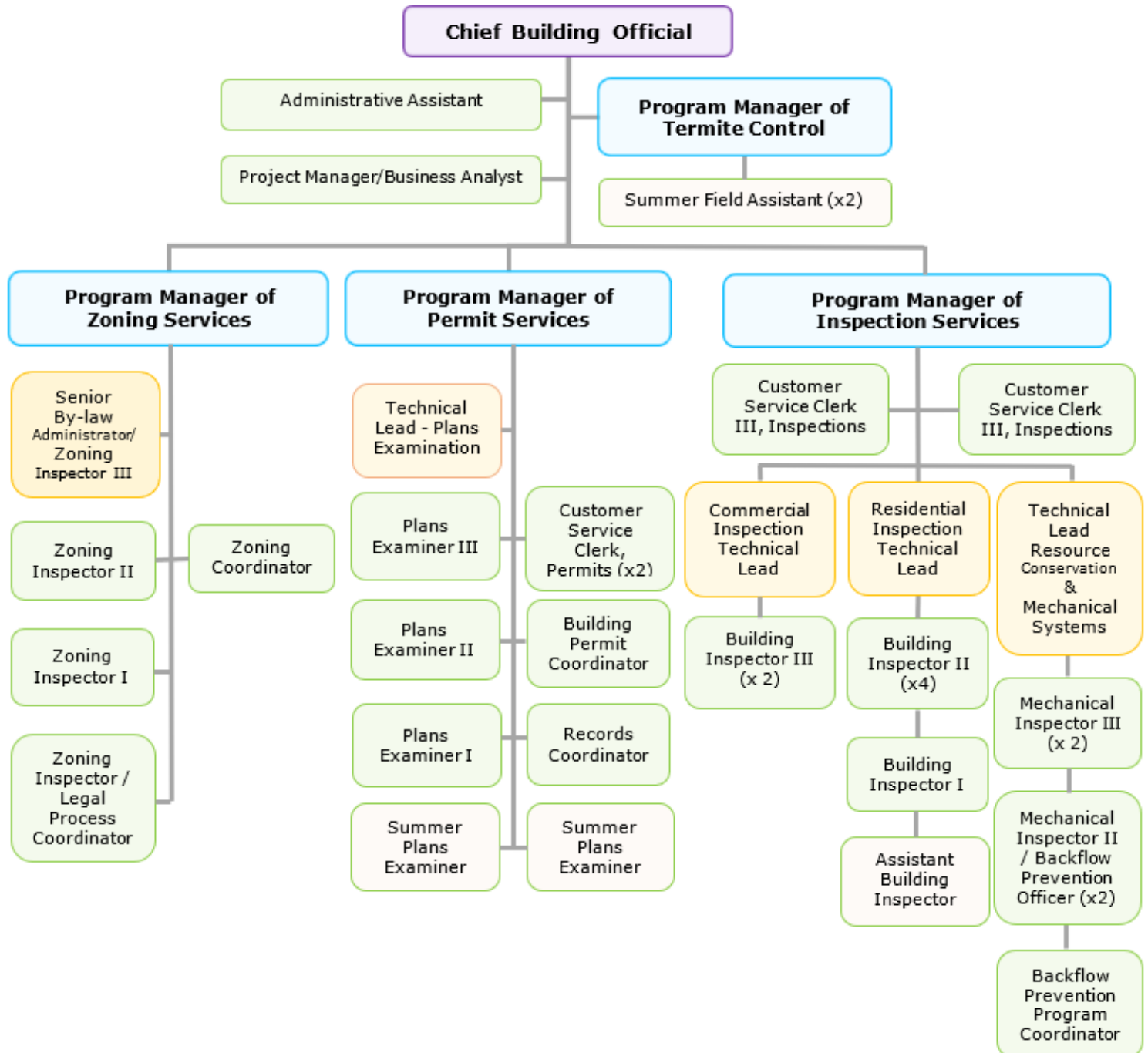
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ADMINISTRATION

Divisional Structure

Building Services is a division within the Planning and Building Services department of the Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise service area. See the staff organizational chart below.



PERMITS

Introduction

The Permit Services team is responsible for accepting, reviewing and issuing building permits for all construction and demolition projects within the City of Guelph. In 2023, this team within Building Services had nine full-time staff and two temporary summer Plans Examiners.

Permit Services also collects applications, fees and deposits on behalf of other service areas of the City, including curb cut applications, development charges, community benefit charges and parkland dedication fees. Managing filing systems for both Planning Services and Engineering Services is another service provided. Property information reports, routine disclosure requests and freedom of information requests are also handled by the Permit Services team.

Building permits are issued for all sizes and types of projects from a deck or shed, to a high-rise residential or large industrial building. The Province mandates that building permit applications be reviewed within set time frames which range from 10 to 30 working days.

The [Guelph Permit and Application System](#) allows all types of building permit applications to be submitted online at any time. This also allows customers to review the status of their permits at their convenience.

The Permit Services team also has a kiosk located at their customer service desk to allow in-person assistance. The kiosk is available to those customers who may not have access to a computer or other electronic device to submit their application.

The Ontario Building Code (OBC) is a regulation made under the Building Code Act. The focus of this provincially legislated service is to ensure the technical requirements of the OBC are met. The OBC contains minimum provisions respecting the functionality of buildings with reference to safety, health, fire protection, accessibility, energy efficiency and structural sufficiency. Building permit applications are reviewed by the Permit Services team to confirm that the minimum requirements of the OBC are met, and to ensure that all other applicable laws have been complied with.

Major Building Projects

The number of larger construction projects has a significant impact on the overall figures associated with construction values, new residential units and building permit revenues. This is due in large part to the major building projects listed below.

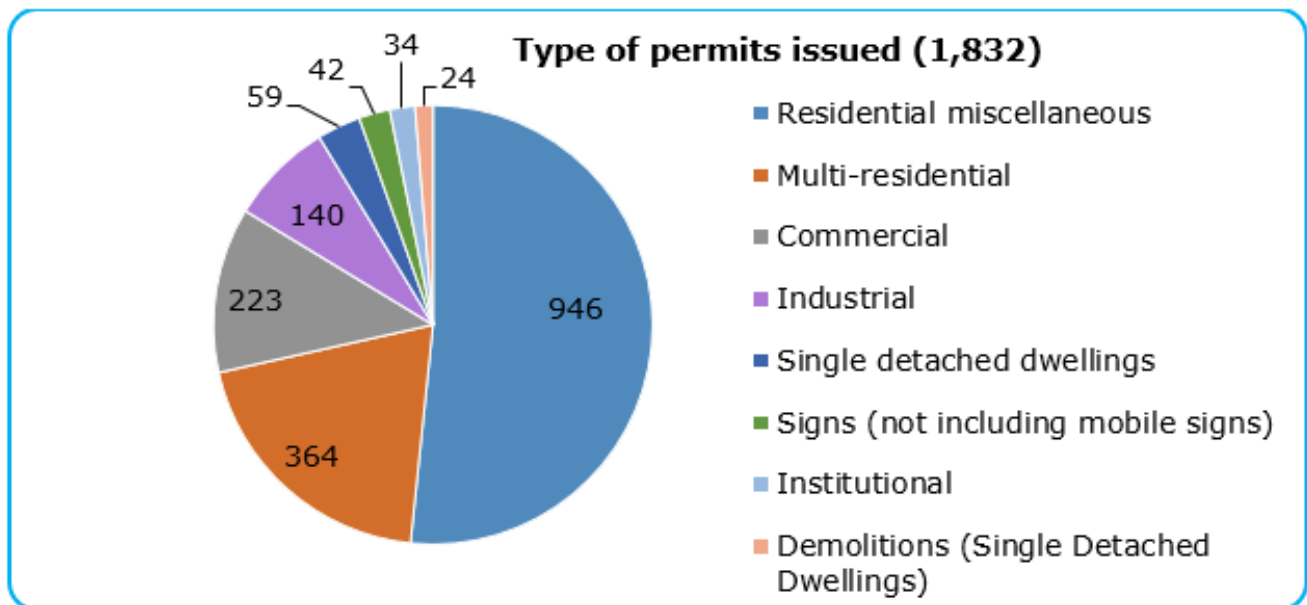
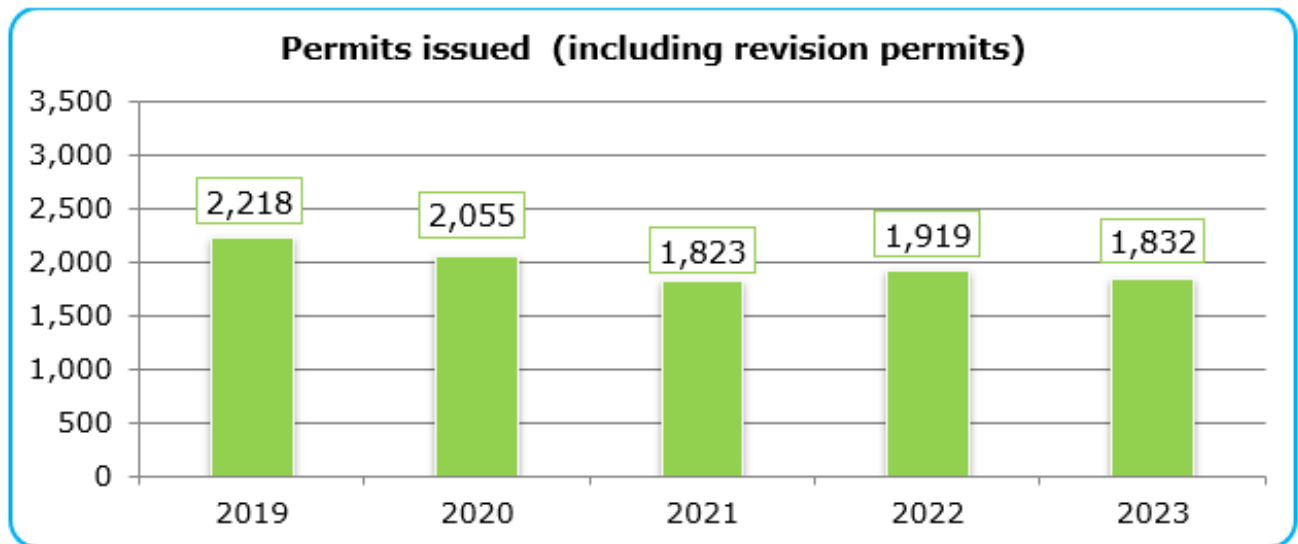
The top five projects alone accounted for more than a quarter of the total construction value of the 1,832 permits issued in 2023.

Description	Value
55 Baker Street Three-storey public library (downtown)	\$74,000,000
1882 Gordon Street Eight-storey residential condo building (180 units)	\$70,045,000
166 College Avenue West Six-storey mixed use residential building (110 units)	\$38,000,000
181 Elmira Road South Eight-storey apartment building (138 units)	\$34,500,000
191 Elmira Road South Eight-storey apartment building (138 units)	\$34,500,000
100 Starwood Drive 11-storey apartment building (135 units)	\$22,860,000
90 Starwood Drive 11 storey apartment building (120 units)	\$21,600,000
65 Independence Place Addition to existing industrial building	\$20,000,000
540 Hanlon Creek Boulevard One-storey industrial building	\$20,000,000
587-591 Hanlon Creek Boulevard Five two-storey industrial buildings	\$15,000,000
460 Stone Road East (University of Guelph) One-storey research, teaching and food production facility	\$10,868,000
550 Hanlon Creek Boulevard One-storey industrial building	\$10,860,000
110 Stevenson Street South Three-storey self-storage facility	\$10,600,000
1080 Southgate Drive One-storey industrial building	\$10,000,000
59 Independence Place One-storey industrial building	\$10,000,000

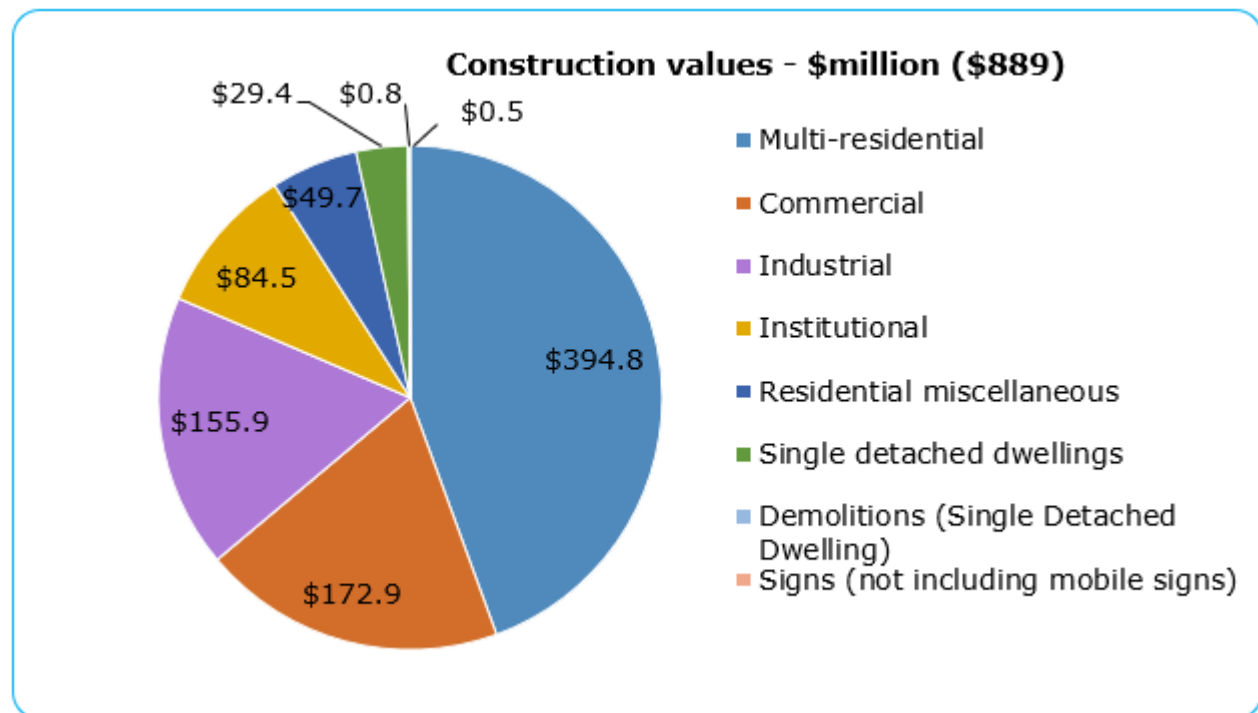
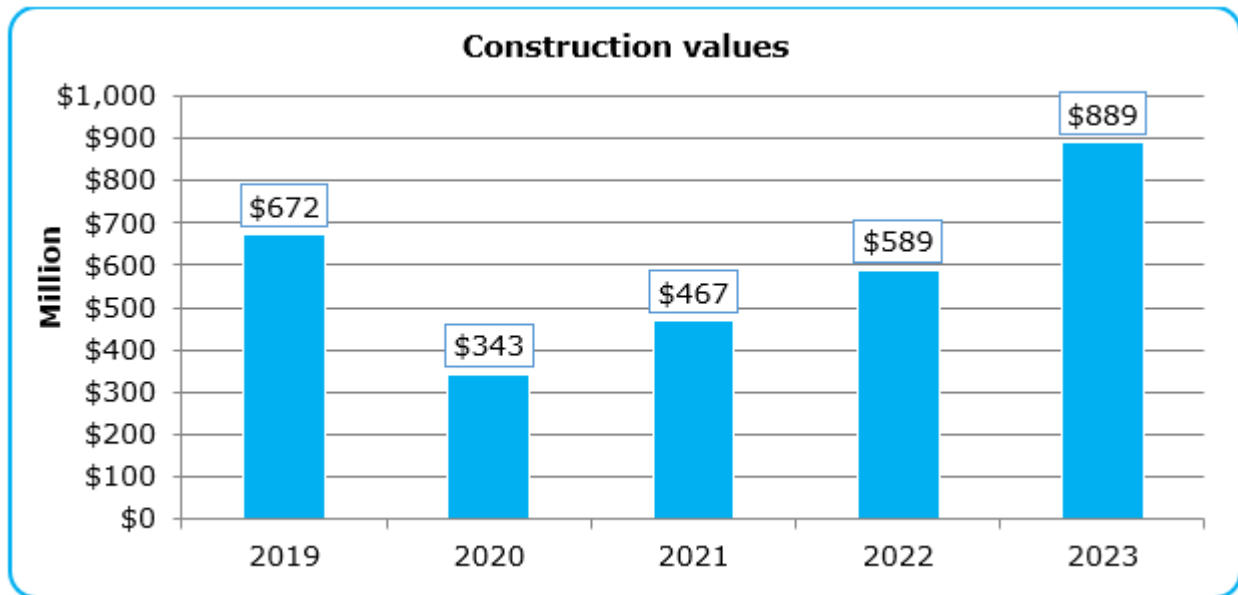
Performance Measurements

Dashboard

Building permits



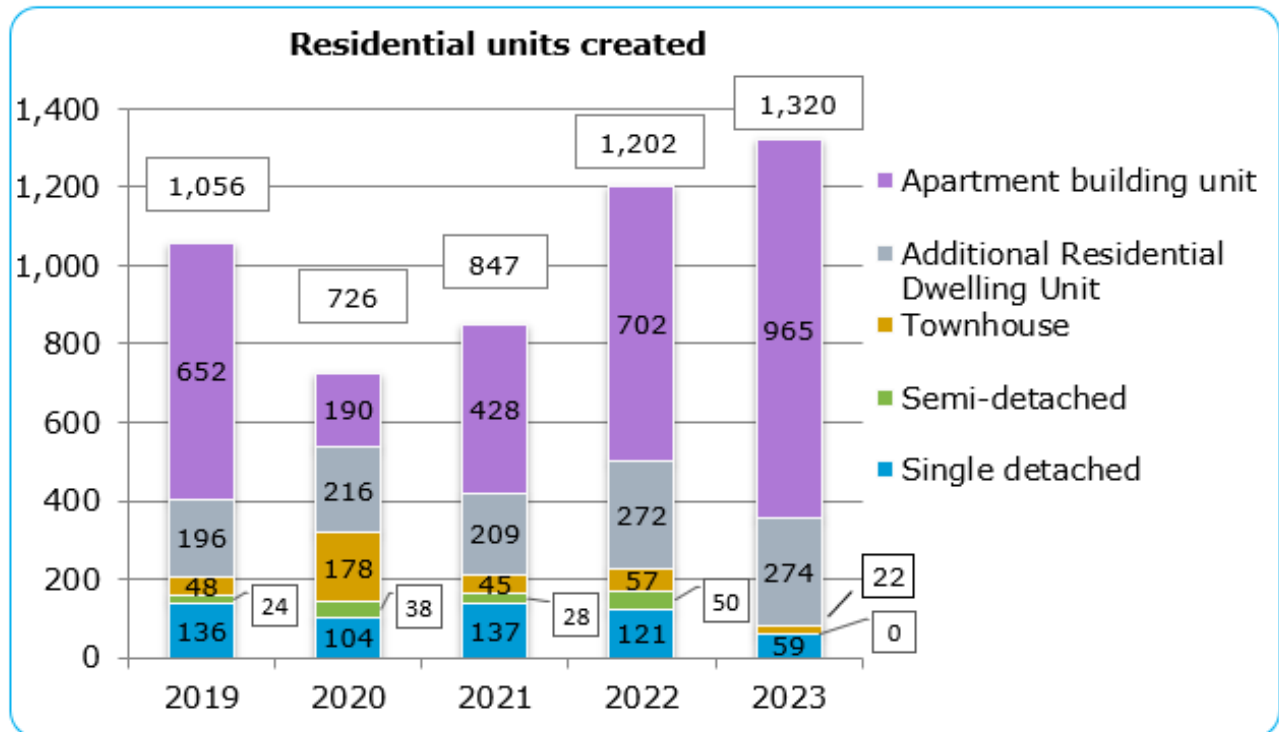
Building permits (continued)



New residential units

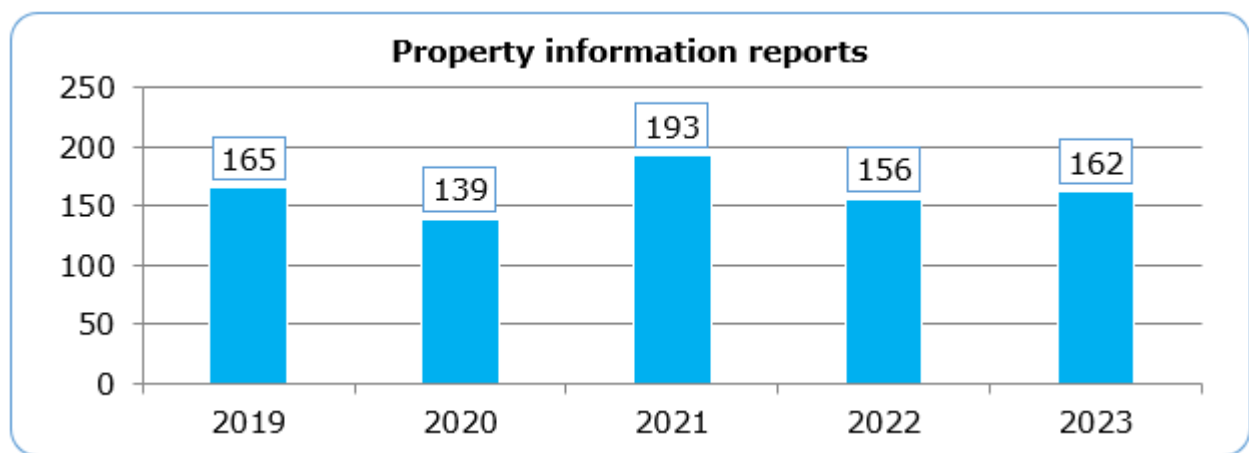
As residential intensification continues to increase, the creation of new dwellings remains focused on multi-residential units, including apartment buildings and additional residential dwelling units (ARDU's).

The 1,320 residential units created in 2023 met the housing targets set by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).



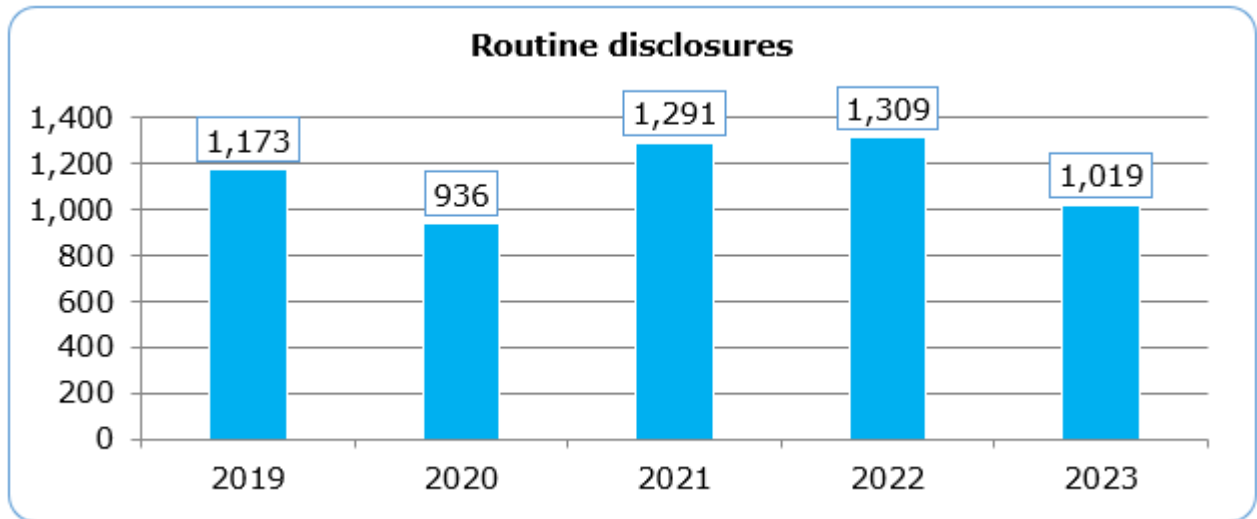
Property information reports

Property information reports, otherwise known as pre-sales, were on par with average annual volumes with the exception of 2021 when the real estate market experienced a spike in home sales due to low interest rates.



Routine disclosure (records requests)

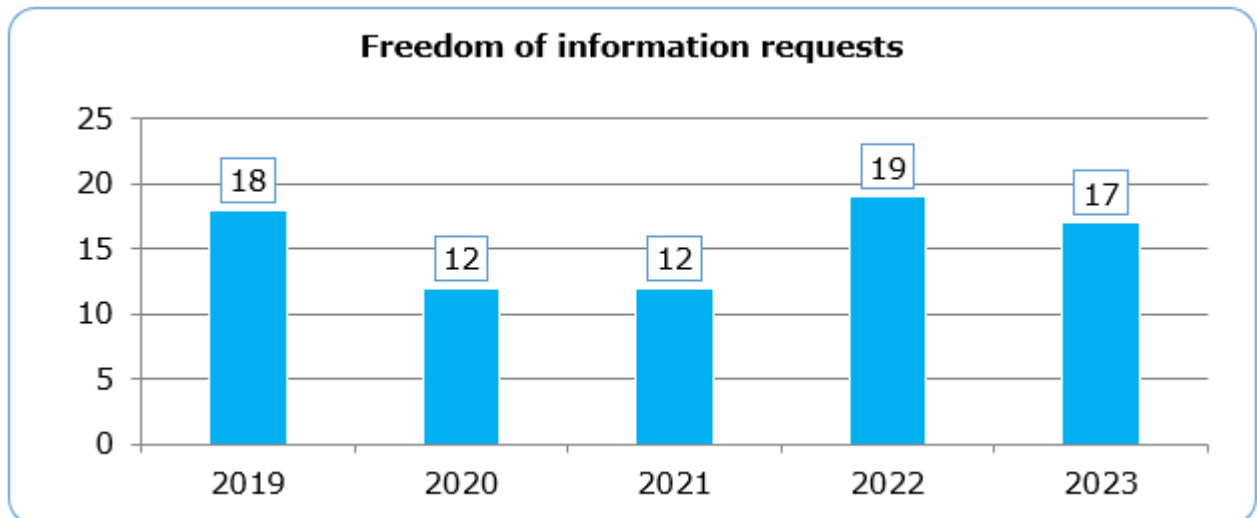
Routine disclosure is the release of certain types of administrative and operational records to building owners in response to informal requests regulated under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



Freedom of information

Freedom of information requests are made under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. They provide access to City records when routine disclosure guidelines are not met.

Freedom of Information requests are generated from the City Clerk's department.



Scorecard

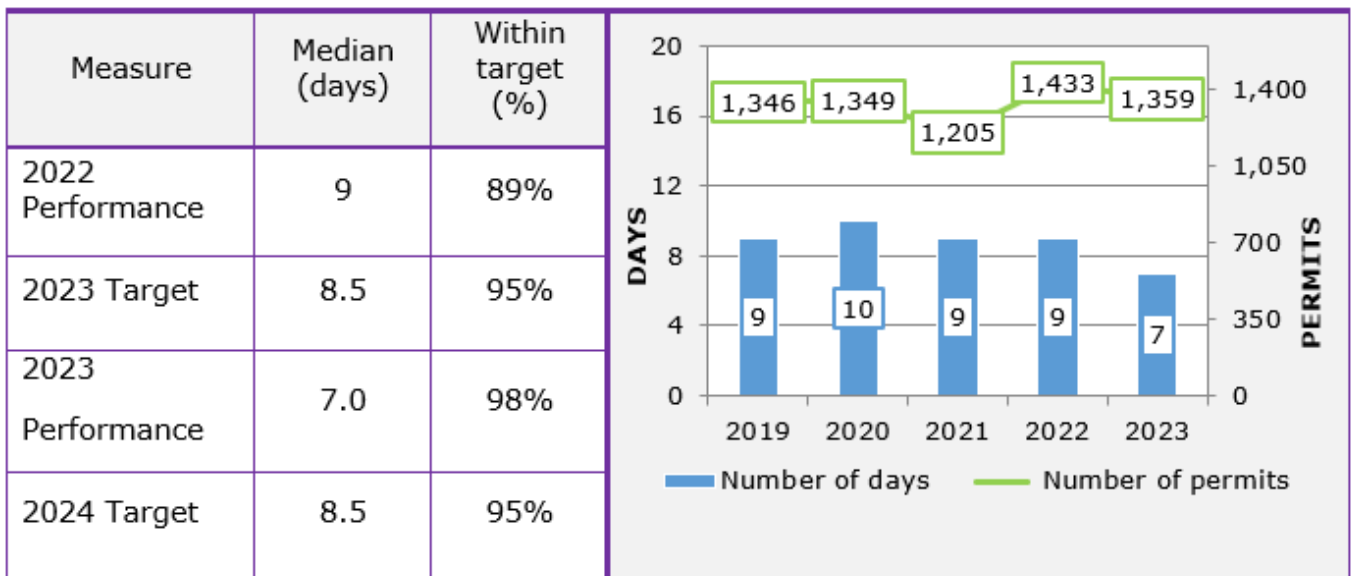
Permit Services sets performance targets to measure how well customers' needs are being met. These targets include measuring the median number of days to process building permit applications and the percentage of applications that are reviewed within provincially established turnaround times.

During the summer months, two temporary staff are typically hired to assist with the seasonally higher volume of permit applications.

The following scorecards provide a graphical representation of the Permit Services team's overall performance associated with the review of building permit applications. The targets for each permit type reflect provincially legislated timelines based on the type of building, which varies from 10 to 30 working days.

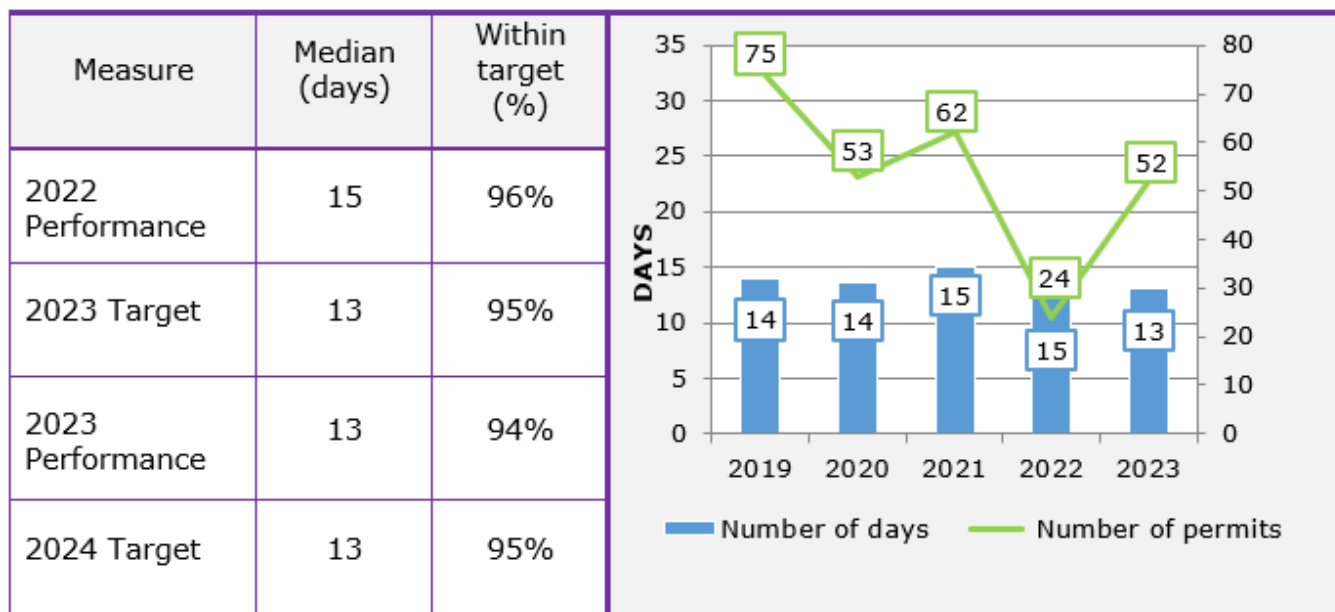
10-day permits

The following scorecard reflects 10-day permit turnaround time targets, which applies to typical residential housing including single detached houses, semi-detached houses and townhouses, as well as most associated accessory buildings. Tents regulated under the OBC also fall within the 10-day review period.



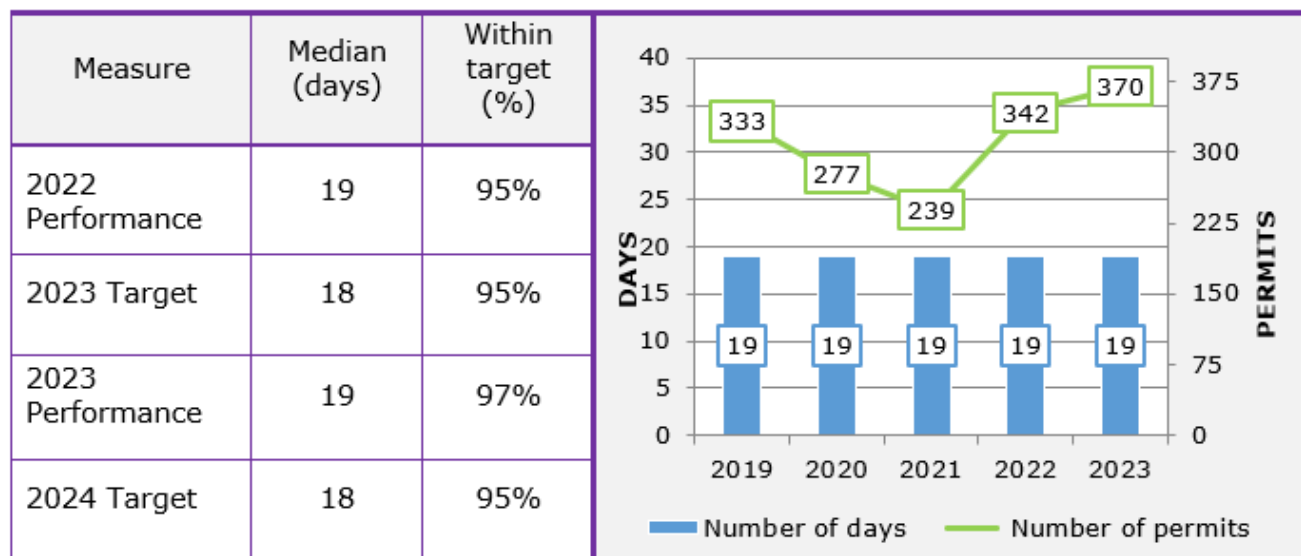
15-day permits

The following scorecard reflects 15-day permit turnaround time targets. This applies to multi-residential, commercial and industrial buildings that are not more than three storeys in building height and not more than 600m² in building area.



20-day permits

The following scorecard reflects 20-day permit turnaround time targets. This applies to multi-residential, commercial and industrial buildings that are more than three storeys in building height or more than 600m² in building area. It also applies to most assembly, care, detention and high-hazard industrial buildings.



30-day permits

Post-disaster buildings, such as hospitals and police stations, as well as buildings that exceed six storeys in height, are required to be reviewed within 30 business days. There were 21 of these building permits issued in 2023 and the average turnaround time was 21 days.



INSPECTIONS

Introduction

The Inspection Services team is responsible for all construction and demolition inspection related activity regulated by the Ontario Building Code (OBC). In addition to inspecting the construction of buildings, Inspection Services is also responsible for plumbing, HVAC and energy efficiency inspections. In 2023, this function within Building Services had 18 full-time staff – two of which are funded by Water Services through the Backflow Prevention Program – and one summer building inspector.

The OBC is a regulation made under the Building Code Act. The focus of this provincially legislated service is to ensure the technical requirements of the OBC are met. The OBC contains minimum provisions respecting the functionality of buildings with reference to safety, health, fire protection, accessibility, energy efficiency and structural sufficiency. Building inspections are performed by the Inspection Services team to ensure these minimum OBC requirements are met.

In addition to inspecting construction and demolition projects, Inspections Services also carries out swimming pool, hot tub, liquor license, daycare, and business license inspections, as well as other miscellaneous property inspections such as investigating construction without a permit, grow operations and buildings damaged by fire.

The Province legislates that building inspections are to be carried out within two business days and we are currently meeting this service level, with most being carried out within one business day. This level of service generally meets the needs of customers.

Construction of large multi-residential projects such as apartment buildings continues to increase. Often large residential apartment buildings and large complex building projects can last two years or more after permit issuance. With the current housing crisis and direction from the Provincial Government, we anticipate permits for apartment buildings to increase at a higher rate than we have seen in the past and we will require more trained staff available to conduct these inspections.

Building Inspection team members have demonstrated leadership in representing the City of Guelph both regionally, provincially and nationally in many ways, including as directors, secretaries and key representatives with the Ontario Building Officials Association (OBOA), the Ontario Plumbing Inspector's Association (OPIA), the Ontario Backflow Administrative Committee, the Mechanical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), The Ontario Municipal Inspection Advisory Committee (OMBIAC), the Standing Committee on Energy Efficiency for the National Energy Code for Buildings, the Guelph and District Homebuilders Association and CSA Working Groups.

Performance Measurements

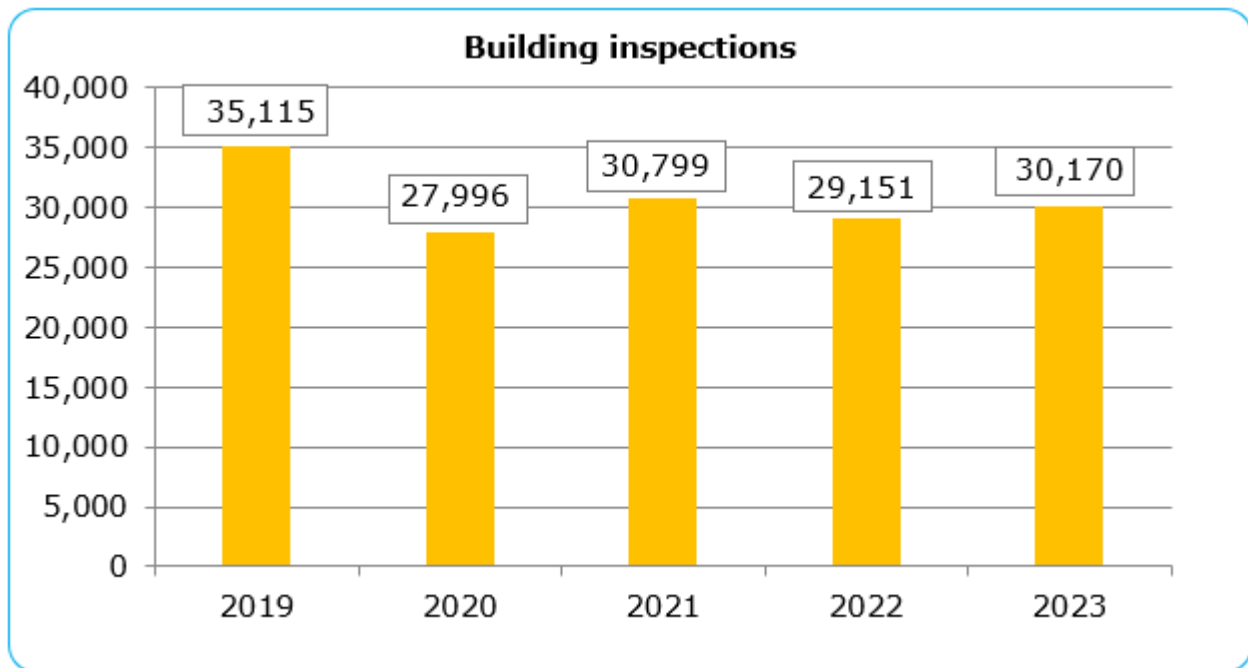
Dashboard

The number of building inspections carried out in 2023 was consistent with previous years.

Our own average monthly productivity targets for residential, commercial and mechanical inspection groups are generally being met with the exception occurring when there are vacancies. However, as expected, productivity reductions also have been observed during some periods of the mentoring and training of staff to support succession and replacement planning efforts. This effect was noted various times throughout the year in all residential, commercial and mechanical teams in 2023.

A similar impact on individual productivity levels can be anticipated in the coming years as the Inspection Services team continues to work through a number of retirements. The goal is to ensure maximum knowledge transfer within staff and a seamless transition for our customers. Most training and development of staff generally occurs during non-peak periods from October to March.

The following chart identifies the number of building inspections carried out per year.



Scorecard

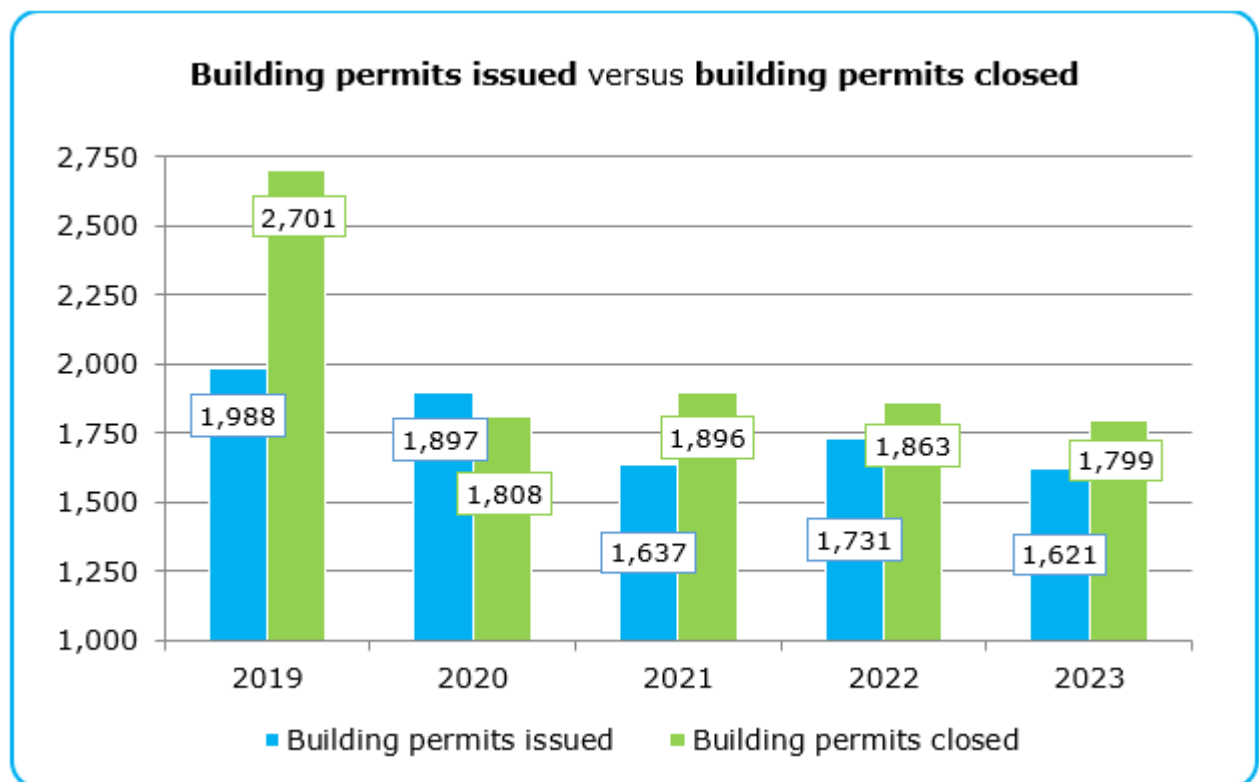
As part of the Inactive Permits Program, the Inspection Services team has a goal of closing at least as many building permits per year as are issued. The winter months are typically non-peak times for building inspections, which provides an opportunity to follow-up on inactive permits.

Efforts to close more permits than were issued in 2023 were successful. Over 170 more permits were closed than were issued in 2023. This can be attributed to the additional effort put in by the inspection team members to address inactive building permits during off peak months and the additional efforts of administrative staff to support this effort.

Nearly 1,200 more permits have been closed than issued over the past five years. This positive trend is anticipated to continue in future years but is dependent on staffing levels and construction volume. The responsibility to request inspections rests with the permit applicant. However, there is also some obligation on the part of the Building Inspection team to ensure permits get closed. In general, we focus on permits which pose the most risk to life safety first. This assists to reduce risks to citizens and the City. Progress on inactive permits with current staff levels is likely limited to an average overall reduction of between 100 and 250 permits per year over total permits issued for a given year. To make more rapid gains consideration to the hiring of a dedicated inactive inspector(s) should be considered.

The number of closed permits have been updated to accurately reflect canceled, revoked or closed permits.

** Swimming pool and hot tub permits and inspections included starting in 2023 **





ZONING

Introduction

Zoning Services is responsible for the administration and enforcement of numerous by-laws and programs with the primary focus being the City of Guelph Comprehensive Zoning By-law. The Zoning By-law regulates land use within the City, including the location and use of buildings and structures for residential, commercial, industrial, institutional and other specified uses.

In 2023, this function within Building Services had six full-time staff.

Administration and Enforcement

The primary administrative functions of Zoning Services include zoning review of building permit applications, review and issuance of sign, pool and hot tub permits, administration of the additional residential dwelling unit (accessory apartment) registration program and lodging house certifications.

Zoning Services is also responsible for the enforcement of Zoning Bylaw regulations, additional residential dwelling unit registration, signs on private property (building, freestanding and mobile), in addition to certain provisions of the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

Zoning Services has various levels of involvement in:

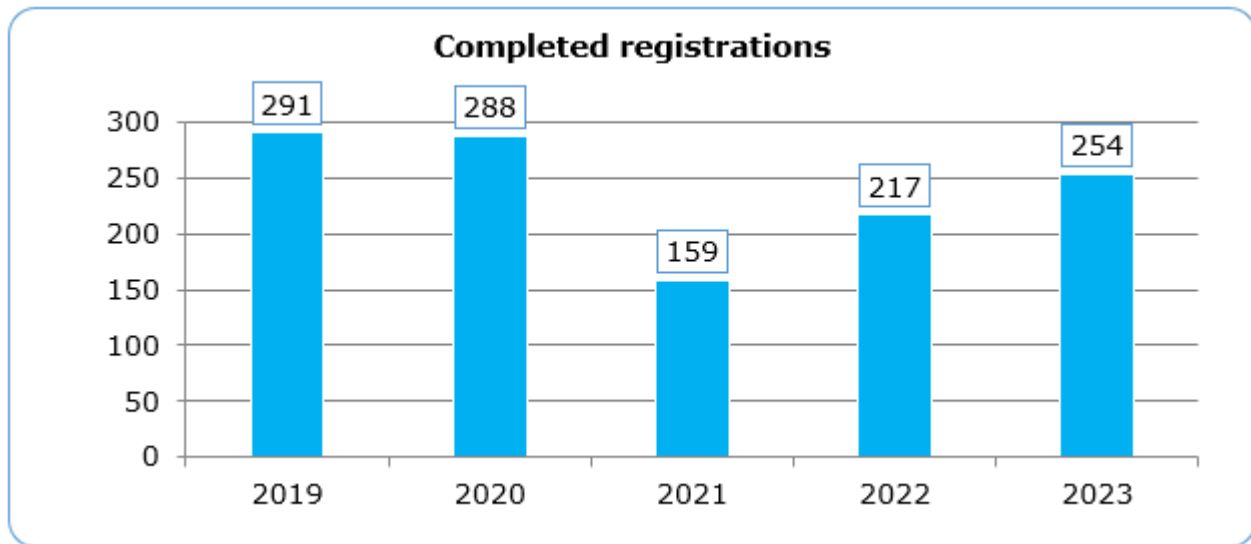
- Committee of Adjustment applications,
- the regulating of telecommunication towers,
- property information reports for real estate transactions,
- site plan approval,
- agreement releases,
- encroachment applications,
- coordination of legal matters,
- preliminary zoning review process, and
- involvement in the development of the Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw.

Shared Rental Housing

Zoning Services leads the shared rental housing initiative to improve the safety and wellbeing of tenants and residents.

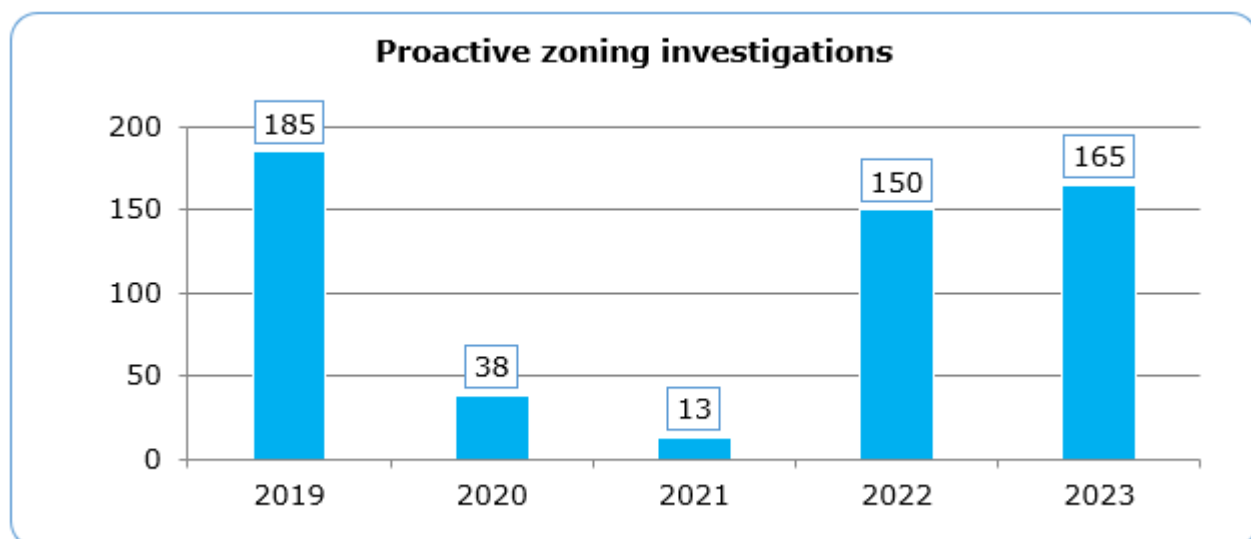
Additional Residential Dwelling Units (accessory apartments)

At the end of 2023, there were a total of 3,941 registered Additional Residential Dwelling Units (accessory apartments) within the City.



Proactive Enforcement

Proactive enforcement includes the inspection and enforcement of shared rental housing infractions. This includes additional residential dwelling units (accessory apartments), the Ontario Building Code, and zoning provisions (including lodging houses).



Recommended Approach

Staff has continued with the Council recommended approach for shared rental housing that was approved in 2014. In order to keep Council apprised of the effectiveness of the program, staff will continue to provide updates through this annual report.

Shared rental housing highlights for 2023:

- Building Services inspectors completed on-going training in aspects of the legal proceedings program
- One search warrant was enacted
- Continued communication and education initiatives to improve tenant safety
- Consistent levels of legal proceedings

Tenant Safety

Building Services continues to collaborate with key stakeholders to promote safe and legal rental accommodations.

In partnership with the University of Guelph Off-Campus Living Office, the Guelph Fire Department and City of Guelph Property Standards, the City continues to promote and offer free rental unit safety inspections year-round. This tenant safety initiative is designed to increase tenant safety awareness and to promote free rental unit safety inspections. There were 165 tenant safety inspections in 2023.

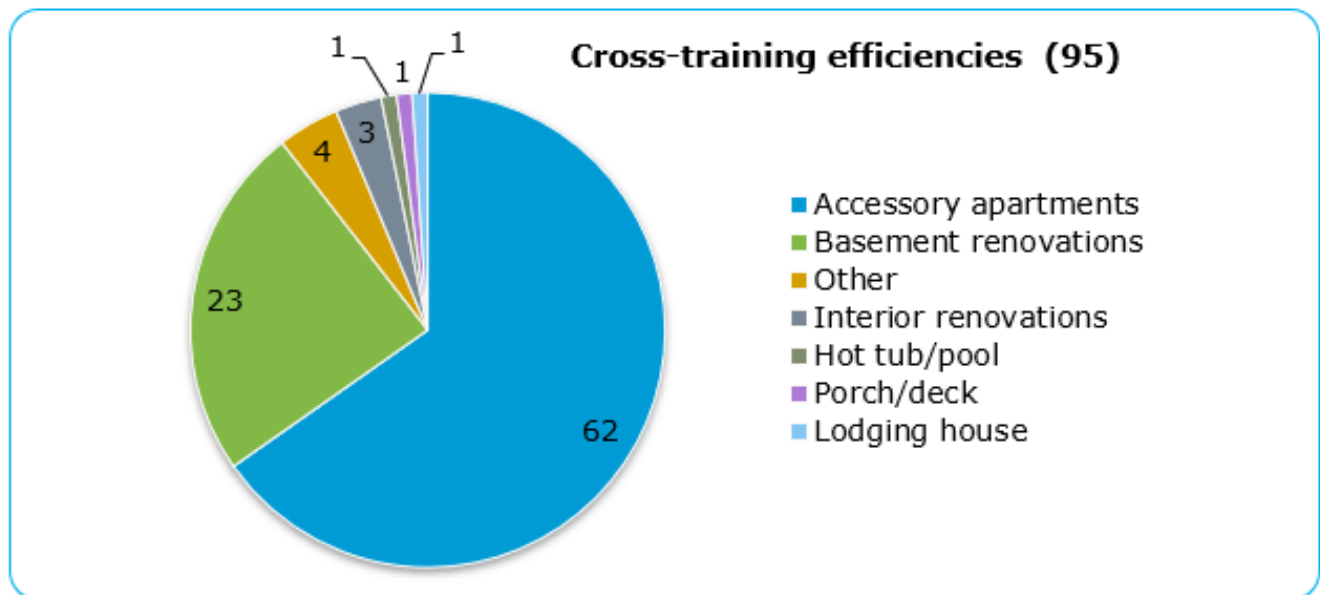
Search Warrants

Building Services established a search warrant program in 2016, including operating guidelines for the implementation of search warrants. One search warrant was enacted in 2023.

Cross-training

Cross-training zoning inspectors to also be appointed as building inspectors has resulted in significant departmental efficiencies and improved customer service.

The ability to have one inspector perform both zoning and building inspections eliminates the need for multiple inspectors to attend the same site. This assists our customers by reducing the number of inspections and allowing them to work with a single inspector to resolve any issues. In 2023, 95 proactive OBC infractions were identified by zoning inspectors.



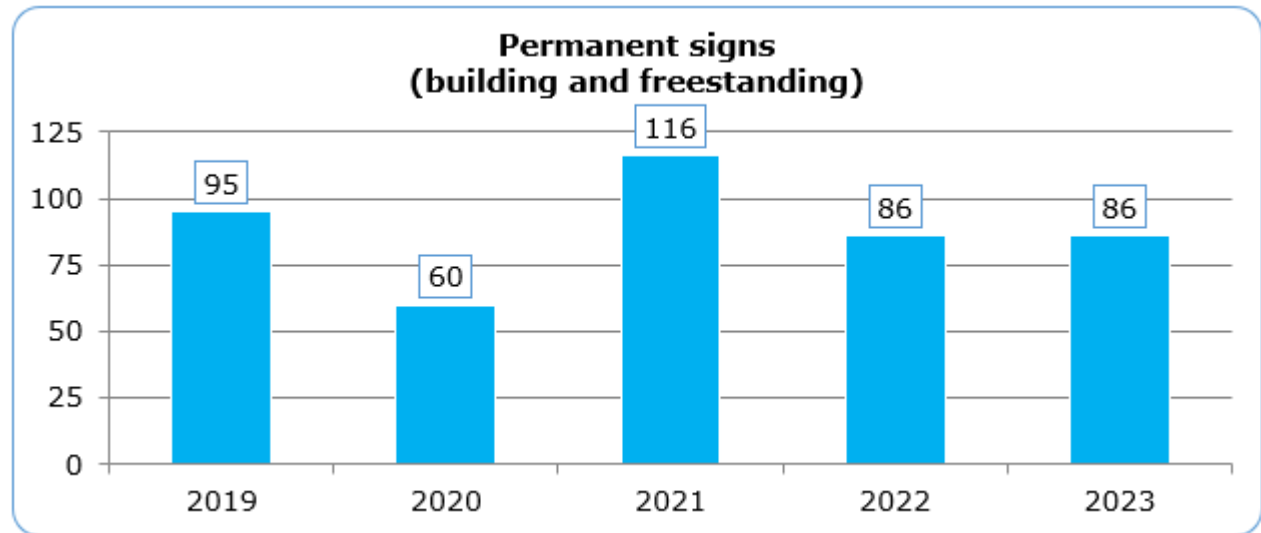
Sign Bylaw

Zoning Services administers the City's Sign Bylaw, which regulates permanent building signs, freestanding (pylon) signs, and mobile signs. In 2023, 86 permanent signs (building and freestanding) were issued, and 797 mobile signs were issued.

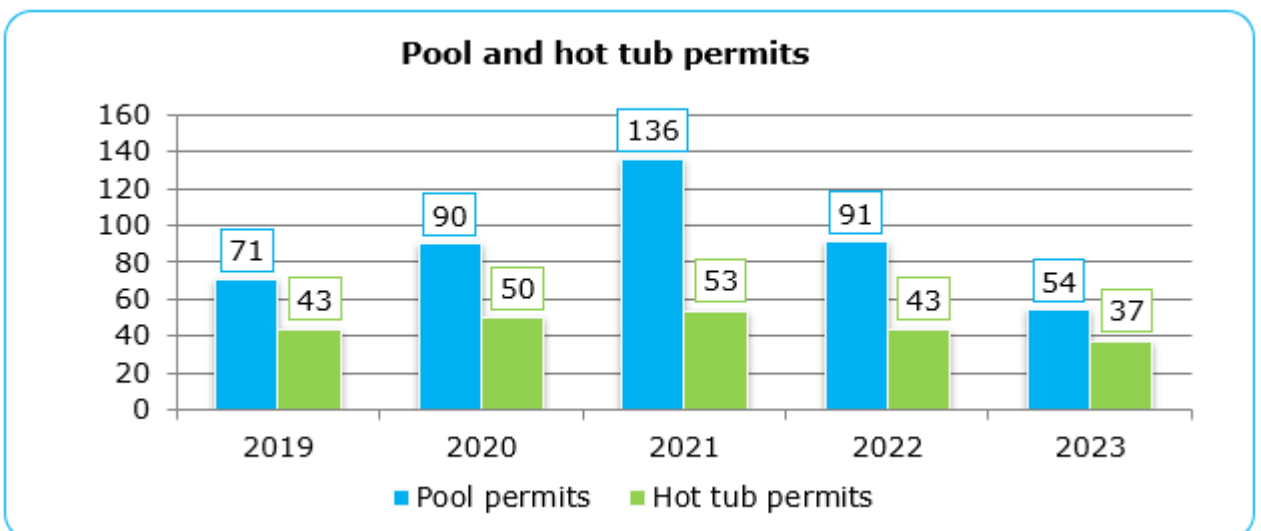
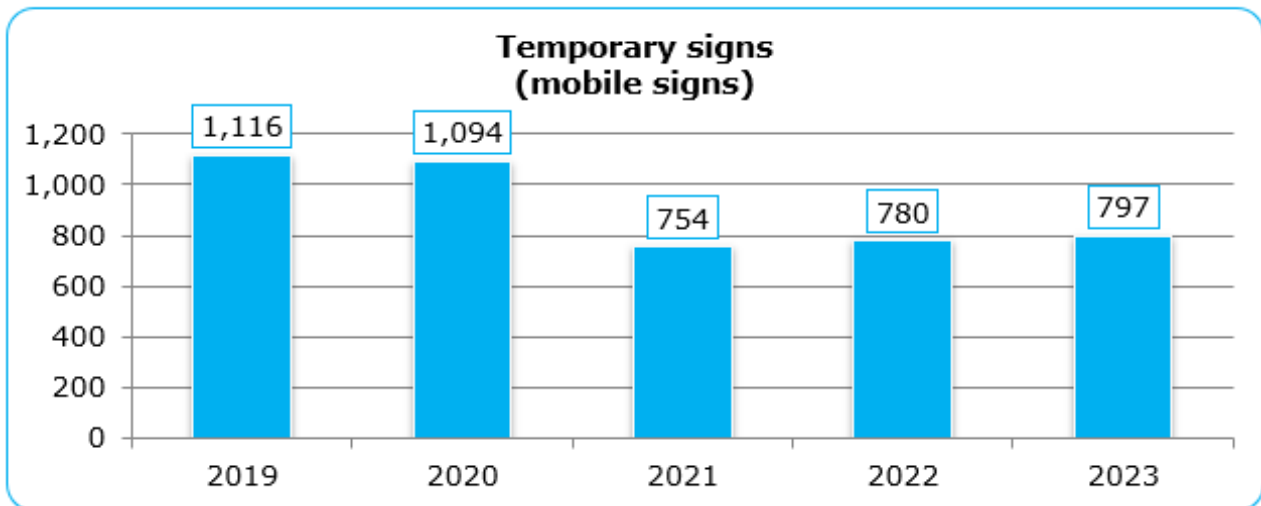
Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Bylaw

The Outdoor Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Bylaw is designed to ensure public safety of new swimming pool and hot tub installations. In 2023, 91 permits were issued under the bylaw.

Permits



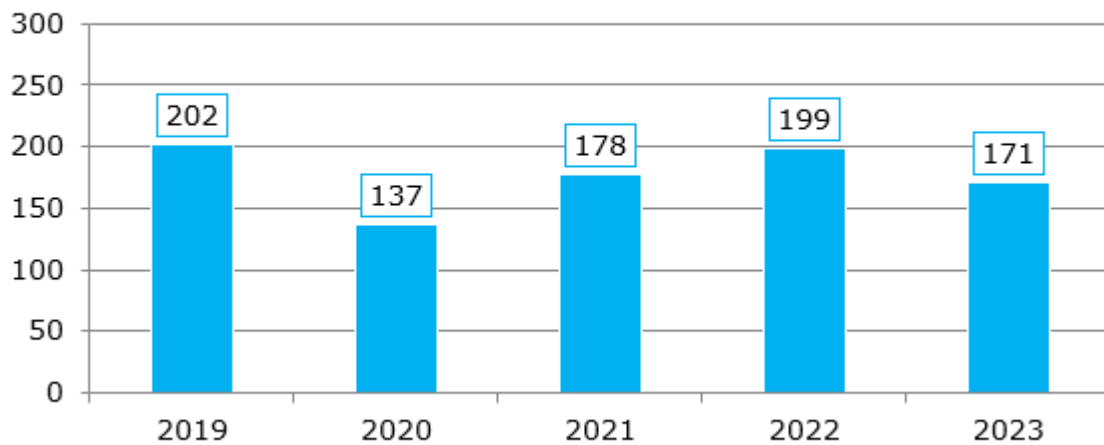
Permanent signs include Ontario Building Code signs.



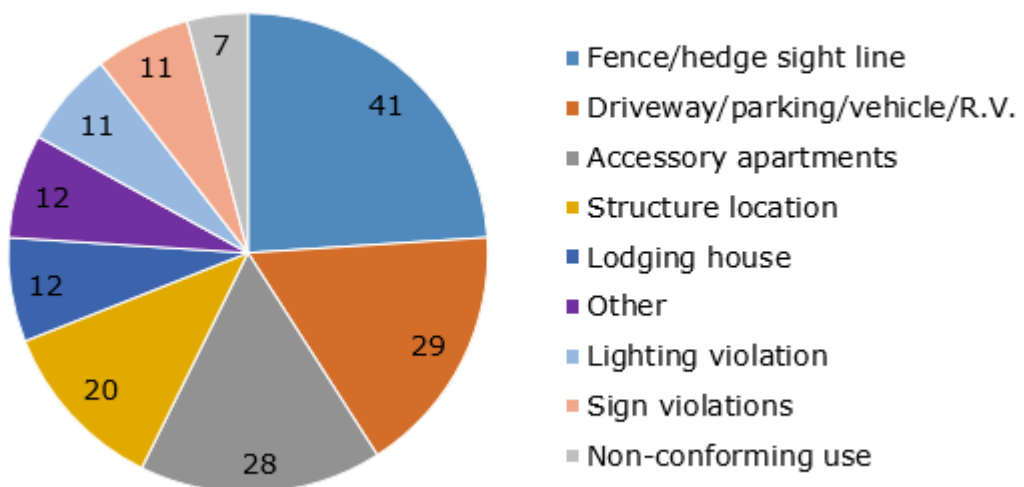
Performance Measurements

Dashboard

Zoning complaints

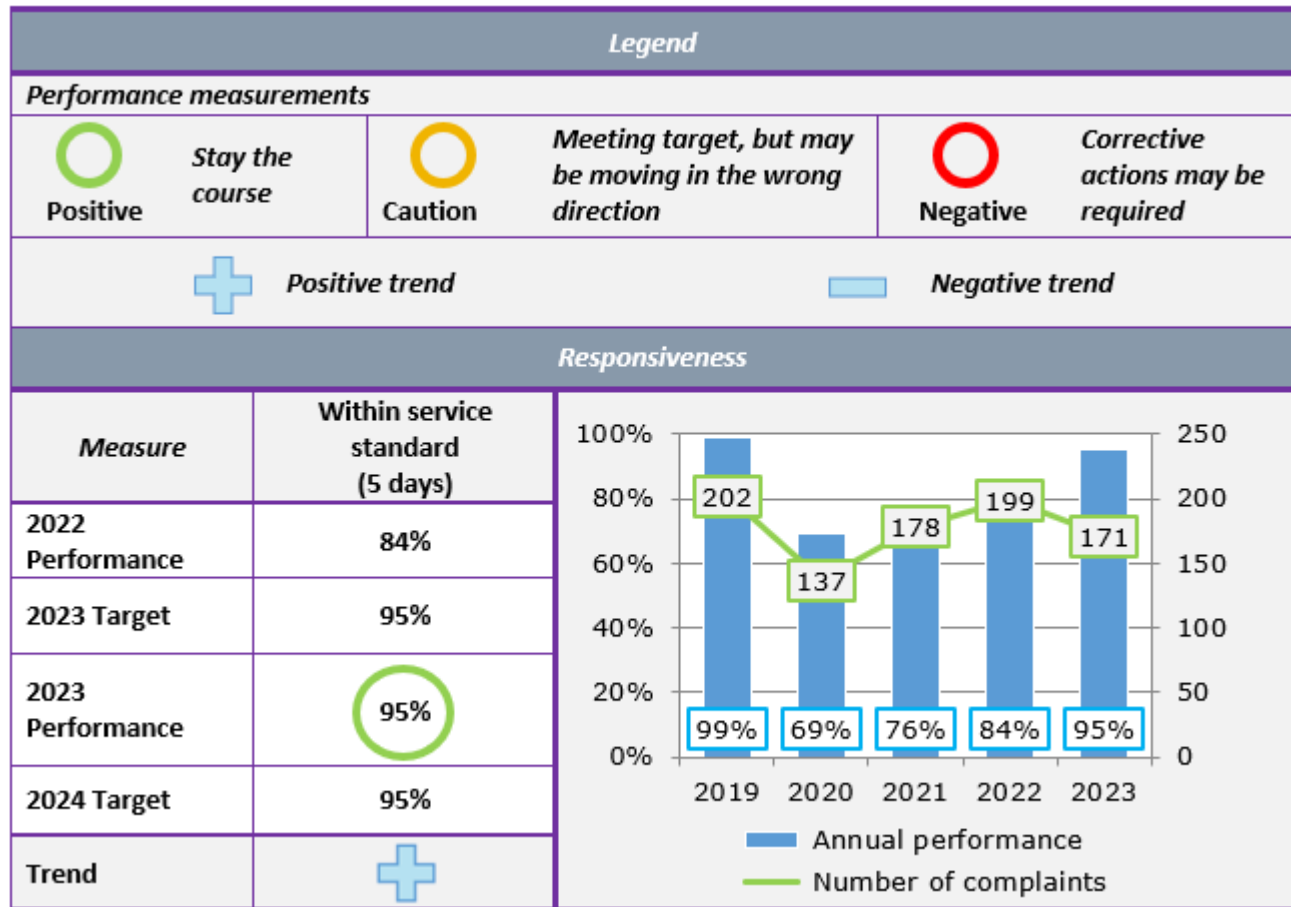


Type of zoning complaints (171)



Scorecard

Our goal is to investigate a complaint within 5 days of receiving it. We aim to meet this target 95% of the time. In 2023 this target was successfully met.



BACKFLOW

Introduction

The City of Guelph Backflow Prevention Program was implemented in 2000. The intent of the program is to assist in providing a supply of safe drinking water to all City residents. This program, which is funded by Water Services, has two Backflow Prevention Officers and a Backflow Prevention Coordinator within Building Services.

All industrial, commercial, institutional and larger multi-residential buildings are required to install backflow prevention devices on water services entering the building, as well as protecting all interior cross-connections. Other residential buildings are required to install backflow prevention devices on irrigation systems and other cross connections.

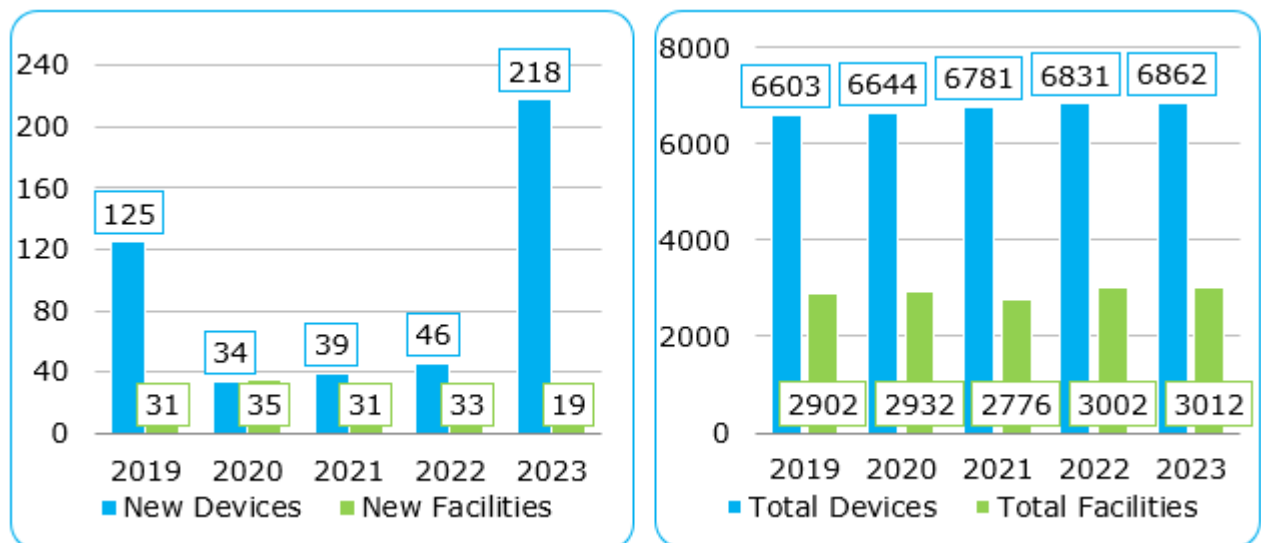
Annual testing is required on all testable devices in moderate to severe buildings and every 5 years in minor buildings and the reports shall be submitted to Building Services. Cross connection control surveys are also required to be submitted every five years, or as requested by the City, for all multi-residential, institutional, commercial and industrial buildings. A cross connection control survey is a thorough inspection of the plumbing system which identifies any actual or potential cross-connections within the building. These surveys list all backflow prevention devices currently in the facility and any upgrades required in order to remain compliant with the Backflow Prevention By-law.

Residential homes with access to an auxiliary water supply and that are also supplied by City water require a Cross Connection Control survey to be submitted every five years.

** Please note that the total number of devices indicated in the report represents approximate active backflow devices at the end of 2023. The total number of facilities represents monitored active and inactive facilities. The marked increase in new backflow devices for 2023 is an artefact in the data resulting from assignment of installation dates for backflow device records that did not previously have an installation date **

Performance Measurements

Dashboard



SEWAGE SYSTEMS

Introduction

Building Services implemented the On-site Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program (Sewage Inspection Program) in 2016 that was approved by Council in November of 2015, because of changes to the Building Code. This program requires all properties containing a private sewage system to undergo a maintenance inspection, which shall be carried out by a qualified third-party individual.

The intent of the program is to ensure all properties within the City have properly functioning sewage systems that do not pose a risk to the municipal drinking water system. This will ensure systems are functioning properly, thereby also mitigating the risk of contaminating private wells, surface water, ground water or adjacent properties. Malfunctioning sewage systems are deemed to be an unsafe condition in the Building Code Act. This maintenance program therefore enables the City to ensure that any systems deemed unsafe are repaired or removed to eliminate the threat to the municipal drinking water system.

Performance Measurements

We completed the first 5-year cycle of our Sewage Inspection Program in 2020, and in 2023 we continued with the 3rd year of our next cycle. To date there are 317 known properties within the City that require compliance with the Sewage Inspection Program. When this program was initiated in 2016, all high-risk properties were tested in the inaugural year. 2021 reflected the beginning of the second 5-year inspections cycle for high-risk properties.

In 2023 there were 71 Septic properties to be inspected as part of the Sewage Inspection Program, resulting in 66 inspections completed, zero properties being vacant/demolished, one inspection postponed from 2022 resulted in an order, and 4 orders were issued for 2023. Of the properties with orders issued, 3 properties complied, and one is proceeding to court action.

The program has also identified properties that were previously connected to the City's water and wastewater systems. Due to the redevelopment of the south end, we are anticipating that multiple properties will be removed from the program through the appropriate demolition permit process.

TERMITES

The City has concluded the active monitoring phase of the termite control program. Going forward, the City will enforce the provisions of the Ontario Building Code and the City's Termite Control Bylaw on a property-by-property basis, if needed.

Between 2007 and 2023 the comprehensive termite control program the City implemented has reduced termite activity. The active monitoring and treatment phase of the program concluded at the end of 2023, finding there was no known termite activity in the management areas. Therefore, the need for any sort of continued termite inspection, monitoring or treatment is not necessary.

From 2007 to 2023, the City's termite management program involved inspections, monitoring properties with traps, reducing termite habitat through yard wood management, area-wide colony level suppressive treatments and limited use of conventional chemical treatments where necessary.

Building Services 2023 Statistical Report

Building Services

Planning and Building Services
Infrastructure, Development and Environment
City of Guelph

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