

2020

Building Services Statistical Report



Building Services

Planning and Building Services

Infrastructure, Development and
Enterprise Services

City of Guelph

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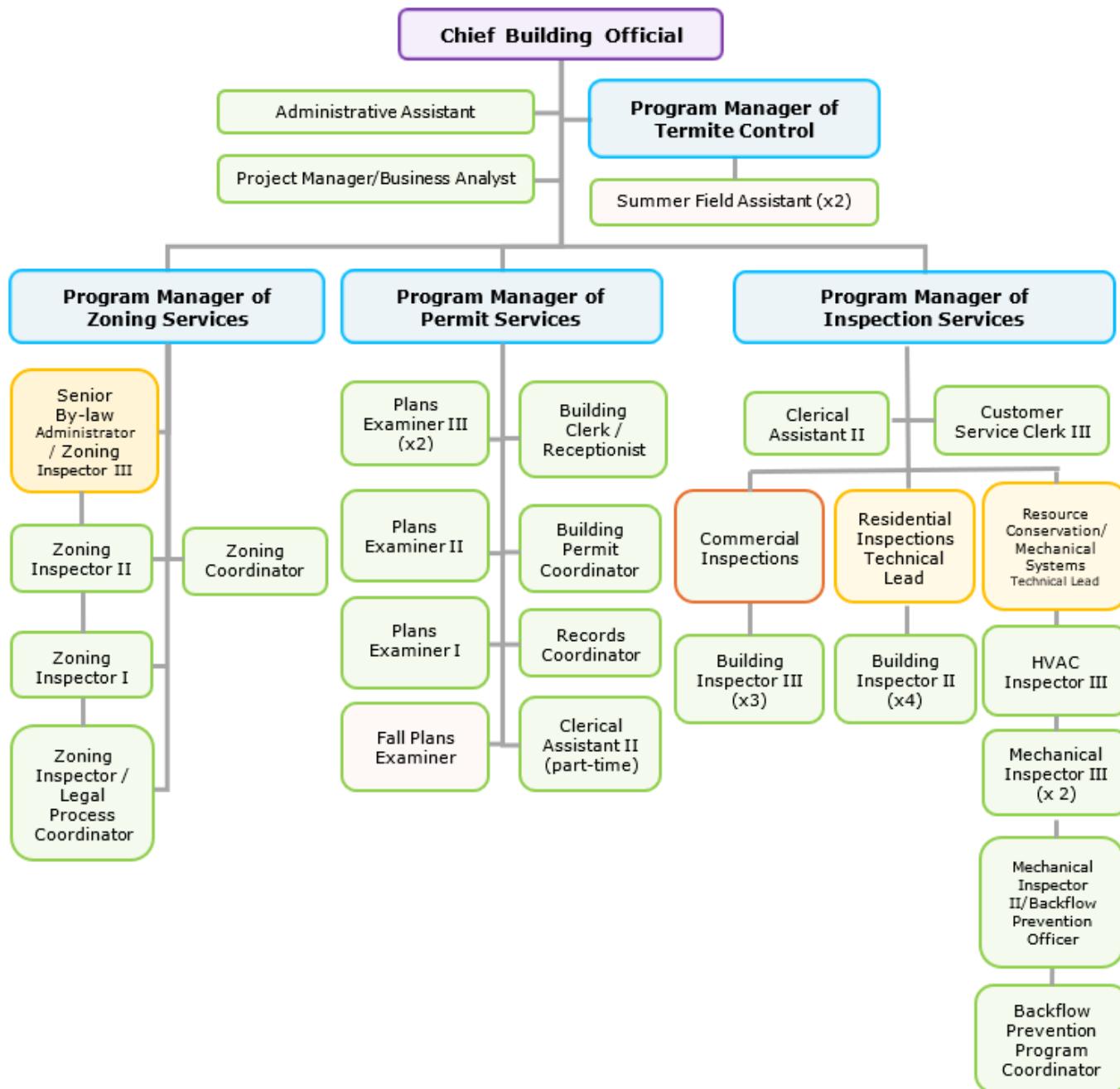
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ADMINISTRATION

Divisional Structure

Building Services is a division within the Planning and Building Services department of the Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise service area.

In 2020, the Building Services team consisted of 35 full-time staff, one part-time clerical assistant and four summer staff, which is reflected in the 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 2020, this group within Building Services had seven full-time staff, one part-time clerical assistant and one temporary fall Plans Examiner.

Permit Services also collects applications, fees and deposits on behalf of other service areas of the City, including curb cut applications, development 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.

Although building permit applications have been accepted electronically for more than a decade, starting in 2020, electronic applications are now mandatory. Building Services online permit and inspection portal allows all types of building permit applications to be submitted at any time. This also allows customers to review the status of their permits at their convenience. With the assistance of Information Technology Services, an enhanced online portal is being launched in 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a very small impact on the Permit Services team. Due to the introduction of mandatory electronic permit applications in 2020, and a new public portal that was launched in 2018, the transition to working remotely was fairly seamless. Throughout the course of multiple Provincial lockdowns and stay-at-home orders, Permit Services continued to accept, process and issue all types of permit applications with very little interruptions.

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.

These highest valued projects from 2020 cover all major project categories, including industrial, commercial, institutional and residential. The top seven projects accounted for one-third of the \$343 million in construction value in 2020.

Description	Value
395 Edinburgh Road North Seven storey apartment building	\$22,635,000
28 College Avenue West (building 044) Renovation and addition – University of Guelph	\$18,403,800
75 Quarterman Road Industrial building	\$17,000,000
98 Farley Drive Six storey apartment building	\$16,284,000
65 Quarterman Road Industrial building	\$15,400,000
245 Hanlon Creek Boulevard Three storey multi-tenant office building	\$13,585,000
482 Gordon Street (building 073) Replacement of mechanical systems and architectural finishes – University of Guelph	\$10,000,000
1 Wilbert Street Two storey building – Guelph KIA	\$5,760,000
89 South Ring Road (building 072) Building envelope replacements – University of Guelph	\$5,242,000
890 Woodlawn Road West Interior renovations – McNeil Consumer Healthcare	\$5,000,000
435 Stone Road West Renovations to existing food court – Stone Road Mall	\$5,000,000
590 Hanlon Creek Boulevard Industrial building	\$4,600,000

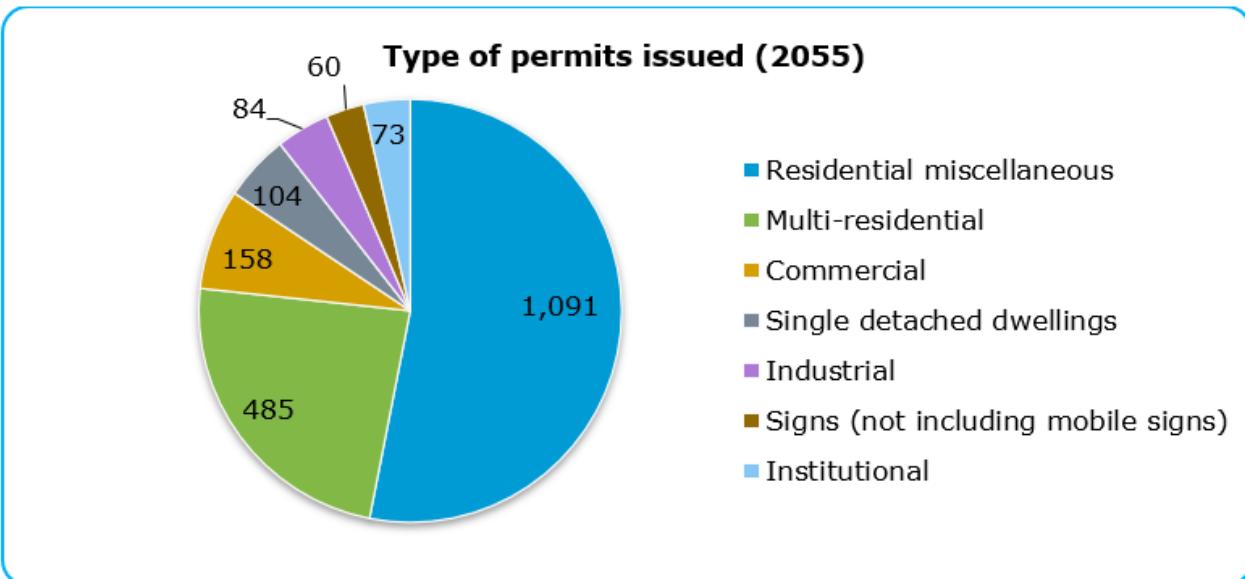
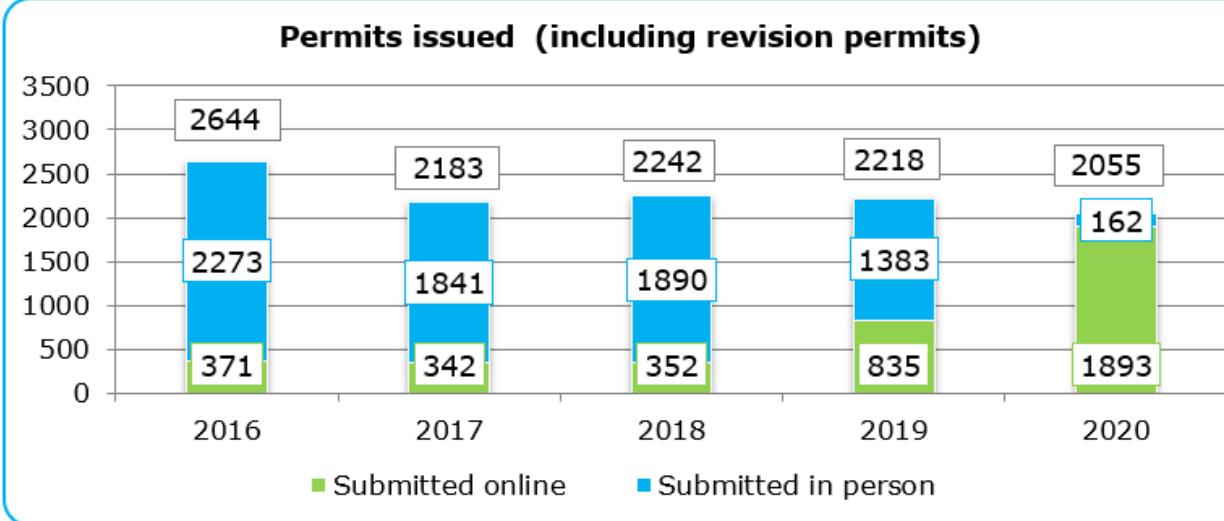
Performance Measurements

Dashboard

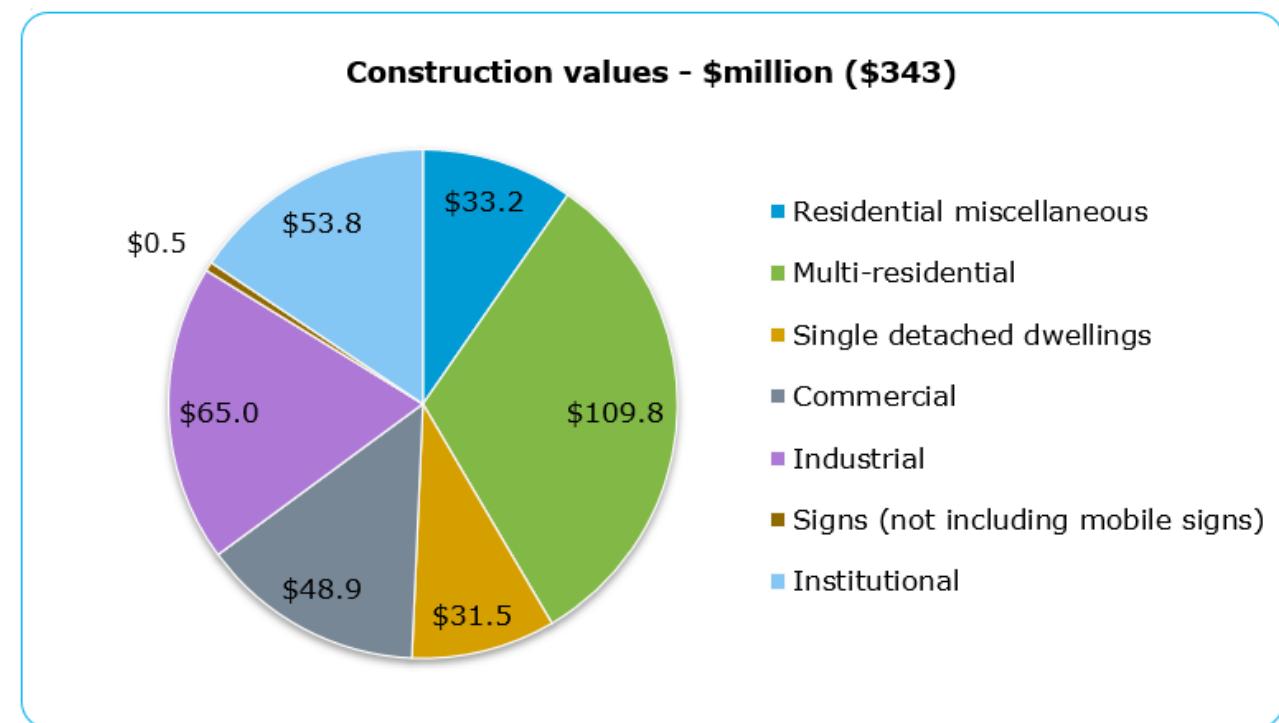
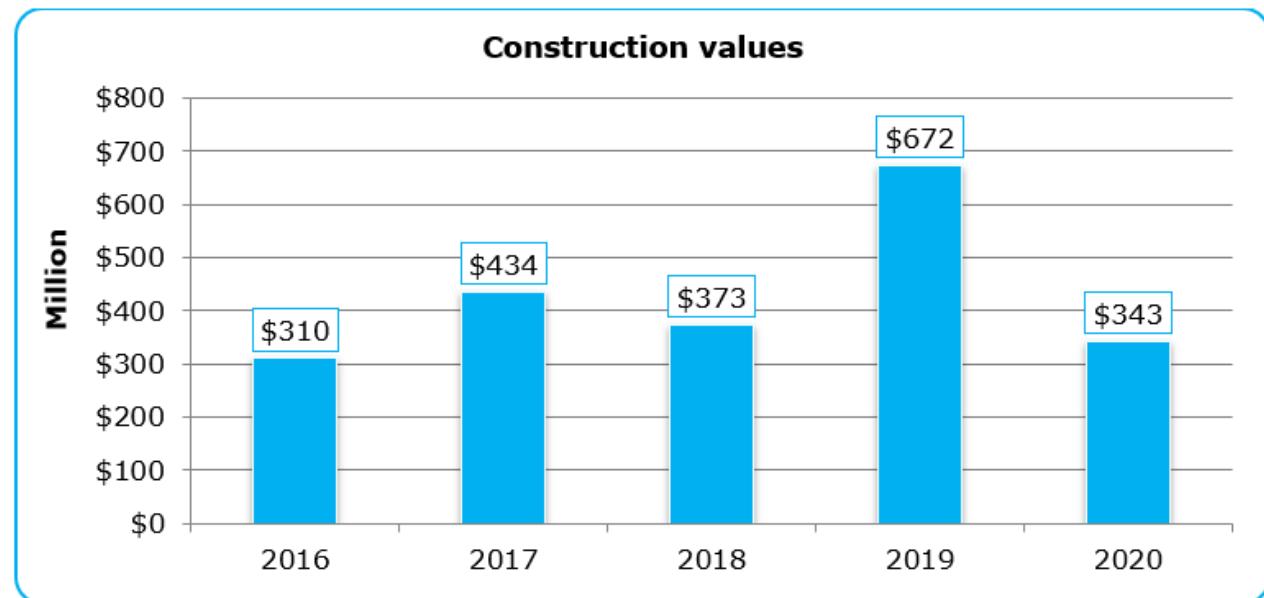
Building permits

The number of building permits issued in 2020 was down slightly when compared to the previous few years. Although building permit activity dipped slightly at the start of the pandemic – during April and May – it came back strong during the summer months and continued by meeting annual permit volume trends through the fall and into winter. The total number of new permit applications reviewed in 2020 was only down by 2 per cent from the previous year.

Starting in 2020, all building permit applications were required to be submitted electronically. This resulted in a drastic increase to online permit applications. The 162 permit applications that were submitted in person in 2020 were primarily from applications submitted in previous years, prior to requiring electronic submissions.



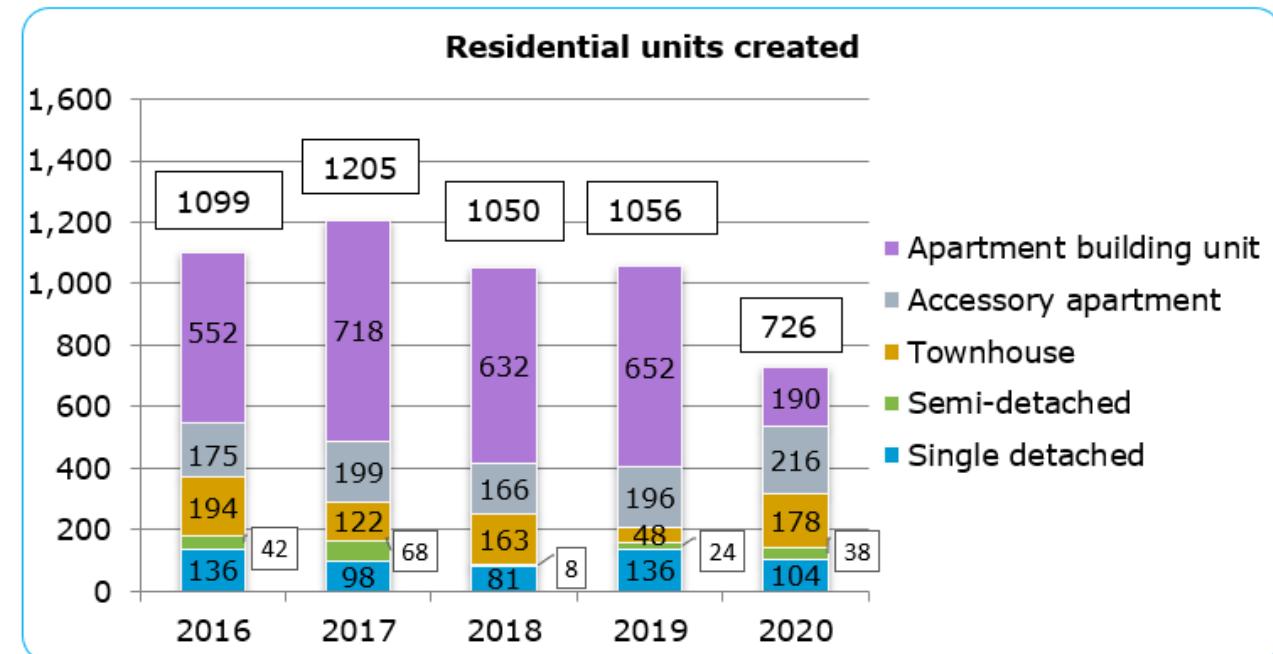
Building permits (continued)



New residential units

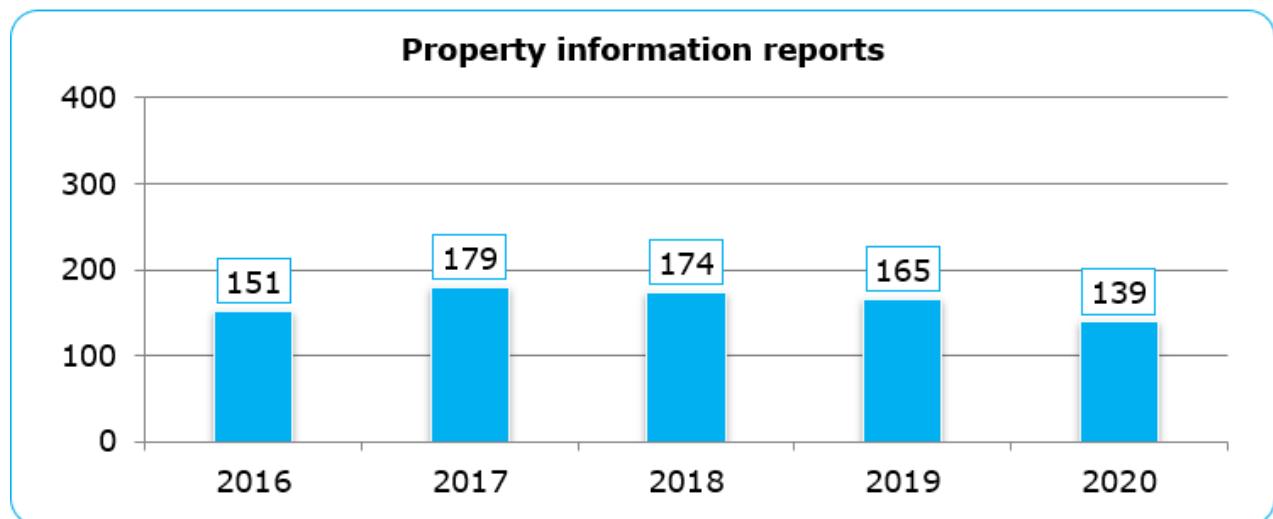
As residential intensification continues to increase, the creation of new dwellings remains focused on multi-residential units, including apartment buildings and accessory apartments. This is due to the move towards residential intensification through the Places to Grow legislation.

The number of residential dwelling units created in 2020 saw a decrease of almost 400 permits when compared to the average over the past four years. While most categories remained steady in 2020, apartment buildings saw the largest decline. Although the reason for the decrease can't be pin-pointed, it may be the result of pandemic-related financial uncertainty related to these large-scale residential projects.



Property information reports

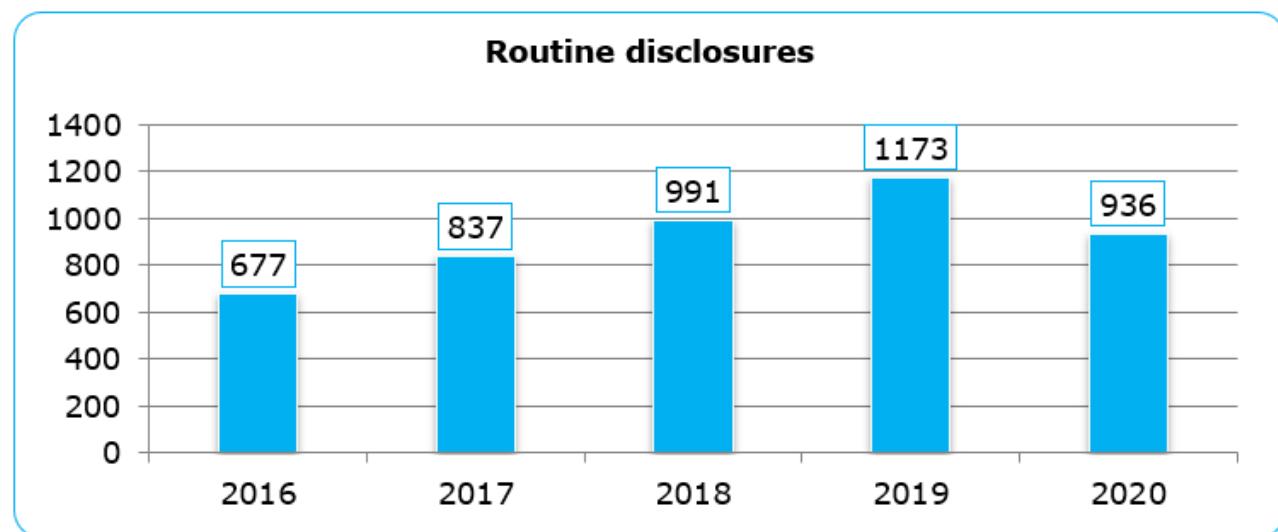
The volume of property information reports, otherwise known as pre-sales saw a slight decline in 2020. This may be the result of a reduction in real estate transactions during the pandemic.



Routine disclosure

Routine disclosure is the automatic release of certain types of administrative and operational records 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.

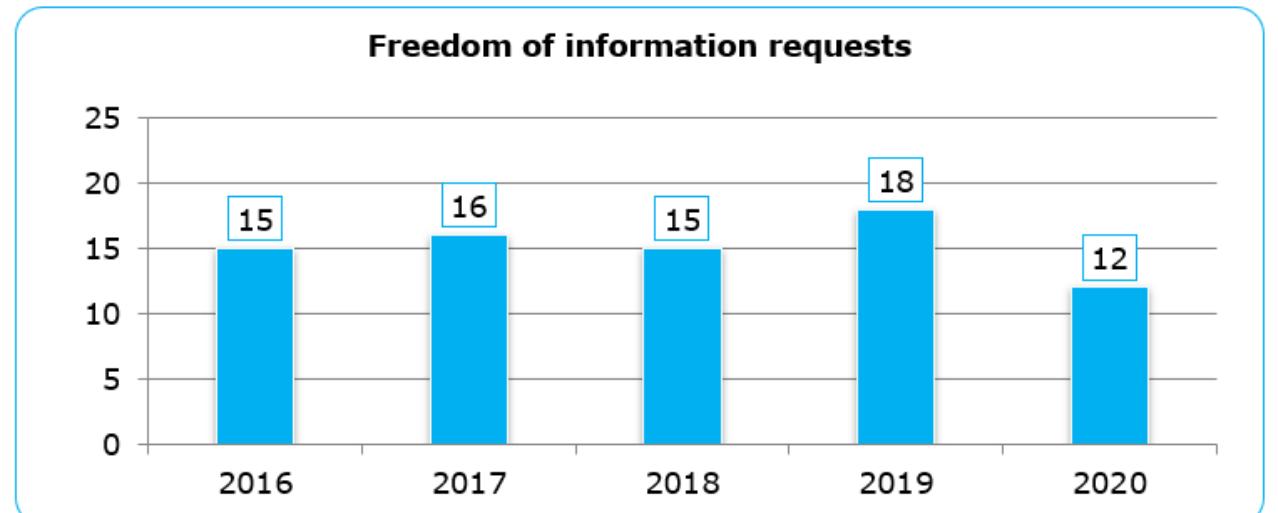
This type of request, which is processed at the departmental level, has continued to increase over the past 5 years.



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 average number of days to process 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. These two summer positions were not filled in 2020 due to the pandemic.

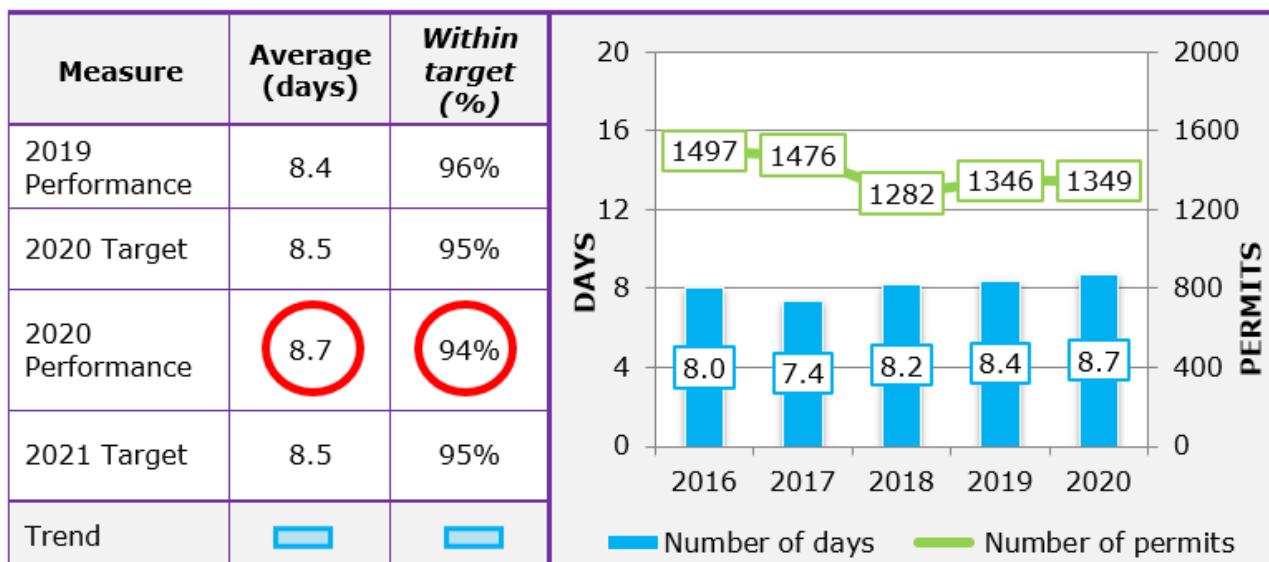
The total number of new permit applications reviewed in 2020 was down only two per cent over the previous year. However, a staffing shortage of one-third of typical plans examination staff from May to August resulted in some plan review targets not being met.

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.

Legend			
Performance measurements			
○ Positive	<i>Stay the course</i>	○ Caution	<i>Meeting target, but may be moving in the wrong direction</i>
+ <i>Positive trend</i>		— <i>Negative trend</i>	

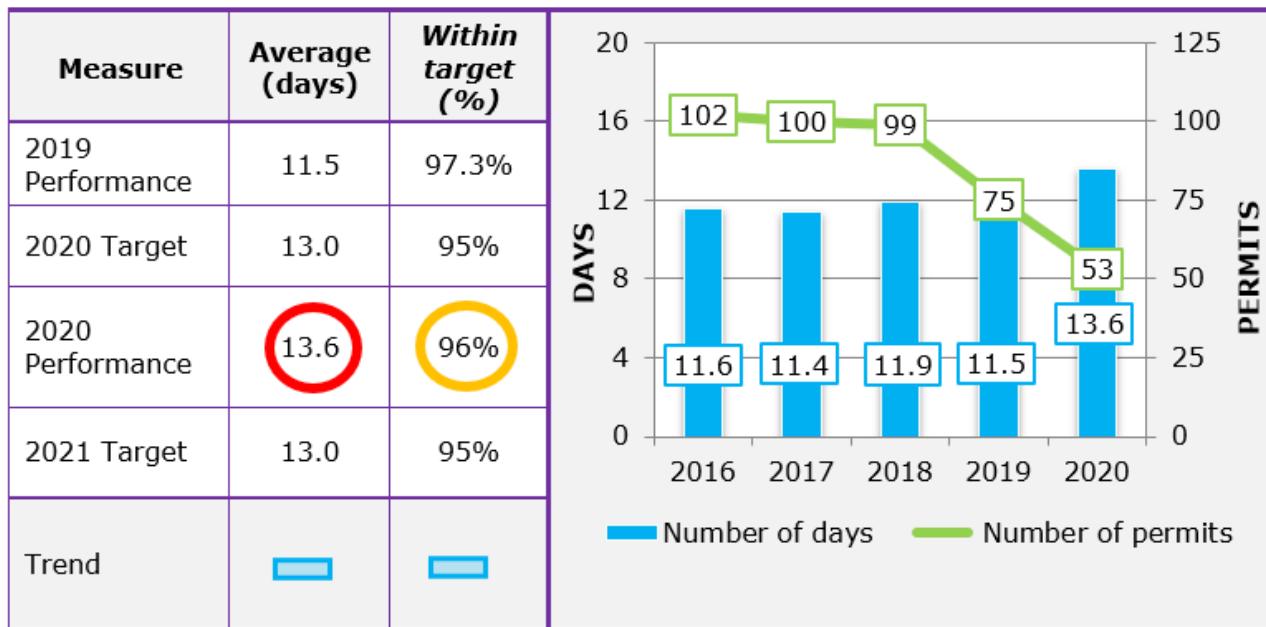
10-day permits

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.



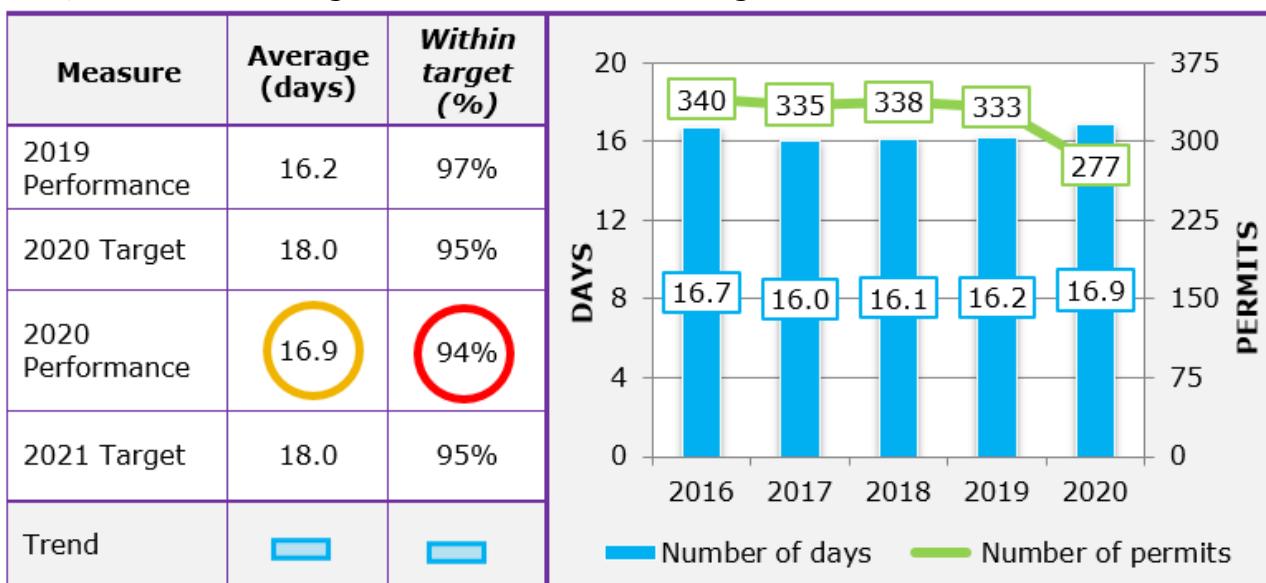
15-day permits

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 19 of these building permits issued in 2020 and the average turnaround time was 13 days.



INSPECTIONS

Introduction

The Inspection Services team is responsible for all construction and demolition inspection related activity regulated by the OBC. In addition to inspecting the construction of buildings, Inspection Services is also responsible for plumbing, HVAC and energy efficiency inspections. In 2020, this function within Building Services had 17 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 (OBC). 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 and business license inspections, as well as other miscellaneous property inspections such as 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 most 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.

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 Plumbing Inspector's Association (OPIA), the Ontario Backflow Administrative Committee, the Mechanical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), 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

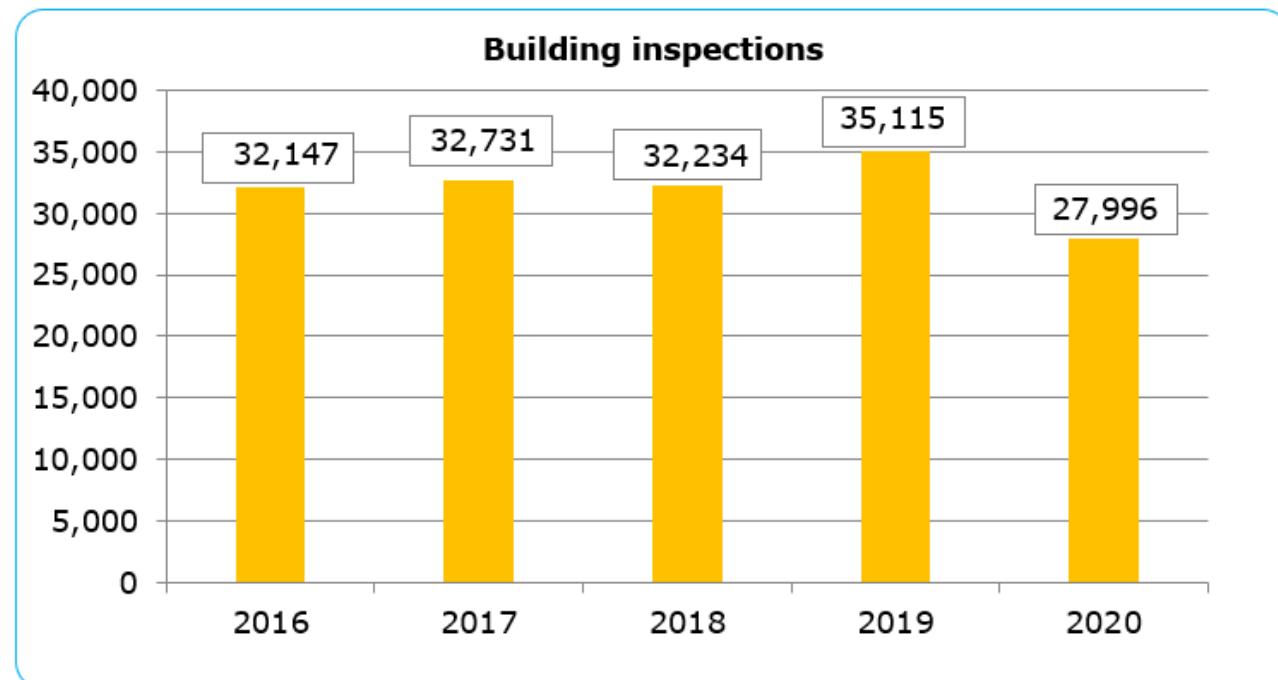
Dashboard

The number of building inspections carried out in 2020 was lower than the previous years, due largely to the impacts of COVID 19 on both our active permits (some construction sites shut down several times during the year due to providing emergency order), and our inactive permits work (we were unable to enter occupied homes and businesses for much of 2020).

Our average monthly productivity targets for residential, commercial and mechanical inspection groups were impacted by: a reduction in permit volume, COVID 19 restrictions, time required to carry out COVID 19 Health and Safety Procedures and due to having two inspection team members on declared emergency leave for a short portion of 2020. The largest impacts on inspection volume associated with COVID 19 were felt in April, May and June. To ensure we made good use of this time, inspectors focused a lot of effort on training and development during these three months, something we would normally focus on in off peak construction months between October and March. In addition, inspection staff worked to update inspection checklists and create new ones for inspectors and customers alike. They also reviewed all of our residential inspection processes and developed a set of standard inspection deficiency pick clauses as part of the comprehensive residential folder review.

We are helping our customers move from phoning in inspections to booking inspections through our online portal. Approximately one third of our inspections were booked online in 2020. We hope to see that number rise significantly in 2021 particularly after release of our new portal in mid-2021 that will enable sub-contractors to request inspections on projects.

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



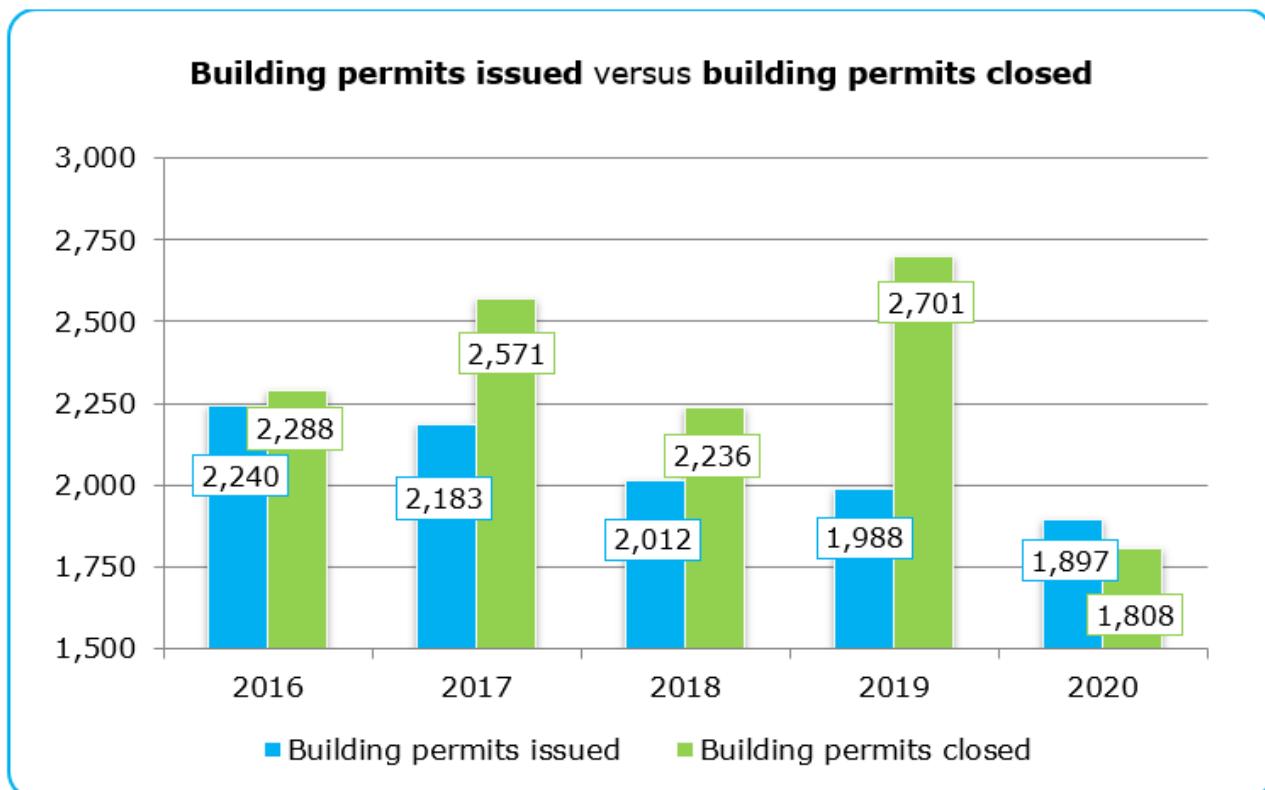
Scorecard

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.

There was a significant effort put into closing inactive permits in the early 2020 but this effort had to be suspended in mid-March due to COVID 19 restrictions. As a result of these restrictions, 89 more permits were issued in 2020 than were closed.

Over 1200 more permits have been closed than issued in all of 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 2012, we estimated that there were approximately 6,000 inactive/dormant building permits. An update to this report should be considered for fall 2021. 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 as well. 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 permits issued each year does not include revision permits. The number of closed permits have been revised to accurately reflect canceled, revoked or closed permits.





Introduction

Zoning Services is responsible for the administration and enforcement of numerous by-laws and programs with the primary focus being the Guelph Zoning By-law. The Zoning By-law provides regulations concerning land use zoning within the City to control and regulate the location and use of buildings and structures for residential, business, industrial and other specified uses.

In 2020, 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 two-unit house (accessory apartment) registration program and lodging house certifications.

Zoning Services also 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, and
- preliminary zoning review process

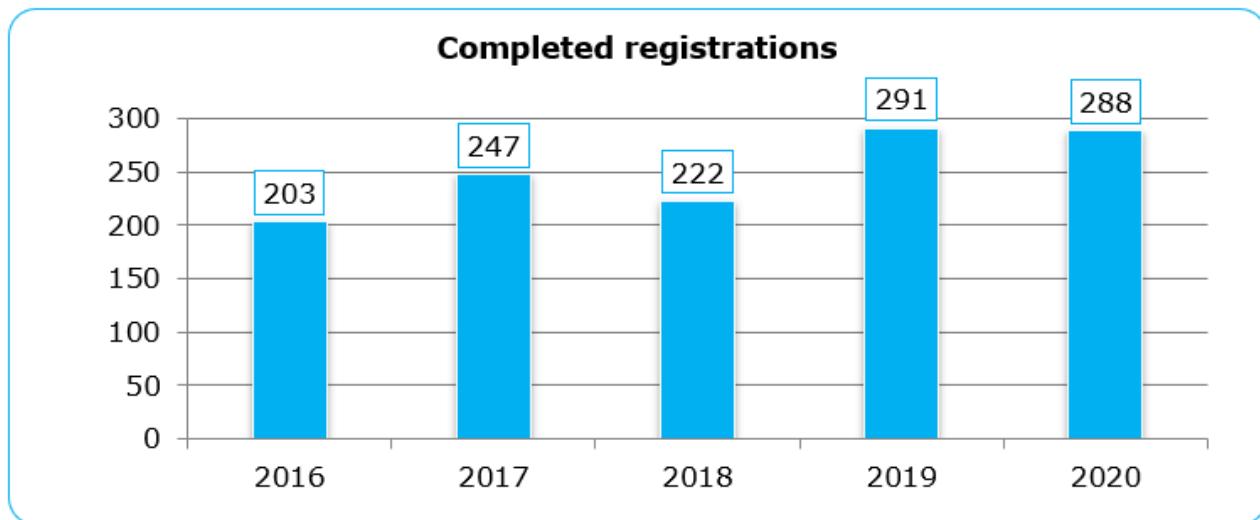
Zoning Services is also responsible for the enforcement of Zoning By-law regulations, two-unit houses (accessory apartments), signs on private property (building, freestanding and mobile), in addition to certain provisions of the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

Shared Rental Housing

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

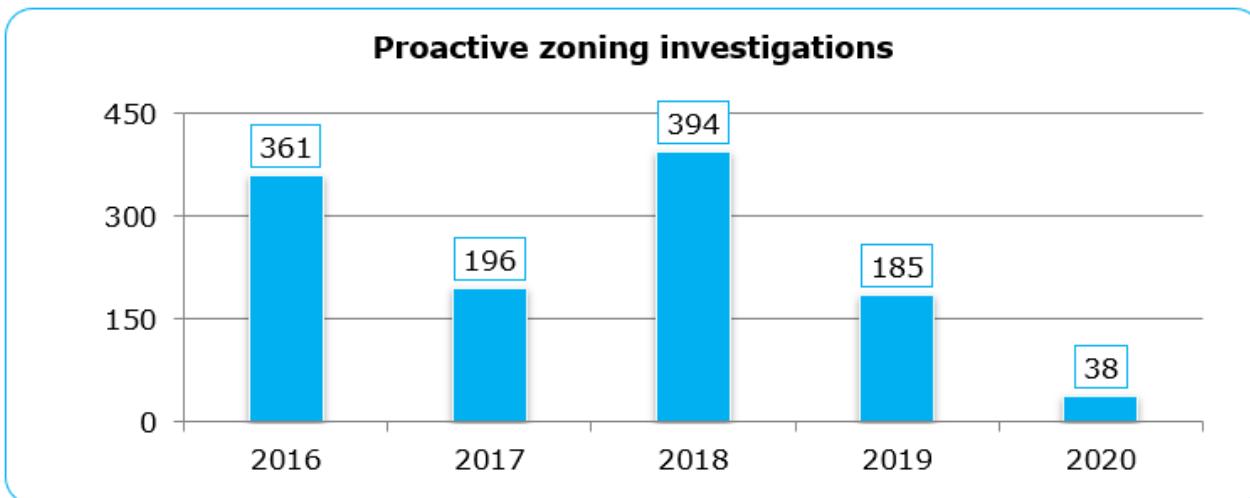
Accessory Apartments

At the end of 2020, there were in excess of 3,330 registered accessory apartments within the City.



Proactive Enforcement

Proactive enforcement concentrates on inspection and enforcement relating to shared rental housing. This includes two-unit houses (accessory apartments), the Ontario Building Code, and zoning provisions (including lodging houses).



Recommended Approach

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

Shared rental housing recommended approach highlights for 2020:

- Building Services inspectors completed on-going training in aspects of the legal proceedings program
- Continued success in the execution of search warrants
- 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 the availability of free rental unit safety inspections. Staff conducted 31 tenant initiated rental unit safety inspections in 2020 until it was suspended due to emergency measures.

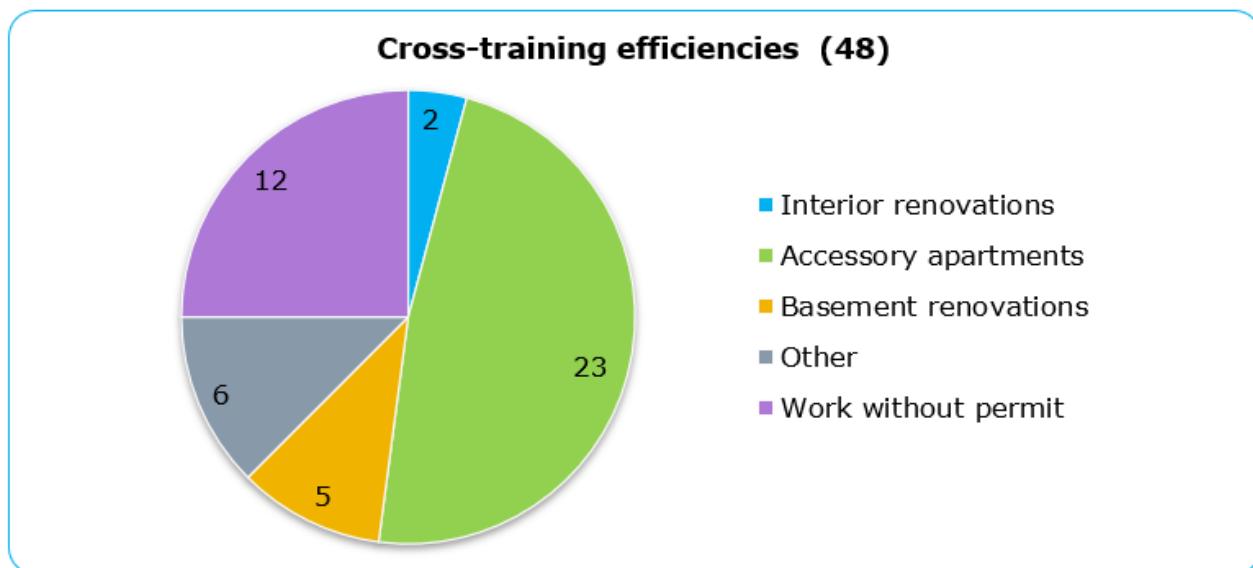
Search Warrants

Building Services created a search warrant team in 2016, along with operating guidelines for the implementation of search warrants. With the assistance of Guelph Police Services, Zoning Services successfully executed 4 search warrants at 2 properties in 2020. Staff will continue to use this option for compliance when all other options have been exhausted.

Cross-training

Significant efficiencies and improvements to customer service were gained as a result of cross-training zoning inspectors to also be appointed as building inspectors.

The ability to have one inspector perform both zoning and building functions 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 2020, 48 proactive OBC infractions were identified by zoning inspectors.

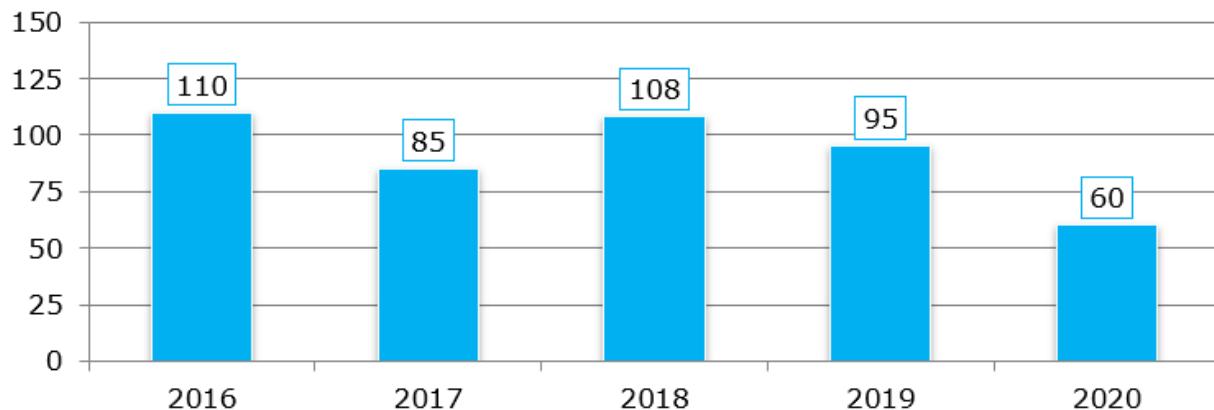


Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Bylaw

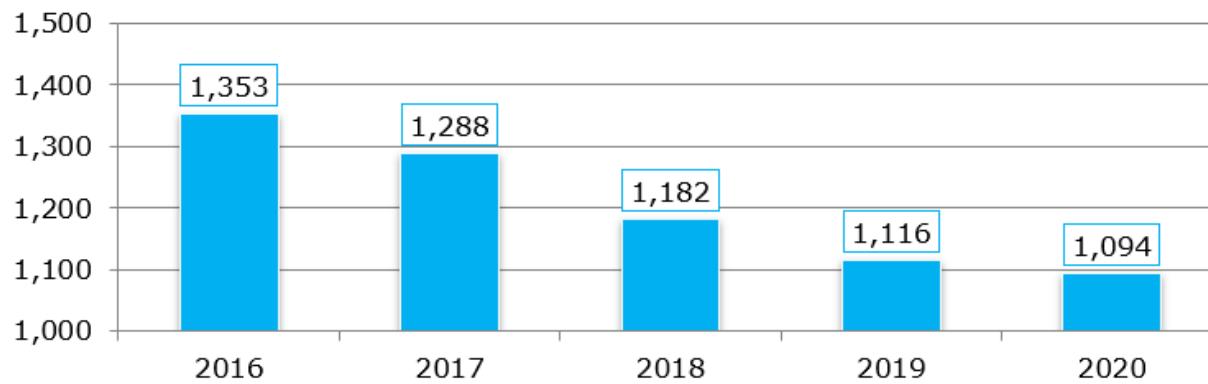
In early 2019, Council approved a new Outdoor Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Bylaw. This bylaw was created through collaboration with our industry partners and the public. The new bylaw is designed to enhance the public safety in regards to new swimming pool and hot tub installations. In 2020, 140 permits were issued under the new bylaw with enhanced safety measures which exceeded previous years.

Permits

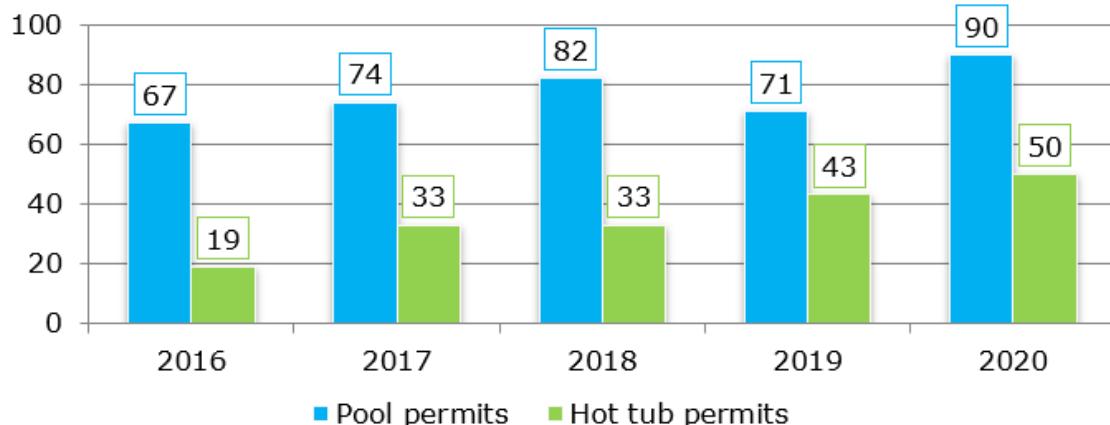
Permanent signs (building and freestanding)



Temporary signs (mobile and portable)

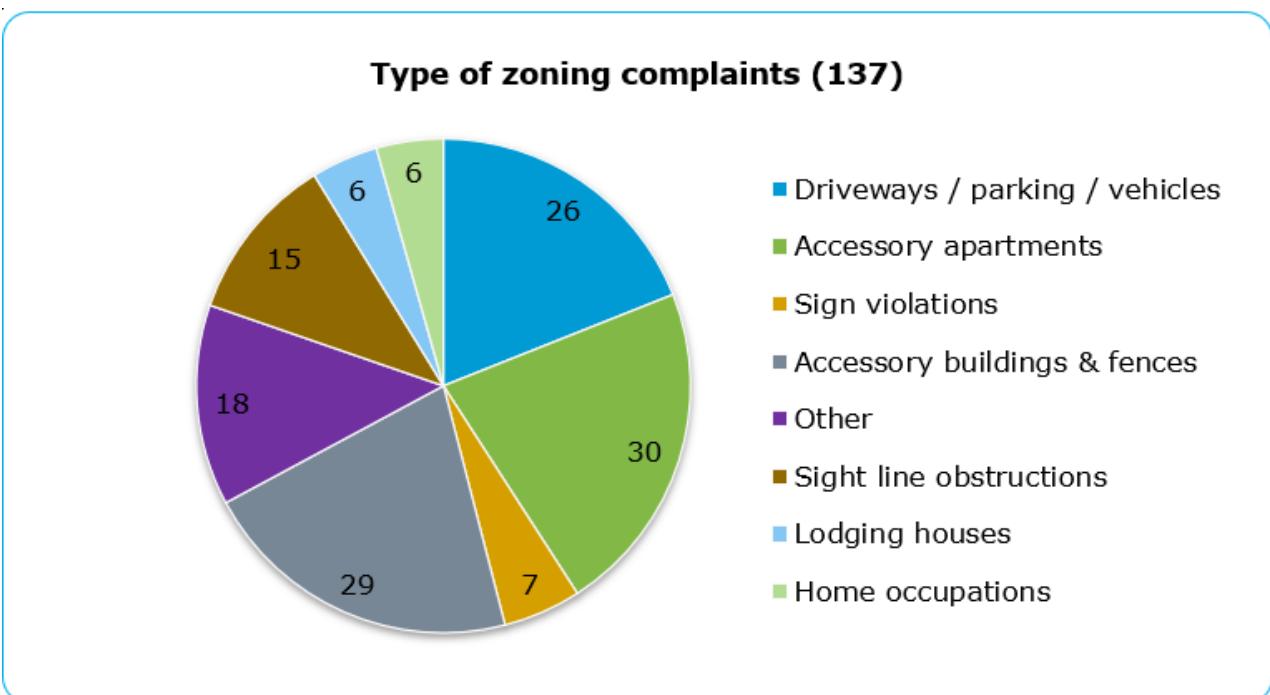
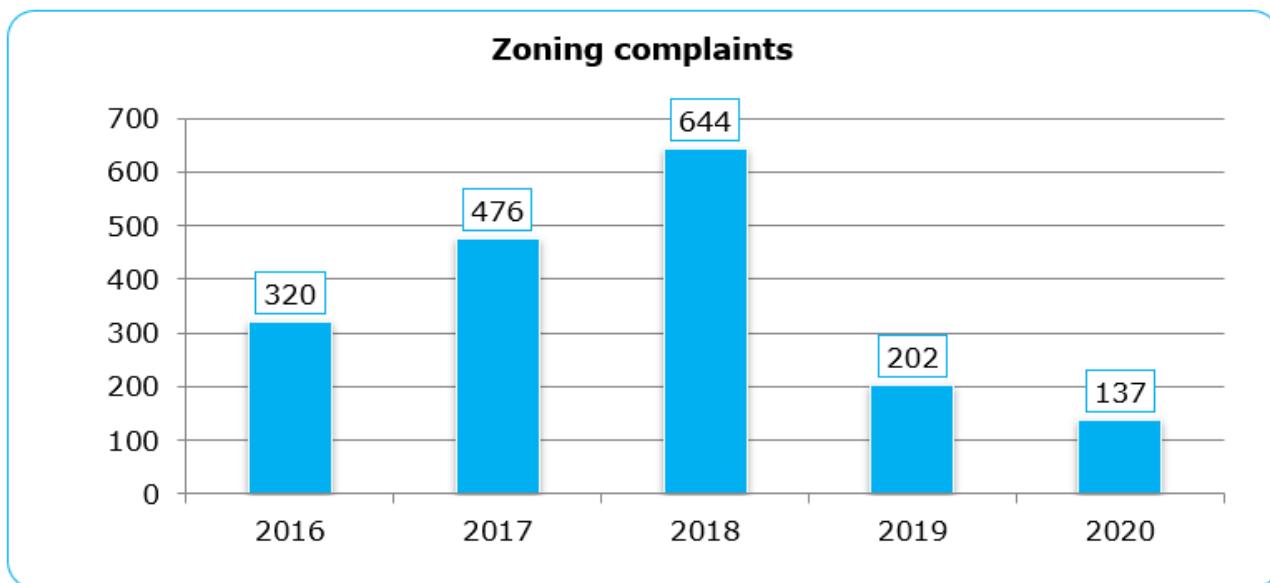


Pool and hot tub permits



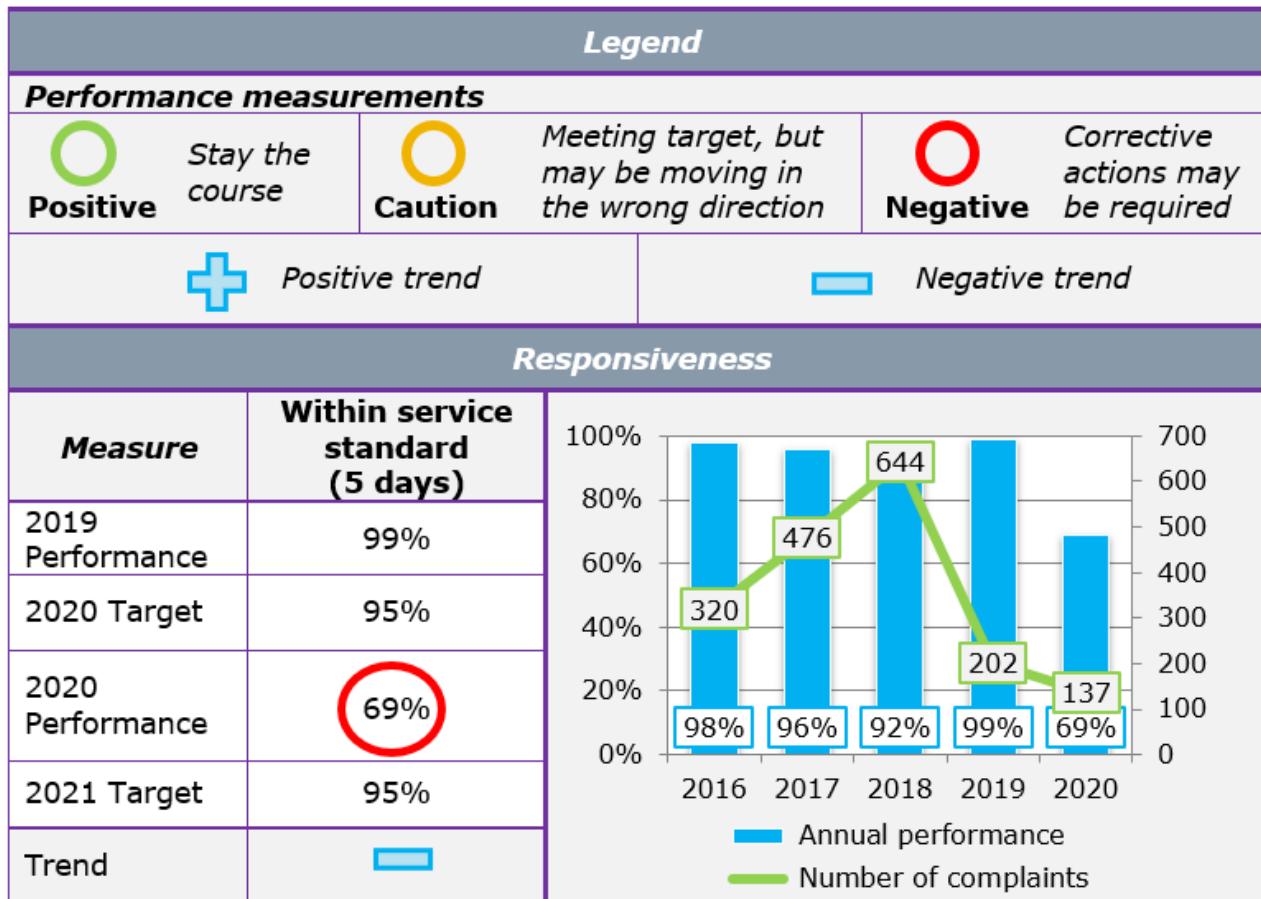
Performance Measurements

Dashboard



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 2020 this target was not successfully met.



2020 proved to be a difficult year in terms of Zoning enforcement and proactive investigations. Zoning complaint inspections were mostly suspended and only reinstated for exterior inspections in the fall of 2020. Proactive inspections were suspended for most of the year.

Zoning enforcement staff did participate in park inspections for over capacity limits in support of By-law Compliance during the first lock down from April to June. Additionally, staff processed a large number of permit applications including the most ever for pools and hot tubs.

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 full-time staff within Building Services.

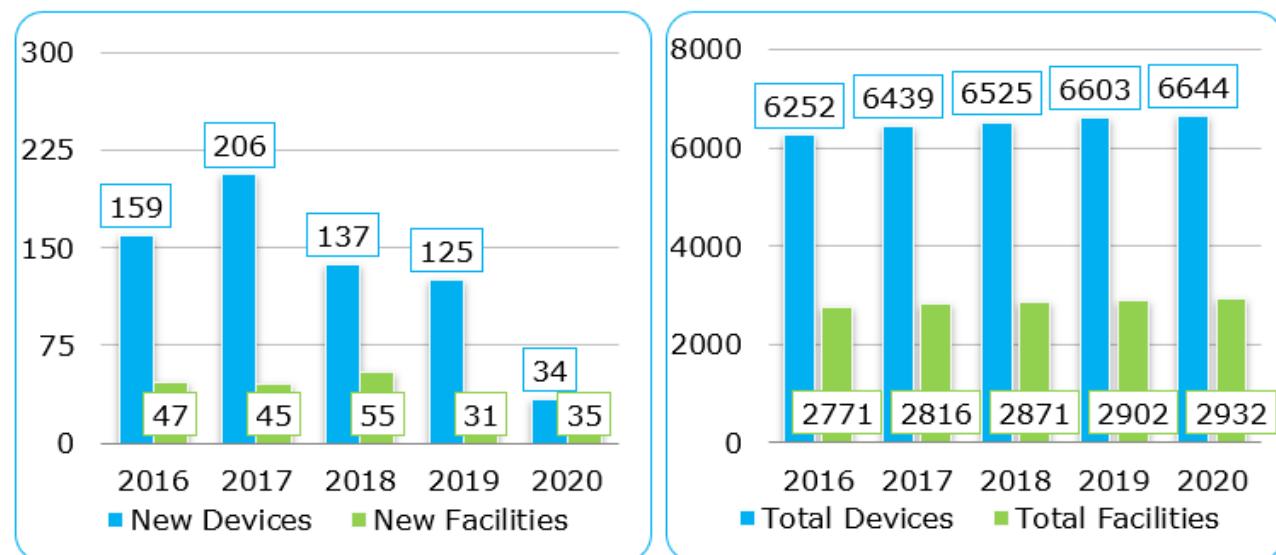
All industrial, commercial, institutional and larger multi-residential buildings are required to install backflow prevention devices on water services entering the building, as well as protecting all interior cross-connections. Other residential buildings are required to install backflow prevention devices 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 as well. **Please note that the total number of devices indicated in the report represents those devices that have been added, removed or exchanged.**

Performance Measurements

Dashboard



SEWAGE SYSTEMS

Introduction

Building Services implemented the Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program in 2016 that was approved by Council in November of 2015, as a result 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 so that they do not pose a risk to drinking water. This will ensure systems are functioning properly and not 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 program will enable the City to ensure any unsafe conditions are rectified.

Performance Measurements

There are approximately 300 known properties within the City that require compliance with the Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program. As of 2020, 100% (37 properties) of the higher risk properties were compliant.

No deadline is established in the Building Code for the inspection of sewage systems in the lower risk areas but it is our intent to have all systems inspected within the first 5 years of the program. By the end of 2020, all of the lower risk properties were compliant. In 2021 we will begin the first cycle of the 5 year program re-inspecting properties from 2016.

This program has also identified a number of properties that had been connected to the City's water and wastewater systems without Building Services knowledge which is a beneficial outcome of the program.

All properties in the Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program are required to have follow-up inspections every 5 years.

TERMITES

Introduction

The City of Guelph has been tracking and combating an infestation of the eastern subterranean termites since the 1970s. This insect pest can be difficult and expensive to control and can cause serious structural damage to any wood frame structures, including housing. In order to protect the City's housing stock, and to prevent the continuous spread of this invasive species, the City implemented a termite control program. The program has one part-time staff member and two summer field assistants within Building Services.

The City hired Dr. Tim Myles as a full-time Termite Control Officer in 2007 to develop a comprehensive termite control program. Dr. Myles was previously the Director of the Urban Entomology Program at the University of Toronto, and is a pioneering researcher in area-wide management of termites.

Traditional termite control uses soil insecticides and wood preservatives to chemically treat affected structures, but does not address overall termite population control and suppression. The City's program integrates all traditional methods of pre-treatment, remedial treatment and preventative treatment, as well as preventative measures in new construction, termite habitat elimination, and termite population suppressive treatments.

The termite infestation has included five management areas; Woolwich (*discovered in 1960's*), Windermere (2000), Emma-Pine (2007), King Street (2012) and John Galt Park (2014). The Windermere and Emma-Pine management areas are no longer active. The King Street management area was inactive for the first full year in 2019.

Within each termite management area, properties are classified as either a red zone or a blue zone. Red zone areas have historically been within blocks encompassed by the infestation. Properties designated as blue zone are essentially buffer properties surrounding active areas. For additional information and to view the complete 2020 Termite Report, refer to guelph.ca/termites.

Subterranean termites are non-native invasive insects that can cause serious structural damage to buildings and structures, and can be difficult and expensive to control.

Termites are wood destroying insects that live in large colonies numbering several million. They forage through the soil and expand the colony's territory as they encounter new wood items to feed on.

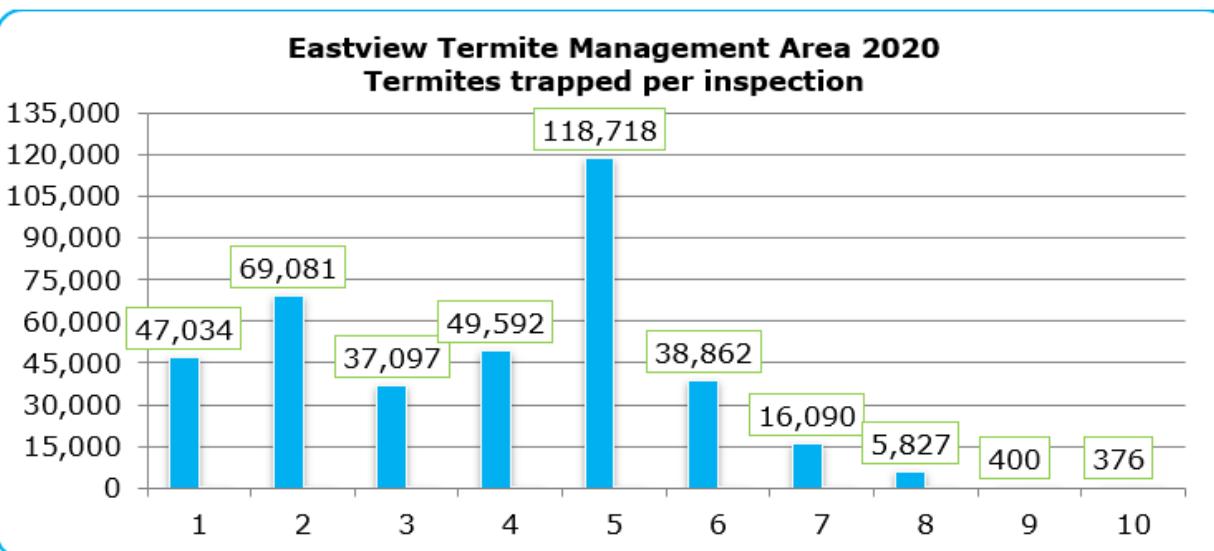
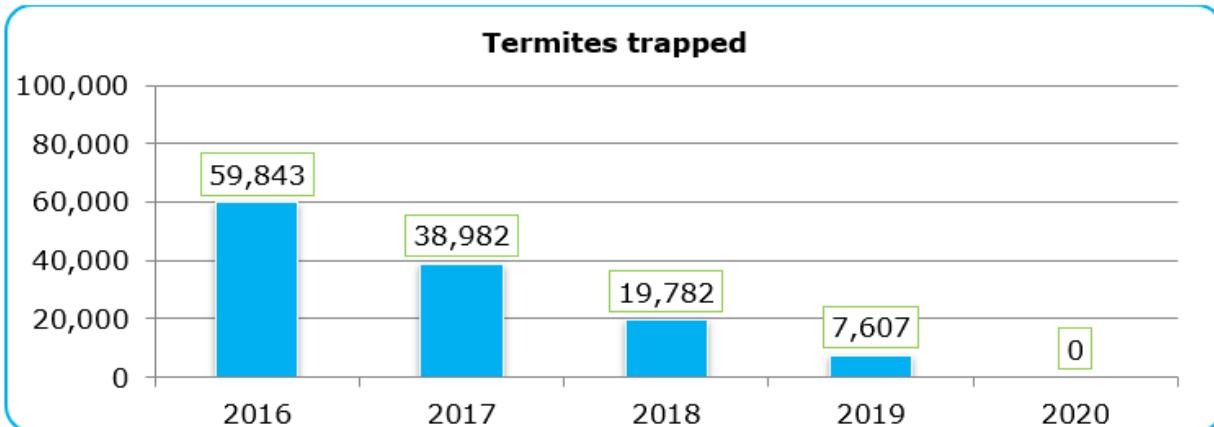


Performance Measurements

Dashboard

The number of termites trapped in five of the six termite management areas dropped to zero for the first time in 2020, as shown in figure 1. The only termite activity discovered in these five sites was one small infested stump in the Woolwich management area. That stump was manually extracted and disposed.

The sixth management site, the Eastview area, was discovered in 2019. The Eastview area encompasses 43 red zone and 50 blue zone properties. Termite management actions included installation of an array of termite monitoring traps and inspection of traps on a bimonthly basis. A total of 383,077 termites were trapped from 34 active properties from 55 different active traps. Borate sprays were conducted on properties with indoor activity. 350 borate rods were installed in fence posts and retaining walls. Twenty-five stumps and seven dead or dying trees were removed. Yard wood management included removal of items such as firewood, scrap lumber, edging boards, and wood chip mulch. A fall nematode treatment was conducted on all properties that had signed an authorization for the treatment. The number of termites trapped on each of the ten inspections in the Eastview area in 2020 is shown in Figure 2. The population declined toward the end of the season.





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Building Services

Planning and Building Services

Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services

City of Guelph

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