

2021

Building Services Statistical Report



Building Services

Planning and Building Services

Infrastructure, Development and
Enterprise Services

City of Guelph

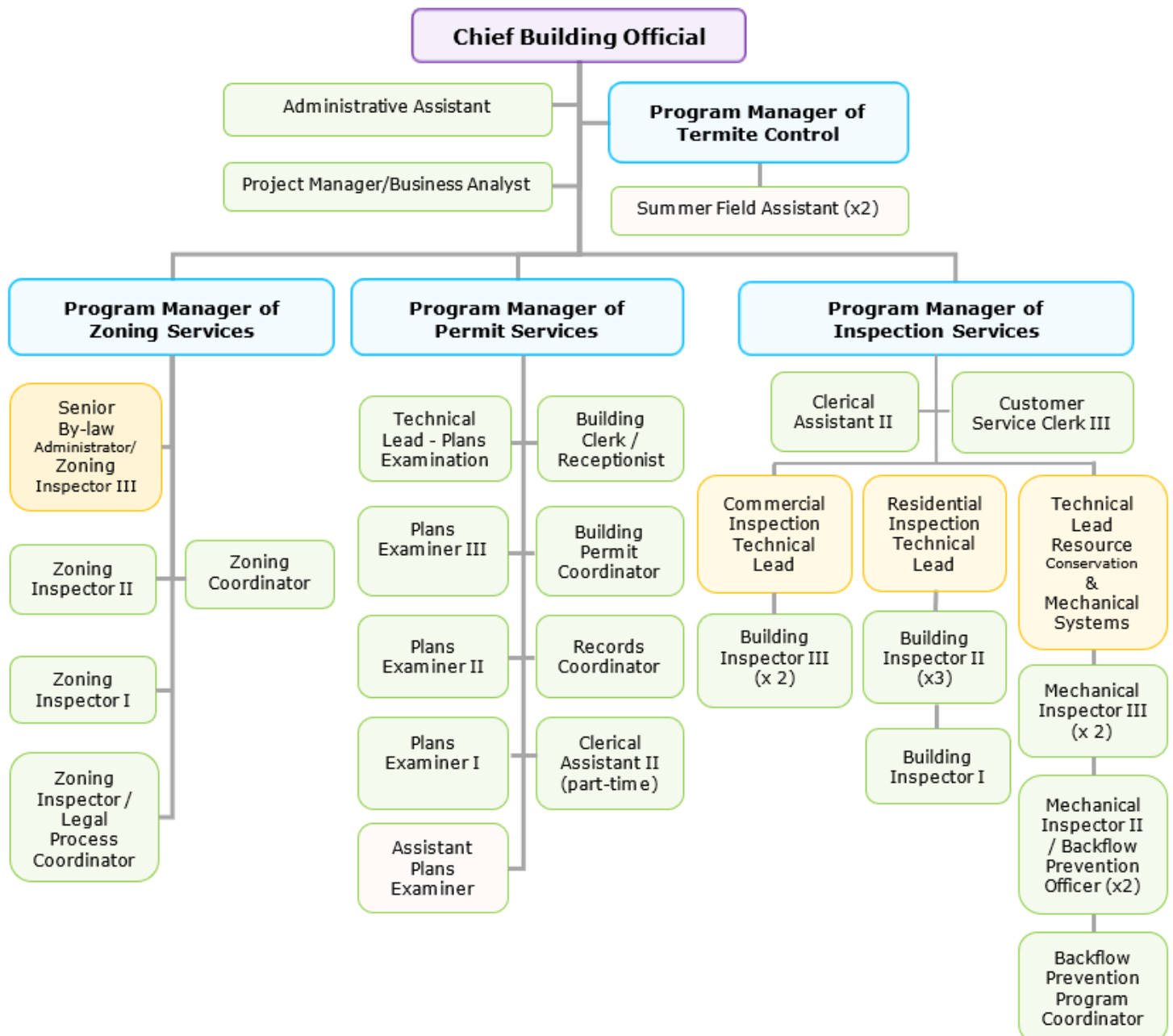
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ADMINISTRATION

Divisional Structure

Building Services is a division within the Planning and Building Services department of the Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise service area. In 2021, the Building Services team consisted of 36 full-time positions, one part-time clerical assistant and three 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 2021, this group within Building Services had eight full-time staff, one part-time clerical assistant and one temporary fall Assistant 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 had been accepted electronically for more than a decade, electronic applications became mandatory in 2020. Building Services online permit and inspection portal ([GPAS](#)) 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 was launched in 2021.

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.

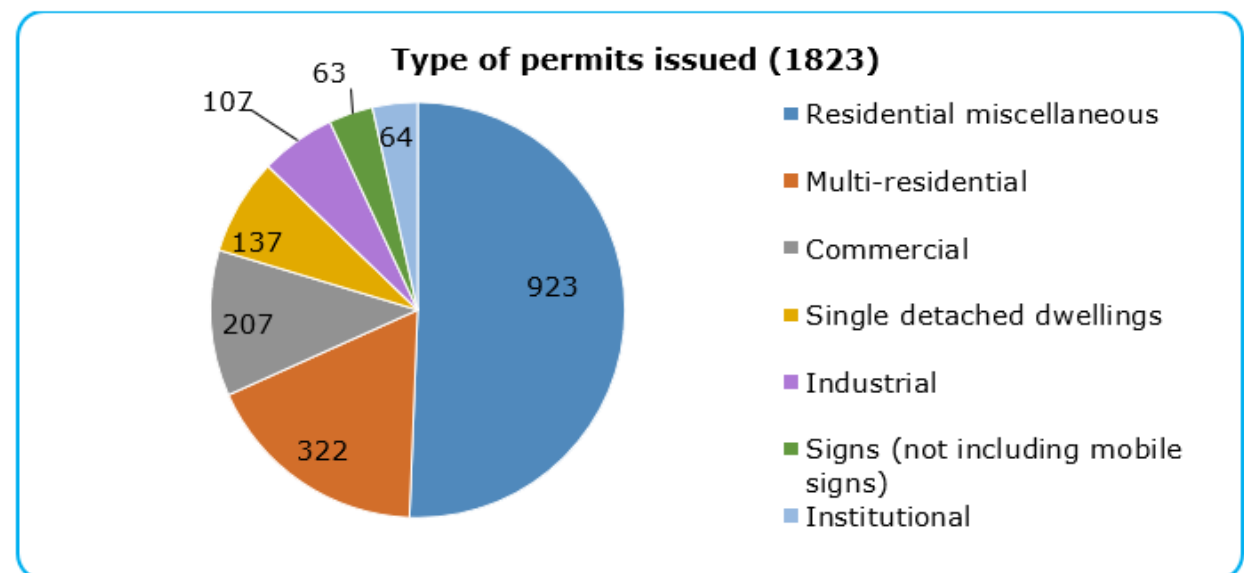
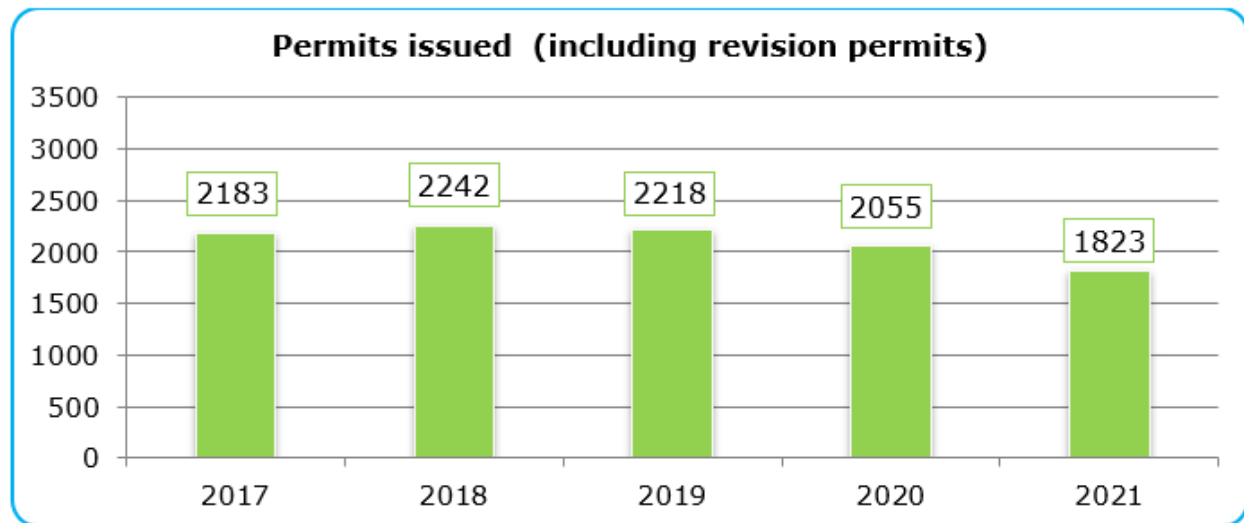
These highest valued projects from 2021 cover all major project categories, including industrial, commercial, institutional and residential. The top seven projects accounted for almost half of the \$467 million in construction value in 2021.

Description	Value
25 Poppy Drive West Guelph South End Community Centre	\$80,000,000
71 Wyndham Street South 14 storey apartment building (139 units)	\$44,400,000
425 Watson Parkway North 9 storey apartment building (139 Units)	\$30,028,000
561 York Road Two storey commercial building	\$25,000,000
1533 Gordon Street 6 storey residential condo building	\$19,000,000
480 Gordon Street – University of Guelph Addition to existing library	\$18,000,000
735 Woolwich Street Three storey office building	\$13,000,000
101 Cooper Drive Three storey office building (shell only, no finishes)	\$10,450,000
54 Phelan Court One storey industrial building	\$9,060,000
8 Ryde Court Renovations to Paisley water station	\$7,500,000
71 Hanlon Creek Boulevard One storey office building	\$7,000,000
50 Golds Court One storey industrial building	\$5,780,000

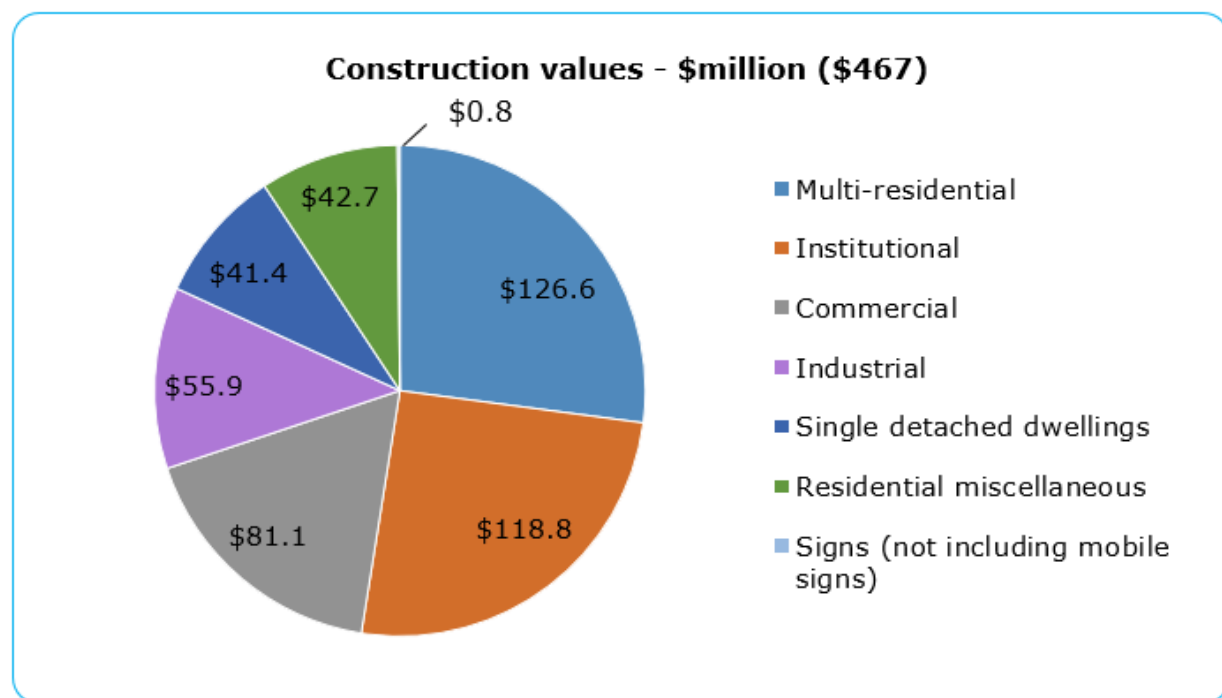
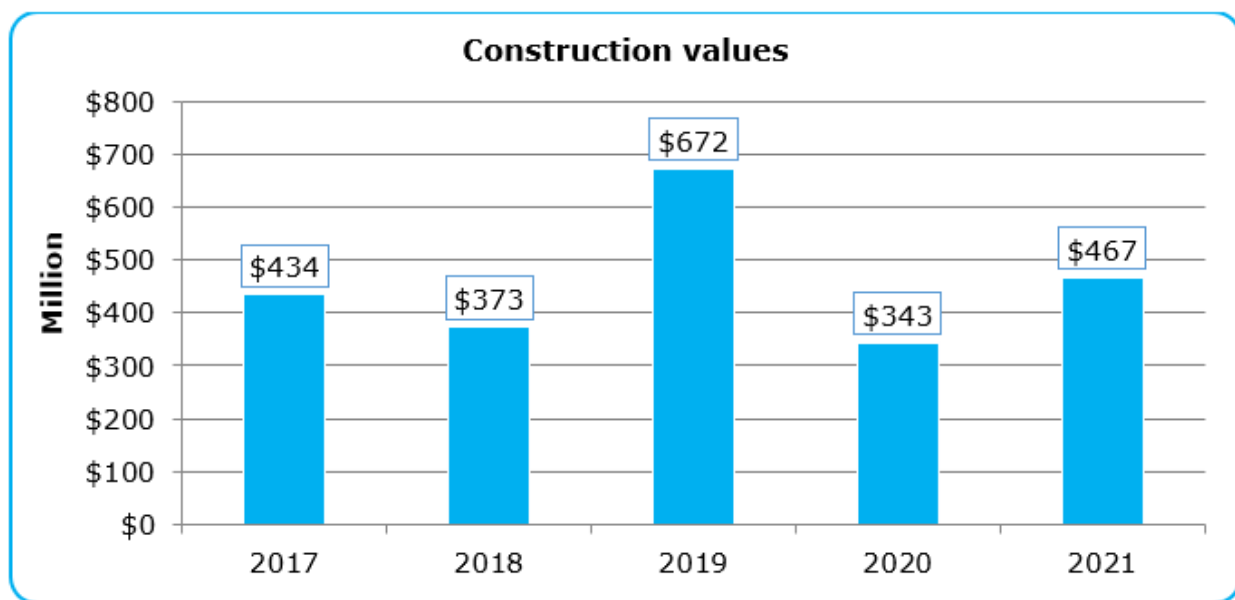
Performance Measurements

Dashboard

Building permits

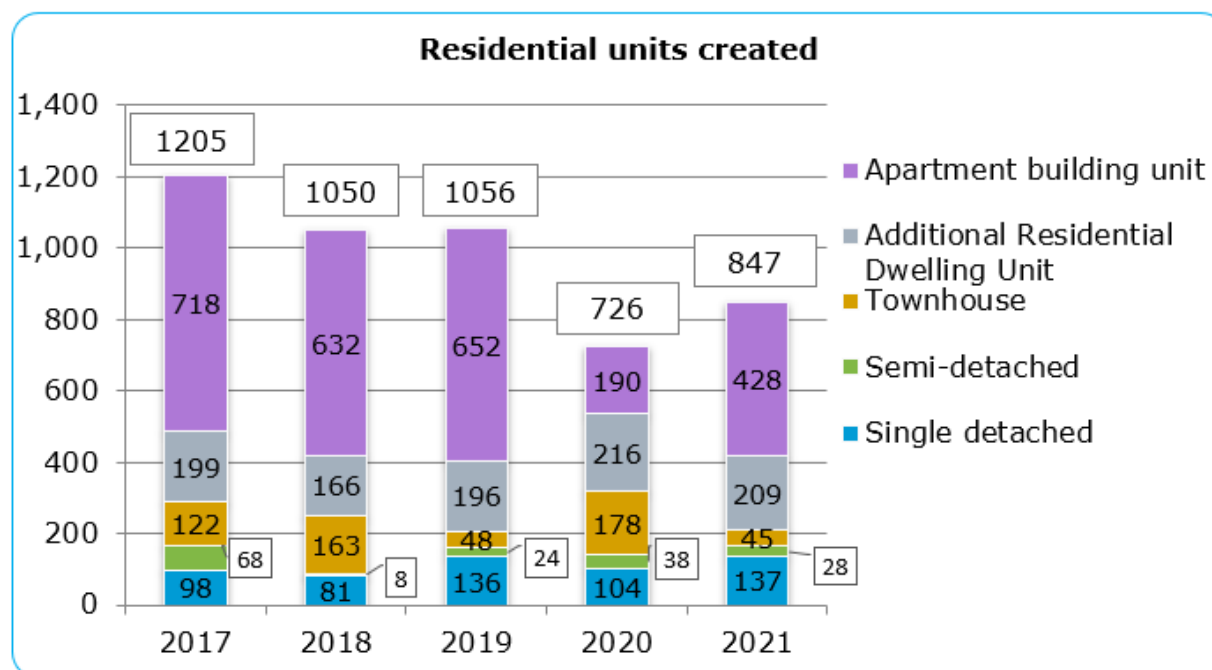


Building permits (continued)



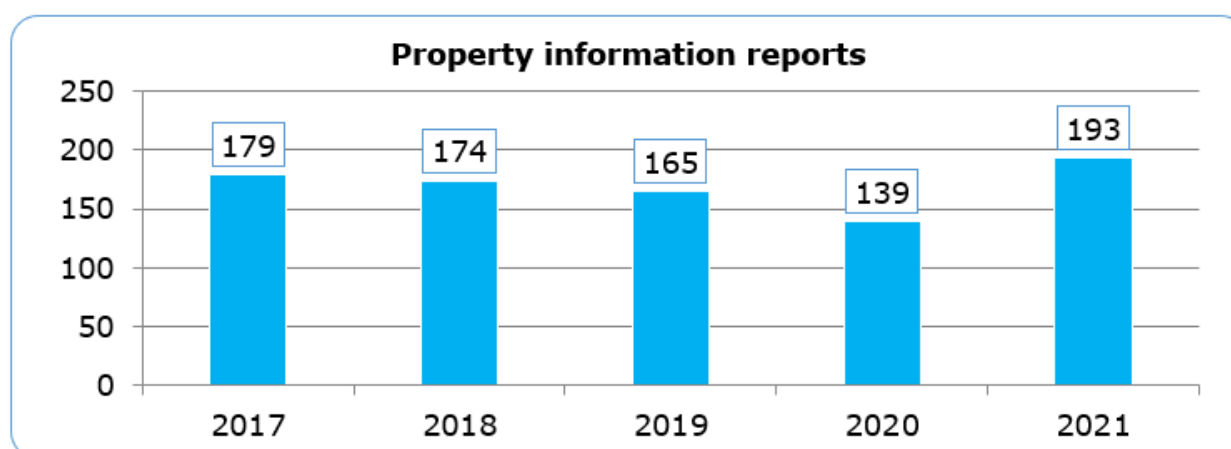
New residential units

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). This is due to the move towards residential intensification through the Places to Grow legislation.



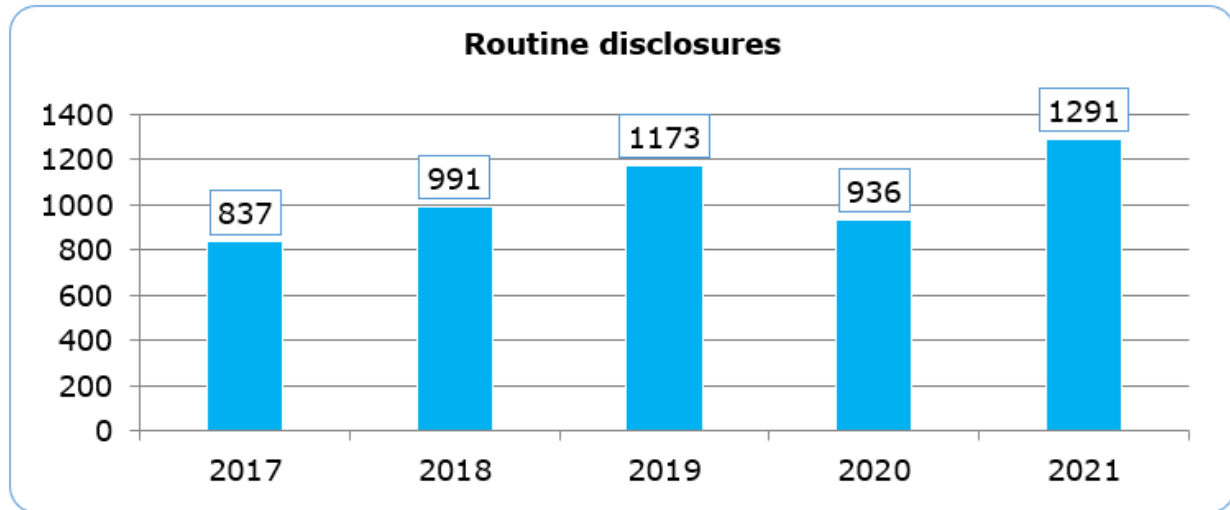
Property information reports

The volume of property information reports, otherwise known as pre-sales saw a large increase in 2021.



Routine disclosure

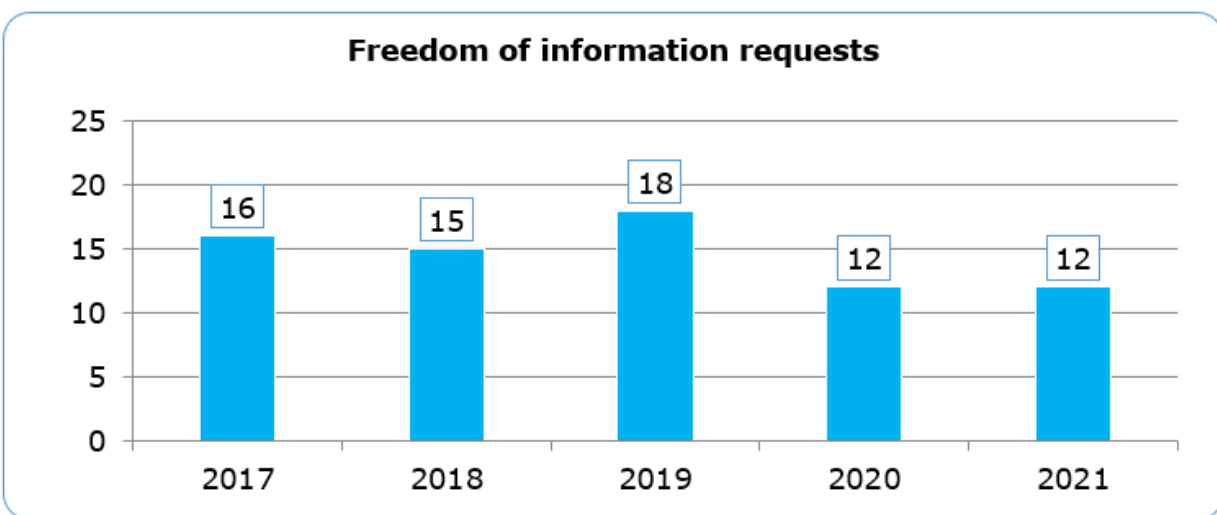
Routine disclosure is the automatic release of certain types of administrative and operational records in response to informal requests regulated under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



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.

Although the number of permits issued in 2021 was down from previous years, staffing shortages in the Permits Services team resulted in plan review targets not being met.

During the summer months, two temporary staff are typically hired to assist with the seasonally higher volume of permit applications. However, due to recruitment challenges, only one summer position was able to be filled late-summer in 2021.

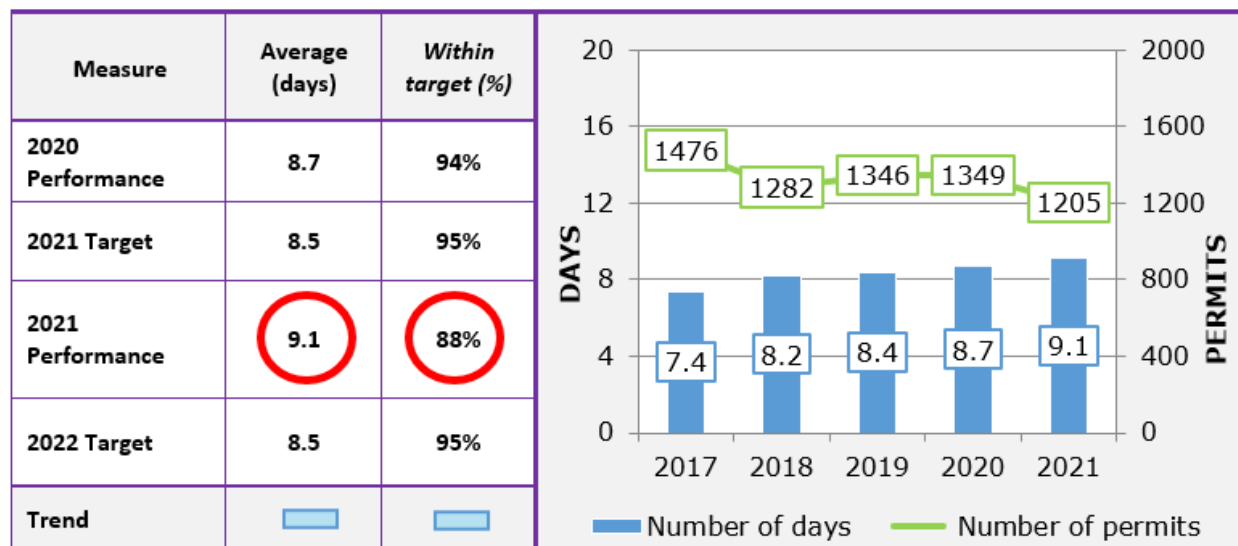
In addition to seasonal staffing shortages, vacancies were also present in both residential and commercial plans examination positions, in addition to clerical roles.

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>
 Negative		<i>Corrective actions may be required</i>	
 <i>Positive trend</i>		 <i>Negative trend</i>	

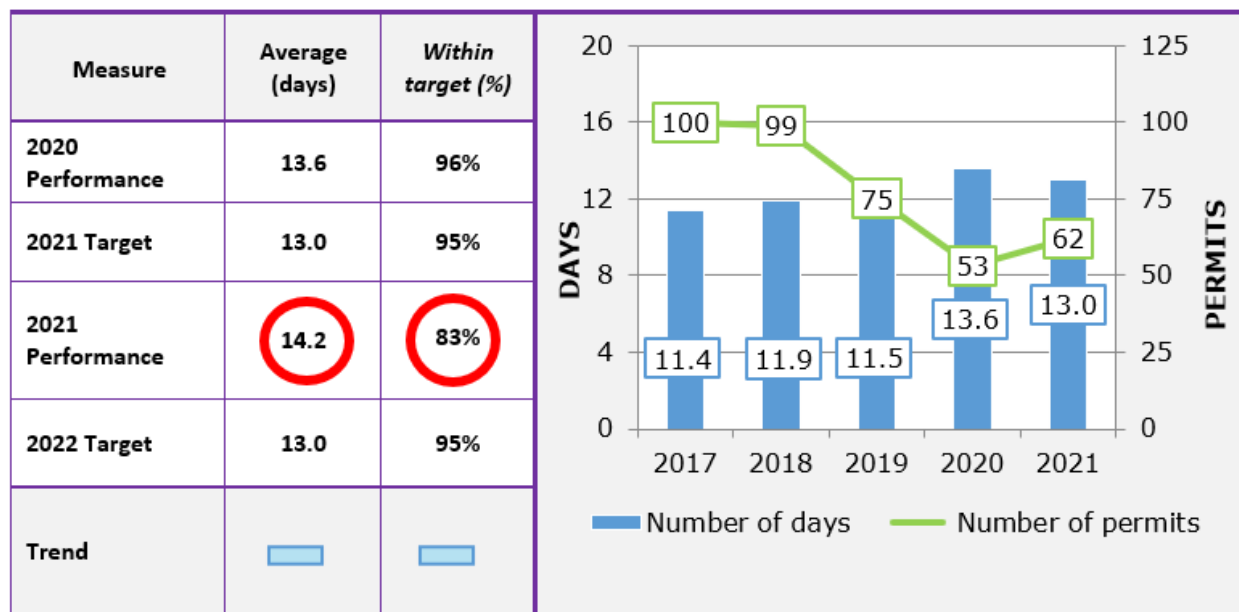
10-day permits

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.



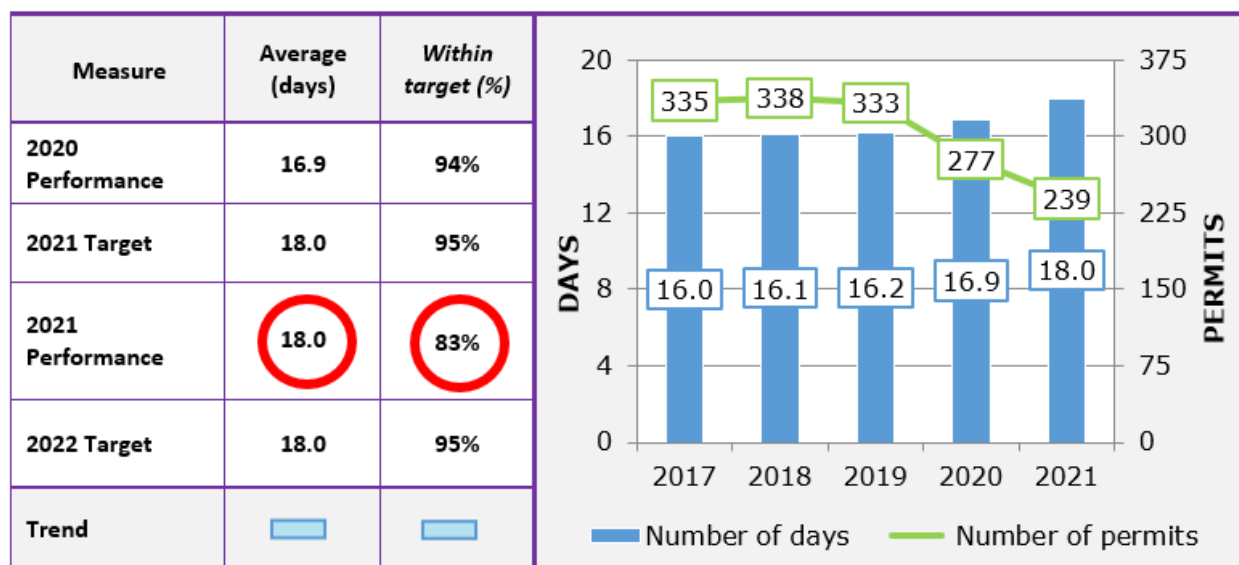
15-day permits

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 nineteen of these building permits issued in 2021 and the average turnaround time was 12.5 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 2021, 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. 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 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

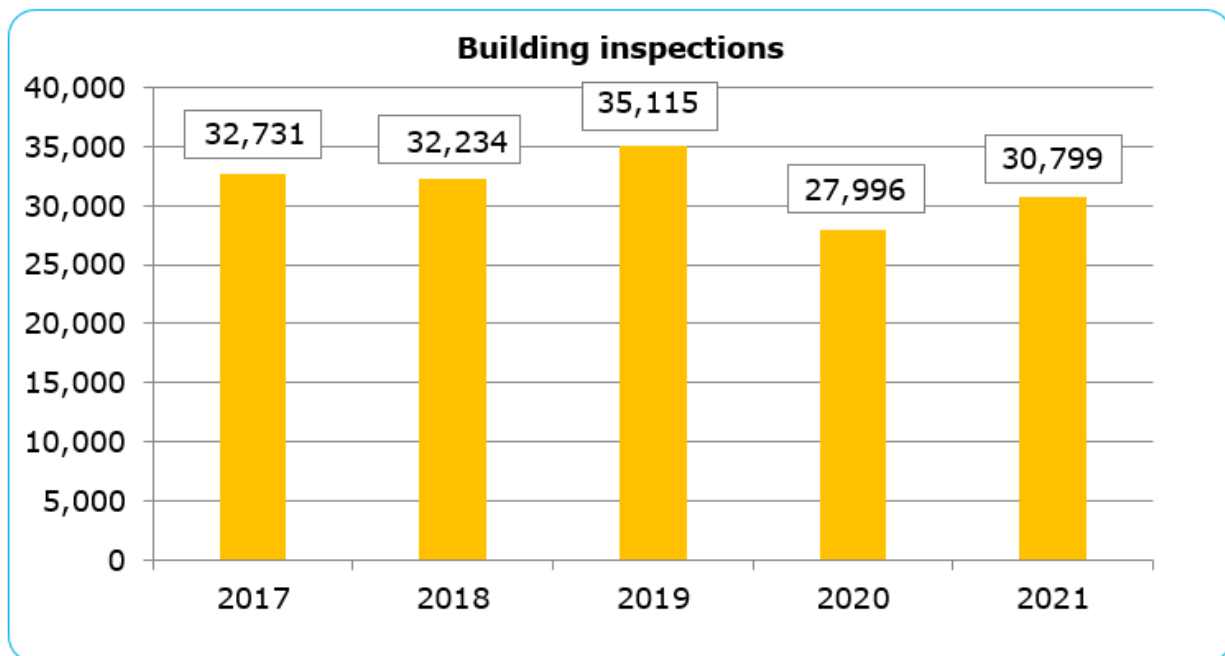
Dashboard

The number of building inspections carried out in 2021 rebounded from the low in 2020 which was largely due 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). Some of these challenges and COVID 19 restrictions continued in 2021.

Our average monthly productivity targets for residential, commercial and mechanical inspection groups were impacted by a reduction in permit volume, COVID 19 restrictions and time required to carry out COVID 19 Health and Safety Procedures

We continue to see a rise in the number of inspections scheduled online and continue to support customers in making that switch.

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



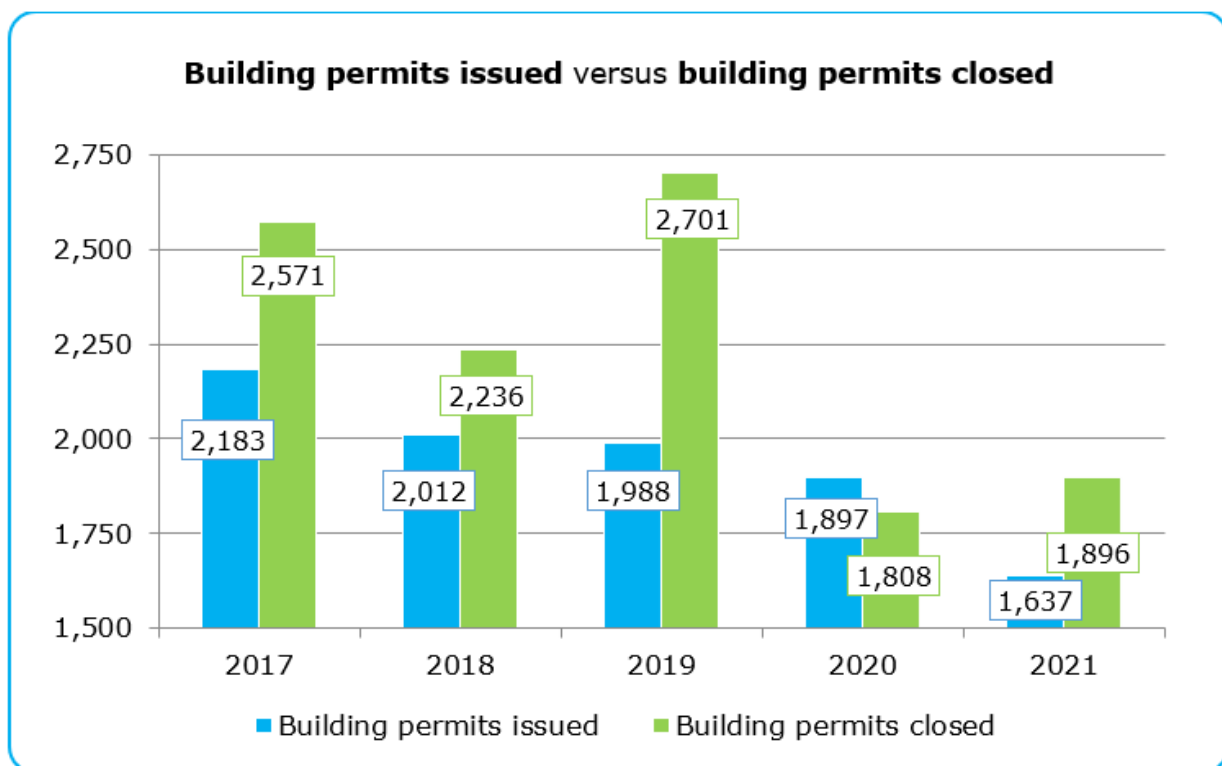
Scorecard

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 2021 and we were able to rebound from not achieving this goal in 2020 due to COVID 19 restrictions.

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





ZONING

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 2021, 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 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.

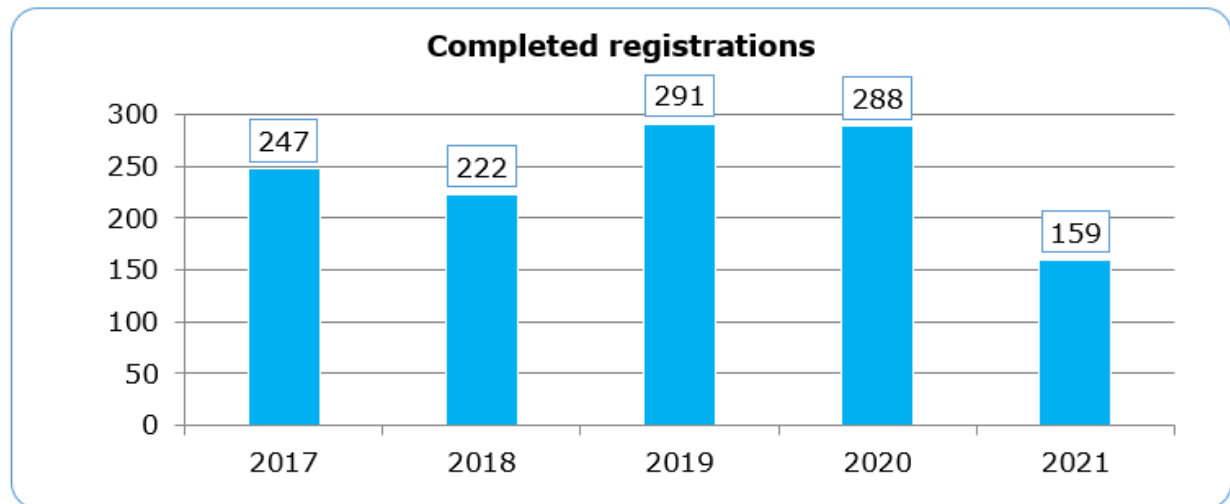
Zoning Services is also responsible for the enforcement of Zoning By-law regulations, additional residential dwelling units (accessory apartments), signs on private property (building, freestanding and mobile), in addition to certain provisions of the Ontario Building Code (OBC).

Shared Rental Housing

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

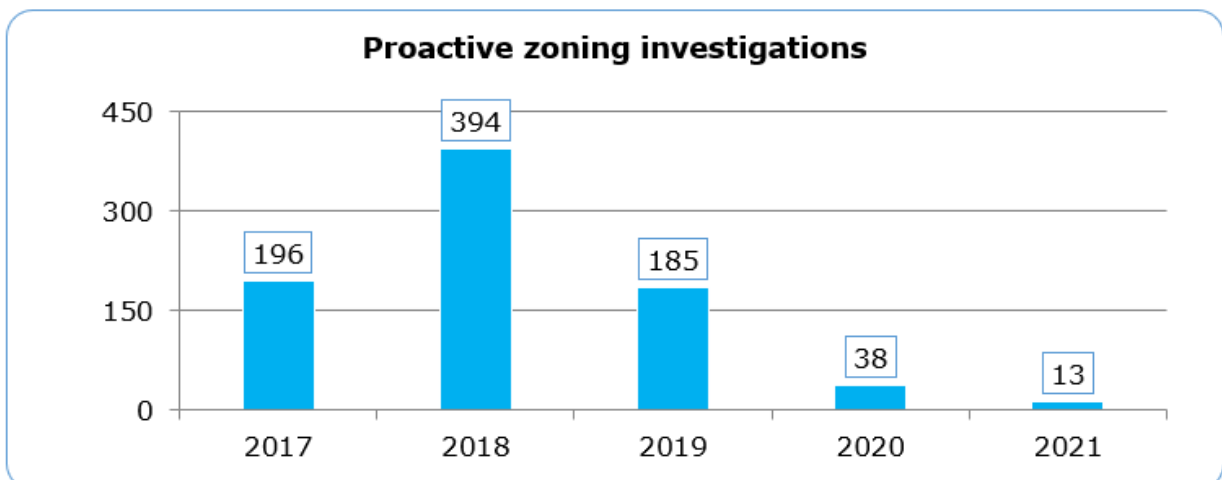
Accessory Apartments

At the end of 2021, there were in excess of 3,500 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 2021:

- Building Services inspectors completed on-going training in aspects of the legal proceedings program
- The execution of search warrants was suspended due to the pandemic
- 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. Tenant safety inspections were suspended in 2021 due to the pandemic.

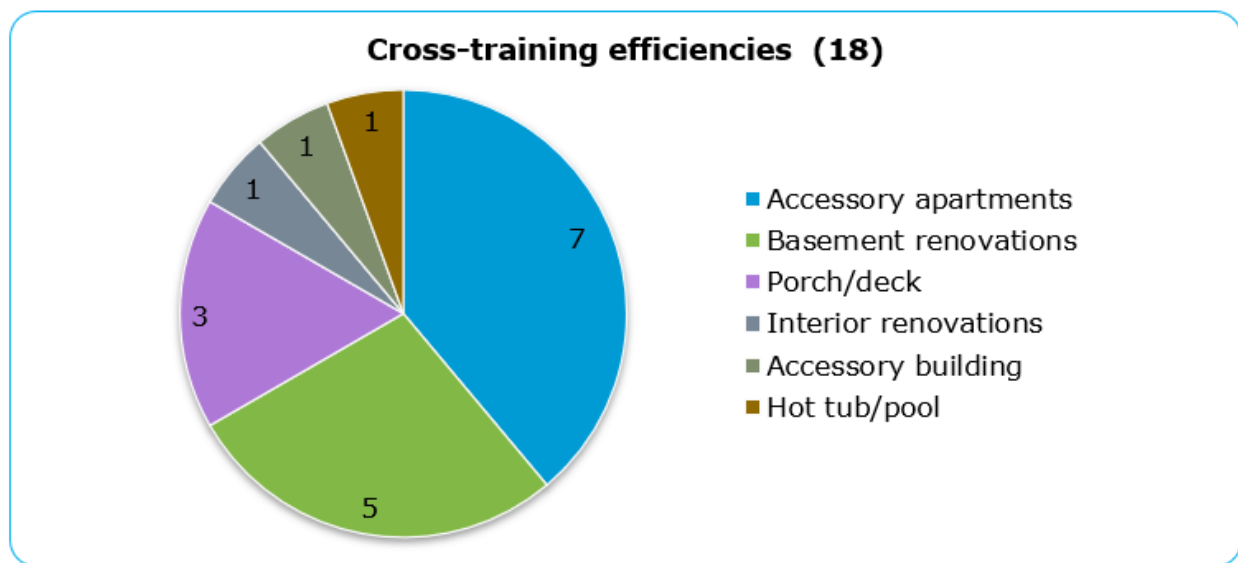
Search Warrants

Building Services created a search warrant team in 2016, along with operating guidelines for the implementation of search warrants. No search warrants were issued in 2021 due to the pandemic.

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.

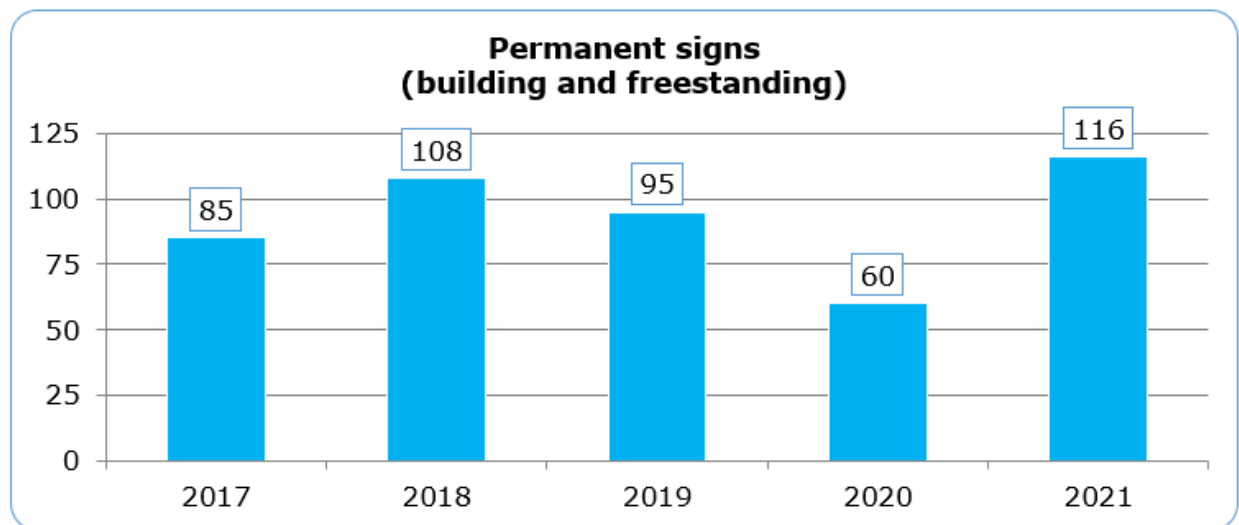
The ability to have one inspector perform both zoning and building functions eliminates the need for multiple inspectors to attend the same site. This assists our customers by reducing the number of inspections and allowing them to work with a single inspector to resolve any issues. In 2021, 18 proactive OBC infractions were identified by zoning inspectors.



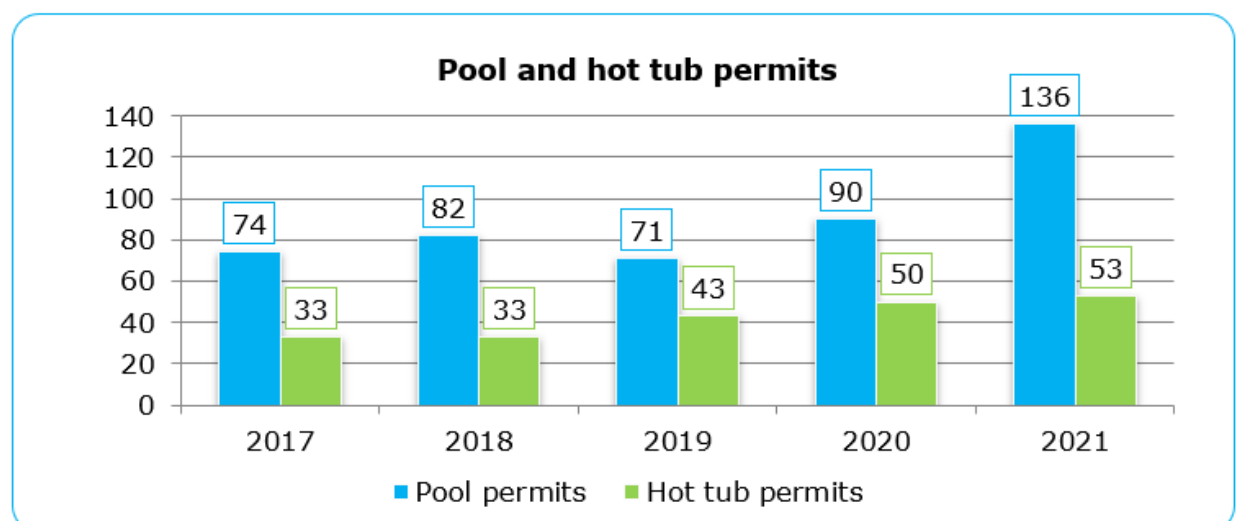
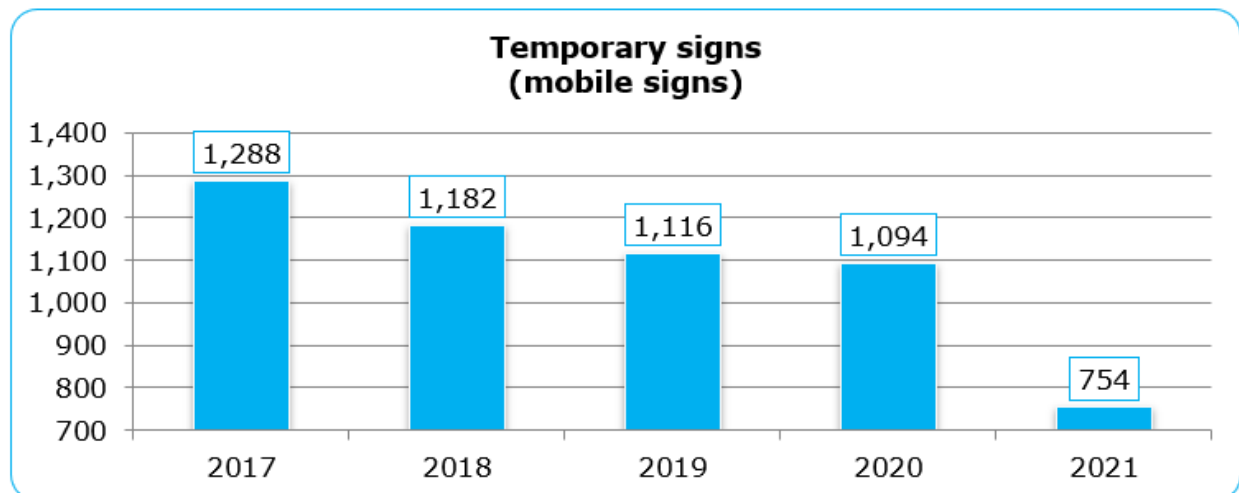
Swimming Pool and Hot Tub Bylaw

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 regard to new swimming pool and hot tub installations. In 2021, 189 permits were issued under the new bylaw with enhanced safety measures which exceeded previous years.

Permits

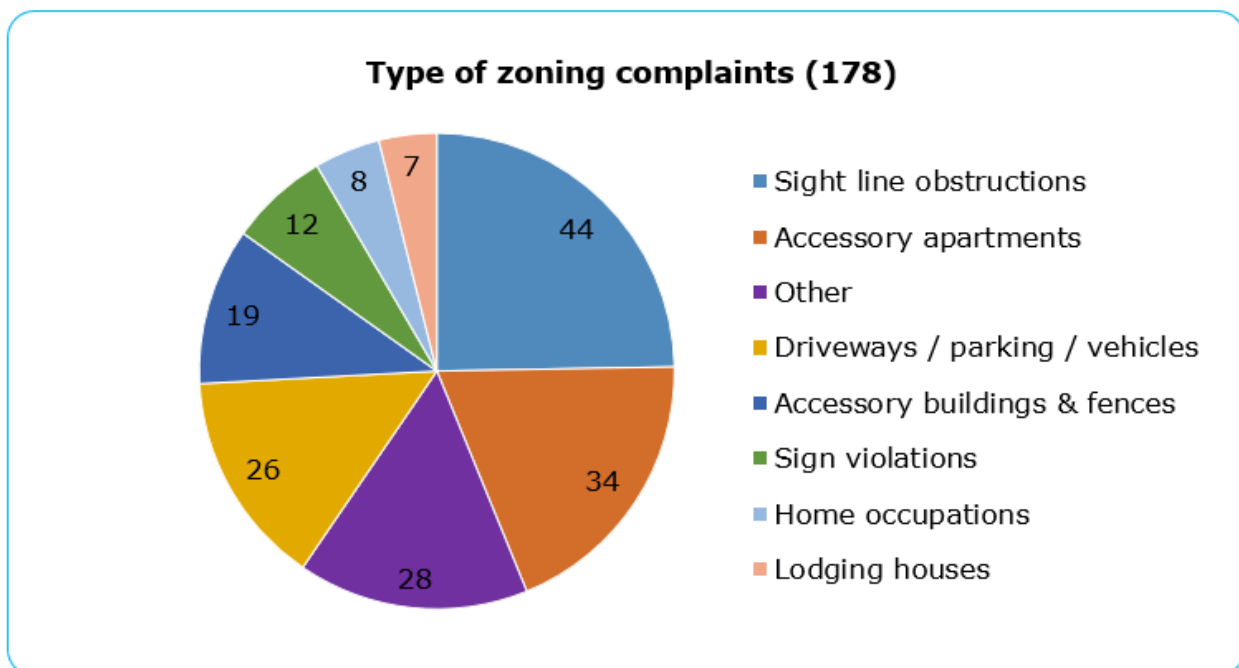
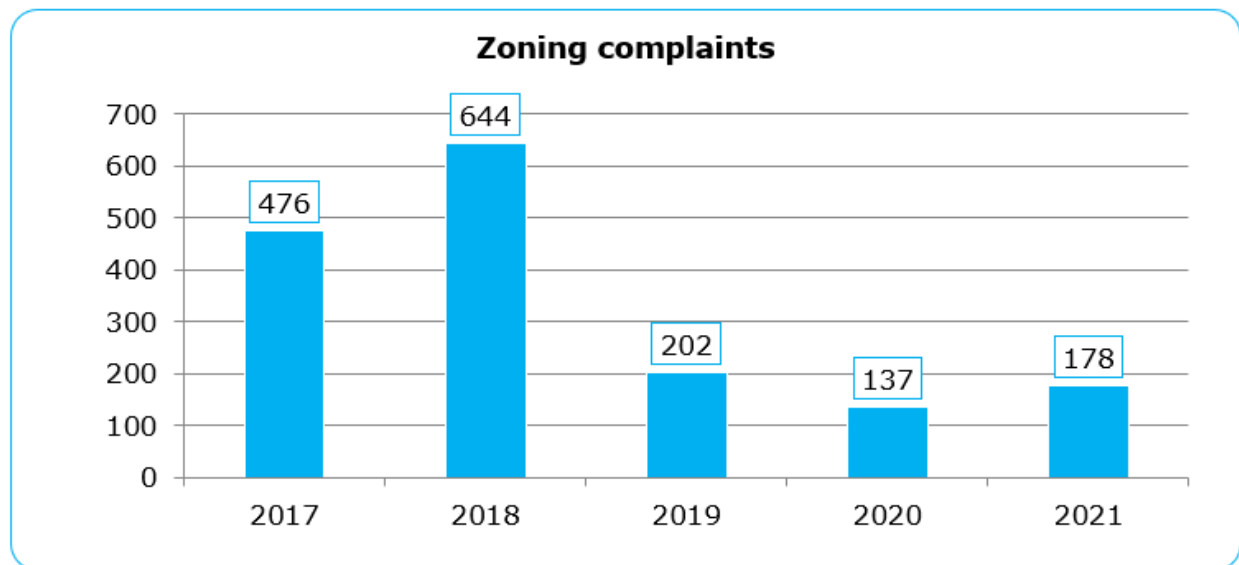


Permanent signs include Ontario Building Code signs.



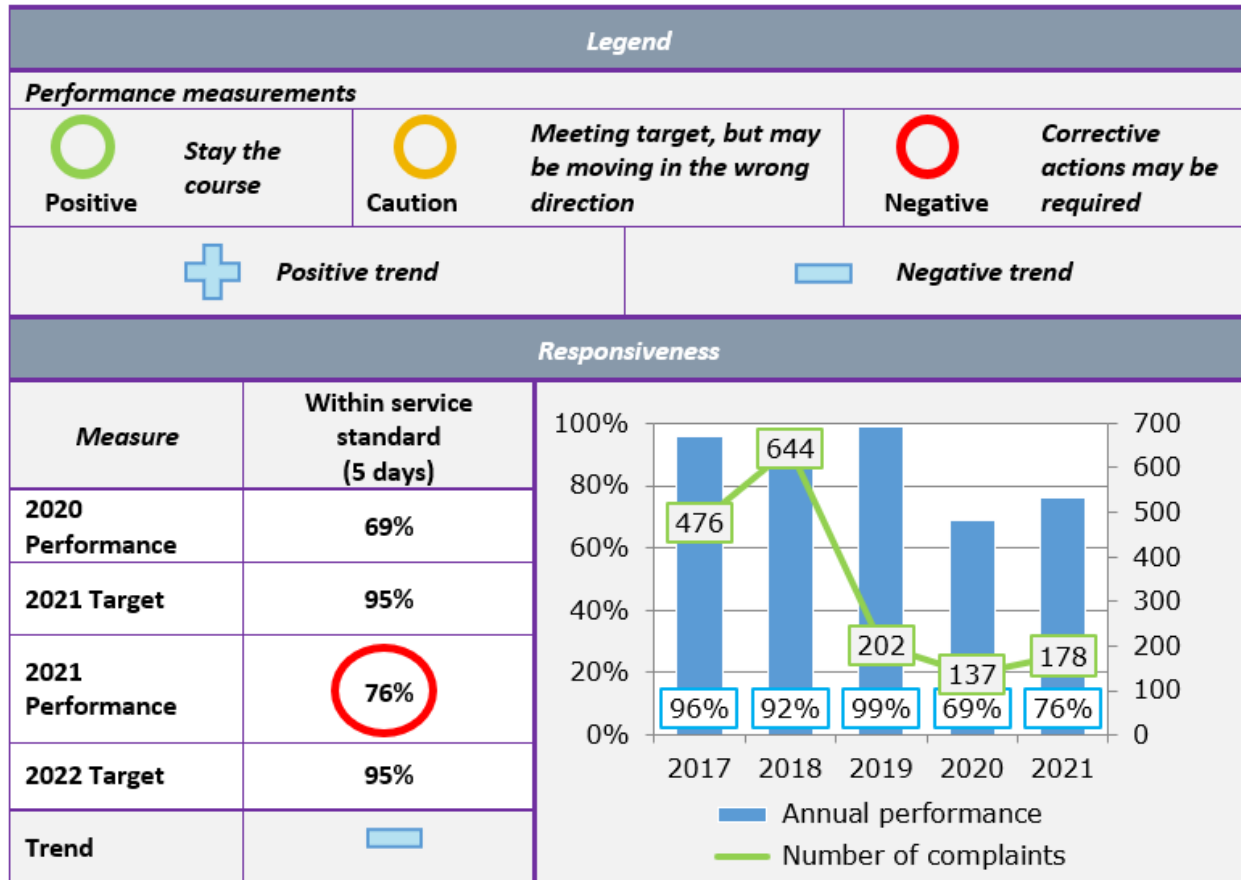
Performance Measurements

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 2021 this target was not successfully met due to the pandemic and suspended inspections.



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.

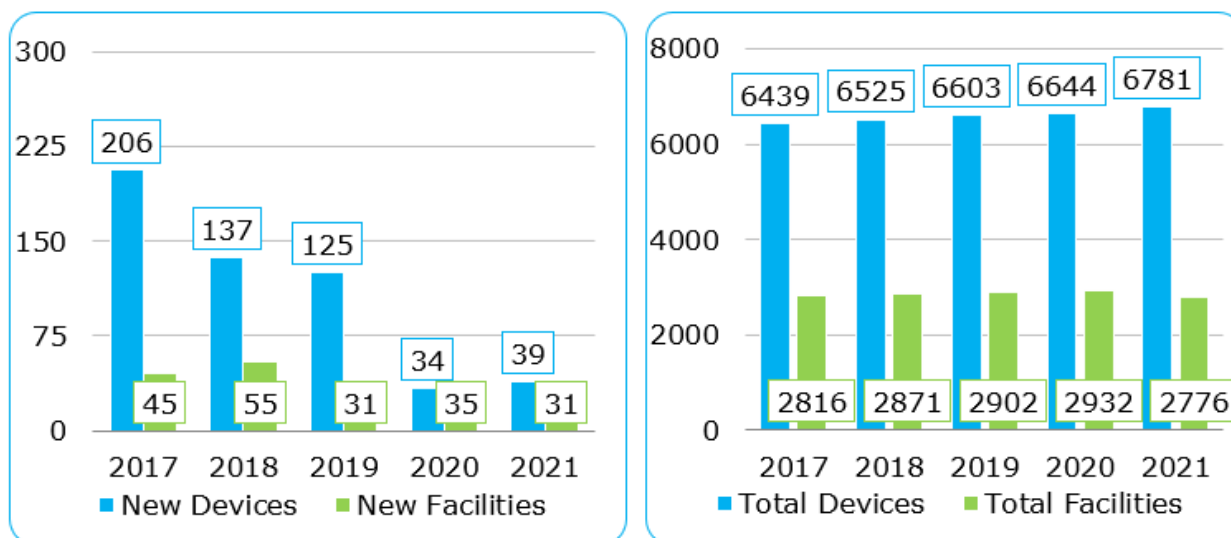
All industrial, commercial, institutional and larger multi-residential buildings are required to install backflow prevention devices on water services entering the building, as well as protecting all interior cross-connections. Other residential buildings are required to install backflow prevention devices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

We completed the first cycle of our Sewage Inspection Program in 2020, and in 2021 we began the 2nd cycle of our program. To date there are 314 known properties within the City that require compliance with the Sewage Inspection Program. As of 2021, 94% (35 Properties) of the higher risk properties were compliant, with 2 orders being issued.

No deadline is established in the Building Code for the inspection of sewage systems in the lower risk areas, but all systems have been inspected during the first 5 years of the Program. By the end of 2021, 212 of the 218 active lower risk properties were compliant, with 1 order issued and 5 properties being monitored.

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, this has resulted in the decommissioning of several sewage systems through the appropriate demolition permit process.

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. A sixth infestation area (Eastview) was discovered 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 2021 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

Of the areas with ongoing monitoring, the King Street area had no activity in 2021. This was the third consecutive year of complete inactivity for the King Street area. The Woolwich and John Galt Park management areas had renewed but relatively minor activity (Figure 1.)

As expected, the highest level of activity was in the Eastview management area, which was newly discovered in the fall of 2019. Traps were inspected 17 times from May through October. Figure 2 compares the number of termites trapped on each inspection in 2020 and 2021 in the Eastview area. A total of 151,281 termites were trapped in 2021. This represented a 60.5% reduction compared to the previous year. 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. Please refer to the [2021 Termite Status Report](#) for more information.

Figure 1: Termites trapped by year in all areas except Eastview.

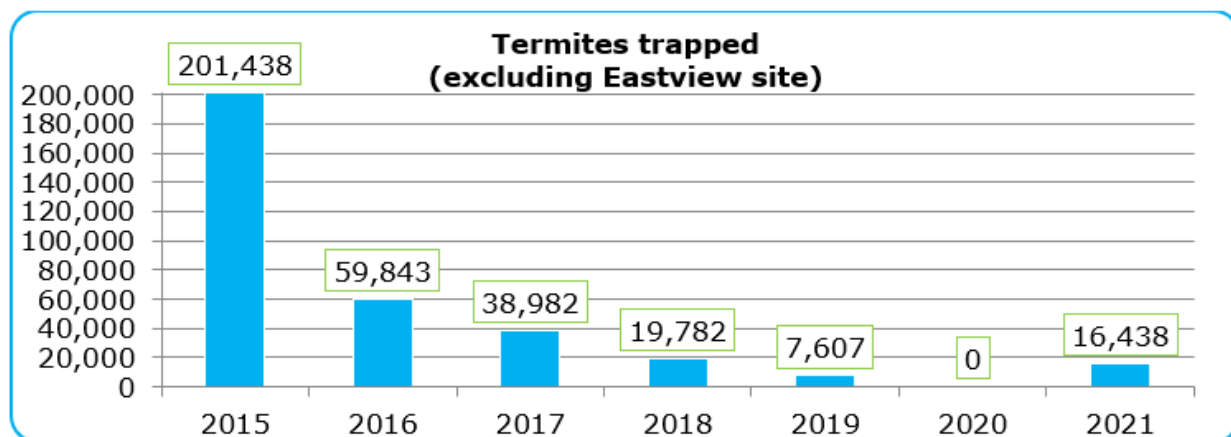
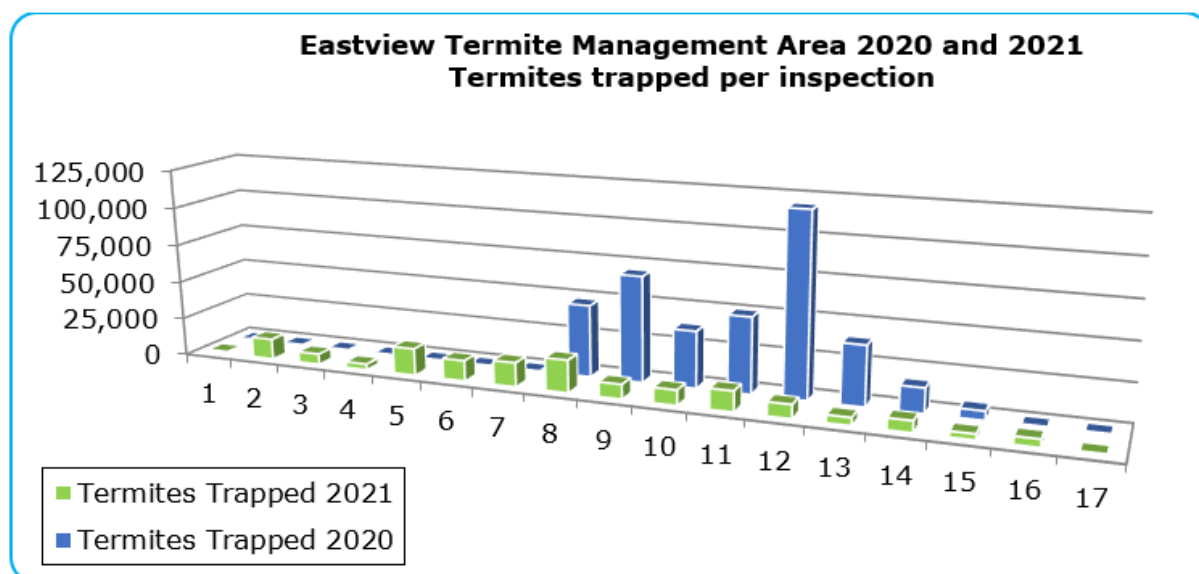


Figure 2: Termites trapped per inspection in the Eastview area in 2020 and 2021.



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