

2025 BUILDING SERVICES STATISTICAL REPORT

City of Guelph

Building Services

Planning and Building Services

Infrastructure, Development and Environment

Table of Contents

ADMINISTRATION **3**

Divisional Structure 3

PERMITS **4**

Introduction 4
Major Building Projects 5
Performance Measurements 6
Scorecard 10

INSPECTIONS **13**

Introduction 13
Performance Measurements 14
Scorecard 15

ZONING **17**

Introduction 17
Shared Rental Housing 18
Permits 21
Performance Measurements 22
Scorecard 23

BACKFLOW **24**

Introduction 24
Performance Measurements 25

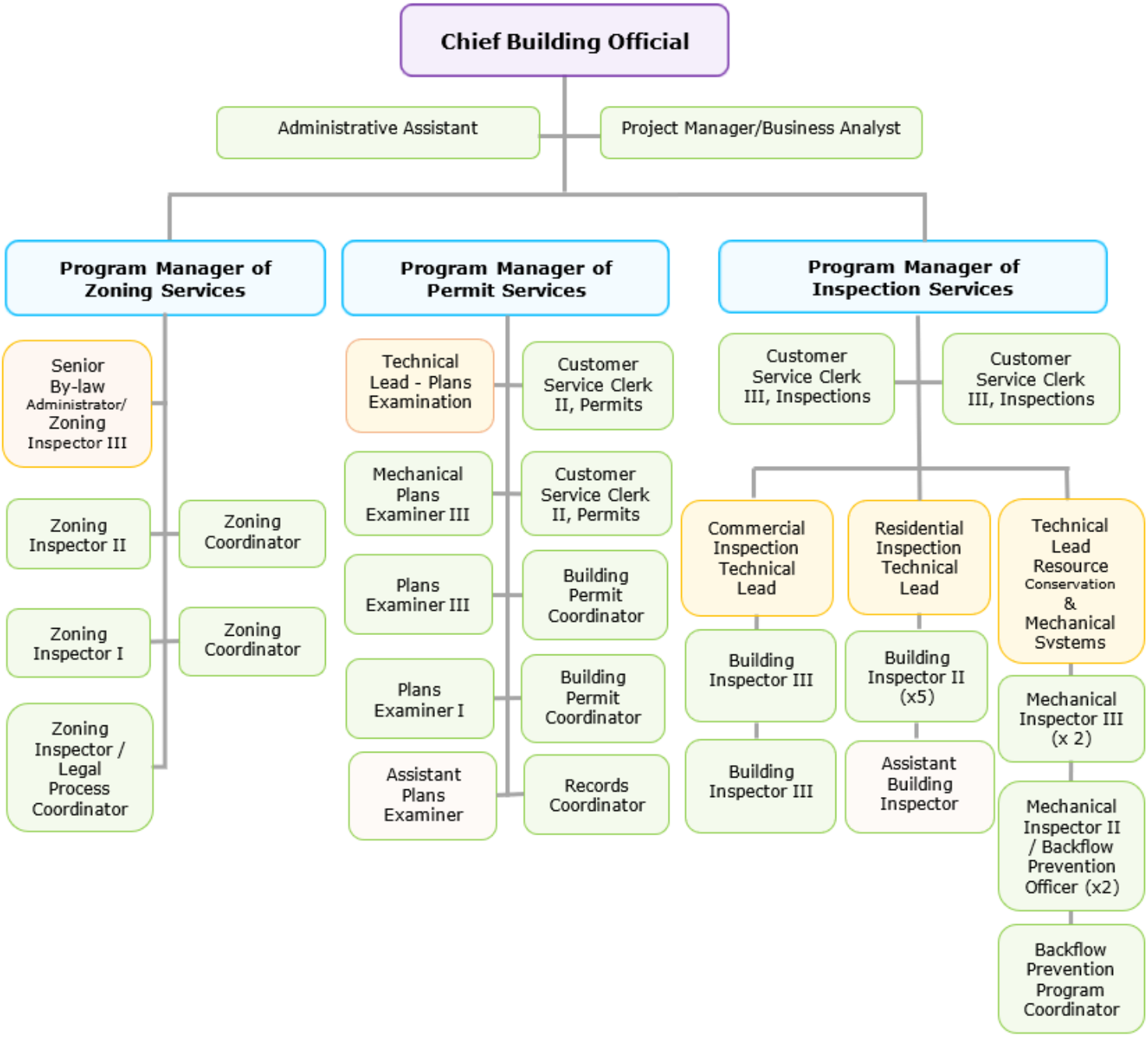
SEWAGE SYSTEMS **26**

Introduction 26
Performance Measurements 26

ADMINISTRATION

Divisional Structure

Building Services is a division within the Planning and Building Services department of the Infrastructure, Development and Environment 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 2025, this team within Building Services had 9 full-time staff and one temporary summer Assistant Plans Examiners.

Permit Services also collects fees and deposits on behalf of other service areas of the City, including development charges, community benefit charges and parkland dedication fees. Property information reports, records 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 (GPAS) 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 with GPAS. The kiosk is available to customers who may not have access to a computer or another electronic device to submit their application. Additionally, for customers who need assistance but aren't able to attend City Hall in person, a virtual screen-sharing option is available to assist them remotely.

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

With the current housing crisis and direction from the Provincial Government, we anticipate a rebound in permit activity for condo, apartment, and other multi-residential developments. As these projects move forward and economic uncertainty subsides, it will be important to retain and develop the experienced staff needed to administer and inspect these increasingly complex buildings, while continually monitoring development activity and assessing future resource requirements to ensure service levels can be maintained.

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.

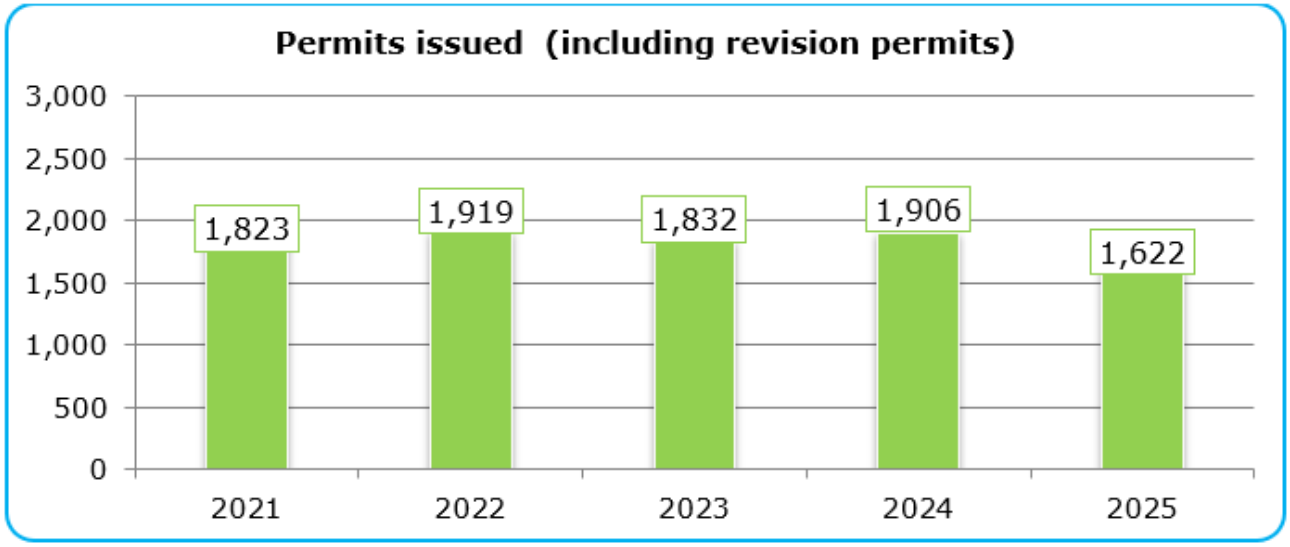
The top five projects alone accounted for more than a quarter of the total construction value of the 1,662 permits issued in 2025.

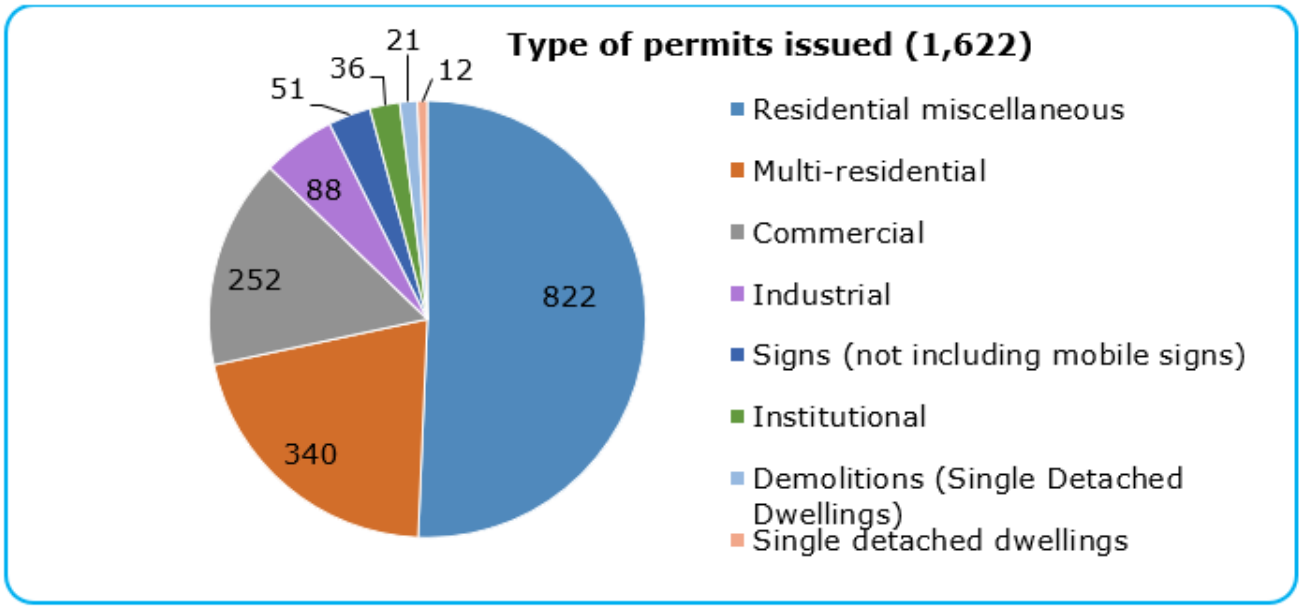
Description	Value
388 Arkell Road Two-storey secondary school	$55,000,000
476 Gordon Street (University of Guelph, J.D. MacLachlan Building) Three-storey addition and renovations	$28,000,000
42 Lowes Road West Three-storey stacked townhouses (6 buildings, 150 units)	$24,271,520
460 Speedvale Avenue West (Conestoga College) Interior renovations to create a diagnostic imaging clinic	$18,955,000
201 Elmira Road S Three-storey open-air parking structure	$11,781,777
824 Woolwich Street Three-storey stacked townhouses (4buildings, 112 units)	$10,000,000
41 Massey Road Three-storey office building and two-storey industrial addition	$7,012,600
115 Delhi Street (Guelph General Hospital) Mechanical and electrical upgrades/renovations	$5,850,000
221 Scottsdale Drive Addition to existing elementary school	$5,021,400
177 Rickson Avenue Addition to existing elementary school	$4,518,385
11 Cork Street West Three-storey multi-residential building (10 units)	$4,500,000

Performance Measurements

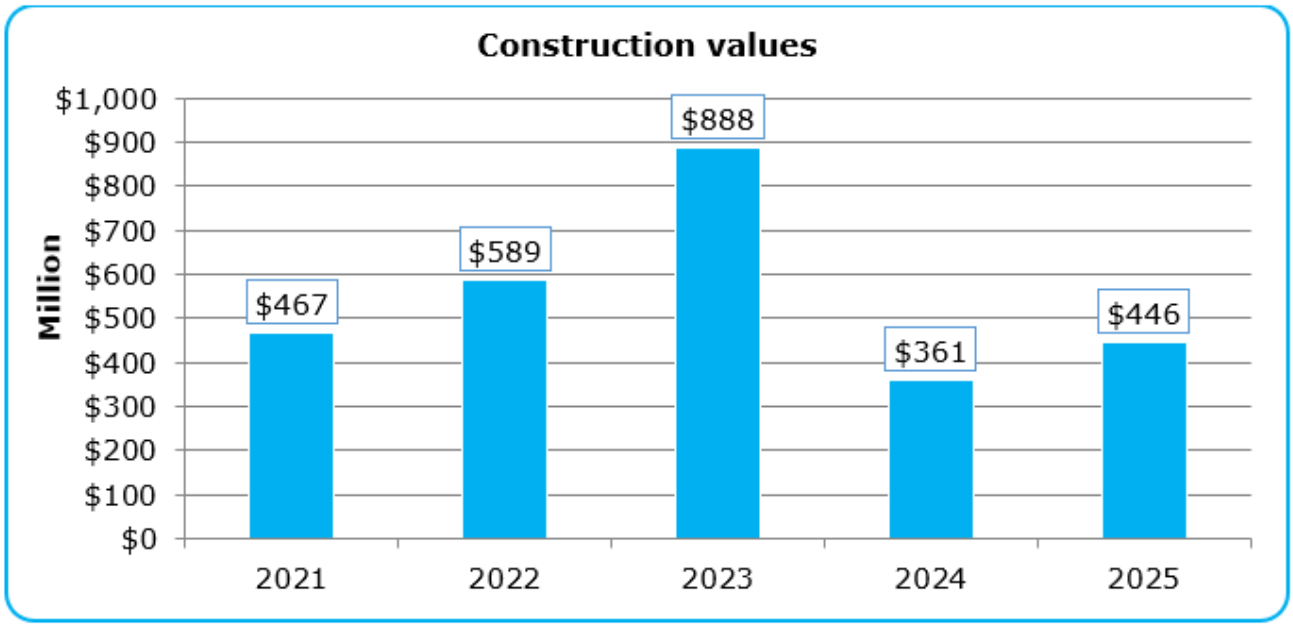
Dashboard

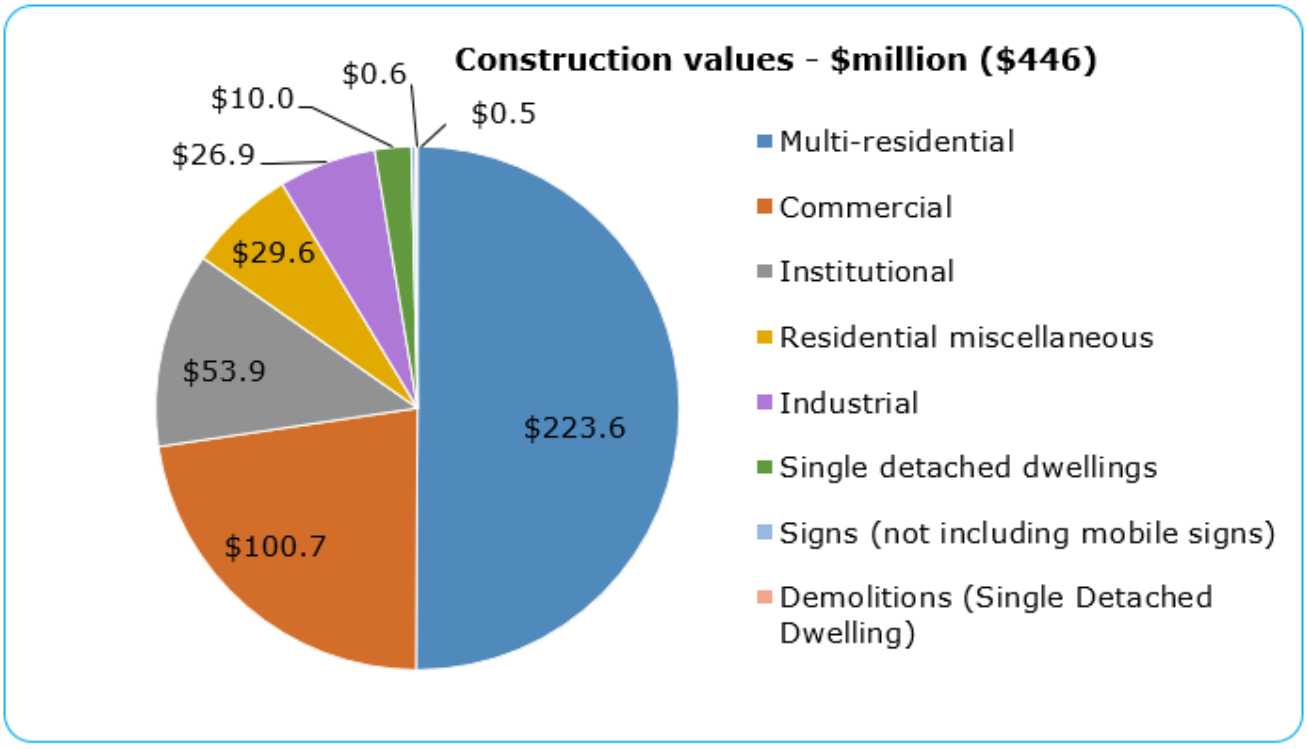
Building permits





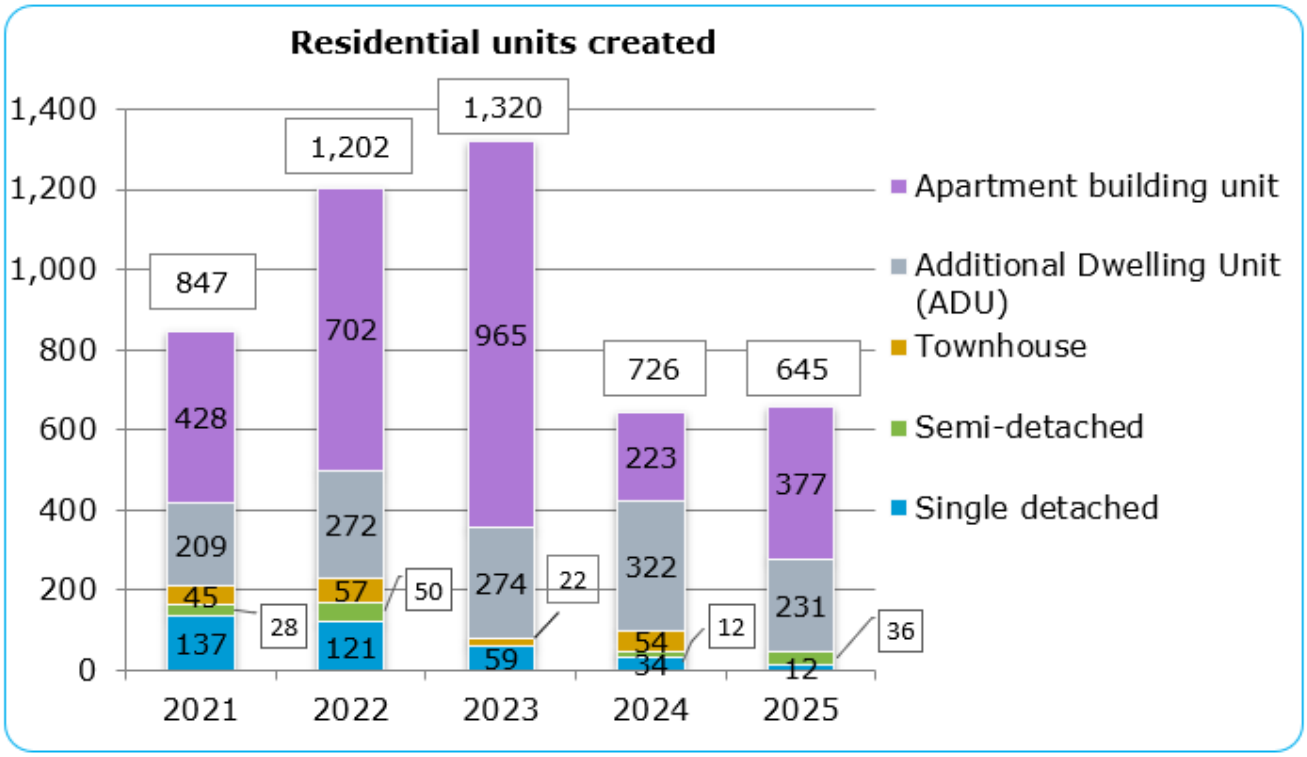
Building permits (continued)





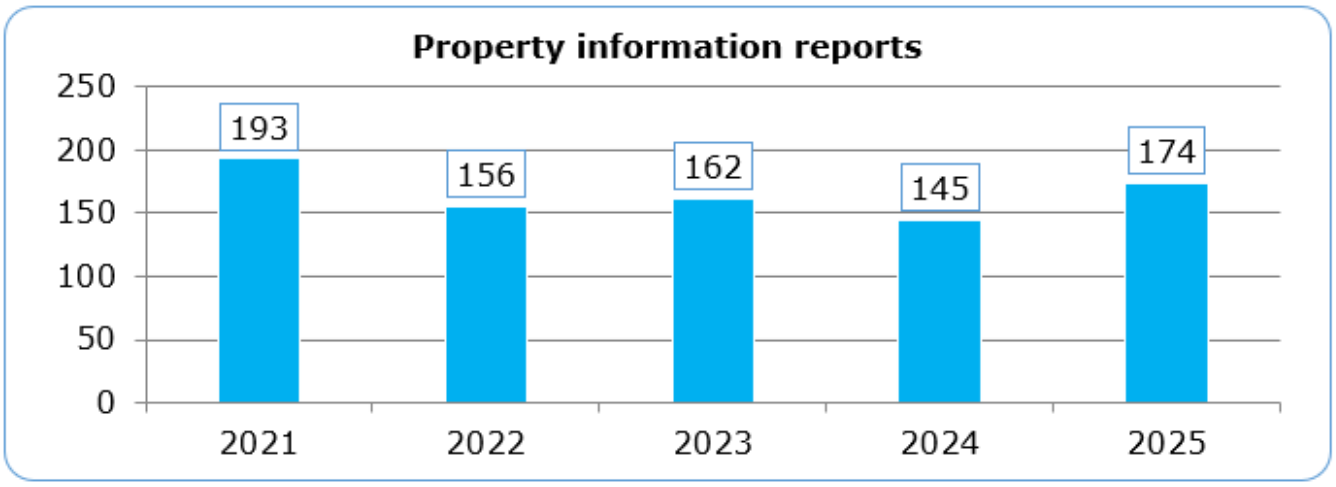
New residential units

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



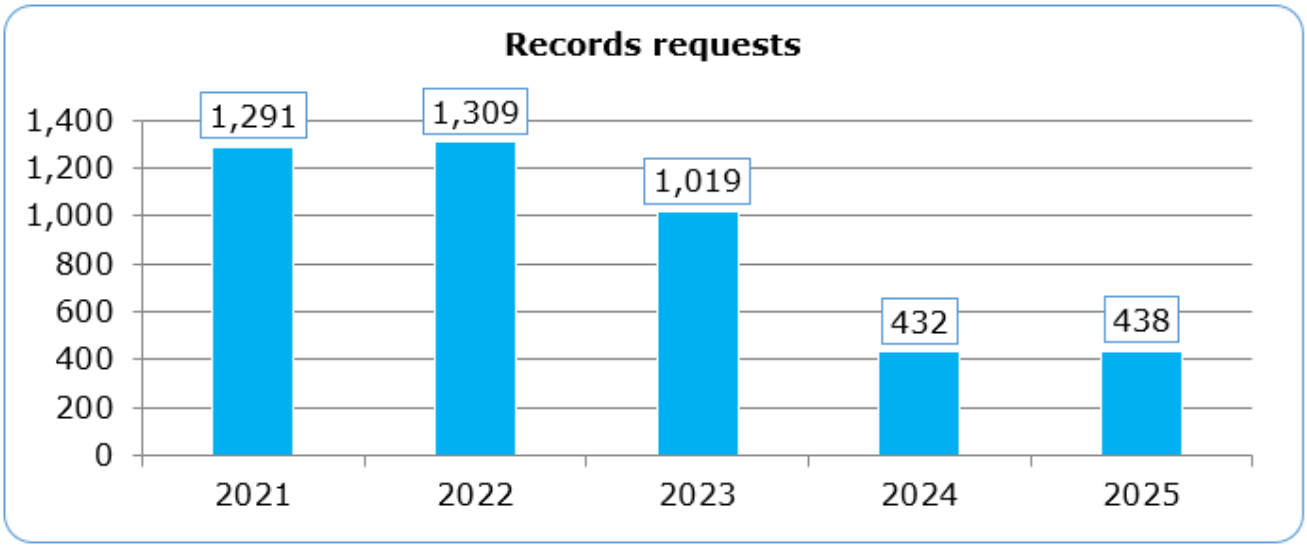
Property information reports

Property information reports, otherwise know as pre-sales, saw a slight increase in 2025 over average annual volumes.



Records requests

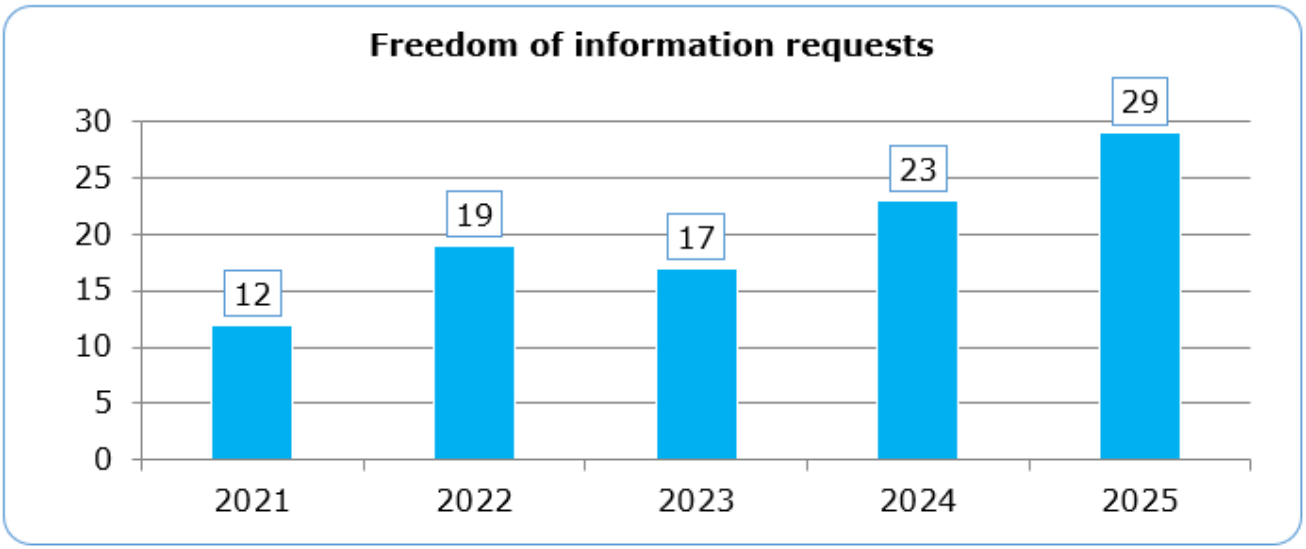
Records requests refer to the release of certain types of administrative and operational records to building owners in response to informal requests regulated under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.



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 the request falls outside of the routine disclosure guidelines.

Freedom of Information requests originate 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, a temporary summer Assistant Plans Examiners was hired to assist with the seasonally higher volume of permit applications.

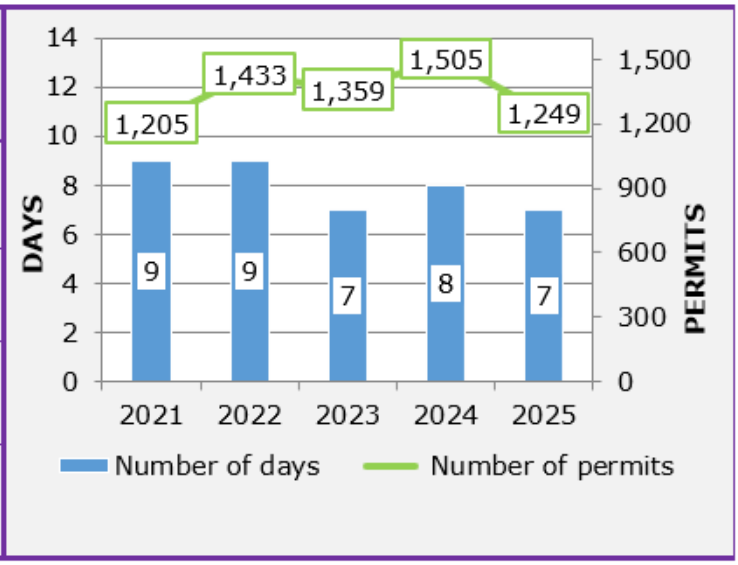
The following scorecards provide a graphical representation of the Permit Services team's overall performance associated with the review of building permit applications. The targets for each permit type reflect provincially legislated timelines based on the type of building, which varies from 10 to 30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

While the median number of days for each permit type met the provincial standard, some fell just short of meeting internally established benchmarks. The percentage of permits reviewed within the target also fell just short of internal benchmarks. These can both be attributed to vacancies within the Permit Services team and to the challenges in recruiting for these highly skilled, technical position that requires multiple levels of provincial qualifications.

10-day permits

The following scorecard reflects 10-day permit turnaround time targets, which applies to typical low-rise residential housing including single detached houses, semi-detached houses and row-townhouses, as well as most additional dwelling units (ADU's). Tents regulated under the OBC also fall within the 10-day review period.

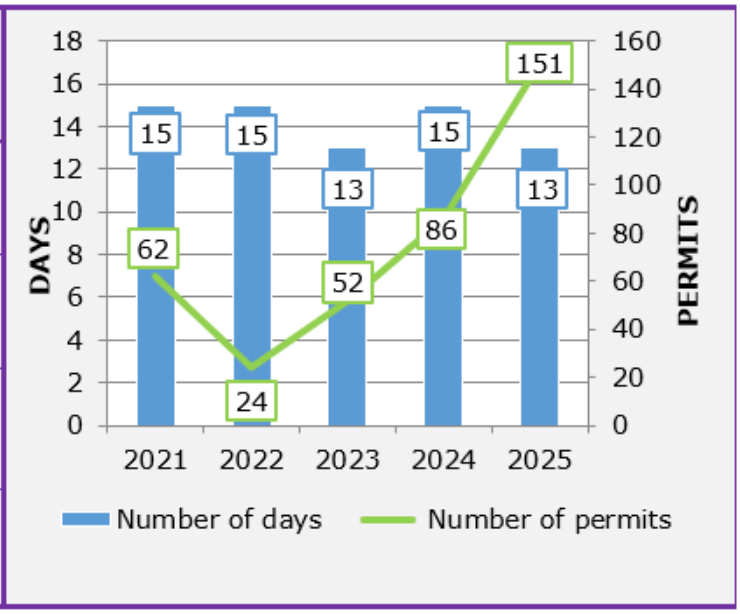
Measure	Median (days)	Within target (%)
2024 Performance	8.0	92%
2025 Target	8.5	95%
2025 Performance	7.0	94%
2026 Target	8.5	95%



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.

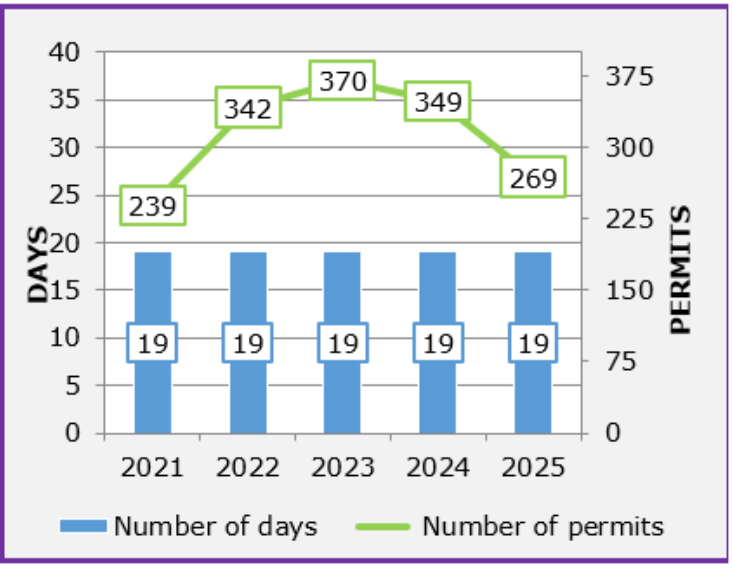
Measure	Median (days)	Within target (%)
2024 Performance	15	90%
2025 Target	13	95%
2025 Performance	13	95%
2026 Target	13	95%



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.

Measure	Median (days)	Within target (%)
2024 Performance	19	86%
2025 Target	18	95%
2025 Performance	19	91%
2026 Target	18	95%



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 2025 and the median turnaround time was 24 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 2025, this function within Building Services had 18 full-time staff – two of which are funded by Water Services through the Backflow Prevention Program, as well as one part-time commercial building inspector and one temporary summer Assistant 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, and buildings damaged by vehicles or 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. We also offer AM or PM timeframes to enhance customer service.

With the current housing crisis and direction from the Provincial Government, we anticipate a rebound in permit activity for condo, apartment, and other multi-residential developments. As these projects move forward and economic uncertainty subsides, it will be important to retain and develop the experienced staff needed to administer and inspect these increasingly complex buildings, while continually monitoring development activity and assessing future resource requirements to ensure service levels can be maintained.

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

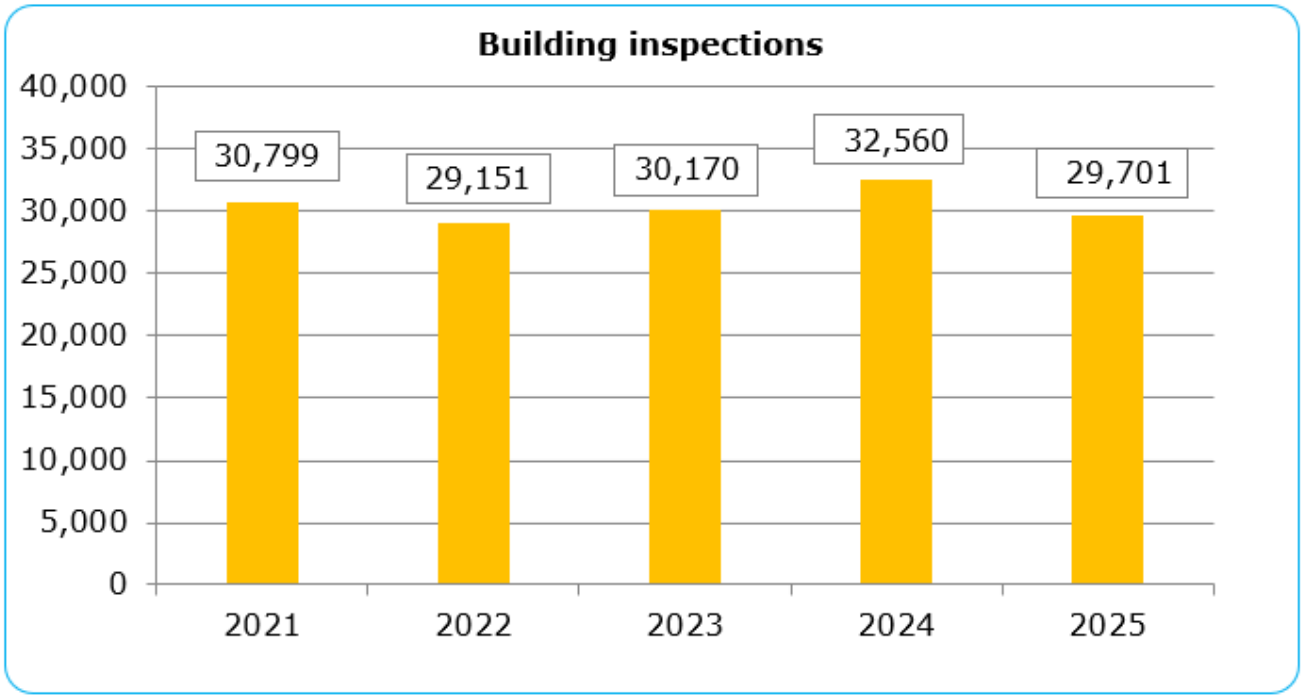
Dashboard

The number of building inspections carried out in 2025 was slightly below, but still in line with, the 5-year average. This can be attributed to the overall number of permits issued in 2025 being slightly lower than previous years. In addition to regular building inspection activities, staff continue to investigate inactive and dormant permit folders, recognizing the risks these files can present, as highlighted by recent case law.

Our own average monthly inspection targets for residential, commercial and mechanical inspection groups are generally being met with the exception occurring when there are vacancies. Reductions in the number of inspections completed by individual inspection groups can occur during periods when staff are training and mentoring new employees, as well as supporting the ongoing development of existing staff as part of succession and workforce planning efforts. This impact was evident throughout much of 2025 within the Mechanical team due to a staff resignation and challenges in recruiting a replacement.

A similar impact on individual inspection levels can be anticipated in the coming years as the Inspection Services team works through a number of anticipated retirements. The priority will be to maximize knowledge transfer between staff and ensure a seamless transition for customers while maintaining service continuity. To minimize operational impacts, most staff training and development activities are scheduled during non-peak periods, generally between November and 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.

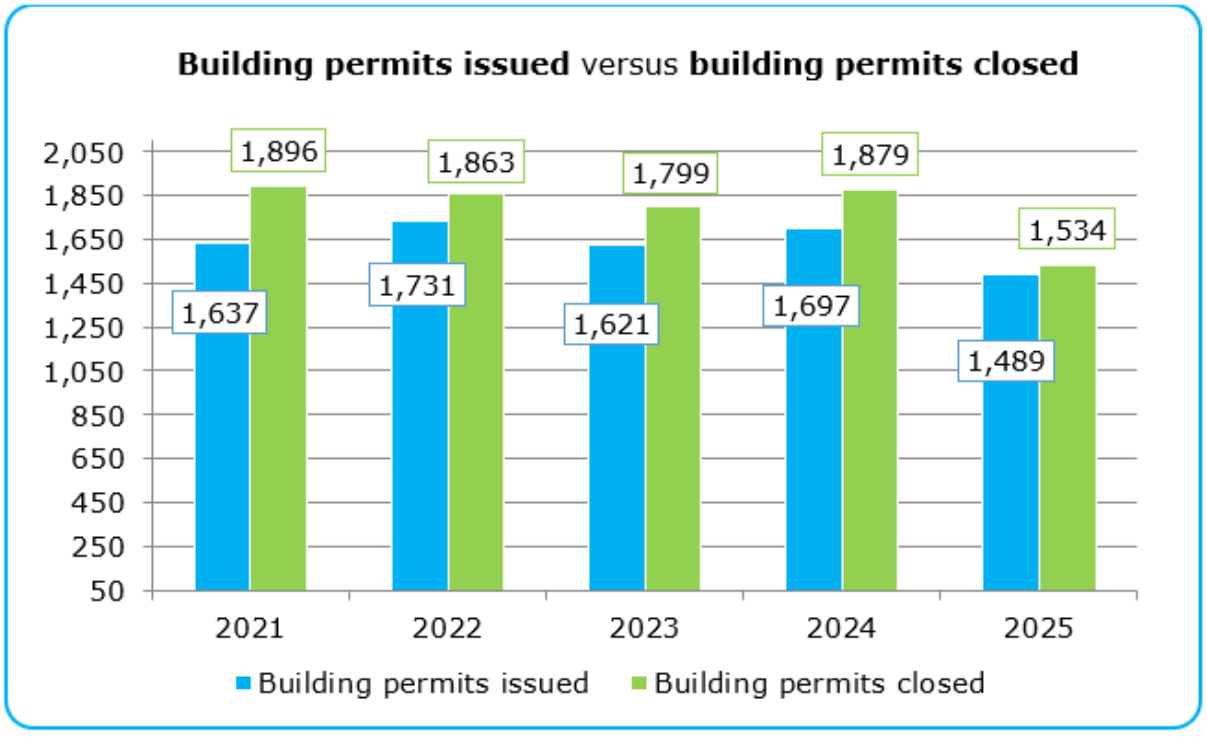
Efforts to close more permits than were issued in 2025 were successful. This can be attributed to the additional effort put in by the inspection team members to address inactive building permits during off-peak months and the additional efforts of administrative staff to support this effort.

Over the past five years, nearly 800 more permits have been closed than issued, representing an average reduction of just under 160 open permits annually. This positive trend is expected to continue in future years, subject to staffing levels and construction activity. While permit applicants are responsible for requesting inspections and facilitating permit closure, Building Inspection staff also play an important role in identifying and following up on inactive and outstanding permits. Priority is generally given to permits that present the greatest potential life safety risks. This risk-based approach helps reduce risks to both the public and the City while continuing to reduce the overall number of open permits.

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 has 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 bylaws and programs with the primary focus being the City of Guelph Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw. The Zoning Bylaw 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 2025, this function within Building Services had seven 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 small multi-unit residential (including additional dwelling units) registration program and lodging house certifications.

Zoning Services is also responsible for the enforcement of Zoning Bylaw regulations, small multi-unit residential 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 Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw appeals.

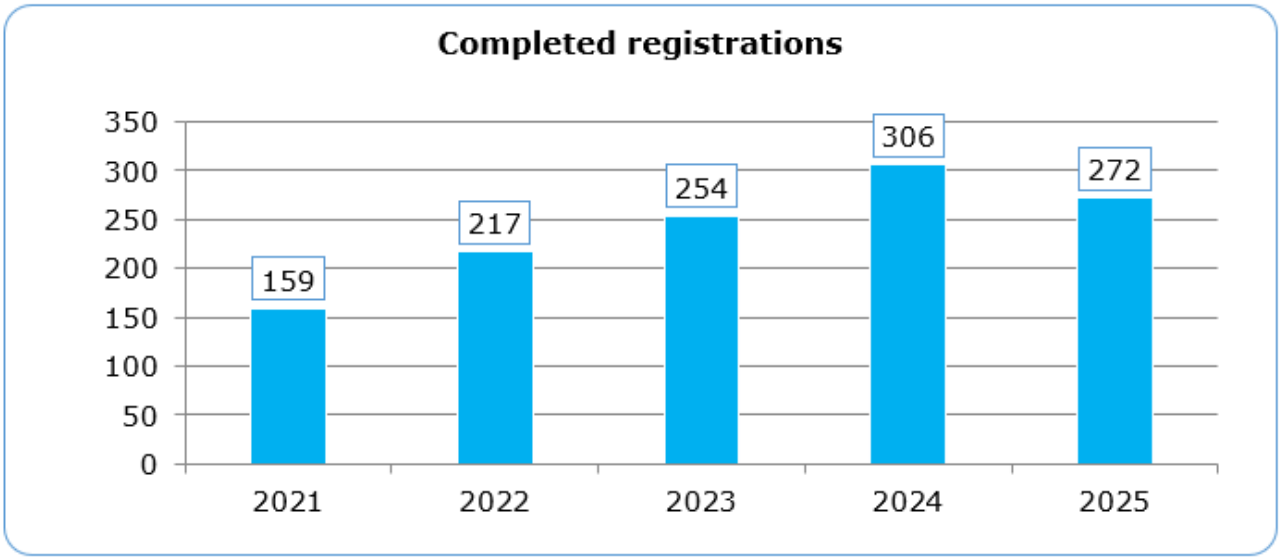
Shared Rental Housing

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

Additional Dwelling Units

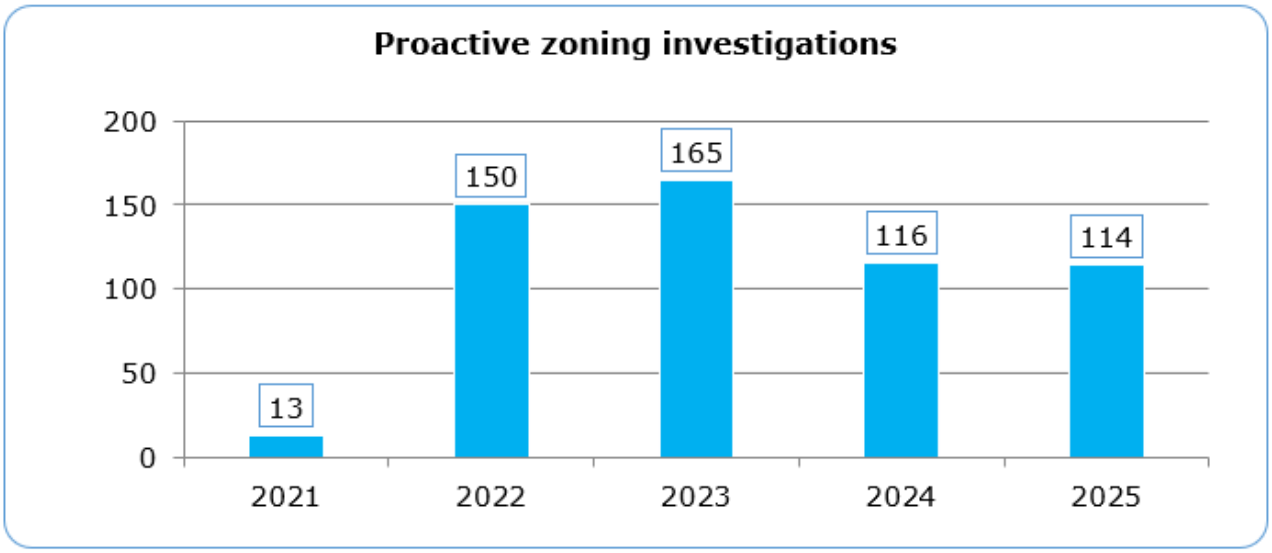
At the end of 2025, there were a total of 4,524 registered Additional Dwelling Units (ADU's) within the City.

NEW: the number of 3-unit properties registered in 2025 was 31 (included in the total 4,524)



Proactive Enforcement

Proactive enforcement includes the inspection and enforcement of shared rental housing infractions. This includes additional dwelling units, 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.

Shared rental housing highlights for 2025:

- Building and Zoning inspectors completed on-going training in aspects of the legal proceedings program
- Nine search warrants were executed on four properties
- 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 114 tenant safety inspections in 2025.

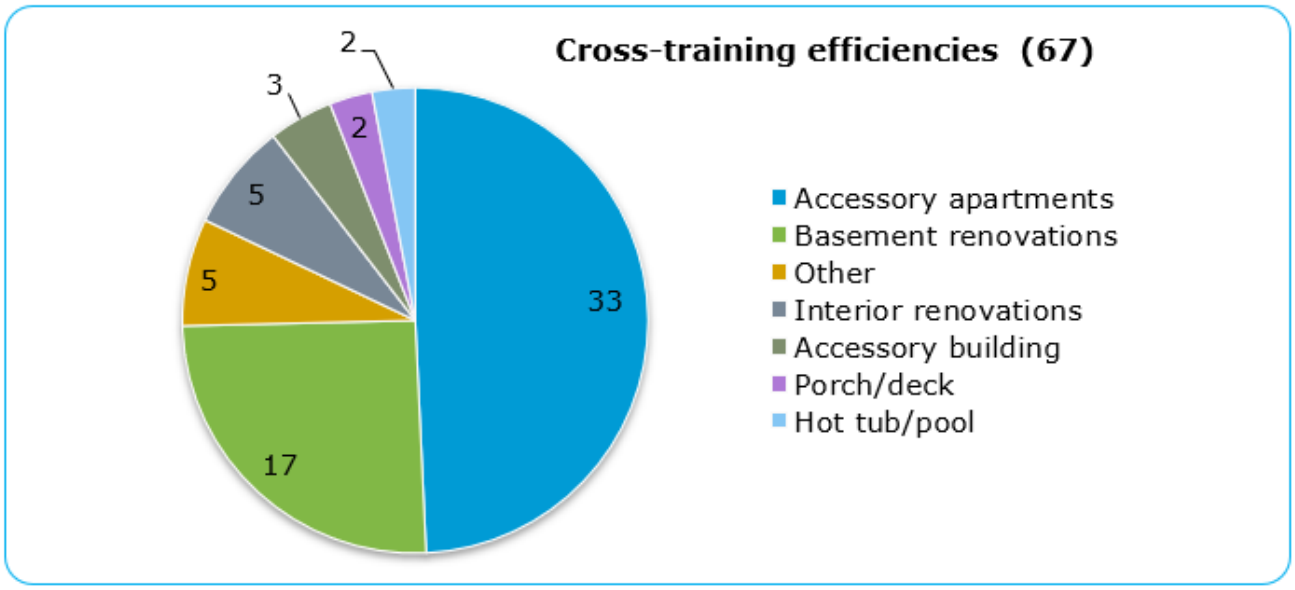
Search Warrants

Building Services created a search warrant team in 2016, along with operating guidelines for the implementation of search warrants. Nine search warrants were executed in 2025.

Cross-training

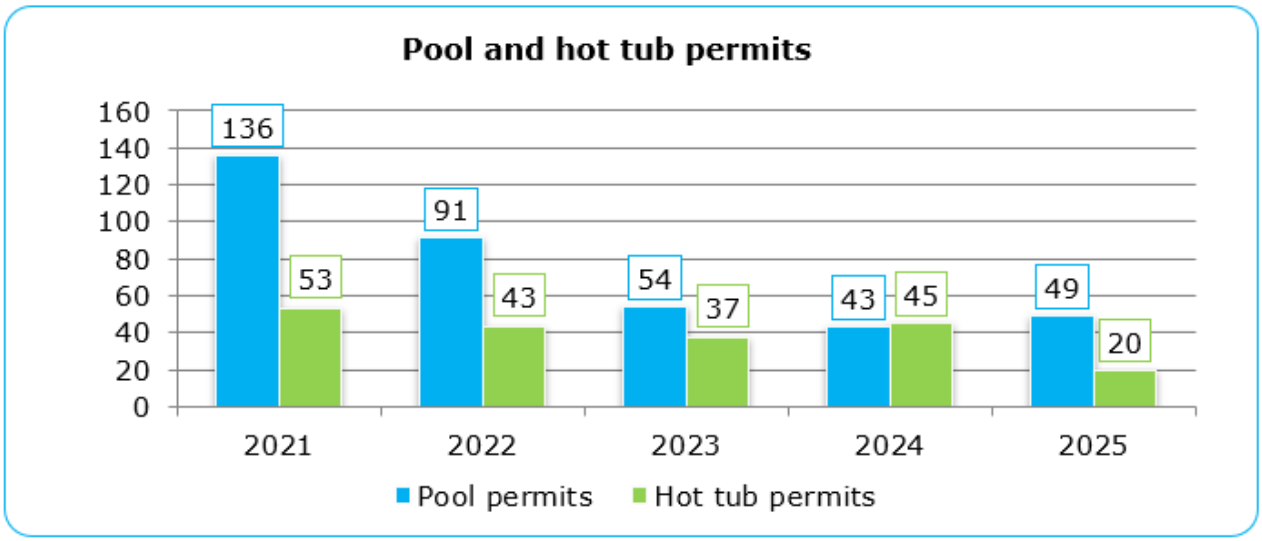
Significant efficiencies and improvements to customer service were gained as a result of cross-training zoning inspectors to also be appointed as building inspectors.

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 2025, 67 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 regarding new swimming pool and hot tub installations. In 2025, 69 permits were issued under the bylaw with enhanced safety measures.



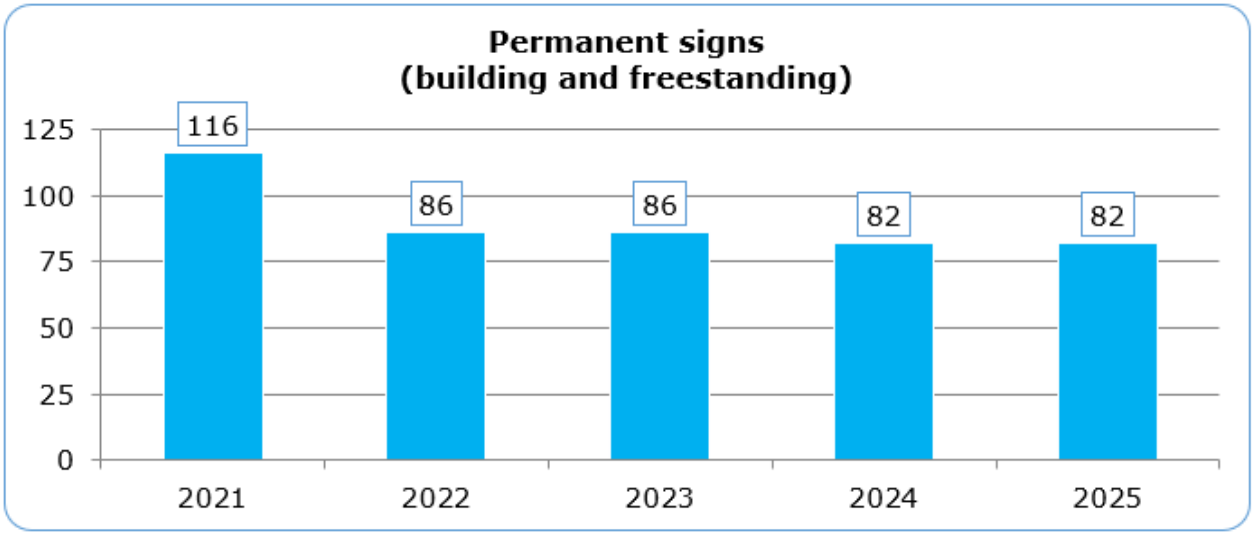
Permits

Permanent signs

Building signs are signs attached to a building and include signs on a canopy or an awning.

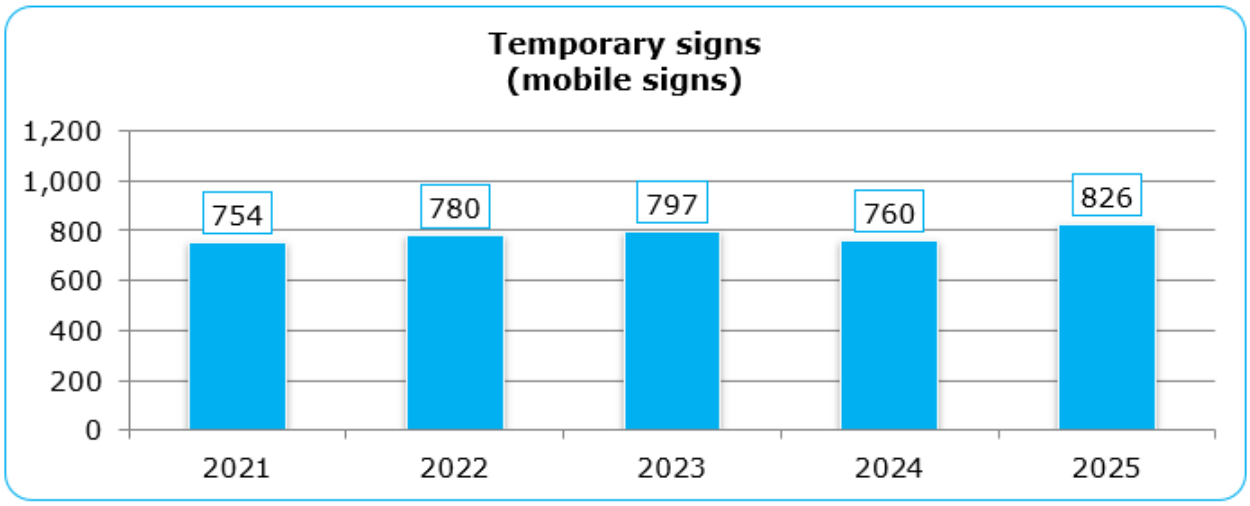
Freestanding signs, commonly referred to as pylon signs, are signs which are typically supported by a support structure which is embedded into the ground.

Permanent signs include Ontario Building Code Signs. Building and freestanding signs require a permit prior to installation.



Temporary signs

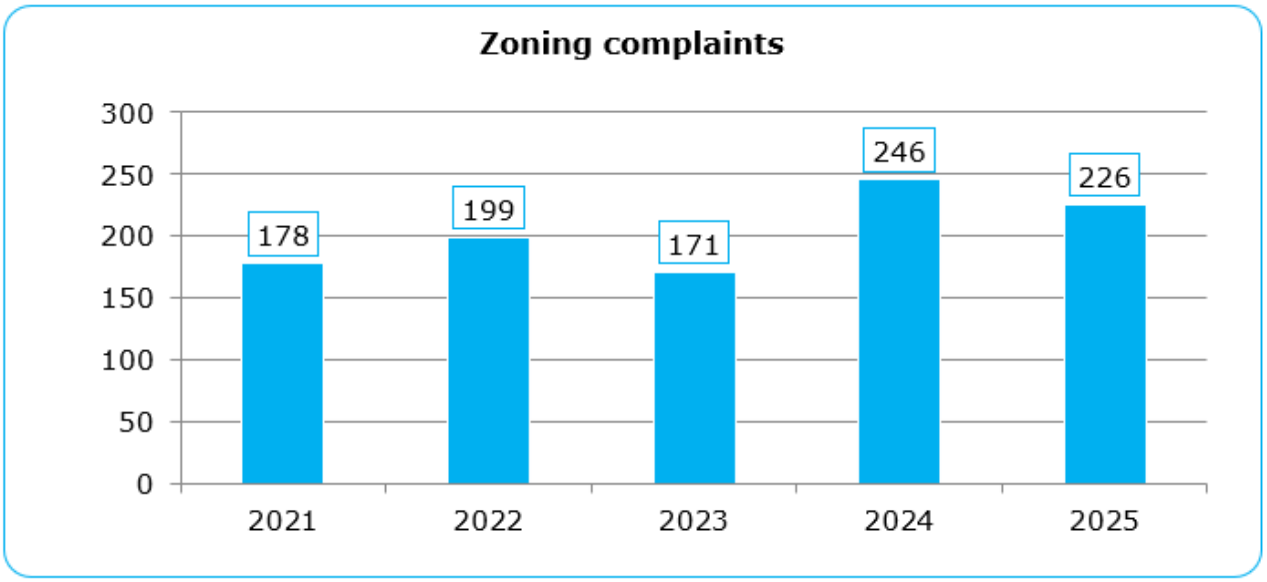
Mobile signs are temporary signs that are permitted on private properties to advertise one of the businesses located on the property in question. A permit is required prior to installation.

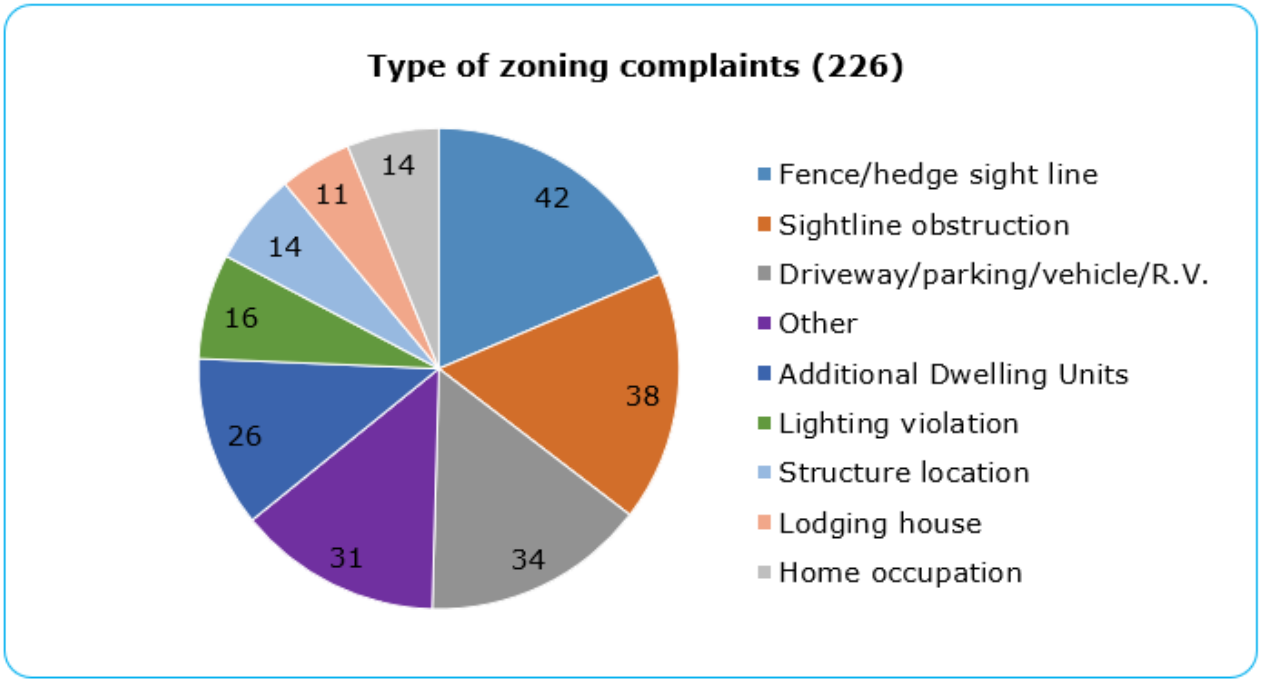


Performance Measurements

Dashboard

Zoning Services is also responsible for the enforcement of Zoning By-law regulations, which is primarily complaint-driven.

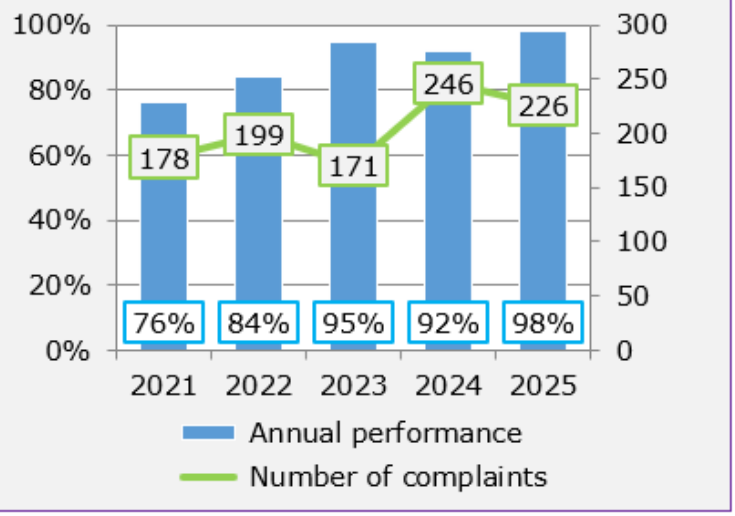




Scorecard

Our goal is to investigate a complaint within 5 days of receiving it. We aim to meet this target 95% of the time, which we did for 2025.

Responsiveness	
Measure	**Within service standard (5 days)**
2024 Performance	92%
2025 Target	95%
2025 Performance	98%
2026 Target	95%



BACKFLOW

Introduction

The City of Guelph Backflow Prevention Program was implemented in 2000. The intent of the program is to assist in providing safe drinking water to all City residents. The program, which is funded by Water Services, includes funding for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Backflow Prevention Officer position. These responsibilities are shared between two staff members who divide their time between backflow prevention and mechanical inspection duties, in addition to 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 Building Services, 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.

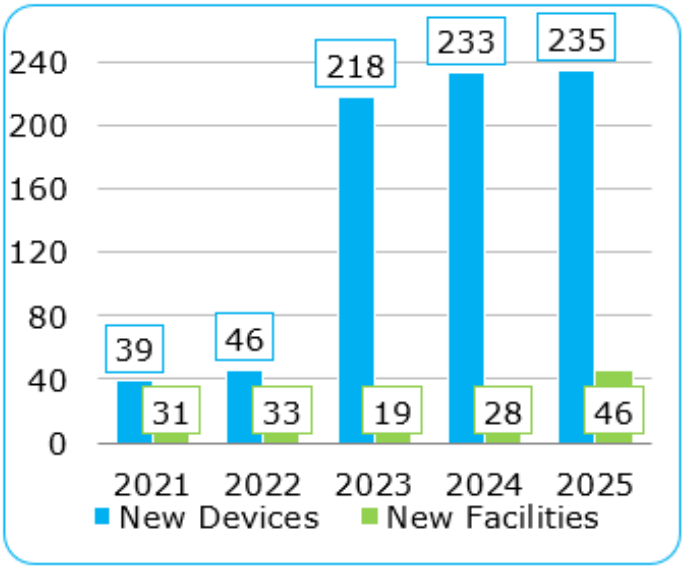
Residential homes with access to an auxiliary water supply and that are also supplied by City water require a Cross Connection Control survey to be submitted every five years.

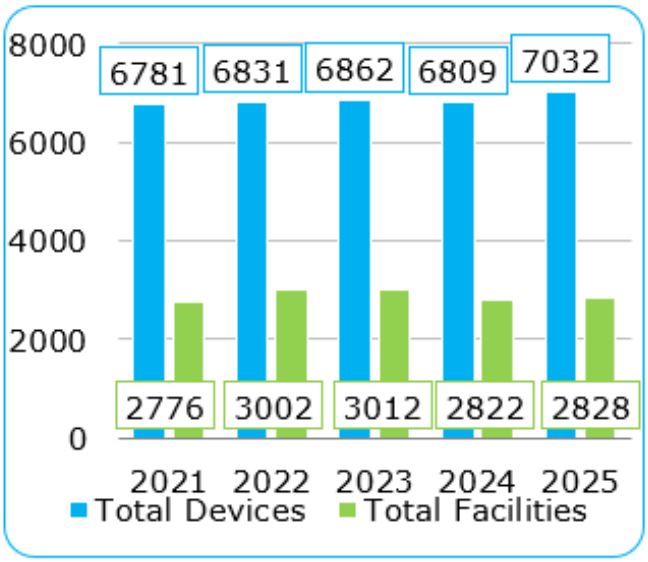
** Please note that the total number of devices indicated in the report represents active backflow devices only. The total number of facilities represents both active and inactive facilities monitored through the program.

The increase in new backflow devices reported between 2023 and 2025 does not reflect a corresponding increase in actual installations. Rather, it results from the assignment of installation dates to existing backflow device records that previously did not contain this information. This adjustment will continue to affect reported installation trends until all records within the five-year update cycle have been reviewed and updated. **

Performance Measurements

Dashboard





SEWAGE SYSTEMS

Introduction

Building Services implemented the On-site Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program (Sewage Inspection Program) in 2016, as approved by Council in November of 2015. The program was introduced to address the regulatory requirements of the Ontario 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 potential threats to the municipal drinking water system.

Performance Measurements

This report represents the 5th and final year of the 2nd round of the current 5-year compliance cycle of the Sewage Inspection Program. The first compliance cycle concluded in 2020.

To date, there are 230 known properties within the City with existing septic systems that are subject to the Sewage Inspection Program. This figure is significantly lower than that reported in previous years due to a change in reporting criteria. Previously, reporting included all properties that had a septic system at any point since the inception of the program. However, many of those properties have since had their septic systems decommissioned and/or have been connected to the municipal sanitary sewer system.

Going forward, reporting will include only current properties with an existing private sewage system, including both active properties and vacant properties where a septic system remains in place, regardless of whether it is currently in use.

Five properties did not submit the required third-party maintenance inspection report and were scheduled for follow-up inspections in 2025. Four of these properties subsequently achieved compliance, while enforcement proceedings will be initiated for the remaining property. There are currently 14 properties identified as vacant and therefore on pause within the Sewage Inspection Program, several of which are pending demolition. Vacant properties continue to be monitored on a regular basis.

In 2025, legal proceedings were initiated for all three properties that were issued Orders in 2024 for non-compliance with the Sewage Inspection Program. All three cases resulted in convictions and a combined total of $8,375 in fines. One property owner subsequently achieved compliance, while the remaining two properties continue to be monitored and may be subject to further enforcement action if compliance is not achieved.

Building Services 2025 Statistical Report

Building Services

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

519-837-5615
building@guelph.ca
guelph.ca/building

Accessible formats are available as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by contacting Building Services at 519-837-5615 or building@guelph.ca. TTY 519-826-9771.