



building communities together

2021 Business Plan Building Inspection Services (1007)

Virgil Hoefels, Chief Building Official

Working in partnership with communities large and small to offer local, sub-regional, and regional services to ensure that the Cariboo Chilcotin is a socially, economically, and environmentally desirable region.

Executive Summary

In keeping with its mandate to bring much needed services to the residents of the Cariboo Regional District, the CRD implemented building inspection in 1969. It is the mandate of the Building Inspection Department to provide building inspection services as set out in the building bylaw for residents and builders.

The BC Building Code, in conjunction with building inspections, addresses many of society's most important concerns including public health and safety. Because they are developed by a democratic and deliberative process that applies improvements incrementally, the building codes also address cost-efficiency and investment value. In large part, building codes and inspections establish a building's quality, safety and energy performance for years to come.

This Building Department was established in 1969 through supplementary letters patent; and in 2010, Cariboo Regional District Building Inspection Service Amendment Bylaw No. 4635, 2010 was adopted by the Board. Previously, the service was divided into two functions: South/Central and North regions. However, Bylaw No. 4635, 2010 amalgamated these two functions. The Building Bylaw No. 4635, 2010 has been updated throughout the years and the current revision is Bylaw 4997, 2016.

The CRD continues to work collaboratively with its member municipalities to provide efficient and cost-effective building inspection services by entering into service agreements.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory on the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and has committed to continuing to work towards carbon neutrality in respect of corporate operations.

Cariboo Regional District Building Officials are located in the Central Cariboo office in Williams Lake, the North Cariboo Office in Quesnel and in the South Cariboo office in 100 Mile House.

Directors for Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and L are responsible for the governance of this service.

Services Offered

Services provided by the department include:

- Technical plan reviews and administration of the building permit process,
- The provision of building and plumbing inspections at construction sites,
- Responding to public enquiries relating to construction standards and regulations,
- Providing initial enforcement of the building bylaw,
- Issuing permits for wood-burning appliances and inspections to confirm safe installations; and
- Verifying that projects comply with zoning and land use bylaws.

Cariboo Regional District Building Inspection Service Amendment Bylaw No. 4635, 2010, pages 1 and 2 describe the service area as follows:

“The service area is contained within the boundaries of:

- (i) Electoral Areas ‘D’, ‘G’, ‘H’, and ‘L’ in their entirety; and
- (ii) Portions of Electoral Areas ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘E’, ‘F’, and ‘I’ as shown outlined on Schedule ‘A’ attached hereto and forming part of this bylaw and shall be known as the “Cariboo Regional District Building Inspection Service Area”.

The Market

By providing building inspection services, it allows the CRD to provide valuable statistical information to measure the economic health of our region. The following graphs and tables display the number of issued building permits and value of construction for permitted construction within the CRD Building Inspection Service Area for the period of 2003 – 2019.

Year	Building Permits Issued	Value of Construction
2003	691	23,213,507
2004	673	25,704,235
2005	801	29,467,660
2006	957	40,864,252
2007	1,167	58,676,400
2008	1,157	54,641,500
2009	1,080	43,362,287
2010	1,023	40,574,130
2011	734	27,045,525
2012	616	23,546,741
2013	428	19,899,900
2014	368	16,372,983
2015	480	26,876,111
2016	424	31,857,646
2017	340	36,270,175
2018	422	38,198,773
2019	563	29,636,932

Table 1: Annual Building Permits Issued and Value of Construction

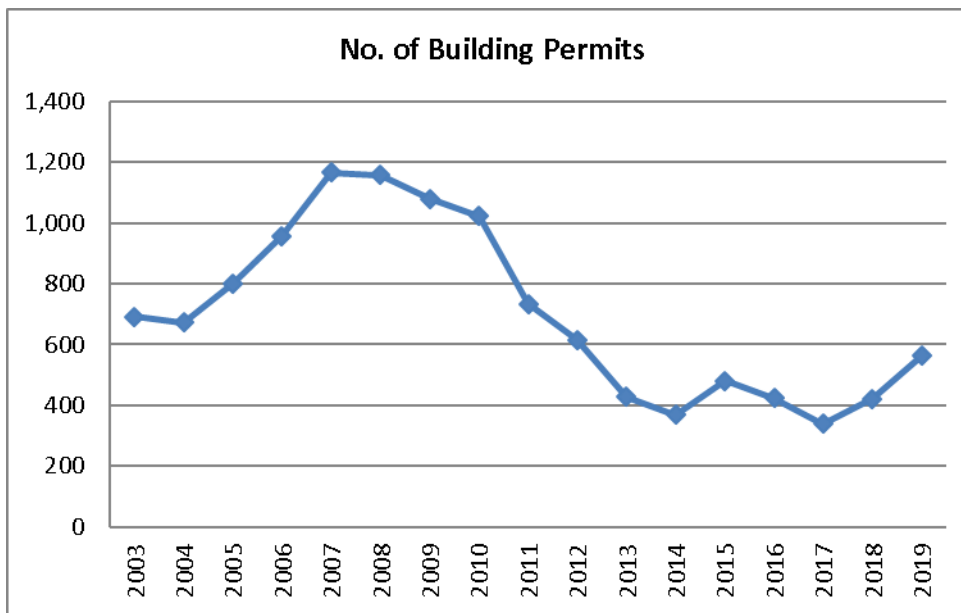


Figure 1: Annual Building Permits Issued

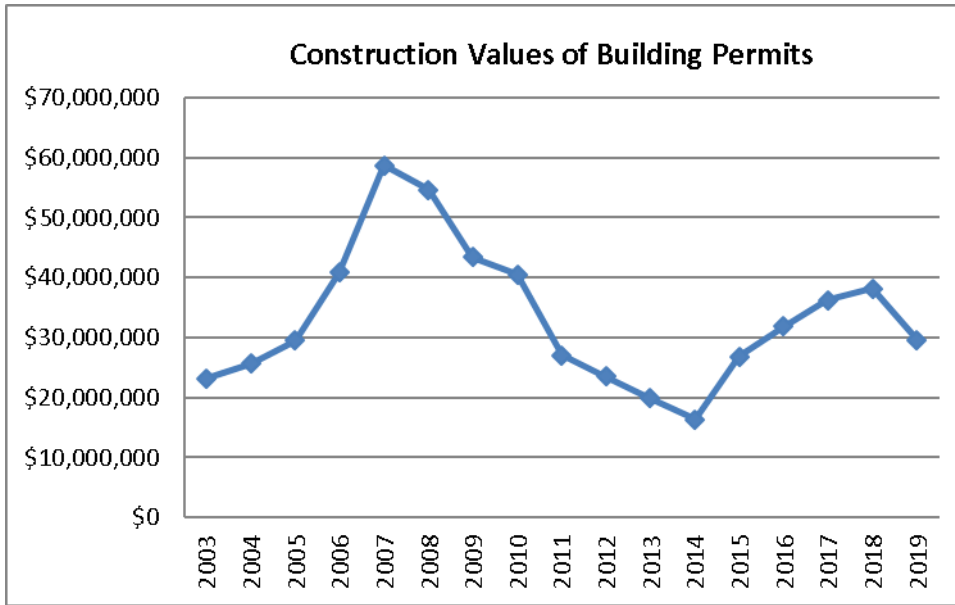


Table 1: Annual Value of Construction

Building Inspection service areas are divided into three separate areas being North, Central and South. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen an influx of residents from the coastal region. It is unsure if this trend will continue into 2021; however, discussions with prominent residential contractors in the area would suggest it will. Many of these contractors have stated that they are scheduled well into 2021 for new residential builds.

Business Plan Goals

Previous Years Business Plan Goals and Status

2019

- Goal:** To increase consistency in documentation of building inspections.

Met with several different software providers to review different options. Final choice on software will be made and implementation will occur in 2019.

Status: Partially complete.

CityView Mobile (CVM) was implemented by the previous CBO. It is being used in the North and Central offices; however, it is not being used in the South office. CVM has brought consistency to inspection comments and increased efficiencies. There are limitations and updates to the workings of the software that need to be addressed. The Building Department and IT have committed to addressing these

limitations this winter and implementation of the digital CVM inspections in all offices in the spring of 2021.

Action Steps for 2021:

- a. Update CVM to address limitations identified by current users.
- b. Set up training for inspectors that are not using CVM.
- c. Implement CVM across all offices.

Note - There may be some difficulty in implementing CVM with inspectors that are not tech savvy.

2. **Goal:** Provide staff with updates of the changes to the 2018 Building Code.

Managed staff time and budgets to allow for training seminars or conferences that staff attended in order to learn about the code changes and maintain certification.

Status: Complete and ongoing as new code updates are released.

Action Steps for 2021:

- a. Ensure all inspectors maintain adequate training on all new code updates.

2020

1. **Goal:** Meet the certification requirements of the *Building Act*.

Rationale: The implementation of the *Building Act* will require staff to be certified to the level they inspect.

Strategy: Investigate availability of courses and evaluate which ones would be the most beneficial for our needs. This will continue until the full implementation of the *Building Act*.

Status: Complete and ongoing into 2021.

All inspectors have taken required courses and obtained certification to perform inspections to the required levels. We currently have two Level 1 inspectors and two Level 2 inspectors. Level 3 inspections are currently contracted out to a sub-contractor inspector and to neighbouring municipalities with whom we have reciprocal inspection agreements. One of the Level 1 inspectors will be certified to Level 2 status in 2021, and the two Level 2 inspectors are expected to achieve Level 3, with Plumbing Level 1 in 2021 as well.

Action Steps for 2021:

- a. Ensure all inspectors maintain certification and support staff to progress in certification levels.

2. **Goal:** To increase efficiencies of application processing and record management in the satellite offices.

Rationale: Provide tools in the satellite offices to allow for scanning and copying of building plans when requested. This would provide efficiency and cost savings, as the plans are currently being couriered to the Williams Lake office in order to complete this task. This will also allow for building permit plans to be submitted electronically.

Strategy: Coordinate with IT to research which plotter would be best in these locations.

Status: Partially complete and ongoing into 2021.

Central office is scanning all plans for the Central office and select plans for the North office. Currently, any North plans that are 11x17 or smaller are being scanned within the North office; and any larger plans are either received digitally or scanned in the Central office by the Williams Lake Building Clerk.

The South office now has a plotter and scanner and has digitized plans as time allows. Starting September 2020, the South office Casual Building Clerk has been coming in one day a week to ensure that digitizing stays current. This will continue into 2021.

Action Steps for 2021:

- a. Obtain a plotter/scanner for the North office. This will increase scanning efficiencies and reduce resources assigned to transferring files in between the North and Central offices.

2021

The following represents an accumulated list of previous years goals, and goals for the Building Department for 2021 and beyond. A more in-depth strategic plan will be developed for each goal as it is approached, complete with action steps and deliverables.

1. **Goal:** Incorporate previous years goals into 2021 goals, objectives and action steps.
2. **Goal:** Develop consistency and increase efficiencies across all three offices.

A constant challenge within the department has been to ensure clerical and operational consistency across all three offices. These problems have been amplified in recent years due to employee turnover and lack of updated policies and procedures for new staff to rely upon. By implementing automated processes and

documenting policies and procedures, we will transfer institutional knowledge from staff into a tangible process and documents that can be relied upon by all.

a. **Objectives**

- i. Implement CityView Mobile
- ii. Develop Clerk Procedures Manual
- iii. Develop In-House Documents
- iv. Implement Standard Operating Procedure/Policy (SOP) Plan
- v. Update Building Procedures Manual
- vi. Create Building Inspection Mapping App

3. Goal: Enhance inspection staff expertise.

The BC Building Code was revised in 2018. Since its revision in 2018, it has undergone various updates each year. It is a challenge for inspectors to remain on top of these updates. It is critical that they do, however; as it is difficult and creates risk to the CRD to interpret these changes on the fly in the field. Advance training provides for a better service to the public and ensures certifications required by the BC Building Act,

a. **Objectives**

- i. Ensure all inspectors maintain certification
- ii. Ensure all inspectors who are willing progress in their certification
- iii. Ensure all inspectors are trained in all Building Code updates

4. Goal: Increase building permit application efficiency.

It is a standing order within the Building Department to provide services to the public in the most efficient manner possible. The onset of COVID-19 has forced the Building staff to accept numerous online building permit applications, which has led to explore the options available within CityView to automate this process. It has been revealed that the CityView Portal offers a number of powerful tools to assist in this.

The Building and Planning Departments work hand in hand on many applications. Under its new structure with two separate Managers, it has allowed each Department to operate more efficiently. Policies and procedures are needed, however, to ensure interdepartmental operations stay efficient and services are kept streamlined.

a. **Objectives**

- i. Implement CityView Portal.
- ii. Sync the Development Permit and Building Permit application process.
- iii. Update Geotechnical DP guidelines in hand with Planning Department.

5. **Goal:** Address staff shortages during EOC activation and busy building season.

EOC activation is now the new normal. EOC activations typically occur during the busy construction season and cause disruption that is felt for many months post EOC deactivation.

a. **Objectives**

- i. Develop a reserve of sub-contractors or casual inspectors to assist in providing building inspection services during these times.
- ii. Ensure sufficient Casual Clerks are hired to provide coverage.

6. **Goal:** Update the Building Bylaw.

The construction industry is evolving at a rapid pace. As it evolves, the complexity of building increases as does the cost of construction. As building become more complex, it becomes more difficult to provide services to historical levels. The Building Bylaw has not been updated since 2016; and as such, there are various areas that need to be addressed.

a. **Objectives**

- i. Submit an Agenda Item Summary for proposed Building Bylaw changes. Some of the changes include:
 - a) Update building permit process time.
 - b) Update building permit fees to match neighbouring municipalities.
 - c) Update Construction Values/Cost Per Ft² table.
 - d) Change minimum building permit fee to match application fee.

Financials

The Building Inspection Service is funded through taxation within the service areas, as well as building permit revenues. In 2019, the building inspection revenue was \$688,800, with \$460,602 (67%) coming from permit fees (includes renewals and other recoveries) and the remaining \$228,197 (33%) coming from taxes. This has allowed the tax requisition to be lowered to \$228,197 in 2019 from \$285,246 in 2018.

Historical reports have shown that our permit fees are in the middle area with neighbouring municipalities. However, this data is outdated and is to be updated with 2020 values. This is listed as one of the goals in the Bylaw Update Goal.

Significant Issues & Trends

Historic Buildings Built Without Permits

The Cariboo Regional District has seen an increase in Building Permit Information Requests from local realtors. This has identified, and brought to the CRD's attention, various structures built without permits within the Building Inspection Service Areas. The realtors and prospective purchasers are seeking a formal response as to what sort of enforcement action will be taken by the CRD. A legal opinion has been obtained and the process to deal with these situations through an approved policy has begun.

Request for Inspections in Non-Service Areas

There has been an increase in requests for voluntary inspections in non-inspection service areas. In these cases, we have advised the applicant that this service is not offered at the moment.

Energy Step Code

The BC Energy Step Code is a provincial standard that provides an incremental and consistent approach to achieving more energy-efficient buildings. It provides a common pathway that local governments may use to ensure British Columbia delivers on its goal of net-zero energy-ready performance by 2032. It does so by establishing a series of measurable, performance-based energy-efficiency requirements for construction that communities may choose to adopt when ready.

By 2032, the BC Building Code will move towards the higher steps of the BC Energy Step Code as a minimum requirement. The National Building Code of Canada will also be moving towards this outcome by 2030. Step 1 of the BC Energy Step Code is proposed to be implemented in 2021. It is unsure at this point what additional resources will be required to implement this provincial requirement.

Increased Construction

The Building Department has seen an increase in building inquiries and permits to residents from the Lower Mainland. It appears that many are looking to move to rural areas as the COVID-19 pandemic endures. It is forecast that this elevated increase in construction will continue into 2021.