



building communities together

2022 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. For 2020, the total value of construction is shown with and without the Quesnel Jr. Secondary School.

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
2020 (w/o school)	493	42,315,292
2020 (with school)	494	65,315,292
2021 - August	430	33,042,510

Table 1: Annual Building Permits Issued and Value of Construction

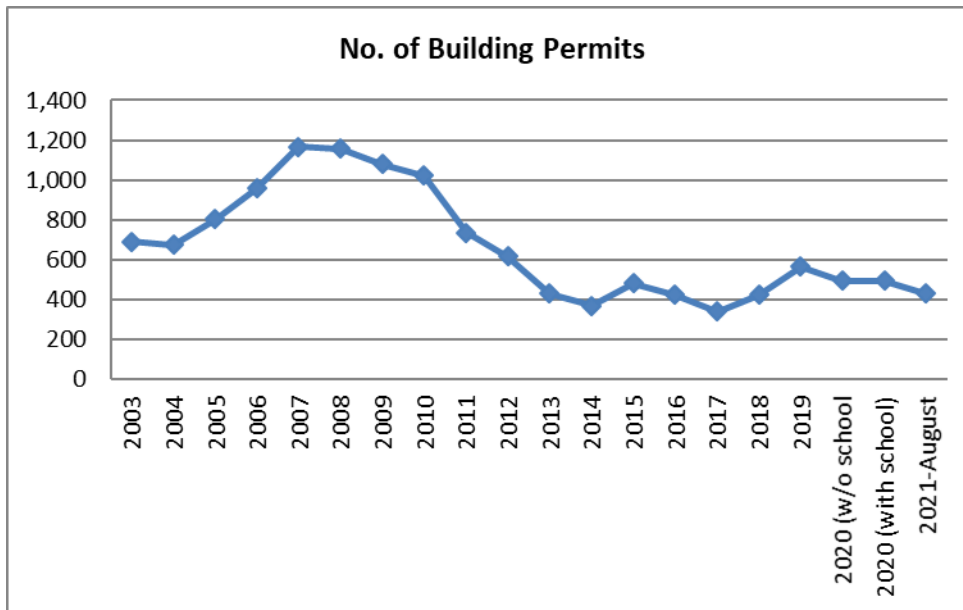


Figure 1: Annual Building Permits Issued

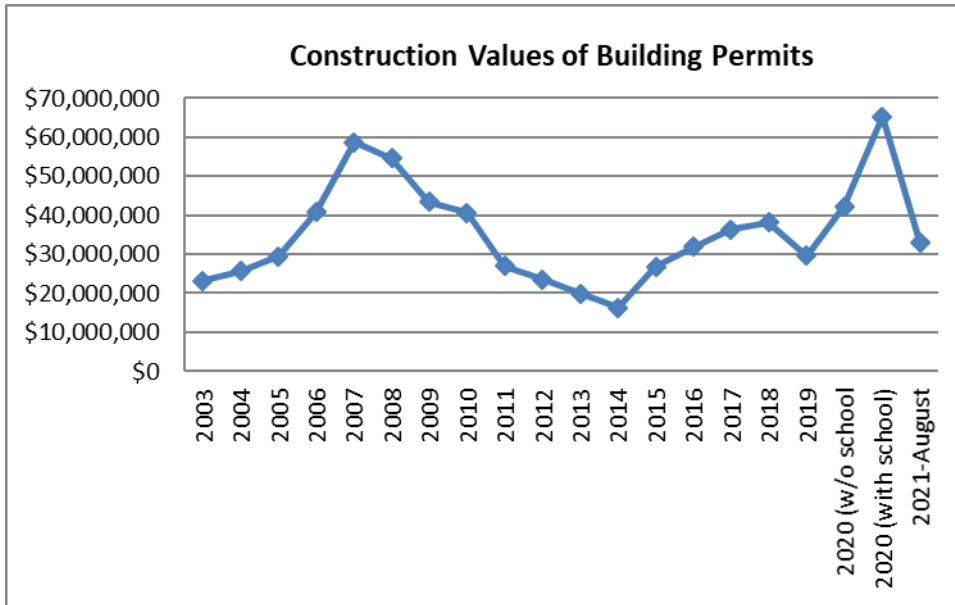


Figure 2: Annual Value of Construction

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 2022; 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 2022 for new residential builds.

Business Plan Goals

Previous Years' Business Plan Goals and Status

2021

The following represents an accumulated list of previous years' goals for 2019-2020, 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.

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.

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 Department staff to accept numerous online building permit applications, which has led to exploring 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.

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.

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 becomes 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.

Objectives

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

2022

The following shows what objectives from previous years' business plans were met, which are still in progress and new goals and objectives for 2022. 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 2022 goals, objectives and action steps.

This has been completed and will no longer be a goal in future business plans.

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.

Objectives

- i. Implement CityView Mobile – Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
- ii. Develop Clerk Procedures Manual - Abandoned
 - The idea of a Specific Clerk Procedures Manual has been abandoned. Clerk procedures will be addressed through Clerk-specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS).
- iii. Develop In-House Documents - Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
 - Numerous In-House guidance documents have been both developed and updated. This has been expanded to include public documents to guide the public in permit application requirements.
- iv. Implement Standard Operating Procedure/Policy (SOP) Plan - Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
 - Through the year there have been numerous SOPs in development. These have been created on an as-needed basis. As issues and inconsistencies arise, SOPs are created to address each issue. These are reviewed with staff and then implemented.
- v. Update Building Inspection Procedures Manual - Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
 - This is being replaced by the Standard Operating Policy and will be discontinued once all SOPs have been completed.
- vi. Create Building Inspection Mapping App - Abandoned
 - The Building Department has decided to use the Development Services Web 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.

Objectives

- i. Ensure all Inspectors maintain certification - Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
 - In addition to the required CPD point training, all Inspectors underwent in-depth HVAC training and certification through TECA (Thermal Environmental Comfort Association)
 - 2022 will focus training on Energy Step Code.

- ii. Ensure all Inspectors who are willing progress in their certification – Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
 - New certification requirements were implemented by BOABC this year which has made it more difficult to obtain certification. All Inspectors are continually progressing with their certification.
- iii. Ensure all Inspectors are trained in all Building Code updates – Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.

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 Department staff to accept numerous online building permit applications, which has led to exploring 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.

Objectives

- i. Implement CityView Portal – Ongoing
 - The Building Department has been working with IT to implement this. We have been working to modify the Department’s process to match the CityView standard process. This is ongoing and will continue throughout 2022. The goal is to have our day-to-day process matching the standard CityView Portal process prior to the implementation of CityView Portal. The goal for CityView Portal implementation is 2023.
- ii. Sync the Development Permit and Building Permit application process - Ongoing
- iii. Update Geotechnical Development Permit guidelines in hand with Planning Department - Ongoing

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.

Objectives

- i. Develop a reserve of sub-contractors or casual Inspectors to assist in providing building inspection services during these times. Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2022.
 - During 2021, the Building Department expanded its reliance on the service of Rick Hodgson to assist with plan reviews. This helped in addressing the staff shortages we were experiencing.
 - The 2022 salary budget has been increased to allow for the potential hiring of an in-house Plan Reviewer.
- ii. Ensure sufficient Casual Clerks are hired to provide coverage - Ongoing
 - Casual Clerks are sufficient in the Williams Lake and 100 Mile offices. However, the casual position for the Quesnel office is still vacant and posted.

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.

Objectives

- i. Submit an Agenda Item Summary for proposed Building Bylaw changes. Some of the changes include:
 - Update building permit process time - Completed
 - This has been updated to 4 weeks from 3 weeks
 - Update building permit fees to match neighboring municipalities - Completed
 - This was completed by the updating of the Fees Schedule in the Building Bylaw.
 - Update Construction Values/Cost Per Ft² table - Completed
 - This was completed by the updating of the Fees Schedule in the Building Bylaw.
 - Change minimum building permit fee to match application fee – Completed
 - This was completed by the updating of the Fees Schedule in the Building Bylaw.

7. Goal: Maintain Historic Staffing Levels for Field Inspectors

The 10 year average for Cost of Construction inspected per Inspector (COC/Inspector) is \$9,405,672. The last 3 years of COC/ Inspector are:

- i. 2019: \$8,467,695
- ii. 2020 (with school): \$18,661,512
- iii. 2020 (without school): \$12,090,083
- iv. 2021 - YTD: \$12,556,154

These values show that the Building Department is currently understaffed. The current COC/Inspector is approx. 30% higher than historic levels.

While some believe this overage can be compensated for by increasing efficiencies, the Building Department may have to look at increasing permanent staff if this trend continues through 2022.

The 2022 business plan proposes the following to address this increased COC/Inspector through 2022:

- i. Increase the use of subcontractors that are currently being used.
 - o This is a helpful tool to rely on; however, out-of-house subcontractors can be problematic to coordinate.
- ii. The salary budget has been increased to allow for the hiring of a full-time seasonal Plan Reviewer for the busy construction season months.

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 \$825,163, with \$587,682 (71%) coming from permit fees (includes renewals and other recoveries) and the remaining \$237,481 (29%) coming from taxes.

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 current 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 was obtained and a new policy was developed and adopted by the CRD Board of Directors to address these situations.

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 inquires and permit applications from residents of 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 2022.