



building communities together

2023 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 energy efficiency, 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 – 2022.

Table 1: Annual Building Permits Issued and Value of Construction

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	494	65,315,292
2021	509	38,138,458
2022-September	422	60,864,041

Figure 1: Annual Building Permits Issued

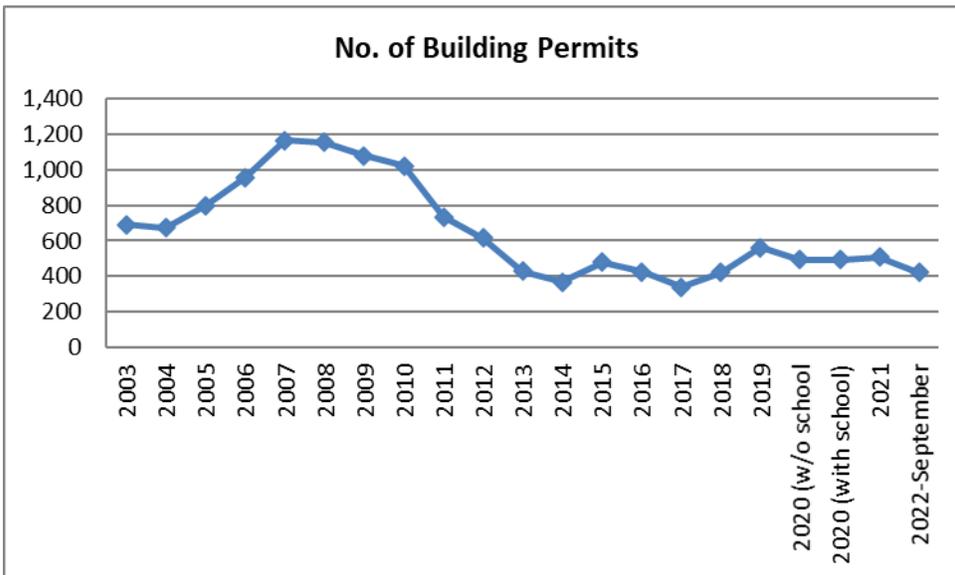
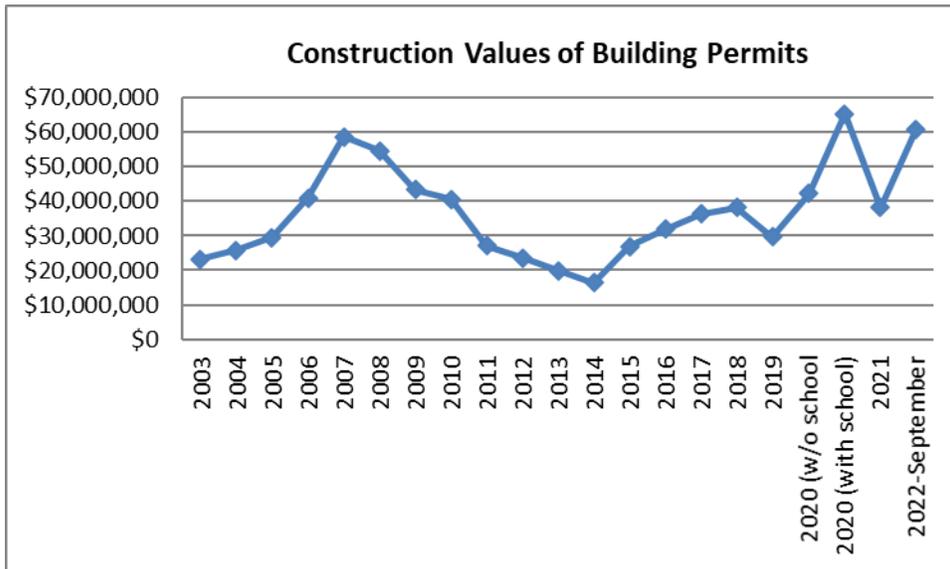


Figure 2: Annual Value of Construction



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. This trend continued into 2022, and discussions with prominent residential contractors in the area would suggest it will continue into 2023. Many of these contractors have stated that they are scheduled to the end of 2023 for new residential builds.

Business Plan Goals

2023

1. **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 past years due to employee turnover and lack of updated policies and procedures for new staff to rely upon. Recent years have implemented automated processes and the creations of new policies and procedures to transfer institutional knowledge from staff into tangible processes and documents that can be relied upon by all. This will continue into 2023 as detailed below.

Objectives

- i. Expand use of CityView Mobile – Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2023.

- ii. Expand Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Plan – Started in 2021 and ongoing into 2023.
 - a. Numerous SOPs have been developed on an as-needed basis. As issues and inconsistencies arise, additional SOPs are created to address each issue. These are reviewed with staff and then implemented.
 - b. Incorporate the Building Inspection Procedures Manual into the Standard Operating Procedure.
- iii. Increase the efficiency of building permit application by implementing the use of CityView Portal.

2. 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 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 2022 and ongoing into 2023.
 - In addition to the required CPD point training, all Inspectors will undergo training with a focus on Energy Step Code.
- ii. Ensure all Inspectors who are willing progress in their certification – Met in 2022 and ongoing into 2023.
 - 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.
- iv. Ensure all Inspectors are trained in all Building Code updates – Met in 2022 and ongoing into 2023.

3. 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 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 department is planning a CityView Project starting early 2023 to expand the use of CityView portal, which will allow applicants to submit permit applications online.

Objectives

- i. Implement CityView Building department Workflow and 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 2023. 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
 - i. Implement CityView- Laserfiche
 - ii. Expand the use of CityView functions to include: conditions, correspondence, and activity lists.
4. **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 and/or casual Inspectors to assist in providing building inspection services during these times. Met in 2021 and ongoing into 2023.
 - During 2022, 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. This contract is being renewed and will continue into 2023.
 - The 2023 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.
5. **Goal:** Update the Building Bylaw.

There are a variety of general housekeeping updates that need to be revised and incorporated into the building bylaw.

6. **Goal:** Maintain Historic Staffing Levels for Field Inspectors.

The 11-year average for Cost of Construction inspected per Inspector (COC/Inspector) is \$10,377,203. The last 3 years of COC/ Inspector are:

- I. 2020: \$18,661,512
- II. 2021: \$14,492,614
- III. 2022 to September: \$23,128,336

These values show that the Building Department is currently understaffed as the current COC/Inspector is significantly higher than historic levels.

While some of 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 2023.

Objectives

The 2023 business plan proposes the following to address this increased COC/Inspector through 2023:

- i. Increase the use of subcontractors that are currently being used.
-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.

7. Goal – Geotechnical/Landslide Hazard Regulatory Development.

The Cariboo Regional District continues to experience landslide activity within its Building Permit Inspection Service areas. The building department is working with the Planning Department in requesting geotechnical reports and assessments for development within the Geotechnical Hazard Development Permit Areas and the Questionable Slope area as defined by the new Westrek Slope Stability Studies for the Williams Lake and Quesnel Fringe Areas.

Objectives

- v. Work with the planning department in applying for funding thru UBCM to assist in engaging a consulting firm to develop a Risk Tolerance Level for slow moving landslides within the Building Inspection Service Area.
- vi. Work with the planning department in refining the OCP risk hazard mapping boundaries.

Financials

The Building Inspection Service is funded through taxation within the service areas, as well as building permit revenues. In 2021, the building inspection revenue was \$765,401 with \$523,306 (69%) coming from permit fees (includes renewals and other recoveries) and the remaining \$242,095 (31%) coming from taxes.

Historical reports have shown that our permit fees are in the middle area with neighboring municipalities.

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 2032. Step 3 of the BC Energy Step Code is proposed to be implemented in 2023. 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. It is forecast that this elevated increase in construction will continue into 2023.