



2026 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 provide essential services to residents of the Cariboo Regional District, the Building Inspection Department continues to ensure that construction across the region meets the safety, quality, and energy efficiency standards established under the BC Building Code.

Building inspection services were first introduced in 1969 and later consolidated under Building Inspection Service Amendment Bylaw No. 4635, 2010, which merged the former North and South/Central inspection functions into a single regional service. The current regulatory framework is established under Building Bylaw No. 4997, 2016, which continues to be updated to align with provincial requirements and best practices.

The department operates from offices in Williams Lake, Quesnel, and 100 Mile House, serving all active building permit areas in coordination with Planning, Bylaw Enforcement, and member municipalities. Directors for Electoral Areas A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and L are responsible for the governance of this service.

The Cariboo Regional District is a signatory to the Province of BC/UBCM Climate Action Charter and remains committed to supporting carbon neutrality and sustainable construction practices through enforcement of the BC Energy Step Code and preparation for the Zero Carbon Step Code.

Recent Achievements (2025)

- i. Implemented the BC Building Code 2024, including new structural and energy provisions such as braced wall bands.

-2-

- ii. Expanded and standardized Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across all offices to ensure consistency.
- iii. Initiated rollout of the CityView Portal for online permit applications and digital workflow management.
- iv. Continued staff training in energy performance, Step Code compliance, and technical proficiency.

Priorities for 2026

- i. Enhance Cityview utilization, reporting, and integration across departments.
- ii. Encourage public and builder adoption of the CityView Portal to improve efficiency and reduce administrative delays.
- iii. Refine digital plan review processes to further streamline permit turnaround and inter-department coordination.
- iv. Continue collaboration with Planning to enhance geotechnical and hazard mapping for risk-based permitting.

Through modernization, training, and collaboration, the Building Inspection Department will continue to safeguard public safety, support regional growth, and uphold the high standards expected by residents, builders, and the Board of Directors.

Services Offered

The Building Inspection Department provides a range of public-facing and internal support services.

Core Public Services

- i. Technical plan reviews and administration of the building permit process,
- ii. Building and plumbing inspections at construction sites,
- iii. Responding to public inquiries relating to construction standards and regulations,
- iv. Providing initial enforcement of the Building Bylaw, including unsafe or unpermitted construction,
- v. Issuing permits and confirming compliance through required inspections,
- vi. Conducting digital plan reviews and coordination through the CityView Portal,
- vii. Supporting compliance with the BC Energy Step Code and Zero Carbon Step Code, and
- viii. Verifying that projects comply with zoning, land use, and development permit requirements.

Internal and Support Services

- i. Developing and maintaining Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure consistency across offices,
- ii. Providing Building Code interpretation and policy development for staff and other departments,
- iii. Coordinating with Planning, Bylaw Enforcement, and Engineering on complex or non-compliant projects,
- iv. Preparing enforcement documentation such as Stop Work Notices and Notices on Title,
- v. Maintaining accurate digital records, data reporting, and permit statistics through CityView,
- vi. Supporting interdepartmental training and professional development for Building Officials,

The service area encompasses most of the populated regions of the CRD, as defined in the following excerpt from **Building Inspection Service Amendment Bylaw No. 4635, 2010**:

“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

Building permit activity across the Cariboo Regional District continues to demonstrate consistent and stable development patterns. Over the past two decades, construction values and permit volumes have fluctuated with regional and economic cycles, but overall activity remains steady and well within historic averages.

Trends observed 2019 to 2025:

- i. Total construction value has increased approximately 25 percent compared to 2019, with 2025 showing above-average levels.
- ii. Permit volumes have remained stable, varying less than 10 percent year over year.
- iii. The South Cariboo continues to lead the region in both construction value and total permits issued.
- iv. A substantial share of activity involves manufactured homes, garages, workshops, and additions, reflecting steady rural reinvestment.

The department anticipates continued stable construction activity through 2026, with rural residential and renovation projects remaining the dominant sectors.

Table 1: Annual Building Permits Issued and Value of Construction provides a detailed summary of permit numbers and construction values from 2003 through 2024 (September). The data shows a long-term trend of consistent permit volumes with minor year-to-year variation. Construction values remain strong across all three service areas, reflecting sustained investment in residential, accessory, and small commercial projects. The overall trend continues to indicate a healthy level of regional construction activity that supports stable economic growth.

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	430	49,188,255
2022	521	66,854,643
2023	597	53,872,254
2024 - September	349	\$30,406,621

Figure 1: Annual Building Permits Issued displays the long-term trend in permit activity. Permit numbers peaked in 2007 and 2008 before stabilizing from 2013 onward at approximately 450 permits per year. This consistency demonstrates a balanced pace of development that aligns with regional population growth and reinvestment in existing housing stock.

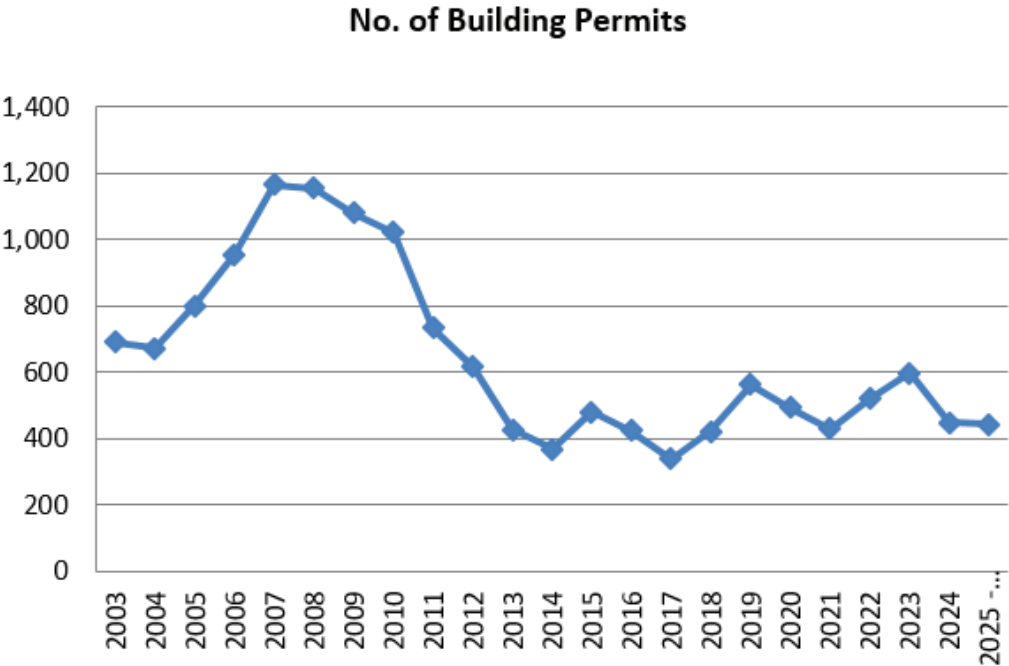


Figure 2: Annual Value of Construction illustrates the total construction value of permitted work. While values fluctuate slightly each year due to the timing of large projects, overall construction value has remained strong, typically ranging between 40 million and 55 million dollars annually. This consistent level of investment highlights ongoing confidence in the Cariboo’s rural and small-community housing market, supported by affordability, lifestyle demand, and migration from larger urban centres.

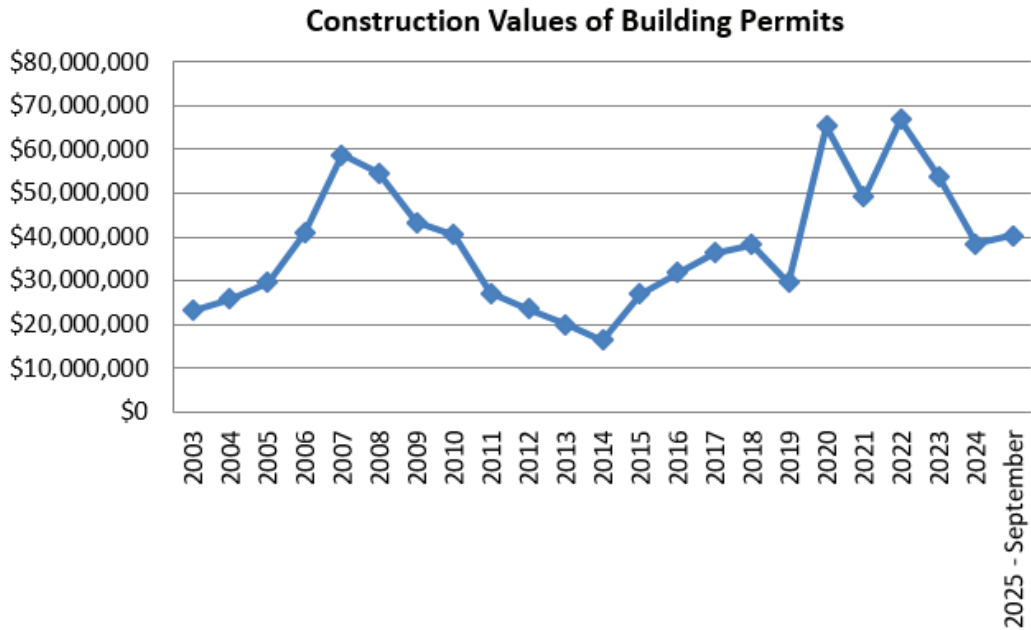
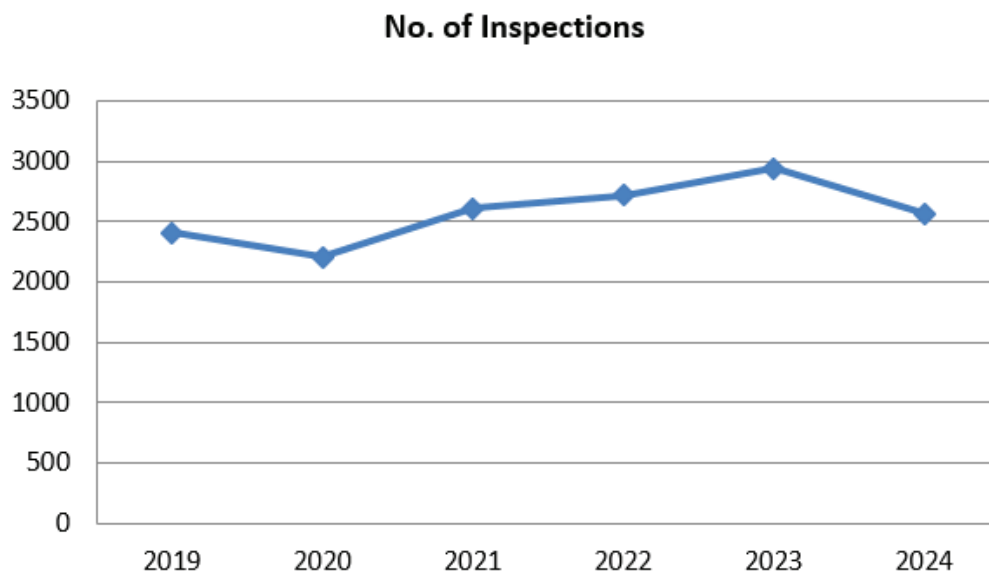


Figure 3: Annual Number of Inspections highlights inspection activity from 2019 through 2024. Inspection volumes have closely mirrored permit activity, averaging approximately 2,500 to 3,000 inspections each year. This reflects a stable departmental workload and improved operational efficiency supported by CityView Mobile, digital inspection tools, and the use of standardized operating procedures.



Business Plan Goals

1. Goal: Strengthen Consistency and Operational Efficiency Across All Offices

Ensuring consistent service delivery across the Central, North, and South Cariboo offices remains a key operational priority. Differences in staffing, workload, and local procedures have historically created variations in processing times and interpretation. This goal focuses on maintaining standardized workflows, strengthening communication, and ensuring that automation and procedural documentation continue to support consistent and reliable service delivery across all offices.

2025 Objectives (Completed or Ongoing)

- i. Expanded use of CityView Mobile across all three offices for real-time inspection entry and reporting.
- ii. Updated the majority of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to align with new CityView workflows.

- iii. Completed department-wide review and consolidation of SOPs for accuracy and usability.
- iv. Implemented new digital workflows consistent with CityView's standard process model.

2026 Objectives (New and Ongoing)

- i. Continue updating of all SOPs to ensure each CityView step and workflow process is fully documented and current.
- ii. Explore CityView Workspace and other emerging digital permitting platforms to assess functionality and compatibility for future adoption.
- iii. Maintain ongoing collaboration between regional offices to ensure consistent interpretation of procedures and documentation requirements.
- iv. Conduct internal staff feedback sessions to identify opportunities for further efficiency and consistency improvements.

2. Goal: Enhance Building Official Expertise and Technical Capacity

The effectiveness of the Building Inspection Department depends on the technical proficiency, certification level, and professionalism of its inspection staff. The introduction of the BC Building Code 2024 brought significant structural and energy-related changes, particularly the new braced wall band requirements. Continued training and technical discussions are essential to ensure accurate interpretation and consistent enforcement across all offices.

2025 Objectives (Completed or Ongoing)

- i. All Building Officials maintained current certification and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements.
- ii. Conducted department-wide training on BC Building Code 2024 updates, with emphasis on braced wall band provisions.
- iii. Provided Step Code and energy training to inspection staff.
- iv. Supported progression toward higher-level certifications for qualified staff.

2026 Objectives (New and Ongoing)

- i. Continue expanding department-wide training and discussion on braced wall bands to address design and review inconsistencies from industry submissions.
- ii. Build in-house expertise to distinguish between Part 9 braced wall bands and Part 4 shear wall systems to ensure proper permit routing and code application.

- iii. Explore the Zero Carbon Step Code and prepare an informational presentation for the Board to explain its voluntary nature, provincial context.

3. Goal: Improve Permit Processing Efficiency Through Digital Transformation

The launch of the CityView Portal in 2025 marked a major milestone in the department's digital transformation. This goal focuses on maximizing the benefits of the system by refining workflows, enhancing reporting capabilities, and ensuring both staff and the public understand and effectively use the platform.

2025 Objectives (Completed or Ongoing)

- i. Successfully launched CityView Portal for public use.
- ii. Completed a full workflow review and brought all departmental workflows in line with CityView's standard process model.
- iii. Updated SOPs to reflect revised workflows and staff responsibilities
- iv. Initiated user support for public permit submissions through the CityView Portal.

2026 Objectives (New and Ongoing)

- i. Expand the use of CityView functionality to include condition tracking, automated correspondence, and advanced reporting features.
- ii. Collaborate with Finance and IT to enhance system utilization, data accuracy, and reporting capabilities.
- iii. Develop a public education initiative focused on improving applicant understanding of complete permit submission requirements.
- iv. Provide clear guidance materials, examples, and checklists to reduce incomplete applications and improve public awareness of permit expectations.

4. Goal: Modernize the Building Bylaw

The Building Bylaw provides the legal framework for the administration of the BC Building Code and related permitting processes within the CRD. Modernization ensures the bylaw remains current with provincial legislation and operational realities. Updating both the Building Bylaw and related enforcement bylaws will strengthen compliance.

2025 Objectives (Completed or Ongoing)

- i. Identified key bylaw sections requiring revision to align with current legislation and provincial standards.
- ii. Drafted preliminary structural updates and framework for internal review.

2026 Objectives (New and Ongoing)

- i. Complete consultation and legal review of proposed Building Bylaw updates.
- ii. Present the updated Building Bylaw to the Board for consideration and adoption.
- iii. Review and update the Bylaw Offense Bylaw to ensure enforcement provisions and fine structures are current and effective.
- iv. Develop companion administrative policies and checklists to support consistent application of bylaw provisions.

5. Goal: Maintain Efficiency and Manage Staffing Levels

Balancing staffing levels with departmental workload remains critical to maintaining consistent and timely service delivery. While overall permit and inspection volumes have remained steady, each year the BC Building Code grows in complexity, requiring more detailed plan reviews, site inspections, and documentation. The cumulative effect of these changes represents a significant increase in staff workload and technical responsibility, even when permit numbers remain stable.

2025 Objectives (Completed or Ongoing)

- i. Continued use of subcontracted inspection support during high-demand periods.
- ii. Evaluated staffing levels and COC/Inspector ratios for performance benchmarking.
- iii. Budgeted for a casual inspector position to provide coverage and flexibility.

2026 Objectives (New and Ongoing)

- i. Add an additional casual Building Inspector position in the 100 Mile House office to provide support and succession planning.
- ii. Monitor workload distribution using permit and inspection data to guide long-term staffing requirements.
- iii. Continue using data-driven workload tracking and cost-per-inspection analysis to inform budget planning.

- iv. Communicate to the Board the growing complexity of plan review and inspection duties resulting from continual provincial code updates and technical downloads.

6. Goal: Support Implementation of Updated Geotechnical and Landslide Hazard Regulations

The Planning Department continues to lead regulatory improvements related to geotechnical and landslide hazards within the Cariboo Regional District. Updated hazard mapping and new Official Community Plan (OCP) geotechnical development permit (GHDP) areas will provide a more consistent and enforceable framework for managing development in hazard-prone areas. The Building Inspection Department's role is to coordinate with Planning to ensure that OCP requirements are consistently applied through the building permit process.

2025 Objectives (Completed or Ongoing)

- i. Supported Planning in identifying priority areas requiring updated hazard mapping.
- ii. Participated in the development of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for geotechnical mapping updates within OCP areas.
- iii. Confirmed award of the RFP to a qualified consultant for completion of hazard mapping and technical review.

2026 Objectives (New and Ongoing)

- i. Support Planning as it updates OCP geotechnical development permit sections and integrates new hazard mapping into the Williams Lake and Quesnel Fringe areas.
- ii. Discontinue use of the legacy "Questionable Slope" mapping system, which was difficult to interpret and enforce.
- iii. Begin applying the new OCP-GHDP requirements within the building permit review process.
- iv. Work with Planning to ensure consistent interpretation, documentation, and public communication of GHDP requirements across all affected areas.

Financials

The Building Inspection Service is funded through a combination of building permit revenues and taxation within the service areas.

The **2025 revenue forecast** was **\$766,126**, with **\$480,855 (63%)** from permit fees (including renewals and recoveries) and **\$285,271 (37%)** from taxation.

The **2026 revenue forecast** is **\$768,135**, with **\$480,855 (63%)** from permit fees and **\$287,281 (37%)** from taxation. This represents a **0.7 percent increase in total revenue** and a **0.7 percent increase in taxation** over 2025.

Historical reports continue to show that CRD permit fees remain within the median range compared to neighboring municipalities, ensuring that the service is both cost-effective and financially sustainable while maintaining consistent service levels across the region.

Significant Issues & Trends

The regulatory and construction landscape in British Columbia continues to evolve rapidly, with increasing focus on energy efficiency, carbon reduction, and modernization of permitting systems. These trends directly affect how the Cariboo Regional District delivers building inspection services and how the public interacts with the permitting process.

Energy Step Code

The BC Energy Step Code provides a phased approach to improving building energy efficiency and achieving net-zero energy-ready standards by 2032. Step 3 became mandatory in 2024 and can currently be met through two compliance paths: **prescriptive** (building to specific code requirements) or **performance** (using an Energy Advisor to model the building's efficiency).

When Step 4 becomes mandatory, the prescriptive path will no longer apply to typical Part 9 buildings, making the use of Energy Advisors mandatory for all new homes. The limited number of qualified Energy Advisors in the Cariboo region may create short-term capacity challenges, though industry response is expected to improve availability over time.

Zero Carbon Step Code

Introduced in 2023, the Zero Carbon Step Code complements the Energy Step Code by targeting operational greenhouse gas emissions. It remains voluntary but is expected to become mandatory for all new buildings by 2030. For now, the CRD will monitor provincial adoption and educate builders and the Board on its implications. Future implementation will require staff training and coordination with Planning as low-carbon mechanical systems become the norm.

Digital Permitting and Automation

The launch of CityView Portal and the adoption of digital workflows have significantly modernized permit processing. The transition to online permitting has been well received

by both staff and the public, particularly by younger and more tech-oriented builders. This shift is expected to continue expanding as more applicants prefer digital submissions, automated communication, and real-time status tracking.

Public Education, Submission Quality, and Code Complexity

Permit applications have become increasingly complex as provincial requirements expand with each new Building Code cycle. This complexity makes it more difficult for the public to understand what constitutes a complete application and why certain documentation is required. As a result, staff spend more time guiding applicants through submission requirements and explaining code provisions.

The increasing technical complexity of modern construction also places greater demands on Building Officials during plan review and field inspection, which can contribute to workload strain and inspector burnout. Improved public education, clearer documentation standards, and continued staff training are essential to maintain efficiency, accuracy, and staff well-being.

Modular and Prefabricated Construction

Across British Columbia, there is a growing shift toward modular and prefabricated building systems as an alternative to traditional on-site construction. Rising labour costs, increasing code complexity, and material delays have made factory-built housing an attractive option for both builders and owner-builders. Modular construction offers shorter build times, improved quality control, and more predictable costs. The department has observed increased inquiries and permit applications involving modular and factory-assembled dwellings, a trend that is expected to continue as affordability pressures and housing demand persist.

Increasing Regulatory Complexity and Builder Frustration

Builders and designers across British Columbia continue to express frustration with the growing complexity of the BC Building Code and the expanding administrative requirements tied to permitting. Each new code cycle introduces additional technical standards, energy performance obligations, and documentation requirements, most of which are mandated provincially and implemented at the local level. While these changes aim to improve building quality and sustainability, they also increase project costs, submission requirements, and staff workload. Local governments like the CRD are responsible for enforcing these provincial standards, which can create tension between builders seeking efficiency and municipalities managing compliance obligations.