



## 2024 Building Season Fact Sheet

### Historic year for building permit applications

- Applications received in 2024: 520 – second highest amount on record<sup>1</sup>
- Applications received in 2023: 401

### Actions taken in 2024 to improve building permit process

- Introduced Remote Virtual Inspections pilot program to allow for more timely building inspections.
- Hired four external consultants to conduct building plan reviews.
- Engaged recruitment firm and undertook Canada-wide search for Building Officials.
- Added support staff to Land and Building Services department from other City departments to increase capacity on a temporary basis.
- Initiated application pre-reviews to inform applicants sooner if their application is incomplete, before a full plan review is carried out.
- Sent a letter to Yukon Government to advocate for an extension to the building commitment timeline for lots sold pursuant to land lotteries.
- Informed new lot owners of the option to apply for an extension on the building commitment term after receiving confirmation from Yukon Government.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2021, the City of Whitehorse received 658 applications – the highest number on record. These numbers are for applications that are reviewed by Building Officials and do not include, e.g., plumbing applications, etc.).

- Introduced Foundation-only Permits for eligible residential projects, allowing work to begin while an applicant's Building Permit is processed.
- Reviewed and updated qualifications and compensation for Building Officials.
- Hired two new Building Officials to increase capacity to address workload.
- Began implementation of final recommendations from the Housing and Land Development Advisory Committee focused on permit process improvements.
- Hosted the Whitehorse Building Workshop, which brought together builders, contractors, suppliers, and other industry representatives to learn and share information about the City's building permit process and local building requirements for residential development.
- Sent a letter to Community Services Minister Richard Mostyn to formally request increased scrutiny of the National Building Code (NBC), exemption or alterations of NBC sections that hinder regulatory efficiency, and delegation of authority to the City of Whitehorse to customize local application of aspects of the NBC.
- Commissioned an independent report to review the 2024 building permit backlog, engage with industry and government officials, and develop recommendations for improving the building permit process in Whitehorse.

### **Work underway in 2025 to improve the City's building permit process**

- Implementation of recommendations from independent report on 2024 season.
- Launch of new e-permitting system for development and building permits.
- Develop and present webinar info series on National Building Code requirements for local building industry.
- Expand access to Remote Virtual Inspections for buildings.
- Increase use of Foundation-only Permits for residential buildings.
- Explore new program to allow builders to apply and secure pre-approval of repeat housing designs prior to the submission of Building Permit applications.
- Development of new Residential Application Guide for builders.
- Introduction of new Complete Application Submission check list to assist builders with permit applications.

- Launch new Complete Application Verification confirmation system to increase transparency for builders prior to plan reviews.
- Remove existing financial disincentives to submitting permit applications until the start of construction season in order to assist builders and spread-out application processing throughout the year.
- Proposed financial incentives for building permit applications submitted between November 1 and February 28 each year.
- Extend timelines in the Building and Plumbing Bylaw related to residential building permits to allow builders more flexibility around construction and better reflect current practice (current 6-month expiry date proposed to be extended).
- Introduction of standardized plan review system to increase clarity and improve communications between government officials and applicants.
- Ongoing recruitment efforts to increase number of Building Officials.
- Implementation of final recommendations from the Housing and Land Development Advisory Committee focused on permit process improvements.
- Increase number of consultants on contract to review building plans in order to increase capacity for 2025 construction season.
- Proposed changes to establish defined timelines and service levels for building permits to improve efficiency and transparency of permitting process.
- Develop Annual Report detailing key performance indicators and review of timelines and service levels to increase transparency and accountability.
- Organize regular meetings between builders, industry representatives and government officials to increase dialogue around challenges and opportunities to improved development in Whitehorse.