Building Permits and Inspections Service Review

Public Policy Branch, Corporate Strategy & Performance

Citizen Experience, Innovation & Performance Division

January 2020

City of Regina | REGINA Infinite Horizons

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Executive Summary

Background

The role of the City of Regina is to administer and enforce the safety standards of buildings as set out in national/provincial building codes. In consideration of the City's regulatory responsibility for the built environment, it is important to understand that the customers of the building permits and inspections service are the occupants of buildings for the life of the building. It is to those occupants that the City owes its primary obligation. If the City fails to diligently conduct plan review, permit issuance and construction inspections, the City may face legal liability for resulting financial losses, personal injuries or death.

The Building Permits process has, for many years, received numerous complaints. The City of Regina has endeavoured to address these issues incrementally over time, but the issues have continued. By the summer of 2019, elected officials were consistently hearing of these complaints and they had also been featured in media reports. To resolve these issues, the City launched a service review of the Building Permit and Inspection Service. This report includes the results of that review and recommendations for improvement.

Regulatory effectiveness can be a competitive advantage for a community looking for investment. The current level of performance of the City of Regina in this service does not provide any advantage when investors are considering where to locate their investments. A clear goal of this review is to turn what has become a disincentive into a competitive advantage.

Recommendations

Framework for Improvement

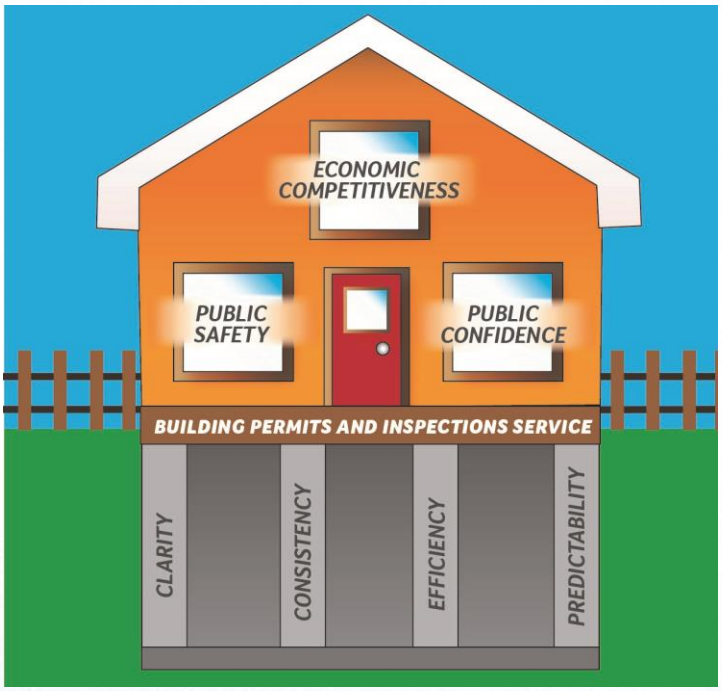
A framework has been developed as the basis for recommendations. The framework sees the City of Regina and the construction/building industry as partners in achieving the objectives of:

- ***Public safety*:** The primary role of the building permits and inspections service
- ***Public confidence*:** This objective recognizes that buildings last significantly longer than the involvement of the builder and the first occupant. The role of the City in public safety is one that transfers to new owners, thereby providing them assurance that the buildings they purchase are safely built.
- ***Economic competitiveness*:** This service review recognized that any process that costs the users unnecessarily or that affects the attractiveness of Regina as a place to build and invest is counterproductive to the goals of the community. While the effort to support economic competitiveness cannot undermine the safety objective, it was useful for the review to also understand the importance of streamlined efficient systems as part of the City's regulatory responsibility.

The Building Permits and Inspections Service is the foundation upon which these objectives rest. The regulatory service is built on the supports of ***clarity, consistency, efficiency*** and ***predictability***. The recommendations are structured based on this framework.

The recommendations are structured to address each element of the “structure” with general service recommendations (the floor upon which the house is built) and recommendations for each pillar of the foundation.

This framework sounds simple enough, but the reality is that, if the City of Regina is able to achieve these four pillars, it will deliver on one of the most competitive and attractive regulatory systems in Canada. While speed of service is certainly important to the industry, even more important is predictability of service. It is the inability of construction companies to be able to reliably plan their work that is the biggest issue they are facing. In order to achieve predictability, the City must also achieve clarity and consistency. These four pillars represent an integrated and proactive approach to regulation that, if achieved, will assure the service objectives of **public safety, public confidence,** and **economic competitiveness.**



General Service Recommendations

1. That the City of Regina recognize and work with the design, building and construction industries as partners to achieve the objectives of ***public safety***, ***public confidence*** and ***economic competitiveness***.

    1.1 That the City of Regina establish a strategy to build and maintain a positive relationship with the construction industry including, but not limited to:

    - Regularly attending association meetings and educational opportunities
    - Hosting meet and greet sessions to allow industry to get to know the names and faces of those working in Building Standards and vice versa
    - Partnering with associations to provide education to the industry on code interpretation and the building permit process

- Partnering with the associations to advocate for improved code instruction through various educational and apprenticeship programs
- Establishing mechanisms to allow for affiliated and unaffiliated professionals in the construction industry to stay updated on information related to the building code and the permit/inspection process

2. That the City of Regina continue to uphold its role as a regulator and proactively communicate the value of building permits to the public.

    2.1 That the City of Regina establish a strategy to provide better public education on the building permit process, especially targeting audiences such as commercial real estate brokers and commercial building owners.

3. That the City of Regina establish the following preliminary performance targets for the 2021 construction season:

    - Residential: 5 business days to provide a permit or comments
    - Commercial: 10 business days to provide a permit or comments
    - Resubmissions: 5 business days to provide a permit or additional comments

    3.1 That for 2020, while the recommendations of this review are being implemented and to ensure predictability for the industry, the City communicate the following preliminary targets:

    - Residential: 10 business days to provide a permit or comments
    - Commercial: 20 business days to provide a permit or comments
    - Resubmissions: 5 business days to provide a permit or additional comments

    3.2 That the City develop and implement more specific service targets based on the complexity of the construction project and application (e.g. decks, garages, etc.; more complex/less complex commercial projects) by the end of 2020.

    3.3 That the implementation team working on these recommendations establish performance targets that will allow the measurement of benefits realized from this review, including:

    - A targeted reduction in the percentage of permit applications put on hold
    - A targeted reduction in the number of service requests received

4. That the City of Regina ensure that the Implementation Plan and Building Standards Branch personnel are adequately supported to ensure the successful implementation of the recommendations.

    4.1 That the City assign a dedicated project manager to coordinate the implementation project.

    4.2 That the City put into place supports to ensure good change management, including:

- Ensuring buy-in to the proposed program framework and the partnership with industry to achieve the program objectives of ***public safety***, ***public confidence*** and ***economic competitiveness***
- Supporting the enhancement of competencies in the staff to build the required relationships with industry and to provide the regulatory service in a way that is solution focused
- Ensuring documentation of new standards for applying code and processes as developed to support the objective of consistency
- Continuing to build on the workplace culture so that it is collaborative, supportive and solution-focused

4.3 That the City develop an efficient process to manage customer escalations, particularly during the implementation project to minimize distractions from delivering levels of service and recommendation implementation.

4.4 That the City develop an internal workforce development plan for the Building Standards Branch to ensure better retention and succession planning, including:

- Ensuring job evaluations, classifications and compensation adequately consider the required expertise, the level of risk and judgment associated with the work, and the market rates for such competencies
- Ensuring that compensation supports career development and advancement within the service

5. That Building Permit fees remain unchanged throughout 2020 to provide time for the City of Regina to demonstrate its improved levels of service and build confidence in the industry.

5.1 That any necessary permit fee increases be phased in, beginning in 2021, until full cost recovery is achieved.

Clarity

6. That the City of Regina clearly communicate the expectations of applicants for the building permit and inspection process and provide clear information regarding how code will be interpreted and how any changes in code will be interpreted and applied.

Consistency

7. That the City of Regina establish internal training and standardized processes to ensure consistent interpretation and application of building code across all reviewers and inspectors.

7.1 That the City explore opportunities to establish a quick and efficient dispute resolution process to address disputes in code interpretation between the City of Regina and permit applicants/holders. This process should:

- Be readily available within five days of a request for dispute resolution
- Enable an open and fair dialogue between the City and the applicant
- Include documenting decisions as a precedent for future code interpretation.

Efficiency

8. That the City of Regina establish short-term work-around processes by June 1, 2020:

    8.1 Make available a set number of opportunities per week for permit applicants to pay to have their applications expedited.

    8.2 Establish a separate service stream to expedite small projects.

    8.3 Improve the phased permit process.

9. That the City of Regina address issues that are reducing the efficiency of the process.

    9.1 That the City establish a pre-application meeting process for complex projects that ensures the following:

    - The meeting process ensures all necessary officials (e.g. building officials, development officers, etc.) are in attendance;
    - Documentation of meeting results so that, at the time of application submission, the assigned reviewer has access to the record of discussion at the pre-application meeting; and
    - The process is cost recovery.

    9.2 City staff address any administrative or minor code errors in permit applications by email or telephone (confirmed in writing) rather than putting the application on hold.

    9.3 The inspector sign off on any minor project changes that occur through the construction process and not require the submission of a change through the review process.

    9.4 The resubmission performance target of five business days applies to only two resubmissions per permit application. After two resubmissions, if the application still has deficiencies, it should re-enter the process at the back of the line.

    9.5 Permit fees cover only one reinspection where inspections identify deficiencies. The full cost of reinspection should be charged for any additional reinspection(s). The option to charge for re-inspections is already in place – the recommendation is intended to describe how it should be applied in the future.

10. That the City of Regina implement enabling technologies to support digital service delivery, improve internal efficiency and support overall program performance.

    10.1 The City identify and implement processes to automate tasks within the new planning and building software (e.g. automated compilation of comments; assignment of work tasks, structured use of checklists and corrections, automatic issuing of notifications, etc.).

    10.2 The City provide online self-service options for common information requests such as search for the permit history and the zoning of a property online.

10.3 The City improve the customer experience on Regina.ca to better support and empower applicants when accessing the building and permits program. Provide content and online tools to support the development of customer knowledge, provide guidance on how to navigate the system, and reduce demand on internal resources to manage support requests (e.g. provide customized applications based on project scope and step by step support for applicants).

10.4 External stakeholders and representative user groups be engaged in the development of online services and participate in formal usability testing prior to launch to ensure a minimum standard for user experience.

10.5 Online functionalities identified through the review process be formally scoped, estimated and further evaluated as a part of the implementation phase (e.g. online dashboards of application status, online collaboration tools, automated notifications, interactive checklist wizard, automated calendar invitations for inspections, online code-related repositories, digital signatures, etc.)

10.6 The City prioritize the system functionality and integration required to support performance management and reporting efforts as a part of the implementation plan.

10.7 The City evaluates opportunities for technology and automation to improve the customer experience and contribute to program objectives on an ongoing basis in collaboration with external stakeholders.

11. That the City of Regina introduce new efficiencies to existing processes.

11.1 The City develop a consistent process to expedite the review of production builds (e.g. reviewing a prototype in detail and reviewing only changes to subsequent models).

11.2 Separate the building and development permit application processes and, where it makes sense (e.g. for more complex commercial projects), administer them separately.

11.3 The City redesign the application and work-flow process to collect appropriate information at the application stage and throughout the inspection process, in order to ensure consistency with the design and construction process. This process may be facilitated through the use of conditional permits.

11.4 The City optimize the role of File Support Managers, so they are responsible for both customer liaising and work-flow management.

Predictability

12. That the City of Regina improve predictability for industry.

12.1 The City review resourcing levels and practices to ensure that service levels for application permits can remain consistent through peak construction times.

12.2 The City provide notification of changes to permit process, permit requirements, and code interpretation to industry with adequate notice (i.e. six months) and

implement changes during slow construction periods (i.e. Q1 or Q4 of any calendar year).

12.3 Building Standards work with industry to develop a long-term permanent solution to early occupancy of homes with stucco finishes. In the meantime, explore temporary solutions for the 2020 construction season.

Building Permits and Inspections Review

January 2020

Background

The role of the City of Regina is to administer and enforce the safety standards of buildings as set out in national/provincial building codes. In consideration of the City's regulatory responsibility for the built environment, it is important to understand that the customers of the building permits and inspections service are the occupants of buildings for the life of the building. It is to those occupants that the City owes its primary obligation. If the City fails to diligently conduct plan review, permit issuance and construction inspections, the City may face legal liability for resulting financial losses, personal injuries or death.

The Building Permits process has, for many years, received numerous complaints. The City of Regina has endeavoured to address these issues incrementally over time, but the issues have continued. By the summer of 2019, elected officials were consistently hearing of these complaints and they had also been featured in media reports. To resolve these issues, the City launched a service review of the Building Permit and Inspection Service. The review was managed through the City Manager's Office and was conducted at arm's length from the Planning and Development Services Department, which is responsible for the service.

The review charter included an analysis of the current situation, identification of issues and the development of solutions including a plan to implement them. The City contracted with an external consulting firm, MPATH Engagement, to develop and deliver the process to support our understanding of the needs of the development community and the internal staff. By understanding these needs, the process would ultimately lead to the development of targeted solutions.

The project purpose, which informed all aspects of the project design and delivery, was:

> *To determine changes the City can make to its delivery of the building and development permits program to improve satisfaction with service delivery and achieve program objectives for* ***public safety****,* ***public confidence*** *and* ***economic competitiveness****.*

The three program objectives were central to the project's thinking and design. For many years, the permit service has been built upon the dual program objectives of public safety and public confidence. The City of Regina's responsibility in these areas is present for the life of any building and outlives the responsibility of the builder or the original owner. This project added an additional lens to the thinking that drives the service, that of economic competitiveness. There was a recognition that any process that costs the users unnecessarily or that affects the attractiveness of Regina as a place to build and invest is counterproductive to the goals of the community. While the effort to support economic competitiveness cannot undermine the other program goals, it is useful to understand the City's regulatory role through this added filter. This shift required that the City begin to think of those applying for building permits as important customers as well.

The effectiveness of regulation can be a competitive advantage for a community for investment. The current level of performance of the City of Regina in this service does not provide any advantage when investors are considering where to locate their investments. One clear goal of this review is to turn what has become a disincentive into a competitive advantage.

The scope of this review focuses on the processes from building permit application to occupancy. While there are areas of the City Administration that deal with this process outside the Building Standards Branch, for the most part the review focused on the processes within the branch itself, with some consideration also given to the roles of the Development Engineering Services branch and the Fire & Protective Services Department. Based on engagement with the industry, this was the right focus. There may be upstream issues (e.g. policies and procedures surrounding the application of *The Zoning Bylaw,* which has recently been revised and with which developers and builders are still developing familiarity) that contribute to issues in Building Standards, but these would need to be addressed in another way.

The project began with a Request for Quotes from vendors in August 2019. Engagement began in September with key informants and proceeded to broader stakeholders in October through December. Over the same period, data was collected to assess the City's performance and gain a better understanding of potential solutions.

The project brought with it several complexities that had to be managed. The first was that, at the same time as the review was underway, the staff of Planning and Development Services was launching new software to support the building and development permit process. The software went live internally in September 2019, with plans to release a customer portal in early 2020. The second complexity was that the staff continued to work on an ongoing effort to improve service, which had been underway for some months. Finally, the branch appointed a new manager for the building permit service area in September 2019. Fortunately, the new manager was an internal hire and continuity was strong. The service review project made every effort to coordinate with these three efforts to avoid overlaps and inconsistencies.

Building Standards in Saskatchewan

Building standards in Saskatchewan are regulated by the Province of Saskatchewan through *The Uniform Building and Accessibility Standards Act* (UBAS). UBAS directs local authorities (i.e. municipalities) to enforce and administer the Act on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. The UBAS regulations establish the code standards with which buildings in Saskatchewan must comply. The main standard that applies is the National Building Code of Canada. As of January 1, 2019, the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings was also declared in force through the UBAS regulations. UBAS also contains Saskatchewan-specific amendments to the National Building Code of Canada that must be complied with. Thus, while the City of Regina has full control over how it administers its permits and inspections service, it has no authority over the code itself. This means that improvements to the Building Permits and Inspections service cannot be achieved by amending the regulations.

Process design

Engagement Framework

The City of Regina bases the design of engagement processes on the principles and guidelines of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). This body has outlined a spectrum of public participation that includes five general approaches from *consult* to *empower* (see Appendix A – IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation). In recognition of the evident dissatisfaction with the building permit and inspection process, the City chose to design the engagement process using the *Involve* level of engagement design. The goal of the *Involve* level is "to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered." The promise to the public of engaging at the *Involve* level is that "we will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision." In making this choice, the City had to fulfill its responsibilities for public safety and public confidence, while remaining focused on the processes that affect customers.

Engagement Design

The process of the service review was built upon a common investigative framework, outlined in Figure 1 below.

Issues

The identification of issues began in the early stages of engagement, through key informant interviews with the Regina and Region Homebuilders Association (RRHBA), the Regina Construction Association (RCA), and supervisory staff within the City of Regina Building Standards Branch.

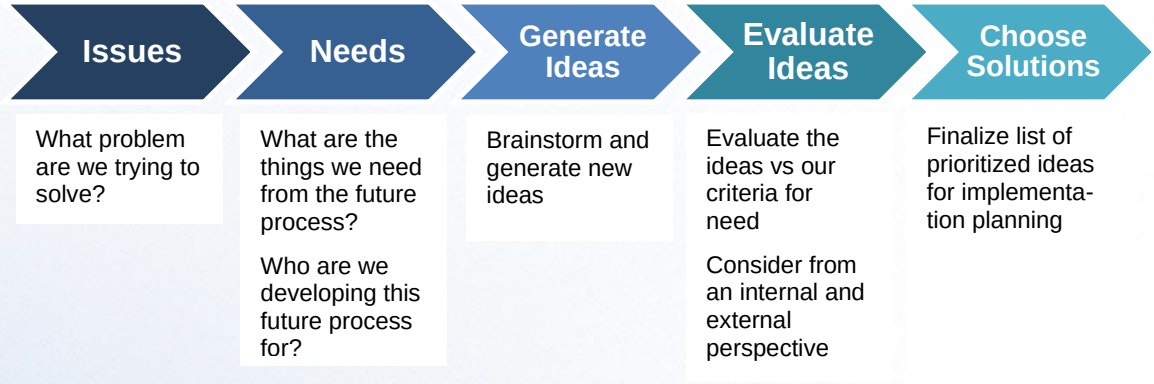


Figure 1: Investigative Framework utilized by the Building Permits and Inspections Service Review

A stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify parties with whom the project should engage, and the engagement process was designed based on this analysis. Key groups that emerged through the stakeholder analysis process were:

- Commercial construction businesses
- Residential builders
- Designers (engineers, architects, draftspersons)
- Small general contractors
- Staff with roles in the permit process

Broader engagement on issue identification involved facilitated meetings with associated groups of stakeholders. The RCA hosted a session for commercial construction and the RRHBA hosted a session for residential builders. A session for designers was developed through cooperation with the Saskatchewan Association of Architects (SAA) and the Association of Consulting Engineers – Saskatchewan (ACEC – SK). Additionally, a list of draftspersons that had indicated their interest in receiving updates on building standards was used to recruit members to the group. Staff participated in small focus groups by work unit. In total, 17 sessions were held to identify issues.

Needs, Idea Generation, and Evaluation

The second round of engagement was developed based on four working groups consisting of both industry and staff representation. There were four groups of approximately 15 to 20 members each, with roughly equal representation from industry and City staff. The groups were structured as follows:

- Commercial construction
- Residential home builders
- Designers
- Small general contractors unaffiliated with any association

Each working group met twice, with each session focusing on a different bucket of issues as defined through the issue identification phase. Participants from industry were offered a small per diem for their participation to offset the cost to them of taking time away from paid work. Session 1 focused on *Information and Awareness; Interactions and Support;* and *Relationships, Roles and Accountability*. Session 2 focused on *Speed and Timing of Delivery; Regulatory Involvement;* and *Financial and Economic Competitiveness.* Participants identified needs associated with issues in each bucket and then generated ideas to respond to those needs across the several stages of the building permit process (general process improvement; pre-application; application; review; inspection; and occupancy).

As a final stage, several of the key solutions were voted on using an in-room electronic poll to determine priorities.

Reporting Findings and Recommendations

In recognition of the IAP2 Spectrum approach to engagement, *Involve*, a final session was held where all participants in the working group process were invited to hear the findings and recommendations resulting from their input and the research conducted. This final stage allowed participants to provide input as to whether they had been accurately understood and to provide final input into the recommendations.

In total, there were in excess of 50 hours of facilitated sessions in the engagement process.

Research

Independently of the engagement process, the project team engaged in research on several fronts:

1. Survey research of customer satisfaction
2. Comparative research into the performance of other jurisdictions in Canada
3. Analysis of six months (March to September 2019) of inquiries to Service Regina regarding building permits
4. Examining the cost to the customer of the City's building permits and inspections process, particularly the cost of delays.
5. Analysis of the software system that had been recently launched internally to identify technology opportunities.

Findings

Survey

An electronic survey was issued through several channels:

1. A sign-up list to which industry and residents had been invited so that the City could update them on developments in the building permits and inspections service. At the time of the distribution of the survey, the list had approximately 150 stakeholders on it.

2. Through the membership of the following associations:

    a. The Regina Construction Association
    b. The Regina and Region Homebuilders Association
    c. The Saskatchewan Architects Association
    d. The Association of Consulting Engineers – Saskatchewan

In total, 126 individuals responded to the survey. Of those, 85 percent self-identified as professionals in the building industry, 11 percent self-identified as residents, and another 4 percent identified as "Other". Of those in the building industry, 50 percent were directly responsible for coordinating permits and another 27 percent supported those who coordinated permits. Another 24 percent were not directly involved in obtaining permits but indicated that their work was directly affected by the permit process.

Survey results (see Appendix B – Detailed Results of Survey) showed a significant and pervasive level of dissatisfaction among respondents. The highest degree of dissatisfaction was in relation to the efficiency and speed of the permits and inspections service. Each of these had 90 percent of respondents express some degree of dissatisfaction.

Jurisdictional Comparison

The comparative analysis conducted for this report examined an array of jurisdictions. Generally, the comparisons focused on three municipalities considered as similar to Regina based on a

variety of factors. These were Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Calgary. Where other data was easily accessible, it is included for information purposes.

Speed of Service

Speed of service (generally understood as the time from application to issuance of a permit) is complex to assess and compare. There is no standardized way to measure speed across jurisdictions. The City of Regina has integrated its development permit and building permit processes, so all speed measurements include both. Many other jurisdictions require that building permit applicants already have any required development approvals prior to applying for a building permit. Another inconsistency regarding how speed is measured is related to the time during which any deficiencies in the application are being addressed by the customer, referred to by the City of Regina as *hold time.* Some jurisdictions include this time in their calculation of speed of service, while others exclude it. The City of Saskatoon, for example, has established speed targets that exclude hold time, but also include estimates of time for "customer dialogue" which are greater than the target processing time.

Average Permit Approval Times, 2018[#]		
	Average Days to Approve a Residential Permit	*Average Days to Approve a Commercial Permit*
Regina	43	65
Saskatoon	5	25 to 50 days (based on complexity)
Calgary	21[*]	49 – 56 (based on complexity)
Winnipeg	11	1 – 29 (based on complexity) [**]

Note:

[#]Note that these comparisons do not account for the differences in process. Regina performance times include the approval of a development permit while some others may not.

[*] Calgary has an expedited process for some applicants with a target turnaround time of one to four days.

[**] Winnipeg has a service that allows certain commercial applicants to pay for a meeting with all necessary approvers to allow for expedited approvals.

Figure 2: Permit approval timelines by jurisdiction

Speed of permit application review varies considerably depending on the complexity of the permit application. Most jurisdictions publish targets and performance in a matrix based on complexity. Full details of the various matrices can be found in Appendix C – Performance by Jurisdiction.

The City of Regina's performance on speed of service is generally slower than most other jurisdictions, particularly on the residential side, even when accounting for differences in approaches to measurement. A few key comparators are provided by way of example in Figure 2.

Permit Fees

The permit and inspection service is typically funded through full cost recovery (i.e. permit fees cover the cost of the service). Permit costs to applicants therefore represent two issues:

1. Charges for permits can be a competitive advantage for municipalities that charge lower fees; and
2. Low cost permits may result from choices to inadequately resource the permit service, which potentially affects the speed and efficiency of the service.

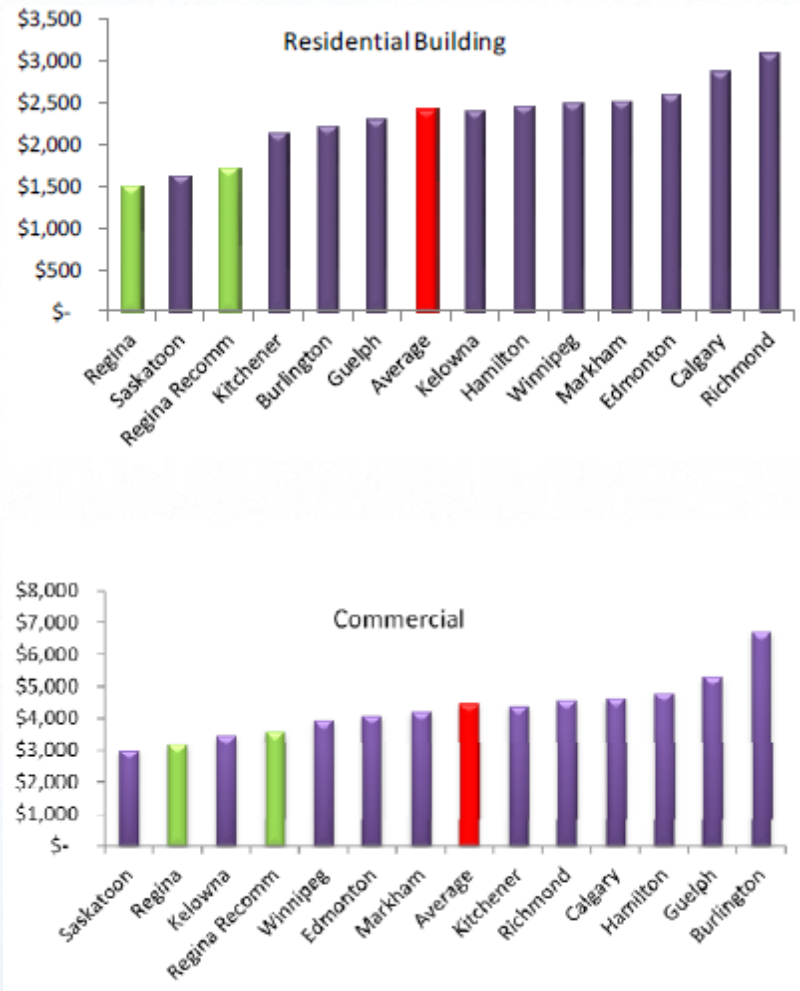


Figure 3: Comparison of permit fees by jurisdiction

The City of Regina's permit charges are typically lower than those of other jurisdictions. The City of Regina undertook a comparison of eleven jurisdictions in a review of its permit fees in 2018. That data is presented in Figure 3. That review found that Regina's fees were not recovering the full cost of the service and recommended a small increase. Due to the City's pending launch of a

new software, which was expected to improve levels of service, no increase has yet been recommended.

Efficiency

The primary driver of cost in the permit and inspection service is that of staff. Staffing also provides a good metric to assess efficiency and productivity. Regina's staffing level is slightly higher than most jurisdictions for which staffing numbers were available except Saskatoon. A reasonable conclusion is that the current level of staffing should be delivering a similar speed of service to other jurisdictions. If, however, Regina wants to achieve the level of service that Saskatoon is achieving for residential permits, it will likely require additional staff. A full comparison, normalized using "average number of permits processed per staff member" and "number of staff per $100K of construction value," is provided in Figure 4 below.

Comparison of Staff Levels Per $100K of Total Construction Value – 2018

	Total Number of Permits Issued	*Total Value of All Construction Permits*	*Total Number of Staff Reviewing*	*Average Number of Permits Processed Per Staff Member*	*Number of Staff per $100K of Total Construction Value*
Regina	2,590	$409,141,580	8	324	.0019
Saskatoon	3,371	$640,535,000	17	198	.0027
Calgary	16,636	$4,551,529,069	36	462	.0008
Winnipeg	10,249	$1,849,841,000	Est. 16	641	.0008

Figure 4: Comparison of the efficiency of the permit service by jurisdiction

Analysis of Internal Performance

There were two sources of internal performance information that were analyzed to better understand some of the issues facing the permits and inspections service. This analysis provides some insight into possible solutions.

The first area of analysis was a deeper examination into the processing time of permit applications. To understand this analysis, it is useful to understand the key steps in the application process. These are described in Figure 5.

At each step an application might be put on hold because of some deficiency. At the Application stage, this is likely due to missing forms or information. At the Development Review stage, it can be due to issues like setbacks or site coverage. At the Code Review stage, it is usually due to non-compliant items in the building code. Finally, at the Permit Issuing stage, it is because permit applicants fail to come to the City to pick up and pay for their permits (at the time this report was written there were more than 100 permits that had not been picked up).

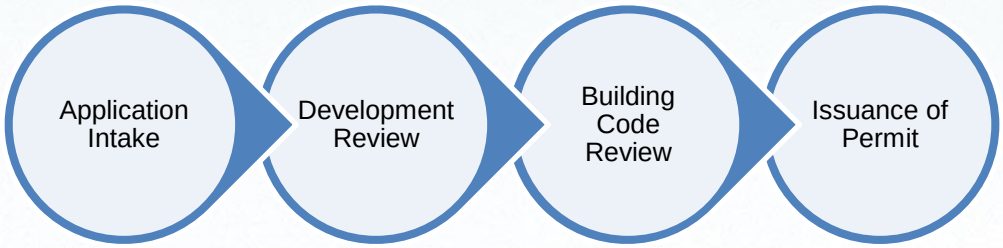


Figure 5: Permit application stages at the City of Regina

While the City of Regina has much to improve in terms of its processing times, some of the delays in processing are due to issues with the applications themselves. Returning an application to the applicant and placing it on hold essentially doubles the processing time for any stage of the process. Reducing the number of applications on hold will significantly improve the overall processing time. This will require effort by the City and by the industry, which is discussed further in the recommendations.

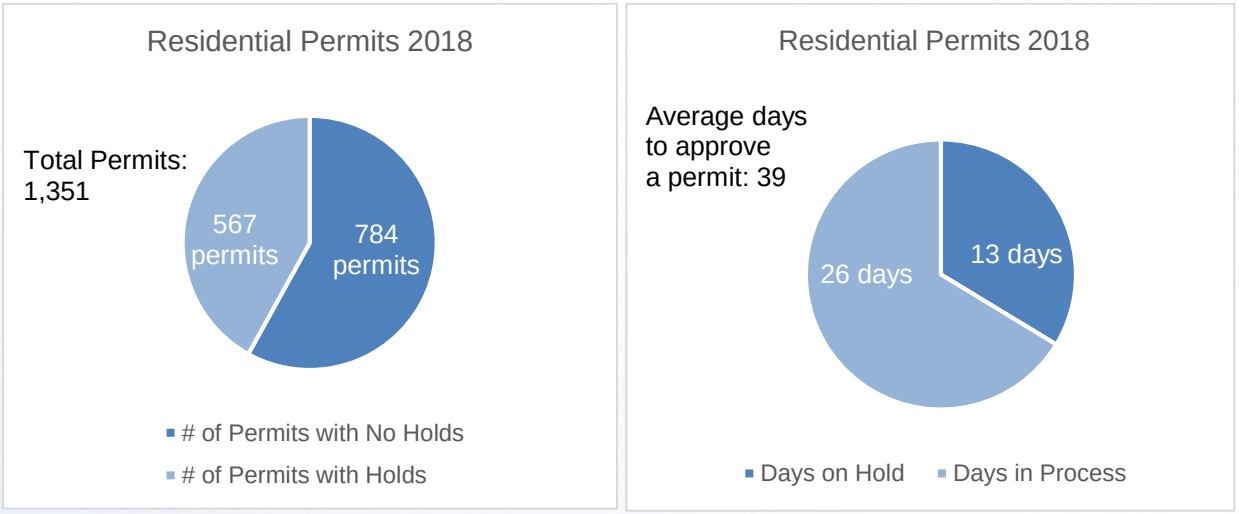


*Figure 6: Analysis of the impact of "holds" on the **Residential** permit application process*

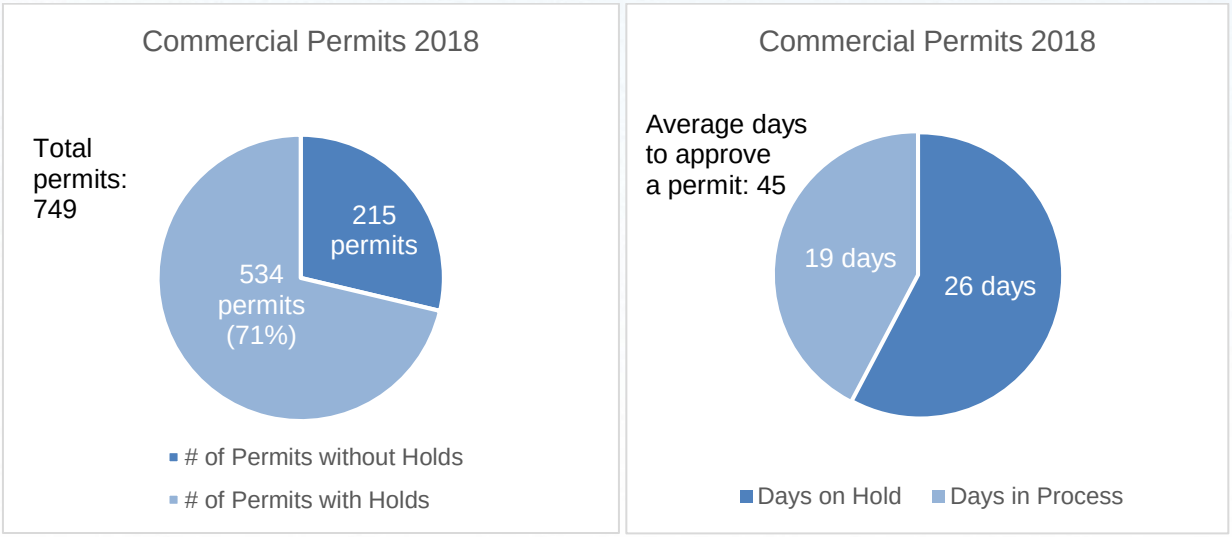


*Figure 7: Analysis of the impact of "holds" on the **Commercial** permit application process*

Another area for examination was the inquiries received by the Building Standards Branch through Service Regina. A detailed analysis was conducted of all service requests for the six months between March and September 2018. During that period, the branch received 1,573 service requests, most of which required an in-person response. An analysis of these requests suggests there are efficiencies, some of which are already in development, that could improve both the customer experience and the productivity of the branch personnel. The calls were placed into five different categories:

- Application status: These calls were to determine when an applicant for a building permit could expect to receive it. Just over a quarter of the calls were in this category. Most of these calls will be eliminated when the Customer Portal for building permits is launched. This system will allow customers to do an online search to determine application status. The extent to which this new process will eliminate such calls is dependent upon the level to which the branch can improve processing times.
- Pre-application assistance: These calls ranged from assistance with the application itself to code interpretation. Over 40 percent of the calls were in this category. Many of them could be eliminated with improved information on Regina.ca about:
    - How to complete an application
    - What does and doesn't require a building permit
- Post-application assistance: These calls were generally related either to projects that were underway, such as making changes to the construction plan for the project, or they were in response to calls/questions from City Building Officials. This is the only category of calls which would almost always require a Building Official to respond.
- Permit History: Almost 15% of calls were from property owners or contractors looking for the permit history of a particular property. An automated system that allows customers to do their own searches online would eliminate most of these calls.

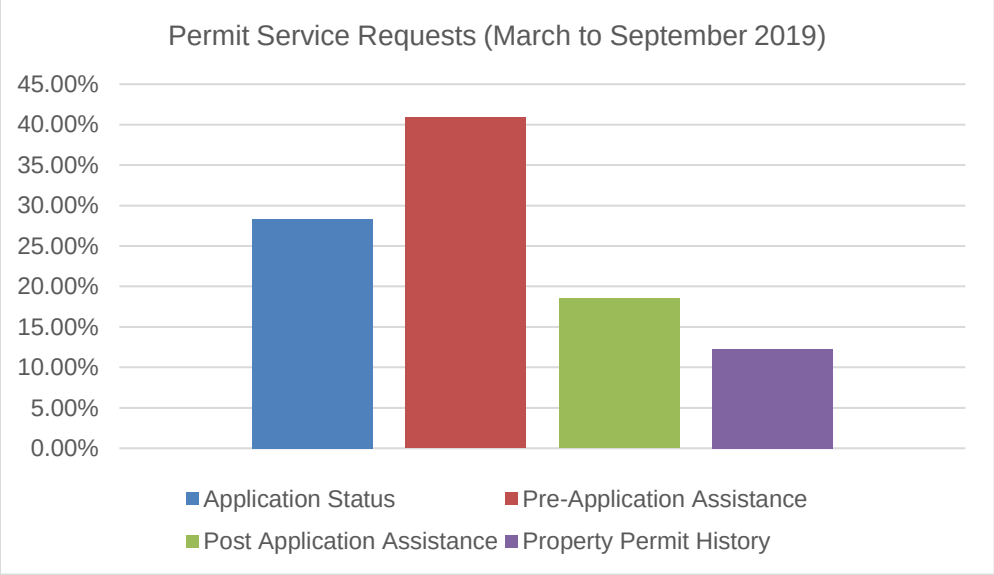


Figure 8: Analysis of Service Requests to the Building Standards Branch (March to September 2019)

Direct Cost Estimator

Early in the review process the Government of Saskatchewan Regulatory Modernization Branch contacted the project team. The branch has been working across the Provincial government to improve and streamline regulation. In service to that end, they have developed a tool, the Direct Cost Estimator (DCE), which assesses the cost of regulation. The Regulatory Modernization Branch offered this tool to the City of Regina to use in its review of the building permits and inspections service. Uniquely, the tool assesses not only the cost to Government of administering regulations, but also the cost to the customer of complying with regulations. It was this unique insight that the tool provided – the cost to customers of complying with regulations – that added significant value.

The City met with a small number of both commercial and residential builders to obtain the data to populate the DCE. The DCE works best when the cost to the customer is the same in all circumstances and the reality is that, for builders, each circumstance is unique. The key issue that surfaced in terms of the cost of the permitting process is the cost to customers of the need for multiple resubmissions of plans. Depending on the size and scale of a project and whether there is an in-house drafter or designer, or the work is shopped out externally, the financial impact of resubmissions is difficult to calculate. It can range from a few minutes of an in-house drafter's time to thousands of dollars on a large project. In one instance, the delays resulted in the loss of a contract.

While the DCE was not helpful as a mathematical tool, it raised the City's sensitivity to the cost of regulation for customers. This was a useful lens that helped orient the service review to the customer's needs.

Case Study #1

A commercial contractor was the successful proponent for an RFP for construction management services on a fast track tenant improvement project for a major corporation. The tenant improvements would see the complete renovation of two full floors and two partial floors of a downtown commercial office building (22,000 square feet) in a $2 million project. The corporate client provided three months for the tenant improvements and had ordered office furniture to be delivered at the end of the third month.

The following is a history of the permit process:

- An application for demolition was submitted on September 12th.
- The demolition permit was issued on October 18th. Typically, demolition permits take much less time, even when a full building is being demolished. This delayed the project by a full month.
- A full permit was applied for on October 10th.
- Questions and comments were provided to the contractor on October 31st and response was provided on November 5th.
    - Some questions were already answered in the specifications or would be provided in shop drawings that had to meet those specifications. Shop drawings typically are not available at the time of submission.
- Additional questions and comments were provided to the contractor on November 12th with a response on November 19th (these were different than were asked in the first round of questions and comments.)
    - Some of the comments (outdated smoke dampers) were about base building infrastructure to which the landlord needed to agree (at the cost of the landlord). Potentially there is education required to inform building owners of their obligations when tenant improvements are undertaken.
- Final permit was issued November 26th, six weeks after the application and more than two months into what was originally a three-month project timeline.

Scheduling for the project became a significant challenge for the contractors and his subcontractors. Crews are typically committed to the projects and when they don't progress those crews have to find other work to keep them busy or are sent home. When the work proceeds, contractors and subcontractors must scramble to mobilize their crews and work around revised commitments.

The contract did not include a liquidated damages provision, otherwise the financial consequences of this project would have been significant. Without a liquidated damages clause, it is difficult to quantify the cost. The cost of delays is shared by many as it affects the tenants, landlords, consultants, general contractors, subtrades & suppliers. The delays certainly put pressure on the schedule. Note that this commercial contractor will no longer agree to liquidated damages without qualification because of the unreliability of the building permit process.

Case Study #2

A small independent contractor was hired by a private resident to build a detached residential garage. The project was in the range of $40,000 to $50,000 in total, with 10 percent of that as margin that would flow to the contractor. The following is the history of the building permit process:

- The original permit application was submitted on October 15th.
- The permit was returned to the contractor on October 25th as incomplete (missing truss drawings)
    - The truss drawings had been submitted after the original application but were not attached to the original application by the City when submitted. Thus, the application reviewer did not have access to the truss drawings.
- On November 15th, the applicant was notified that there was a typo on the truss design and was asked to submit a correction
- Later in November, the applicant was notified that the site coverage for the garage slightly exceeded the allowance under *The Zoning Bylaw* and an application for a minor variance was required. At the time of writing, this application is still outstanding.

By mid-November, the owner who wanted a new garage was heading south for the winter and postponed the garage project to the spring. The contractor laid off two workers and was unable to secure the income from the project in 2019.

Case Study #3

A residential custom home builder was designing and building a large custom home with some unique features requiring both design and engineering support.

The permit package was completed on October 7 and, wanting to ensure the application went smoothly, the home builder engaged the City on several questions from site coverage to water meter sizing. Answers to these questions required revision to the drawings, including to stamped engineer drawings at a cost to the builder that could not be passed on to the client. The process took several weeks, in part because of the City's slow responsiveness to calls and emails and to their lack of clarity in answers.

The permit application was finally submitted on October 25. The home builder was not notified that the application had been received until they called the City on November 4. On November 5, the builder received a Notice of Incomplete Application. The list of deficiencies included:

- Items that had never been requested at the application stage before and that were usually reviewed at the time of inspection
- Engineer stamped drawings and truss design drawings that didn't agree and had to be redone (one was in metric and one was in imperial – they were otherwise identical)
- Reference to "spray foam building envelope design drawings" to which neither the designer nor the engineer knew how to respond. This comment resulted in several requests for clarification from the City by different people. The issue was eventually was clarified as something spray foam installers supply.

The revised application was resubmitted on November 15, at which time the builder was advised by the City that they should submit only those pages that had been revised. On November 18,

the builder was advised by the City that the whole package needed to be resubmitted – not only the revised pages. This required the engineer to open the engineer stamped drawings and re-stamp the whole document.

On November 25, the builder was notified by the City that there were two development issues that needed to be resolved prior to a building permit being issued:

- The house was being built on two lots and an application was required to consolidate them
- The eaves of the house encroached on the easement adjacent to the property and an application was required to address this
- The fees for these two applications were $730 in total.

The letter to follow up on these issues arrived four days later, but also included several other issues, some of which were already addressed in the original application but were simply missed by the reviewer.

Drawings were redone and re-stamped by the designer and engineer. An easement agreement was undertaken with the City and a consolidation application was submitted. All materials were provided to the City by December 4.

The encroachment agreement was completed and brought to City Hall on December 6, but the City couldn't accept a credit card payment for the fee. On December 10, a cheque was couriered, and an agreement was executed and registered with ISC on December 12.

Final approved permit was received December 13.

The impact of the process to achieve the permit included:

- $450 in engineering time revising and re-stamping drawings
- $1,350 in direct cost to the builder from the designer and another equal amount borne by the designer for time spent researching and trying to contact the City to get clarity on the issues
- $200 in consulting time from the energy consultant to answer questions between the builder and the City
- $1,800 in builder time to coordinate the responses and obtain clarity from the City
- Approximately $5,000 in heating and hoarding costs for undertaking a large basement construction in January, rather than in October

The builder noted that there were occasions through this process that either they or their contractors had to deal with Municode (the City of Regina code consultant who supports some application reviews) and found them very easy to reach and to get clarity from.

Industry Engagement

Engagement sessions were held with members of the Regina Construction Association and the Regina and Region Homebuilders Association as well as approximately 20 independent engineers, architects and designers. In total approximately 60 individuals participated in the process.

The input from industry through the issue identification sessions was themed and shared back with participants to ensure accuracy. Detailed reporting of the results of these sessions can be found in Appendix C – Issues Identification (External Stakeholders). In summary, the issues were clustered into the following themes:

- **Communication and awareness:** Communication about and during the permitting process is insufficient.
- **Speed and timing of delivery:** The speed of permit reviews is generally slow and not aligned to the needs of industry or building owners. Further, the timing of information requirements does not align with the industry building process.
- **Roles and relationships:** There has been an erosion of a collaborative and productive working relationship between industry and the City, coupled with an absence of effective dispute resolution mechanisms.
- **Regulatory involvement:** Inconsistency exists in the application of building code and other regulations at all stages of the process.
- **Service touchpoints and interactions:** The City's approach to service does not meet the needs of industry. The current approach extends timelines and does not result in collaborative interaction.
- **Ownership and accountability:** Industry indicated that it was nearly impossible to manage project timelines and delivery schedules when City staff are unable to make any firm commitments for permit review timelines.
- **Financial and economic competitiveness:** The quality of the permit service means the community is falling behind in investment, causing negative financial impacts at the project, industry and community level.

Staff Engagement

Employees met with the external consultant in small groups to discuss their concerns about the current state of the program. The consultant hosted a total of 14 sessions with 41 individuals. The majority of the sessions were with employees of Building Standards; however, sessions were also held with staff from other areas of Planning & Development Services and Fire & Protective Services.

In order to provide a safe environment for employees to be open and transparent about their concerns, input gathered was anonymous. There were some common issues and themes that emerged from each session, as well as some diverse perspectives.

Detailed reporting of the results of these sessions are in **Error! Reference source not found.**. In summary, issues were clustered into the following themes:

- **Managing Escalations:** Escalations are typically related to significant delays in permit processing. They receive priority attention and reduce overall efficiency. Numbers of escalations are increasing, and this is having a net negative effect on the service.
- **Quality of Regulatory Service:** Staff generally perceive that the quality and integrity of the regulatory work has improved substantially from what it was in the past. However, concerns remain about the consistency of decisions and quality across all work teams.

- **Process and Service Delivery:** Redesigned processes have meant that Building Official 1s are no longer utilized to sign off on simpler applications, reducing overall capacity. The five-day turnaround on resubmissions has resulted in some applications continually churning at the front of the queue. Pre-application meetings for commercial projects help identify potential issues and result in a smoother review process later, but they are demanding from a resource perspective. The branch is suffering from a lack of an effective process to manage a complex, multi-step process. The project to launch the new software included limited optimization of business processes.
- **Interactions with Industry and Customers:** Applicants do not acknowledge the extent to which regulations have changed or simply do not think they should apply to them because the regulations would go against established construction practices. There is a culture of non-compliance among some in the industry who take a “good enough is good enough” approach. Reviewers are working to improve consistency in their comments when providing feedback on drawings.
- **Regulations and Processes:** Customers have varying levels of understanding about City review and inspection processes and a lack of knowledge about what is expected as part of an application. There is a general tendency by applicants to underestimate the level of complexity involved. Renovations to existing commercial buildings presents one of the most challenging areas of regulation to navigate.

Solutions

As a follow-up to the issue identification sessions, a series of working group sessions occurred, featuring a mix of City staff and external stakeholders. The objective of these sessions was to gain deeper insight into the needs of all stakeholders and work collaboratively on developing potential solutions.

There were eight sessions between November and December 2019. Session length was 3.5 hours in total. Four sets of participants attended, representing a different make-up of external stakeholders – designer, residential, commercial and independent. An external facilitator led the sessions. Participants sat in groups of four to six, with one to two City staff also present at each table.

The first series of working group sessions began with information sharing on delivery times for residential and commercial permits in 2018, the percentage of applications placed on hold and the impact of holds on approval times, as well as the results of the online satisfaction survey.

Participants worked primarily in small groups and began by developing a series of personas used to anchor the service design solutions. The categories identified from the issue identification sessions served as a framework to develop a detailed inventory of needs. Finally, participants brainstormed a series of ideas and solutions that were mapped onto the various stages of the permitting and inspections process.

Topics covered in the first sessions included:

- Information and Awareness
- Interactions and Support

- Relationship, Roles and Accountability

The second series of working group sessions followed a similar format as the first sessions, with participants working through a process of identifying needs and a series of potential solutions.

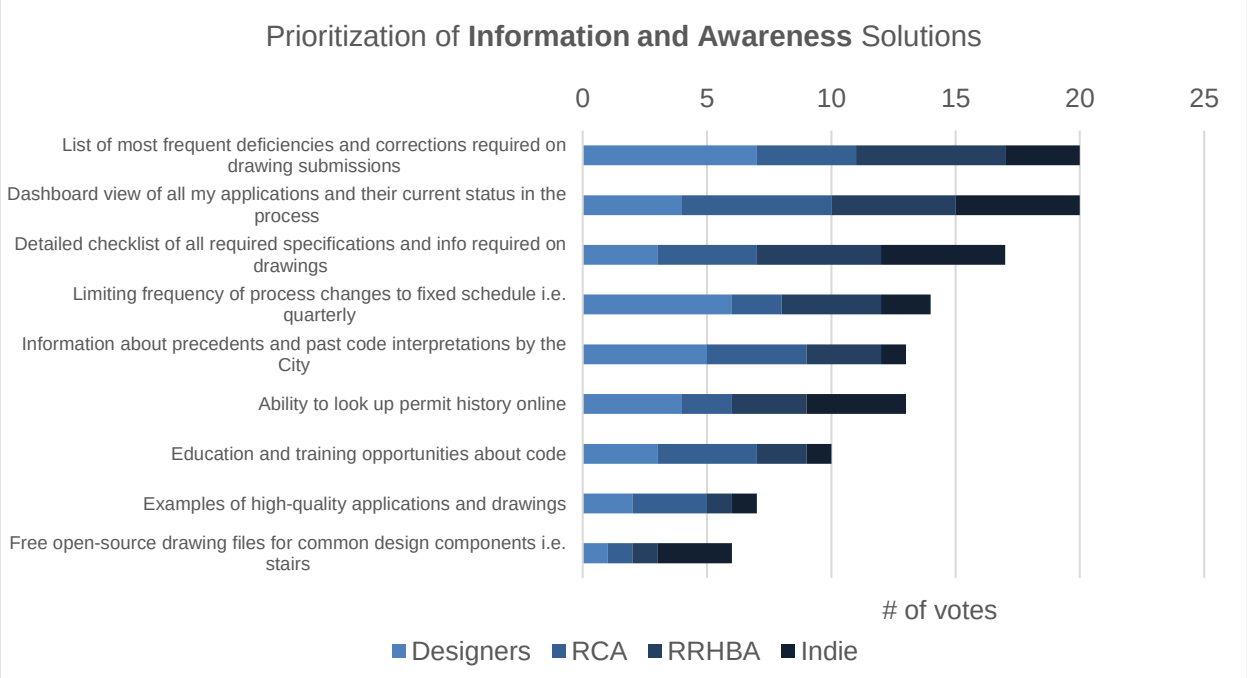
Topics covered in the second sessions included:

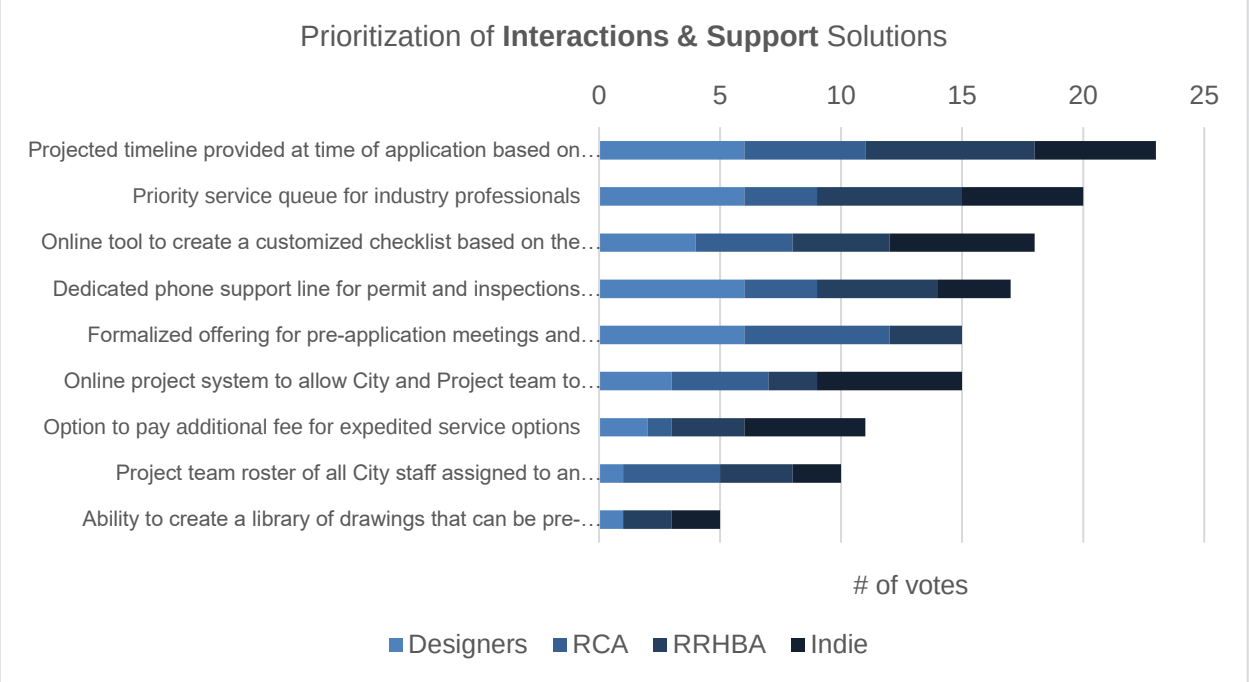
- Speed and Timing of Delivery
- Regulatory Involvement
- Financial and Economic Competitiveness

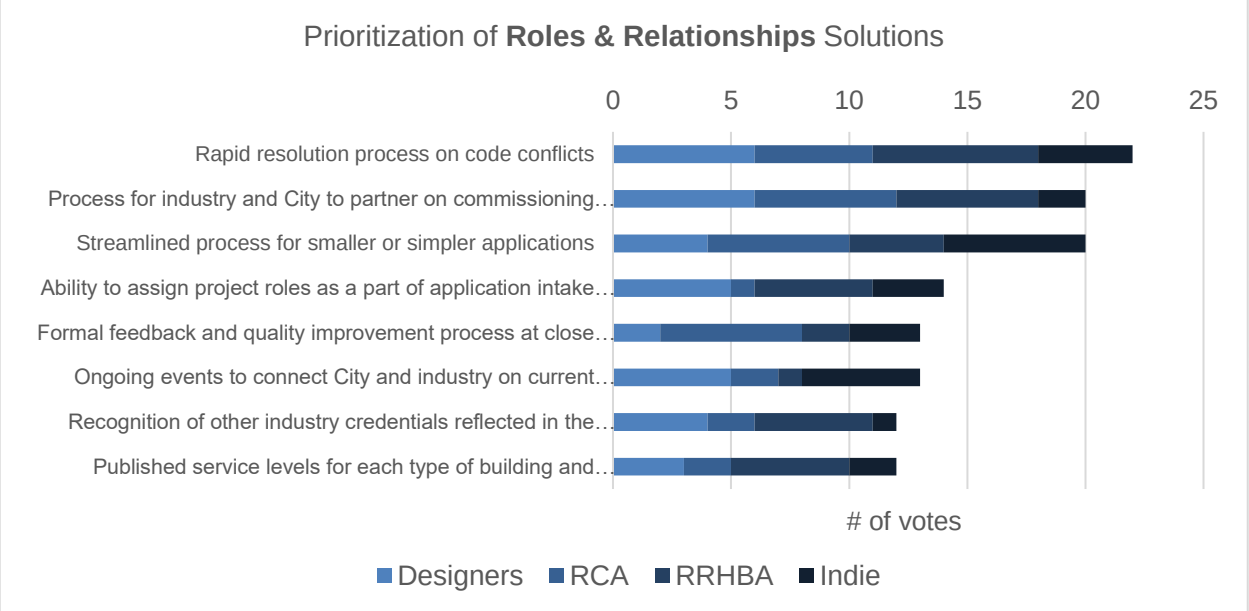
Appendix E – Working Group Outputs includes the detailed outputs from these sessions.

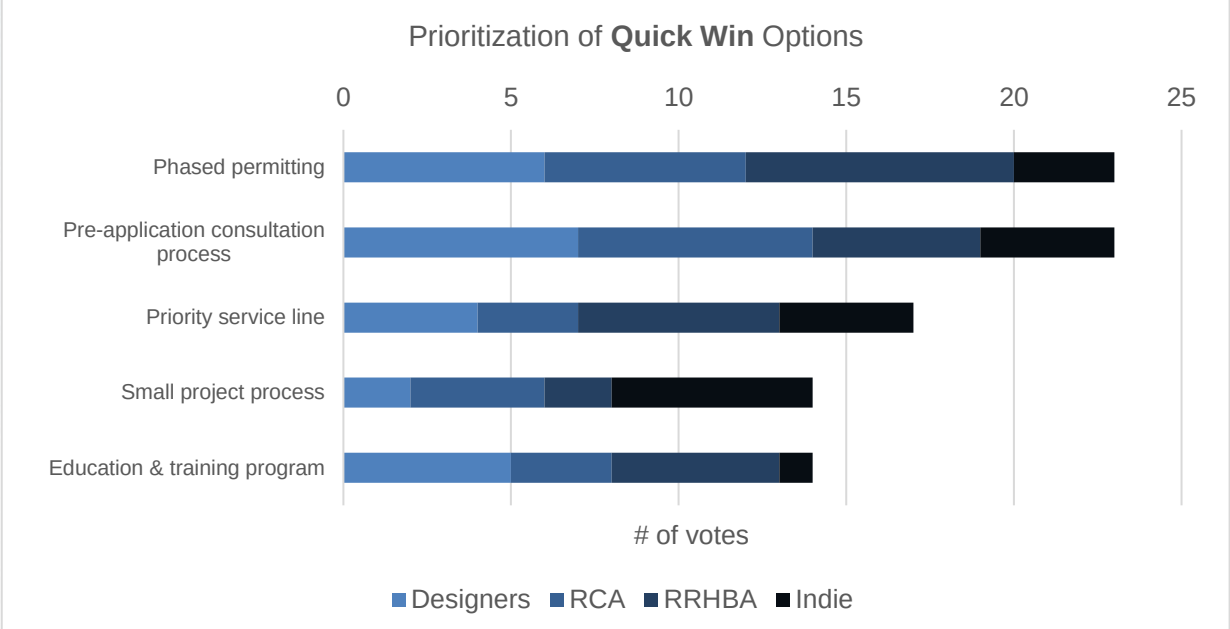
Prioritizing and refining solutions was the focus of the latter part of the sessions. Participants voted to select topics for further discussion based on ideas that originated in the first sessions. Appendix E includes more details regarding the discussion on solutions, but the charts below also outline the prioritization of topics.

Working Group Results




Prioritization of **Interactions & Support** Solutions
0
5
10
15
20
25
Projected timeline provided at time of application based on…
Priority service queue for industry professionals
Online tool to create a customized checklist based on the…
Dedicated phone support line for permit and inspections…
Formalized offering for pre-application meetings and…
Online project system to allow City and Project team to…
Option to pay additional fee for expedited service options
Project team roster of all City staff assigned to an…
Ability to create a library of drawings that can be pre-…
# of votes
Designers
RCA
RRHBA
Indie


Prioritization of **Roles & Relationships** Solutions
0
5
10
15
20
25
Rapid resolution process on code conflicts
Process for industry and City to partner on commissioning…
Streamlined process for smaller or simpler applications
Ability to assign project roles as a part of application intake…
Formal feedback and quality improvement process at close…
Ongoing events to connect City and industry on current…
Recognition of other industry credentials reflected in the…
Published service levels for each type of building and…
# of votes
Designers
RCA
RRHBA
Indie



Improvements Already in Progress

Prior to the announcement of the review, there was already an improvement plan underway and a plan to launch software to automate some of the work. Through the process of the service review, particularly while developing solutions, the staff has actively participated and taken ideas back to the workplace. Considerable work has already taken place to address the issues and needs identified by the industry and these are all in line with and supportive of the recommendations. The following represents a list of progress that has been made:

- The launch of the software in late September has improved efficiency, particularly in the following ways:
    - Concurrent review, meaning the development review and building code review processes can occur simultaneously. Where fire code or other infrastructure reviews are required, they can also occur simultaneously.
    - Electronic submissions: While the software has not yet been able to allow for direct customer access, it has allowed for digital submissions. Customers no longer need to submit multiple copies of printed plans. The software also allows for easier comparison of plans when they are resubmitted to address deficiencies, improving the processing time for resubmissions.
    - Monitored review deadlines: The City has seldomly met its previously established review time targets. Indeed, the City did not have good processes to even monitor them. The new software allows for the establishment of deadlines for each application and easier performance monitoring.

- Small residential projects: Building Standards staff have developed a fast track process to more quickly assess and process small residential projects (i.e. decks, spray foam, basements, etc.)
- Conditional Permits: The new software allows for more flexibility to conditionally approve a permit with minor deficiencies. Approval is conditional upon the correction of such deficiencies, with corrections reviewed during the building inspection process. This effort results in fewer holds and fewer re-submissions.
- Customer Service: The branch has assigned capacity and developed a system so applicants have a person to call directly, allowing them to bypass Service Regina. Supplementing this new capacity are two key service enhancements made possible because of the software:
    - Applicants immediately receive an acknowledgement of their application when received by the City. This communication outlines who is working on the application and how to contact them if there are questions. The letter also outlines the file support manager assigned to the file, whose commitment is to stay in touch and be the main point of contact at all stages of the process.
    - When an application is placed on hold for deficiencies, the file support manager will follow up with the applicant to ensure they are clear on what is required and to link them with any supports they might need.
- Website: Now includes information and processes to support applicants including:
    - Fillable forms
    - Advisories
    - A subscriber list (to receive regular notifications)
- Staffing: Additional resources have been made available, including a code consultant to support timely reviews at times when application volume exceeds staff capacity. Most vacancies have either been filled or are in the process of being filled.

The result of these changes has been significant improvement in review times. As of December 2019, the application review process was reliably able to meet the following targets:

- Residential permits: 5 days to either permit or comments to the applicant
- Commercial permits: 10 days to either permit or comments to the applicant
- Revisions: 5 days to either permit or further comments to the applicant

There are several other processes in development, including:

- In busy periods, inspectors will review, issue permits and inspect deck applications to free up residential reviewers for other more complex reviews;
- The creation of a tendered list of code consultants intended as a resource when application volume exceeds branch capacity; and
- A townhouse pilot project is currently underway to review and approve prototype designs. Once the system to document, store and retrieve the prototypes has been

established, the review of productions builds should be much more efficient. Subsequent applications based on the same model will only require review of the features that differ from the approved prototype plans.

While the branch is currently able to meet aggressive targets for application review, the volume of applications in November and December is low. The plan includes strategies to support the team in times of higher volume, but the branch will need to work through a full season to determine sustainable targets for review time.

Transitioning to Implementation

The City of Regina recognizes that reviewing the Building Permits and Inspections Service is not the end of this work. If one understands an improvement process to include the following steps: Listen, Understand, Action and Maintain, then this review has completed only two of them. The implementation project will Action the recommendations and establish systems to Maintain the results.

By the time of this report, a project manager to lead the implementation has already been put in place. The consulting team that supported the service review project, MPATH Engagement, was also contracted for the implementation project, providing much needed continuity from the service review to implementation. The implementation plan will be finalized within a month of the approval of recommendations and work will continue throughout 2020.

Recommendations

Framework

A framework has been developed as the basis for recommendations. The framework sees the City of Regina and the construction/building industry as partners in achieving the objectives of:

- ***Public safety*:** The primary role of the building permits and inspections service
- ***Public confidence*:** This objective recognizes that buildings last significantly longer than the involvement of the builder and the first occupant. The role of the City in public safety is one that transfers to new owners, thereby providing them assurance that the buildings they purchase are safely built.
- ***Economic competitiveness*:** This service review recognized that any process that costs the users unnecessarily or that affects the attractiveness of Regina as a place to build and invest is counterproductive to the goals of the community. While the effort to support economic competitiveness cannot undermine the safety objective, it was useful for the review to also understand the importance of streamlined efficient systems as part of the City's regulatory responsibility.

Based on engagement with stakeholders, four key themes emerged throughout the project's engagement, including:

1. The Building Permit and Inspections process needs to provide more ***clarity*** on what is expected from builders and designers. This includes clarity on how code will be interpreted, what will be reviewed and inspected, what information is required at each stage of the building process and what construction processes require a permit.

2. More ***consistency*** is required in the application and inspection process. The project heard numerous accounts where different reviewers applied code in different ways and reviewers and inspectors applied code in different ways. This is enormously frustrating for builders.

3. The application process needs to demonstrate ***efficiency***. The process needs to advance as quickly as possible. Tactics that improve efficiency need to be established and barriers need to be removed. Automation also needs to be solidified to improve efficiency.

4. The ***predictability*** of the process needs to be improved. If there was one message from the industry, it was that improving the predictability of how long the permit application process would take would improve their ability to plan and scope their work (and manage their costs).

The framework presented in Figure 9 is a proposed way forward. The objectives of the Building Permits and Inspections service are supported by the regulatory program itself. This program is built on the pillars of ***clarity, consistency, efficiency,*** and ***predictability***.

The recommendations are structured to address each element of the "structure" with general service recommendations (the floor upon which the house is built) and recommendations for each pillar of the foundation.

This framework sounds simple enough. But the reality is that, if the City of Regina can achieve these four pillars, it will deliver one of the most competitive and attractive regulatory systems in Canada. While speed of service is certainly important to the industry, even more important was the concept of predictability. It is the inability of construction companies to be able to reliably plan their work that is the biggest issue they are facing. In order to achieve predictability, the City must also achieve clarity and consistency. These four pillars represent an integrated and proactive approach to regulation and, if achieved, will assure the service objectives of **public safety, public confidence,** and **economic competitiveness.**

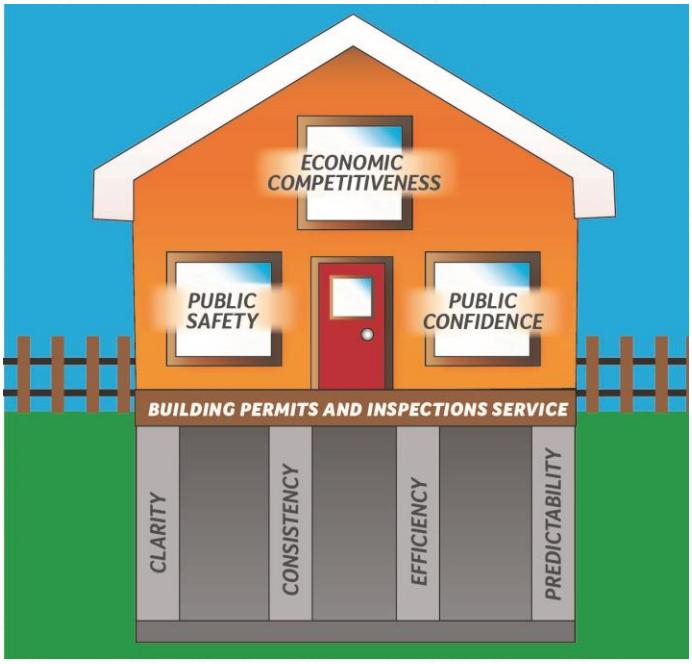


Figure 9: Proposed framework for the Building Permits and Inspections Service

General Service Recommendations

Industry as Partners

Throughout the project to review the Building Permits and Inspections Service, it became clear that the industry can be a strong ally of the City in ensuring a productive and well-functioning building permit system. The working relationship with the industry and the trust between the staff of the Building Standards Branch and the industry grew over the course of the project itself. Industry has requested that this effort to build relationships continue after the review is complete.

1. That the City of Regina recognize and work with the design, building and construction industry as partners to achieve the objectives of *public safety, public confidence* and *economic competitiveness.*

Local associations such as the Regina Construction Association (RCA) and the Regina and Region

Homebuilders Association (RRHBA) have been and can continue to provide a strong basis for these relationships, but the review found many designers and builders who were not aligned with either of these associations. Efforts must be taken to reach out beyond the associations.

Within this context, it is also recommended:

1.1 That the City of Regina establish a strategy to build and maintain a positive relationship with the construction industry including, but not limited to:

- Regularly attending association meetings and educational opportunities
- Hosting meet and greet sessions to allow industry to get to know the names and faces of those working in Building Standards and vice versa
- Partnering with associations to provide education to the industry on code interpretation and the building permit process.
- Partnering with the associations to advocate for improved code instruction through various educational and apprenticeship programs
- Establishing mechanisms to allow for affiliated and unaffiliated professionals in the construction industry to stay updated on information related to the building code and the permit/inspection process.

City as Regulator

One consequence of poor performance in the Building Permits and Inspections service is that the regulatory service can be perceived to be a hurdle rather than a public benefit. This potentially leads to reluctance to comply with the process when non-compliance is possible. The regulation of building safety plays an important role in the construction industry. It provides assurance to current and future purchasers and occupants of buildings that the building is safe. Throughout the engagement process, builders indicated that a well-administered permit and inspections service should be a competitive advantage for them. With a consistent, efficient and predictable program, builders will be able to provide their customers with assurances that their work will be inspected by the local authority. This is particularly valuable when the property is resold.

2. That the City of Regina continue to uphold its role as a regulator and proactively communicate the value of building permits to the public.

As part of embracing the City's role as a regulator, the City will necessarily need to play a role in promoting the value of building permits to the public. Supports such as effectively communicating the value of building permits and clarifying the permitting process itself will be invaluable in ensuring the objectives of *Public Safety, Public Confidence* and *Economic Competitiveness*.

In terms of public education, the construction industry indicated there were certain target audiences that would benefit from better understanding the permit and development process. For example, commercial real estate brokers and commercial building owners do not always

understand the implications of change of use from a zoning perspective or tenant improvements in aging buildings. Without a solid understanding of these processes, purchasers or lessees can be misled about the cost and/or timelines of readying the property for its intended use.

Within this context it is also recommended:

2.1 That the City of Regina establish a strategy to provide better public education on the building permit process, especially targeting audiences such as commercial real estate brokers and commercial building owners.

Performance Targets

As a result of this review, the industry expects target review timelines to be established and consistently met. The branch is currently consistently meeting its existing target of 5 business days for residential permits and 10 business days for commercial permits (at which point the applicant can expect either a permit or comments on deficiencies). The branch is also consistently meeting the target of 5 business days for resubmissions.

3. That the City of Regina establish the following preliminary performance targets for the 2021 construction season:
   - Residential: 5 business days to provide a permit or comments
   - Commercial: 10 business days to provide a permit or comments
   - Resubmissions: 5 days to provide a permit or additional comments

These targets have been met through December 2019, which is generally the slowest time of the year for construction. The branch should test its ability to achieve this target during the busy summer construction season, recognizing that predictability is as important to the industry as speed. The plan includes strategies to support the team in times of higher volume, but the branch will need to work through a full season to determine sustainable targets for review time. The public commitment during the summer 2020 construction season should be reliably achievable during the peak construction season.

Within this context, it is also recommended:

3.1 That for 2020, while the recommendations of this review are being implemented and to ensure predictability for the industry, the City communicate the following preliminary targets:

- Residential: 10 business days to provide a permit or comments
- Commercial: 20 business days to provide a permit or comments
- Resubmissions: 5 business days to provide a permit or additional comments

3.2 That the City develop and implement more specific service targets based on the complexity of the construction project and application (e.g. decks, garages, etc.; more complex/less complex commercial projects) by the end of 2020.

3.3 That the implementation team working on these recommendations establish performance targets that will allow the measurement of benefits realized from this review including:

- A targeted reduction in the percentage of permit applications put on hold
- A targeted reduction in the number of service requests received

Organizational Capacity

The program of work required to address some of the Building Permits and Inspections service's challenges will require sustained and significant involvement from both supervisory and front-line staff. The implementation plan requires that supports be put into place that allow this involvement. This involvement will ensure that the solutions implemented will work and that there will be buy-in from staff. Without this support, the changes necessary to build a successful partnership with industry that achieves the program's objectives will not be implemented.

4. That the City of Regina ensure the implementation plan and Building Standards Branch staff are adequately supported to ensure the successful implementation of the recommendations.

The key issue facing the staff is capacity management. Critical implementation activities will need to happen in the build-up to the peak of the construction season in 2020. This is exactly the time when all capacity is needed to deliver on the industry's required levels of service.

Within this context, it is also recommended:

4.1 That the City assign dedicated project manager to coordinate the implementation project.

4.2 That the City put into place supports to ensure good change management including:

- Ensuring buy-in to the proposed program framework and the partnership with industry to achieve the program objectives of ***public safety, public confidence*** and ***economic competitiveness***
- Supporting the enhancement of competencies in the staff to build the required relationships with industry and to provide the regulatory service in a way that is solution focused
- Ensuring documentation of new standards for applying code and processes as developed to support the objective of consistency

- Continuing to build on the workplace culture so that it is collaborative, supportive and solution-focused

4.3 That the City develop an efficient process to manage customer escalations, particularly during the implementation project to minimize distractions from delivering levels of service and recommendation implementation.

4.4 That the City develop an internal workforce development plan for the Building Standards Branch to ensure better retention and succession planning including:

- Ensuring job evaluations, classifications and compensation adequately consider the required expertise, the level of risk and judgment associated with the work, and the market rates for such competencies
- Ensuring that compensation supports career development and advancement within the service

Building Permit Fees

The Building Permits and Inspections service is intended to be a full cost recovery service – the fees for the service are intended to cover the cost of delivery. A study conducted in 2018 found that the current fee structure is insufficient to recover costs. It recommended an immediate 14 percent increase to fees with inflationary increases annually after that. This recommendation was not advanced at the time, largely because the City's permits and inspections service was not consistently meeting the commitments it had made for levels of service and was working on launching a software system that would improve efficiency.

5. That Building Permit fees remain unchanged throughout 2020 to provide time for the City of Regina to demonstrate its improved levels of service and build confidence in the industry.

There remains considerable lack of confidence in the City's permit and inspections service. Some of the tactics discussed in this report may lead to some increased costs (e.g. back-up code consultants to assist during higher volume periods), but some may result in decreased costs (e.g. improved processes). It is recognized that trust will have to be rebuilt with the industry. While the industry did not express significant concerns with the potential for a fee increase, they did want to see evidence of value for the money being spent. For that reason, this review recommends that general permit fees not be increased in 2020 and that the service continue to be subsidized. This recommendation is separate and apart from any specific recommendations that have charges attached to them. Beginning in 2021, any necessary fee increases should be phased in. This will provide for a year of "proof of concept," giving the industry an opportunity to test for itself the improved levels of service provided by Building Standards.

Note that if a change in permit fees is required, City Council will need to approve them.

Within this context, it is also recommended:

5.1 That any necessary permit fee increases be phased in, beginning in 2021, until full cost recovery is achieved.

Clarity

A key finding of the review was that industry is no longer clear on what is expected of them. Their experience of the service is that the process itself and the application of code can change unexpectedly and without notice. The changes often feel arbitrary and not conducive to good construction planning and execution.

There is little distinction from the customer's perspective between clarity and consistency. For the purposes of this report, these two related themes are distinguished in the following way:

- Clarity includes those recommendations that will improve the building industry's knowledge and awareness of what the City expects from them (external).
- Consistency includes those recommendations that will improve Building Standards personnel's consistency in applying code and communicating with the industry (internal).

The tactics that improve consistency are likely to also improve clarity.

A wide range of tactics were suggested as solutions to this issue by the working groups in the engagement process, including:

- Learning events and regular information sessions
- Searchable online archive of code and code interpretation updates
- Contractor handbook/training guide and sample sets of drawings that meet the expected standards
- Regular reporting on reasons applications go on hold
- Regular reporting on common inspection deficiencies
- Clear expectations for what activities require a permit for both residential and commercial renovations
- Clear and consistent approach to establishing permit fees for renovations based only on activities that require a permit. Consider flat fees for each permittable activity.
- Improved checklists for complex projects with greater detail provided regarding required information

6. That the City of Regina clearly communicate the expectations of applicants for the building permit and inspection process and provide clear information regarding how code will be interpreted and how any changes in code will be interpreted and applied.

Consistency

In order to provide the clarity required by the industry, the Building Standards Branch must develop improved tactics to ensure that each reviewer and inspector is approaching their work using the same standards. There is a high degree of staff turnover in the branch for a wide range of reasons – this review recommends a human resource review to respond to this challenge.

7. That the City of Regina establish internal training and standardized processes to ensure consistent interpretation and application of building code across all reviewers and inspectors.

Because of high turnover, the branch is frequently under-resourced and many of the staff are relatively inexperienced in their roles. Building code is complex and the nuances and application of code are something that are better and better understood over time. Reviewers and inspectors are learning all the time on the job as they become more exposed to various applications and building sites. Systems need to be implemented that mitigate the risks of inconsistent interpretation and application of the code that this situation creates.

The engagement process offered numerous suggestions to achieve this recommendation including:

- Standard operating procedures for code interpretation
- Clarity regarding errors/deficiencies that require resubmission and those that are immaterial or addressable through a conversation with the applicant
- Documentation of acceptable substitutes in code interpretation and approved alternative solutions

A significant issue that emerged was the need for a process to resolve disputes in code interpretation. Within that context, it is also recommended:

7.1 That the City explore opportunities to establish a quick and efficient dispute resolution process to address disputes in code interpretation between the City of Regina and permit applicants/holders. The process should:

- Be readily available within five days of a request for dispute resolution
- Enable an open and fair dialogue between the City and the applicant
- Include documenting decisions as a precedent for future code interpretation

Efficiency

It became evident throughout the service review process that the level of service (the speed at which application review occurs) is the key concern of the industry. Many of the solutions proposed were 'work-arounds' for the real requirement, which is predictable and reliable levels of service that meet the needs of industry. The recommendations in this report include some of the proposed work-arounds but not others. The real focus of the efficiency effort should be on producing a level of service that the Building Standards branch can consistently deliver.

Work-arounds: Short-term Fixes

The planning and building software is still in the early stages of implementation. It is resulting in an improvement in speed of service. The launch of the customer portal will further improve efficiency, but this launch remains some months off. The long-term level of service target is five days to permit approval or comments for residential applications and ten days for most commercial applications. These targets will become more nuanced (i.e. specific targets for specific project types) as the branch implements the recommendations of this report. There were two key recommendations that the industry requested as work-arounds – phased permits, which allow a foundation permit to be issued while other issues are being worked on in the larger project; and a fast track process of some sort that would allow some applications to bypass others.

There were three general suggestions for the structure of a fast track process:

- A process like the Canadian Border Security Agency (CBSA) NEXUS process, a fast process based on the qualification of the applicant. This structure would see the applications from contractors/ designers/builders meeting certain criteria bypass the applications from those who do not meet the criteria.
- An option like an airline's first-class seating, which costs more and offers only limited availability. This structure would allow those who have some need that is urgent to be able to pay to bypass the regular application process.
- A structure based on the nature of the project. In this case, those projects that are relatively simple to assess such as garages, decks and basement developments would bypass other more complex projects.

The NEXUS process would be cumbersome to establish and maintain. The burden of creating and managing criteria for eligible participants is significant. Given that the process is unlikely to provide much added value once the level of service meets the target level of performance, this process is not recommended.

The other two processes are recommended.

Phased permits are already being issued by the Building Standards Branch. To ensure that their systems can manage phased permits, applicants are required to apply for permits for each phase of their

8. That the City of Regina establish short-term work-around processes by June 1, 2020.

project. A separate foundation permit can be issued and a permit for the rest of the project can be issued later. This is not ideal and complicates the process by requiring builders to manage multiple permits.

Another shortcut that is already in place is conditional permits. Applications that have not entirely addressed deficiencies are issued with conditions, which are then reviewed at the time of inspection. This process potentially creates a risk for the builder as the conditions on the permit do not show up on the drawings, but it does reduce the need to put a given application on hold and wait for a resubmission.

Within this context, the following specific short-term work-arounds are recommended (by June 1, 2020):

8.1 Make available a set number of opportunities per week for permit applicants to pay to have their applications expedited.

8.2 Establish a separate service stream to expedite small projects.

8.3 Improve the phased permit process.

Addressing Issues that Reduce the Efficiency of the Process

9. That the City of Regina address issues that are reducing the efficiency of the process.

There were two particular issues that showed up consistently that appeared to "clog" up the permit review system and eat up the limited capacity of the branch – the frequency of putting applications on "hold," resulting in a single application being reviewed multiple times, and the number of service requests that do not require a building official to answer the question. Simply addressing these issues will add to the capacity of the team responsible for reviewing permit applications. The intent of this section's recommendations is to reduce these capacity demands so that more effort can be expended on actually reviewing applications (ideally only once). One additional issue that came up from time to time was that minor changes in the project during construction should not require a change submission. Rather, the inspector should be able to sign off on the changes on site. Finally, poor quality applications or inspections can result in repeated need for resubmissions or inspections. This ties up resources and reduces access to them for strong performers.

Within this context, it is further recommended that:

9.1 The City establish a pre-application meeting process for complex projects that ensures the following:

- The meeting process ensures all necessary officials (e.g. building officials, development officers, etc.) are in attendance;
- Documentation of meeting results so that, at the time of application submission, the assigned reviewer has access to the record of discussion at the pre-application meeting; and

- The process is cost recovery.

9.2 City staff address any administrative or minor code errors in permit applications by email or telephone (follow up in writing) rather than putting the application on hold.

9.3 The inspector sign off on any minor project changes that occur through the construction process and not require the submission of a change through the review process.

9.4 The resubmission performance target of five business days applies to only two resubmissions per permit application. After two resubmissions, if the application still has deficiencies, it should re-enter the process at the back of the line.

9.5 Permit fees cover only one reinspection where inspections identify deficiencies. The full cost of reinspection should be charged for any additional reinspection(s). The option to charge for re-inspections is already in place – the recommendation is intended to describe how it should be applied in the future.

Automation

The City of Regina has recently acquired new software to support the management of the planning and building processes. The software has been installed to achieve the improvements described earlier in this report and there is opportunity for continued optimization through additional automation.. Regina.ca also offers significant opportunities for communication and education regarding the building permits and inspections process. It is recommended that the City maximize the potential of these technologies to improve efficiency and customer service.

Within this context, it is also recommended that:

10.1 The City identify and implement processes to automate tasks within the new planning and building software (e.g. automated compilation of comments; assignment of work tasks, structured use of checklists and corrections, automatic issuing of notifications, etc.).

10.2 The City provide online self-service options for common information requests such as search for the permit history and the zoning of a property online.

10. That the City of Regina implement enabling technologies to support digital service delivery, improve internal efficiency and support overall program performance.

10.3 The City improve the customer experience on Regina.ca to better support and empower applicants when accessing the building and permits program. Provide content and online tools to support the development of customer knowledge, provide guidance on how to navigate the system, and reduce demand on internal resources to manage support requests (e.g. provide customized applications based on project scope and step by step support for applicants).

10.4 External stakeholders and representative user groups be engaged in the development of online services and participate in formal usability testing prior to launch to ensure a minimum standard for user experience.

10.5 Online functionalities identified through the review process be formally scoped, estimated and further evaluated as a part of the implementation phase (e.g. online dashboards of application status, online collaboration tools, automated notifications, interactive checklist wizard, automated calendar invitations for inspections, online code-related repositories, digital signatures, etc.)

10.6 The City prioritize the system functionality and integration required to support performance management and reporting efforts as a part of the implementation plan.

10.7 The City evaluates opportunities for technology and automation to improve the customer experience and contribute to program objectives on an ongoing basis in collaboration with external stakeholders.

Addressing the Efficiency of the Existing Processes

The working group process identified numerous opportunities to improve processes as did the project team's own investigation into things like the software. Only those options with the most potential are noted here. Others not included here are in Appendix E – Working Group Outputs.

Within this context, it is recommended that:

11. That the City of Regina introduce new efficiencies to existing processes.

11.1 The City develop a consistent process to expedite the review of production builds (e.g. reviewing a prototype in detail and reviewing only changes to subsequent models).

11.2 Separate the building and development permit application processes and, where it makes sense (e.g. for more complex commercial projects), administer them separately.

11.3 The City redesign the application and the work-flow process to collect appropriate information at the application stage and throughout the inspection process, in order to ensure consistency with the design and construction process. This process may be facilitated through the use of conditional permits.

11.4 The City optimize the role of File Support Managers so they are responsible for both customer liaising and work-flow management.

Predictability

While speed of service was important, when asked whether predictability or speed was more important, the industry agreed that predictability was the most important issue. Industry was prepared to forgo some speed of service if the slower speed could be consistently delivered. The key message to the City of Regina was, “don’t make promises you can’t keep.” If the industry had confidence that application review time was predictable and consistent, they could accommodate it through their project planning.

12. That the City of Regina improve predictability for industry.

A secondary issue of predictability is related to the issue of consistency – the industry has asked that code changes or changes to how code is interpreted be undertaken with enough notice that the changes can be accommodated through the project design and planning process.

Within this context, it is also recommended that:

12.1 The City review resourcing levels and practices to ensure that service levels for application permits can remain consistent through peak construction times.

12.2 The City provide notification of changes to permit process, permit requirements, and code interpretation to industry with adequate notice (i.e. six months) and implement changes during slow construction periods (i.e. Q1 or Q4 of any calendar year).

12.3 Building Standards work with industry to develop a long-term permanent solution to early occupancy of homes with stucco finishes. In the meantime, explore temporary solutions for the 2020 construction season.

Advice on Implementation and Phasing

While the development of an implementation plan is not within the scope of this service review, there were some key lessons that surfaced within the project that should be considered in the design of the implementation plan.

1. The engagement of staff in the development of solutions and processes is valuable. People support what they create – the buy-in to new approaches will be significantly better than would have otherwise been the case. While it is not possible to build an engagement process targeting consensus, staff engagement should be a priority wherever feasible.

2. The ongoing engagement of industry will be essential to retaining the industry’s buy-in to this review. The project has had positive feedback from the service review process. Industry has asked that the engagement continue.

3. The short term work-arounds should be the priority for process improvement including:

    - Phased permitting
    - Pre-application meetings – particularly how to support the capacity required to deliver on this commitment
    - Removing hold for admin errors
    - Sign-off on minor changes by Inspector
    - Scratch coats
    - Production builds
    - Small project process

4. The capacity of the staff and the capacity of the industry to respond to changes is low, particularly during peak season. Establish an incremental implementation strategy that tackles a few things at a time to ensure that new processes work and are stable before moving on to the next things.

Acknowledgements

This report was developed by the Public Policy Branch of the City of Regina with the aid and assistance of numerous parties. The Branch would like to thank and acknowledge the following:

- MPATH Engagement, the consulting firm that supported the service review from planning through to final recommendations. Derek Leverington and Roslyn Kozak provided a level of collaboration and support that was instrumental to this project's success.
- The staff of Planning and Development Services, and most particularly the Building Standards Branch, who, even though they were under the microscope for this process, embraced the work and the challenge of finding solutions.
- The builders, contractors and designers who provided their constructive insights into the issues they were facing and their thoughtful advice on improvements.
- Kevin Dureau, Executive Director of the Regina Construction Association and Stu Niebergall, President and CEO of the Regina and Region Homebuilders Association, who met with the project team throughout the project and provided thoughtful and insightful guidance and advice on the process.
- Bill Hawkins, Chief Building Official, Province of Saskatchewan, whose advice and insight set the review on track from the outset.
- Regulatory Modernization Unit, Province of Saskatchewan. Joe Carson (Director) and Daniel Leiva (Senior Policy Analyst) provided training and support in the assessment of regulatory environments.
- The project team: Jordan Reid, Public Policy; Rob Bartlett, City Planning and Community Development; Leah Goodwin, Citizen Experience; Erin Navin, Citizen Experience. The team provided the backbone of the service review.
- Kelly Leichert, Development Control Officer with the City of Regina, member of two working groups, and a talented artist who provided the drawing that became the basis of the Framework for Improvement.

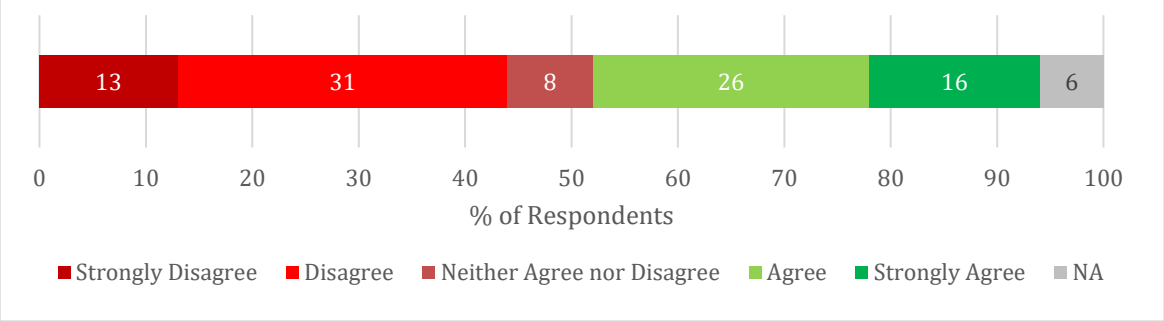
Appendix A – IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place the final decision-making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

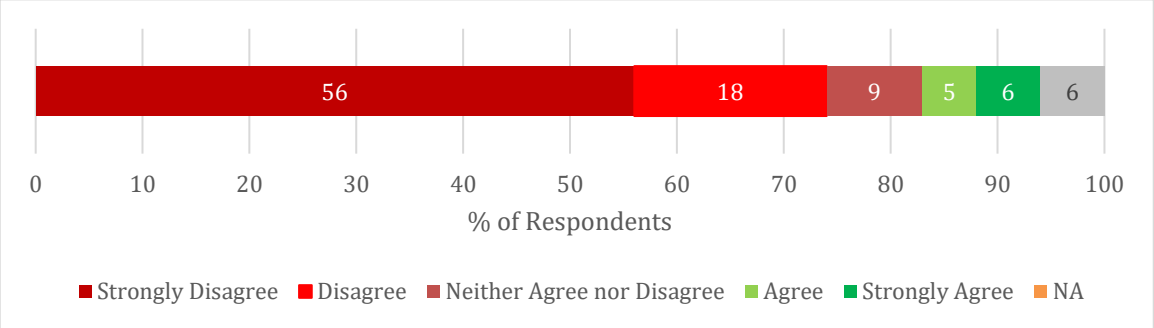
Appendix B – Detailed Results of Survey

Respondents were asked ten questions and were able to respond using a Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

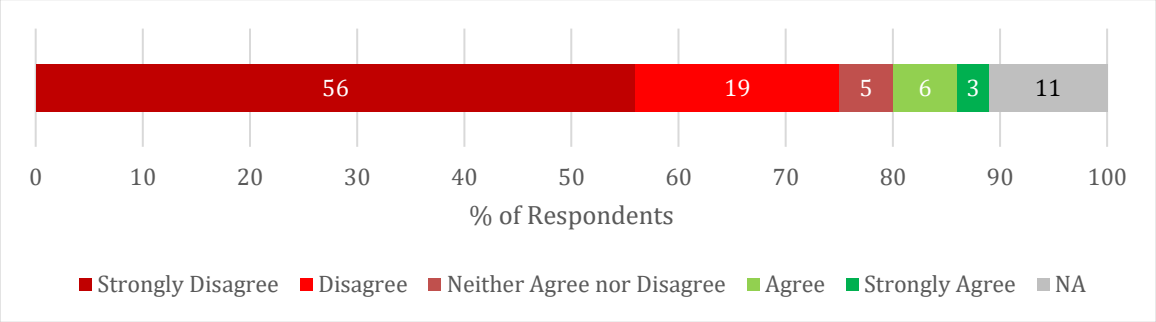
1. I have access to the information I need to prepare my building permit application.



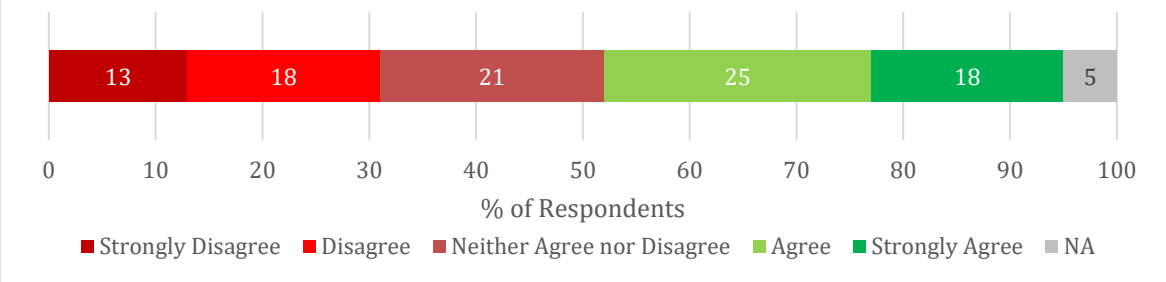
2. I can communicate with the City about my permit application in a way that works well for me.



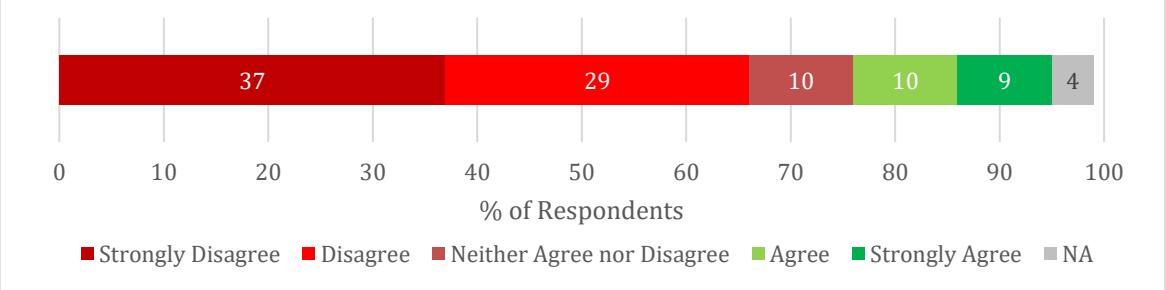
3. The City keeps me informed about the status of my permit application.



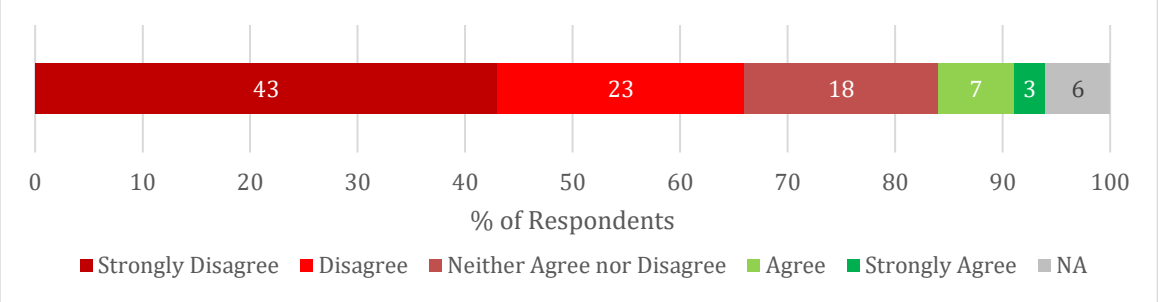
4. The City of Regina building permits and inspection process is effective at ensuring public safety.



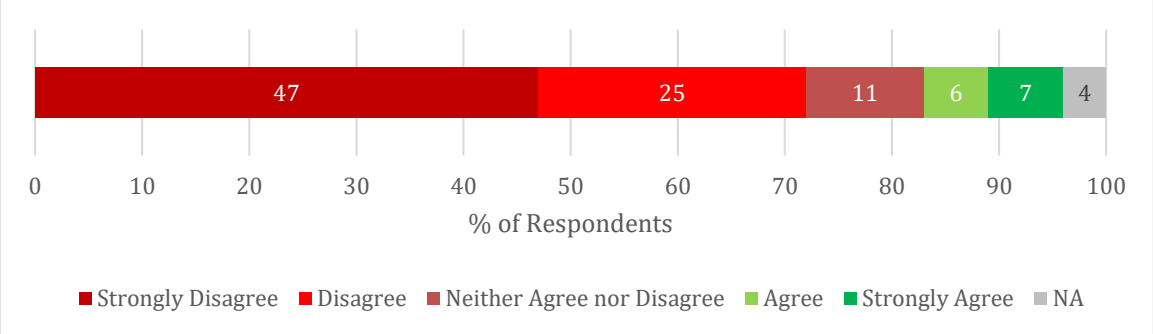
5. The effort required to demonstrate compliance with regulations is reasonable.



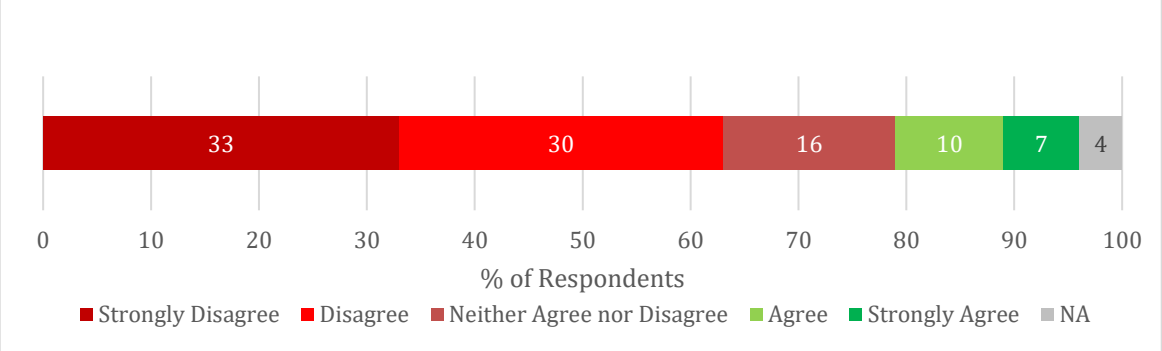
6. There is a fair process for resolving issues with a permit application.



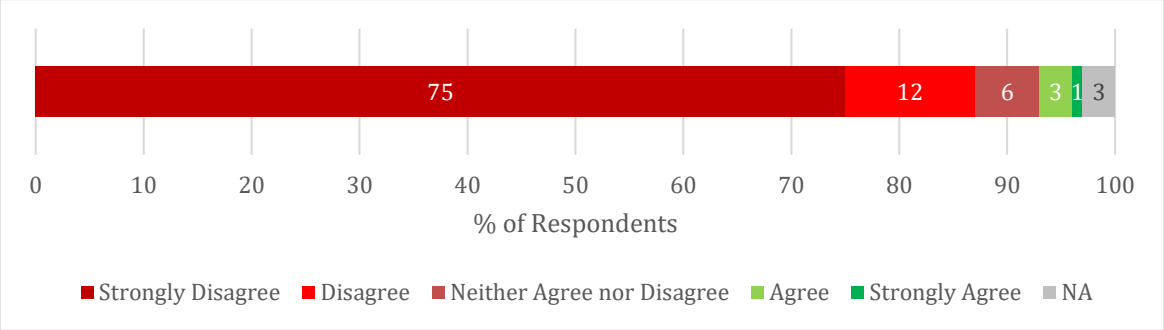
7. The City is consistent when evaluating compliance with the building code during the application and inspection process.



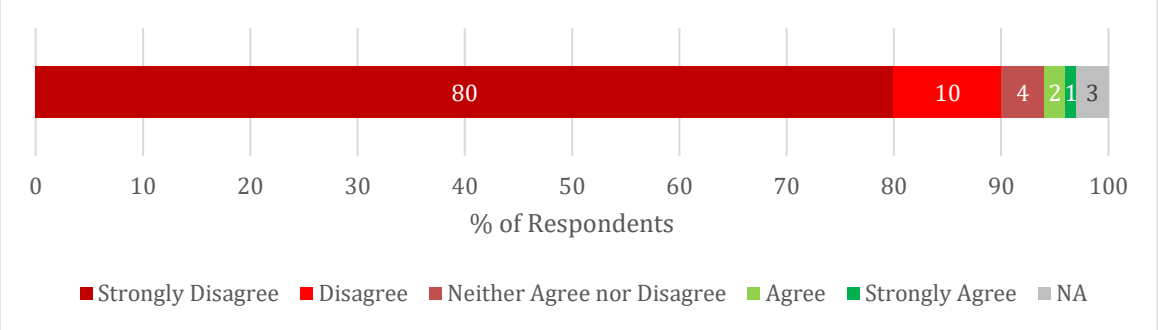
8. I am confident the City will follow-up on service commitments it makes regarding my building permit application or inspection.



9. The City of Regina building permits and inspection process is efficient.



10. The speed of service for processing building permits meets my needs.



Appendix C – Performance by Jurisdiction

Saskatoon

The City of Saskatoon has a five-day review target for single detached, semi-detached and duplex dwellings, and a nine-day target for decks, detached garages and accessory buildings. In 2018, these targets were met 90 percent of the time.

Regarding non-residential plan reviews, which include institutional, commercial, industrial and multi-family developments, the City of Saskatoon has a broader target of 5-10 weeks for plan review. Their staff have noted challenges in meeting this target and they were unable to provide a performance level. The City has developed a complexity matrix that is intended to provide timelines for plan review based upon the type and size of development (see Table 1).

Table 1: Saskatoon Building Permit Review Complexity Matrix

		SMALL REVIEW by Development Services	LARGE REVIEW by Development Services	CURB CROSSING Review by Transportation	SMALL REVIEW by C&D (Inc. Saskatoon Water)	LARGE REVIEW by C&D (Inc. Saskatoon Water)	SMALL REVIEW by Building Standards	LARGE REVIEW by Building Standards	Administration and Circulation	SMALL Total Working Days	LARGE Total Working Days	Customer Dialogue
Group 1: OUD, TUD Rowhouse with RMTN Zoning – Group Dwelling Site	New	11	15	4	6	8	5	6	4	30	37	6-8 weeks
	Add		13			8		6	4		31	Approx. 6 weeks
	Alt	5					3		2	10		Approx. 2 weeks
Group 2: Alternative Family Care Home (Residential Care Home)	New	11		4	6		4		4	29		Approx. 6 weeks
	Add	11			6		4		2	23		Approx. 5 weeks
	Alt	11					4		2	17		Approx. 4 weeks
Group 3: Residential Apartments, Motels/Hotels, Restaurants, Shopping Centres, Retail Stores, Office Buildings, Industrial – Warehouses and Manufacturing Plants	New		15	4		8		13	4		44	9-10 weeks
	Add		15			8		12	4		39	Approx. 8 weeks
	Alt	12	15				5	11	4	21	30	4-6 weeks

Group 4: Public (assembly) Buildings, Education Buildings and Churches, Institutional Buildings – Hospitals and Detention Centres, High Rise Building (all building types)	New		15	4		8		15	4		46	Approx. 10 weeks
	Add	12	15		6	8	9	13	4	31	40	6-8 weeks
	Alt	12	15				5	11	4	21	30	4-6 weeks
Basement Development	New						3		2	5		5 business days
Residential Deck/Single Detached Garage/Detached Accessory Building	New	5					2		2	9		9 business days
Seasonal Building	New	5					5		2	12		2-3 weeks
Demolition	New	5					5		2	12		2-3 weeks
Shoring Permits	New	5					5		2	22		4-5 weeks
Fire/Structural Repairs – only when fast track is requested	Alt	5					5		2	12		2-3 weeks

Calgary

The City of Calgary has three different types of applications for building permits, including Residential Improvement Projects (RIP), Single Construction Permits (SCP) and Commercial Multi-Family (CMF). The City of Calgary does offer a “quick release” program for certain types of projects, where applicants meeting certain criteria can have their permit issued in 1-4 business days instead of 21. The projects qualifying for faster processing under this program include:

- interior office renovations;
- temporary uses such as tents or stages;
- interior partition removal;
- parkade repairs;
- fire alarm repairs/upgrades; and
- demising wall installation.

The criteria for determining whether these types of projects can be processed using the “quick release” program varies – for example, installation of demising walls would only qualify if there are no changes to the building’s mechanical systems, and no penetration of the wall by any architectural or mechanical system.

For residential development, the City of Calgary accepts applications through two streams. Builders that have obtained a business license with the City have their applications processed through one stream, while all other applications are processed through a separate stream. Different staff groups work on each stream, so there are essentially two teams handling residential permit applications. City staff noted that applications made through the first stream, i.e. by those with a business license, are often approved within one or two business days. The City of Calgary does not otherwise expedite approval processes for applicants, though administration officials noted that high-performance applicants generally get through the application process faster anyway as their applications usually are more complete or correct than others. Figure 10 outlines the City of Calgary’s performance targets by development type and 2018 performance.

Development Type	***Performance Targets****	***2018 Performance***
New Single, Semi-Detached or Duplex Dwelling	Approval within 21 days	N/A – The City of Calgary's performance against their targets is not publicly reported, but their staff acknowledge that for the most part they are meeting them.
Alteration to Single, Semi-Detached or Duplex Dwelling	Approval within 7 days	
Multi-Residential Building	Approval within 49 days for projects between $1M and $10M, and within 56 days for projects over $10M.	
Industrial Building		
Mixed-Use Building		
Commercial Building		
Note: * = Performance targets cover only time required to obtain a building permit; applying for a development permit is a separate process that adds additional time.		

Figure 10: City of Calgary building permit review performance targets and 2018 performance

Winnipeg

Like in Regina, the City of Winnipeg's building permit review process includes reviews by multiple individuals. For a typical commercial build, for example, reviews are conducted by different individuals for each aspect of construction, including development.

Winnipeg offers an expedited program on the commercial side that could serve as a potential model for expedited permit application processing in Regina. The process requires an additional payment but can often see commercial permits approved in a week to ten days as opposed to the standard timing. The process is reserved for relatively simple projects such as rowhouses (which are considered commercial by Winnipeg) and box stores.

Residential Permit Type	***Description of Work***	***Target Processing Time***	***Sept/Oct 2018* Median Processing Time***	***Nov/Dec 2018 Median Processing Time***
Residential Permits (New construction, additions and alterations)				
Residential 1 Day	Accessory Structure permit of any type that does not require a zoning or structural review.	1	1	2
Residential 5 Day	Accessory Structure permit for in-ground or above ground Swimming Pool, or a permit that requires a structural plan and/or Zoning review.	5	3	3
Residential 10 Day	Housing permit for new construction, additions, alterations (except above).	10	13	11
Residential 15 Day	Housing permit for change of use and conversions (adding or subtracting dwelling units, residential care homes, day cares, secondary suites, rooming houses).	15	17	15
Residential 20 Day	Rowhousing	20	12	15

Figure 11: City of Winnipeg Initial Complete Review – Residential processing targets and median results

Commercial Permit Type	***Description of Work***	***Target Processing Time***	***Sept/Oct 2018* Median Processing Time***	***Nov/Dec 2018 Median Processing Time***
Interior Alterations				
Category A	Minor alterations with no building change of use; no professionals required; no impact on life safety; exterior alterations not affecting life safety.	5	1	2
Category B	No change of use in building; one or two	10	8	6

	professionals other than structural; minimal or no impact on base building or other tenants.			
Category C	Change of use in existing tenant space; multiple professionals involved.	15	17	14
Category D	Gutting of existing space; change from single to multi-tenant space; significant impact on base building; property types affected by historic, waterways, flood fringe, downtown, etc.	20	29	19
Category E	Re-purposing of existing building; historic; multiple alternative solutions.	30	N/A	N/A[1]
New Commercial Buildings and Additions				
OPCP	Option for commercial permit applications submitted under professional seals to be issued with no plan examination.	5	5	N/A
New commercial buildings and additions – standard	Standard additions/new buildings	20	27	22
New commercial buildings and additions – staged/partial	Staged permits for commercial new/major additions	15[2]	17	14
Notes: * = The City of Winnipeg notes that commercial permit processing times are expected to increase throughout September and October. [1] = N/A indicates that there were no permits or the permit volumes were too low to be statistically relevant. [2] = 15 days per stage				

Figure 12: City of Winnipeg Initial Complete Review – Commercial processing targets and median results

Regina

The Building Standards branch has established performance targets of 5 days to approve a residential permit and 10 days to approve a commercial permit. A review of the data in Figure 12 demonstrates that the branch has experienced some difficulty in meeting its targets consistently.

Figure 13 shows the median and average calendar days to approve both a residential building permit and a commercial building permit from 2017 through to the present.

Year	***Median Days to Approve a Residential Permit***	***Average Days to Approve a Residential Permit***	***Median Days to Approve a Commercial Permit***	***Average Days to Approve a Commercial Permit***
2017	19	32	N/A*	N/A*
2018	20	39	28	45
2019[1]	25	26	28	32

Note:

* = As a result of changes in application tracking, this information is not available for commercial permits for 2017.

1 = Includes data up to September 26.

Figure 13: Median and average permit approval times, 2017 – 2019

Appendix C – Issues Identification (External Stakeholders)

City of Regina Building Permits and Inspections Review

External Stakeholder Summary of Issues

Background

In 2019, the City began a review of the building permits and inspections service to determine changes that can be made to improve satisfaction with service delivery and achieve program objectives for public safety, public confidence and economic competitiveness.

The review is made up of two phases. The first is a Current State review which will be followed by a Future State definition phase. As part of understanding the current state, the City hosted three external stakeholder sessions with members of the building, construction and design industry (October 16, 17 and November 1, 2019).

The City worked with industry and professional associations to identify volunteers for the sessions. Participants were selected to reflect the diverse interests of those most affected by changes to the permit and inspections processes.

Session Format

Sessions were 2 to 2.5 hours in length and facilitated by an independent facilitator. Attendance at each session ranged from 17 to 25 participants. Three City staff attended as observers.

All sessions began with a brief presentation to provide background information on the project and outline the engagement process and opportunities for participation available during the service review.

The meetings were designed and facilitated as issues identification sessions, with participants having the ability to put forward issues outside of any suggested or pre-defined categorizations.

The meeting format included time for individual documentation of concerns before participating in small group discussions. Each group had time to discuss their individual concerns before developing a common set of issues Finally, all participants in the room engaged in a facilitated discussion where issues were documented and further discussed as a large group before being sorted into common themes.

The issues and general themes that emerged from each session were generally common across the three groups, with some variety in the level of focus on a given issue. The issues articulated on the following pages represent an overall picture of the issues and themes across groups as well contributions specific to each session.

Represented Organizations

Altered Dimensions Drafting and Design
Alton Tangedal Architect
Ardel Steel
BBK Structural Engineers CJ
Evans Home Design Clark
Design Studio Crawford
Homes Daytona Homes
DS Designs
Envision Drafting and Design
Fiorante Homes and Commercial
Flynn Canada
Fries Tallman
Gang-Nail Trusses
Gilroy Homes
Glenrose Homes
Graham Construction
Halstead Drafting and Design
Hipperson Construction
Homes by Dream
Jill of all Trades Interior Design
K. Cooney Drafting Studio
Kincaid Interiors
Ledcor
Ministry of Central Services
Munro Homes
North Ridge
P3A
Pacesetter Homes
PCL Construction
Piller and Putz Construction
Pinnwest Developments
R. J. England Consulting
Regina Construction Association
Regina & Region Home Builders Association
Ritenburg & Associates
Robinson Residential Design Rohit
Communities
Saskatchewan New Home Warranty Program
SEPW Architecture
Stantec Sthamann
Homes
Tangent Drafting and Design
Walker Projects
Westridge Construction WSP

Issues Identified in Sessions

Communication and Awareness

- Communication is not sufficient to keep customers informed of changes to the permitting process
- Lack of reference material and examples to help prepare applications
- Uncertainty on how to interpret reviewer feedback
- No effective method to track details when communicating back and forth during reviews and revisions
- Uncertainty regarding the status of an application after submission and a slow inquiry process e.g. service request
- Application form doesn't identify project contributors (i.e. designers) to enable direct communication and collaboration if issues arise
- General feeling that 'the rules keep changing'

Speed and Timing of Delivery

- Speed of permit reviews is generally slow and not aligned to the needs of industry or building owners
- Timing of delivery for permit application reviews is inconsistent
- Extent of up-front application requirements are seen as onerous and tend to delay projects getting started
- Timing of application information requirements doesn't align with the industry building/permit process e.g. detailed drawings being required as a part of an application requiring approval for land use
- Current process tends to apply a one-size-fits-all approach to processing various permit request types regardless of its stage or scope e.g. decks are in the same queue as more complex permit applications
- Lack of coordination between processing dependent permits results in delays e.g. demolition permit required to receive building permit
- Requests for additional information during review are unpredictable and it is difficult to know when individual aspects of approval are achieved

Roles and Relationships

- Erosion of collaborative, productive relationships between industry and City
- City personnel changes have resulted in loss of common history and established working relationships
- Review process ignores established norms, conventions and standards that exist within professions such as engineering and architecture
- Absence of effective mechanism for conflict resolution on project-specific issues as well as issues that are common across multiple projects
- Difficulty with getting approvals can reflect negatively on the reputation of industry professionals to their clients
- Frustration that it is often easier to concede an issue to regulatory authority than it is to argue a position that is believed to be a superior solution
-

Regulatory Involvement

- Extent of regulatory intervention is sometimes perceived as excessive relative to project scale and level of risk
- Inconsistent expectations and approvals between staff members e.g. reviewer to reviewer, reviewer to inspector
- Potential conflict between feedback provided from reviewers of different areas
- Tension in balancing role of problem-solving and compliance during review process
- Inconsistency in review results in successful past applications not serving as a form of interpretive precedent to guide future work
- When reviews contradict comments or direction from past or similar reviews, it is frustrating and diminishes confidence in the review process
- No capacity to identify and manage versions of individual design elements results in repeated review efforts e.g. common elements on several drawings
- Unreasonable interpretations in discretionary circumstances e.g. renovations to existing buildings
- Regulatory approach doesn't accommodate the realities of our climate and short construction season

Service Touchpoints and Interactions

- Prefer to have direct access to reviewers by phone during review process, instead of leaving voice messages and receiving email follow-ups afterwards
- Lack of formalized options for collaboration during planning phase to support project scoping and design decisions to avoid surprises later on i.e. pre-application meetings
- Consensus that service channels designed for residents i.e. 777-7000 do not work well for managing this type of process
- Waiting to receive a call back is too slow and commitments are not consistently kept for follow-up activity
- Limited access to reviewers or resources with technical expertise
- Post-review interactions are not effective at resolving issues and tend to go back and forth
- Current service is a change from past service where there was more direct contact and collaboration with reviewers
- Requirement for in-person application submission do not add value to interaction and generally increases the amount of effort required
- Interactions with new or inexperienced staff can be frustrating, especially when their involvement is viewed as slowing down the process compared to more senior or experienced staff
- Staff attending job sites are not always properly outfitted with personal protective equipment

Ownership and Accountability

- Ambiguity around risk and liability result in uncoordinated efforts and unproductive approaches to mitigation
- Nearly impossible to manage project timelines and delivery schedules when no firm commitments for permit review timelines can be made by City staff
- Initiating follow-ups to inquire on status has become an informal practice to improve service received
- Service levels fluctuate according to time of year and staffing levels

Financial and Economic Competitiveness

- Unpredictability in the review process leads to lapses in timelines, change in project scope and increased costs
- The community is falling behind in terms of its competitiveness as other jurisdictions are providing more efficient service and/or looking to improve service delivery
- Negative financial impacts are significant and are felt at the community, industry and project level
- Investment is leaving the City and it is difficult to attract new investment
- Job loss within the sector
- Increased pressures on cashflows and profitability
- Projects delivery is taking longer than necessary
- Increased costs to demonstrate compliance during review that add no real value to the project
- Charges levied by the City for permits and inspections do not always represent a fair exchange of value for money
- Increased costs if project extends past planned seasonal window
- Direct costs in the form of liquidated damages due to being unable to deliver on project schedules
- Revenue lost from cancelled projects

Appendix D – Issues Identification (Internal Stakeholders)

City of Regina Building Permits and Inspections Review

Internal Stakeholder Summary of Issues

Background

In 2019, the City began a review of the building permits and inspections service to determine changes that can be made to improve satisfaction with service delivery and achieve program objectives for public safety, public confidence and economic competitiveness.

The review is made up of two phases. The first is a Current State review which will be followed by a Future State definition phase. As a complementary process to engaging external stakeholders, staff were invited to share concerns in order to create an equivalent understanding of the current state from an internal perspective.

Employees meet with the external consultant in small groups to discuss their concerns about the current state of the program. The consultant hosted a total of 14 sessions with 41 individuals. The majority of the sessions were with employees of Building Standards, however sessions were also held with staff from other areas of Planning Development Services and Fire.

Session Format

All sessions began with a brief presentation to provide background information on the project. The presentation outlined the engagement process and highlighted opportunities for staff to participate during the service review. Sessions were scheduled for 1 hour in length.

The meetings were designed and facilitated as issues identification sessions, with participants having the ability to put forward issues outside of any suggested or pre-defined categorizations. Participants were encouraged to focus on issues and impacts on internal teams and individuals at the City.

In order to provide a safe environment for employees to be open and transparent about their concerns, input gathered was anonymous and was consolidated into common themes.

Employees were invited to provide any additional comments or information to the consultant directly as a follow-up to the discussion for inclusion in the summary.

The issues and themes that emerged from each session were generally common across groups, with some diversity of perspectives present. The issues articulated on the following pages represent an overall picture of the discussions as well contributions specific to each session.

Issues Identified in Sessions

Managing Escalations

- Managing escalations takes a lot of time and reduces overall efficiency - attending to an urgent request means putting everything else on hold
- Both reviewers and inspectors are exposed to a lot of frustration from the industry and find they are often apologizing for delays
- While it is seldom that escalations are not related to significant delays in permit processing, the numbers of escalations are increasing and this is having a net negative effect on the service.
- Staff have been threatened with a phone call to senior management or the Mayor by customers who aren't getting what they want

Quality of Regulatory Service

- Staff generally perceive that the quality and integrity of the regulatory work has improved substantially from what it was in the past
- There are internal concerns about the consistency of decisions and quality across all work teams
- Not all direction provided to customers is consistent and sometimes needs to be addressed by other team members later in the process
- Staff feel some validation based on Municode's feedback on the quality of applications they have reviewed
- Some of the City's current permitting processes are a result of not having better mechanisms for managing the process e.g. using occupancy permits for matters more related to zoning requirements

Process and Service Delivery

- Staff with Building Official Level 1 certification are qualified to and used to sign off on simpler applications like decks or garages but don't any longer due to a change in process
- The new requirement for 5-day revision turnaround times results in some applications churning at the front of the queue, potentially as a result of being a low-quality application in the first place, resulting in delayed reviews of other applications
- Staff feel frustrated that the expedited turnaround on revisions is offered even when an application takes several weeks to be revised and re-submitted
- Pre-application meetings for Commercial projects help identify potential issues and result in a smoother review process later on but places additional demand on resources to be able to accommodate
- Permitting process is too complex for residents wanting to do simple projects e.g. deck, garage
- Staff prefer to have the same reviewer stay with the file until complete, making it difficult to share workload
- Lack of an effective method to manage complex, multi-step work processes
- Work can get hung up internally and a single bottleneck can have a significant impact on overall turnaround times and reflect negatively on the whole department
- Internal processes have largely been inherited from the past and have not been recently analyzed or optimized
- The scope of the software project did not include sufficient optimization of business processes
- There is no overall plan for how to manage work with the level of complexity that the building permit application process has

- Workarounds exist to address process changes and lack of communication
- Lack of ownership and accountability on internal process, delivery standards and systems
- Insufficient documentation and training resources for new software
- Building permits tends to be a common focus of attention however but some of the same underlying issues exist in other areas such zoning and developmental engineering
- Tendency for internal silos to develop are driven by constraints of scope and function when regulating applicable acts i.e. UBAS vs Planning & Development Act
- Applicants get frustrated when required to make an improvement as a part of one type of review when there is no over-arching regulatory approach that sees the benefit realized i.e. being required to upsize a water line at the street only to get downsized again at the building
- There is not always consensus within the City about how to best manage projects and requirements across areas
- The current zoning and building permit processes adds to overall complexity and is not well-understood by applicants

Interactions with Industry and Customers

- Applicants don't acknowledge the extent that regulations have changed or simply don't think they should apply to them because they have established practices of doing construction a certain way
- Staff feel that their professional integrity is being put at odds with customer service expectations
- Reviewers have started using conditions as a means to get permits issued but there are concerns that this will only result in deferring issues to later on in the building process when they are more expensive to resolve
- Staff have a higher level of confidence when drawings are both complete and fully compliant up-front rather than relying on conditions which may get missed later on, resulting in additional costs to resolve
- Culture of non-compliance is still expected by some in the industry with a "good enough is good enough" approach
- Depending on the applicant, City staff expertise as code experts is either not respected or applicants expect to be told how to solve the gaps in compliance
- Application submissions from out-of-province designers that have experience with building codes in other markets are generally of higher quality
- City gets blamed for issues that are not the fault of the City e.g. a slow economy or added complexity for code requirements
- Some customers would rather argue than work productively on making their application compliant
- Reviewers are working on improvements to consistency of comments when providing feedback on drawings
- Some applicants seem to use the City's review process as a way to finish their design work instead of a validation step
- Industry expectations of the software needs to be managed as it won't solve all existing problems and may introduce new challenges
- City has provided a checklist that is now required as a part of the application but not everyone uses it or values it
- Lots of back and forth is required during the review

which is frustrating and time consuming for all involved
- Unclear on how to help in light of UBAS Act i.e. you can't design for someone and staff are not consultants
- Customers will sometimes ignore reviewer feedback on drawings which then results in more effort to review
- In situations where reviewers have been treated poorly by customers, there is a hesitation to deal directly with industry over the phone and communicating by email is preferred

- *Knowledge of Regulations and Processes*
  - Some residential customers are bringing in packages from retailers like Home Depot without realizing they are not turn-key in terms of compliance for an application
  - Customer not willing to hire professionals with the required level of expertise and this puts extra pressure on the City and the system to provide support
  - Customers have varying levels of understanding about City review and inspection processes
  - Customers have a lack of understanding of what City departments are involved in reviewing applications (e.g. zoning, development engineering)
  - Lack of knowledge about what is expected as a part of an application
  - Missing information when an application is submitted slows down the process
  - General tendency by applicants to underestimate the level of complexity involved and sometimes other members of industry over-promise or set expectations that are unrealistic
  - Some industry professionals are working outside their core area of expertise without realizing their gaps in technical knowledge
  - Tenant changes may require improvements to the overall building i.e. suite separation
  - Tenants leasing in new buildings may have to do significant upgrades to be compliant with fire safety code
  - Renovations to existing commercial buildings presents one of the most challenging areas of regulation to navigate

Appendix E – Working Group Outputs

City of Regina Building Permits and Inspections Review

Working Groups Session 1 and 2 – Summary of Future State Definition

As a follow-up to the issues identification sessions, a series working group sessions were facilitated with a mix of City staff and external stakeholders. The objective of these sessions was to gain deeper insight into the needs of all stakeholders and work collaboratively on developing potential solutions.

Eight sessions were held in November and December 2019. Session length was 3.5 hours in total. Four sets of participants attended, representing a different make-up of external stakeholders – designer, residential, commercial and independent. An external facilitator was used to lead the sessions. Participants were seated in groups of four to six, with one to two City staff present at each table.

The first series of working group sessions began with information sharing on delivery times for residential and commercial permits in 2018, the percentage of applications that are put on hold and respective duration times, as well as the results of the online satisfaction survey.

Participants worked primarily in small groups and began by developing a series of personas used to anchor the service design solutions. The categories identified from the issues identification sessions were used as framework to develop a detailed inventory of needs. Finally, a series of ideas and solutions were developed and mapped onto the various stages of the permitting and inspections process.

Topics covered in the first sessions included:

- Information and Awareness
- Interactions and Support
- Relationship, Roles and Accountability

The second series of working group sessions followed a similar format as the first sessions, with participants working through a process of identifying needs and a series of potential solutions.

Topics covered in the second sessions included:

- Speed and Timing of Delivery
- Regulatory Involvement
- Financial and Economic Competitiveness

The latter part of the sessions were dedicated to prioritizing and refining solutions. Participants voted to select topics for further discussion based on ideas that originated in the first sessions.

These topics included:

- Phased permitting
- Pre-application consultation process
- Education and training program
- Small project process
- Priority service line

At the close of the sessions, external participants voted on ideas that would have the most positive impact on their business.

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
Information and Awareness	• Ability to understand what types of permits are required and when • Working knowledge of City processes for building permit review and inspections • Awareness of any changes to City processes that would affect submission requirements with sufficient time to update internal procedures • Access to code-focused learning opportunities rather than having to learn through the trial and error of a review and inspection process • Information and tools to understand the applicable reviews that a given application type is subject to • Understanding of the regulatory frameworks and governing authorities that are responsible for managing compliance • Expected level of service for how long a review will take when it is being completed or coordinated by the City • Detailed status information about the progress of an application through its required steps • Knowledge of where to turn to for help and support when navigating the process • List of available contacts and roles related to the review process • Access to examples and precedents of previous code interpretations • Timely updates from regulatory authorities on changes in interpretations or application of regulations • Ability to anticipate and understand requirements for complex projects or where direction is required by the City • Convenient access to permit history for a property • Access to reference information to help create a high-quality applicable • Access to property information the City has on file, such as past drawings • Ability to understand the difference between code requirements vs the City's procedural requirements	• Provide upstream education to community stakeholders to support knowledge of process and avoid pitfalls later on • Ability to monitor detailed status of applications • Access to a dashboard-style online view of all current applications, the present status and projected date of completion • Provide estimated completion time for reviews based on expectations of both City and applicant • Education programs provided by the source of the regulation • Detailed checklist of all information that is required on a submission and the format it is expected to be provided • Repository of previous code interpretations that can be relied on for use in future applications • List of all internal and external team members associated with a permit application with their role and contact information included • Process and procedural documentation or guidebook • Procedural requirements are managed and released in versions and remain in place until a next formal update occurs • Formal program for education and training that increases overall level of knowledge within the industry • Wizard-style online tools that can support applicants in understanding requirements and applicability of regulations • Access to examples and stories to illustrate more theoretical or abstract information in a practical context • Use off-season time as an opportunity to communicate and educate • Develop tools and resources to support applicants, especially interactive tools that can be specific to all application types • Communication programs to educate homeowners about the benefits of regulation and what they need to know before undertaking projects such as a deck or garage • Current listing and inventory of most common deficiencies on applications and recommended approaches to improve submissions • Usable and efficient process for acquiring permission to access permit history for a property • Manage and share the current version of drawings online • Ensure that specifications that are not referenced in a drawing are readily available for reference with the application file

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
	• Procedures regarding the timing of when information is required in the process • Ability to provide other background information as a part of the project to set context for review	• Provide structured method to manage information-sharing and communication on application-related tasks
Interactions and Support	• Ability to speak to staff who have the technical knowledge to answer technical questions or provide direction • Support offered on preferred channels that are appropriate for the type of inquiry such as phone calls instead of relying on emails or written communication • Ability to provide access to designers and other project contributors on the application to support communication • Follow-up communication from the City that supports quick and efficient resolution of any deficiencies in compliance • Support real-time phone communication with documented notes from discussion for future reference • Flexibility for support interactions based on the audience and type of application • Ability to share a common set of content and information across entire City and industry team, particularly where information is being updated or appended • Ability to have access to technical resources at the City when planning projects • Efficient and consistent process and tools for managing communication and collaboration, particularly around the resolution of application deficiencies	• Provide customer access to staff with appropriate level of technical knowledge to deliver first-contact resolution to issues without waiting for a call back • Provide regular information sharing opportunities such as live events or online communication • Ability to provide predictable update on timelines when exceptions occur and an updated status is requested • Increase speed for call-backs to support faster resolution to same-day instead of standard 48-hours • Have phone call follow-ups immediately after review to support fast resolution of remaining gaps in compliance • Access to an online portal with information on the status of an application through the individual review steps • Uninterrupted levels of service when staff are out of office • Designated alternate contacts for both applicants and City staff • Follow-up notifications for applicants of outstanding tasks • Automated notification of application progress through reviews • Ability to identify all individuals associated with an application and their roles on the project to support effective collaboration • Flexibility to transition from model of submission and review to other more collaborative methods of working • Option for online submissions vs in-person submissions at City Hall • Access to a formalized pre-application meeting process that can provide direction to inform project approaches early on • Direct phone access to technical resources to answer questions without needing to create a request through Service Regina • Have pre-defined roles assigned to individuals on the application form to support role clarity and collaboration • Ensure that builder owners who hold the ultimate responsibility for compliance are appropriately engaged in the process • Offer service options for industry professionals at City Hall that minimize delays • Provide permit to builder at final inspection when possible

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
		• Efficient method for construction manager to log and communicate minor changes that result during construction phase, such as material changes, to City review and inspection team • Send calendar invitation automatically when booking inspections • Retain record of past communication and documentation that can be used in the future
Relationship, Roles and Accountability	• Maintain healthy working relationship between the City and industry to avoid a feeling of "us and them" • Provide mechanisms to prevent unresolved issues or differences in interpretation to avoid tension and frustration in working relationships • Maintain clarity on roles between design and review • Ensure that regulatory authority is used appropriately and does not extend outside the scope of the role • Sense of shared responsibility for outcomes across City and industry • Provide explanations and rationale when rejecting applications • Service commitments need to be made and kept • Commitments should be based on realistic expectations for delivery • Provide clarity on how the significance of professional designations such as an engineer's stamp are factored into the review process • Single point of contact for applications • A mutual sense of trust and respect for the contribution everyone makes to the project	• Develop feedback mechanisms for all parties involved • Have a single point of contact at City who champions the progress of an application until completed • Provide a streamlined process where the provision of a stamped drawing can satisfy regulatory requirements • Ensure service commitments are made and kept • Have established points of contact and escalation • Pair equivalent roles between City and industry to allow people with similar experience and expertise to collaborate • Provide a reasonable level of flexibility when possible to accommodate the needs of the project team • Find a balance between up-front review vs inspection • Develop framework to measure and monitor performance • Partner with industry associations to create support materials and provide education • Define and communicate roles and responsibilities of each party • Partner with structural engineers to establish preferable alternatives • City to sponsor on-site relationship building opportunities with industry • Create a method for high-performing applicants to be recognized and rewarded in the process • Add a portfolio manager to work with industry and allow technical staff to focus on the technical aspects of reviewing • Assign a common City team to specific clients • Work with professional associations to ensure that occupants of buildings receive accurate information about the building permit and inspections process • Provide contractor with notification and the option to attend inspection

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
		• Include contractor in communications with building owner in order to support their reputation and working relationship • Use day-to-day project interactions to help build positive working relationships between City and industry • Provide incentives as well as disincentives for reduced levels of performance for both City and applicants • Institute a formal project close-out process that identifies key learnings that can be applied to future improvement initiatives
Speed and Timing of Delivery	• Predictable speed of delivery that can be used for project planning • Service delivery to be consistent regardless of time of year or fluctuations in demand • Speed of service delivery to match timeline requirements of the project, especially when outside the control of applicant • An equitable and outcome-driven approach to prioritizing review efforts that is communicated externally • Maintain a logical connection between the amount of time required to complete the work and the length of time to complete the review process • Focus on training and communication to support the preparation of high-quality application that move through the system efficiently • Consistent information sharing in general • Service delivery times that supports tendering deadlines and processes • Process that works for larger, distant head office clients that may have increased time pressure and less familiarity with local market • Service options that can address unforeseen demands for quick turnarounds on permit approvals	• Speed of permit delivery should reflect the time to complete the construction • Documented service standards for each application review type • Provide flexibility and support for customers that are out of market and may not understand local processes i.e. head offices building franchises • Prioritized level of service in emergency circumstances i.e. fire/flood • Predictable levels of service with defined timelines • Provide a streamlined process for smaller, less-complex projects i.e. decks, garages and basements • Support ability to get started on initial stages of projects without requiring efforts or information that is better deferred until later in the process • Provide rapid turnaround options to help larger projects get started more quickly using phased approaches • Ensure capacity can scale up and respond to the overall demand curve of the annual business cycle as well as short-term peaks that can result from favorable weather conditions • Provide clarity on turnaround times in business days vs calendar days • Provide a range of options for turnarounds that allows industry to make decisions about how to prioritize a mix of small and large projects • Offer a paid service for expedited review, similar to a Nexus pass

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
Regulatory Involvement	• Avoid slowing down the processing of applications due to minor administrative errors • Address ambiguity and grey areas that are reliant on the City's interpretation or decision-making • Avoid delays in occupancy on account of requirements better managed through zoning requirements • Support industry in addressing any tensions or conflicts between requirements from different level of regulations • Repository of precedents that can be relied on for future design and decision-making • Collaborate with industry by providing direction and guidance on regulatory matter as early as possible in the design and planning process • Identify any risks early on that may cause delays later on • Identify high-value focus areas when regulating and clarify expectations • Avoid unnecessary regulatory scope-creep when reviewing renovation projects • Consistency between review and inspection stages • Consistency between different reviewers and review types • Opportunity to collaborate or turn to a 3rd party to resolve issues • Ability to capture City's investment of time and resources into project that may not have fees captured other • Flexibility in terms of permits provided i.e. phased vs an entire project • Feedback on application reviews needs to be clear, actionable and support resolution • Common exposure to information on regulation between regulators and designers • Coordinated approach to managing the risks associated with regulation • Unbundle permit types that have the effect of slowing down projects	• Provide a streamlined re-review process when a minor change, or one typical during construction, is required • Pre-application meetings to get direction on compliance-related aspects of the design • Follow-up pre-application meetings with documentation and direction that allows applicants to proceed with confidence • Document precedents from previous applications as well as acceptable solution that are deemed compliant by the City • Clarify and communicate the City's position on aspects of code that applicants find ambiguous or difficult to interpret • Differentiate between minor administrative deficiencies on an application vs major compliance issues such as safety concerns • Provide flexibility in processes to allow projects to get started more easily i.e. phased permitting • Align the timing requirements for technical specification information with its availability to applicants • Offer flexibility for applicants with proven track records • Provide quick appeals process, potentially to a neutral third party, to resolve any impasses between applicant and the City • Develop a disciplined process for ensuring consistent reviews • Option to submit a standardized drawing that can be locked and later reused for other projects • Limit interventions to areas related to regulatory compliance vs other design-focused feedback • Provide rationale for why information is required as a part of the submission • Proactively engage external involvement to support the overall performance of the process i.e. engage subject matter experts on how technical solutions can achieve desired outcomes • Evaluate options for level of scrutiny applied to regulation and make decisions aligned with risk profile • Separate permit types such as development and building permits to streamline processes and provide appropriate flexibility for different project types • Address persistent issues such as the issue of being unable to grant occupancy without scratch-coat applied with a solution that

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
		adequately addresses the needs of the builder, the owner/occupant and the City • Evaluate where processes undertaken by other parties can streamline the City's efforts on reviewing compliance such as warranty providers, 3rd party contracted inspections, etc. • Provide a structured checklist of items for reviews and inspections • Use alternate approaches to address zoning issues such as registering deficiencies on title instead of delaying occupancy • Partner with industry associations to develop a program for pre-qualification that addresses needs and risks of ensuring compliance
Financial and Economic Competitiveness	• Help avoid unnecessary costs and delays associated with supplying drawings by communicating requirements in advance • Support ability to commence projects by tailoring processes and requirements based on a reasonable level of detail available at the time to applicants • Support ability to get compensated in a timely manner at project close-out • Strike a balance between the level of detail required on drawings to demonstrate compliance vs requiring a level of detail that is better managed during inspection • Method for designers to avoid providing a client with a permit-ready drawings that may not get used until sometime in the future and may no longer be compliant due to procedural changes • Monitor and match service delivery of other jurisdictions that are competing with the City for investment and projects • Support projects that function as drivers of economic activity or attract new investment to the area such as industrial projects that can result in additional residential development • Identify projects that have contractual obligations and penalties associated if the timeline is delayed i.e. liquidated damages • Match delivery to typical contractual timelines for projects such as tenant improvements	• Support ability to take advantage of favourable weather conditions without having to stop work • Avoid requirement for more expensive submissions i.e. new drawings for minor changes, when simpler approaches for demonstrating compliance can suffice • Remain competitive with other jurisdictions that can attract investment away from Regina • Ensure the building and inspections program is a positive contributor to the overall competitiveness of the community • Align with efforts of other levels of government on coordinating efforts that will result in positive growth such as provincial growth plan • Method of identifying projects with both positive and negative economic and financial implications to support appropriate responses • Identify projects that have externally mandated timelines such as competitive RFP processes or tenant improvements • Develop approaches to delivery that reflect awareness and prioritization of economic considerations • Support the development of educational programs and recruiting of human resources into the industry • Establish a permit fees structure where possible to avoid inconsistent calculations of fees i.e. renovations • Standardize fees so they are easy to interpret and encourage utilization of the program

THEME	NEEDS	IDEAS & SOLUTIONS
	• Ability to submit a drawing for a floorplan that can be reused multiple times without requiring repeated submissions • Clarity in how fees are calculated based on dollar value that ensures a level playing field for contractors • The costs of regulation should represent a fair exchange of value for the service performed • Ability to align with and support the objectives of other organizations and levels of government that are focused on growth • Support the industry with consistent and predictable delivery that supports project planning and managing client expectations • Flexibility for inspection windows so work can continue on weekends if weather permits	• Support industry's ability to manage projects effectively with consideration given to the effects of regulation on scope, timelines and costs • Add additional fees for applicants who ignore direction on how to achieve compliance and put unnecessary demands on the system