

SAFETY CODES PERMITS AND INSPECTIONS AUDIT

RECOMMENDATION

That the October 21, 2022, Office of the City Auditor report OCA01513, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only.

Executive Summary

This report presents the results of the Safety Codes Permits and Inspections audit.

REPORT

The City of Edmonton's Development Services Branch is responsible for safety codes, permits and inspections. The Branch's Safety Codes Permits and Inspections team monitors buildings and structures to make sure that they comply with the Safety Codes Act and other regulations including the Quality Management Plan. The Quality Management Plan sets minimum service levels and establishes responsibilities and processes in order for the City to provide compliance monitoring.

The objectives of the Safety Codes Permits and Inspections audit were to determine whether:

- Safety Codes Permits and Inspections' building permits process is effective, efficient and aligns with regulatory requirements.
- Safety Codes Permits and Inspections' is managing the building permits process to meet stakeholder expectations.

This audit focuses on permits and inspections for new single-detached homes. However, observations in this report may also apply to permitting and inspections of multi-unit housing and commercial units.

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The Office of the City Auditor found that minimum inspection requirements are unclear and inconsistent. This can lead to stakeholder confusion as to what the actual requirements are or why they are different. As well, Safety Codes Permits and Inspections can expand the use of their risk-based model to reduce the number of inspections they complete on each single-detached home. Safety Codes Permits and Inspections continue to complete inspections with high first-time pass rates and overall are conducting more inspections per home than the number required by the City's Quality Management Plan.

The Office of the City Auditor also found that Safety Codes Permits and Inspections' lack comprehensive, documented procedures. For example, intake staff don't have updated checklists to make sure permit applications include all required documents. Safety Codes Officers are also not providing consistent information in their inspection reports to applicants.

The Development Services Branch releases quarterly activity reports which include performance measures that Safety Codes Permits and Inspections use to make business decisions. The Office of the City Auditor found issues with the reliability, understandability and comparability of the performance measures. Additionally, Safety Codes Permits and Inspections has not set targets for the measures we reviewed.

The Office of the City Auditor made the following recommendations to the Development Services Branch:

- Update its procedures and checklists for application intake, and develop operating procedures and checklists to improve consistency of Safety Codes Officers' site inspections.
- Enhance its performance measures so they are reliable, understandable, comparable and include measurable targets.

The Office of the City Auditor made the following recommendations to the Safety Codes Permits and Inspections area:

- Review and re-set minimum inspection requirements so that service expectations are clear and consistent.
- Expand its use of their risk-based model to determine the actual inspections needed for new single-detached homes.
- Review the permit application and inspection processes and implement a plan to improve efficiency.

POLICY

Bylaw 16097, Audit Committee Bylaw, Section 14(d) states that, "Committee will review all reports from the City Auditor dealing with completed audit projects."

ATTACHMENTS

1. Safety Codes Permits and Inspections Audit Report