

PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

The mission of the Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department is to facilitate the preservation and building of a safe, attractive, vibrant and sustainable San José through partnership with and exceptional service to our diverse communities and customers.

PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Department (PBCE) guides the physical development of San José. Through its three divisions, it reviews construction applications and issues permits for consistency with law and policy. PBCE's 2022-23 operating expenditures totaled \$52.6 million. This includes personal and non-personal expenditures. The Department was also responsible for roughly \$1.8 million in Citywide expenses. In FY 2022-23 PBCE had 312 authorized positions, an increase of 13 positions over the previous year. Of these 312 budgeted positions, 70 were vacant as of June 30, 2023.

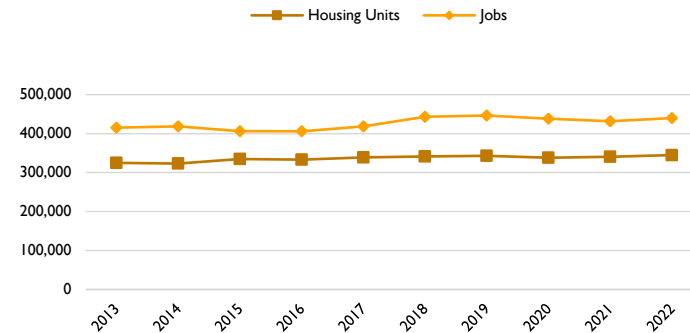
Under the collaborative umbrella of Development Services, PBCE works with other City departments to permit new development. Subsequent pages of this chapter discuss Development Services.

PLANNING

PBCE's Planning Division administers the City's long-range planning projects and processes land development applications to match the City's planning goals. The [Envision San José 2040 General Plan](#) identifies 12 major strategies that promote active, walkable, bicycle-friendly, transit-oriented, mixed-use urban settings for new housing and job growth. PBCE reviews the major strategies of the General Plan during both an annual hearing and its regular four-year major plan review.* See the Development Services pages of this chapter for more on the Planning Division's work. Also see [San José: A Community Guide](#) online.

*PBCE's most recent review of the major strategies within the General Plan can be accessed from [PBCE's website](#).

San José Housing Units and Jobs

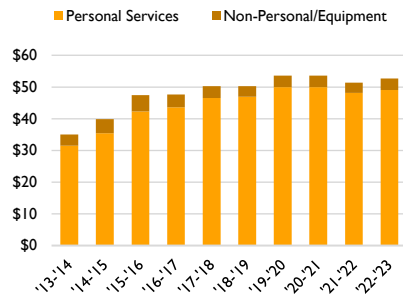


Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

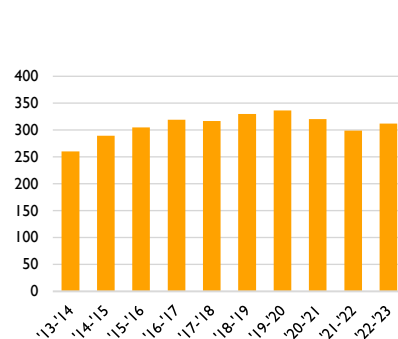
Select Planning Updates

Parking and Transportation Demand Management: In 2022, the City Council approved a zoning update to allow developers to “right size” their parking by no longer requiring that they provide an arbitrary minimum amount of parking. This update will also require Transportation Demand Management (TDM) which are measures developments must take to make a variety of transportation options more attractive. The ordinance went into effect in April 2023.

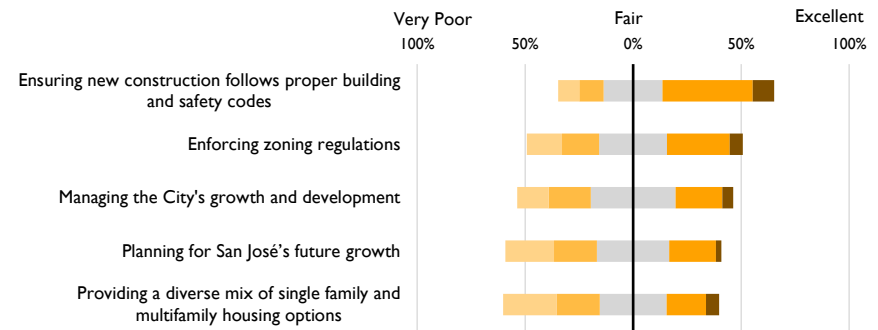
PBCE Operating Expenditures (\$millions)



PBCE Authorized Positions



Community Survey 2023 Ratings of Services



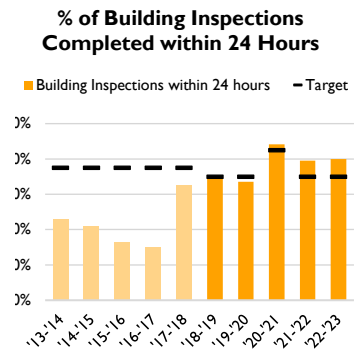
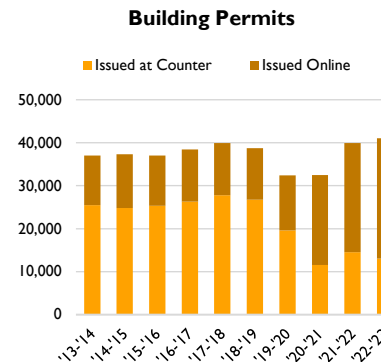
PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

BUILDING

PBCE’s Building Division reviews plans for and inspects new construction projects within the city, ensuring they meet health and safety codes and City zoning requirements. Types of plans reviewed range from large commercial development to residential projects, such as assessorly dwelling units. Of submitted plans that received a review, the Division completed 62 percent of plan checks within cycle times (target: 85 percent). Additionally, the Division completed 80 percent of building inspections within its goal of 24 hours (target: 70 percent).

See *Development Services* on the next page for more on the Building Division’s work. Also see the *CSA Dashboard* chapter for additional performance measures.

For more information on the Building Division, see our 2023 audit, [Residential Building Permits: Additional Resources and Further Process Enhancements can Reduce Wait Times and Improve Service Delivery](#).



Note: Beginning in 2017-18, data excludes inspections specifically requested for > 24 hours as missed targets.

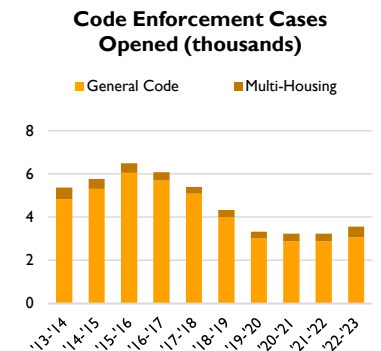
CODE ENFORCEMENT

PBCE’s Code Enforcement Division enforces laws that promote the health, safety, and appearance of existing buildings and neighborhoods. It also inspects businesses, such as those selling alcohol or tobacco; property and business owners fund these inspections with fees.

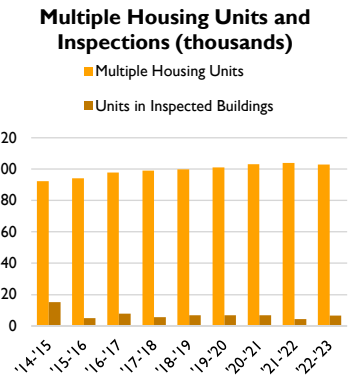
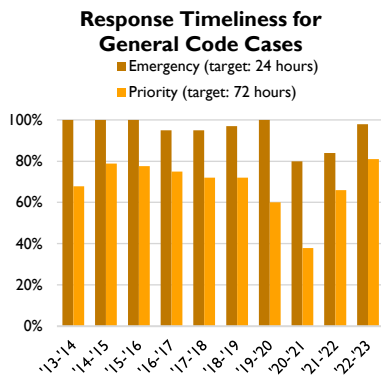
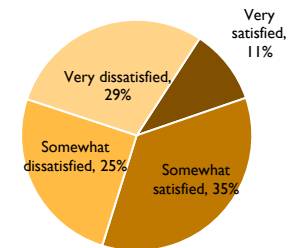
In 2022-23, PBCE opened 3,100 general code enforcement cases, including 77 emergency complaints and 790 priority complaints. Code Enforcement staff responded to 98 percent of emergency complaints within 24 hours (target: 100 percent) and 81 percent of priority complaints within 72 hours (target: 75 percent).* Code Enforcement sends letters in response to other types of complaints and only responds in-person as appropriate.

Code Enforcement has a risk-based, tiered Multiple Housing Inspection Program whereby more frequent inspections are targeted to properties at higher risk of violations. In 2022-23, Code Enforcement inspected 6,700 housing units out of the estimated 102,900 units on the Multiple Housing Roster.

*Emergency complaints involve an immediate threat to life or property, such as an unsecured pool fence. Priority complaints involve possible threats to life or property, such as unpermitted construction. The proportions of such complaints that met response targets—98 percent and 81 percent, respectively, as noted above—are averages of monthly results.



Community Survey 2023
Residents’ rating of the City’s efforts to enforce code violations



DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Permit Center in City Hall provides permit services for new building projects and changes to existing structures. Depending on the scope of the project, a permit could be issued the same day, or require plans to be reviewed by the City's different Development Service partners.

The **Development Services partners** in the Permit Center are the:

- Planning Division,
- Building Division,
- Public Works Department (also see *Public Works chapter*), and
- Fire Department (also see *Fire chapter*).

In 2022-23, Development Services:

- issued 41,000 permits (roughly 28,000 online), and
- processed about 4,800 planning applications.

Building inspections have decreased year to year since 2018-19, while the total number of building permits issued and plan checks completed have returned to or exceed pre-COVID levels.

The volume of construction in 2022-23 was similar to the prior year but remains below pre-COVID levels. The value of construction decreased in 2022-23 from the prior year.

The Permit Center located in City Hall

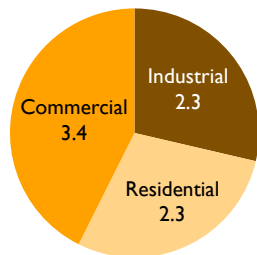


Source: Auditor photo from Fall 2019

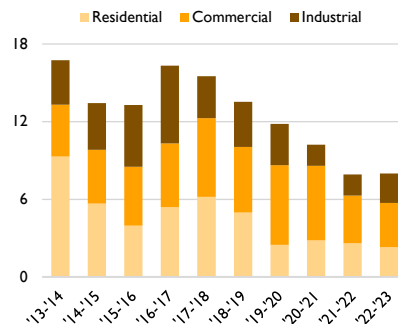
Partner	Revenue (\$millions)	Positions
Building	\$33.63	165.48
Public Works	\$14.55	67.1
Fire	\$7.82	37.6
Planning	\$8.31	38.44
TOTAL	\$64.30	308.62

Source: 2022-23 Modified Budget as outlined in the City's 2023-24 Adopted Operating Budget. Total may not sum due to rounding.

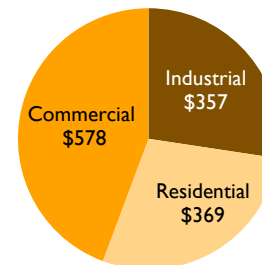
Volume of Building Activity (millions of square feet)



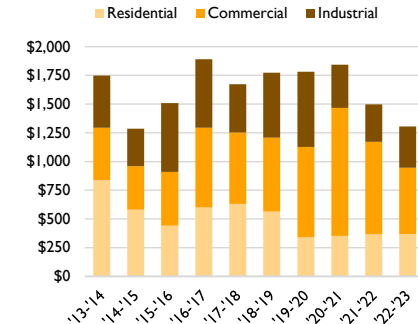
Volume of Construction (millions of square feet)



Value of Building Activity (\$millions)



Value of Construction (\$millions)



Development Services projects vary broadly, from replacing a residential water heater to large, mixed-use developments of many thousands of square feet. One project may require multiple permits and inspections. Some projects require approval through a public hearing, but most require only administrative approval. Projects only go through Public Works or the Fire Department when they have impacts on public facilities (e.g., traffic, streets, sewers, utilities, flood hazard zone) or involve fire-related issues (e.g., need for fire sprinkler systems or fire alarm systems), respectively.

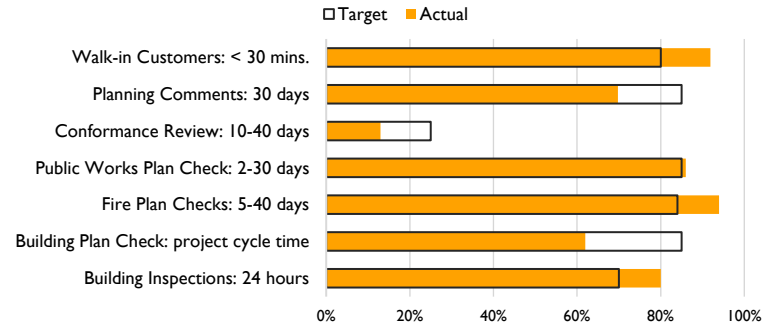
The City offers a number of programs to expedite project delivery for companies, small businesses, and homeowners. Timeliness of individual steps in the development process varies depending on the scale and complexity of a given project, and can involve one to all four of the Development Services partners. Four of the seven selected development processes met their annual timeliness targets.

(See CSA Dashboards chapter for additional performance measures for development services.)

City Council Focus Area

The City established four focus areas for 2023-24, one of which is “Attracting Investment in Jobs and Housing.” The scorecard for this metric consists of five measures, including housing units added in the city and the percent of residential projects completed within plan check time targets, among other.

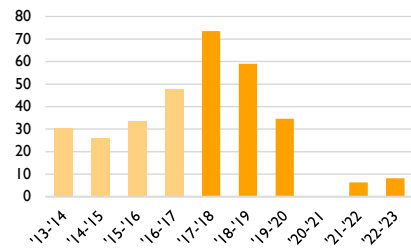
Timeliness of Development Services*



Source: PBCE from the City’s permits database.

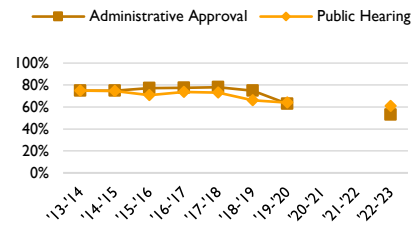
*These selected measures may occur simultaneously; some are dependent on completion of particular processes. For other Fire and Public Works measures related to Development Services, see the Fire and Public Works chapters.

Permit Center Customers Served (thousands)



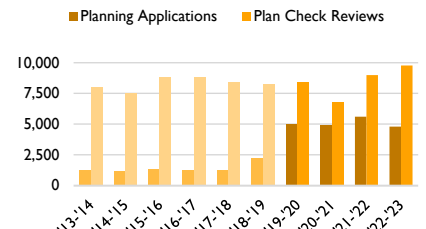
Note: In 2017-18, PBCE changed their methodology to include duplicated counts for multiple services and visits.

Development Services Overall Customer Satisfaction by Project Type



Note: Data was not collected in 2020-21 or 2021-22.

Planning Applications and Plan Checks



Note: Starting in 2019-20, measures may have increased due to an upgrade to the City’s integrated permitting system and subsequent changes to data reporting.

Building Inspections (thousands)

