

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 (PBCE) Department 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 2019-20 operating expenditures totaled \$53.5 million. This includes personal and non-personal expenditures. The Department was also responsible for Citywide and other expenses totaling \$3.4 million. PBCE had 336.5 authorized positions.

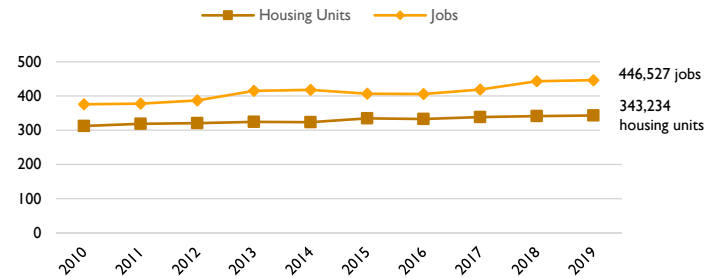
Under the collaborative umbrella of Development Services, PBCE works with other City departments to deliver the City's permitting function. Subsequent pages of this chapter discuss Development Services.

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](#), last updated in March 2020,* 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. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that San José had 446,527 jobs and 343,234 housing units in 2019. See the *Development Services pages of this chapter for more on the Planning Division's work*. Also see [San José: A Community Guide](#) online.

*Council approved General Plan amendments to change the land use designation of urban residential and residential neighborhoods (Mountain Springs and Westwinds mobile home parks) to mobile home park in order to prevent risk of redevelopment.

San José Housing Units and Jobs (thousands)



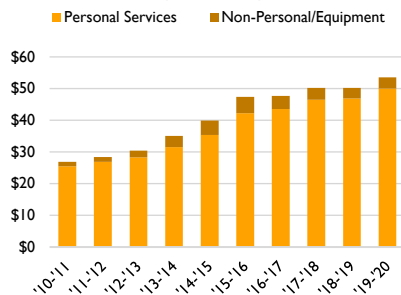
Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Note: In 2019-20, building permits accounted for 1,811 new residential units, including 488 single-family units (including second units and duplexes), and 1,323 multi-family units.

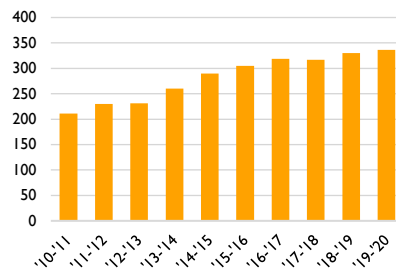
Select Planning Updates

Secondary Units: In 2019, Council approved a number of changes to secondary unit regulations to align with new California state laws. In 2020, Council approved updates to San Jose's zoning laws to allow for tiny homes on wheels (THOWs), which are a type of detached ADU. See the regulation changes at sanjoseca.gov/adus.

PBCE Operating Expenditures (\$millions)

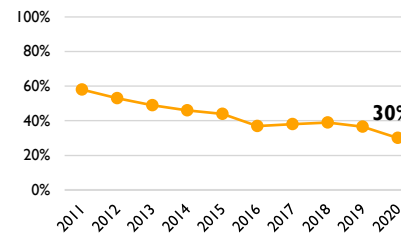


PBCE Authorized Positions



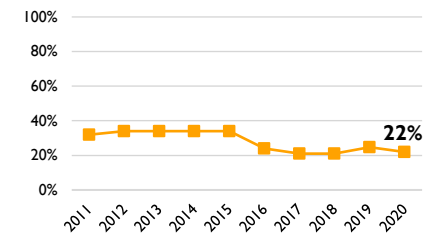
RESIDENT SURVEY

% of San José residents rating overall quality of new development as "excellent" or "good"



RESIDENT SURVEY

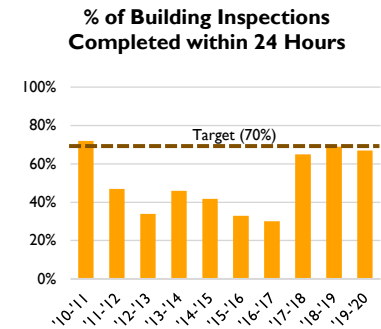
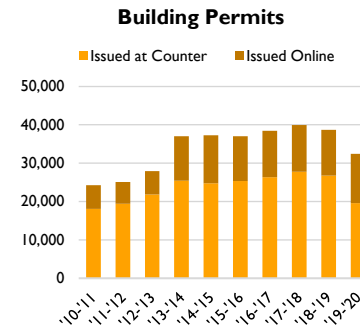
% of San José residents rating land use, planning and zoning as "excellent" or "good"



PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT

BUILDING

PBCE's Building Division reviews new construction projects within the City, ensuring they meet health and safety codes and City zoning requirements. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Division saw a decrease in the number of permits issued after several years of modest growth. It completed 74 percent of plan checks within cycle times (target: 85%) and 67 percent of building inspections within its goal of 24 hours (target: 70%). 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.*



Note: Beginning in '17-'18, data excludes inspections specifically requested for > 24 hours as missed targets.

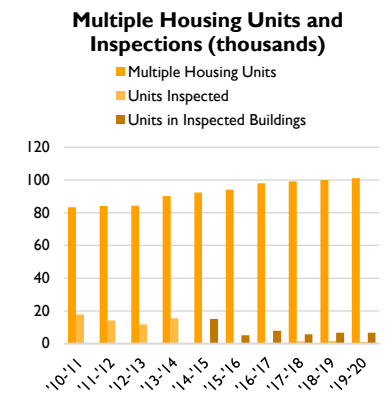
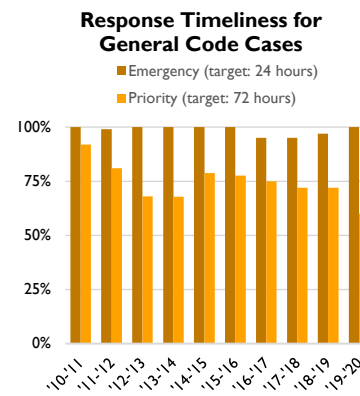
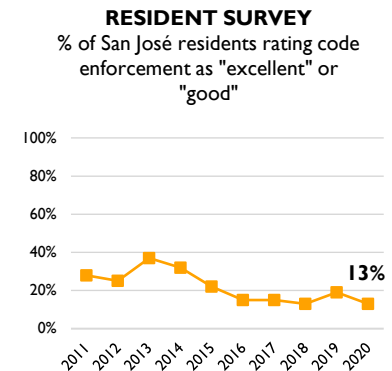
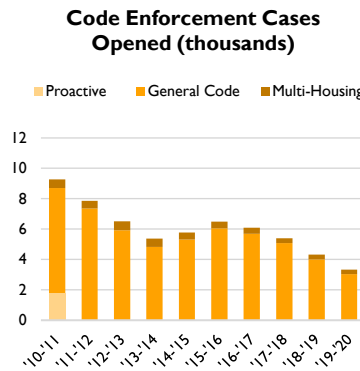
CODE ENFORCEMENT

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

In 2019-20, PBCE opened about 3,000 general code enforcement cases, including 147 emergency complaints and 861 priority complaints. Code Enforcement staff responded to nearly 100 percent of emergency complaints within PBCE's 24-hour target and 60 percent of priority complaints within the 72-hour target.* Code enforcement sends letters in response to other types of complaints and only responds personally as appropriate.

Response times for priority complaints from March 17, 2020 through June 30, 2020 significantly declined due to the County's shelter in place order and suspension of Code Enforcement field inspections during the COVID-19 emergency.

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 2019-20, Code Enforcement inspected 6,749 housing units out of the estimated 101,053 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—97 percent and 60 percent, respectively, as noted above—are averages of monthly results.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Permit Center in City Hall provides one-stop permit services for new building projects and changes to existing structures.

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 2019-20, Development Services:

- issued about 32,400 permits (12,800 online),
- served nearly 35,000 Permit Center customers, and
- processed over 5,000 planning applications.*

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, field inspections and building permits have decreased.

The volume of construction decreased for the third straight year; however, the value of construction has steadily increased from 2017-18. Trends varied across residential, commercial, and industrial categories.

The Permit Center located in City Hall

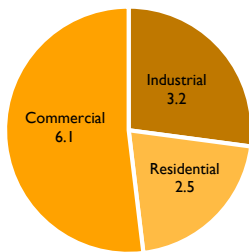


Source: Auditor photo from Fall 2019

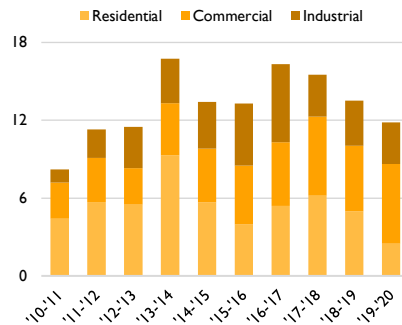
Partner	Revenue (\$millions)	Positions
Building	\$33.80	171
Public Works	\$9.90	69.31
Fire	\$8.41	41.32
Planning	\$6.34	43.21
TOTAL	\$58.45	324.84

Source: 2019-20 Modified Budget as outlined in the City's 2020-21 Adopted Operating Budget

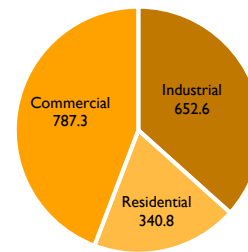
Volume of Building Activity
(millions of square feet)



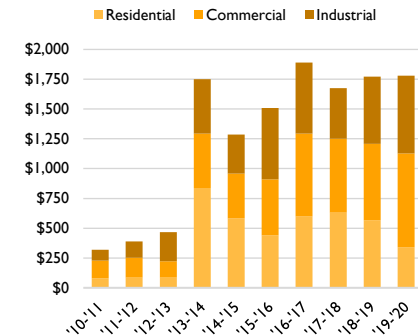
Volume of Construction
(millions of square feet)



Value of Building Activity
(\$millions)



Value of Construction
(\$millions)



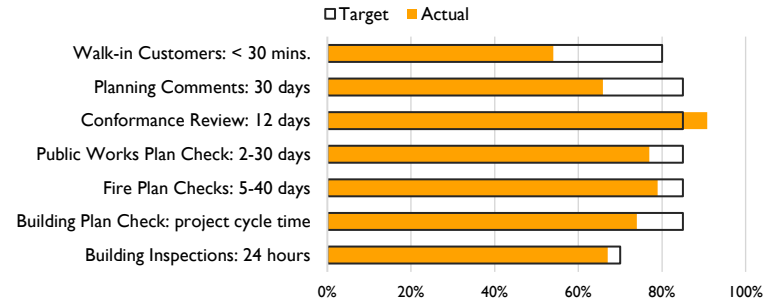
Development Services projects vary broadly, from replacing a residential water heater to large, mixed-use developments of many thousands of square feet. One project may require multiple permits and inspections. Some projects require approval through a public hearing, but most require only administrative approval (an estimated 86 percent). 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 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. However, turnaround times continue to be a primary concern. 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. One of the seven selected development processes met their annual timeliness targets.

Of the 32,400 building permits PBCE issued in 2019-20, about 12,800 were online permits, saving staff time and customer trips to the Permit Center.

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

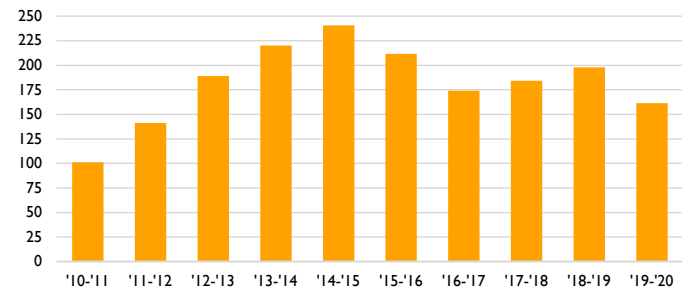
Timeliness of Development Services*



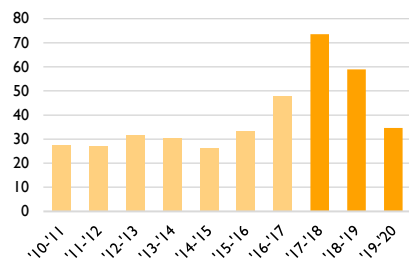
Source: PBCE from the City's Permits Database

*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.

Building Inspections (thousands)

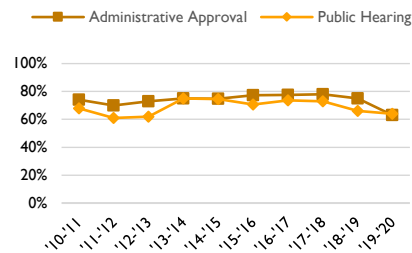


Permit Center Customers Served (thousands)*



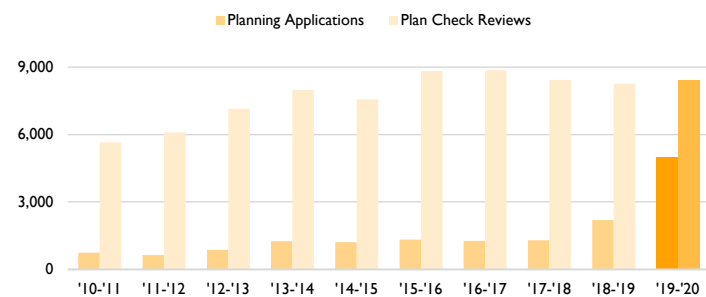
* Due to COVID-19, City Hall closed which limited Permit Center activity. In 2017-18, PBCE changed their methodology to include duplicated counts for multiple services and visits.

Development Services Overall Customer Satisfaction by Project Type



Source: Development Services Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Planning Applications and Plan Checks



Measures may have increased in 2019-20 due to changes in data reporting following an upgrade to the City's Integrated Permitting System (IPS).

