

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 2020-21 operating expenditures totaled \$53.6 million. This includes personal and non-personal expenditures. The Department was also responsible for \$2.4 million in Citywide expenses. PBCE had 320.5 authorized positions, a reduction of 16 positions since 2019-20.

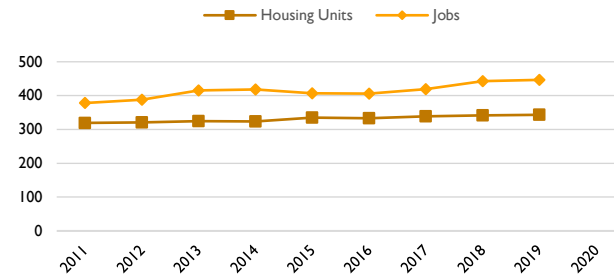
Under the collaborative umbrella of Development Services, PBCE works with other City departments to deliver the City's permitting function. Subsequent pages of this chapter discuss Development Services.

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 September 2021,* 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.

*Council approved General Plan amendments to update references from the Green Vision to the Climate Smart, and to change the 2014 Diridon Station Area Plan diagrams and text for the Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan within the of the approximately 84-gross acre site, among other changes.

San José Housing Units and Jobs (thousands)

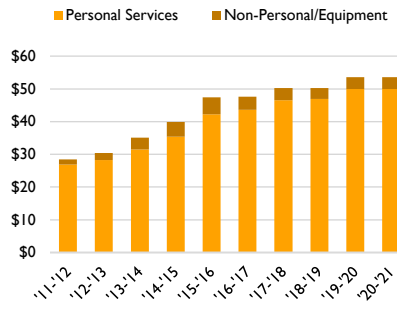


Source: American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau
 Note: San José level data for the American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau was not available for 2020.

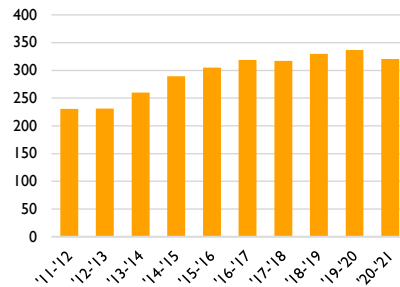
Select Planning Updates

Accessory Dwelling Units: In 2020, Council approved updates to San José's zoning laws to allow for tiny homes on wheels (THOWs), which are a type of detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs). In 2021, minor updates and clarifying changes were incorporated in accordance with the recent State Law mandate. See the regulation changes at sanjoseca.gov/adus.

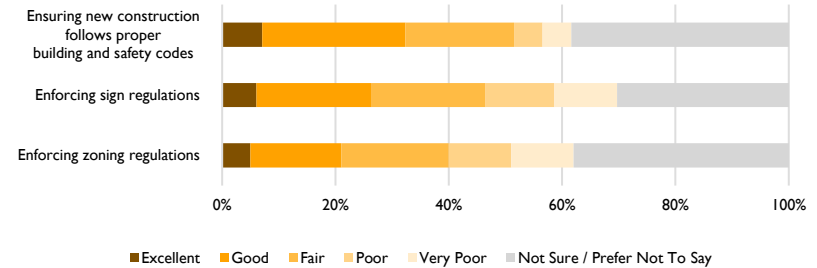
PBCE Operating Expenditures (\$millions)



PBCE Authorized Positions



Community Survey 2021 Ratings of services



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, permits issued were slightly lower in the past two years; however, more permits were issued online than previous years. The Division completed 64 percent of plan checks within cycle times (target: 88%) and 88 percent of building inspections within its goal of 24 hours (target: 85%).

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.

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.

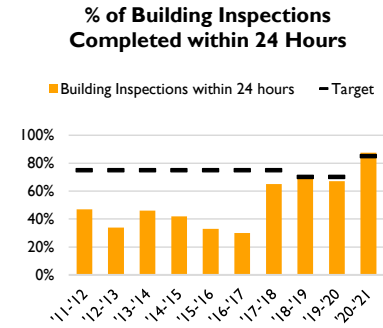
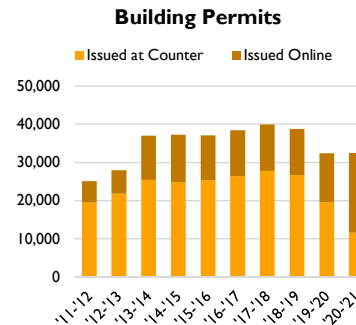
In March 2020, due to the pandemic, Code Enforcement's work was limited to only essential services, such as health and safety issues. Later, Code Enforcement started exterior inspections and remote interior inspections for non-emergency cases. Additionally, some inspectors were activated to the City's Emergency Operations Center which also affected the Division's workload.

In 2020-21, PBCE opened 2,880 general code enforcement cases, including 68 emergency complaints and 702 priority complaints. Response times of priority and emergency complaints decreased from 2019-20 during the COVID-19 emergency. Code Enforcement staff responded to 80 percent of emergency complaints within PBCE's 24-hour target, a reduction of 20 percentage points since 2019-20. Further, Code Enforcement responded to 38 percent of priority complaints within the 72-hour target, 22 percentage points less on average than in 2019-20.* Code Enforcement sends letters in response to other types of complaints and only responds personally as appropriate.

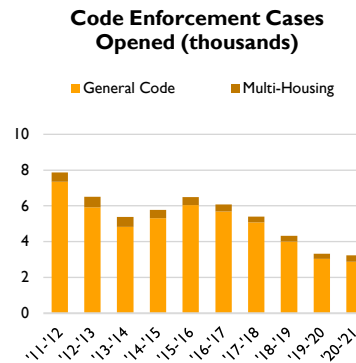
Code Enforcement has a risk-based, tiered Multiple Housing Inspection Program whereby more frequent inspections are targeted to properties at higher risk of violations. In 2020-21, Code Enforcement inspected 6,759 housing units out of the estimated 103,233 units on the Multiple Housing Roster.

*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—80 percent and 38 percent, respectively, as noted above—are averages of monthly results.

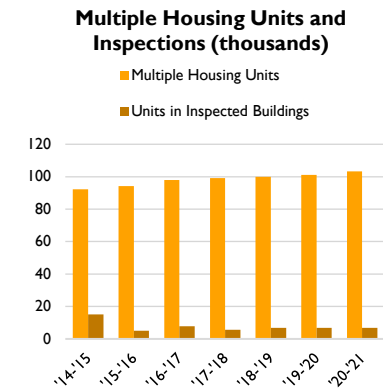
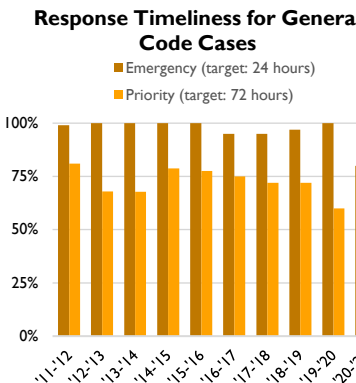
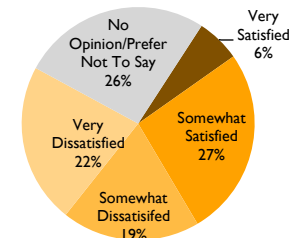
For more information on Code Enforcement, see our 2021, [Code Enforcement Management Controls: Improvements to Oversight and Coordination Needed](#)



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



Community Survey 2021
Residents' rating their satisfaction with the City's efforts to enforce code violations



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 2020-21, Development Services:

- issued nearly 32,500 permits (20,900 online), and
- processed about 4,900 planning applications.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, field inspections and building permits have decreased in the past two years. Additionally, due to the pandemic, City Hall was not open to walk-in customers to the permit center.

The volume of construction decreased for the fourth 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

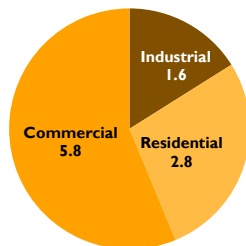


Source: Auditor photo from Fall 2019

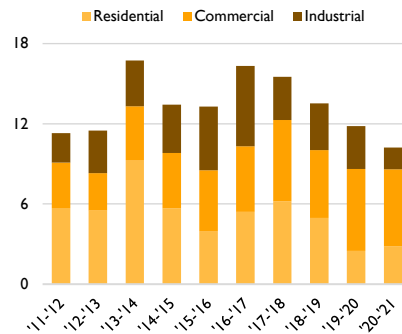
Partner	Revenue (\$millions)	Positions
Building	\$24.61	164.23
Public Works	\$10.93	67.67
Fire	\$6.20	39.57
Planning	\$6.39	35.48
TOTAL	\$48.12	306.95

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

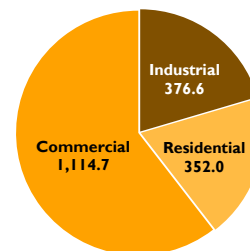
Volume of Building Activity (millions of square feet)



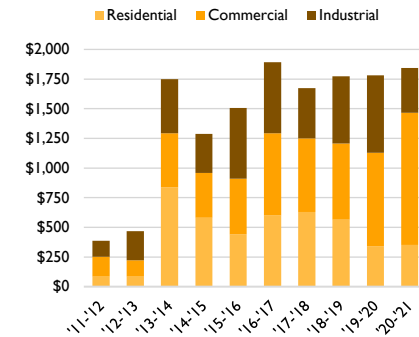
Volume of Construction (millions of square feet)



Value of Building Activity (\$millions)



Value of Construction (\$millions)

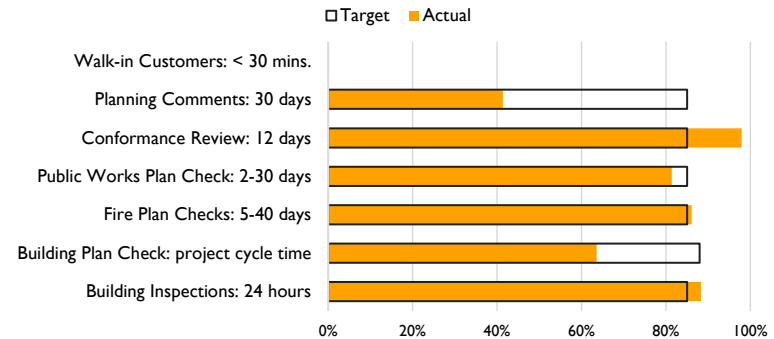


Development Services projects vary broadly, from replacing a residential water heater to large, mixed-use developments of many thousands of square feet. One project may require multiple permits and inspections. Some projects require approval through a public hearing, but most require only administrative approval. 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. Three of the seven selected development processes met their annual timeliness targets.

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

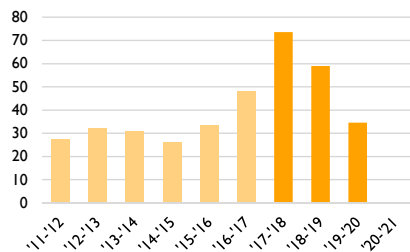
Timeliness of Development Services*



Source: PBCE from the City's Permits Database. Due to COVID-19, City Hall was closed to walk-in customers in 2020-21.

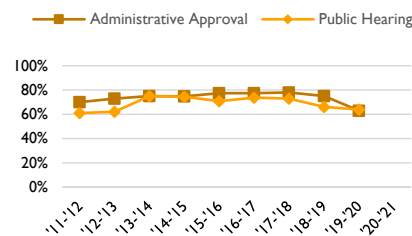
*These selected measures may occur simultaneously; some are dependent on completion of particular processes. For other Fire and Public Works measures related to Development Services, see the Fire and Public Works chapters.

Permit Center Customers Served (thousands)



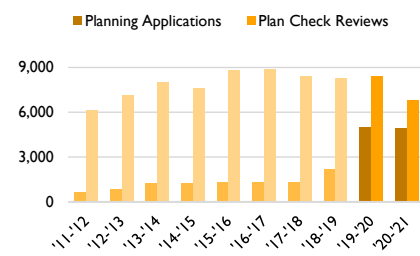
Note: Due to COVID-19, City Hall was closed to customers in 2020-21. In 2017-18, PBCE changed their methodology to include duplicated counts for multiple services and visits.

Development Services Overall Customer Satisfaction by Project Type



Source: Development Services Customer Satisfaction Surveys. This survey was not conducted for 2020-21.

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 (IPS) and subsequent changes to data reporting.

Building Inspections (thousands)

