

DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

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WHAT WE DO

The Department of Buildings (DOB) regulates the safe and lawful use of more than 1,000,000 buildings and 50,000 active construction sites under its jurisdiction by enforcing laws, including the City's Construction Codes, Zoning Resolution and Energy Code, as well as the New York State Multiple Dwelling Law. The Department enforces compliance with these regulations and promotes public safety through its review and approval of building plans, permitting and licensing functions, and inspections. The Department is currently in the process of setting goals for the next stage of its growth, which will be released in a vision document in the coming months.

FOCUS ON EQUITY

The Department of Buildings promotes the safety of all people who build, live and work in New York City. The Department's motto, 'Build Safe | Live Safe,' underscores the importance of safe construction and the safe and lawful occupancy and use of buildings, even after the construction work is completed. In addition to code and zoning compliance review, the Department provides emergency response and performs investigations of construction incidents. DOB has strengthened its educational outreach efforts to ensure construction and design professionals, property owners and tenants know that safety must always come first.

The Department is committed to operating efficiently and distributing its resources to meet the safety and service needs of residents – through both in-person and online interactions with the public. Guided by the Building One City plan, the Department continued the rollout of DOB NOW, a program that enables business to be conducted with the agency online. The program's goals are to increase the transparency of agency operations, promote the highest standards of integrity among staff and in the real estate and construction industries, and develop a data-driven approach to disciplining bad actors. When fully implemented, DOB NOW will replace an over 30-year-old mainframe system.

The Department is fully committed to protecting the public's long-term safety in the face of climate change. Beginning in July 2018, DOB initiated development of the 2020 NYC Energy Conservation Code, promising New Yorkers even more efficient buildings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. In the last year, the Department's sustainability enforcement unit has expanded audits of required energy progress inspections, focused on identifying bad actors. As part of DOB's support of Mayor de Blasio's NYC Green New Deal and OneNYC 2050 plan, the agency's efforts will expand to include implementation of laws passed with the 2019 Climate Mobilization Act, assisting building owners in meeting aggressive greenhouse gas limits.

OUR SERVICES AND GOALS

SERVICE 1 Facilitate safe and compliant development.

- Goal 1a Improve processing efficiency.
- Goal 1b Promptly review initial construction plans.
- Goal 1c Promptly schedule development inspections.

SERVICE 2 Ensure the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties by enforcing the Building Code and the Zoning Resolution.

- Goal 2a Promptly address complaints.
- Goal 2b Rigorously enforce building and zoning laws.
- Goal 2c Prevent construction-related fatalities and injuries.

HOW WE PERFORMED

- In the first four months of Fiscal 2020, total job filings remained stable, including 17,040 Building Information System (BIS) filings and 18,557 DOB NOW filings. The number of completed plan reviews for total BIS and DOB NOW filings increased by 6.7 percent from 33,983 to 36,259, including 17,312 BIS completed plan reviews, and 18,947 DOB NOW completed plan reviews. Filings and plan reviews are expected to continue increasing via DOB NOW as volume shifts to that system from BIS.
- The average time to complete first plan reviews for new buildings at the Borough Offices increased by nearly three days to 7.6 days, and for major renovations rose from 5.2 to 7.6 days. For jobs filed through the Hub, average plan review times for new buildings rose from 4.4 to 5.1 days, and for major renovations increased from 4.3 to 5.2 days. Average plan review times for minor renovations at the Borough Offices increased from 1.2 to 2.7 days, and rose from 0.1 to 0.2 days for the Hub. For DOB NOW, the average time to complete first plan reviews was half a day. These increases in average time to first plan review can be attributed in part to a 45 percent increase in reviews performed compared to the previous year, staff turnover, and training commitments for staff as the agency implemented additional work types in DOB NOW beginning in August 2019.
- The average wait time for a construction inspection fell from 2.3 days to 2 days, while average wait times for plumbing inspections increased slightly, from 2.3 to 2.4 days and for electrical inspections decreased from 2.6 to 2.3 days.
- The Department responded to nearly 740 fewer Priority B complaints during the reporting period, down to 27,284. At the same time, the average time to respond to Priority B complaints increased from 10.9 days to 13.1. The Department expects average response times to B complaints to continue to remain well below its 40-day target. The Department continued to allocate resources to prioritizing and reducing its backlog of these complaints.
- The Department completed 60,608 construction inspections compared to 64,863 in the same Fiscal 2019 period, and issued 32,008 OATH/Environmental Control Board violations (10.3 percent more than a year ago). Of the violations heard, 73 percent were upheld, a decrease from 80 percent last year. DOB violations issued increased to 27,082 from 11,122 in the same Fiscal 2019 period. These increases can be attributed in part to knowledge sharing between units and targeted enforcement sweeps of bad actors and problem areas within the industry.
- Despite hiring additional enforcement inspectors, as well as continuing to strengthen its education and outreach programs by working with industry professionals to raise awareness about best safety practices, construction accidents causing serious or fatal injuries still occur. Compared to the same four-month period last year, construction-related accidents decreased from 265 to 209 and construction-related injuries decreased from 270 to 218. Fatalities decreased from five to four. Efforts to raise safety awareness included direct outreach at over 1,500 job sites, distribution of 50,000 safety cards in multiple languages, mailing permit holders and site safety professionals about training requirements, issuing public service notices, training of over 1,000 professionals during Local Law 196 information sessions, and social media engagement.

SERVICE 1 Facilitate safe and compliant development.

Goal 1a Improve processing efficiency.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
Filings (DOB NOW)	19	13,244	24,415	*	*	7,765	18,557
Jobs filed (BIS)	92,569	82,286	81,809	*	*	27,829	17,040
★ Average customer in-person transaction time (minutes)	7	5	5	↓	↓	5	5
Average customer in-person wait time (minutes)	27	21	23	*	*	19	19
Work permits issued - Initial (DOB NOW)	NA	11,239	20,299	*	*	6,995	11,972
Work permits issued - Renewals (DOB NOW)	NA	3,439	10,433	*	*	3,012	4,326
Building permits issued - Initial (BIS)	109,724	99,946	93,676	*	*	33,471	23,457
Building permits issued - Renewals (BIS)	56,183	58,858	56,834	*	*	19,188	18,035
Certificates of Occupancy issued	6,427	6,032	6,197	*	*	1,945	2,021
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↑↓ Directional Target	* None			

Goal 1b Promptly review initial construction plans.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
First plan reviews completed (BIS)	86,878	77,391	75,577	*	*	26,206	17,312
First plan reviews completed (DOB NOW)		13,009	24,398	*	*	7,777	18,947
★ Average days to complete first plan review (Borough offices) - New buildings	5.6	5.7	4.4	12.0	12.0	4.7	7.6
★ Average days to complete first plan review (Borough offices) - Major renovation (Alteration I)	5.8	5.5	5.0	10.0	10.0	5.2	7.6
Average days to complete first plan review (Borough offices) - Minor renovation (Alterations II and III)	1.5	1.7	1.3	4.0	4.0	1.2	2.7
Average days to complete first plan review (Hub projects) - New buildings	4.9	4.2	4.5	*	*	4.4	5.1
Average days to complete first plan review (Hub projects) - Major renovation (Alteration I)	5.1	4.3	4.2	*	*	4.3	5.2
Average days to complete first plan review (Hub projects) - Minor renovation (Alterations II and III)	0.1	0.1	0.2	*	*	0.1	0.2
Average days to complete first plan review (DOB NOW)	NA	NA	0.6	*	*	0.4	1.0
Permitted jobs professionally certified (%)	64.1%	61.2%	58.1%	*	*	59.6%	63.8%
Permitted jobs professionally certified that were audited (%)	23.0%	19.1%	13.4%	*	*	14.7%	12.5%
Of eligible audited jobs, the percent of audits that resulted in revocation notices (%)	42.0%	37.9%	41.1%	*	*	36.1%	50.8%
★ Average days to complete first review (DOB NOW)	NA	NA	0.6	↓	↓	0.4	1.0
Average days from filing to approval (DOB NOW)	NA	NA	45.6	*	*	46.8	47.2
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↑↓ Directional Target	* None			

Goal 1c Promptly schedule development inspections.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
★ Average days between construction inspection request and inspection	2.7	2.4	2.0	↓	↓	2.3	2.0
★ Average days between electrical inspection request and inspection	6.5	3.9	2.6	↓	↓	2.6	2.3
★ Average days between plumbing inspection request and inspection	3.4	2.1	2.4	↓	↓	2.3	2.4
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↑↓ Directional Target	* None			

SERVICE 2 Ensure the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties by enforcing the Building Code and the Zoning Resolution.

Goal 2a Promptly address complaints.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
Priority A (emergency) complaints received	16,591	16,989	17,281	*	*	6,303	5,927
Priority B (nonemergency) complaints received	74,240	78,526	77,386	*	*	28,024	27,284
Priority A complaints responded to	15,981	16,463	16,737	*	*	6,119	5,787
Priority B complaints responded to	72,848	75,326	70,027	*	*	25,882	25,843
★ Average time to respond to Priority A complaints (days)	0.6	0.4	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.3
★ Average time to respond to Priority B complaints (days)	38.2	13.2	11.4	40.0	40.0	10.9	13.1
★ Residential illegal conversion complaints where access was obtained (%)	36.4%	38.2%	38.0%	44.0%	44.0%	39.3%	37.0%
– Access obtained and violations were written (%)	39.8%	42.3%	41.6%	*	*	43.3%	37.0%
Work without a permit complaints where access was obtained and violations were written (%)	29.9%	29.6%	29.3%	*	*	25.6%	34.7%
★ Critical Indicator	"NA" Not Available		↑↓ Directional Target	* None			

Goal 2b Rigorously enforce building and zoning laws.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
★ Construction inspections completed	156,508	188,221	203,077	140,000	140,000	64,863	60,608
Construction inspections resulting in violations (%)	24.6%	26.0%	30.1%	*	*	26.2%	31.5%
DOB violations issued	89,430	79,422	49,506	*	*	11,122	27,082
Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings violations issued	66,399	82,228	89,964	*	*	29,011	32,008
★ Violations admitted to or upheld at the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (%)	81.7%	79.1%	79.9%	80.0%	80.0%	79.7%	73.3%
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️ Directional Target * None							

Goal 2c Prevent construction-related fatalities and injuries.

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
Construction-related incidents	1,170	1,052	915	*	*	347	309
– Construction-related accidents	611	729	625	*	*	265	209
★ Construction-related injuries	622	744	646	⬇️	⬇️	270	218
★ – Construction-related fatalities	9	16	11	⬇️	⬇️	5	4
Incident inspections resulting in violations (%)	64.3%	72.7%	87.4%	*	*	75.4%	76.5%
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY-WIDE MANAGEMENT

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
Collisions involving City vehicles	98	81	110	*	*	37	45
Workplace injuries reported	21	20	10	*	*	4	6
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY CUSTOMER SERVICE

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
Customer Experience							
E-mails responded to in 14 days (%)	63%	50%	53%	57%	57%	56%	46%
Letters responded to in 14 days (%)	60%	47%	58%	57%	57%	47%	91%
Calls answered in 30 seconds (%)	NA	70%	68%	*	*	71%	66%
Completed customer requests for interpretation	63	100	122	*	*	NA	NA
CORE customer experience rating (0-100)	90	90	NA	85	85	NA	NA
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️ Directional Target * None							

Performance Indicators	Actual			Target		4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY19	FY20
Response to 311 Service Requests (SRs)							
Percent meeting time to first action - Elevator - Defective/Not Working (60 days)	92%	100%	NA	50%	50%	0%	0%
Percent meeting time to first action - General Construction/Plumbing - Contrary/Beyond Approved Plans/Permits (60 days)	62%	88%	98%	72%	72%	99%	97%
Percent meeting time to first action - General Construction/Plumbing - Failure to Maintain (60 days)	80%	63%	63%	77%	77%	54%	86%
Percent meeting time to first action - Illegal Conversion of Residential Building/Space (60 days)	53%	91%	100%	57%	57%	100%	97%
Percent meeting time to first action - No Permit - Construction, Plumbing, Cranes & Derricks, Building/Use, Elevator (60 days)	93%	98%	97%	77%	77%	98%	96%
★ Critical Indicator "NA" Not Available ⬆️ Directional Target * None							

AGENCY RESOURCES

Resource Indicators	Actual			Sept. 2019 MMR Plan	Updated Plan	Plan	4-Month Actual	
	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY20 ¹	FY21 ¹	FY19	FY20
Expenditures (\$000,000) ²	\$150.4	\$159.7	\$173.2	\$208.4	\$210.6	\$199.5	\$68.3	\$67.0
Revenues (\$000,000)	\$303.3	\$329.7	\$388.5	\$335.1	\$335.4	\$335.9	\$119.9	\$125.0
Personnel	1,551	1,633	1,665	1,877	1,899	1,893	1,597	1,660
Overtime paid (\$000,000)	\$7.9	\$7.4	\$7.5	\$3.0	\$3.0	\$3.0	\$2.3	\$2.4
¹ January 2020 Financial Plan		² Expenditures include all funds		"NA" - Not Available				

SPENDING AND BUDGET INFORMATION

Where possible, the relationship between an agency's goals and its expenditures and planned resources, by budgetary unit of appropriation (UA), is shown in the 'Applicable MMR Goals' column. Each relationship is not necessarily exhaustive or exclusive. Any one goal may be connected to multiple UAs and any UA may be connected to multiple goals.

Unit of Appropriation	Expenditures FY19 ¹ (\$000,000)	January 2020 Financial Plan FY20 ² (\$000,000)	Applicable MMR Goals ³
001 - Personal Services	\$132.6	\$156.9	All
002 - Other Than Personal Services	\$40.6	\$53.7	All
Agency Total	\$173.2	\$210.6	

¹Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2019. Includes all funds. ²Includes all funds.
³Refer to agency goals listed at front of chapter. "NA" Not Available * None

NOTEWORTHY CHANGES, ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS

- The metric formerly reported as "First plan reviews completed—Total", has been replaced with the following two metrics: "First plan reviews completed (BIS)" and "First plan reviews completed (DOB NOW)". This change has been made to clarify that the total number of plan reviews is the sum of reviews conducted via both systems, which are discussed individually in the narrative.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional information go to:

- Building One City:
http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/buildings/pdf/building_one_city.pdf
- Data and Reporting:
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/buildings/about/metrics-reports.page>

For more information on the agency, please visit: www.nyc.gov/buildings.

