



Staff Report

Planning and Development Services – Building

Report To: Special Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: July 7, 2020
Report Number: PDS.20.45
Subject: Semi-Annual Building Services Statistics 2020
Prepared by: Barb Dooks, Building Services & Zoning Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.20.45 entitled “Semi-Annual Building Services Statistics 2020” for information purposes;

AND THAT Council receives the update provided by staff relating to Building Services continued provision of services through the COVID-19 Pandemic.

B. Overview

The Semi-Annual Building Services Statistics Report for the five-month period of analysis January 1 to May 31, 2020 provides a summary of building permit activity and construction values, along with comparisons to the same period for the previous three years. Building inspections conducted during this five-month period are presented and compared to the same period for the previous three years. A summary of revenue is also presented for the period and compared to the previous three years.

C. Background

A semi-annual update of Building Services activity is provided to Council for assessment and review for key indicators in evaluating local economic impact and trends.

D. Analysis

The regular activities of the Building Services division include permit intake, applicable law determination and review, plans examination and approval of permit applications, inspection scheduling, on-site building inspections, general application process inquiries, provision of zoning and building code information to the public, reporting, record maintenance, and enforcement of the *Building Code Act*.

For the five months from January 1 to May 31, 2020, Building Services issued a total of 166 building permits, with a corresponding total construction value of \$53,047,308. The Division also collected \$400,396 in permit revenue during this time period, while conducting 1,266 building inspections. Although numbers

are down for the five-month period relative to the same period in previous years, it is expected that the year-end building statistics recover and will be close to the three-year average.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, while the Town Hall has been closed to the public, Building Services staff continued to function with full staffing levels which included a limited number of staff in the office, and plans examiners, building inspectors, and administration staff working remotely.

Over the course of the past few months, the Provincial Government's List of Essential Workplaces has been amended several times. During the period from April 4th to May 19th, all construction activity throughout the province was suspended except for residential dwellings and renovations with a permit issued prior to the effective date of the order. While this order was in place, building permit applications, plans review, inspections, zoning reviews and all other department functions continued to be performed except for the issuance of Building Permits. Throughout the first 3 months of 2020, revenue was up +30% over the average of the same period for the previous 3 years (2017, 2018 and 2019). Payment of permit fees has been delayed in some cases due to this, some market uncertainty and some applicants waited to apply until the Provincial Orders were amended or lifted. Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Division continues to experience increases in the number of permit applications for new dwelling units directly relating to the construction industry activity throughout the municipality.

Since building activity in the Town of The Blue Mountains consists mainly of residential construction projects, construction activity remained strong during the pandemic period. Requests for Building Inspections remained high and inspections continued as requested except within occupied dwellings.

On May 19th the List of Essential Workplaces was amended to permit all construction activity to resume. Since that time, the number of permit applications and inquiries have greatly increased, and most contractors are feeling optimistic about their clients remaining committed to starting building projects this year as planned.

Activity

Activity in the construction industry throughout The Blue Mountains has the potential to remain strong for the remainder of 2020. In the Blue Mountain Village and Craigeleith area, newly serviced subdivisions are ready for permits for the construction of single detached dwellings and semi-detached dwellings within Windfall Phase 4 and Second Nature Phase 3 developments. New townhomes are expected to break ground at Manorwood Block 153 while the final four apartment blocks are expected to be constructed at Mountain House this summer. Construction sites along Highway 26 including the Villages at Peaks Bay, and Peaks Meadows continue to be very active. Building permits are expected to be issued soon for dwellings within the Bayside Development at Highway 26 and County Road 40. Building activity in Lora Bay will continue with the anticipated opening of the Cottages at Lora Bay Phase 4 and Lora Bay Phase 4 residential construction sites. Commercial construction continues for the Thornbury Craft Cider & Beer production facility addition and a new clubhouse for The Peaks Ski Club while proposed expansion at the Craigeleith Ski Club is expected to commence later this year.

Building Permits

The following data provides a graphical breakdown of the number of building permits issued and the related construction values, compared to the previous three years. The construction value for the first five

months of 2020 is comparable to the value in 2017, while the number of permits issued is lower than the 2017 totals. The comparable construction values may be attributed to larger and more complex buildings being constructed within the Town of The Blue Mountains.

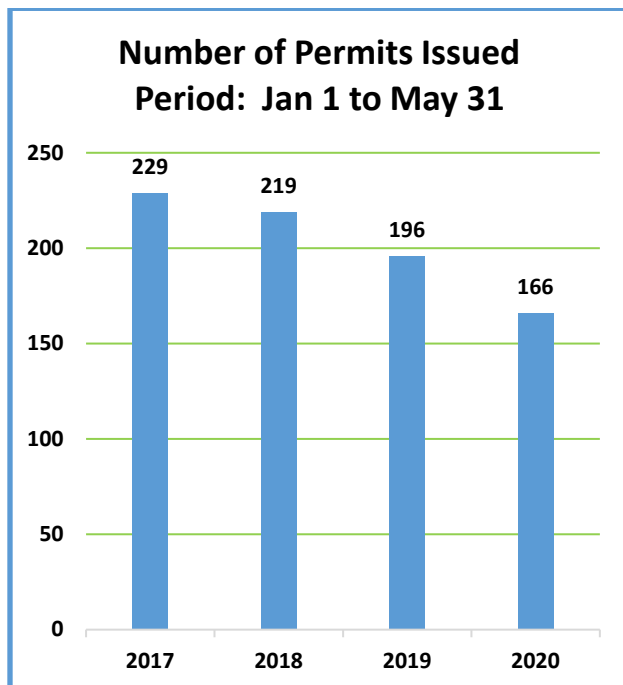


Chart is based on semi-annual data from Jan to May

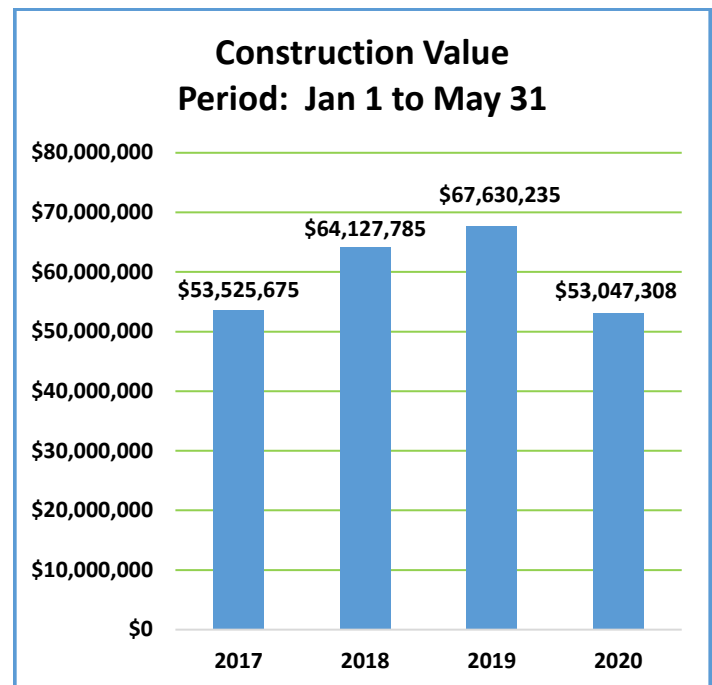
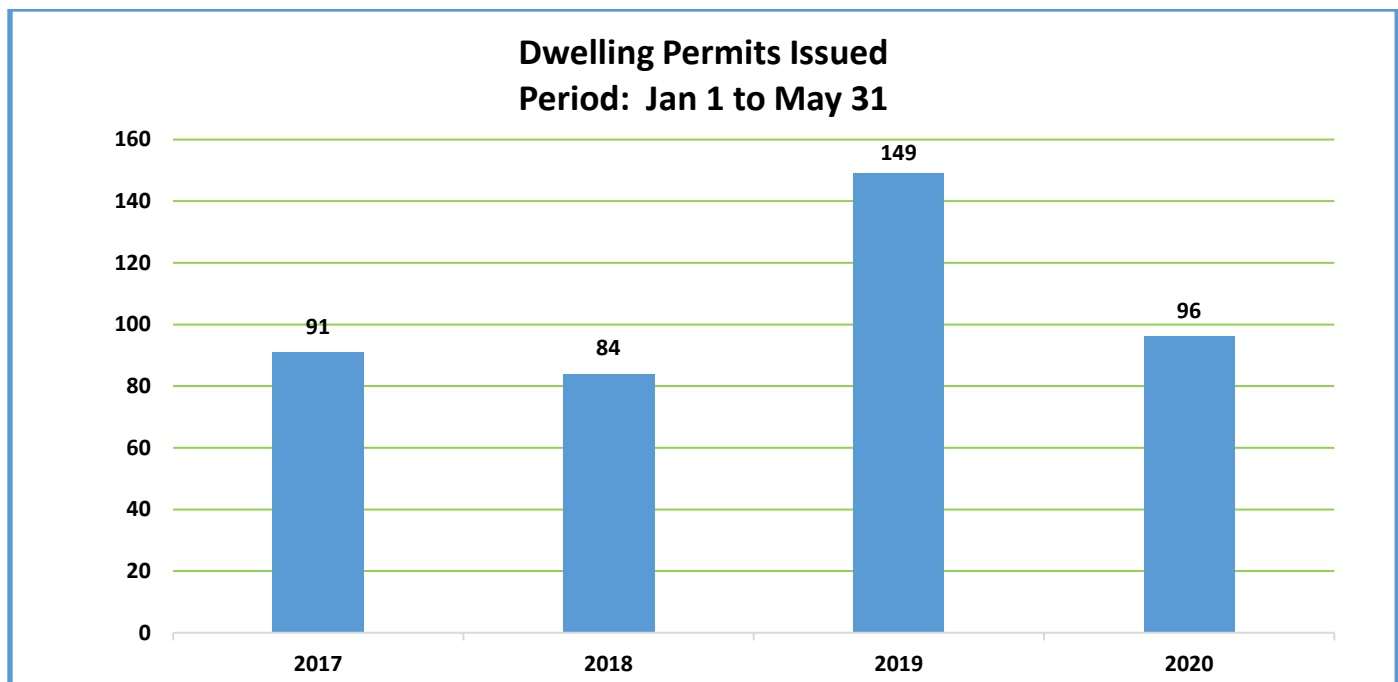
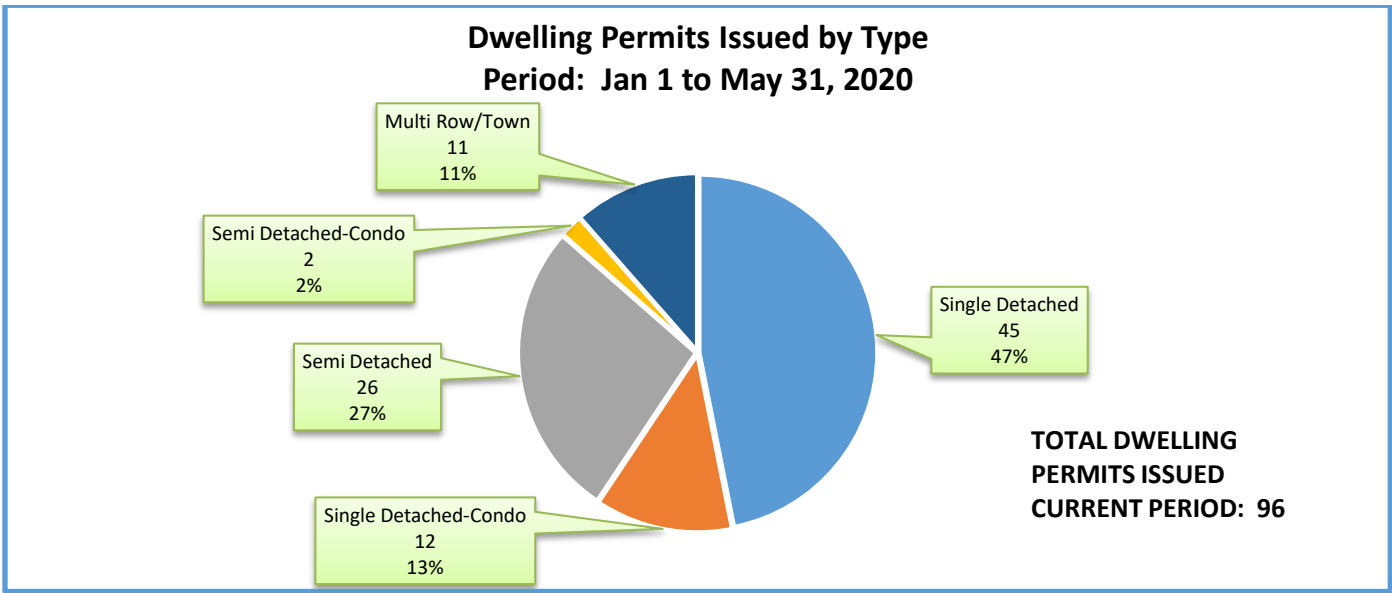


Chart is based on semi-annual data from Jan to May
Construction Values reflect TACBOC Standards

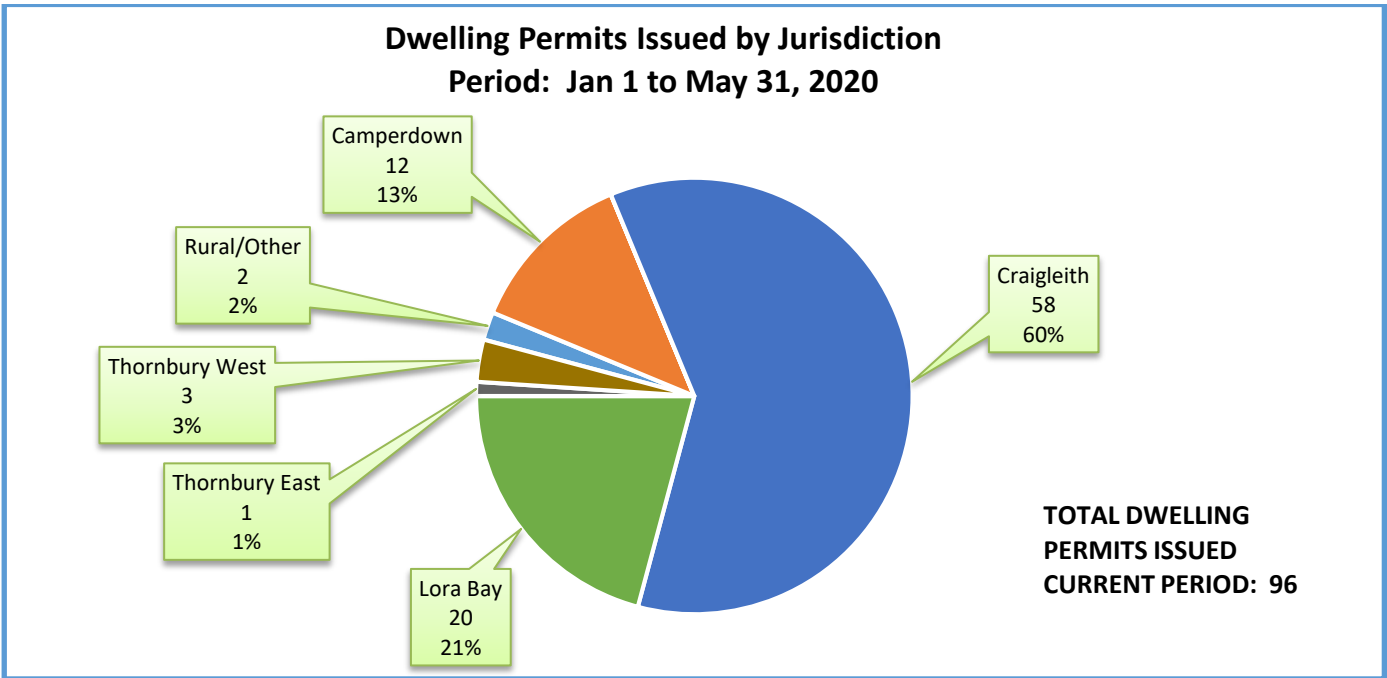
The following data provides a graphical breakdown of the number of new dwelling permits issued compared to the previous three years:



The following data provides a graphical breakdown of the ***number and type of dwelling permits*** issued during the current five-month period:

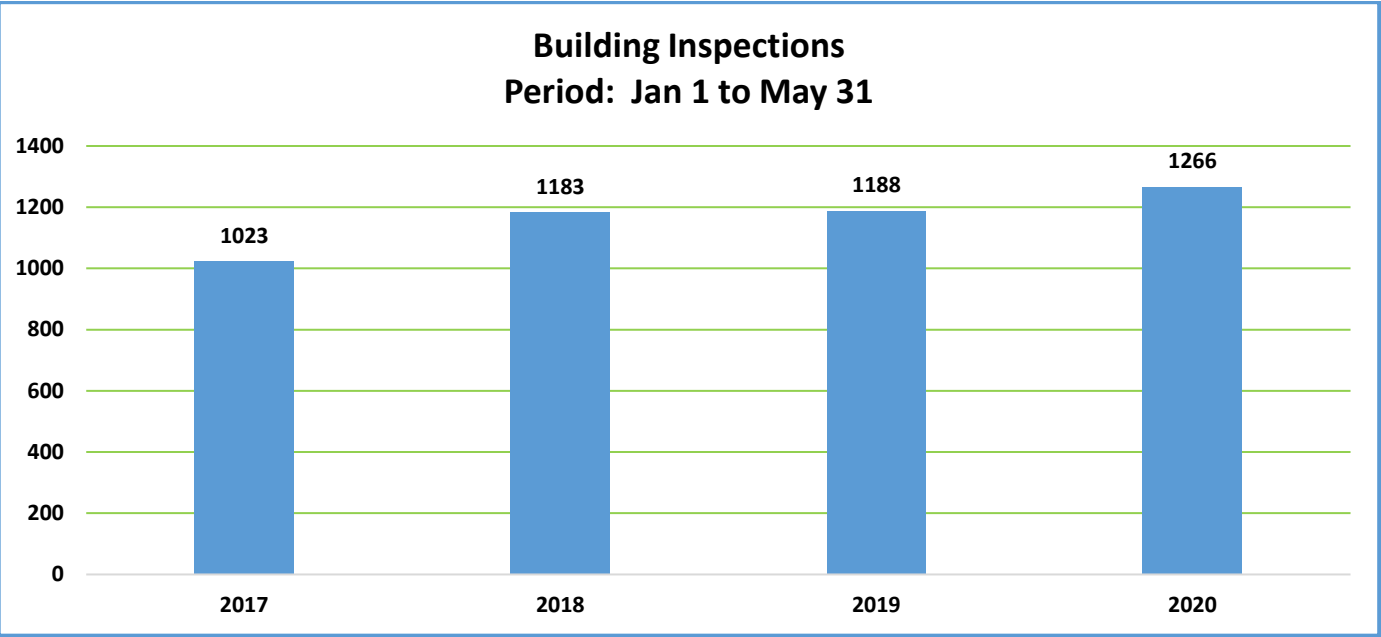


The following data provides a graphical breakdown of ***dwelling permits issued by jurisdiction*** during the current five-month period:



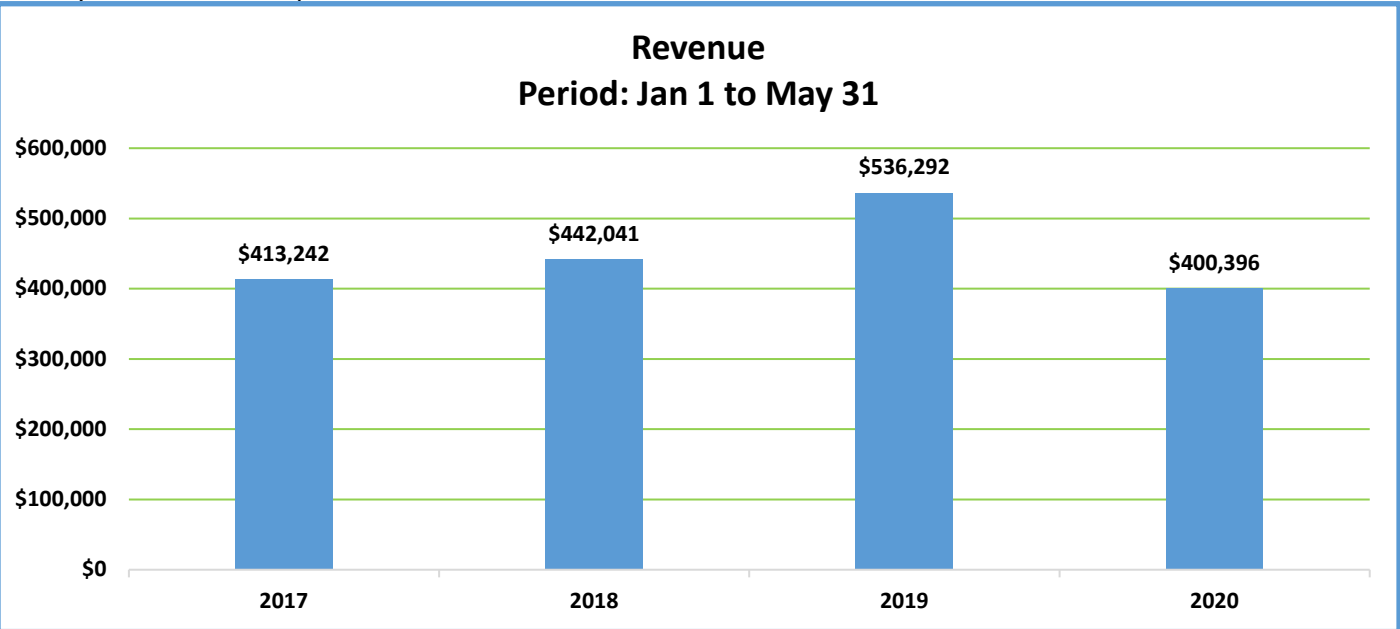
Inspections

The following data provides a graphical breakdown of the number of inspections conducted compared with previous three years same time period. Inspections performed by the Building Services Division continue to increase year over year, including during the pandemic. The increased inspections may be attributed to larger and more complex buildings which may require additional inspections to confirm compliance with the Ontario Building Code.



Revenue

The following data provides a graphical breakdown of building permit revenue compared with previous three years same time period:



E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence
Objective #2: Improve Internal Communications Across our Organization

F. Environmental Impacts

None.

G. Financial Impact

The Building Department is sitting in a good position at the end of May 2020. Expenses are running under-budget due to staff vacancies in the Salary and Benefit expense lines. Revenues are also running below as compared to this time in 2019 however with the restrictions being lifted by the Province revenues are expected to normalize. If at the end of 2020 the Building Department is in a deficit position, the Building Rate Stabilization Reserve Fund has a balance of \$1.46M.

H. In consultation with

Nathan Westendorp, Director of Planning & Development Services

Sam Dinsmore, Deputy Treasurer/Manager of Accounting and Budgets

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. Comments regarding this report should be submitted to Tim Murawsky, cbo@thebluemountains.ca

J. Attached

None.

Respectfully submitted,

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Building Services & Zoning Coordinator

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For more information, please contact:
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