



City of Camrose

Administrative Report

To: Committee of the Whole Meeting Date: January 20, 2025

From: Manager – Planning and Development

Re: For Information – 2024 Annual Development Statistics

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Committee of the Whole Council accept this report as information.

BACKGROUND:

- Planning & Development has committed to tracking several development permit, business license, and land development statistics in order to provide greater transparency and accountability on the department's operations.
- As many of these statistics have now been tracked for over 10 years, the data presented provides a more relevant view of changing conditions in the development industry in Camrose.
- 10 non-exempt projects over \$500,000 in quoted construction value were approved, and a further 5 projects over \$1,000,000 were approved. This is triple the annual average.
- Usually, there are exempt (i.e. non-taxable) projects that comprise of between 15% - 50% of the estimated construction value. In 2024, there were no meaningful exempt projects. The growth in permits was driven entirely by the private sector.
- With the significant amount of private sector investment compared to previous years, the 2024 private capital investment (\$56M) eclipsed the significant investment in the City of Camrose in 2023 (\$43M).
- New lot development continued to slow as there is a significant amount of volume on the market dating back over 15 years. However, it is encouraging to see the 2008 subdivisions in Southwest Meadows finally seeing a notable increase in dwelling development.
- The volume of minor permits increased in all categories year-over-year.
- The total number of active business licenses continues to increase, resulting in a 10% increase in business license revenue.
- A substantial amount of development continues downtown. In the time since the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan was under development, the amount of vacant and underutilized land downtown has been reduced by 1/3 (or 10 acres).
- The full report is attached for review.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT/MUNICIPAL DIRECTIVES:

Build a Strong Economy

The City develops strong relationships with the local business community to encourage their growth. Camrose further builds our economic base by attracting sustainable, innovative industries and entrepreneurs.

ADVOCACY / COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES:

Not applicable.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS:

Not applicable.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Development Statistics – 2024 Annual Summary

SUBMITTED BY:

Aaron Leckie
Manager of Planning and Development

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Leckie".

APPROVED BY:

Malcolm Boyd
City Manager

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized "MB".

City of Camrose Planning & Development

Development Statistics – 2024 Annual Summary

Contents

Development Statistics – 2024 Annual Summary	1
Summary:	2
Total Development Permits	3
Subdivisions	4
Redistricting, Road Closure, & Plan Amendments	5
Development Permits (Major)	6
Development Permits (Major) – Volume of Work by Month	8
Development Permits (Major) – Approval Time vs. Cost	9
Development Permits (Major) – Days to Approval	10
Development Permits (Minor)	11
Total Business Licenses	12
Business License Revenues	14
Downtown Vacant & Underutilized Lands Map	15

Summary:

The Planning & Development Department (P&D) is responsible for Current Planning and Long-Range Planning activities for the City of Camrose. Current Planning consists of approvals which fall into the categories of licenses, permits, subdivisions, and bylaw amendments. This annual summary focuses on Current Planning activities and the overall volume of work as just one way of tracking development activity.

Overall, the total number of permits is down 20% relative to the 10-year average. However, in 2024, P&D continues to see a record number of large projects non-exempt from taxation. In fact, the growth was entirely driven by the private sector. Private sector investment eclipsed the significant growth year in 2023 (\$56M in 2024 up from \$43M in 2023).

There were 10 non-exempt projects over \$500,000 in quoted construction value, and a further 5 non-exempt projects over \$1,000,000 in quoted construction value. Even after excluding projects that did not break ground in 2024, this is triple the annual average. In future years, the threshold for a major project will likely need to be moved up as high-end single detached dwellings are now being captured in major projects.

The dynamics of residential development in Camrose continue to change. For two consecutive years, there have been more multi-unit development projects than single detached dwellings.

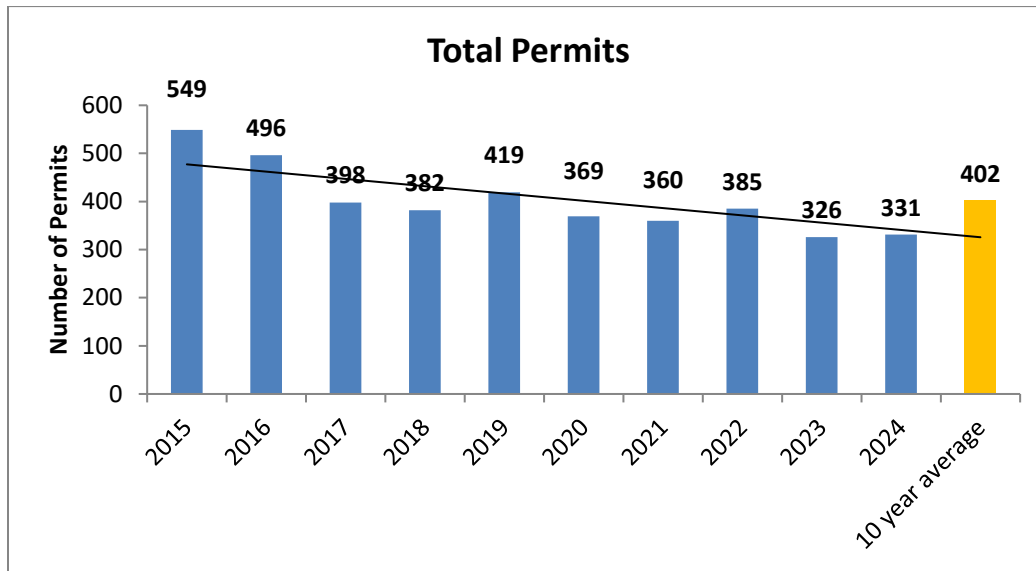
Minor permits have increased in all categories year-over-year.

Business license revenues are up 10%. New businesses opening continue to more than offset closures resulting in an increase in the total number of active operating businesses in Camrose.

P&D continues to update the development of vacant and underutilized lands in downtown Camrose. Properties were added to the map as buildings were vacated, reclassified, or developed. Since reporting started as the Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan project was underway, the amount of vacant and underutilized land downtown has been reduced by approximately 10 acres or approximately 1/3 from when reporting started in 2016. Downtown development optimizes existing assets such as municipal servicing, adds value, and ensures downtown is the cultural center of Camrose.

Total Development Permits

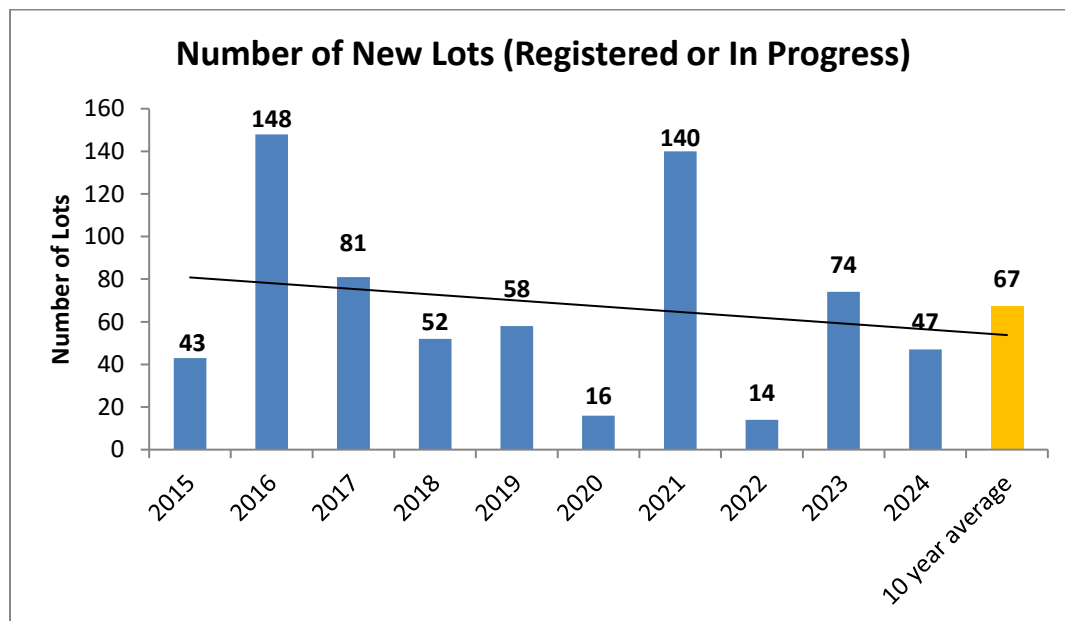
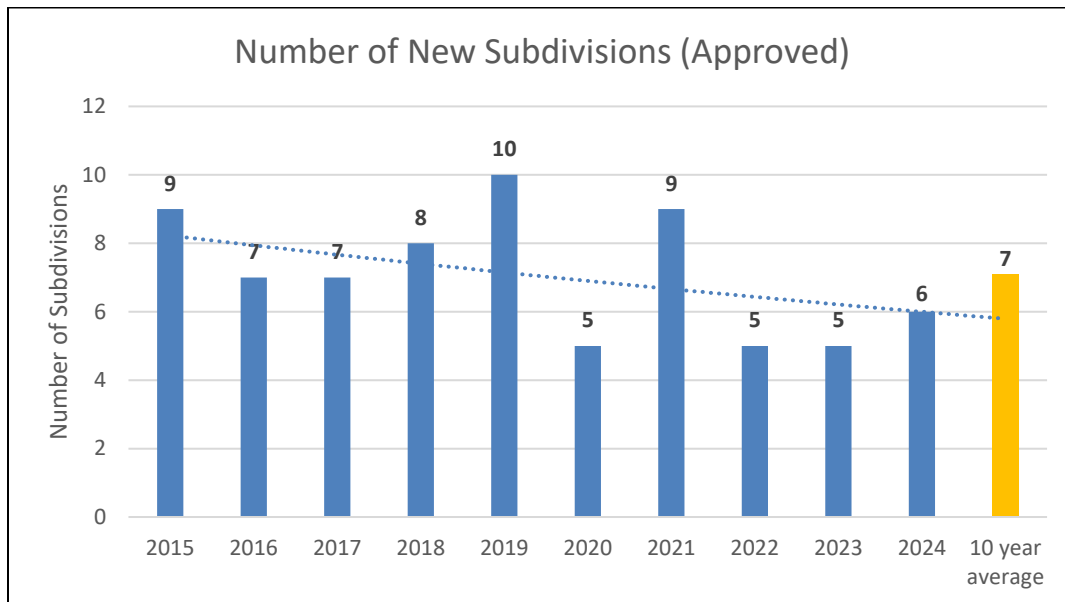
The total number of permits is down 20% relative to the 10-year average. However, a trend since 2020 has been the replacement of lower value permits (such as accessory buildings) with higher value permits (such as multi-unit developments). When calculating the total number of permits, each of these examples are still counted as 1.



Subdivisions

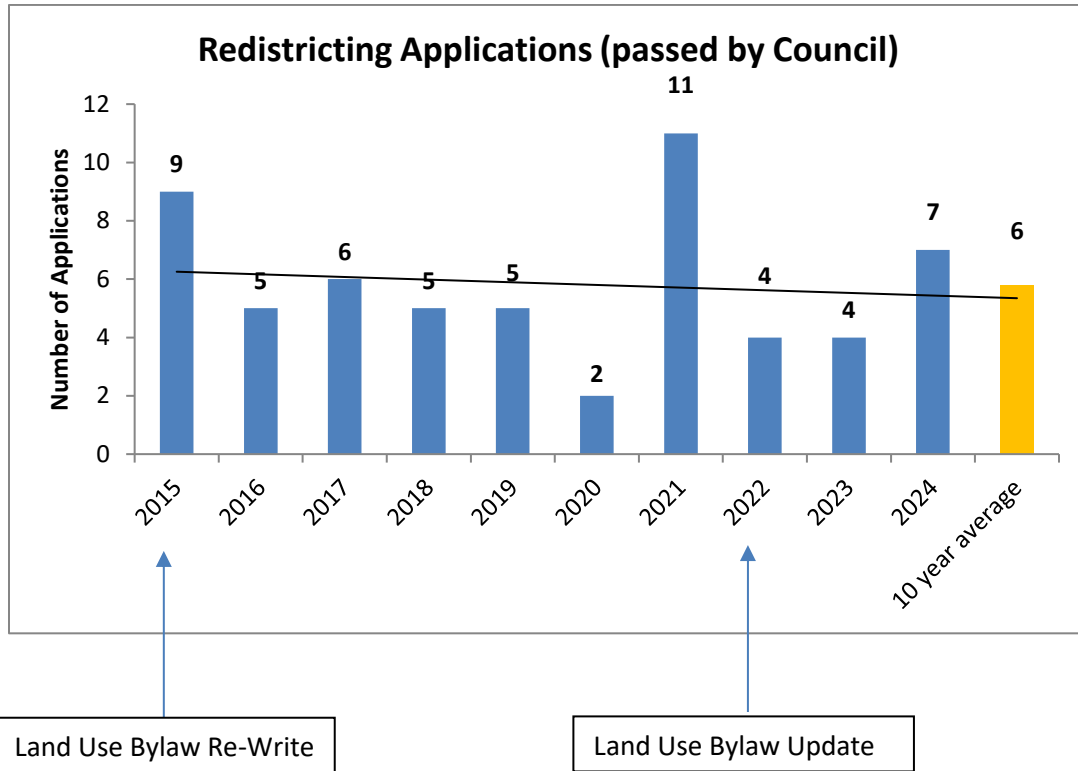
2024 was a below-average year for approved subdivisions and for residential lot registration. The inventory increased substantially in 2021 as West Park phase 5, Valleyview West phase 2, and Creekview Estates were developed. Camrose still has a large inventory of undeveloped lots dating back to 2008, but that has seen some decrease in undeveloped lots in 2024 (primarily Southwest Meadows).

New subdivisions that were not registered by January 1st, 2024, do not generate taxable growth until 2025. Most of these lots will transition to real growth in 2025, as home development has recently or will soon commence. In 2025, West Park and Stoney Creek Estates are expected to drive most of the dwelling construction in new areas.



Redistricting, Road Closure, & Plan Amendments

In 2024, 6 Redistricting applications and 1 Land Use Bylaw text amendment were approved; this is consistent with the 10-year average. Camrose continues to see a low instance of amendments under these application categories, indicating the LUB remains a workable document.



Development Permits (Major)

Major development permits consist of residential (single detached dwellings & multi-unit dwellings), commercial, institutional, industrial, and mixed-use applications. A continuing trend from 2020–2024 is a lower total number of permits, but the projects are much larger in size.

10 approved non-exempt (i.e. taxable) development permits provided an estimated construction value of over \$500,000.

- IPEC Developments (Fourplex)
- IPEC Developments Inc. (Five-plex)
- (2) Battle River Homes (Duplex)
- Battle River Homes (Single Detached Dwelling)
- Battle River Homes (Fourplex)
- Zetsen Master Builders (Fourplex)
- Zetsen Master Builders (Fourplex)
- Five Star Home Solution (Duplex)
- Kimmy Holdings (Dealership – Commercial Addition)

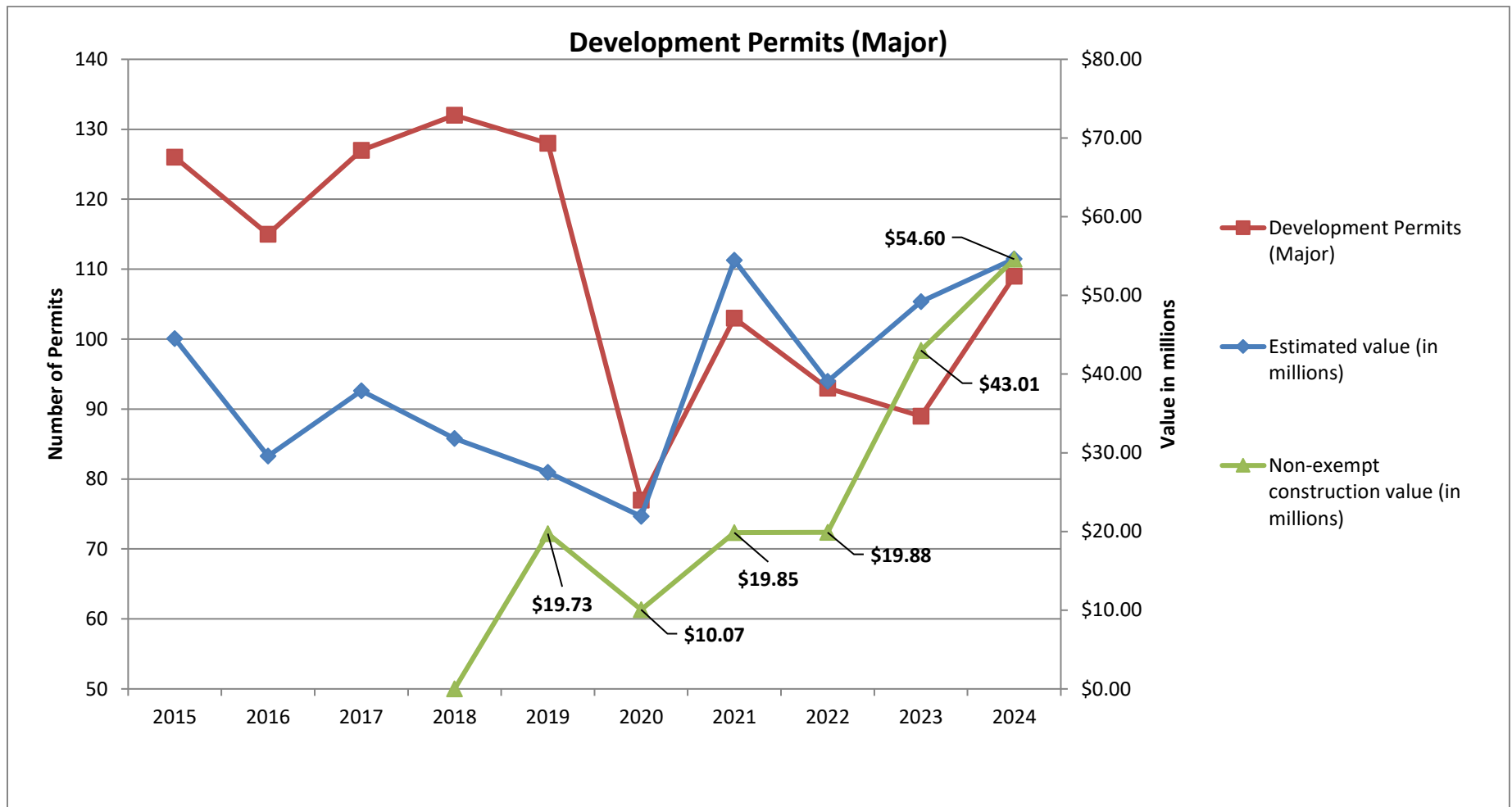
5 approved non-exempt (i.e. taxable) development permits provided an estimated construction value of over \$1 million each.

- Collabor8 Architecture & Design (Vision Credit Union)
- Arc Studios (98 Unit Residential Apartment)
- Alair Homes Camrose (Single Detached Dwelling)
- Goransrud Holdings Ltd. (12 Unit Multi-Unit Dwelling)
- Align Builders Ltd. (Lamb Ford Renovations)

Unlike previous years, there were no major exempt (i.e. non-taxable) projects approved in 2024. The private sector has exclusively driven growth in 2024. In a typical year exempt projects account for between 15% and 50% of the total estimated construction value.

Development Permits currently in progress that are not included in this report, as they have not been approved, are as follows:

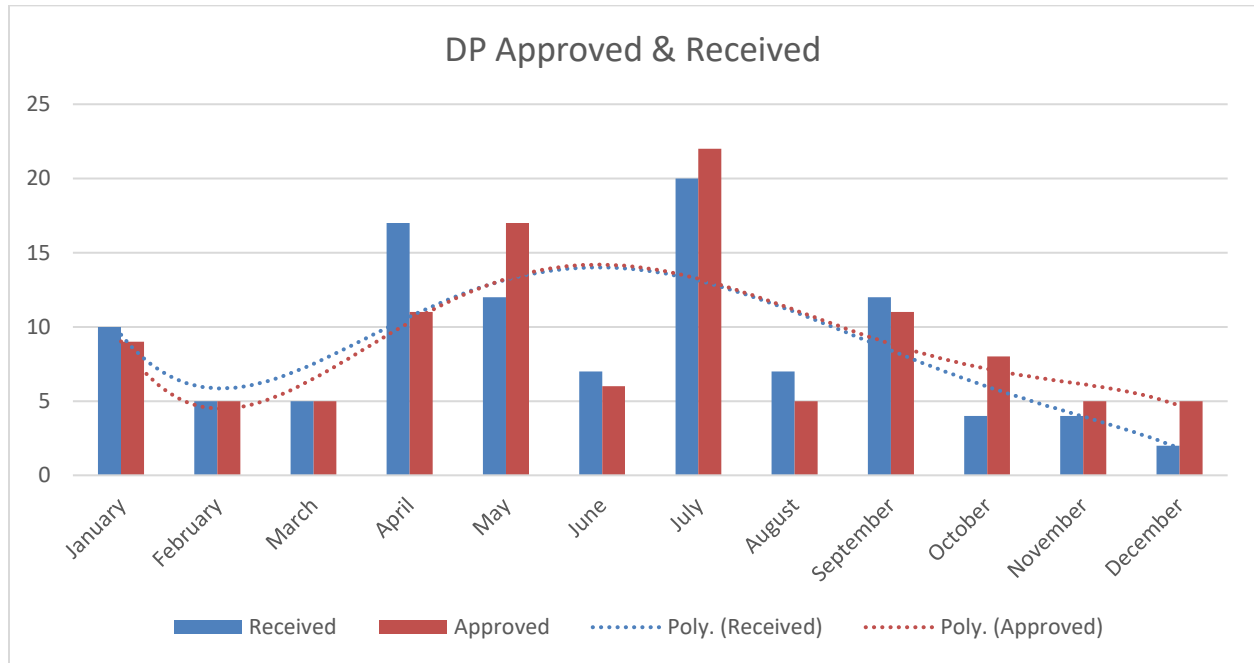
- Five Star Home Solutions (Industrial Building)
- BR2 Architecture (30 Unit Residential Apartment)



** This chart does not include in progress development permits of which have not been approved. The total estimated construction amount of in progress permits is \$10,540,000.

Development Permits (Major) – Volume of Work by Month

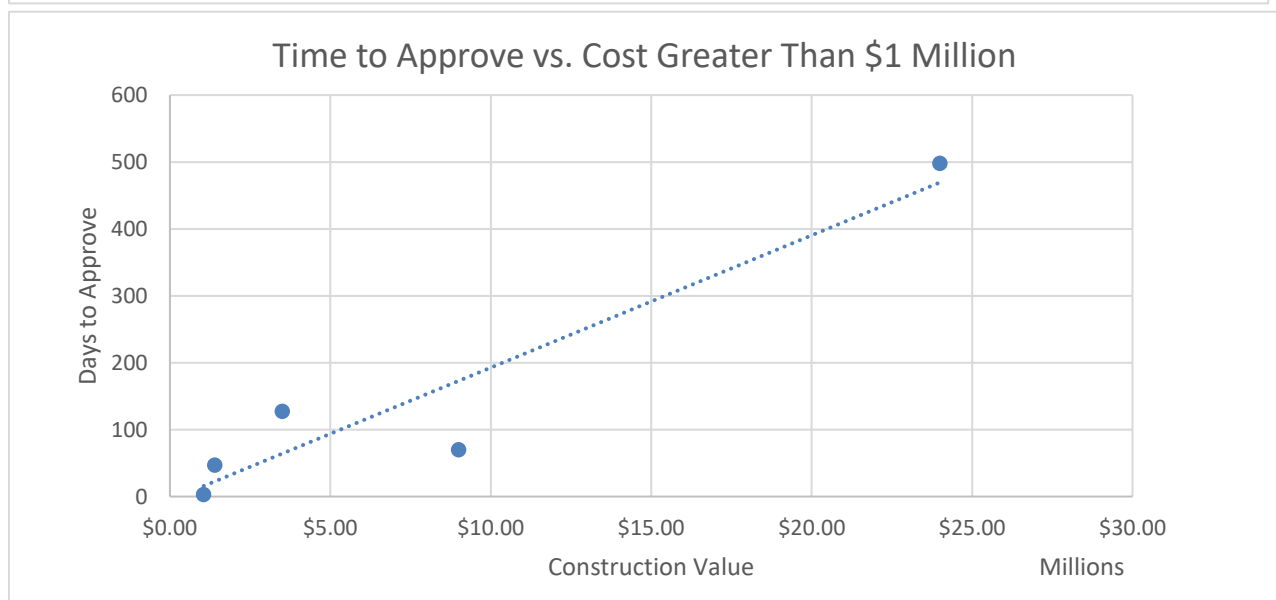
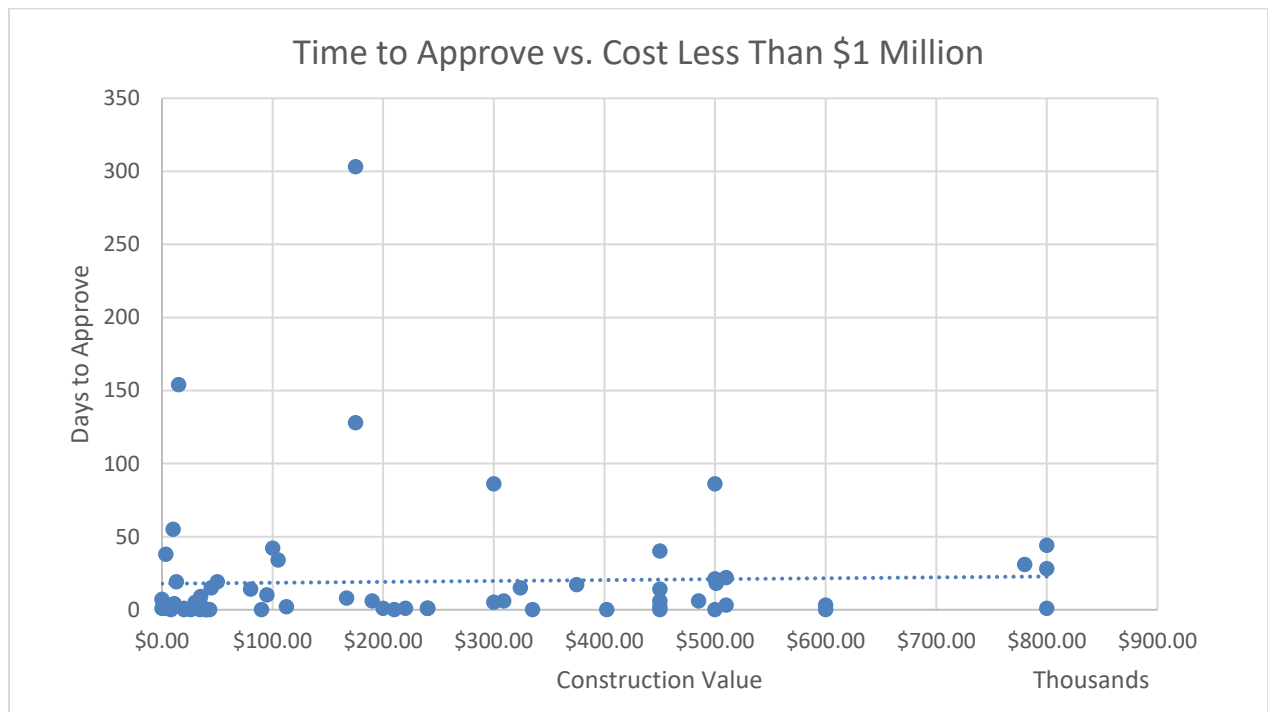
The seasonality to the volume of work was noticeably different in 2024. Typically, there is a “spring surge” in advance of the construction season, and an “autumn push” in advance of cold weather. It was quite unusual to see the greatest volume of work in July.



Development Permits (Major) – Approval Time vs. Cost

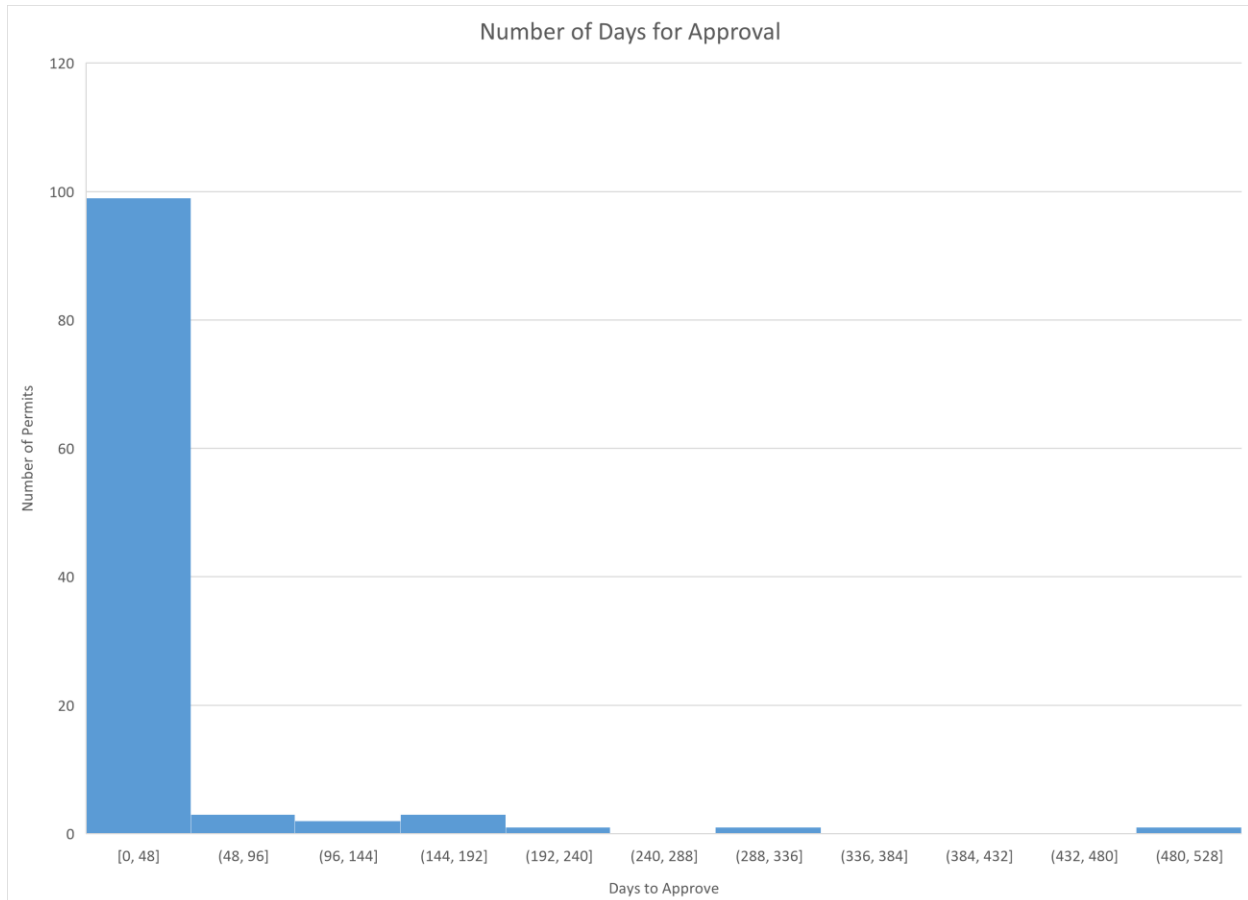
Most major development permits are under \$1 million dollars in value and are approved well within mandated timelines. In some cases, advertising requirements, public engagement, or the necessity of further studies or applications can delay a project, but these are rare occurrences.

Higher valued construction projects usually require supportive studies like a traffic impact assessment, stormwater management plan, detailed utility information, or other data to support the application. As such, there is some correlation between the projected construction cost and the time it takes to review and approve.



Development Permits (Major) – Days to Approval

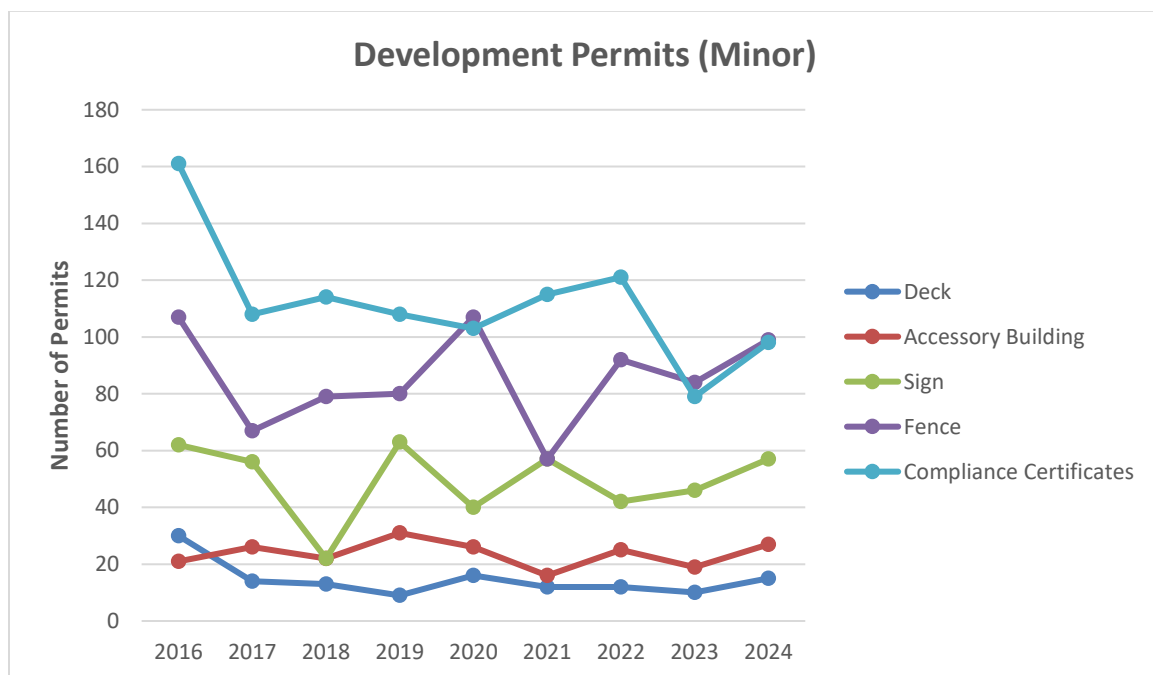
The Development Authority has 20 days to deem an application complete or incomplete, and a further 40 days to review the application once it is deemed complete. Almost all major permits are approved well within mandated timeframes. In some instances, extensions are required if additional information is required by the Development Authority. This information usually comes to light through internal or public referrals.



Development Permits (Minor)

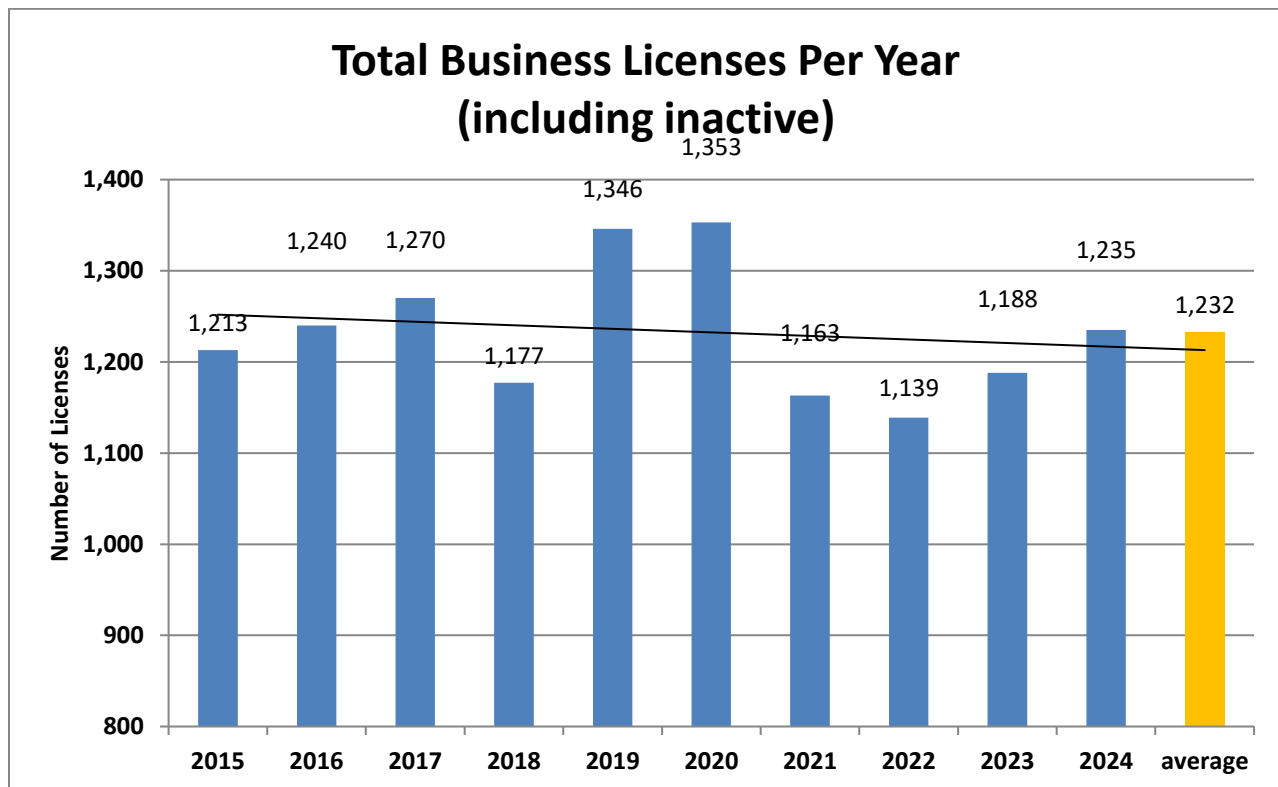
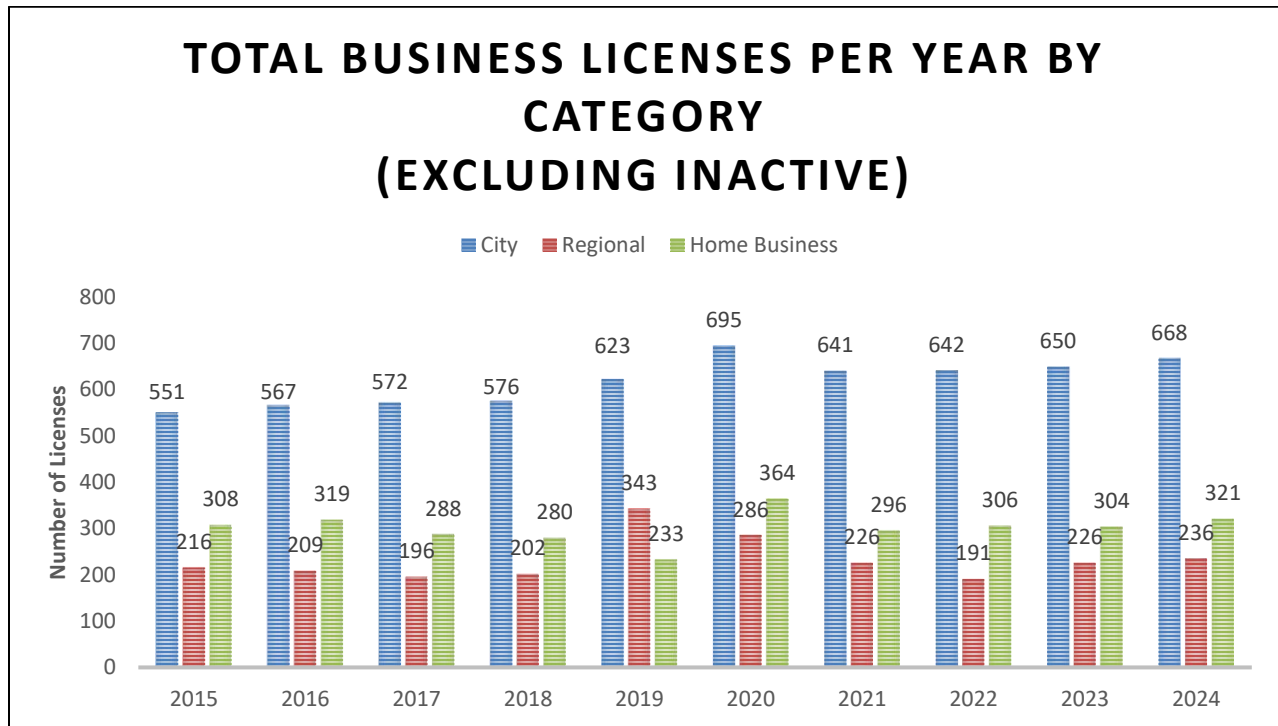
P&D processes development permits for accessory structures, decks, fences, and signs. P&D also provides compliance certificates on request. Although compliance certificates were up year-over-year, they are still lower than in the period from 2016-2022. Compliance certificate requests have dropped in number not because of a lack of demand for this service, but rather, the speed at which these home transactions must close, making a 2–3 day wait period for a municipal compliance review unrealistic. As well, P&D has received information that less real estate transactions are being conditioned with the need for compliance certificates with the current market dynamics, speed of transactions, and multiple competitive bids cited as reasons.

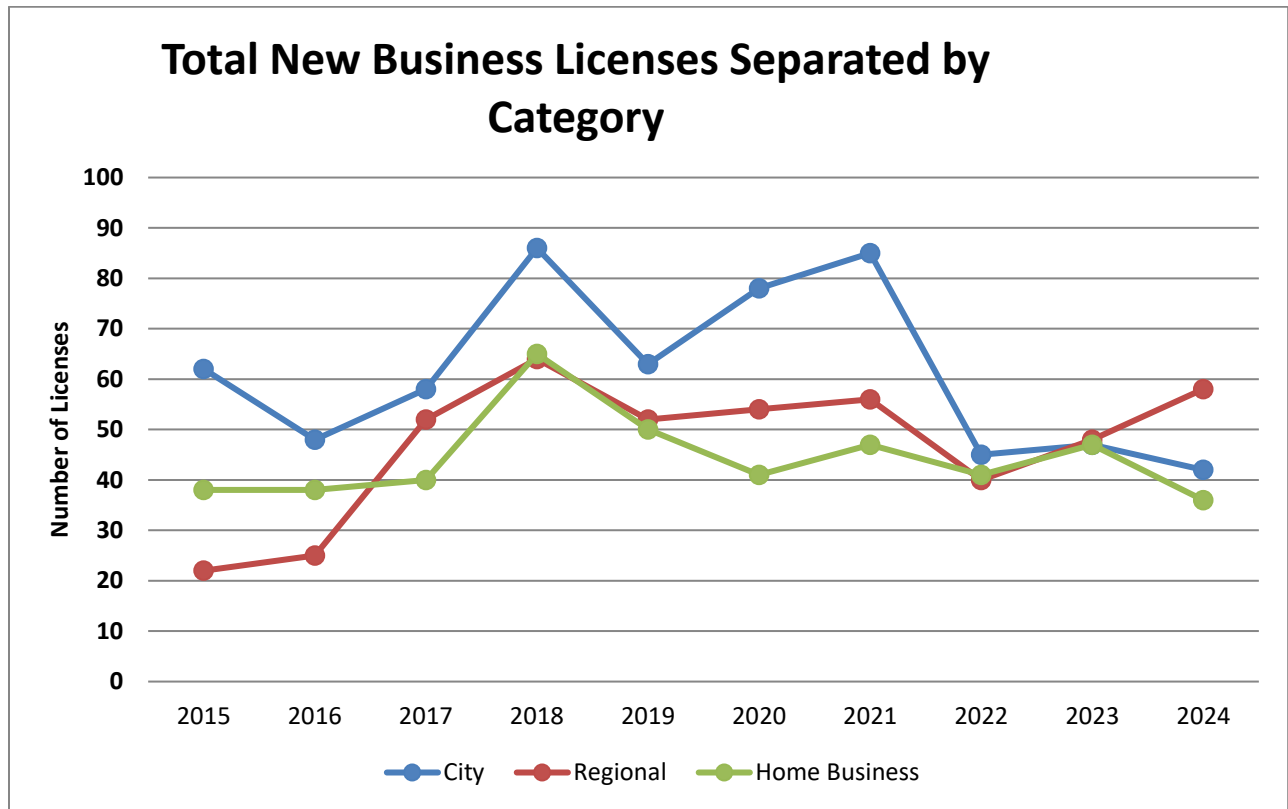
Minor permits increased in all categories year-over-year. These permit categories have historically varied significantly year to year and are not a good representation of the daily activities in P&D.



Total Business Licenses

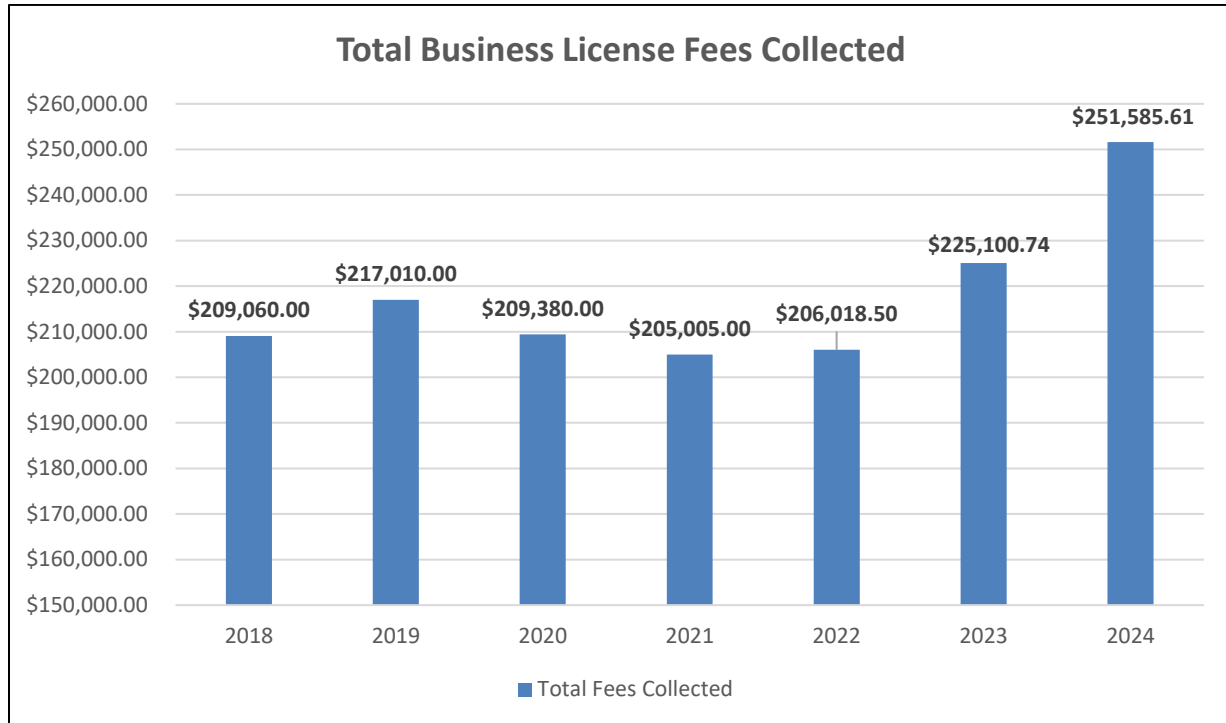
New businesses opening continue to more than offset closures resulting in an increase in the total number of active operating businesses in Camrose.





Business License Revenues

Business License revenues increased due to growth in the total number of operating businesses, especially regional businesses. Regional businesses have a higher tier application fee. In addition, the 2024 5% increase to license fees has augmented revenues.

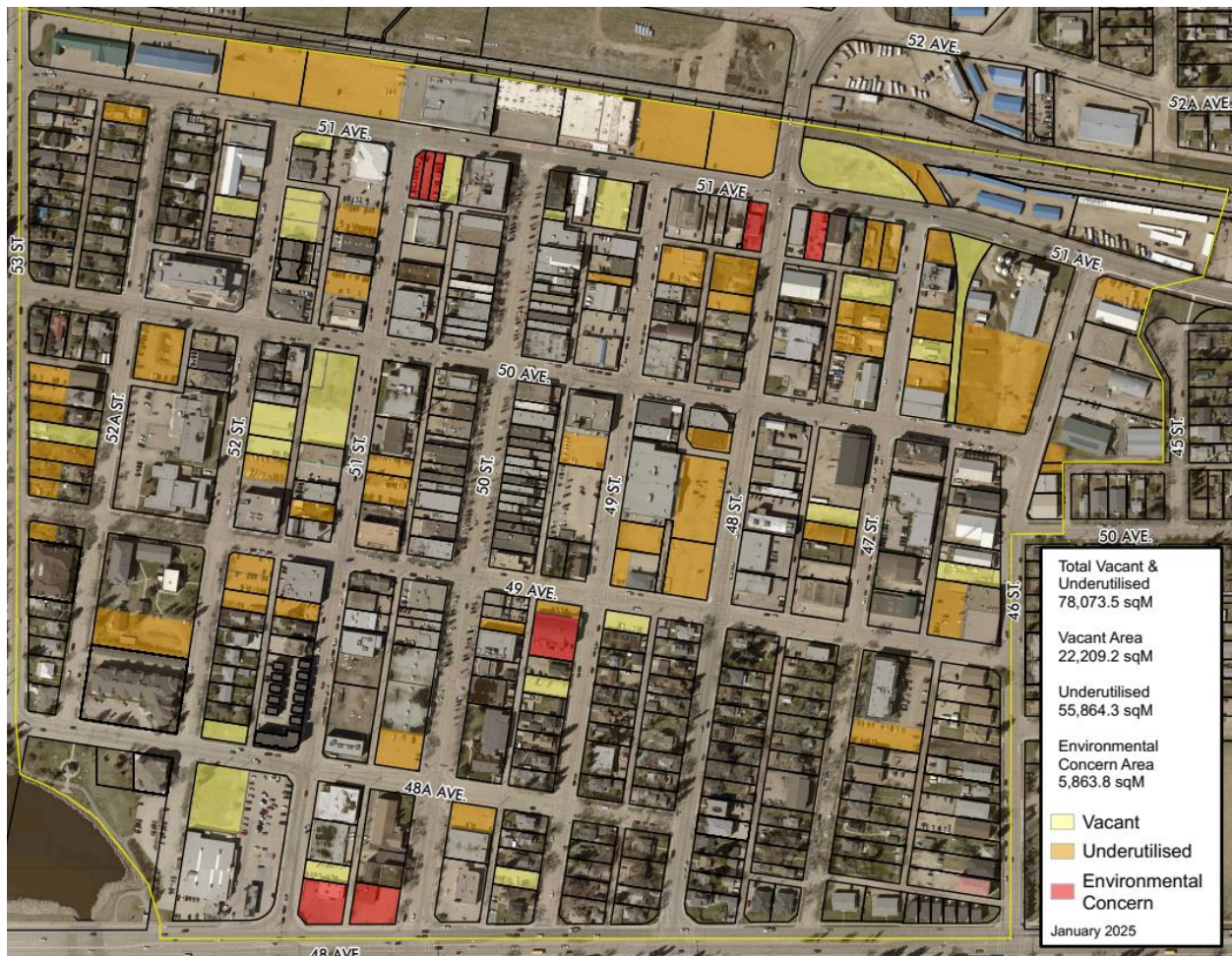


Downtown Vacant & Underutilized Lands Map

A total of 78,073m² (approximately 20.0 acres) of vacant and underutilized land remains undeveloped in downtown.

- Land is classified vacant if there is no development or the use of surface parking and could be optimized by providing collective parking arrangements.
- Land is classified as underutilized if there is a structure on the site, but the site could accommodate additional development with no impact on parking, services, or the existing businesses.
- Land is classified as having environmental concerns if there is documentation in the file regarding potential or proven contamination.

Downtown Vacant & Underutilized Lands Map



A review of property development downtown is conducted annually. Properties are removed from the map as they are developed, new vacant and underutilized land is added if permanent structures are demolished, and environmentally contaminated lands are reclassified as they are remediated. The amount of vacant and underutilized land downtown has declined since reporting started in 2016. Downtown development optimizes existing assets such as municipal servicing, adds value, and ensures downtown is the cultural center of Camrose.

Administration is anticipating a large drop of vacant and underutilized lands in 2025 when a couple of major projects are developed.

