



FAIRFAX COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2020



Fairfax County Planning & Development Agencies

Customer Bill of Rights

We strive to create a partnership of mutual respect, courtesy and accountability for all. Customers have a right to services that are ...



Accessible, Understandable and Fair



Responsive and Collaborative



Predictable, Consistent and Timely



Solution-Oriented

Customer Responsibilities:

- Use best practices to ensure quality submissions.
- Respond diligently to information requests to facilitate the review process.
- Be considerate of others to create a partnership based in mutual respect.



A Fairfax County, Va. Publication | March 2018
If accommodations or alternate formats are needed, please call 703-324-1780.

Customers and Staff Working Together

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Message from Land Development Services Director William D. Hicks, P.E.



Land Development Services' (LDS) fiscal year 2020 (FY20) began with a focus on expanding our environmental outlook initiatives, leveraging technology services, strengthening our partnership with industry and increasing outreach to residents to better deliver consistent, predictable and expedient customer service. While that focus continued throughout FY20, in the fourth quarter of the fiscal year, LDS, as well as all of Fairfax County, faced the global challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The LDS FY20 Annual Report conveys the story of a strong fiscal year that faced unprecedented challenges.

The difficulty for everyone in FY20 was understanding and analyzing the impact the pandemic had on operations. The pandemic compelled the agency to swiftly design a new virtual and all-electronic business and customer service model in March and April. Customers who previously depended on conducting business in-person at the Herrity building now learned to navigate the process online after the building closed to the public on March 27. To better accommodate our customers, LDS pivoted our permitting system to temporarily allow for all building and site permits to be completed online via ShareFile, FIDO and ProjectDox. As I write this letter, our systems have been fully integrated for electronic submission, and positive feedback from customers has been growing, as our customers and staff rapidly adapt to the new environment.

FY20 Highlights:

- » LDS processed 63,453 building and trade permits and conducted 229,381 site and building inspections.
- » LDS collected \$42,901,904 million in total revenue for permit and inspection fees.
- » Beginning March 23, 2020, building inspections were conducted virtually.

Although demand for permits dipped temporarily from March through May by about 30 percent, residential construction rebounded to nearly pre-pandemic levels by June as families embraced the “safer at home” concept, building new pools, decks, sunrooms and more. Commercial construction improved at a slower rate, but normally follows the trajectory of the residential home improvement market.

Thank you for bearing with us as we navigated how best to support the public and the building industry during an ongoing pandemic.

“ The pandemic compelled the agency to design a new virtual and all-electronic business model in March and April, posing unprecedented challenges for LDS staff and customers in the fourth quarter. ”

— William D. Hicks, P.E.
Director, Land
Development Services



New Construction in Fairfax County

\$47.7 million

Total amount of bonds released

81

Bonded public
improvements
completed

1,714

Number of new
addresses added
in Fairfax County

50

New commercial
buildings permitted

3,656

New dwelling units
permitted

(Single family homes, townhouses
and multi-family units)

\$1.7 billion

Estimated value of residential and commercial construction
Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20)*

* Fiscal Year 2020: July 1, 2019
through June 30, 2020

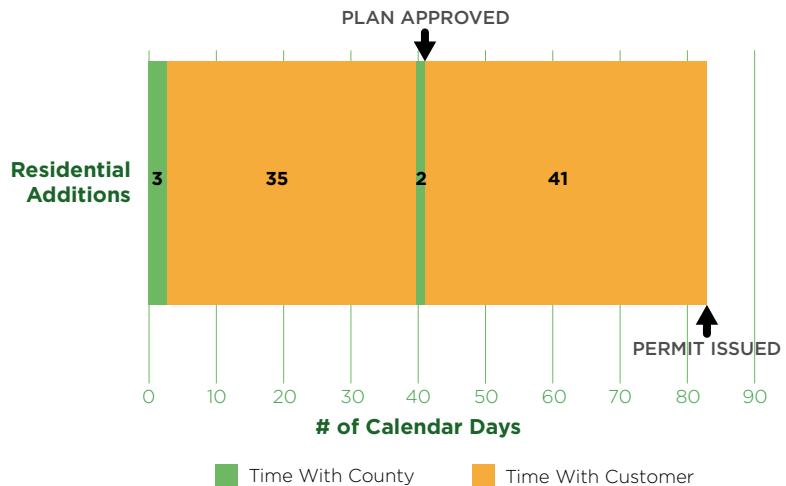
Completed Residential Additions

Residential additions include basements, decks, screened porches, sunrooms and one- and two-story additions. As the pandemic significantly impacted the latter half of FY20, Land Development Services (LDS) processed 90% of these residential additions prior to March 2020. Many projects successfully achieved permit approval in a single submission. During FY20, the average submissions required to secure permit approval was 1.5. The chart to the right depicts the average review time from application submission to permit issuance.

1.5

Average number of submissions this project type typically takes to achieve permit issuance

Average Processing Time to Permit Issuance



Details

- » 531 Projects
- » Avg. Time to Market (Measured to Plan Approval): 40 Days
- » Avg. # of Submissions: 1.5

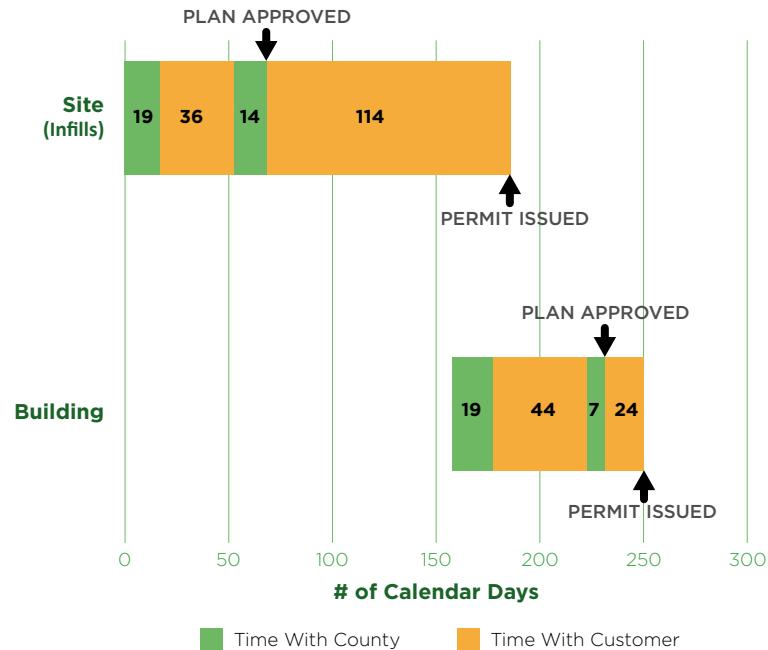
Completed Single Family Homes

Fairfax County builders develop single family home projects in two manners: custom, uniquely designed homes or production homes permitted under a common “master file” design. The chart to the right depicts the average plan review time for all single-family homes. Compared to Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19)*, the county’s review time decreased by 3 days (5%) while the customer time increased by 62 days (40%).

* Fiscal Year 2019: July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

County review time decreased by
3 Days

Average Processing Time to Permit Issuance



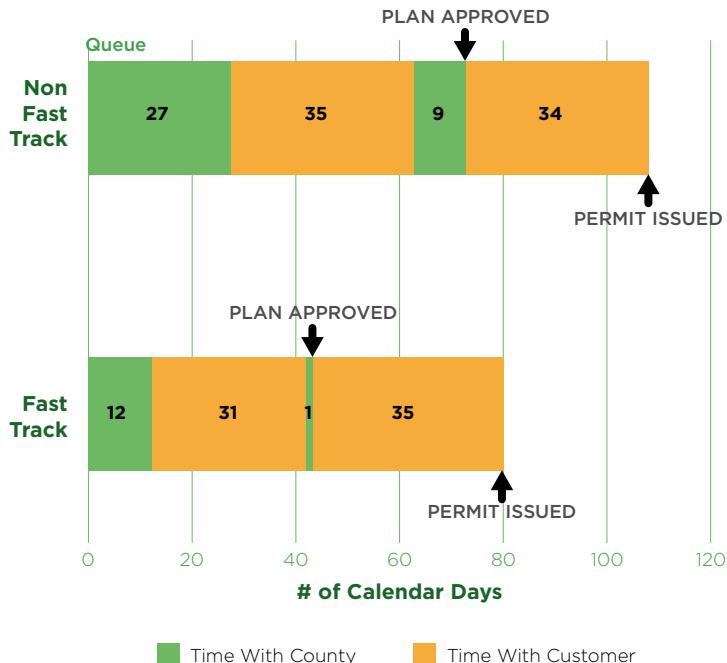
Details

- » 855 Projects (626 with Related Site Plans)
- » Avg. Time to Market (Measured to Plan Approval): 223 Days
- » Avg. # of Submissions: 1.6 Site, 2.4 Building

Completed Tenant Improvements

Commercial tenant improvements include projects to redesign interior space. This may include office or storefront modifications to accommodate a new occupancy. Submissions fall into two categories: Fast Track or Non-Fast Track. Business and Retail occupancy projects in space less than 10,000 sq. ft. (without complexities such as a kitchen hood) and all other occupancies less than 4,500 sq. ft. qualify to be reviewed under the Fast Track program. Of the 1,891 tenant improvement projects completed during FY20, 83% were submitted and approved in a prior fiscal year.

Average Processing Time to Permit Issuance



For fast track plans,
county review time decreased by

5 days
or
18 percent

Details

Fast Track Projects

- » 1,029 Projects Approved
- » 49% Approved in One Submission

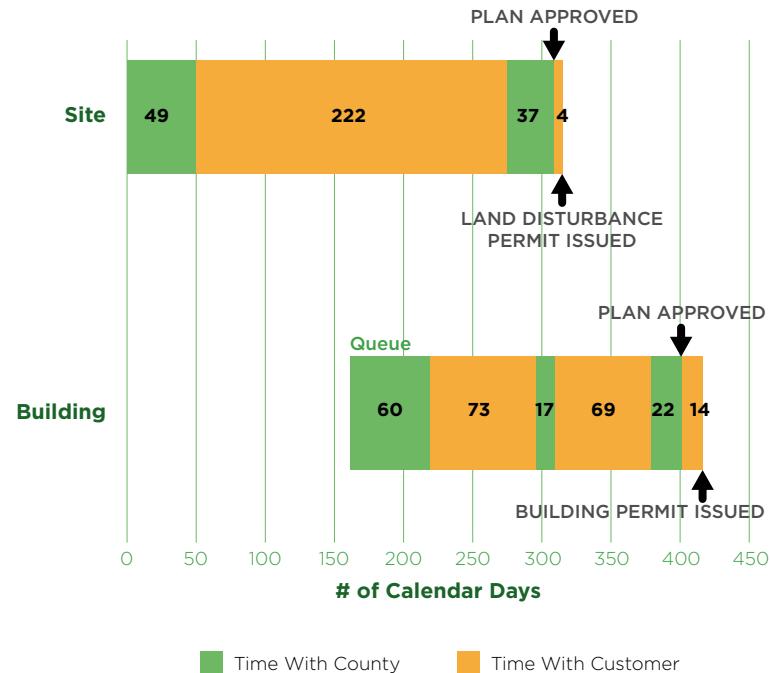
Non-Fast Track Projects

- » 862 Projects Approved
- » 22% Approved in One Submission

Completed Commercial Multi-Use Buildings

Compared to FY19, the county review time increased 56 days for commercial multi-use buildings that were certified for occupancy in FY20. This dataset includes a variety of large and small projects. For instance, this includes Reston Town Center Urban Core (402,000 sq. ft.) with a site plan approved in 2015; The Boro Buildings C2 and C3 (411,000 sq. ft.), The Preserves at Westfields (multi-family project with 441,000 sq. ft.), and the General Dynamics headquarters building (301,000 sq. ft.) all with site plans approved in 2017.

Average Processing Time to Permit Issuance

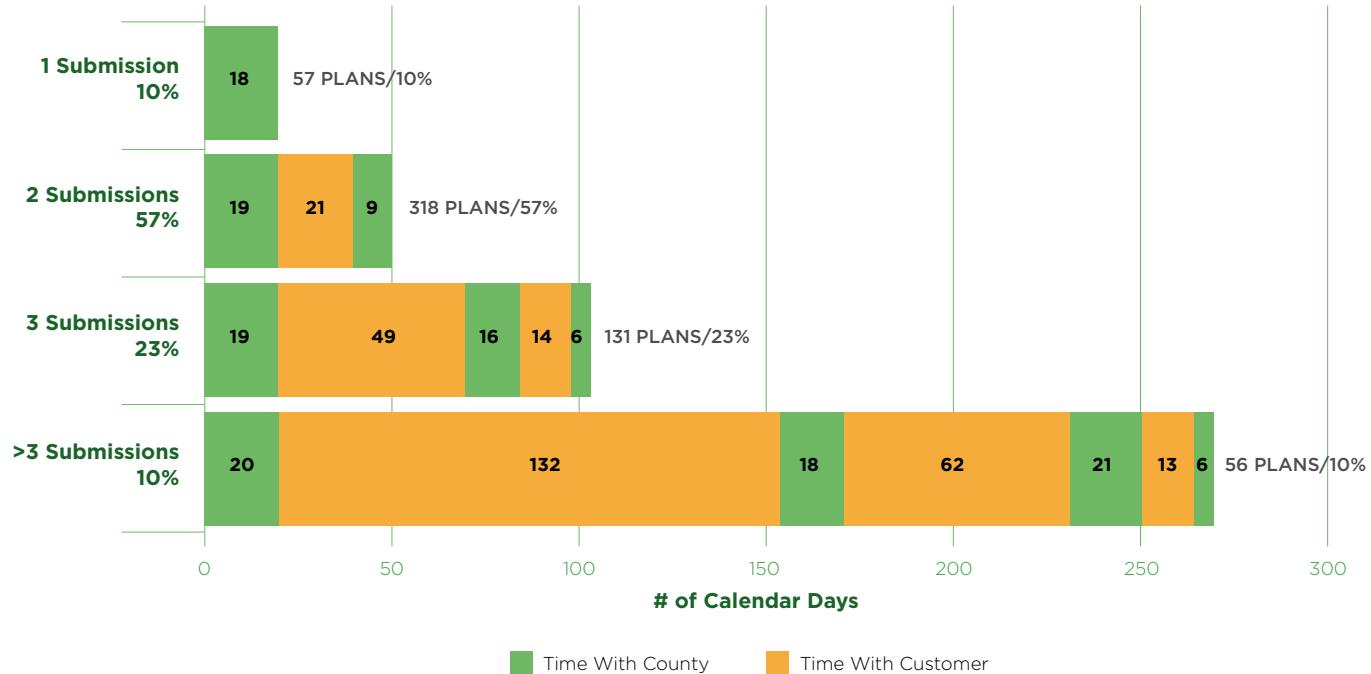


Details

- » 22 Projects
- » Avg. Time to Market (Measured to Plan Approval): 402 Days
- » Avg. # of Submissions: 1.75 Site, 2 Building

Residential Infill Plan Approvals

Site Plans Related to Single Family Home Construction | Construction Pending



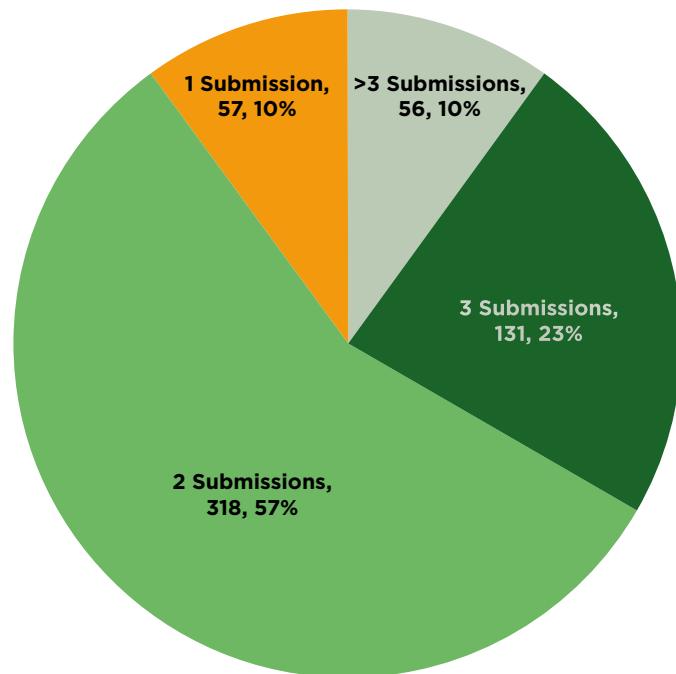
County review time
decreased by
3 Days
compared to FY19

Details

- » 562 Projects
- » Avg. Time with County: 34 Days
- » Avg. # of Submissions: 2.4

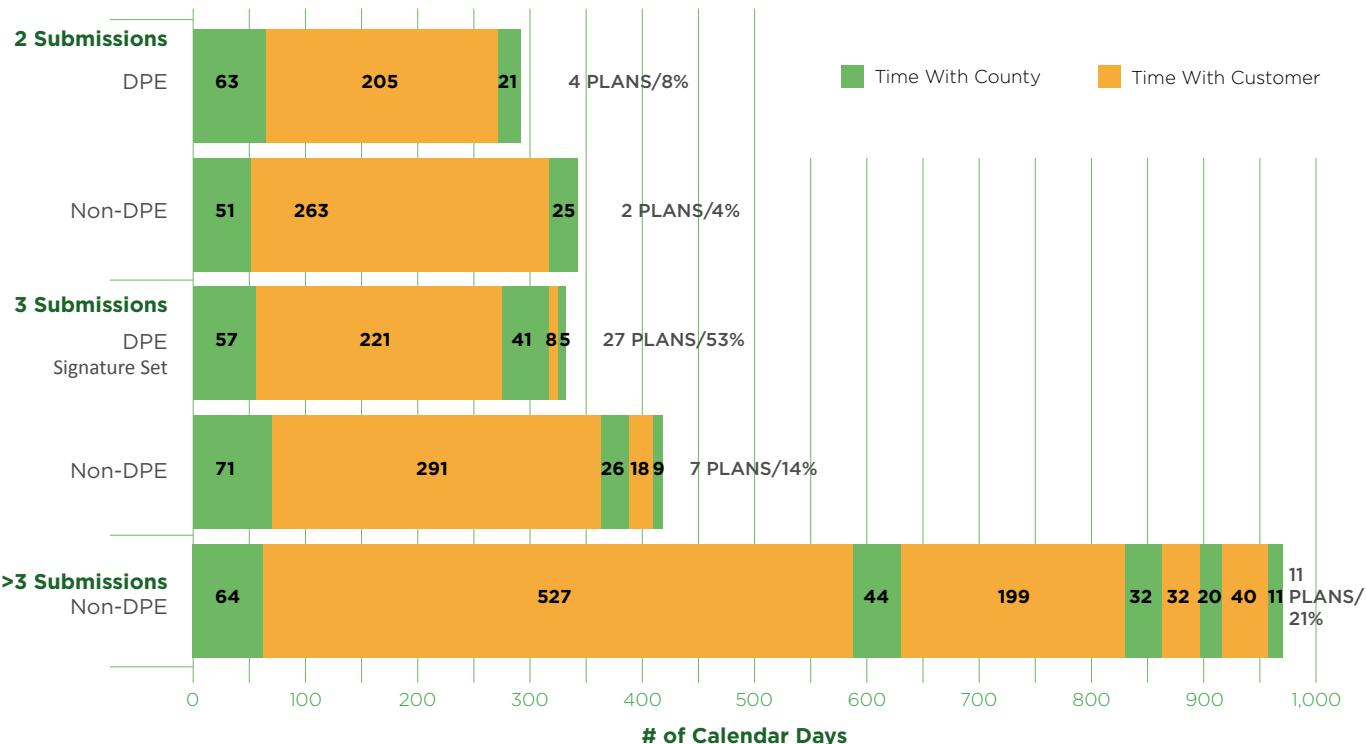
Now that most land in Fairfax County has been developed, most residential development occurs individually under a Residential Infill (INF) Plan. In FY20, LDS processed 562 such plans. For each plan, staff review for compliance with today's environmental standards, which include guidelines around stormwater management and tree preservation requirements. The county instituted two changes that have begun to positively impact INF submissions. First, the agency began conducting the gateway Minimum Standards Review for INF submissions in-house. This review assures that the plans reaching staff plan reviewers have achieved the quality necessary for a productive code review. Bringing this review in house strengthens the coordination between the gateway review and the engineering review. Second, the agency created a dedicated branch to focus solely on INF plans. This has supported consistency in review. Both adjustments have combined to reduce review time by three days (8%) when compared to FY19.

**FY20 INF Plans –
of Submissions
to Approval**
562 Total Plans



Major Site Plan Approvals

DPE and Non-DPE | Construction Pending



3.25

Average number of submissions
before approval

Details

Total Major Site Plans Approved: 51

Designated Plan Examiner
(DPE-Peer Review)

- » 31 Plans
- » Avg. Time With County: 103 Days
- » Avg. Time With Customer: 250 Days
- » Avg. # of Submissions: 2

Non-DPE Peer Review

- » 20 Plans
- » Avg. Time With County: 129 Days
- » Avg. Time With Customer: 521 Days
- » Avg. # of Submissions: 3.5



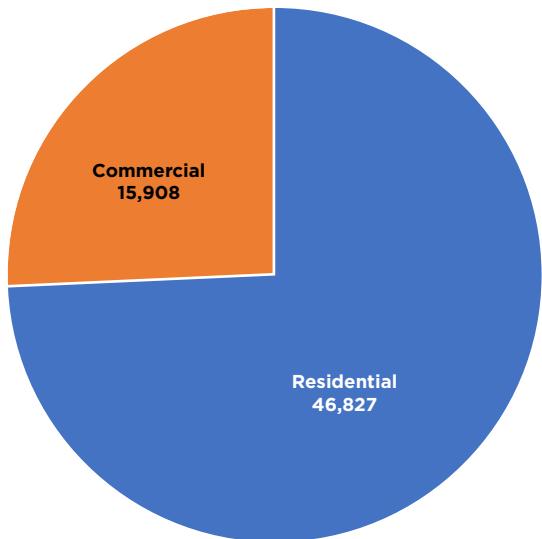
Major site plans are defined by their complexity, rather than their size. In FY20, the average size of projects with major site plans reached 4.6 acres (50% greater than the FY19 average). However, within those 4.6 acres, multiple factors complicate site design and plan review and, ultimately, the inspection process. These issues include stormwater management, re-grading, tree preservation and erosion control.

LDS continues to work with industry and other partner agencies to shorten review times. Receiving high quality plan submissions from industry is the single-most important step to shorten review times. The peer review Designated Plans Examiner (DPE) program pushes county approval toward two submissions. To meet this demand, applicants must submit high quality plans reviewed by industry peers. The value of this program is readily apparent by comparing time-to-market data. The average time-to-market is 353 days for DPE plans and 650 days for non-DPE plans. For DPE plans, this is an increase of 95 days (37%) compared to FY19. This increase is due to the escalating complexity of larger developments that are no longer centered on one or two major buildings. These campus-like developments take much more time to review.

Building and Trade Permits

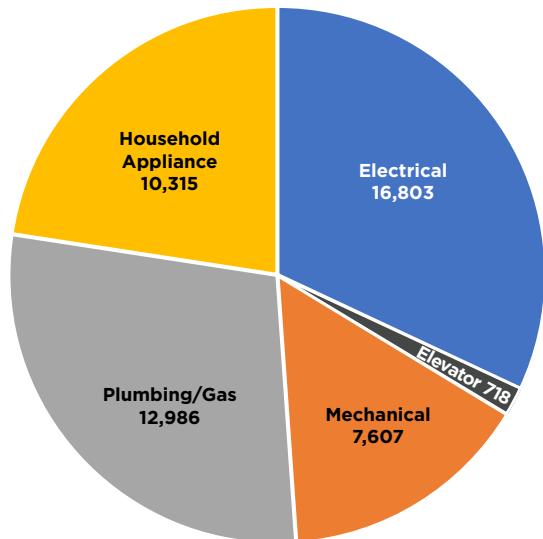
26%

Commercial permits issued



74%

Residential permits issued

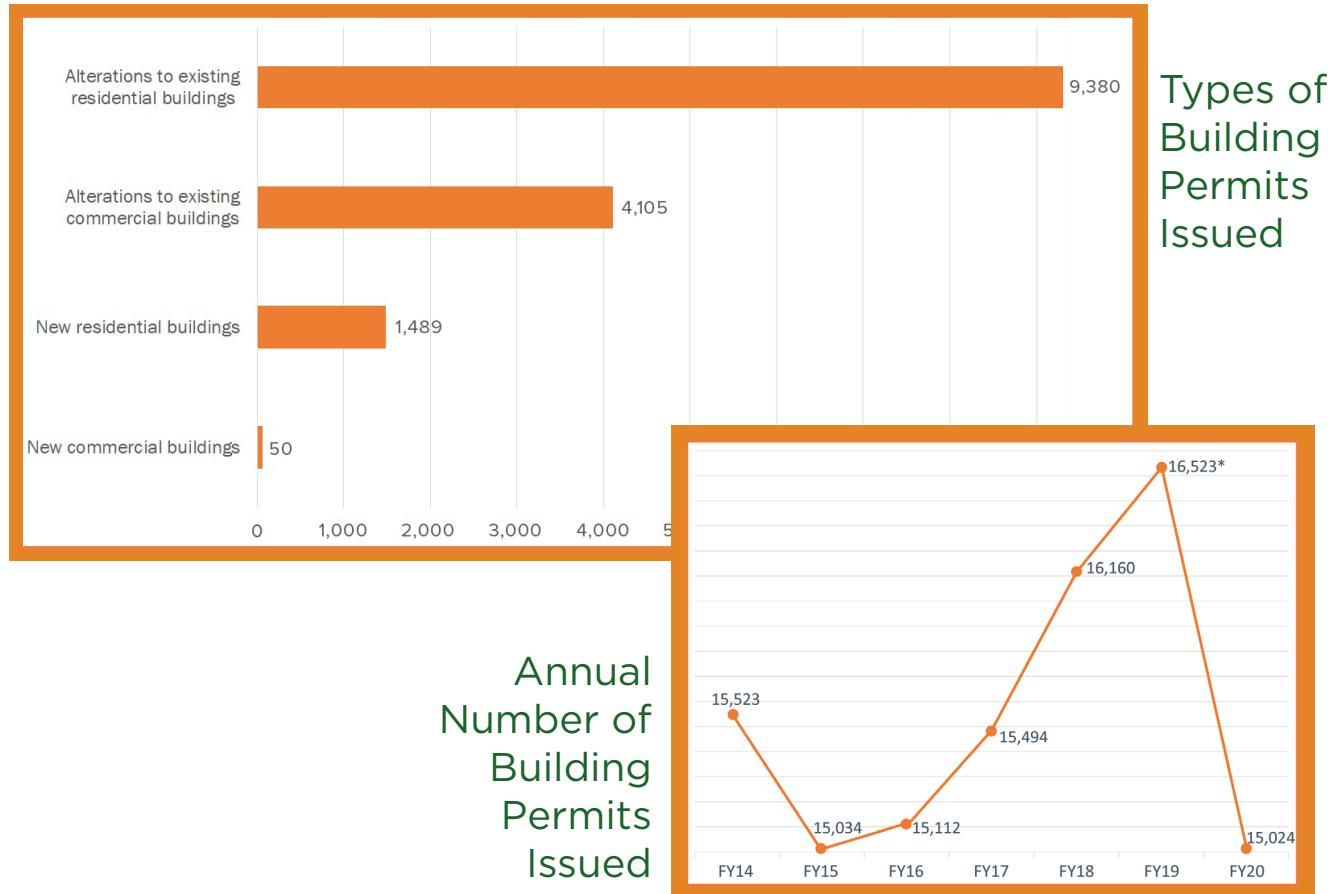


63,453

Total building and
trade permits issued

48,429

Total trade permits issued



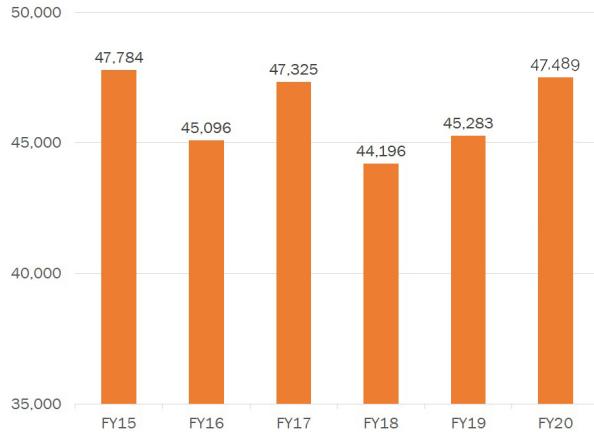
* This number has been corrected since the LDS FY19 annual report was published.

15,024

Building permits issued



Building and Site Inspections



47,489

Site inspections conducted

181,892

Building inspections conducted

13,884

More inspections overall
in FY20 than in FY19 —
most of which were
conducted virtually



Critical Structures

Most major commercial projects and multi-family residences are considered Critical Structures. Given safety risks with these building projects, the county requires special inspections by a Registered Design Professional. The Critical Structures section of the Building Division works directly with industry throughout construction of these projects to maximize public safety for these structures.

1,781

Shop drawings reviewed

809

Inspections performed

33,934

Inspection reports
received for critical
structure projects



21

Number of tower cranes
in Fairfax County
as of May 2020

Elevators/Escalators



6,715
of elevators/
escalators
in Fairfax County

718
Permits issued for
new elevators/
escalators

14,696
Total
inspections
performed

Resources Overview

287

Number of Employees

48

Professional Engineers

101

Va. Dept. of Environmental Quality Certifications

631

Va. Dept. of Housing & Community Development Certifications

5

Certified Floodplain Managers

1

Professional Land Surveyor

5

LEED-Certified Engineers

REVENUE

\$42,901,904

Fees are the primary source of revenue for LDS and are based on the costs required to perform our core services and to operate the agency. This fee revenue can fluctuate each year depending on the volume of plans submitted and permits issued.

EXPENDITURES

\$41,598,236

Expenditures include personnel, contracts, utilities, training and other operating costs and an overhead rate for occupancy costs, interagency coordination and county oversight.

COST RECOVERY RATE

103%

LDS' cost recovery rate is determined by comparing the total annual expenditures to the total annual revenue. This rate is used to determine how fees are calculated. In working with the county's Department of Management and Budget, LDS aims to achieve 100% cost recovery.

However, actual revenue and expenses vary based on work volume. Any excess revenue, with Board of Supervisors approval, is invested in the agency's capital needs. Currently, this is focused on the PLUS online permitting system.

Environmental Outlook

23,817

Erosion & sediment
inspections
performed

757

Land disturbing
activities
approved

667

Acres of
approved land
disturbance

665

Stormwater
inspections
performed





517

Stormwater facilities
brought online treating
436.06 acres

224

Erosion & sediment
control violations
issued

69

Water Quality Impact
Assessments (WQIA)
approved*

32

Resource Protection
Area (RPA)
violations issued

12

Stormwater
violations
issued

*WQIAs are submitted
for evaluation of potential
development impacts to the
Chesapeake Bay RPA.

Environmental Outlook

23

Green buildings
built & ready for
occupancy

544

Solar panel
permits issued

3

Green buildings
reviewed



8

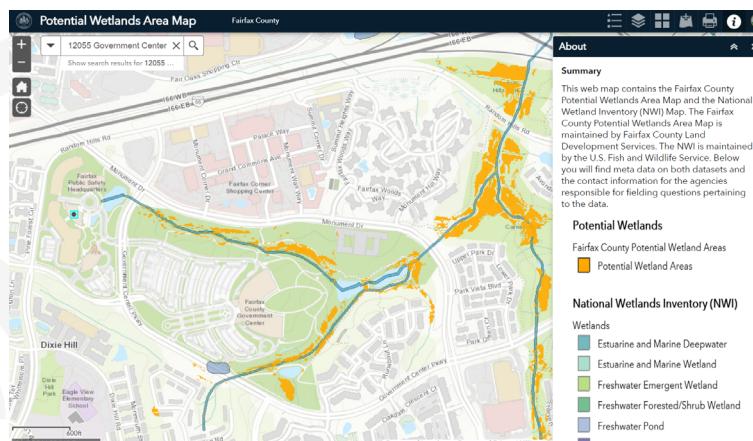
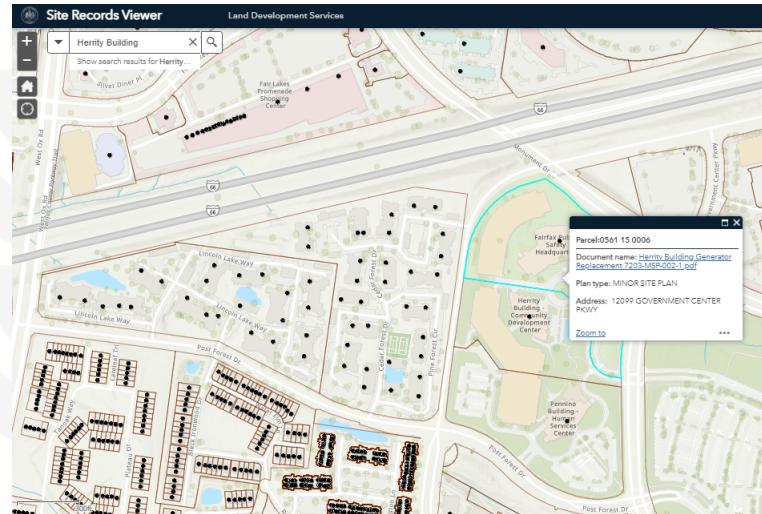
Number of geographic information system (GIS) apps developed

Site Records Viewer (SRV)

The Site Records Viewer provides access to thousands of approved site records. Download or view PDFs of approved site-related plan records, such as infill lot grading plans, resource protection area studies and site plans.

6,178 Views from 3/1/20 to 6/30/20

Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/Plan2Build for more Land Development Services GIS applications.



Potential Wetlands Map

Applicants for many plan types must certify a “wetlands statement” that attests to securing required wetland permits in advance of any land disturbance. The data in this application assists property owners and plan preparers in preliminary identification of potential wetlands.

1,108 Views in FY20



Contact LDS

Permit Application Center, Site Application Center,
Facilitation and Addressing Center, Bonds and Agreements: **703-222-0801**

Building Plan Review and Inspections: **703-631-5101**

Site Development and Inspections: **703-324-1720**

Director's Office: **703-324-1780 • TTY 711**

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/Plan2Build



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