

CURRENT PLANNING BRANCH

# QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

FOURTH QUARTER 2014

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## BRANCH PURPOSE

The Current Planning Branch meets the challenge of translating the City's growth vision into plans and development approvals. The Branch shapes a livable, safe, and sustainable City by guiding how land is developed, buildings are constructed, and businesses operate.

GREAT PEOPLE - GREAT SERVICE - GREAT OUTCOMES

## CITY GROWTH IN 2014

2014 was a year of unprecedented growth for the the City of Edmonton. The total construction value of building permit applications in 2014 was \$4.6 billion, which is a 17% increase from 2013. Among the projects that support the City's growth include private development such as the Edmonton Arena District, the City of Edmonton Office building, and numerous condominiums in the downtown core. New area structure plans are also in place for Goodridge Corners and Horse Hill. We have also made changes to the Zoning Bylaw to address City priorities such as infill. This year we also developed Winter Design Guidelines to make Edmonton an exciting, active, and vibrant city to live in during the winter. The 2015 budget for Current Planning has been approved by City Council with an overall 0% change in permit and service fees. We attribute these cost savings to refinements in our business process, the implementation of eServices and continuous improvements in internal and external training.



(Photo Credit: Edmonton Arena District)



(Photo Credit: Edmonton Galleria Project)

## VEHICLE FOR HIRE TAXI DECALS

Vehicle for Hire launched a new decal to be placed inside taxis, indicating the broker and unit number of the taxi that the passenger is riding in. This decal includes a telephone number and web address for passengers to report complaints. The use of taxi decals has been widely accepted by the industry and public, and has resulted in increased complaint reports to administration by the public. Conducted by VFH officers, every taxi in the City organized a winter inspection with the help of the broker organization. The decals were placed on the taxis during this inspection.

The City is encouraging passengers who may feel unsafe to take a photo of the decal on their phone and email the photo to [vehicleforhire@edmonton.ca](mailto:vehicleforhire@edmonton.ca) with the time and date of the incident, or call 780-496-5244.

For more information, please visit:  
[www.edmonton.ca/bandittaxis](http://www.edmonton.ca/bandittaxis)



Please be aware you are in a \_\_\_\_\_  
Taxi Cab unit # \_\_\_\_\_

For any comments or complaints please contact  
The City of Edmonton Vehicle for Hire  
administration office at 780-496-5244  
or [vehicleforhire@edmonton.ca](mailto:vehicleforhire@edmonton.ca)

## HOW WE'RE IMPROVING

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### RISK-BASED INSPECTIONS

The Quality Management Plan requires us to complete plumbing and gas inspection requests within 2-5 working days. As a method of reducing the backlog of inspection requests, and allowing our inspectors to focus on gas line inspections, we have introduced risk-based inspections. Also known as a verification of compliance, these risk-based inspections are voluntary and available to any builders and their Plumbing & Gas subcontractors that want to participate. The process allows a ticketed journeyman that has inspected the work for code compliance to identify infractions during an audit. If an infraction is identified, the particular plumber will be suspended from participating in the program. We are currently developing a more comprehensive program for risk-based inspections of plumbing stacks in 2015.

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### CURRENT PLANNING SERVICE CENTRE

The retention schedule has recently undergone an overhaul in response to the new ways that records are processed in today's work environment. It captures the workflow and corporate records in POSSE while remaining inclusive of other formats that are still in use, from shared drives to paper files. As a direct result of feedback from the business areas, the new retention schedule also retains records longer in order to facilitate informed business decisions.

#### Q4 2014 Update:

- 16,007 in-person visits, a 13% increase over Q4 2013
- 37,947 calls handled, up 113% over Q4 2013
- Improved customer wait times by 11% in Q4 2013

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### FUTURE STATE AND eSERVICES

The Current Planning Branch is pleased to announce the official launch of eShare. eShare is the new internal one-stop knowledge management tool to collaborate, see Branch news, and announcements and access training materials. All knowledge assets of the Branch, including articles, process documents, videos and documents such as bylaws and best practices, are easily searchable in eShare. Eventually replacing CityHelp and other knowledge repositories, eShare ensures the information you need is available when you need it.

#### Q4 2014 Update:

- 8,435 Pet Licences issued in Q4 2014
- 632 Business Licence renewals in Q4 2014
- As of November 1, Development Coordination is only accepting digital submissions through eServices and ePlan

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### DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The Current Planning Branch said goodbye to Orest Gowda on his last day as Director of Development Coordination on December 18. We congratulate him on his retirement and thank Orest for all his hard work over 32 years with the Branch. Nancy Domijan, former Lead Development Engineer has assumed the role of Director for the section. Nancy has played a pivotal role in re-designing the engineering drawing review process and introducing electronic plan submissions to the Branch.

#### Congratulations, Nancy!

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## PLANNING ACADEMY

Planning Academy courses are designed for citizens to better understand and participate in the planning process. Planning Academy also allows citizens the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the roles, rights, and interests of the parties involved in the planning and development process. The program consists of three core courses and four elective courses. A Certificate of Participation can be earned by completing all three core courses along with any one elective. These courses will be offered by City staff at least twice per year. Participants are welcome to take any course whether or not it will lead to the certificate.

### Q4 2014 Update:

- Registration is now open for the Planning Academy Infill course scheduled for February 25, 2015
- Registration for the spring Planning Academy courses will open on March 3, 2015

For more information, please visit:  
[www.edmonton.ca/planningacademy](http://www.edmonton.ca/planningacademy)

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## POSSE ZONING CLEARANCE JOB

This job was created to ensure that zoning approval is in place before the creation of a commercial Business Licence. It increases clarity in the licensing process, reduces applicant confusion and minimizes internal processing errors while providing a direct link between zoning approval and business licence. This will also provide better measures in terms of each stage a business licence passes through.

### Why do we need this job?

- To ensure that zoning approval is in place before the creation of a commercial Business Licence
- To reduce applicant confusion and to minimize internal processing errors
- To provide a direct link between the zoning approval and the actual Business Licence
- To provide a vehicle for development decision making criteria
- To increase clarity in the licensing process

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## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN ON UNLICENSED TAXIS

Vehicle for Hire started a social media campaign on unlicensed taxis reminding Edmontonians to avoid using unlicensed cabs. Unlicensed taxis are cabs which operate without a valid licence. Often, they are uninsured and unsafe for the passenger. Properly licensed taxi drivers are screened by the City and require proof of completion of professional driving classes. Licensed taxi vehicles are also subject to regular mechanical inspections, fare meter inspections, and also have the proper insurance to protect passengers in case of injury.

### Licensed cabs can be easily identified by these features:

- Front licence plate that says "Edmonton Taxi"
- City of Edmonton inspection sticker
- Driver's licence displayed within the vehicle
- Fully visible meter
- Meter rate sticker displayed in vehicle
- Unit number decals on the vehicle's rear side panel and back bumper

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## ONBOARDING PILOT

The Onboarding program was proposed as a method of creating consistency across Branch sections in staff training. The goal of the onboarding program is to give new employees an idea of what to expect during their first 90 days of employment. It will also connect employees with how the work in their section fits within the Branch, and allows them to understand the big picture by connecting their work to the City's strategic goals. A pilot of the onboarding program was launched in September 2014 to the Branch Leadership Team. It received positive feedback with recommendations on how to further improve the program moving forward. The Onboarding program is now mandatory for all Current Planning staff.

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### PCI COMPLIANCE

The City of Edmonton had a mandate to remove any non-compliant method of storage or transmission of credit card data stored across the organization, including all transactions in person, over the phone, and any electronic data, by December 31, 2014. For Sustainable Development, this includes the removal of documents stored in specific POSSE jobs. As a merchant, the City, is obligated to follow the PCI DSS requirements to protect the credit card data of their customers. This means employees who gather credit card data from citizens and businesses must complete a special sign off process to become authorized to handle credit card data for the City.

#### Q4 2014 Update:

- Created a new POSSE job for requesting records, to enable tracking and automate associated processes
- Credit Card payment is now only accepted in person or via our new telephone payment system; payment via fax or email is not acceptable

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### CHANGES TO BUILDING PERMITS AND INSPECTION SERVICES

The Branch congratulates Mark Brodgesell and Roger Clemens on their new roles in the Building Permits and Inspection Services section. Mark Brodgesell will now be the Chief Building Inspector, while Roger is now Chief Plans Examiner, Building. Both Mark and Roger have been leaders in continuously improving their section and helping the Branch grow.

#### Q4 2014 Update:

- Two new inspection processes have been added to HVAC permit jobs; the HVAC Concealed Duct Inspection and HVAC Stack Inspection
- Reason for adding these inspections:
  - HVAC permits currently only have a final HVAC inspection process automatically inserted when the permit is created
  - On the final inspection process, when the inspection is OK a Permit Service Report is automatically sent via email upon completion at a successful first inspection

## FOURTH QUARTER ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

View the complete **Quarterly Activity Report** at  
[www.edmonton.ca/cpperformance](http://www.edmonton.ca/cpperformance)

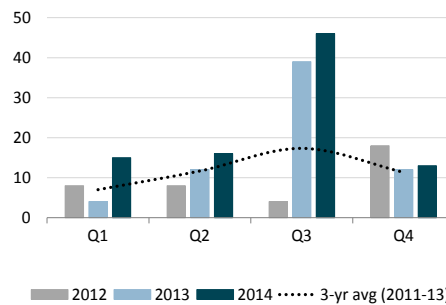
13

### Servicing Agreements for Multi-Family Lots

-72% from Q3 2014  
+8% from Q4 2013

### SERVICING AGREEMENTS

Multi-Family Lots



16,007

### Total walk-in customers

-19% from Q3 2014  
+13% from Q4 2013



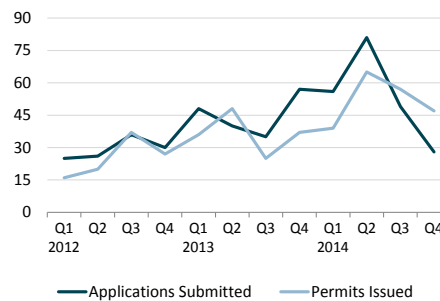
47

### Development Permits issued for New Multi-Family Buildings

-18% from Q3 2014  
+27% from Q4 2013

### DEVELOPMENT PERMITS

New Multi-Family Buildings



91%

Walk-in customers with  
wait time under  
15 minutes

Target = 75%



1,489

### New Business licences issued

-1% from Q3 2014  
+14% from Q4 2013

346

### Expedited House Combo Permits Issued

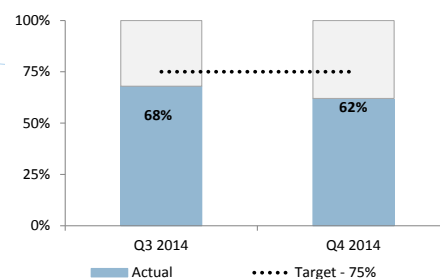
-21% from Q3 2014  
+7% from Q4 2013



-6% from Q3 2014  
issued within 10  
business days

### EXPEDITED HOUSE COMBO

Issued within Target Time



27,674

### Total Safety Code inspections completed

-7% from Q3 2014  
+10% from Q4 2013