

Staff Memorandum



To	Mayor A. Nuttall and Members of Council
Subject	Building Services Enhanced Customer Services, Protocols and Procedures
Date	November 26, 2025
Ward	All
From	P. Evans, Chief Building Official
Executive Member Approval	B. Araniyasundaran, General Manager, Infrastructure and Growth Management
CAO Approval	M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update regarding enhanced customer service protocols and procedures that have been recently implemented by Building Services.

Several enhanced processes in the Building Services Department have been put in place to provide additional methods for the public and/or City staff to contact staff in the Building Services department. These measures aim to assist the public by facilitating easy access to information and guidance regarding the building permit process and providing an enhanced customer service experience.

- Live Answering for Building Services

Building Services will have a dedicated Customer Experience Clerk responsible for live answering calls to the department during business hours. This staff member will triage calls and connect them with the appropriate Building Services team member.

This will ensure that complex or technical questions are directed to the correct staff member; provide faster, more consistent responses; and maintain a live contact point during business hours. To support this, voicemail greetings and out-of-office notifications will be standardized to ensure clear, consistent messaging. Calls will be returned within one business day, and any escalations will follow the established chain: Supervisor/Manager → Chief Building Official (CBO) as required.

Service Barrie will continue to provide customer service currently in place such as receiving and booking requests for inspections, processing requests for documents and compliance letters, and now have the added benefit of escalation (as described above) when they cannot reach the specific employee.

This internal line will help ensure Service Barrie is also able to connect with the appropriate Building Services staff more quickly, supporting better coordination, and ensuring timely responses to public inquiries.

- In-Person Counter Assistance

The Building Services Department welcomes the public to visit us on the 8th floor of City Hall where staff can meet with clients and discuss their permit needs. During the pandemic, in-person discussions and meetings were not possible. This led to a more digital-centric approach to doing business. In an effort to establish an enhanced customer service experience, we encourage members of the public to visit us in person. This information has been provided on the City of Barrie's website.

- Liaison Meetings with the Construction Industry

The Building Services Management team meets quarterly with representatives from the local construction industry: Barrie Construction Association (BCA), Simcoe County Home Builders Association (SCHBA) and Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD).

These meetings are held to ensure that the industry is constructively engaged regularly; and informed and consulted on possible changes to procedures that could affect their members.

- Community Engagement

Building Services, along with Development Services hosted two open houses at the Dorian Centre and at the Peggy Hill Team Community Centre. This provided an opportunity for the general public to speak with Building Services staff and Planners about their projects and the permit process, general construction and zoning.

In November, Building Services and Development Services staff are presenting 'Additional Residential Units - Planning, Building, and Financing: What You Need to Know' during two events held at the Barrie Public Library (at the Downtown and Painswick branches). These events provide opportunities for City staff to share pertinent information about ARU projects, answer questions, and provide the community with options to create safe and affordable housing options in neighbourhoods across the City of Barrie. Both events reached near maximum capacity.

- Other Customer Service Enhancements

Building Services contracted an external consultant to perform an in-depth review of the application intake, drawing review, and permit issuance process. They will review the entire process to determine if anything should be modified, enhanced or eliminated to streamline the issuance of building permits and ensure that permits are issued efficiently.

Building Services staff developed a comprehensive permit application guidebook to help residents with their permit applications from start to finish.

Building Services developed an Emergency Preparedness Committee (EPC) to create standard procedures and protocols for staff in the unlikely event of a serious incident (e.g. 2021 tornado). Building Services staff created a Disaster Recovery Guide for residents (hopefully, this is never needed).

Along with an APLI survey that online users are welcome to complete regarding permit submission through the City's customer portal, Building Services is implementing a customer experience survey that is sent to all permit holders once their project is completed (after permit close). The survey requests customer feedback on the entire permit process and provides an opportunity for Building Management to gauge customer satisfaction for the purposes of continually improving our processes.

Enhancing customer service and streamlining permit processes (Initiative 9), as well as improving access to information for residents interested in building additional residential units (ARUs) (Initiative 7) are key commitments under the City's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan. Implementation of these initiatives keeps the City in good standing with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) under our HAF Contribution Agreement. Continued eligibility for Year 3 funding is contingent on maintaining progress and achieving all program deliverables on schedule.

The Building Services Department works diligently to ensure construction complies with the prescribed requirements of the Ontario Building Code. We are making great strides in enhancing our customer service experience and we encourage members of the community to contact us with questions and comments regarding our services. Our goal is to provide efficient, helpful, and valuable customer service as we work to ensure that buildings are safe for the people who live, work, and play, in the City of Barrie.

Appendix:

None

Memo Author:

Paul Evans, Chief Building Official, Building Services

File #:

M00 – Media and Public Relations

Pending #:

Not Applicable