

Planning



Planning Department

Description

The Planning Department provides professional, technical, and analytical expertise that assists the community in identifying goals, policies, and objectives governing growth and future development within the Municipality of Anchorage. It guides the development of a livable and resilient northern community, facilitates development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations and prepares long range land use plans based on the community's goals and aspirations, economic assets and opportunities, and environmental attributes. Deemed an essential service, the Department contributes to the economic vitality and livelihood of supporting residential and commercial activities through timely land use entitlement, code and plan interpretation and application.

Planning (907)343-7931
4700 Elmore Road Anchorage, AK 99507
<https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD>

Department Services

- Produces area-wide, regional, and neighborhood plans that meet community expectations for our winter city community. This includes Assembly-adopted comprehensive plans for the Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak-Eagle River, Girdwood and Turnagain Arm and sub-area plans within those areas.
- Provides planning for long-term multi-modal transportation needs.
- Ensures that new developments adhere to adopted plans, codes, and regulations.
- Provides a public process for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezoning's, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.
- Assists the public with residential, commercial, and industrial development projects.
- Provides staff support to Municipality's Emergency Operation Center in the areas of Planning, Operations, and other areas as requested.

Divisions

- Director's Office & Administration
 - Provides leadership, management, and coordination for overall operations of the department; and
 - Provides full array of administrative and financial management services to include but not limited to budget, accounting, grant administration, purchasing, IT coordination, asset management, human resources coordination, and payroll.
- Current Planning
 - Processes zoning, platting and other development applications requiring land use actions;
 - Provides staff support to four adjudicatory/regulatory boards: Planning & Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Urban Design Commission, and Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals; and
 - Develops ordinances to amend codes and regulations as needed to respond to market needs and public safety.
- Long Range Planning
 - Creates, updates, coordinates, and implements the Anchorage Comprehensive Plan (Anchorage Bowl, Chugiak/Eagle River/Eklutna, and Girdwood/Turnagain Arm);

- Prepares and implements district and neighborhood plans, and conducts planning studies;
- Develops policy guidance and ordinances to amend code as needed to implement plans;
- General Permit Authority: Administers and maintains the agreement with the Corp of Engineers through regular updates of the Anchorage Wetlands Management Plan and issues wetlands permits per COE guidelines;
- Prepares and updates the Land Use Plan Map;
- Assists the public in the development and construction of residential, commercial and industrial projects consistent with the Municipality's Comprehensive, District and Neighborhood plans;
- Historic Preservation Officer: Administers and maintains National Park Service Certified Local Government Status, which enables the Municipality to qualify for grant funding;
- Provides staff support and expertise to the Anchorage Historic Preservation Commission, and towards historic preservation planning efforts;
- Provides staff support to the Geotechnical Advisory Commission, and the Watershed and Natural Resource Advisory Commission; and
- Applies for grants to further the vision and goals of the Municipality's land use and functional plans.
- Transportation Planning
 - Supervises and coordinates the AMATS (Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions) Program through a cooperative, coordinated, and comprehensive planning process;
 - Develops and implements a multi-modal transportation system for the Municipality of Anchorage;
 - Maintains eligibility for Federal Assistance for road, transit, trail, port, freight, and air quality improvements;
 - Develops and manages the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP); and
 - Updates the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP);
 - Monitors, amends, and updates the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP); Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and
 - Prepares and reviews design and land use plans.

Department Goals that Contribute to Achieving the Mayor's Mission:



Good Government – Ensuring ethical and accountable government, balancing the budget, and delivering quality, effective government services.

- Incorporate the necessary tools and training for staff in order to serve the public effectively.
- Examine and track the level of tax subsidy for the processing of zoning and platting cases.
- Develop staff resources to serve as projects managers to assist major housing and economic development projects from concept phase to issuance of certificate of occupancy.
- Provide timely and accurate services for applicants requesting:
 - Land use reviews/determinations;
 - Administrative land use permits; and
 - Zoning and platting services.

- Provide timely, clear, and accurate information about zoning and platting cases to the general public and to the citizens serving on Anchorage's four land use regulatory boards: Planning and Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, and Urban Design Commission.



Safe Streets and Trails – Creating a safer, healthier Anchorage for all by addressing homelessness, investing in crisis response services and public health, cleaning up our parks, trails and public spaces, and staffing up our public safety departments.

- Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design guidelines in the review of site and building plans.
- Adopt policies and procedures to minimize the impacts of and response to natural disasters.
- Provide guidance in the design of public and private development projects that fosters crime prevention and minimizes the impacts from natural and man-made disasters.



Building Our Future – Laying the foundation for a more prosperous future through housing solutions, economic development and investments in childcare, public infrastructure and quality of life.

- Engage the community in land use planning activities to make decisions about land uses and transportation, as well as public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community.
- Review and make necessary changes to codes, regulations, land use approval, building permit and other processes to reduce barriers to housing and non-residential development.
- Assist health and higher education partners in implementing their campus master plans to ensure continued quality health care and higher education is provided in-state.

Planning Department Summary

	2024 Actuals Unaudited	2025 Revised	2026 Approved	26 v 25 % Chg
Direct Cost by Division				
PL Planning	2,879,432	3,593,427	3,446,560	(4.09%)
PL Planning Administration	327,069	368,483	355,929	(3.41%)
Direct Cost Total	3,206,501	3,961,910	3,802,489	(4.02%)
Intragovernmental Charges				
Charges by/to Other Departments	1,732,853	1,919,800	1,938,129	0.95%
Function Cost Total	4,939,354	5,881,710	5,740,618	(2.40%)
Program Generated Revenue	(1,451,823)	(1,368,930)	(1,368,930)	-
Net Cost Total	3,487,531	4,512,780	4,371,688	(3.13%)
Direct Cost by Category				
Salaries and Benefits	3,061,382	3,503,134	3,549,530	1.32%
Supplies	26,494	14,984	14,984	-
Travel	-	-	-	-
Contractual/OtherServices	107,450	434,342	228,525	(47.39%)
Debt Service	-	-	-	-
Equipment, Furnishings	11,174	9,450	9,450	-
Direct Cost Total	3,206,501	3,961,910	3,802,489	(4.02%)
Position Summary as Budgeted				
Full-Time	24	25	25	-
Part-Time	1	-	-	-
Position Total	25	25	25	-

Planning

Reconciliation from 2025 Revised Budget to 2026 Approved Budget

	Direct Costs	Positions		
		FT	PT	Seas/T
2025 Revised Budget	3,961,910	25	-	-
2025 One-Time Requirements				
- Reverse 2025 1Q - ONE-TIME- to 190200 - 2024 Assembly Amendment #52, Line 1, (Mayor Vetoed, Veto Overridden) Communications and educational materials about development code changes - reduced by amount spent in 2024	(51,120)	-	-	-
- Reverse 2025 1Q - ONE-TIME- Chugiak Eagle River Comprehensive Plan - Project to be funded with fund balance that resulted from unused 2024 project appropriation as a transfer and appropriation in the Operating Projects Committed General Fund (190000)	(200,000)	-	-	-
Changes in Existing Programs/Funding for 2026				
- Salaries and benefits adjustments	46,396	-	-	-
- Fleet	(4,697)	-	-	-
2026 Continuation Level	3,752,489	25	-	-
2026 Proposed Budget Changes				
- None	-	-	-	-
2026 Assembly Amendments				
- 1C - One-Time - Additional budget for create staffing plan	50,000	-	-	-
2026 Approved Budget	3,802,489	25	-	-

Planning Operating Grant and Alternative Funded Programs

Program	Fund Center	Award Amount	Expected Expenditures Thru 12/31/2024	Expected Expenditures in 2025	Expected Balance at End of 2025	Personnel FT	PT	T	Program Expiration
American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) AR2021-360 (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) Complete the Midtown Neighborhood plan and the South Addition Neighborhood Plan	190200 9000005	325,000	180,287	144,713	-	-	-	-	Dec-26
Historic Preservation Fund - Local Historic Resources Survey Database (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) Create a local historic and cultural resource survey inventory and local landmarks register database for the Municipality of Anchorage. This inventory database will become a new GIS data set that the Municipality of Anchorage will maintain and keep updated as permanent data layer in its GIS system, in support of its historic preservation gram and to facilitate greater consideration of historic resources in municipal decision making processes.	190200 1000104	6,000	132	5,868	-	-	-	-	Aug-25
Historic Preservation Fund - Historic Inventory and Registry Phase 2 (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) The purpose of this CLG grant project is to complete phase 2 of the local historic and cultural resource inventory and landmarks register for the Municipality of Anchorage. Work on this inventory database has begun as a first phase, under CLG Grant # 23008. The proposed phase 2 of this project will be to complete unfinished data entry of resources not entered in phase 1, to develop and launch the on-line map and research app by which historic preservation staff, commissioners, and the public interact with the inventory data.	190200 1000117	4,800		1,714	3,086	-	-	-	Sep-26
2024/2025 AMATS Program - Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Program 2020 (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) Two year grant for local and regional studies that are required prior to transit and highway design and construction.	190200 1000100	4,249,764	1,515,500	1,355,222	1,379,042	7.8	-	-	Sep-25
2026/2027 AMATS Program - Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS) Program 2020 (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) Two year grant for local and regional studies that are required prior to transit and highway design and construction.	190200	5,345,838		668,230	4,677,608	7.8	-	-	Sep-27
AMATS: Downtown Streets Engineering Study (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will implement the Our Downtown Anchorage District Plan through a street engineering study that will address the Plan's transportation & circulation policies. Plan action items include assessing ROW ownership and management in the Downtown district, identify opportunities for complete streets, and include modeling as needed.	190200 1000097	522,836	285,670	198,662	38,504	-	-	-	Dec-25
Historic Preservation Fund - Govt. Hill Wireless Station Phase II (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) The second-phase of Historic Structure Report (HSR) is essential to support continued, time-sensitive efforts to rehabilitate this historic property as recommended in the first-phase HSR which assessed that the building is in an advanced stage of deterioration and needs stabilization soon.	190200 1000106	30,000		15,000	15,000	-	-	-	Sep-26
Historic Preservation Fund - Public Engagement (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant)	190200 1000118	49,500		17,679	31,821	-	-	-	Sep-26

Planning Operating Grant and Alternative Funded Programs

Program	Fund Center	Award Amount	Expected Expenditures Thru 12/31/2024	Expected Expenditures in 2025	Expected Balance at End of 2025	Personnel			Program Expiration
The purpose of this CLG grant project is to complete a public process for revising and completing an existing, 2018 draft Municipality of Anchorage Historic Preservation Plan (Anchorage HPP). The public education and engagement process will result in updated community direction for the historic preservation goals, objectives, and strategies of the Anchorage HPP, including more policy-level focus on: * Housing: Historic Preservation as a tool to renovate and maintain older, affordable housing to help meet Anchorage's housing challenges. * Cultural Heritage Preservation: Carrying forward the living cultural traditions of Native Alaskan and other cultural communities that make up Anchorage's diversity of traditions.									
AMATS: Climate Action Plan (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will build on the Anchorage Climate Action Plan (adopted May 2019) by developing a climate action plan for the AMATS planning area. This data-based product will inventory current and past Anchorage/Chugiak-Eagle River transportation system greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (including carbon) in order to quantitatively evaluate strategies and actions to reduce future GHG emissions, including carbon reduction strategies, related to transportation. This project will focus on equity and include a strategic implementation plan.	190200 1000101	382,496	22,502	179,997	179,997	-	-	-	Dec-26
AMATS: Regional Household Travel Survey (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will conduct a Regional Household Travel Survey to gather information on travel behaviors and patterns of the households in the region. This work will develop, test, and implement a household travel survey to gather information on travel behaviors and patterns of the households in the region. The data collected from this effort will be used to update and recalibrate the regional travel demand model and other technical tools, and support transportation planning requirements and activities.	190200 1000094	564,175	190,580	186,798	186,797	-	-	-	Dec-26
AMATS Non-Motorized Facility Maintenance Equipment (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will purchase maintenance equipment that will be used to plow and sweep non-motorized facilities during the winter and summer months within the AMATS area.	190200 1000092	3,127,485	945,469	1,218,231	963,786	-	-	-	Dec-26
AMATS: Recreational Trails Plan Update (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will provide a comprehensive update of all recreational trails within the AMATS area. This update will include primary and secondary linkages to established multi-use pathways, as well as, recreational facilities such as single track bicycle trails, hiking networks, and bicycle parks within the planning area. This plan will also study trail expansion opportunities and strengthening the connections between recreational trail development and fostering economic growth within the AMATS area.	190200 1000093	387,150	148,457	119,347	119,347	-	-	-	Dec-26
Brownfield FY23 Coalition EPA Grant (Fed Pass-Thru Grant) MOA will inventory, characterize, assess, and conduct cleanup planning and community involvement for brownfield sites in the Anchorage area. Coalition partners are strengthening the local economy by redeveloping brownfield properties in and around 5 high priority revitalization areas: East Downtown/Fairview/Ship Creek, Downtown Core, Midtown/Spenard, Mountain View, and Chugiak/Eagle River.	190200 1000091	1,000,000	22,000	326,000	652,000	-	-	-	Sep-27
19CDBGDR09 Seismic Hazards Analysis and Mapping (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant)	190200 1000112	695,000 PLN - 8	17,306	338,847	338,847	-	-	-	Dec-26

Planning Operating Grant and Alternative Funded Programs

Program	Fund Center	Award Amount	Expected Expenditures Thru 12/31/2024	Expected Expenditures in 2025	Expected Balance at End of 2025	Personnel			Program Expiration
						FT	PT	T	
Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) will utilize \$695,000 CDBG-DR funds for seismic hazards analysis and mapping within the MOA. The materials from this project may be used to enhance MOA Geographical Information System (GIS) and online websites to educate the public on seismic and other geological hazards. This project will increase knowledge and awareness by decision-makers to reduce risks to public health and welfare from geological hazards. Areas of geological hazards and geological soil characteristics will be identified in the inhabited areas of the MOA. The data platform may be expanded in the future to map other natural hazards. Materials may also be used to revise Anchorage Building Code (Title 23) and Zoning Code (Title 21) to protect human health and support seismic hazard mitigation activities, as authorized by 24 CFR 570.205 and 24 CFR 570.208 (d)(4).									
AMATS: Complete Streets Plan (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This plan will build on the AMATS Complete Streets policy to provide planning guidance for street types, sidewalks, roadways, intersections, curbsides, and ADA accessibility as well as plan implementation. This plan will also develop multi-modal street typologies for the AMATS area a corresponding street typology map. These typologies may include recommendations for development review, streetscape design, traffic signal upgrades, recommended road reclassifications, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities design.	190200 1000099	386,918	88,402	99,505	199,011	-	-	-	Dec-27
AMATS: Congestion Management Process Update (Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This project will update the AMATS Congestion Management Process plan to identify areas of congestion within the AMATS area and provide a systematic and regionally-accepted approach for managing congestion in those areas. This update will provide up-to-date information on the transportation system performance and assess alternatives strategies for congestion management that will be integration in the AMATS process through an action / implementation plan. The plan will also provide a review of best practices on how to better integration the CMP into the MPO process and provide recommendations to AMATS.	190200 1000115	258,162		5,677	252,485	-	-	-	Sep-27
AMATS 2052 MTP (State Dir/Fed Pass-Thru Grant) This plan will timely update of the MTP for the AMATS planning area, to ensure uninterrupted eligibility for AMATS to plan and program federal Highway Trust Fund monies for surface transportation improvements. The process includes: • Updating descriptions of existing conditions • Addressing current and future deficiencies • Making recommendations for improvements to roadways, public transportation service, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and include a financial plan to do so • Addressing air quality requirements • It is anticipated the AMATS Travel Demand Model will be	190200 1000120	343,496		85,874	257,622	-	-	-	May-28

Planning Operating Grant and Alternative Funded Programs

Program	Fund Center	Award Amount	Expected Expenditures Thru 12/31/2024	Expected Expenditures in 2025	Expected Balance at End of 2025	Personnel			Program Expiration
						FT	PT	T	
It is anticipated the AWRATS Travel Demand model will be updated and used to project future road network deficiencies, and several model runs will be conducted for various solutions strategies.									
Total Grant and Alternative Operating Funding for Department		17,678,621	3,416,305	4,967,363	9,294,953	7.8	-	-	
Total General Government Operating Direct Cost for Department				3,802,489		25	-	-	
Total Operating Budget for Department				8,769,852		33	-	-	

Planning Department

Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results.

Mission

The Planning Department provides professional, technical, and analytical expertise that assists the community in identifying goals, policies and objectives governing growth and future development within the Municipality of Anchorage. It guides the development of a livable northern community, facilitating development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations and preparing long-range land use plans based on the community's goals and aspirations, economic assets and opportunities, and environmental attributes.

Core Services

- Produces area-wide, regional, and neighborhood plans that meet community expectations for our winter city community. This includes Assembly-adopted comprehensive and sub-area plans for Chugiak-Eagle River, Anchorage Bowl, Girdwood, and Turnagain Arm.
- Provides planning for long-term multi-modal transportation needs.
- Ensures new developments adhere to adopted plans and land use code.
- Provides a public process for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezoning's, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.

Planning Department

Current Planning Division

Anchorage: Performance. Value. Results.

Mission

Facilitate land use development in accordance with Anchorage's zoning and subdivision regulations.

Core Services

- Respond to public inquiries regarding land use development regulations and how regulations apply to given situations.
- Provide public processes for property owners to seek exceptions to (variances, grandfather rights, rezoning's, etc.), or accommodation under (conditional uses, plat notes, etc.) Anchorage's zoning or platting regulations.

Accomplishment Goals

- Provide timely, clear, and accurate information about zoning and platting cases to the general public and to the citizens serving on Anchorage's four land use regulatory boards: Planning and Zoning Commission, Platting Board, Zoning Board of Examiners and Appeals, and Urban Design Commission.
- Examine and track the level of tax subsidy for the processing of zoning and platting cases.
- Develop staff resources to serve as projects managers to assist major housing and economic development projects from concept phase to issuance of certificate of occupancy.
- Assist health and higher education partners in implementing campus master plans to ensure continued quality health care and higher education is provided in-state.
- Provide timely and accurate services for applicants requesting:
 - Land use reviews/determinations;
 - Administrative land use permits;
 - Zoning and platting services; and
 - Zoning Review for all land use and building permits.
- Safety: Provide guidance in the design of public and private development projects that foster crime prevention and minimizes the impacts from natural and man-made disasters.
 - Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design guidelines in the review of site and building plans;
 - Adopt policies and procedures to minimize the impacts of and response to natural disasters.
- Engage the community in land use planning activities to make decisions about land uses and transportation, as well as public facilities, economic development, housing, and other public issues that are vital to a healthy and livable community.
- Review and make necessary changes to codes, regulations, land use approval, building permit and other processes to reduce barriers to housing and non-residential development.
- Incorporate the necessary tools and training for staff in order to serve the public effectively.

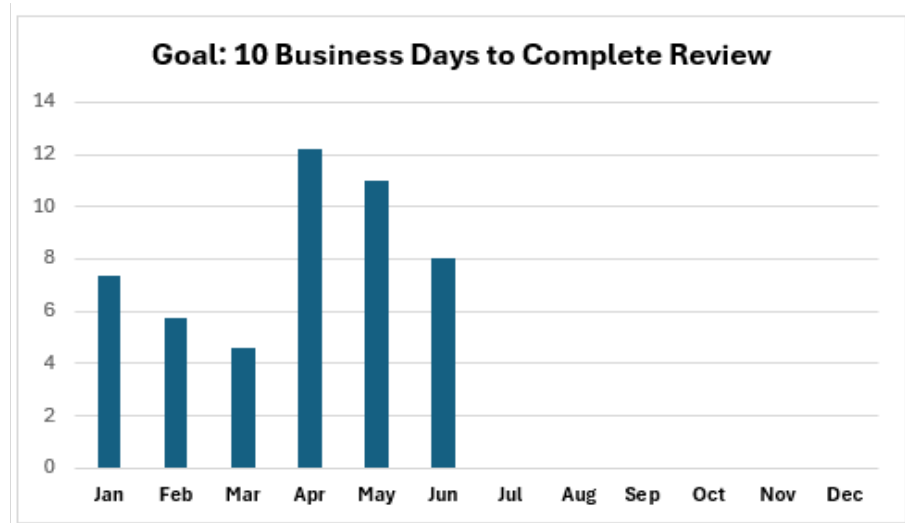
Performance Measures

Progress in achieving goals shall be measured by:

Measure #1: Average number of business days to complete initial reviews of land use determinations. Goal: 10 business days (Land Use Review)

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days to Complete	7.33	5.71	4.6	12.23	11	8						
Total # Completed	6	7	10	13	12	13						
# of Staff	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	1	1.25						

NOTE: Staff reduction in April, short staffed through July.

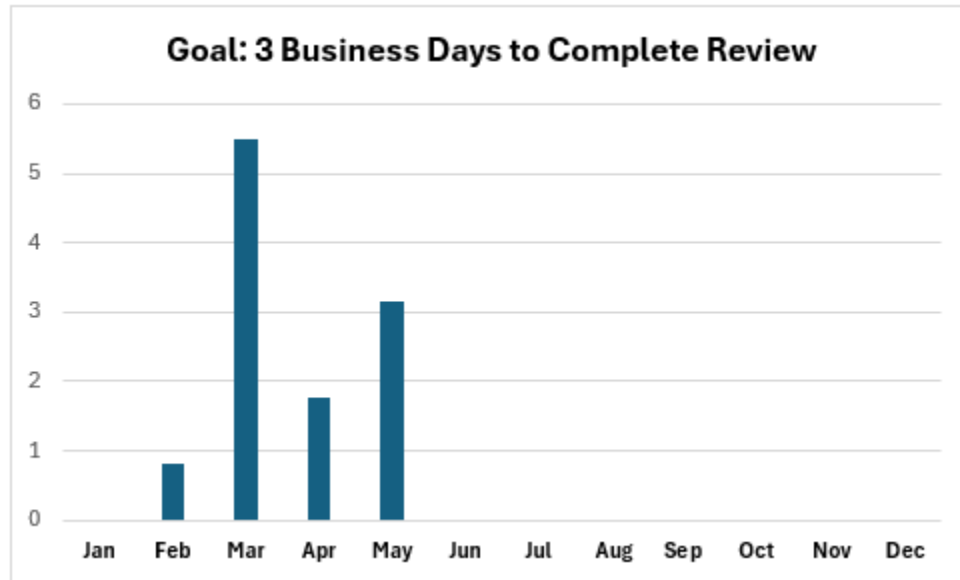


Measure #2: Average number of days to complete initial reviews of administrative land use permits. Goal: 3 business days (Land Use Review)

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days	0	0.8	5.5	1.78	3.14	0						
Total # Completed	5	5	2	9	7	3						
# of Staff	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1	.1						

NOTE:

- permit **A251022** held in March, waiting on information from applicant, then reviewed and issued the same day information was submitted
- permit **A251061** held for information from applicant, then reviewed and issued same day information was provided.

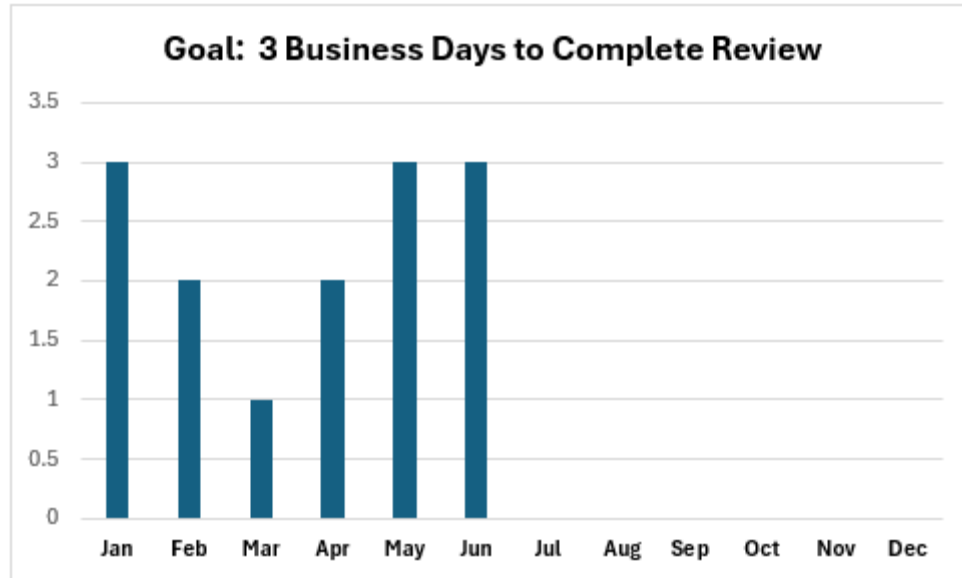


Measure #3: Average number of business days to complete initial reviews of Residential Permits. Goal: 3 business days (Zoning Plan Review)

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days to Complete	3	2	1	2	3	3						
Total # Completed	48	43	91	100	94	80						
# of Staff	1.78	1.80	1.90	1.93	1.74	1.80						

NOTE:

Holidays during the work week are calculated as workdays in the average # of days to complete a review. I was acting for Sonnet Calhoun from 4/7 – 4/11.



Measure #4: Average number of days to complete initial reviews of Commercial Permits.
Goal: 10 business days (Zoning Plan Review)

2025	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average # of Days	4	5	4	3	5	5						
Total # Completed	70	73	74	70	70	71						
# of Staff	1.78	1.80	1.90	1.93	1.74	1.80						

NOTE:

Holidays during the work week are calculated as workdays in the average # of days to complete a review. I was acting for Sonnet Calhoun from 4/7 – 4/11.

