



**Bureau of  
Development  
Services** FROM CONCEPT  
TO CONSTRUCTION

# BUREAU OVERVIEW

1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97201, [www.PortlandOregon.gov/BDS](http://www.PortlandOregon.gov/BDS)

## Bureau Mandate

The City of Portland has been regulating construction since the late 1800s. BDS administers State regulations for building, plumbing, electrical, heating and ventilating. BDS is also responsible for administering the Portland Zoning Code, which regulates land use and development including allowed uses, design and scale of buildings, site planning, landscaping, trees and parking. BDS also responds to concerns of the community related to compliance with building, zoning, and property maintenance codes (Title 29) by working with property owners to achieve compliance with City regulations.

A variety of other local regulations adopted within the City Code are administered by BDS, including Original Art Murals, Erosion Control, portions of Trees, Floating Structures, and Signs.

BDS is instrumental in enhancing the safety of buildings and the livability and economic vitality of Portland's neighborhoods and is an integral part of the City of Portland. Our stakeholders include developers, builders, residents, tenants, homeowners and neighborhood associations.

## Bureau Mission

The Bureau of Development Services (BDS) promotes safety, livability, and economic vitality through efficient and collaborative application of building and development codes.

## Bureau Vision

BDS' vision is to be the best development services agency in the country by deploying development review systems that meet the time-sensitive needs of the development industry, and by addressing neighborhood organizations' and citizens' concerns about the quality of development and access to development-related information.

## Functional Areas & Work

### Director's Office

Director's Office sets policies and guides the bureau in meeting its mission and goals. Equity, technology, staffing levels, and service delivery are several focus areas of this office.

### Business Operations/Finance Services

Business Operations/Finance Services administers a variety of services to BDS staff, including human resources, budget and finance, training, safety, and emergency management.

### Land Use Services

Land Use Services staff implements the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan, by administering the Portland Zoning Code (Title 33).

### Plan Review/Permitting Services

Plan Review staff reviews building and mechanical plans for residential and commercial structures and helps customers understand and apply code regulations regarding life safety, energy conservation, accessibility, and other related issues.

### Inspections Services

Inspections Services performs permit inspections on one- and two-family residences, multi-family dwellings, and commercial, retail, and industrial construction projects.

### Public Information & Enforcement Services

Public Information & Enforcement Services develop BDS Codes and Policy, improves public access to information, and implements customer service improvements suggestions, where possible. Enforcement Program staff investigates and resolves issues reported on construction, zoning, dangerous buildings, property maintenance and signs.



## BDS Projects

### Strategic Plan

- The BDS Strategic Plan is a process to create a living, relevant, and practical 5 year Plan to guide the bureau in all areas of work.
- Focus areas include customer experience, programs & services, technology, workforce development, workplace excellence, and community awareness.
- The bureau is currently working with a consultant to finalize the Plan documents and intends to implement the new Plan by Summer 2016.

### Information Technology Advancement Project (ITAP)

- Bureau of Development Services sponsored project to upgrade the City's current legacy permit and case management system which has been in use since 1999.
- Project to move the City's currently paper-based development review, land use review, enforcement and inspection process to a paperless web-based process from start to finish.
- The ITAP project will be funded through permit and land use review fees.

#### What will ITAP do?

- Allow online submittal and management of permit and land use review applications and reviews from home or office 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Allow electronic inspection routing, field data entry and remote field staff access to property and permit data.
- Provide public access to digital records through PortlandOnline and PortlandMaps.



## Significant Issues

### Staffing & Service Levels

BDS is committed to excellence in its programs and services while remaining fiscally responsible. Since autumn 2011, construction has increased at a fast and consistent rate. This increase in work has generated high revenues for the bureau, establishing a strong financial reserve. Additionally the high volume of work and revenue has allowed the bureau to add back approximately 150 positions over the past 5 years.

BDS has been challenged to meet its service level goals while still striving to provide the best customer service possible. We anticipate these service level goals will be improved once we complete hiring and training new staff and implementing efficiencies, where applicable.

### Workplace & Employee Culture

BDS is committed to building a vibrant, positive and productive work place. Its employees are its greatest resource and investment. As an organization, BDS continuously assesses and monitors its strengths and identifies opportunities for improvement with the goal of making BDS a great and effective place to work, conduct business, and serve its customers and community.

Recent initiatives include an ongoing employee workplace survey, an assessment of BDS' organizational structure and internal work culture, development of a streamlined performance evaluation form created to give timely feedback to all employees, and the creation of a training and development section. All of these efforts are focused on building employee trust and morale, empowerment, and an inclusive, fair and respectful work environment that enhances teamwork, job satisfaction, and opportunities for advancement.

In addition, the bureau believes that those closest to the work often have the best ideas for innovation. Staff actively contribute their ideas and recommendations during the annual budget planning process. The

## Significant Issues (continued)

bureau also maintains a strong labor-management partnership and approach to addressing issues of interest to all employees in the bureau.

### Equity & Inclusion

BDS is committed to pursuing equity in its staffing, its programs and services, and its interactions with customers and the community. The bureau is developing an Equity Plan that will incorporate: an equity assessment of all operations; focusing recruitment to produce a more diverse applicant pool; extensive outreach to diverse communities; and applying an “equity lens” to bureau programs and services. BDS is adding staff positions focused on enhancing equity in the bureau’s programs and services and improving engagement with the community.

### General Fund

In addition to its fee-supported construction programs, BDS receives some General Fund support for its Neighborhood Inspections and Land Use Services programs, which implement local City codes. The services provided by these programs are essential to neighborhood livability and protect the health, safety, and welfare of Portland residents. State law prohibits BDS from using construction permit revenues for these programs, and they cannot operate effectively without adequate support from the General Fund.

### BDS and Portland Housing Bureau Coordination in support of Affordable Housing

In light of the recent declaration of a housing and homeless emergency in Portland, the Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) and the Bureau of Development Services (BDS) have been working collaboratively over the last several months to coordinate efforts to support the development of affordable housing. These efforts have included streamlining the review and permitting process for affordable housing projects, enhancing outreach efforts to better promote PHB affordable housing opportunities, and creating incentives to the development community. In addition, work has started on development of alternative regulatory options through a resolution and ordinance that will be brought to City Council in March of 2016.

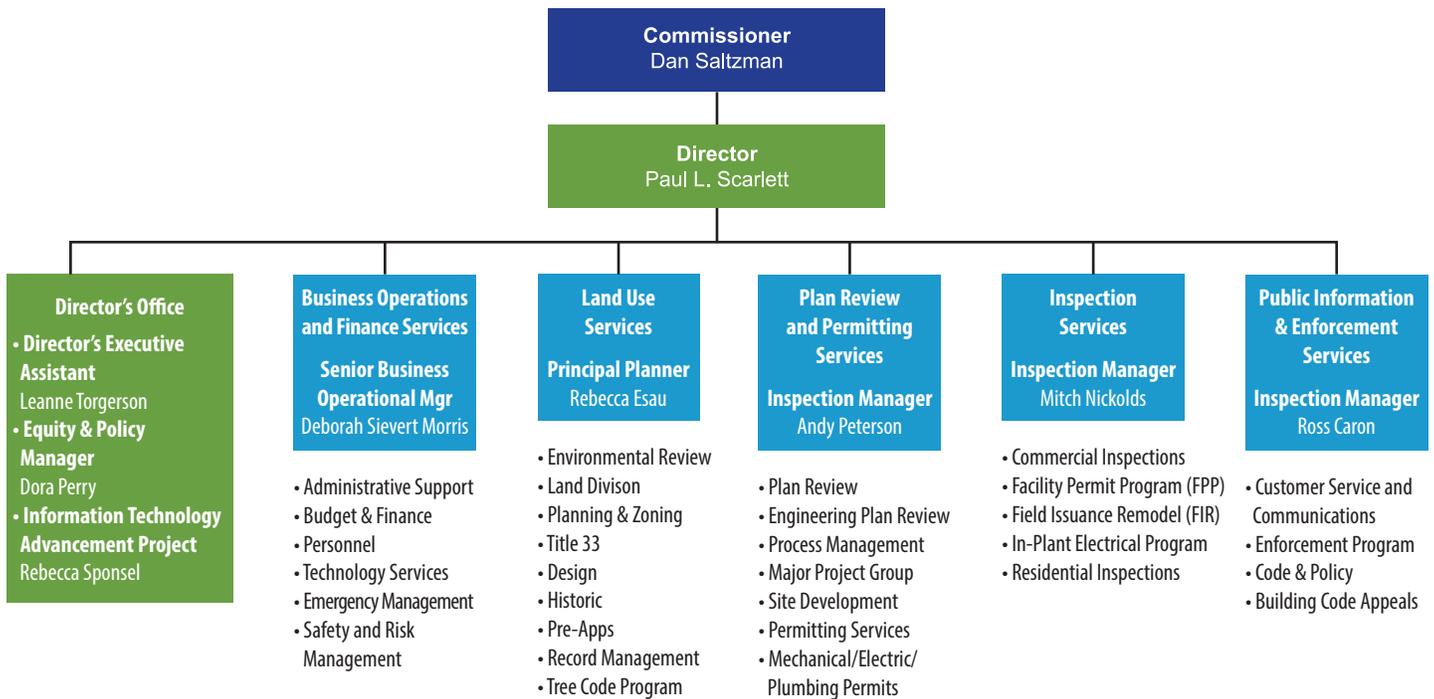


### Code and Policy Projects

The code and policy team strives to develop and update city codes related to construction activities. Some recent significant projects include:

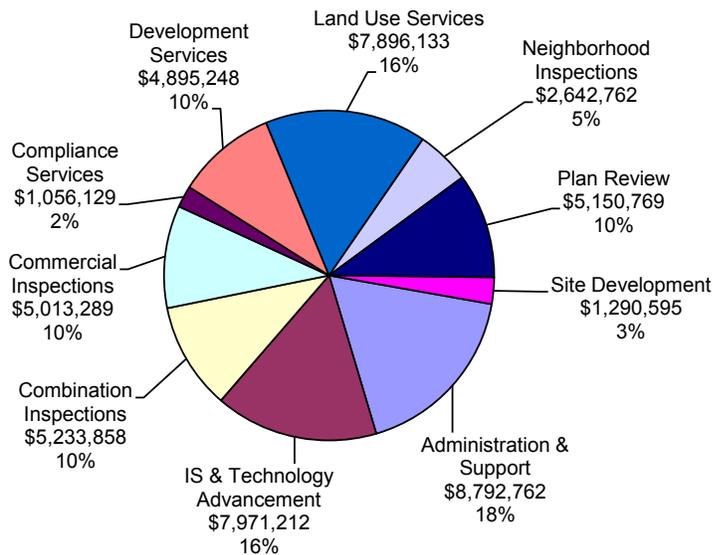
- **Demolition Ordinance:** In Spring 2015, in response to community concerns regarding demolition of residential structures, the code and policy team coordinated with the Development Review Advisory Committee (DRAC), other City bureaus, and the community to amend City code governing residential demolition and implement new processes to improve communication between developers and neighborhood associations. This work also led to increased coordination with State agencies related to hazardous materials at demolition sites.
- **Tree Code:** In the Fall of 2015, due to community concerns surrounding the removal of large trees on development sites, the code and policy team and the Bureau of Parks and Recreation coordinated with other City bureaus, advisory committees, and community members to strengthen the regulations for tree removal in development situations.

## BDS Organizational Chart



## Bureau Programs FY 2015-16

Approved Budget (\$49.9 million)



## How We're Funded

Approximately 96% of BDS's budget is funded with fees and charges. Construction-related programs are 100% funded with this source of revenue.

BDS receives approximately 4% support from the City's General Fund for several local programs that provide key services to the entire community, including Land use Services and Neighborhood Inspections.

## Yearly Workload Averages

(based on past 3 FY2012-15)

- 819 Land Use Review & Final Plat applications
- 9,667 Building permits (residential & commercial)
- 144,412 Inspections
- 794 Building code violations
- 1,027 Zoning code violations
- 5,968 Housing & nuisance intakes

## BDS Facts at a Glance

- Commissioner: Dan Saltzman
- Director: Paul L. Scarlett
- FY 2015-16 Full-time Budgeted FTE: 334.84
- FY 2015-16 Part-time Budgeted FTE: 8.10
- FY 2015-16 Total Budget: \$49.9 m