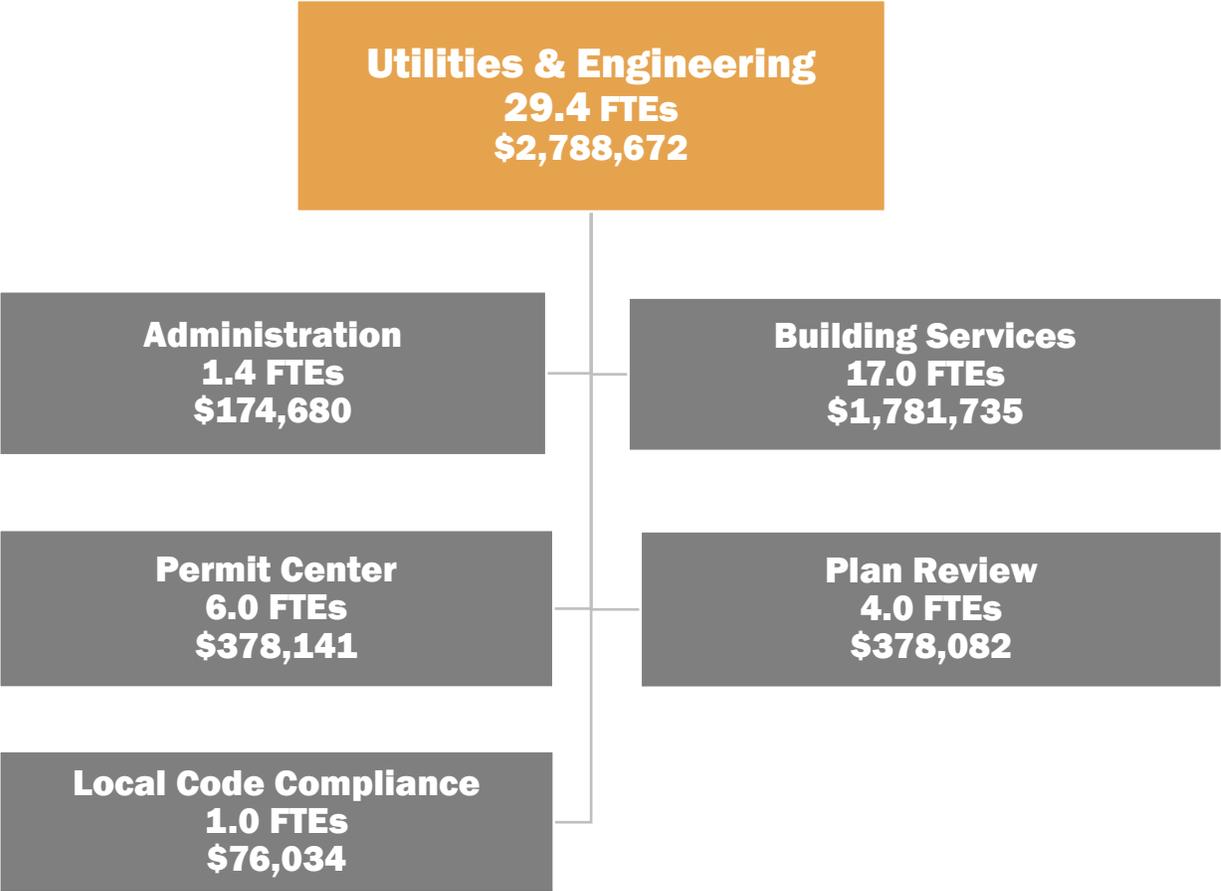


UTILITIES & ENGINEERING

Key Function Organization Chart



Department Services

BUILDING SERVICES

The mission of Building Services is to provide consistent, timely, and courteous advice and service to customers, contractors, businesses, homeowners, and the general public through the application of the State Building Code. The focus of the service is to protect public safety by ensuring all buildings are built to code specifications while promoting economic development through a partnership with the building industry. The operations of Building Services have, as its foundation, four guiding principles: protecting the public, providing the best possible customer service, promoting economic development, and ensuring consistency in the application of codes and treatment of customers.

PERMIT CENTER

Provide permitting information and service to the customers of Catawba County, including municipalities. The Permit Center currently operates two locations (Catawba County Government

Center in Newton and a Remote Access Permitting Terminal (RAPT) in Hickory City Hall) to provide convenient locations for the public to acquire permits and information for Building Services, Planning, and Environmental Health.

PLAN REVIEW

Provide plan review information and service to the customers of Catawba County, including municipalities, in a coordinated, efficient, and friendly manner. Plan Review provides plan review for commercial projects to ensure code compliance with the State Building Codes, conducts on-site safety inspections of existing buildings, provides plan review for existing buildings utilizing the North Carolina Rehabilitation Code (Rehab Code), conducts plan review services based on State local option plan review guidelines, and conducts plan review during express plan review appointments.

LOCAL CODE COMPLIANCE & EROSION CONTROL

Protect the regional water quality and health, safety, and general welfare of Catawba County citizens through implementation of the local soil sedimentation and erosion control program and code compliance program. Promote Catawba County's economic development through timely permitting service to local contractors and developers. The County provides the local soil sedimentation and erosion control program to seven of the eight municipalities in the county (Hickory, Conover, Claremont, Maiden, Long View, Catawba, and Brookford), with Newton providing its own local program.

Budget Highlights

UTILITIES & ENGINEERING

Organizations: 430050 - 430300

	2015/16 Actual	2016/17 Current	2017/18 Requested	2017/18 Adopted	Percent Change
Revenues					
Charges & Fees	1,552,599	1,849,213	2,149,295	2,156,880	16.6%
Miscellaneous	0	4,000	2,000	2,000	-50.0%
General Fund	681,429	667,530	530,640	629,792	-5.7%
Total	\$2,234,028	\$2,520,743	\$2,681,935	\$2,788,672	10.6%
Expenses					
Personal Services	\$1,674,074	\$2,066,564	\$2,210,301	\$2,212,022	7.0%
Supplies & Operations	420,073	394,179	407,680	412,696	4.7%
Capital	139,881	60,000	63,954	63,954	6.6%
Transfer - Permit Software Upgrade	0	0	0	100,000	
Total	\$2,234,028	\$2,520,743	\$2,681,935	\$2,788,672	10.6%
Expenses by Division					
Administration	\$229,835	\$173,203	\$174,598	\$174,680	0.9%
Building Inspections	1,303,046	1,480,712	1,675,724	1,781,735	20.3%
Permit Center	306,237	370,540	377,790	378,141	2.1%
Plan Review	249,997	332,403	377,848	378,082	13.7%
Local Code Compliance	144,913	163,885	75,975	76,034	-53.6%
	\$2,234,028	\$2,520,743	\$2,681,935	\$2,788,672	10.6%
Employees					
Permanent	22.15	27.15	29.40	29.40	8.3%
Hourly	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0%
Total	22.15	27.15	29.40	29.40	8.3%

Utilities and Engineering's budget increased \$267,929 (10.6 percent) partially driven by the addition of two Building Services Official III positions, one added during Fiscal Year 2016/17 and the other planned at mid-year subject to building activity. Additionally, the budget includes a transfer to General Capital Projects of \$100,000 to begin setting aside funds to replace the building permit software, anticipated in the next four to five years. Both the positions and the transfer are funded by increased building permit revenue driven by increased construction activity.

REVENUES & EXPENSES

- *Stormwater and Erosion Control (\$40,000 in revenues and \$88,266 in expenses transferred):* The budget transfers the Water Resources Engineer position to Building Services (0.5 FTE from Local Code Compliance in the General Fund and 0.5 FTE from the Solid Waste Management Fund) to better align expenses with the position's primary responsibility of providing soil sedimentation and erosion control plan review, permits, and inspections for new construction. Last fiscal year, the County began issuing a no charge small site permit to educate small site builders, mostly residential sites, of the applicable soil sedimentation and erosion control requirements. If a complaint is received on one of these small sites, the Water Resources Engineer visits the site and provides educational materials. A follow up site visit is required to determine if the site is in compliance. A site

visit is required monthly until the site is stabilized. During the first half of Fiscal Year 2016/17, over 66 site inspections were conducted.

REVENUES

- *Building Permits (\$202,165 increase)*: Building permit revenue received from the issuance of building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and mobile home permits is on track to surpass the 2016/17 approved budget by at least \$200,000 and additional growth is expected in the coming year.

EXPENSES

- *Building Services Official (\$107,615 increase)*: The budget includes two Building Services Official III positions, one added in May 2017 and the other planned for mid-year subject to building activity. In January 2016, the Board instructed staff to request additional positions when demand increased to 14 inspections per inspector per day. Building Services is now experiencing increased demand and expects the inspections per inspector per day to consistently reach 14 in the next few months. The average number of inspections per inspector per day reached 11.86 in March with a high of 16.75 on March 14th. Additionally, the lack of qualified and experienced inspectors in the available workforce remains an issue across the state. Due to their inexperience and lack of certification, new hires generally require 18 to 24 months of education and experience before they are able to make a significant impact in daily operations.
- *Permitting Software set-aside (\$100,000 increase)*: The budget begins to set aside funds for the future replacement or upgrade of the County's permitting and inspection system, which has been in use for six years. Based on the current use of the system and service level, upgrade or replacement is expected to be needed in the next four to five years and cost \$800,000 or more.

FEES

- *Plan Review Fee (\$102,000 increase)*:

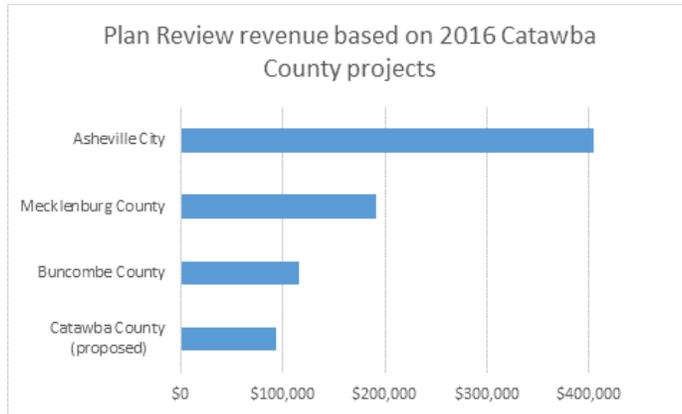
The fee philosophy for Building Services, including Plan Review, is to recover 100 percent of its cost from building permit and plan review fees. Building permit fees are calculated based on a formula driven by the cost of the overall project and the net cost (costs not covered by other fees) to operate Building Services. Currently, a flat fee of \$10 per trade (mechanical, plumbing, electrical, building, fire) is charged for initial plan review and re-submittals, which doesn't cover the cost of providing plan review services and results in inequities as follows:

- The fee is the same regardless of the size of the project, so effectively smaller projects pay a larger fee relative to cost than larger projects.
- Plans for larger projects are more complex and often require more reviews than smaller projects. Additional reviews are charged the same \$10 flat fee per trade.

Utilities & Engineering staff recommend Plan Review fees be adjusted based on cost per project instead of a flat fee basis to more closely match actual expenditures associated with work performed and services provided. Staff reviewed fee methodologies used by other jurisdictions

and found 4 main methodologies as reflected in the table along with the jurisdictions using each method. Cost of project is recommended over fee per square foot because it is more reflective of project complexity than number of square feet and is consistent with how building permit fees are calculated. For instance a shell building may have a lot of square feet but the plan review would be less complicated than a finished building with less square feet.

Fee per Square Foot	Cost of project	Flat Fee	Hourly Rate
Cabarrus County	Asheville City	Burke County	Alexander County
Caldwell County	Buncombe County	Lincoln County	
Forsyth County	Mecklenburg County		
Gaston County			
Iredell County			



The chart applies staff's proposed fee structure and the fee structures of other jurisdictions to Catawba County's actual projects in 2016 to provide an apples to apples comparison. As can be seen, the proposed fee would still be less than other jurisdictions using a cost of project fee methodology.

Project Cost	Adopted Fee
\$1-\$4,999	\$40
\$5,000 - \$24,999	\$75
\$25,000-\$49,999	\$100
\$50,000-\$99,999	\$150
\$100,000-\$149,999	\$200
\$150,000-\$199,999	\$250
\$200,000-\$299,999	\$300
\$300,000-\$399,999	\$350
\$400,000-\$499,999	\$400
\$500,000-\$749,999	\$500
\$750,000-\$999,999	\$600
\$1,000,000-\$1,999,999	\$750
\$2,000,000-\$2,999,999	\$1,000
\$3,000,000-\$4,999,999	\$1,250
\$5,000,000-\$6,999,999	\$1,500
\$7,000,000-\$9,999,999	\$1,750
\$10,000,000-Over	\$2,000

Resubmittal Fees

Currently, re-submittals are \$10 for each trade. The proposed fee structure change would make the 1st re-submittal free; however, subsequent submissions would require the fees outlined below. Based on the chart above, resubmittals would have the greatest effect on larger projects, which tend to be more complicated projects and submitted by bigger firms that can afford the increased plan review fee.

Resubmittal	Adopted Fee
1 st Resubmittal	No charge
2 nd Resubmittal	½ Original Fee
3 rd Resubmittal	Original Fee
4 th Resubmittal	Original Fee
5 th or Greater	In Office Meeting with Designer (\$100/hr review 2 hour minimum)

Project Level	Adopted Fee
Level 1 Project (\$1-\$99,999)	\$75
Level 2 Project (\$100,000-\$999,999)	\$150
Level 3 Project (\$1,000,000-Over)	\$300

New Sign Plan Review

Staff recommends a new \$20 per plan fee for sign plan review. Last year 240 sign plans were reviewed, but there was no fee for sign plan review so no revenue was collected.

Level of Service	Adopted Fee
Signs	\$20

Express Plan Review

Builders will continue to have the option of paying an hourly rate to receive express services. Staff notes that projects over \$100,000 generally take 12 or more hours to complete. This option is not used often but remains available for those who need it.

Level of Service	Adopted Fee
Exterior/Interior	\$950/hr (Existing Fees)
Level 2 Project (\$100,000-\$999,999)	\$800/hr (Existing Fees)

*All review fees are for paper or electronic formats.

Performance Measures

FISCAL YEAR 2017/18

Outcomes continue to focus on customer satisfaction, efficient service, and safety of the public through the enforcement of State and local development regulations. In Building Services, at least 90 percent of all requested inspections will be performed by the next day or on the contractor's requested inspection date. The division will also ensure it has no more than 1 sustainable complaint per 3,000 inspections performed.

MID-YEAR FISCAL YEAR 2016 /17

The following was accomplished during the first half of the fiscal year.

- 98.5 percent of inspections were completed within one day.
- There were no substantiated customer service complaints in the Permit Center
- Nearly every plan review, 532, was reviewed within 10 days
- 25 sets of erosion control plans were reviewed without any complaints

One outcome not on track was that not all inspections are being conducted by Level 3 Inspectors. This is due to the new inspectors still completing their training and certifications.

FISCAL YEAR 2015/16

Building Services applies the State code to protect the public's safety in terms of building code. One of the

Fiscal Year	Total Outcomes	Achieved	Not Achieved	Success Rate
2015/16	22	15	7	68%
2014/15	16	15	1	93%
2013/14	16	15	1	93%

outcomes related to quality building inspections was not achieved. The goal was for 100 percent of all commercial and industrial building inspections to be performed by inspectors with the highest state certification available in the for main inspection certifications. However, that figure was instead 97.56 percent. 84 percent of required training was completed locally, and citizens continued use of the Remote Access Permitting Terminal, with 603 permits issued. Finally, 93.14 percent of requested inspections were performed on the day requested.

In the Permit Center, every outcome was achieved. Only one substantiated complaint was received but dealt with in 24 hours. Enhanced, real-time communication of permit issuance, scheduled inspections, and inspection results was provided through e-mail and text for over 1,500 customers. Similarly, electronic trade permit applications quadrupled to 1,631 from December 2015.

Plan Review achieved each of its outcomes, including completion of 154 safety requests within two days, review of 940 plans in an average of 5.7 days, well ahead of the 10-day goal, and no substantiated complaints came out of any plan review.

A completion of every local code compliance plan review was completed within 10 days (overall average 3.17). Additionally, 2,380 code compliance inspections and 46 erosion control plans had been completed, with no customer service complaints.

Outcomes

BUILDING SERVICES

1. Ensure customers receive quality customer service from Building Services Officials by:
 - a. Performing 90 percent of requested inspections by the next day or on the contractor's requested inspection date, with an ultimate goal of performing 100 percent of inspections within this timeframe.
 - b. Maintaining a substantiated complaint rate of less than 1 per 3,000 inspections performed.
 - c. Responding to 98 percent of all customer service complaints within 24 hours.
2. To control the cost of training and education, Building Services will provide at least 60 percent of all required Building Inspector training and certification locally. Surrounding jurisdictions will be invited to participate in these locally held trainings as well, serving to further drive down the cost to the County.
3. To protect the public welfare, Building Services will respond to 100 percent of all complaints received concerning unsafe, unsanitary or otherwise hazardous and unlawful conditions in buildings or structures within 24 hours. Outcome will be measured by the number of complaints received and response time.

PERMIT CENTER

1. Ensure customers receive quality customer service from the Permit Center by:
 - a. Maintaining a substantiated complaint rate of less than 1 per 1,000 permits issued.
 - b. Responding to 98 percent of all customer service complaints within 24 hours.
2. Provide enhanced, real-time communication the Building Services Division and its customers, by developing, implementing, and promoting notification of permit issuance, inspections scheduled, and inspection results through the use of email and/or text message (Customer's choice). Outcome will be measured by the number of customers signed up for the program.
3. Provide additional opportunity for service provision through the use of email by allowing and promoting the use of email as a means of submitting permit applications and inspection requests in lieu of fax. The number of applications submitted and inspections scheduled can be tracked by the Information Technology Department and this will serve as the measured of the outcome.

PLAN REVIEW

1. Provide timely plan review services by reviewing 97 percent of all commercial blueprints submitted for code compliance and contacting the applicant with the results within 10 working days. This will allow construction to begin quickly, thus, promoting Catawba County's economic development.

2. Ensure customers receive quality customer service from Plan Review officials by:
 - a. Maintaining a substantiated complaint rate of less than 1 per 500 plans reviewed.
 - b. Responding to 98 percent of all customer service complaints within 24 hours.
3. To provide quality service to property owners and/or tenants who request a safety inspection, Plan Review will review 100 percent of complete requests and contact the owner/tenant within two business days. These safety inspections are required by the State for businesses to receive certain licenses (i.e. day care, alcohol law enforcement) as well as for changes of use to an existing building or space.

EROSION CONTROL AND STORMWATER

1. Provide timely plan review services by reviewing 100 percent of all complete sedimentation and erosion control plans within 10 working days. Meeting this outcome will expedite the plan review and permitting process, thereby promoting Catawba County's economic development.
2. Ensure citizens receive quality customer service from Erosion Control staff by:
 - a. Maintaining a substantiated complaint rate of less than 1 per 50 erosion control plans reviewed.
 - b. Responding to 98 percent of all customer service complaints within 24 hours.
3. In accordance with the Watershed Protection District Section 44-434 of the Unified Development Ordinance; the engineered stormwater controls (Best Management Practices) are required where built-upon area exceeds high density development limits. The Water Resources Engineer will perform plan review and issues approval notifications where applicable within the County. Provide timely plan review services by reviewing 100 percent of all stormwater controls within 10 working days, thereby promoting Catawba County's economic development.

LOCAL CODE COMPLIANCE

1. Ensure citizens receive quality customer service from Local Code Compliance staff by:
 - a. Maintaining a substantiated complaint rate of less than 1 per 1,000 code compliance inspections performed.
 - b. Responding to 98 percent of all customer complaints within 24 hours.