

New York State Comptroller
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New York City Government Services

Department of Buildings

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Prepared by the Office of the State Deputy Comptroller for the City of New York

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Introduction

The new mayoral administration, which took office in January 2026, has named “affordability” as a key issue facing New York City residents. To meet the affordability challenge (including housing), the administration is, among other things, exploring ways to accelerate development activity in the City and to reduce certain fees imposed on small businesses and residents. The New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) is one of several agencies involved in meeting the affordability challenge as the City’s principal regulator of the safe and lawful use of buildings and structures under the City’s jurisdiction.

DOB regulates more than 1,000,000 buildings and over 44,400 active construction sites in the City. The two main ways the agency fulfills its mission are through the review and approval of building development applications and by conducting inspections of development sites and existing buildings and structures to enforce the Building Code, Zoning Resolution and other applicable laws.

In continuation of the Office of the State Comptroller’s (OSC) ongoing Government Services Series, the fiscal and performance data of DOB over the past two decades has been reviewed to identify key trends. While OSC finds that agency is meeting its timeliness goals for high-priority demands, it is experiencing a slowdown in responsiveness for both development and inspection activities attributed to staffing and budget constraints.

OSC includes a number of recommendations to improve transparency and decision usefulness of DOB’s performance metrics and encourage a more holistic view of development and code enforcement to better reflect the perspective of businesses and residents.

Key Findings

- **Demand for DOB services remains elevated**, with more than 275,000 total job filings in FY 2025, reflecting continued strong development activity despite pandemic-era fluctuations.
- **Timeliness for both plan examinations and development inspections has deteriorated** in recent years. While DOB continues to complete initial plan reviews promptly, overall filing-to-approval times have grown due to increased resubmissions and applicant-driven delays.
- **Historical inspection timeliness standards are no longer being met.** Average days to complete construction, electrical, and plumbing development inspections have increased consistently since FY 2020.
- **Staffing and budget constraints are limiting service delivery**, with DOB’s full-time headcount remaining below its early-pandemic peak and turnover elevated in key technical and inspectorial titles.
- **Elevator and illegal conversion complaints continue to drive long response times.** DOB’s access rate for illegal residential conversion inspections remains well below its 44 percent target, and timeliness for elevator-related complaints has declined sharply.

- **Construction site safety indicators show improvement.** Construction-related injuries fell to 355 incidents in FY 2025, the lowest level in a decade, reflecting gains related to training requirements and proactive enforcement.

- **DOB continues to meet or exceed its integrity goals,** with substantiation rates for OATH-adjudicated violations remaining at or above the target of 80 percent.

- **Performance reporting gaps limit insight into workload, productivity, and bottlenecks.** The lack of numerical targets for many indicators, limited reporting on inspector productivity, and absence of full complaint lifecycle metrics reduce the decision-usefulness of current public reporting.

Background

DOB has had an interesting history in reaching its current role, balancing the need for ensuring safe and lawful use of property in the City while also minimizing the friction created by regulation on construction activity (see Appendix A for history on the agency). In the Mayor's Management Report (MMR), DOB divides its services into two areas: Facilitating Compliant Building Development (Service 1) and Ensuring the Safe and Lawful Use of Buildings and Properties by Enforcing the Building Code and the Zoning Solution (Service 2).

Facilitation of Compliant Development

The primary objective of facilitating compliant development is the timely review of pre-construction plans, issuing permits, and inspecting construction sites to ensure all activities subject to DOB regulation are performed in accordance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations while also minimizing the friction created by such regulatory activity.

Most construction in the City requires a DOB permit. When the owner of property seeks either to construct a new building or structure, make a major alteration or certain minor alterations to an existing building or structure on that property, the owner must obtain legal permission from DOB to begin the work. These requests for work permits are formally initiated when an applicant (the owner or a party representing the owner, such as a licensed professional) files a pre-construction application with DOB, known as a "job" filing.

DOB uses an electronic application system to handle the intake of new applications and related transactions. Formerly, such business was transacted via the Building Information System (BIS), but starting in 2016 (as part of the "Building One City" vision plan) this legacy system is being replaced by DOB's latest public-facing application portal, called DOB NOW. Today, substantively all jobs are filed through DOB NOW (259,086 applications were filed in FY 2025). A small percentage of total filing volume (6 percent) is still recorded under the legacy system (16,420 applications were filed in the same fiscal year), which DOB attributes to older jobs that receive subsequent or post approval amendment filings. A job initiated under the BIS will remain in the legacy system until it is completed. With substantively all business now handled under the DOB NOW system, DOB intends to retire the BIS in the near future.

The process to obtain approval of a job filing can vary by type of work (general construction, electrical, elevators, and limited alterations). For a detailed overview of the process for general construction, typically the most comprehensive type of development work, see Figure 1. For additional details, see appendices B (a detailed process flow diagram) and C (a narrative description of the process). Excluding minor alterations and ordinary repairs, applicants are generally required to receive approval of a pre-construction plan and to receive and maintain a permit to allow the physical construction to legally proceed.

Recent Policy Actions

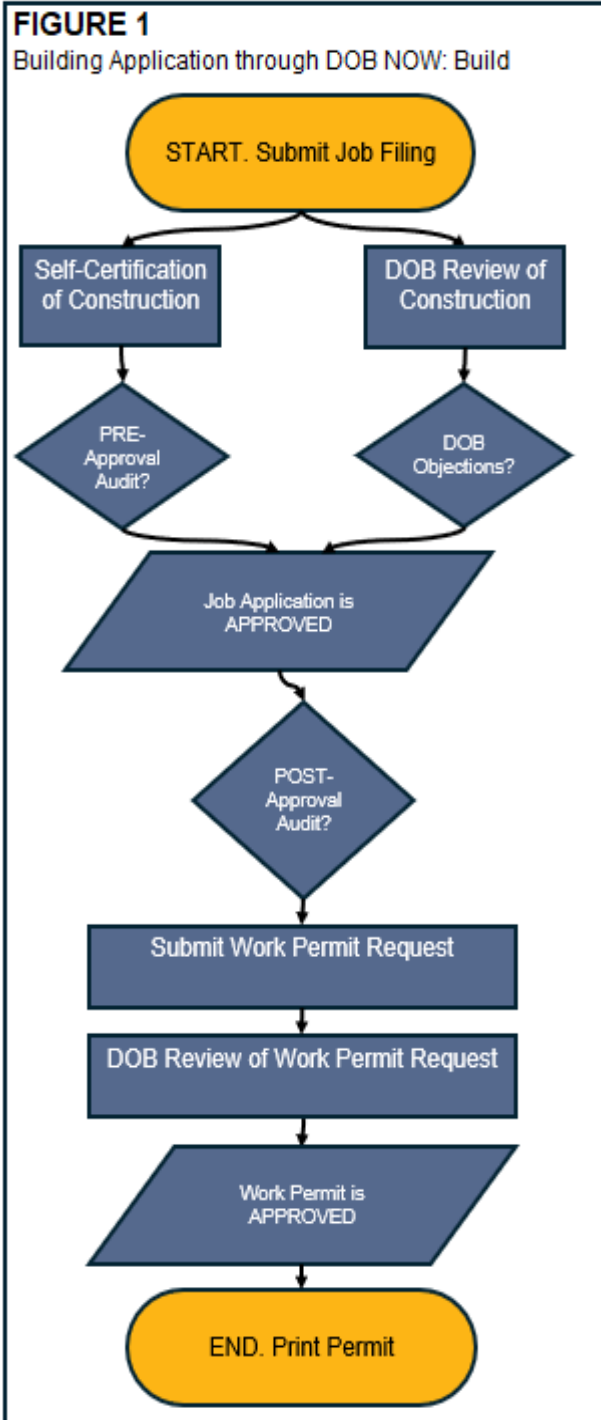
Both the Governor and the Mayor have signaled that the facilitation and acceleration of compliant development is a major priority for addressing the affordability crisis. In May, the Mayor released “Block by Block: The Housing Plan for a New Era,” which suggests that the City recognizes the spending and time costs of certain inspection activities and potential to leverage new technology (such as for facades), DOB’s role in being a project expert to reduce project timelines and its role in reducing construction safety incidents.

On May 13, 2026, the Streamlining Procedures to Expedite Equitable Development (SPEED) taskforce released a vision plan outlining a number of recommended changes in process, technology and funding for staffing engaged in compliance activities at various agencies to expedite developmental activity in the City. The report does not include estimates on the costs and timeline for implementation of the taskforce's recommendations, however.

The Mayor and the Governor have also expressed an interest in reviewing regulations governing the issuance of permits to identify ways to expedite the development process.

In May 2026, the State, as part of the SFY 2027 budget, made changes to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) to provide regulatory relief to certain types of housing projects that are compliant with local zoning and purportedly have no significant impacts on the environment. The Governor has stated that the changes could save as much as \$82,000 in per-unit building costs and should accelerate housing development activity in the State, including the City, by up to two years.

The enforcement of the safe and lawful use of buildings also remains a policy goal. On January 1, 2026, Mayor Mamdani announced an executive order to “revitalize” the Office to Protect Tenants, to coordinate City operations involved in defending tenant’s rights (including DOB). As indicated in the next subsection, DOB’s enforcement role continues even after development has been completed.



Enforcement of Safe Use of Buildings

DOB is responsible for ensuring the safe and lawful use of buildings and properties in New York City by enforcing the Building Code and the Zoning Resolution to minimize harm caused to occupants of buildings and construction workers. This service is accomplished primarily through enforcement inspections and ongoing efforts to engage with the construction industry regarding site safety compliance.

DOB receives (and responds to) complaints via NYC311 and other sources regarding alleged illegal or unsafe construction work and improper building use. A detailed overview of the complaint response process is available in Appendix D. Once a complaint is received, the matter is assigned to the appropriate inspectorial unit. The role of a selected number of these specialized units is highlighted in Appendix E.

If a violating condition is identified during an inspection, the inspector will issue a violation in the form of a summons. In New York City, most summonses issued by the City's different enforcement agencies are adjudicated by the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH), the City's central, independent administrative law court.

In addition to the development inspections (which are scheduled) and the enforcement inspections (which respond to complaints), the DOB is also tasked with managing several local law initiatives that drive additional proactive enforcement activities.

For example, Local Law 196 of 2017 requires workers on construction sites to complete 40 hours of safety training (Supervisors and managers must complete 62 hours of such training). The City reports in the MMR on its progress in preventing construction-related fatalities and injuries. Local Law 79 of 2024 established a new proactive enforcement program.

Not all inspections of buildings and structures under the jurisdiction of DOB are conducted by its employees. The agency relies on the private sector to perform an unquantified, but potentially substantial, share of the inspection activity that takes place in the City each year, including the

SPOTLIGHT: DEVELOPMENT INSPECTIONS

Project work does not end when the contractor completes the physical work. Rather, property owners must ensure that the contractor and design professional have engaged with DOB and/or the Special Inspection Agency (SIA) to ensure completion of all required inspections in a timely manner. DOB refers to this type of enforcement as a "development" inspection (which are scheduled), to distinguish the work from other enforcement activities.

Once certain "milestones" of the development project have been met, licensed professionals such as contractors are mandated to request a development inspection. The City reports on the average number of days to complete such development inspections, broken down into three component categories: General Construction; Electrical; and Plumbing. The design professional and contractor must obtain all of the necessary sign-offs for the completed work so that a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) or a Letter of Completion (LOC) can be obtained to close out the project. Based on the filing status categories reported in DOB NOW, the receipt of the CO or LOC indicates the completion of the general construction job. For electrical, elevators, and limited alterations, approval of a sign-off by an inspector indicates work has been completed.

review and testing of building materials and periodic inspection of major existing structures such as boilers, elevators, and facades.

In such cases, DOB can require periodic filing of inspections performed by the third-party entities, and no DOB action may be necessary as long as the reporting entity has not identified any unsafe condition. From time to time, the agency may promulgate rules to either expand its enforcement scope or delegate portions of the inspection activity to the private sector. For example, DOB is piloting a program to allow approved elevator agencies to perform acceptance tests for new elevator installations, alterations, or modernization work, and already has similar programs in place for items such as boilers and building facades.

Interagency Enforcement Overlap

From the perspective of a property owner, the receipt of a violation from the City can create some confusion because property owners may receive a violation from one of multiple entities, not all of which are adjudicated by OATH.

For instance, if a property or construction site is found to be out of compliance with the City's Construction Codes, an OATH summons is issued. If, however, a property is found to be out of compliance with other applicable laws (e.g., local law relating to facades), or with an order from the DOB commissioner to correct a violating condition, a separate "DOB violation" will be issued to the owner. For these violations, the owner can work with DOB directly to resolve the issue administratively (i.e., correct the violation and pay a fine without a hearing). The Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) is responsible for enforcing the Housing Maintenance Code. In certain cases, it is possible that a single property may be found to be in violation of multiple codes and could receive summonses issued by either DOB, HPD, or both.

OSC reviewed several fiscal and performance indicators to assess the extent the City has achieved its stated service goals.

Service #1: Facilitation of Complaint Development

The City measures whether it is facilitating compliant development, the first major service goal reported by DOB, based on its goals of improving process efficiency, promptly reviewing construction plans, and promptly scheduling development inspections. Processing efficiency indicators include job filings, work permits and COs issued and transaction time.

The prompt review of construction plans is measured based on the number of first plan and resubmission plan reviews completed, days to completion of such reviews and share of jobs professionally certified that are audited for compliance. Scheduled development inspections are measured by the length of time from request to inspection, particularly for construction, electrical and permit requests.

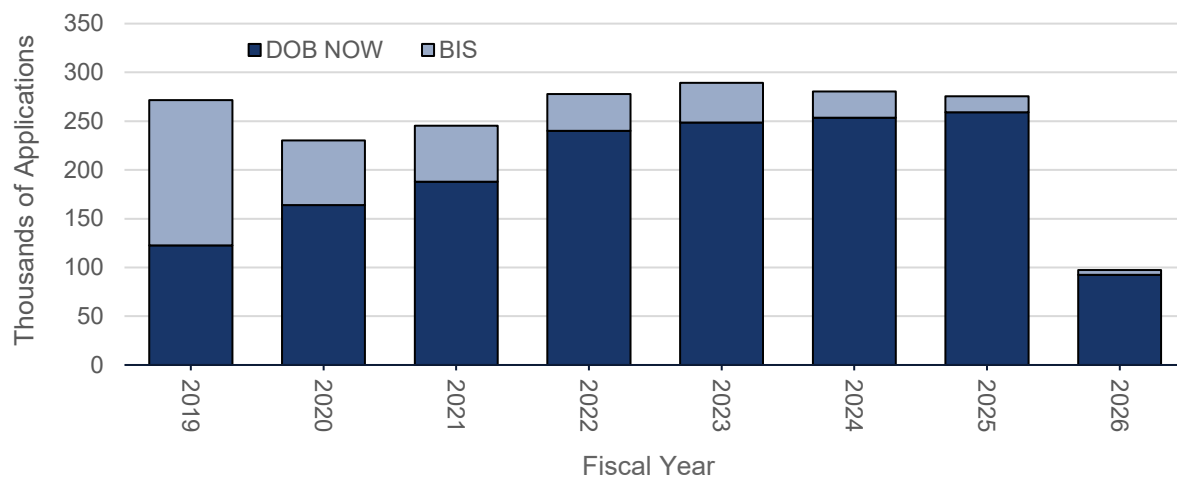
The analysis finds that DOB is struggling to respond to job filings and development requests promptly, based on its own historical benchmarks, and that the agency has experienced a setback in recent years.

Construction Plan and Permit Reviews

While job filings through DOB NOW have increased each year since the City began reporting the data, OSC reviewed the total filings for both DOB NOW and BIS to gain a more complete view of development activity (see Figure 2). During the pandemic, construction-related activity slowed sharply in FY 2020, but recovered quickly over the next two years. While slightly lower than were recorded in FY 2023, the most recent peak, the total number of filings appear to remain relatively high (275,506 filings in FY 2025), suggesting there is a strong “demand” for development plan reviews and inspections.

DOB reports data on a critical timeliness milestone, the average number of days to complete the first plan review, as well as the total amount of time to complete the service from filing date to

FIGURE 2
Job Filings by Application Portal



Note: 2026 shows fiscal-year-to-date filings through October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

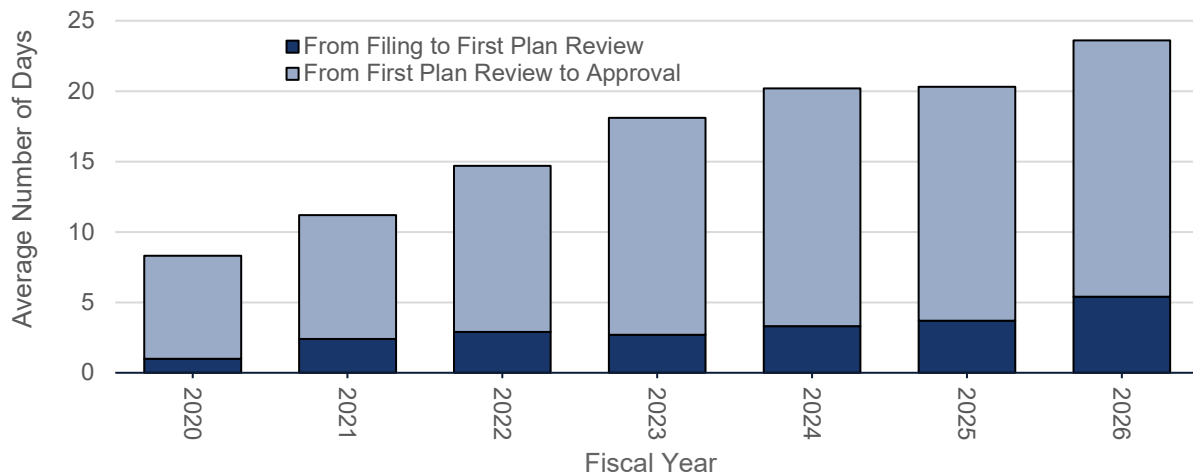
approval date inclusive of the first plan review. Such timeliness reporting is further subdivided by the type of work being reviewed (new buildings, major renovations, and minor renovations) as well as by the application portal (DOB NOW and BIS).

Based on a review of the performance data, it appears most of the time spent on job filing reviews occurs after the first plan review (see Figure 3). While DOB completed its first plan review of jobs submitted through DOB Now on average in 3.7 business days, the length of time from application to approval was 20.3 days. While the average time for each component has increased, time spent with the applicant rose much more sharply since the City began tracking this metric. Notably, the City has stated in the MMR that the timeliness after the first plan review is driven by the time the applicant is “holding the filing while making corrections” to address objections raised by DOB for approval and is “not under the Department’s control.”

In the FY 2026 Preliminary Mayor’s Management Report, DOB reports that the turnaround time rose to 23.6 days during the first four months of the fiscal year. The agency attributes the increase to “filing complexities and submission quality, as well as resource constraints” which contributed to extended plan review times and instances of rejection or resubmission. But this narrative explanation lacks specificity and provides no further insight into the underlying reasons applicants are experiencing such filing complexities and submission quality, nor the percentage of applications being rejected and the average number of times the application is resubmitted before approval, to better understand the increase in the timeliness. These data also do not seem readily available on DOB’s website or NYC OpenData.

For example, it is not clear if the “filing complexity” is caused by changes to the Construction Codes that have made interpretation and compliance more difficult; or whether the applicant is waiting longer to schedule time with DOB staff to help resolve the objections. More details on the underlying issues driving this trend is important, as recently approved [legislation](#) to adopt an international model for existing buildings was intended to help reduce applicant time interpreting the City’s building codes.

FIGURE 3
Timeliness of Pre-Construction Plan Reviews



Note: Data includes only jobs filed through DOB Now. 2026 shows fiscal-year-to-date average as of October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

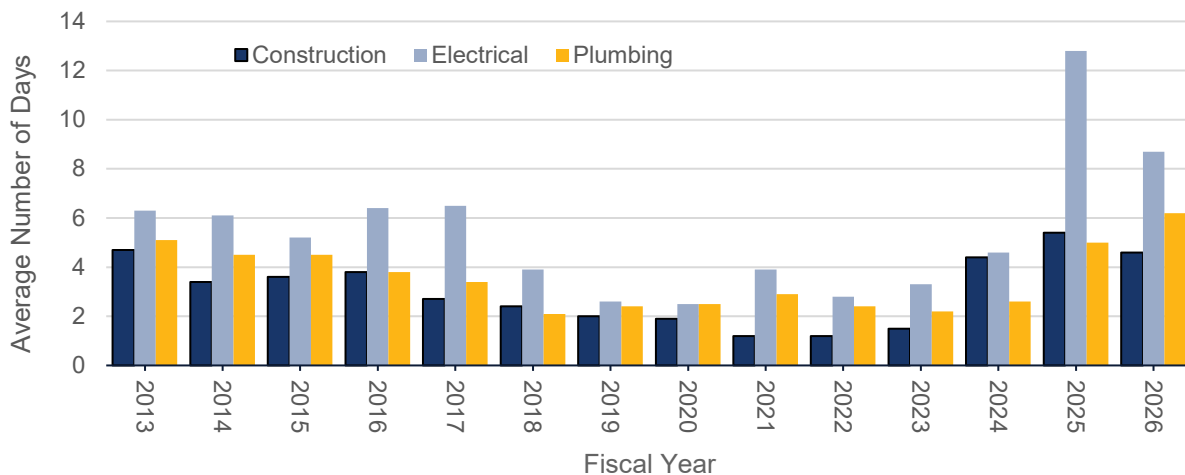
While DOB does not currently publish an “overall” timeliness target for first plan reviews, in past years, the target for jobs submitted via BIS was 4.5 business days (although using this target would assume no efficiencies were realized through the shift to centralized and paperless filings in DOB NOW). If the same target were to be applied to jobs submitted through DOB NOW, then DOB did complete first plan reviews faster than its overall service level target through FY 2025. Nevertheless, the turnaround time for first plan reviews has increased to 5.4 days in the first four months of FY 2026, exceeding the historical target.

DOB reports on the number of work permits issued, but does not currently report on the number of days from the date the permit is requested to the date of approval. Without this information, it is not possible to gauge the impact permit reviews have on the overall promptness of development reviews.

Development Inspections

Local law requires that various types of inspections take place at key milestones of the construction process and once the work is finished before DOB issues a certificate of occupancy. While the turnaround time from the date an inspection is requested to the first available date that an inspector can visit a job site had been relatively quick before the pandemic, the timeliness of such inspections has deteriorated since FY 2020. As shown in Figure 4, the average time from request date to inspection date has increased for each category and remains elevated through the first four months of FY 2026. DOB attributes the deterioration to ongoing budgetary constraints and reduced staff capacity.

FIGURE 4
Timeliness of Development Inspections



Note: Data not available prior to FY 2013. FY 2026 shows fiscal-year-to-date average reported as of October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

DOB used to publish numerical targets for each category of development inspection. As of FY 2017, the targets were 4.5 days for construction inspections; five days for plumbing inspections; and six days for electrical inspections. Starting in FY 2018, however, DOB stopped including numerical targets in the MMR. Instead, the agency displays a “down arrow” symbol, indicating the target is to “reduce the average number of days.” The lack of a numerical target

makes it difficult for a reader to interpret the reasonableness of the turnaround times when compared to a benchmark.

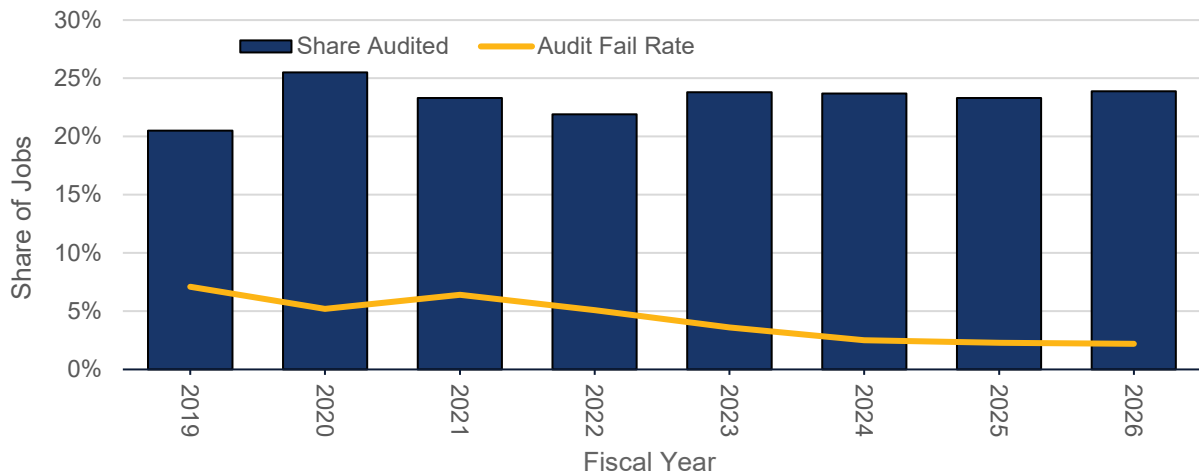
The City used to report numerical targets to these inspection times. If these targets were applied to current trends, then the DOB would not be meeting its historical timeliness standards for development inspections.

Building Application Audits

Job filings submitted by a registered design professional are permitted by local law to bypass DOB’s plan examination process (i.e., self-certified plans). As a safety and integrity control, the agency audits a share of these self-certified plans, which is reported in the MMR. While the MMR has not included a numerical target for the share of professionally certified jobs to be audited each year since FY 2016, the historical benchmark was 20 percent. The MMR now indicates that the desired direction is “Up,” meaning DOB aims to increase the share audited each year for both the sample of jobs audited pre-approval and the share of jobs audited post approval.

As shown in Figure 5, the share of jobs audited (post approval) has exceeded 20 percent of professionally certified jobs each year. DOB also now reports on a sample of professionally certified jobs that are audited pre-approval, which totaled 5,234 in FY 2025. Although not reported explicitly in the MMR, the share of pre-approval audits appears to be around 5 percent, assuming the audits are conducted within the same period that the associated total number of jobs were recorded. The percentage of audited jobs that failed, meaning a revocation letter was issued, has declined in recent years to nearly 2 percent, suggesting there is higher developer compliance.

FIGURE 5
Professionally-Certified Jobs Audited (Post Approval) (%)



Note: Comparable Data not available prior to FY 2019. 2026 is as of October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

Service #2: Promptly Address Complaints and Enforce Building and Zoning Laws

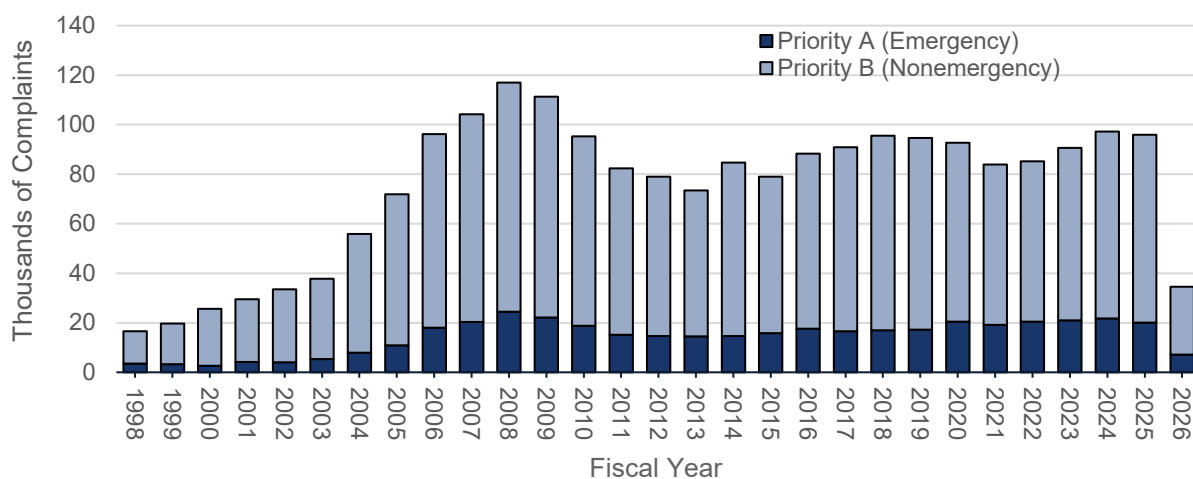
OSC reviewed a number of metrics relating to enforcement of the safe and lawful use of buildings, the second major service goal reported by DOB. These metrics include timeliness to respond to complaints, activities on enforcement of building and zoning laws and the outputs of inspections (including data on the number of violations and other orders issued by DOB), and reporting on the number of construction-related fatalities and injuries (a major focus of the City’s site safety initiatives).

In general, DOB is prompt when responding to priority complaints, it issues findings that are mostly upheld in an OATH proceeding, and reports improvement to overall construction site safety. However, the Department has reported a sharp increase in response times for nonemergency but serious matters. DOB also acknowledges that staffing and budget constraints have contributed to this decline in timeliness.

The MMR includes complaints received that are categorized as either: Priority A, which are emergency requests, such as unsafe demolition or accidents, and have a 24-hour target response; or Priority B requests, which are nonemergency but important for building suitability, such as illegal conversion of space or an elevator that is defective or not working, and have a 40-day target response. The MMR does not report on nonhazardous Priority C or quality-of-life Priority D requests.

Enhanced enforcement efforts and proactive inspection programs implemented during the Bloomberg administration correspond with a sharp rise in complaint activity, peaking in FY 2008. While complaints briefly declined during the pandemic (as did development activity), the number of Priority A and B complaints has averaged 91,498 annually over the past decade, well above

FIGURE 6
Complaints Received by Priority Level



Note: 2026 shows fiscal-year-to-date complaints through October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

the levels of complaints that existed prior to the enhancement of enforcement efforts (see Figure 6).

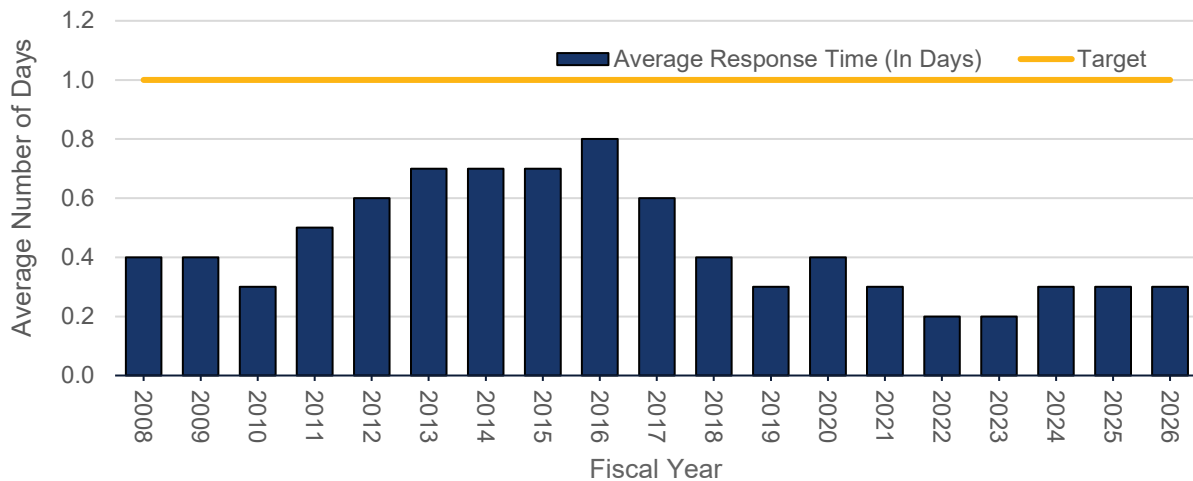
DOB has a stated service level target to conduct a first site visit within one day for Priority A complaints and 40 days for Priority B complaints. As shown in Figures 7 and 8, the City has met the service level target every year for Priority A complaints. DOB is also completing first site visits substantially faster than the service level target for Priority B complaints since FY 2016, although the timeliness for such inspections has risen in recent years. Similar to development inspections, DOB acknowledges in the FY 2025 MMR that response times for Priority B complaints are on the rise mainly due to public concerns about elevators, because the elevator unit remains “impacted by ongoing budgetary constraints and reduced staff capacity.”

In the MMR, DOB reports separately on its timeliness to respond to 311 Service Requests (SR) by complaint type (i.e., “Problems”). Given that requests make up most of the Priority A and Priority B complaint volume, these details on 311 complaints can provide additional insight on the types of issues experiencing relatively long turnaround times.

The MMR currently includes five SR problems (“Elevator – Defective/Not Working”; “Work Contrary/Beyond Approved Plans/Permits”; “Failure to Maintain”; “Illegal Conversion of Residential Buildings/Space”; and “Work Without Permit”). The category of “Failure to Maintain” appears to be broad, referencing any component of the building (including elevators and boilers) that are not in “good working” condition. All of these problems are Priority B complaints.

Overall, DOB’s percent meeting time to first action for three of the five SR Problems is very high (the reported share for each of these three categories is over 95 percent as of FY 2025). However, timeliness to respond to Defective/Not Working Elevators and “Failure to Maintain” complaints has deteriorated rapidly since FY 2023, from over 95 percent in each category to 70.6 percent for Defective/Not Working Elevators and 39.6 percent for “Failure to Maintain.”

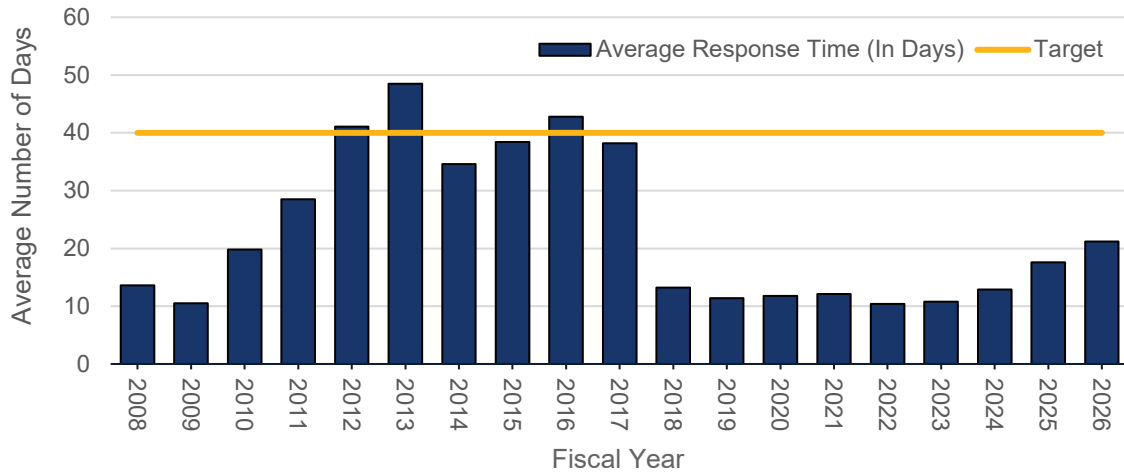
FIGURE 7
Timeliness of Priority A Enforcement Inspections



Note: Priority A complaints are for emergencies. Data not available prior to FY 2008. FY 2026 shows fiscal-year-to-date average as of October 2025.

Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

FIGURE 8
Timeliness of Priority B Enforcement Inspections



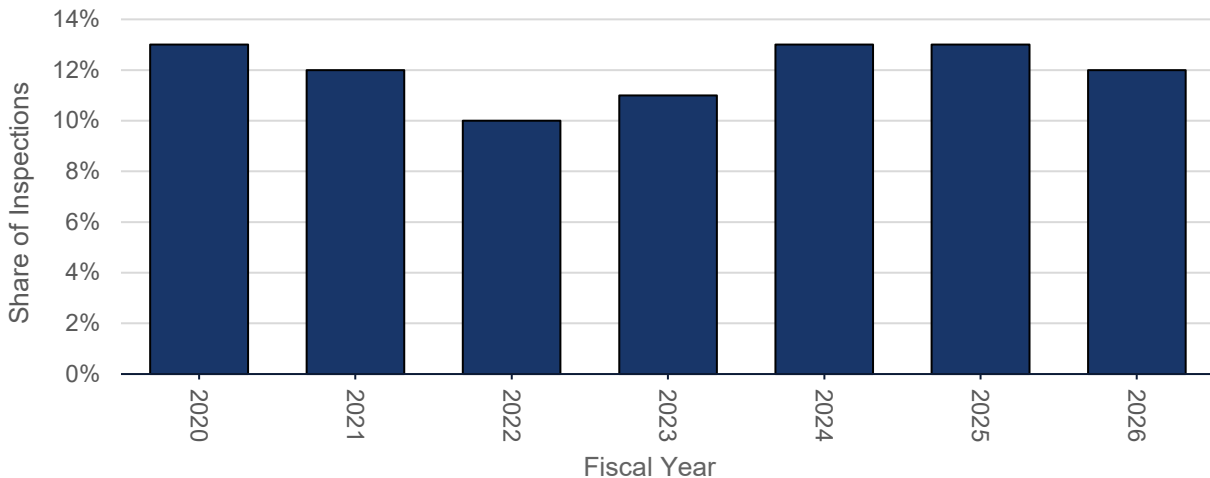
Note: Priority B Complaints are for serious, but nonemergency matters. Data not available prior to FY 2008. FY 2026 shows fiscal year-to-date average as of October 2025.
 Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

The agency does not provide a numerical target for the share of 311 service requests it aims to respond to within the 40-days target timeframe and does not provide the desired direction for four of the five categories. In the FY 2025 MMR, DOB stated that the desired direction for the “percent meeting time to first action” on illegal conversion complaints is “Down,” which is counterintuitive given the DOB’s intent appears to be to increase the promptness of their response (meaning a higher share of complaints are responded to within 40 work days).

Enforcement Dispositions

Once a final inspection is completed (or after two attempts have been made), DOB will close the complaint and indicate its disposition, or final decision or action. As shown in Figure 9, the share

FIGURE 9
Enforcement Inspections Resulting in Violations (%)



Note: Data not available prior to FY 2020. FY 2026 is YTD as of October 2025.
 Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

of enforcement inspections resulting in a violation initially declined since FY 2020, the first year of data reported by the City, but has rebounded since then. This performance metric was added recently (in FY 2023, replacing a previous metric that focused only on construction inspections), but received a material revision in FY 2025 standardized across prior years to account for enforcement activity other than construction inspections, which had been previously omitted for fiscal years 2023 and 2024.

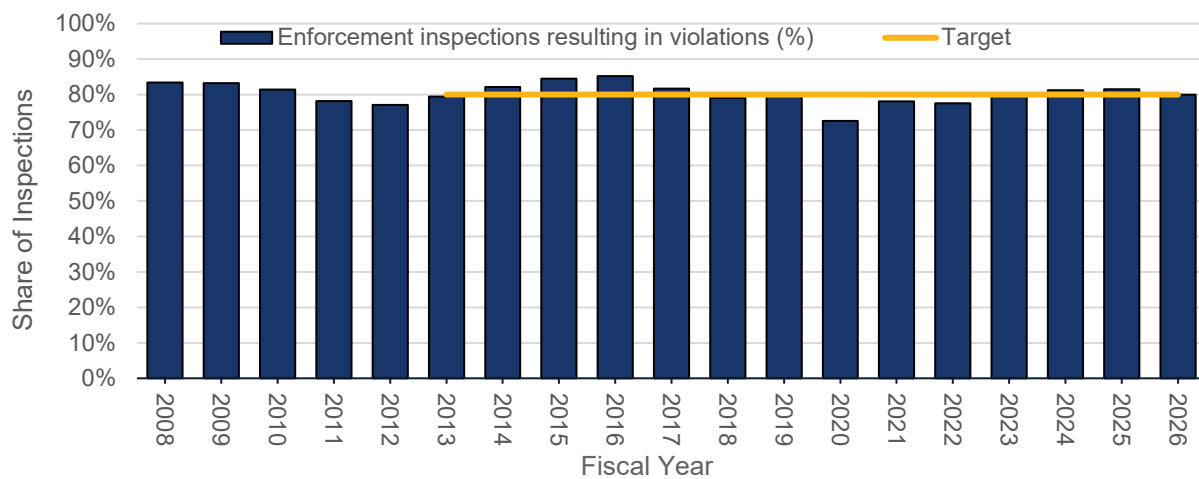
As a result, despite a temporary improvement, the observed rate of compliance has not significantly changed since FY 2020. It is unclear whether a violation rate of 13 percent should be considered “high” or “low” by international standards, however. There does not appear to be any central source of comparative analysis on building inspection activities to benchmark the City’s performance.

DOB has a strong track record in substantiating its violations, essentially meeting or slightly exceeding the current target of 80 percent (see Figure 10). The City includes in the MMR data on this metric going back to FY 2007 but did not establish an annual target until FY 2013. This “substantiation” rate can be viewed as a measure of performance integrity, suggesting that DOB is usually right when it finds a violation. It also may help understand inspector efficiency; if the number were to decline, it would suggest that a greater share of inspector time has been spent on cases that are not substantiated. The MMR does not indicate the reasons OATH did not uphold the remainder of the cases, however. DOB’s substantiation rate briefly declined in FY 2020 (the year the pandemic took hold), but the agency provided no narrative explanation for the temporary setback in performance, although it may have faced increased difficulties performing site inspections in the initial wave of the pandemic.

Construction Site Safety

The City has identified construction site safety as a priority of the DOB for at least two decades and has included data on construction related incidents, injuries and fatalities in the MMR since FY 2006. According to an [October 2009 memo](#) from the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO), Mayor Bloomberg had made oversight of construction a priority since taking office

FIGURE 10
Violations Admitted to or Upheld at OATH (%)



Note: Data not available prior to FY 2008. FY 2026 is as of October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

in 2002. The Mayor and the City Council passed laws increasing fines for illegal construction work, as well as increased safety provisions in specific high-risk areas such as concrete, suspended scaffolds and crane operations. IBO also noted that the City had overhauled the building code in 2007 to increase construction safety (leading to adoption of the New York City Construction Codes of 2008).

A new round of reforms implemented by the City during 2017 imposed additional safety training requirements on the construction industry and expanded DOB enforcement activity, including the creation of a new Construction Safety Compliance inspection unit that performs proactive periodic inspections of all active construction sites.

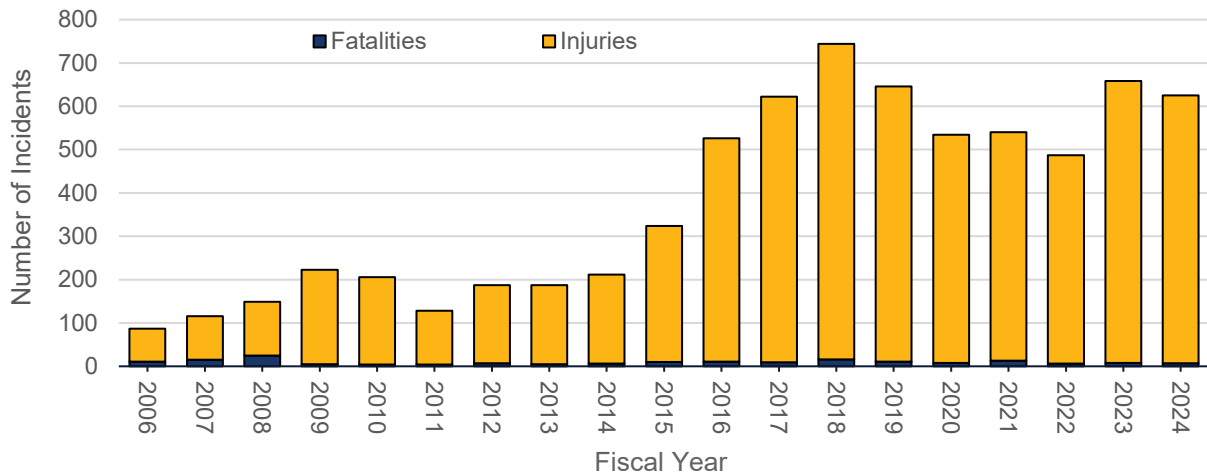
As shown in Figure 11, the number of construction-related injuries rose sharply from 212 in FY 2014 to 744 in FY 2018, which DOB attributes to a corresponding increase in construction activity. The increase may also reflect improved reporting following implementation of Local Laws 78 and 196 of 2017 (LL78 and LL196).

LL196 requires that construction workers receive at least 40 hours of site safety training (supervisors and managers must receive at least 62 hours of such training). LL78 requires the owner of or individuals responsible for managing the construction site to report to DOB within three business days any DOB-permitted construction work that resulted in an injury or fatality. The Department is required to report on such incidents on a monthly basis.

The number of construction-related injuries declined over the next four years to 487 as of FY 2022. DOB attributes the decline to the combination of proactive enforcement and better training for construction workers (including site safety training required under LL196).

The City experienced a setback in FY 2023, when the number of injuries rebounded to 658. In the FY 2023 MMR, DOB suggested that there may have been an increase in new staff with less experience, resulting in more construction-related incidents. In response, the Department reported that it conducted a safety sweep to visit every permitted site and had “made it a point of

FIGURE 11
Construction-Related Injuries and Fatalities



Note: Data not available prior to FY 2006. FY 2026 is year-to-date through October 2025.
 Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

emphasis to talk about safety” and pass out safety materials during these visits, “with a particular emphasis on fall protection.” Construction-related injuries have declined each year since then, although more information is needed from DOB to assess the relationship between recent DOB enforcement activities (and funding for inspectors) on the number of construction incidents. As of FY 2025, the number of construction-related injuries totaled 355, the lowest in 10 years.

In 2022, OSC published an [audit](#) on DOB’s oversight of construction site safety, identifying a number of areas including construction site inspections and safety, and enforcement activity that need to be improved. The audit identified 77 safety issues including: not having a site safety manager; missing or incomplete site safety logs and daily inspection records; and no documentation of workers completing required site safety training or attending mandatory safety meetings. The audit recommended a number of changes which include:

- Creating and implementing policies and procedures to issue DOB Violations for failure to certify corrections of immediately hazardous conditions in a timely manner;
- Using DOB inspection, violation and accident data as well as publicly available data to identify high-risk contractors and sites to proactively inspect; and
- Developing and implementing procedures, including coordinating with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and other relevant agencies, to identify building construction site incidents.

In a [follow-up report](#) issued in 2024, OSC found that DOB had made limited progress in addressing the issues identified in the initial audit report. DOB indicated in response that it is working to improve its existing procedures to address the issues identified in OSC’s report, implementing two of the initial six audit recommendations and partially implementing one of the recommendations as of February 2024.

Staffing and Budget Constraints

DOB has cited in the MMR and in public testimony to the City Council that both staffing and budget constraints have resulted in set backs to the Department's promptness to deliver both development facilitation and enforcement services. As discussed further below, staffing data reviewed by OSC indicates that DOB has frequently reported reductions in personnel following a severe recession, which occurred in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic-fueled recession as well. The Department has also indicated in past testimony that it must compete with the construction industry to attract qualified and experienced workers with training in engineering, architecture and related technical fields, including inspectors. Purportedly, recruitment and retention of technical professionals has been and remains a significant challenge to this day.

DOB's expense budget is personnel driven with more than three-quarters of its operating budget devoted to personal service costs. Until FY 2024, DOB's budget structure was limited to just two Units of Appropriation ("001 – Personal Services" and "002 – Other Than Personal Services"). Following negotiation with the City Council that began over a decade ago through the budget adoption process for FY 2024, the Mayor and the City Council reached agreement to establish new Units of Appropriations to improve transparency and decision usefulness of fiscal data relating to the Department's enforcement and development functions. The additional breakout could also lead to better alignment between certain programmatic activity and performance outcomes.

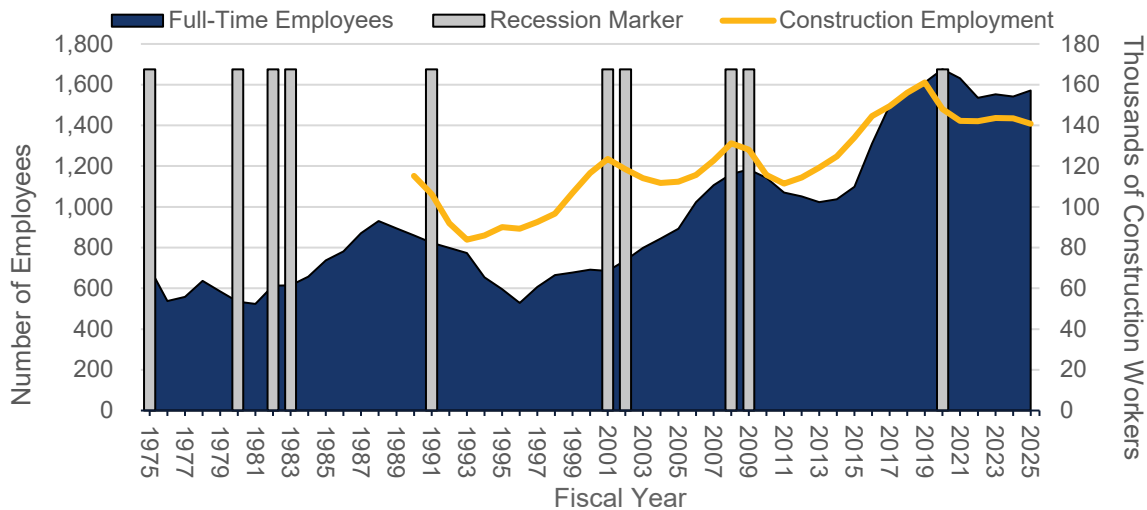
As of February 2026, however, the preliminary MMR for FY 2026 still indicates that "All" or "None" of the MMR goals are applicable to these new divisions in the DOB chapter of the report. Such information is helpful to link City spending and budget on DOB operations to performance. Given that there is not yet much history on the new budget structure, this report will refer to agency-wide staffing trends.

After a major reorganization to dismantle the Housing and Development Administration "superagency" into the DOB and HPD in the 1970s, DOB maintained a relatively small workforce through much of its modern history. There were fewer than 600 full-time employees as of June 30, 1976. DOB's staffing level remained relatively small over the next three decades (fewer than 1,000 employees, see Figure 12), despite a brief expansion during fiscal years 1982 through 1989 followed by a slight retreat in the early 1990s that accelerated through 1996, likely in response to the early 1990s recession.

After declining to the lowest level on record in FY 1996 (528 employees), full-time staffing partially recovered through the early 2000s. However, full-time staffing at DOB would be greatly expanded since FY 2002 in two major phases.

To enforce the expansion in safety regulations (as well as responding to an increase in permit requests and complaints), the City significantly increased funding for inspections. IBO also noted that construction inspector staffing increased by 64 percent from 2002 to 2008, with 222 construction inspectors at the end of 2008, of which 22 were part of a new special enforcement initiative to target specific construction activities considered especially dangerous. By the end of FY 2009, DOB full-time staffing had reached a year-end record of 1,183 employees.

FIGURE 12
Historical Staffing Levels at the DOB



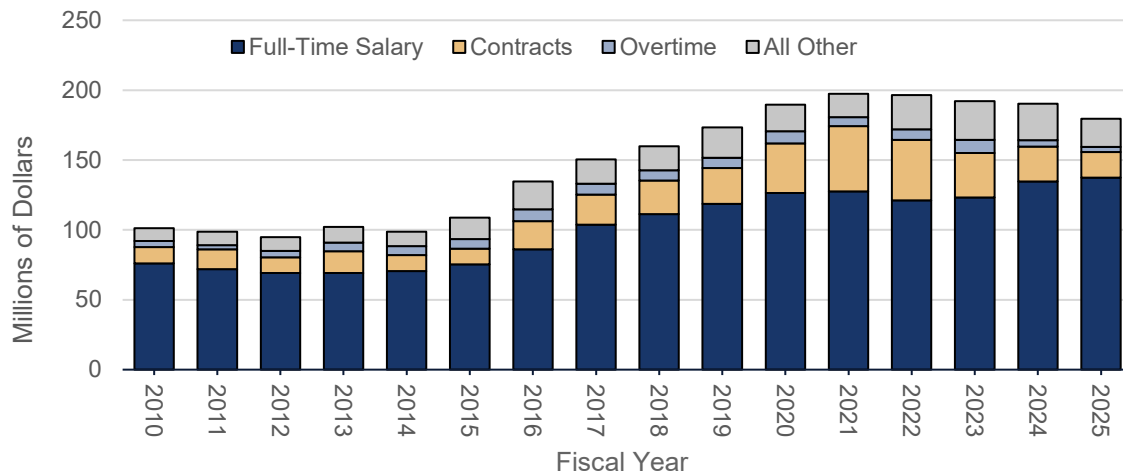
Note: Comparable construction employment data is not available prior to 1990.
 Sources: NYC Comptroller; NYC OMB; NYS Department of Labor, Current Employment Statistics; OSC analysis

Staffing at the DOB experienced another temporary setback due to cost-reduction initiatives implemented in response to the Great Recession (which began in late 2007 and ended in the middle of 2009). Full-time staffing declined to 1,023 through the close of FY 2013, but remained higher than the staffing level recorded before the enforcement expansion.

The de Blasio administration also prioritized reform at DOB. According to the [Building One City vision report](#) issued by the de Blasio administration in 2015, the City indicated that the Department faced a surge in development applications over a three-year period following the Great Recession. The report states that “This increase in demand has revealed some additional needs in DOB’s staffing levels and organizational structure. In the past the agency has been under-resourced to meet the demand for quick and thorough plan reviews.” In the plan, the hiring of plan examiners and inspectors was explicitly linked with the aim of reducing plan examination and inspection times.

In response to these concerns, the City added funding to support 320 new positions over a four-year period (see Figure 13). By FY 2020, staffing at DOB reached a new all-time, year-end record of 1,676 employees, more than tripling the level recorded at the end of FY 1996. Spending on contractual services also rose during the period, corresponding with the rollout of DOB NOW. During the same period, the Department also reported corresponding and significant reductions to average times for first plan reviews and for development inspections.

FIGURE 13
Historical Spending at the DOB

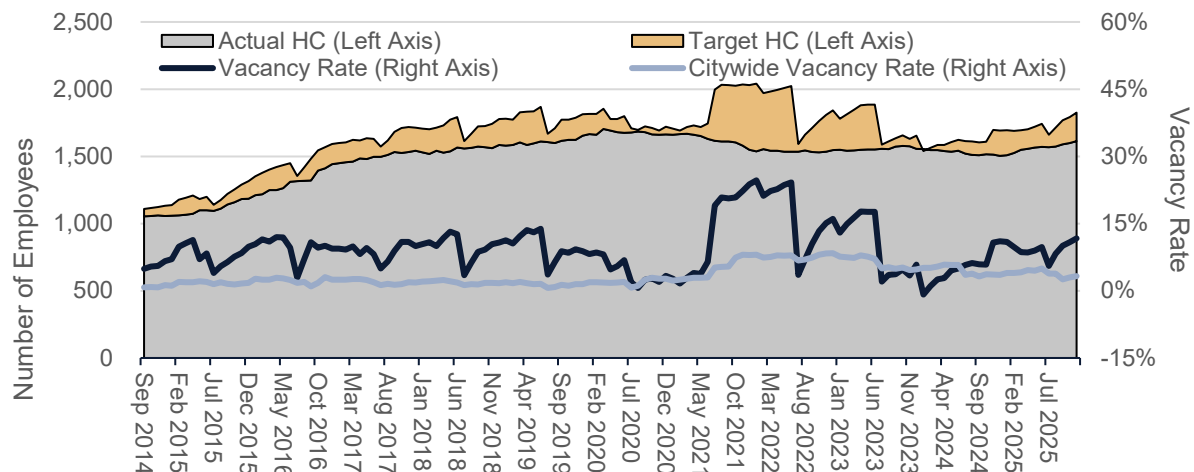


Note: Spending is actuals as of each fiscal year close.
 Sources: NYC Comptroller; NYC Office of Management and Budget; OSC analysis

However, staffing at DOB experienced another setback in the wake of the pandemic and has yet to fully recover. As of June 2025, the Department employed 1,571 full-time staff (see Figure 14), a decline of 7.8 percent from the early pandemic peak of 1,704 employees as of March 2020.

In the wake of the public health emergency, the City limited hiring to replace employee turnover and eliminated a portion of its vacant positions. DOB testified to the City Council in 2025 that inspectorial positions have been exempt from the hiring freeze, but employee turnover offset most new hires. The savings generated from these cost-cutting initiatives helped to close the budget gaps. In OSC’s [2024 report](#) on citywide staffing trends since the pandemic, OSC found that the Department experienced the second-largest increase in attrition levels among other agencies when compared to pre-pandemic levels. Based on updated attrition data through

FIGURE 14
Full-Time Staffing at DOB (Agency-Wide)



Sources: NYC Office of Management and Budget; OSC analysis

December 2025, employee turnover has declined but remains elevated compared to pre-pandemic levels. While construction inspectors were among the jobs with the largest percent decline from December 2022 through January 2024, the headcount for this title has rebounded to levels last seen around October 2020.

As of December 2025, DOB staffing totaled 1,613 full-time employees. Figure 15 identifies the 10 civil service titles with the most full-time employees. Staffing is concentrated mainly in inspectors of various trades, plan examiners, and administrative support. Among its technical staff, the Department also employs a relatively small number of energy conservation specialists, architects and civil engineers.

While too small to be included in the Figure, DOB inspection units also encompass other inspectoral staff for technical work in areas such as boilers and elevators. While the Department has increased the number of boiler inspectors since the pandemic took hold, it has also experienced a decline in elevator inspectors (an area which DOB has noted is experiencing a decline in service promptness).

In the short term, overtime may be used judiciously to address increases in demand for services until demand stabilizes or the agency is able to implement a long-term solution, such as increasing staffing (if necessary, when demand is expected to remain elevated for some time) or implementing process efficiencies.

FIGURE 15
Major Civil Service Titles at DOB

Civil Service Title	Number of Employees
Construction Inspector	338
Clerical Associate	172
Asst. Plan Examiner (BLDGS)	122
Principal Admin. Associate (Non-Supvr)	79
Agency Attorney	57
Adm. Manager (Non-Managerial)	49
Plumbing Inspector	49
Asst. Architect	47
Electrical Inspector	35
Community Coordinator	32

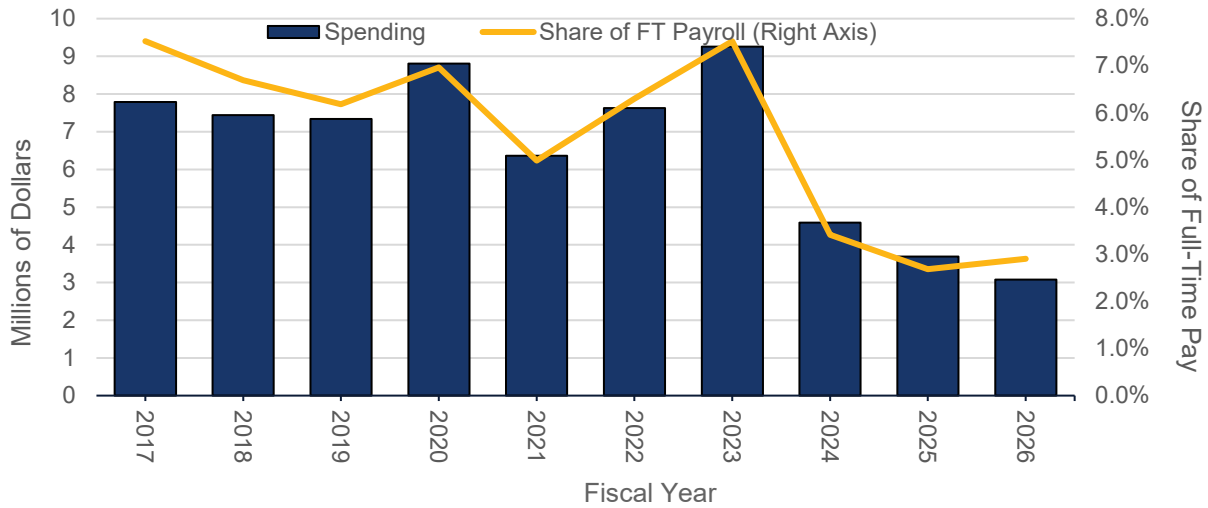
Note: Full-Time Employees as of December 2025.
Sources: NYC Office of Management and Budget; OSC analysis

Overtime

DOB overtime rose to a record level in FY 2023 (at \$9.3 million, 7.5 percent of full-time payroll) but declined sharply to \$3.7 million (2.7 percent of full-time payroll) in FY 2025 (see Figure 16). The Department stated in recent testimony to the City Council that its overtime budget was also reduced, with overtime use limited to high-priority work. The cut was imposed on DOB despite staffing being lower than the pre-pandemic level and the “demand” for plan reviews and inspections appearing strong or returning to pre-pandemic levels.

In the past, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has exempted revenue-generating positions from cost-reduction initiatives aimed at helping the City close its budget gaps. In FY 2025, DOB recorded \$392 million in receipts, mostly from construction permits and fines, compared to \$178 million in operating expenses exclusive of centrally administered costs such as fringe benefits. Such revenue is realized through the development and enforcement activities of the plan examiners and inspectors, supported by administrative staff.

FIGURE 16
Overtime



Note: FY 2026 is year-to-date through March 2026.
Sources: NYC Comptroller; NYC Office of Management and Budget; OSC analysis

Even if revenue generated from fines is excluded (which are not intended to be recurring sources of revenue), the Department recorded \$188.5 million in construction permit fees and \$33.7 million in other permit fees during FY 2025. In effect, the agency generates significant revenue to help fund its operations but, like other agencies, has been subject to cost-reduction initiatives imposed by OMB.

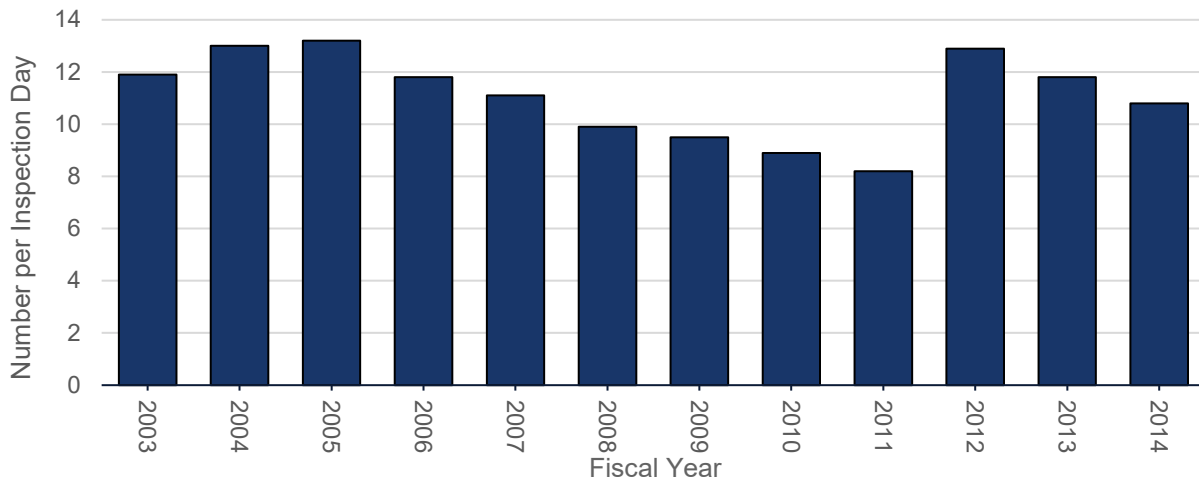
Inspector Productivity

For more than a decade, the City has not reported in the MMR data on inspector productivity and no stand-alone reporting is publicly available elsewhere. This indicator (previously focused on construction inspections) can be useful to understand if there are enough inspectors to perform the work or if each inspection is taking longer than usual due to process changes.

The City established a numerical target of 10 inspections per inspector day for FY 2003 (an increase to the ratio indicates the staff have become more “productive” since they can accomplish more each workday). This metric was further revised in the FY 2012 MMR at a time when productivity had been in decline over several years (from 9.9 in FY 2008 to 8.2 as of FY 2011; see Figure 17). The City reported (under a revised methodology) that the inspection productivity level totaled 12.9 in FY 2012, but the level declined over the next two years to 10.8 as of FY 2014.

Since FY 2014, DOB stopped reporting on this metric, initially citing technical issues. But without explanation, the Department has not provided any comparable metric on inspector productivity in any subsequent year.

FIGURE 17
Construction Inspection Productivity



Note: Average number of construction inspections per inspector day. Data not available prior to FY 2003. Data for fiscal years 2012 through 2014 may not be comparable.
 Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

Responsiveness to Resident Needs

From the perspective of tenants, the timeliness to correct violations (while not the responsibility of DOB) is the most relevant indicator of how quickly their concerns are being addressed. Similarly, from the perspective of property owners, among the most relevant indicators of timeliness is how long it takes them to address a violating condition and to receive a certification of correction.

While DOB has been transparent that it is experiencing staffing and budget constraints that have limited service delivery and is still meeting its timeliness targets, the current MMR indicators on enforcement inspections do not offer a holistic view of the time it takes to resolve complaints from the date the complaint is received to the date of disposition.

The Department reports on the average number of days from the date the complaint is received to the date a field visit is performed. Notably, a field visit is not necessarily the date that the inspection was performed. However DOB does not report in the MMR for complaints in which a violating condition was found, the average number of days from the date of the inspection to the date the complaint is closed. However, under Local Law 110 of 2025, the Department will be required to report annually on its webpage, no later than July 15 each year, on the time elapsed to correct violations at certain residential buildings.

For complaints that require multiple inspections (e.g., to rescind a vacate order), DOB does not report in the MMR the average number of inspections performed per complaint or the average number of days it took from the date the complaint is received to the date of final inspection or final disposition.

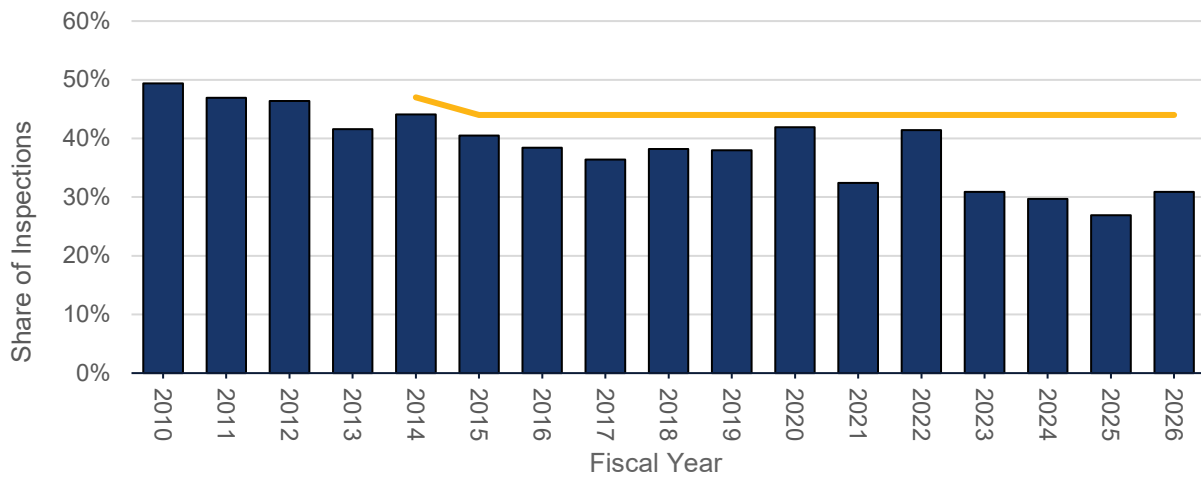
DOB does not have direct control over the timeliness of post-inspection corrective actions of third parties. Typically, for less serious matters, a final resolution to the complaint is recorded when the owner or representative submits a certificate of correction, which may be audited by Department inspectors. In more serious matters, such as when a stop work order or vacate order is issued, a reinspection will be completed before the order can be rescinded and a final resolution can be achieved.

OSC acknowledges that some types of complaints are very challenging for DOB to respond to and can require multiple inspection attempts before access is achieved. For instance, the Department has reported since at least FY 2006 on its difficulties in obtaining access to properties alleged to have illegal residential conversions.

To emphasize its importance, DOB reports in the MMR on the share of residential conversion complaints where access was obtained, which is identified as a “critical” indicator. The Department also includes a numerical target for this indicator: to obtain access to at least 44 percent of the time an inspection occurs, with a desired direction to increase the share over time. Since the City established it, DOB has never been able achieve the annual target and the access rate has trended downward through FY 2025 (see Figure 18).

FIGURE 18

Residential Illegal Complaints Where Access was Granted (%)



Note: Data not available prior to FY 2010. FY 2026 is YTD as of October 2025.
Sources: NYC MMR; OSC analysis

In FY 2025, DOB inspectors were able to obtain access and perform an inspection for only 26.9 percent of the residential illegal conversion complaints. However, the access rate has improved through the beginning of FY 2026. Even though this metric is listed as a critical indicator, the FY 2025 MMR provides no narrative explanation for DOB’s challenges to meet the service target, nor a “vision statement” on how it intends to reverse the trend and achieve its stated target.

In the past, the Department has noted in testimony to the City Council that it has at times faced challenges persuading the courts to grant its request for an administrative search warrant to enter the property and conduct the inspection. A [2009 audit](#) and [2013 follow up audit](#) by the City Comptroller raised similar concerns about the inadequacy of DOB’s response to quality-of-life complaints (i.e., illegal conversions), and urged the DOB to increase its use of such warrants among other recommendations. Recent MMR data indicates that the access challenges identified in the two audits persist to this day.

Promptness vs Consistency

DOB reports timeliness averages to measure promptness, but it is not known how many inspections are completed beyond its target (e.g, the number of Priority B complaints responded to in more than 40 work days). This omission leaves out important context about the consistency of inspection response times and whether certain kinds of inspections (such as illegal residential conversions) are significantly more time and resource intensive.

More than a decade ago, DOB measured its promptness differently. The Department aimed to respond to at least 95 percent of Priority A complaints within 1.5 work days and at least 80 percent of Priority B requests within 40 work days. In FY 2013, the metric was revised to report only on the average, impairing insight on the consistency of the service.

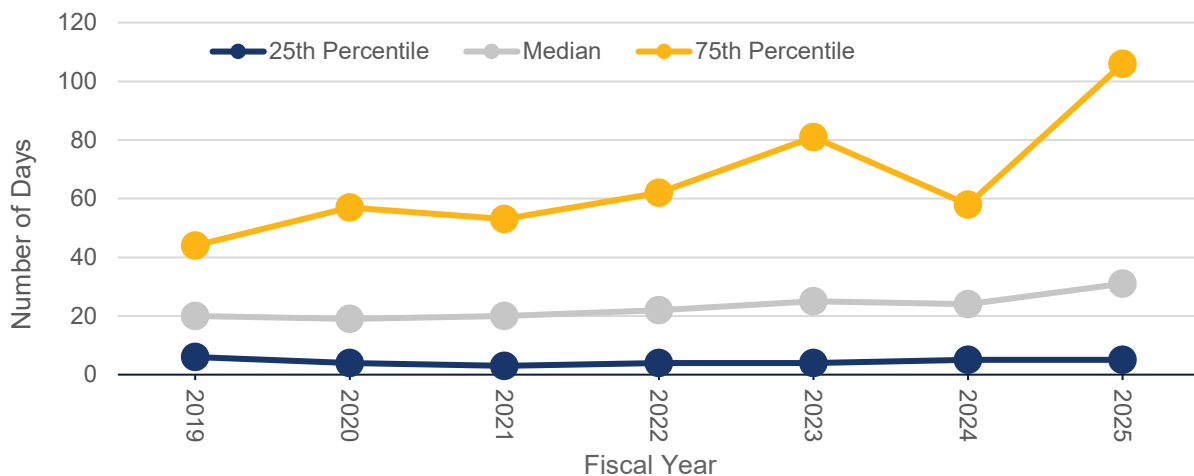
In November 2020, the City Comptroller released an [audit](#) that found DOB’s controls over its handling of complaints need improvement, “specifically with regard to its timeliness in responding to and following up on complaints at every stage of its process.” The audit made 11 recommendations, of which DOB agreed to implement four, partially agreed to one, and disagreed with six recommendations.

An important finding in the audit was that a significant share of the inspections are attempted within a length of time that is considerably longer than the average number of work days reported in the MMR. DOB noted in its response to the 2020 audit that a variety of factors affect when an inspection is attempted, including the nature of the complaint, the type of investigation being conducted, the discipline or expertise required, and other operational considerations such as workload and resource availability.

To develop a holistic understanding of both the length of and variability in response times to inspection complaints, OSC reviewed DOB data published to NYC’s OpenData website. See Appendix F for OSC’s key assumptions and methods.

OSC made similar observations to those found in the City Comptroller’s 2020 audit. As shown in Figure 19, the average number of days from date of entry to date of disposition for Priority B complaints totaled 31 days in FY 2025, the highest in at least six years, but still prompt if compared to DOB’s target of first action within 40 days. However, there is also significant variability in response times.

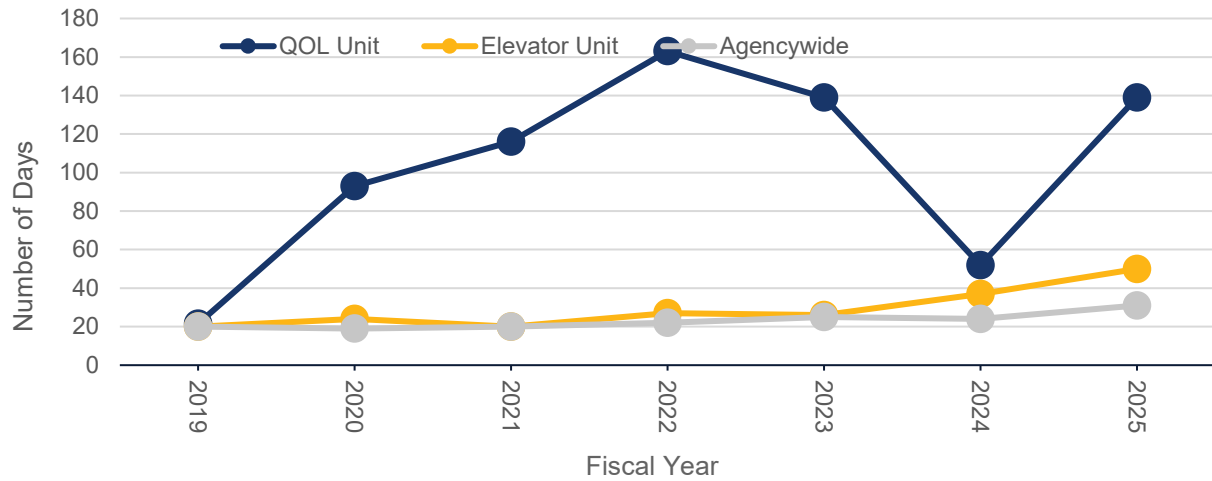
FIGURE 19
Average Time to Close Priority B Complaints



Note: Recorded as of fiscal year of disposition.
Sources: NYC OpenData, DOB Complaints Received; OSC analysis

The variability can be explained by factors DOB mentioned in its response to the 2020 audit, including the type of investigation and availability of staff. As noted previously, illegal conversion complaints (which are referred to as the Quality of Life, or QOL Unit) are among the most resource-intensive complaints, taking DOB on average 139 days to close in FY 2025 (see Figure 20).

FIGURE 20
Timeliness of Selected Inspection Units



Note: Recorded as of fiscal year of disposition.
Sources: NYC OpenData, DOB Complaints Received; OSC analysis

Another significant driver of the variability and growth in overall response times are complaints assigned to the elevator division. The average time to close such complaints has risen sharply since FY 2023, which DOB attributes to staffing constraints. In response, the Department is piloting a self-certification program to help address the short-term staffing and budget constraints for elevator inspections.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The new administration has signaled a renewed interest in accelerating building development in the City as part of its affordability agenda, while also continuing to prioritize the safe and lawful use of the City's more than one million buildings and 44,000 construction sites.

DOB is experiencing mixed results for meeting its service goal to provide prompt service, at least some of which the DOB attributes to staffing and budgetary constraints. The agency has exceeded its "integrity" goal to have at least 80 percent of violations be admitted to or upheld at an OATH proceeding. It also reports improvements to construction site safety, another major priority. However, DOB is still experiencing a setback in the timeliness of certain services, which it attributes to staffing and budget constraints. In addition, while agency performance reporting appears robust, there is room for improvement, particularly as it relates to employee productivity, consistency of inspection times, and better understanding the role of private firms in slowing down development or inspections.

OSC's recommendations are as follows:

- Establish Explicit Targets to Measure Success and Reflect Process;
- Expand Reporting to Increase Decision Usefulness of Performance Data;
- Update Staffing Targets and Hiring to Meet Current and Anticipated Demand

Establish Explicit Targets to Measure Success and Reflect Process Reforms

Currently, many of DOB's performance indicators lack a numerical target, i.e., a benchmark to measure whether the agency is achieving its service goals. In the past, the MMR did include such numerical targets (relating to the promptness of plan examinations and development inspections), which may still be appropriate. But DOB has also implemented significant process reforms such as the introduction of a centralized, paperless system via DOB NOW (which also includes a module for online scheduling, tracking, and notifications for inspections). Given the process improvements, turnaround times should, on average, be less than was anticipated under the legacy filing system. Targets should be added for both development and enforcement activities. Details on the types of work that are experiencing deterioration in responsiveness should also allow the City to more specifically address these issues, such as elevators, with targeted short-term responses, such as the recent pothole "blitz", and long-term solutions, such as prioritizing hiring of trained professionals.

Expand Reporting to Increase Decision Usefulness of Performance Data

In such cases where there is an additional draw on DOB resources for a reinspection, OSC recommends that the agency reports on the timeliness of such reinspections discretely, namely: the average number of days from the date of request for reinspection to the date of the site visit. In addition, DOB should be required under local law to report annually on its webpage, no later than July 15 each year, on the time elapsed to correct violations at certain residential buildings. DOB should also include a separate metric in the MMR to indicate (more broadly), for complaints

in which an inspection identified a violating condition, the average number of days from the date the complaint is received to the date of final disposition.

To segment the data further, DOB should also report on the average number of days from the date the notice of violation is issued to the date the certificate of correction is submitted to (and is accepted by) the agency.

DOB identifies the share of residential illegal conversion complaints where access was obtained as a “critical” performance indicator. Given the persistent challenges it faces in obtaining access, the agency should include a separate indicator of the share of residential illegal conversion complaints where access was obtained through the use of an administrative search warrant.

In certain cases where a numerical target is present, additional context would help convey to the reader the consistency of the service being provided. For instance, with respect to the timeliness of enforcement inspections, DOB once included in the MMR a goal that a certain percentage of the complaints be responded to within the target number of days. For instance, DOB formerly aimed to ensure that not less than 80 percent of Priority B requests be responded to within 40 workdays. These combined criteria suggest that the agency sought to ensure that response was not only prompt, but that the public could be confident in the consistency of the response.

Regarding the job filing data, DOB currently reports on the average number of days from the filing of the application to the first plan review, as well as the average number of days from filing to approval. The time spent with the applicant has increased significantly each year since the agency began reporting on applications submitted through DOB NOW. Today, the time spent with the applicant is at least three times longer than the time spent with the agency, but there is currently little published insight on the underlying reasons for this slow turnaround time. The designation of a project advocate from DOB for affordable housing projects in the City’s housing plan suggests the City understands the lack of expertise can slow projects down.

While it does not directly control the time the application is with an applicant, DOB should study and report back to the public on the major roadblocks to a timely completion of the application. Since the Mayor has signaled an interest in accelerating development activity in the City, such information about the underlying difficulties in receiving approval could provide key stakeholders with the insight needed to take corrective action, where appropriate.

The City should also consider, where feasible, providing time series data in the MMR on the average number of days the applicant spends on each milestone of the job filing process end to end, which would make the major bottlenecks in the development facilitation process clearer.

Adjust Staffing and Leverage Technology to Meet Current and Anticipated Demand

DOB has repeatedly stated that its timeliness has been adversely impacted by staffing and budget constraints and that it experiences difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in inspectorial roles. Considering the current operating trends discussed in this report, the agency should review its authorized headcount with OMB representatives to discuss whether the existing targets remain appropriate. New efforts to leverage technology to improve review and inspection times should be considered in planning for appropriate staffing levels. In addition, it should continue to partner with OMB and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services to explore

additional options to improve recruitment and retention of staff in technical, engineering and architectural roles.

As DOB generates significant revenues each year through its permitting and enforcement activities, it may be appropriate for the mayoral administration to exempt Department staff (including administrative staff) from future vacancy reduction plans typically implemented during periods of economic setback. As in past economic cycles, the agency is likely to encounter a rebound in demand for development reviews and inspections once economic growth and construction activity resumes.

Appendix A: History and Background

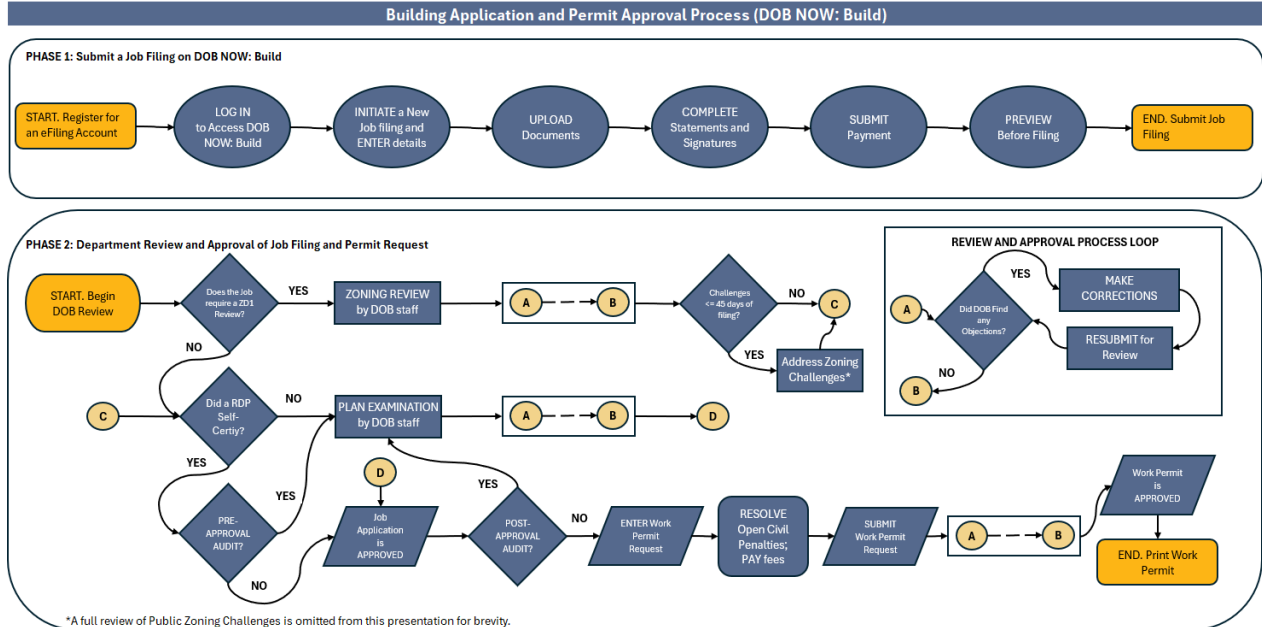
The DOB can trace its origin to around 1860, many decades before the consolidation of the City of New York with Brooklyn, western Queens County, and Staten Island. In the 1800s, the City experienced a population boom coupled with the introduction of new technologies (such as elevators operated by hydraulics or a cable-based system and steel-frame construction) that permitted even larger and more complex buildings to be created. However, historical accounts from that time indicate that the construction and use of buildings were not well regulated then, and residents faced poor and unsafe living conditions.

In April 1860, just two months after a fire at a tenement at 142 Elm Street had resulted in multiple deaths (reportedly including a number of children), the State passed a law to require residential buildings of more than eight families to have fireproof stairs or balconies. The 1860 law also directed the creation of an office within the City of New York's Fire Department to be staffed by a Superintendent of Buildings, a Deputy Superintendent, and eight inspectors who would each serve for three-year terms. In 1862, the Department for the Survey and Inspection of Buildings was formed in Manhattan.

A citywide DOB would not be established until the 1930s. Since then, the Department would be restructured multiple times. The last major restructuring was in 1977, when the Housing and Development Administration (a "superagency" established during the Lindsay Administration) was divided into DOB and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD).

Importantly, while separate entities, the enforcement activities of the DOB and HPD may overlap, but HPD is principally responsible for enforcing the Housing Maintenance Code (Title 27, Chapter 2 of the Administrative Code of New York), while DOB enforces the Construction Codes (Title 28) and the Zoning Resolution among other related laws, rules and regulations.

Appendix B: Process Flow Diagram (Job Filing to Work Permit)



Appendix C: Job Filing Process Detailed

For general construction and major structures (like elevators), a job filing is subject to a pre-construction review of the design specifications known as a plan examination. The DOB is staffed by a team of plan examiners and related architectural and engineering specialists who conduct a review of the plans submitted in the job request to ensure compliance with the NYC Construction Codes, Zoning Resolution, and other pertinent laws and rules.

The average number of business days to complete the first (initial) plan review varies based on scope and complexity of the job, but is generally prompt. However, the filing may face “objections,” a formal way of indicating to the applicant that the plan examiner(s) found aspects of the filing to be not in compliance with applicable law, rules and regulations. The applicant may make “corrections” in the DOB NOW system and resubmit documentation several times until an approval is received.

New buildings or an enlargement affecting the exterior envelope of an existing building are subject to a zoning review and may face public challenge within 45 days of the date DOB approves and posts on its website the zoning diagram for the project.

Not all job filings receive a plan examination by DOB prior to preconstruction approval. In 1995, DOB instituted a Professional Certification Program (PRO CERT), also known as “Self Certification.” Under the PRO CERT program, construction and other submittal documents are accepted with less than full examination based on the professional certification of an applicant who is a Registered Design Professional (RDP), meaning either a New York State licensed Professional Engineer or a Registered Architect (PE/RA).

All professionally certified applications and Post Approval Amendments (PAAs) to the original application are subject to audit by DOB. The audits are also conducted by plan examiners.

DOB may conduct an audit of a sample of the applications at any time. If an auditor fails the application or conditionally accepts it with minor objections, an objection sheet is sent to the applicant, owner and filing representative. DOB may send a 15-day “Notice – Intent to Revoke” (a warning of a possible revocation of a work permit) and in addition, a Stop Work Order (SWO) may be issued at the discretion of the Commissioner. If warranted, the self-certification privilege may be revoked by DOB and the Department may also refer the matter to the NYS Department of Education, which may revoke the license of the individual(s).

Once the job filing has been approved, the applicant may then apply for a work permit to begin physical construction. Similar to the process above, the permit request must be submitted online with all required information, and all required stakeholders must provide electronic signatures. DOB notes on its webpage that the applicant must resolve any civil penalties for any Work Without a Permit prior to submittal of a permit request.

Appendix D: Enforcement Inspections

Each Complaint DOB receives is routed to the appropriate unit for inspection. In the MMR, DOB categorizes these complaints into two groups: Priority A (Emergency, hazardous and presents an imminent risk to public safety, such as a shaking building) and Priority B (Nonemergency, but a serious matter that does not post an imminent risk to public safety in DOB's judgment such as an illegal conversion, inadequate sidewalk shed or scaffolding, and work without a permit).

However, DOB also assigns two additional priority codes that are not reported to the MMR: Priority C (Non-Hazardous such a complaint that building is in use without a CO) and Priority D (quality-of-life problems, such as illegal curb cuts). Data on Priority C and Priority D complaints are available, however, on the NYC OpenData webpage.

DOB has a stated goal to respond to Priority A requests within 24 hours and Priority B requests within 40 work days. At the time of a 2020 audit, the Department had not established required time frames for its inspection of Priority C and D complaints but had an internal goal to inspect them within 60 and 90 days, respectively. As of the FY 2025 MMR, DOB still does not publish data on turnaround times for these two Priority categories.

A common issue encountered by DOB is the inability to access the location named in the complaint to perform an inspection. The inspector will make two attempts to access the location. After each "no access" attempt, inspectors must post an "LS-4" notice on site, a notice to the property owner to call the Department to arrange for an inspection. DOB may attempt to obtain an administrative access warrant to investigate a complaint after the inspector has made two unsuccessful attempts to inspect on different days. Alternatively, DOB can issue a violation, based on exterior observations, even though the owner refused entry. DOB reports on its effort to obtain access to the property as part of the MMR.

If a violating condition is identified during an inspection, the inspector will issue a violation (a summons). In New York City, summonses issued by the City's different enforcement agencies are adjudicated by the City's central, independent administrative law court, the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearings (OATH).

If a property or construction site is found to be out of compliance with the City's Construction Codes, an OATH summons is issued. If, however, a property is found to be out of compliance with other applicable laws, or with an order from the DOB Commissioner to correct a violating condition, the Department will issue a separate violation to the owner.

Appendix E: Selected Inspection Units

Unit	Description	Role
AHVU	After Hours Variance Unit	An After Hours Variance (AHV) is required if a firm is seeking to perform construction activity before 7:00 am, after 6:00 pm, or on a Saturday or Sunday. The DOB publishes a real-time, interactive After Hours Variance Map that shows the location of construction projects where DOB has issued permits allowing construction work to proceed outside of normal business hours.
BOILR	Boiler Unit	DOB's Boiler Unit oversees the installation and operation of New York City's boilers. The Boiler Inspection Cycle is from January 1 to December 31. Low- and high-pressure boiler internal and external inspections must be performed and filed with the Department during this cycle.
CSC	Construction Safety Compliance Unit	The Construction Safety Compliance (CSC) Unit performs proactive periodic inspections on all active sites with a site safety requirement, scaffold safety inspections, and interior/full demolition inspections.
CSE	Construction Safety Enforcement Unit	The Construction Safety Enforcement (CSE) Unit conducts emergency inspections and responds to construction incidents and accidents as well as responding to construction complaints and inspections for violations or Stop Work Orders (SWO) issued by the Construction Safety Compliance Unit. The unit also performs technical reviews/audits of construction documents to verify Code compliance.
ELEVR	Elevator Unit	The Elevator Unit ensures the operational safety, reliable service and lawful use of elevators, escalators, moving walks, personnel hoists, amusement rides and other related vertical transportation devices throughout New York City by performing/witnessing inspections and testing. The unit seeks to provide the public prompt, accurate and transparent information on all elevator administrative processes and procedures.
QOL	Quality of Life Unit	The Quality of Life (QOL) Task Force conducts field inspections in response to illegal conversion complaints. The unit inspects the premises for potentially hazardous conditions involving illegal conversions and issues various types of enforcement orders for non-compliance, including possible Vacate Orders.

Appendix F: Methodology for Analysis of Complaints Received

The [DOB Complaints Received](#) dataset includes information on the date the complaint was received, date of final inspection before disposition, and the date of disposition.

DOB responds to at least 189 unique types of complaint issues (identified by a two-character complaint category code), which as mentioned previously, are assigned to one of four priority levels. OSC reviewed data from 870,378 complaints entered between July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2025 (fiscal years 2019 through 2025) and assigned each complaint type to a priority level using documentation provided by DOB. Of that amount, 6,489 were still active as of the date the data was downloaded (April 9, 2026) and were excluded from the study.

Of the complaints that were closed, OSC categorized 109,385 as Priority A complaints and 436,111 as Priority B complaints. Priority A Complaints were reviewed but have not been included in the analysis.

A portion of the complaints received are assigned a complaint category code that is not included in the documentation provided by the DOB. For purposes of this study, OSC assigned category codes “6M” and “6S” concerning elevator inspections to “Priority B.”

OSC calculated the time to close the complaint, equal to the number of calendar days from the date the complaint was entered to the date of disposition.

To assess consistency, OSC also identified the 25th percentile, 50th percentile (median), and 75th percentile of times reported to close Priority B complaints. OSC further calculated the median times by inspection unit and highlighted the results for the Elevator and Quality of Life (Illegal Residential Conversion) Units.

The dataset does not indicate the number of times an inspection was attempted or performed. So the results must be interpreted carefully.



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