



# FAIRFAX COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



## ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2022 JULY 1, 2021, to JUNE 30, 2022

# LDS Mission, Vision, Values

As members of the Land Development Services team, we accomplish our mission by embracing our values in a work environment that advances racial and social equity and protects the health and well-being of each other and the public.

## Mission

Facilitate the safe and sustainable building of our communities.

## Vision

Be the best partner in creating a thriving Fairfax County.

## Values

### Empowerment

Trust and support employees to lead and make decisions that align with our mission

### Accountability

Fulfill your obligations and expect others to do the same

### Collaboration

Work together towards a common goal and support innovation

### Safety

Adhere to safe working practices on and off the job

### Respect

Value others by demonstrating fairness, appreciation and understanding

### Environmental Stewardship

Promote environmentally responsible development

### Integrity

Consistently demonstrate honesty, sincerity, openness and moral uprightness



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# Message from Land Development Services

## Director William D. Hicks, P.E.

With yet another fiscal year behind us, I am proud to present the Land Development Services FY22 Annual Report. The most significant occurrence in the U.S. during this time, July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022, was emergence from the COVID-19 pandemic. Many considered the worst of the pandemic over in the fall of 2022 as 13 billion vaccines had been administered worldwide; schools, business and dining returned to normalcy and mask wearing mandates ended. However, I want to acknowledge that the virus continues to impact many of us as its variants continue to evolve.

For land development in Fairfax County, FY22 represented a successful comeback from the pandemic-related downturn we encountered in FY21. You can see the highlights below.

A director's letter just wouldn't be final until I mentioned the Planning and Land Use System (PLUS). Fairfax County advanced a major step closer to full transition with Release 3 of PLUS in January 2022. Although this release focused more on the Office of the Fire Marshal, the Health Department and Department of Planning and Development, LDS's Household Appliance record type transitioned to PLUS as well. It was a smooth transition and bodes well for the future of PLUS.

### FY22 Highlights

- The estimated value of construction: \$1.76 billion
- New dwelling units including single family homes: 2,843
- New commercial building permits: 41
- Completed commercial buildings over 10,000 square feet: 25



"For land development in Fairfax County, FY22 represented a successful comeback from the pandemic-related downturn we encountered in FY21."

—William D. Hicks, P.E.  
Director, Fairfax County  
Land Development Services

William D. Hicks, P.E.  
Director, Fairfax County Land Development Services





# LDS Overview

**Revenue: \$50,464,648**

Fees are the primary source of revenue for LDS and are based on costs required to perform our core services and operate the agency. This fee revenue fluctuates each year depending on the volume of plans submitted and permits issued.

**Expenditures: \$43,523,733**

Expenditures include personnel, contracts, utilities, training and other operating costs and an overhead rate for occupancy costs, interagency coordination and county oversight.

**Cost Recovery Rate: 116%**

LDS' cost recovery rate is determined by comparing the total annual expenditures to the total annual revenue. This rate is used to determine how fees are calculated. In working with the county's Department of Management and Budget, LDS aims to achieve 100% cost recovery. However, actual revenue and expenses vary based on work volume. Any excess revenue, with Board of Supervisors approval, is invested in capital needs to efficiently process permits. Currently, this is focused on the Planning and Land Use System (PLUS).

## LDS Staff Stats

Employees: **304**

Professional engineers: **40**

Virginia Department of Environmental  
Quality certifications: **93**

LEED-certified professionals: **5**

American Institute of Certified Planners: **2**

Virginia Department of Housing and  
Community Development  
certifications: **676**

Certified floodplain managers: **4**

Architect licenses: **2**

Professional land surveyor: **1**



# LDS Metrics

Keep up with LDS metrics throughout the year via the metrics page on the LDS website, including:

Residential building permits time-to-approval

Commercial building permits time-to-approval

Major site plans time-to-approval

Minor site plans time-to-approval

Land development volumetrics

Average review days for peer-reviewed  
commercial interior alterations



*Please note: the metrics for the above categories can be found under the "Pre-PLUS Metrics Archive" heading on the metrics website.*



# New Construction in Fairfax County

New commercial buildings permitted:

**41**

Residential and commercial construction (est. value):

**\$1.76 billion**

New addresses added in Fairfax County:

**2,070**

New dwelling units permitted (single-family homes, townhouses and multi-family units):

**2,843**

Bonded public improvements completed:

**62**



Rendering of residences at Townes at Little River Crossing, Annandale, Va.  
(Photo/Courtesy of Christopher Companies Homes)

*In FY21, LDS began processing digital plans as well as continuing to process paper plans. All metrics on this page are based on digital plans requiring a plan review issued on or after December 1, 2020. Paper plan volume is not included.*

# Completed Single-Family Homes - Site

Residential infill development happens when a builder constructs new homes, new pools or large additions as an individual project (i.e., not as a part of a large subdivision development). This type of development applies to all residential construction disturbing more than 2,500 square feet, the construction blocks or alters existing drainage patterns and when the land grade will be changed by more than 18 inches. To receive a land disturbance permit for this construction, an applicant submits a series of plans for county review. Multiple agencies, both within and outside the county, review these plans for compliance with applicable regulations. On-site inspections occur to ensure compliance continues even during construction. There were 634 infill plans approved in FY22, with an average time to approval of 88 days.

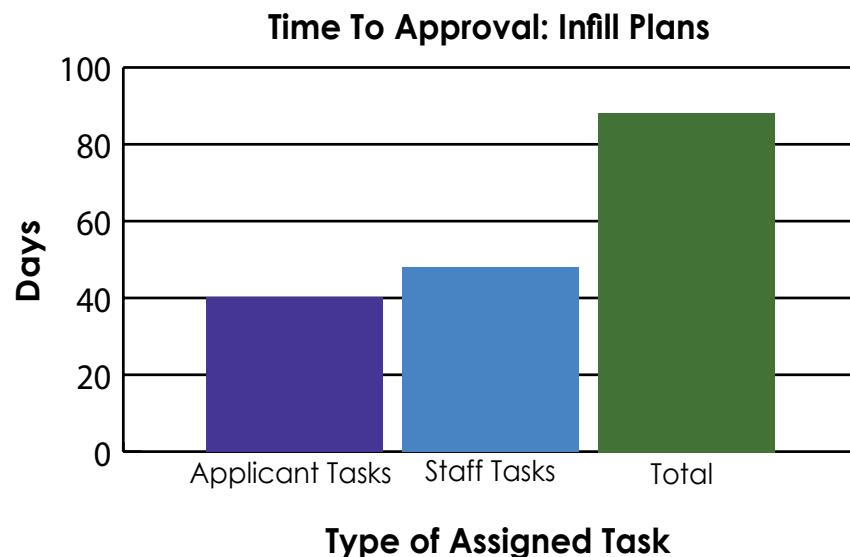


Construction of a new home on an infill lot.  
(Photo/Fairfax County)

Total infill plans approved: **634**

Typical number of submissions required: **2**

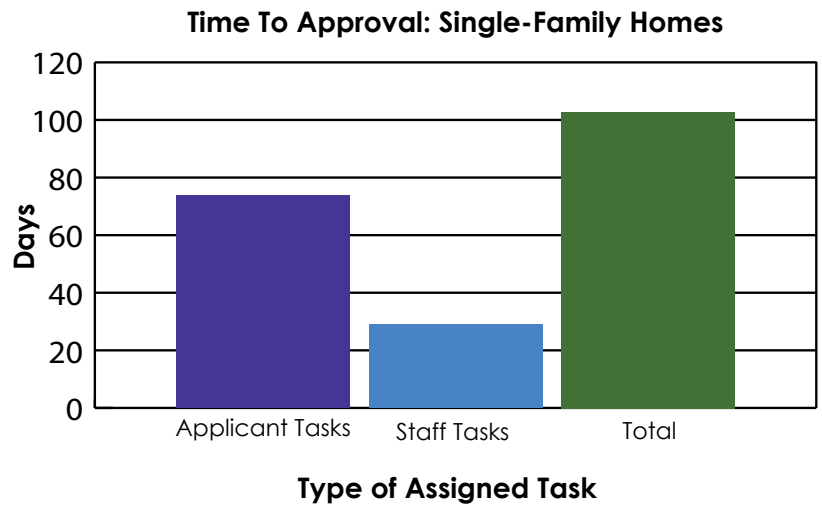
Average number of days to approval: **88**





# Completed Single-Family Homes - Building

Single-family homes fall into two categories: custom built with plans unique to one particular home, or production built based on masterfiles. The latter type of home requires only a cursory review before a permit is issued. There were 874 single family home permits approved in FY22, with an average time to approval of 103 days.



Single-family home in Springfield, Va.  
(Photo/Courtesy of Christopher Companies Homes)

Total number of permits:

**874**

Typical number of submissions required:

**2**

Average number of days to approval:

**103**

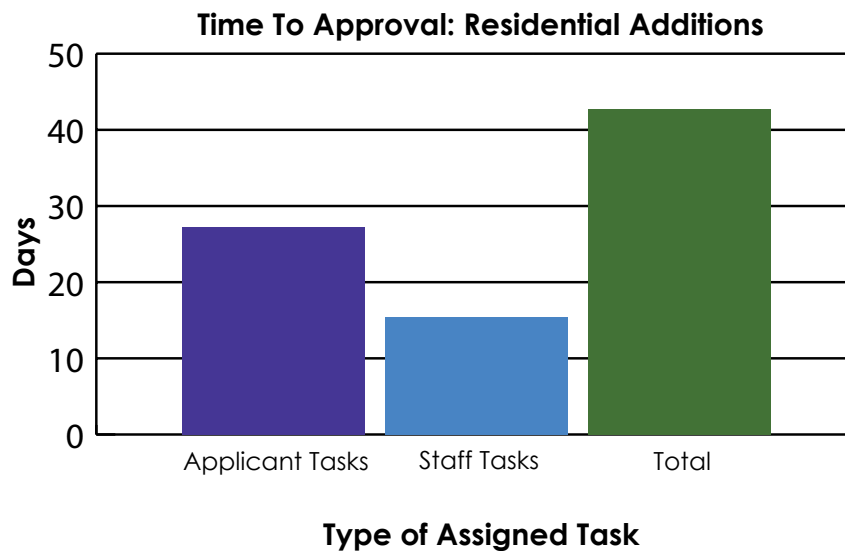


# Completed Residential Additions



A residential addition is either attached to a home or detached, and it might be a deck, sunroom, gazebo, shed, garage or a second story over a home, among others. There were 2,841 residential additions approved in FY22, with an average time to approval of 43 days. The chart depicts the average review time from application submission to plan approval.

A screened-in porch addition in Fairfax, Va.  
(Photo/Courtesy of Design Builders, Inc.)



Total number of permits:

**2,841**

Typical number of submissions required:

**1**

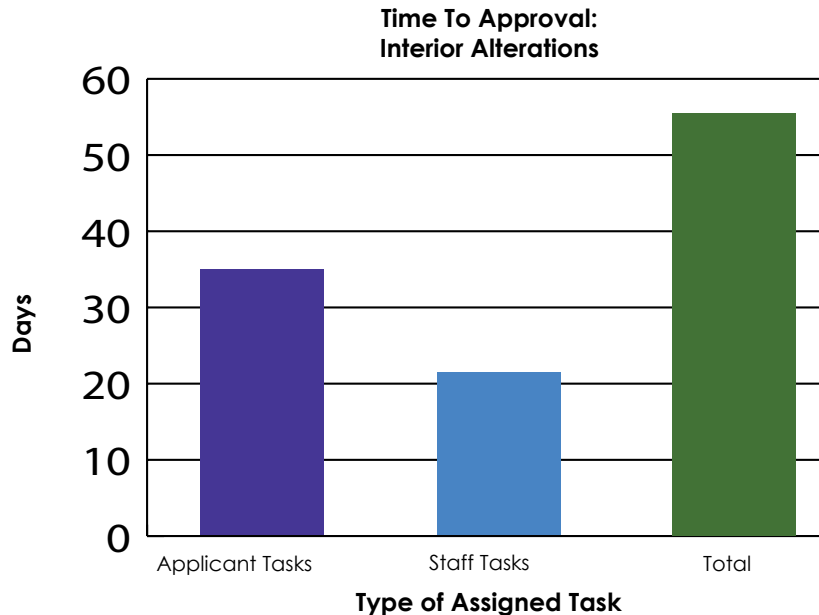
Average number of days to approval:

**43**

# Completed Commercial Interior Alterations

Commercial alteration projects include the redesign of interior space, such as modifications to offices or storefronts to make them ready for new occupancy. The chart depicts the average review time from application submission to plan approval. There were 1,702 commercial alterations approved in FY22, with an average time to approval of 55 days.

A commercial worksite with interior alterations.  
(Photo/BigStock)



Total number of permits: **1,702**

Typical number of submissions required: **2**

Typical number of days to approval: **55**

# Completed Commercial Buildings Over 10,000 Square Feet

Some commercial buildings over 10,000 square feet are multi-use buildings. Multi-use buildings serve multiple purposes, such as retail stores, restaurants and residences. The advantage of multi-use buildings is that they provide more services in a limited space—a significant benefit in urban areas. There were 25 commercial buildings over 10,000 square feet approved in FY22, with an average time to approval of 192 days.



The Capital One Center in McLean, Va.  
(Photo/Danielle Badra, Fairfax County)

Total number of permits:

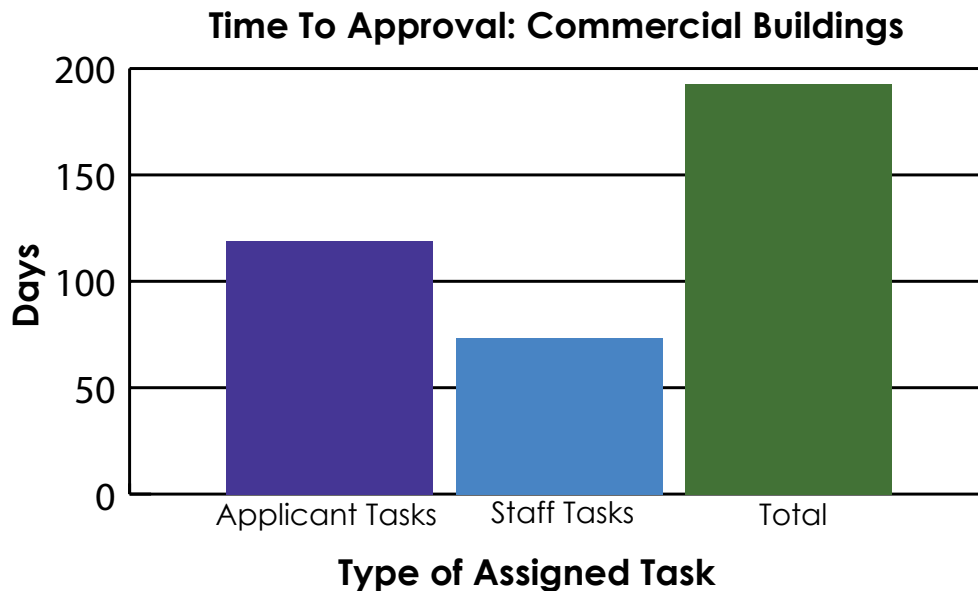
**25**

Typical number of submissions required:

**4+**

Average number of days to approval:

**192**

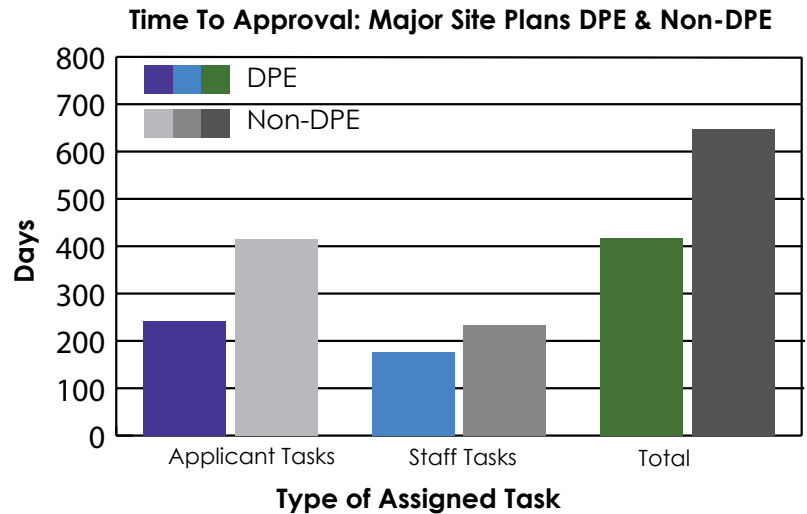




# Major Site Plan Approvals

Site-related plans include commercial, mixed-use, single-family detached, single-family attached, multi-family and public improvement project plans and plats. To ensure that sites are developed in accordance with their approved site-related plans, the Site Development and Inspections Division reviews, inspects and evaluates new public infrastructure, control of erosion and sedimentation, storm drainage, stormwater management, and tree preservation.

The Designated Plans Examiner (DPE) program was created to reduce the time it takes for plan approval. Since the DPE is a trained professional, the quality of submitted plans is much higher than plans not submitted by a DPE. Typically, fewer plan submissions are needed, thus expediting the plan review process. The difference this makes is enormous: the average time to approval under the DPE program in FY22 was 417 days, whereas the average time to approval for non-DPE plans was 646 days.



Average days to approval for DPE plans:

**417**

DPE plans submitted:

**38**

Average number of days needed for county review of DPE plans:

**175**

Average days to approval for non-DPE plans:

**646**

Non-DPE plans submitted:

**3**

Average number of days needed for county review of non-DPE plans:

**232**

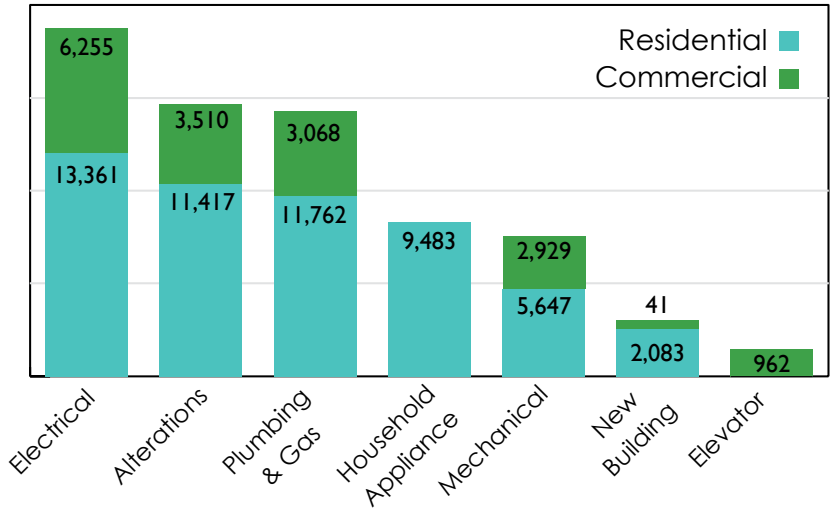
# Building and Trade Permits

## Building and Trade Permits Applied versus Issued

FY21	FY22
Applied: <b>73,652</b>	Applied: <b>72,260</b>
Issued: <b>67,060</b>	Issued: <b>66,782</b>

The numbers for applied versus issued permits include abandoned and canceled permits. Abandoned or canceled permits are included here to reflect the workload shouldered by the county to process these applications.

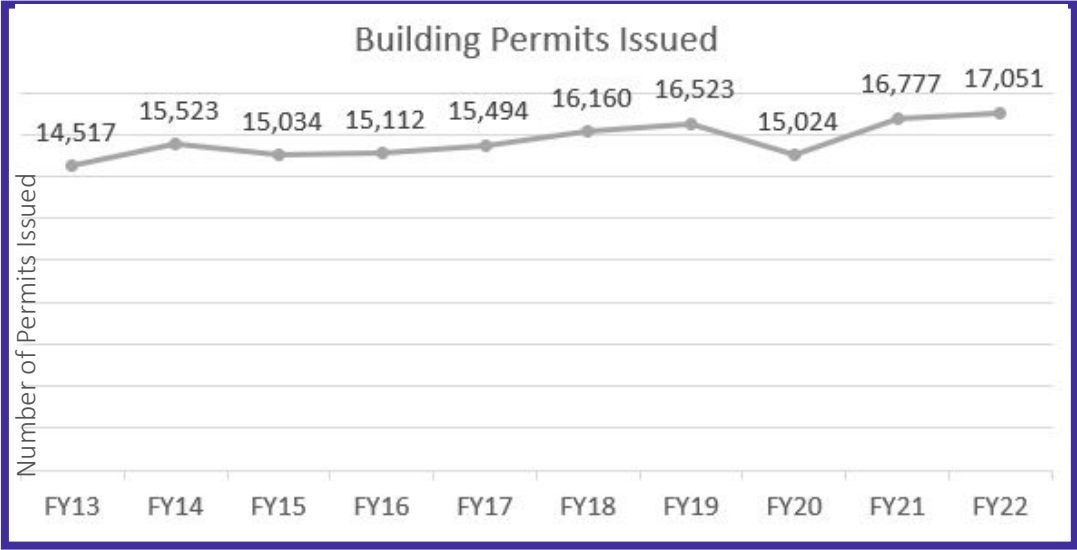
## Building and Trade Permits Issued



**75%**  
of all permits issued are residential permits

**76%**  
of all permits issued are trade permits

Permit numbers include permits that did not require a plan review.

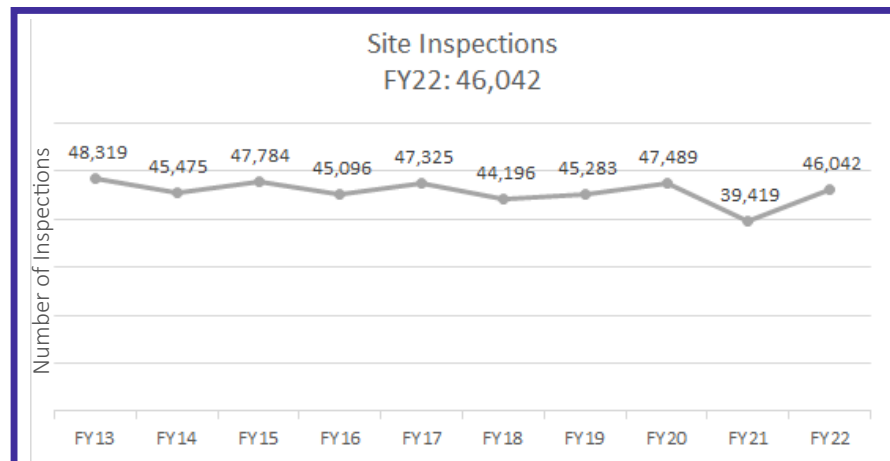
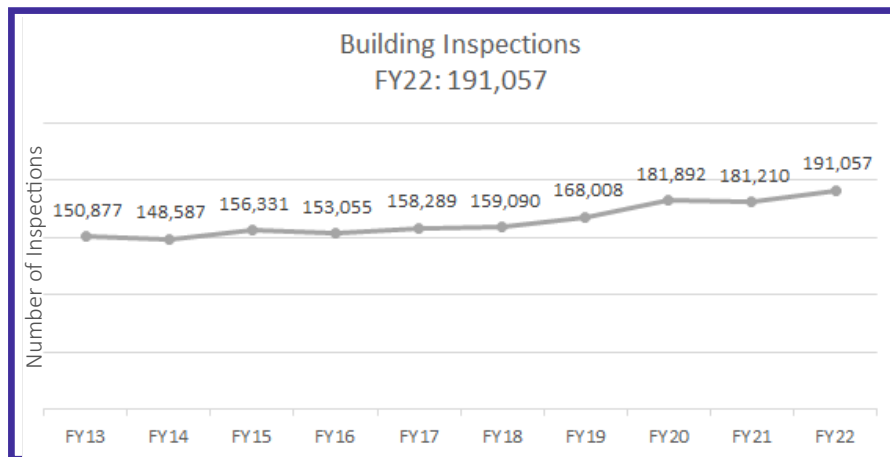


The numbers in the "building permits issued" chart include building alterations and new building permits only. Trade permits, household appliance and elevator permits are not included in this total.

# Building and Site Inspections



LDS site inspectors. (Photo/Anne Cissel, Fairfax County)



Both building and site inspections rebounded from a dip during FY21 when the pandemic and resulting safety-related changes to business processes put a brief hold on both construction and inspections. These FY22 numbers clearly reflect recovery and growth within the construction industry and within LDS inspections.



# Critical Structures

Fairfax County classifies projects for specific building safety inspections or “special inspections” as critical structures. The special inspections program was established in 1973 after a 26-story concrete building under construction collapsed. The program began with a focus on high-rise buildings and tall retaining walls. However, it currently includes all new major commercial and multi-family residential construction (beyond townhomes).

During building construction, the special inspections program inspectors conduct observations, inspections and tests based on Chapter 17 of the Virginia Construction Code to ensure safety. The special inspections must be completed by a registered design professional. The Critical Structures branch of the Building Division at LDS works directly with industry throughout construction to maximize public safety for these structures.

Inspection reports received  
for critical structure projects:

**31,139**

Structural shop drawings reviewed:

**1,757**

Inspections performed:

**1,257**



Capital One headquarters in McLean, Va. (Photo/Danielle Badra, Fairfax County)



# Elevators and Escalators

There are 7,359 vertical transportation pieces of equipment in Fairfax County. Vertical transportation equipment refers to elevators, escalators, lifts, dumbwaiters, hoists and even moving walkways.

All new residential and commercial elevators or escalators to be installed in new or existing buildings must apply for an elevator installation permit. County contractors provide inspections necessary for permitting in Fairfax County.

Elevators and escalators: **7,359**

Permits issued: **962**

Inspections performed: **16,918**



Elevator and escalator at Tysons Corner Center in McLean, Va. (Photo/Nick Kavanagh, Fairfax County)



Escalators and elevators at Wegmans at Capital One Center in Tysons, Va. (Photo/Stefani Graf, Fairfax County)

# Environmental Stewardship

Land disturbing activities approved: 936  
Erosion and sediment inspections performed: 26,265  
Acres of approved land disturbance: 827  
Stormwater inspections performed: 414  
**194** Stormwater facilities brought online treating 75 acres  
Erosion and sediment control violations issued: 246  
Water Quality Impact Assessments (WQIA) approved\*: 65  
Resource Protection Area (RPA) violations issued: 22  
Stormwater violations issued: 18  
Green units built and ready for occupancy in buildings that  
have earned green building certification: 3,187  
Solar panel permits issued: 1,006  
Sidewalk/trail waivers\*\*: 18

\*WQIAs are submitted for evaluation of potential development impacts to the Chesapeake Bay RPA. \*\*Sidewalks/trail waivers number based on review dates in FY22.



Protecting the environment is a key focus of the Countywide Strategic Plan. The Board of Supervisors declared June 4-12, 2022, as Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week to heighten awareness of this estuary's environmental importance. Pohick Creek (pictured) feeds into the Potomac River and, ultimately, into the Bay.

(Photo/Fairfax County)



An old basketball court in Springfield (top) was replaced with at least 2 inches of topsoil and compost (bottom), resulting in various benefits to the environment, including reduction of the temperature of surrounding areas and support for vegetation. The area is in the Resource Protection Area of Pohick Creek, which flows into the Potomac River.

(Photos/Fairfax County)





# Technology

FY22 saw several technological advances at LDS including the launch of the household appliance record type in the Permitting and Land Use System (PLUS). This was a challenging yet significant transition to a new permitting system. This launch allowed staff to test out how the new permitting system operates and identify any kinks ahead of the full launch of PLUS in Fiscal Year 2023.



Welcome to PLUS, Fairfax County's Planning and Land Use System. PLUS allows customers to create and submit applications online, pay fees, track application status and receive electronic notifications.

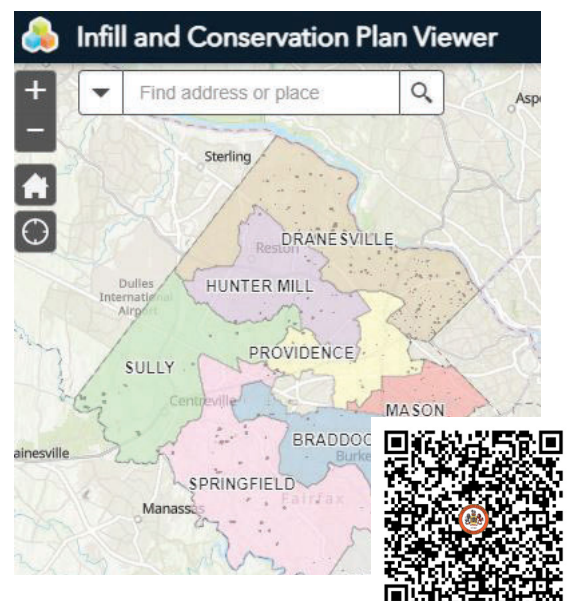
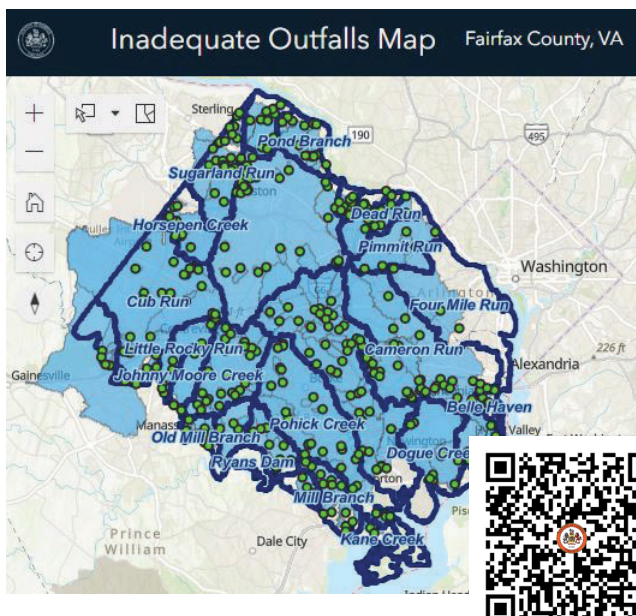
To use these online services, please register for a free user account by clicking on the Register for an Account link above. For complaints, either register for an account or click on the Enforcement tab above to submit directly.

PLUS may be unavailable the third Sunday of each month between 6PM and midnight.

Two new applications were developed to help with site-related plans:  
**Inadequate Outfalls Map** and **Infill and Conservation Plan Viewer**.

The Inadequate Outfalls Map allows applicants to identify the existence of erosion and flooding problems to assist in preparing a site plan.

The Infill and Conservation Plan Viewer allows applicants to search for properties in Fairfax County that have submitted Infill Lot Grading Plans (INF) or Conservation Plans (CON) to Land Development Services.







## CONTACT LDS

Permit Application Center, Site Application Center, Facilitation and Addressing Center, Bonds and Agreements: 703-222-0801

Building Plan Review and Inspections: 703-631-5101

Site Development and Inspections: 703-324-1720

Director's Office: 703-324-1780

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/)



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If accommodations or alternate formats are needed,  
please call 703-324-1780, TTY 711



*The Herrity Building in Fairfax, Va. (Photo/Courtesy of Fairfax County Park Authority)*