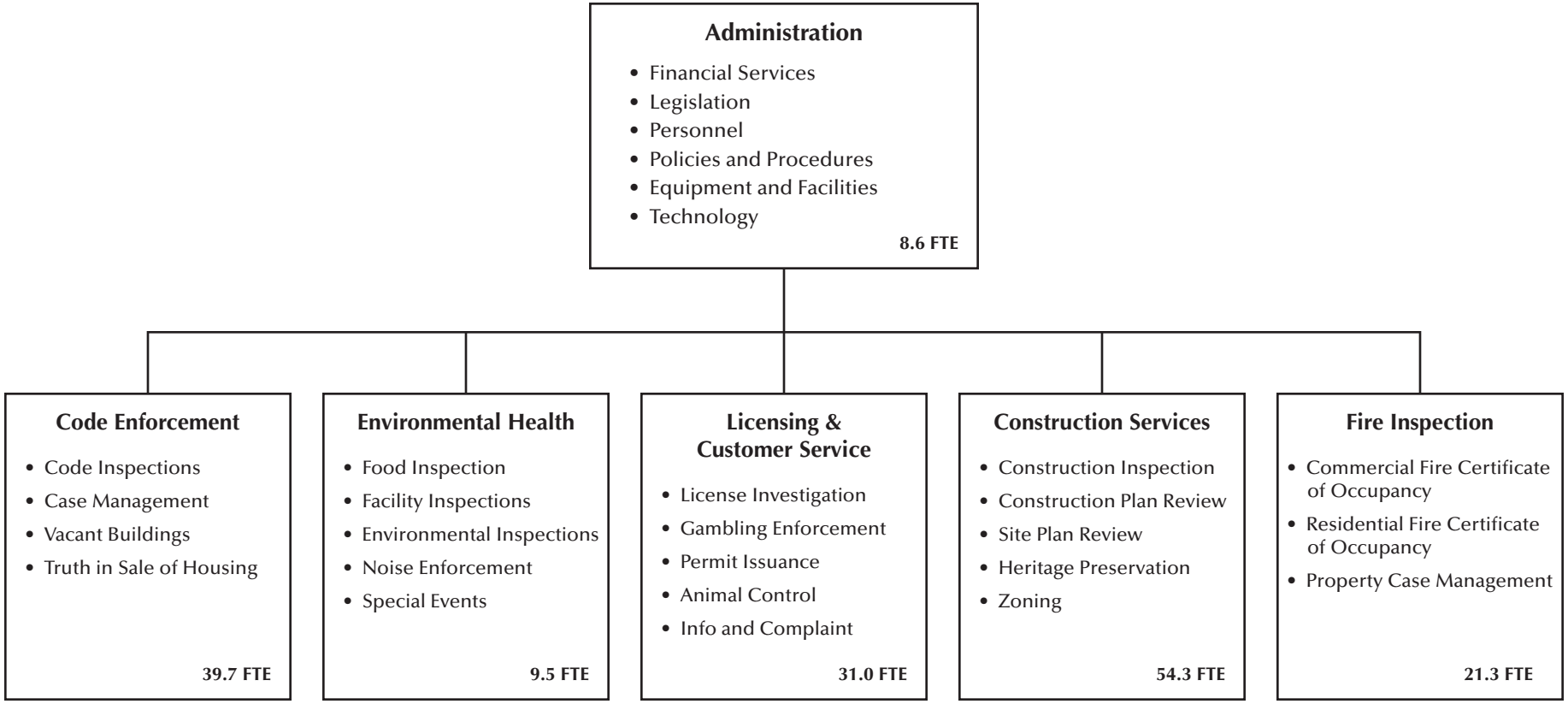
Safety and Inspections

To preserve and improve the quality of life in Saint Paul by protecting and promoting public health and safety for all



(Total 164.4 FTEs)

1/15/09

About the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI)

What We Do (Description of Services)

The Department of Safety and Inspections is a proactive, multi-disciplinary organization that builds and maintains a livable Saint Paul community through strong leadership, creative partnerships, teamwork, and effective regulatory strategies. The department brings together most of the typical municipal inspection and enforcement functions including:

- Animal control
- Construction Permits (building, electrical, plumbing)
- Code Enforcement (housing maintenance requirements)
- Environmental Health (inspections of restaurants, health clubs, swimming pools, pollution complaints etc.)
- Construction plan review for new structures and renovations
- Project facilitation
- Site plan review (large developments)
- Zoning enforcement and Board of Zoning Appeals
- Heritage preservation
- Truth in Sale of Housing Program
- Vacant building administration
- Information and complaint referral
- One stop center (single point of contact) for all licensing, permit, and zoning questions

Statistical Profile

- Issued 27,564 construction permits
- Issued 6,930 on-line permits, a 11% increase over 2006
- Impounded 1,223 dangerous or potentially dangerous dogs
- Conducted 10,607 Certificate of Occupancy Inspections
- Received & referred 17,046 complaints in 2007
- Initiated 240 adverse license actions for license violations
- Processed 97 full site plan reviews

2007-2008 Accomplishments

- Completed reorganization of the Information and Complaint function to improve referrals and response times.
- Revamped the graffiti abatement program to remove graffiti in 48 hours from private property and 72 hours from public property.
- Planned and prepared for licensing and permitting of the Republican National Convention and associated vendors and activities such as sound variances and special advertising signs.
- Implemented a complete revamping of license fees based on the size of establishments to treat the various sized establishments more equitably.
- Automated the "Problem Property" program and changed the focus to behavior related complaints.
- Implemented a comprehensive review and adjustment in license and permit fees.
- Obtained substantial additional funding for the Vacant Building Program and continued to manage the 2,000 vacant buildings in the City.
- Completed a comprehensive downtown real estate search and obtained funding and approval for a 10 year lease for space to house the whole department at 375 Jackson.
- Completed work on the heritage preservation chapter of the City's comprehensive plan.
- Completed a comprehensive strategic plan with specific performance measures and predicted outcomes that relate the department's budget.
- Obtained approval for special state legislation to allow the City to assess the cost of fire certificate of occupancy inspections and vacant building monitoring on the property taxes of owners who do not pay their bills on time.
- Assumed responsibility for managing the downtown skyway system and initiated a number of improvements including painting, new signage, and uniform hours of operation.
- Implemented a proactive restaurant inspection program using administrative penalties to obtain compliance.

Safety & Inspections

Department/Office Director: **ROBERT W KESSLER**

	2006 2nd Prior Exp. & Enc.	2007 Last Year Exp. & Enc.	2008 Adopted	2009 Mayor's Proposed	2009 Council Adopted	Change from Mayor's Proposed	Change from 2008 Adopted
Spending By Unit							
001 GENERAL FUND	4,185,299	5,558,990	5,136,146	6,326,778	6,955,635	628,857	1,819,489
040 PROPERTY CODE ENFORCEMENT	723,253	891,548	1,096,521	1,851,138	1,851,138		754,617
167 CHARITABLE GAMBLING ENFORCEMENT	248,686	137,190	104,906	103,058	103,058		-1,848
320 LICENSE INSPECTIONS & ENV PROTECTIO	10,890,025	10,926,344	12,930,412	12,013,817	10,978,919	-1,034,898	-1,951,493
736 FIRE PROTECTION CLOTHING		6,685	8,522	10,900	10,900		2,378
Total Spending by Uni	**16,047,263**	**17,520,757**	**19,276,507**	**20,305,691**	**19,899,650**	**-406,041**	**623,143**
Spending By Major Object							
SALARIES	8,163,507	9,626,934	10,724,262	10,667,573	10,458,990	-208,583	-265,272
SERVICES	2,967,395	3,430,800	3,642,593	4,384,194	4,280,053	-104,141	637,460
MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES	291,556	278,424	344,401	291,041	291,041		-53,360
EMPLOYER FRINGE BENEFITS	3,061,152	3,621,707	3,769,616	3,763,422	3,670,105	-93,317	-99,511
MISC TRANSFER CONTINGENCY ETC	1,511,764	547,318	790,306	1,182,132	1,182,132		391,826
DEBT							
STREET SEWER BRIDGE ETC IMPROVEMENT			5,329	5,329	5,329		
EQUIPMENT LAND AND BUILDINGS	51,888	15,574	0	12,000	12,000		12,000
Total Spending by Object	**16,047,263**	**17,520,757**	**19,276,507**	**20,305,691**	**19,899,650**	**-406,041**	**623,143**
Percent Change from Previous Year		**9.2%**	**10.0%**	**5.3%**	**-2.0%**	**-2.0%**	**3.2%**
Financing By Major Object							
GENERAL FUND	4,185,299	5,558,990	5,136,146	6,326,778	6,955,635	628,857	1,819,489
SPECIAL FUND							
TAXES							
LICENSES AND PERMITS	8,702,762	8,582,803	10,215,057	9,761,353	9,127,386		-1,087,671
INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE							
FEES, SALES AND SERVICES	2,038,171	2,125,685	2,761,138	2,248,998	1,971,040		-790,098
ENTERPRISE AND UTILITY REVENUES							
MISCELLANEOUS REVENUE	47,181	48,484	230,000	239,000	239,000		9,000
TRANSFERS	525,282	453,695	361,522	1,248,900	1,276,816		915,294
FUND BALANCES			572,644	480,662	329,773		-242,871
Total Financing by Object	**15,498,695**	**16,769,657**	**19,276,507**	**20,305,691**	**19,899,650**	**-406,041**	**623,143**
Percent Change from Previous Year		**8.2%**	**14.9%**	**5.3%**	**-2.0%**	**-2.0%**	**3.2%**

2009 Budget Plan

2009 Goals

- The vision for the Department is "to be the leader in creating the safest, healthiest, most livable and vibrant City in America".
- Focus on the Mayor's "Invest Saint Paul" initiative and create strong partnerships with the 17 District Councils.
- Continue to direct resources and attention on the Vacant Building Program
- Fire Safety inspections and the expansion of Fire Certificate of Occupancy Program for all category
- Obtain approval of the Heritage Preservation Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan
- Promote sustainable urban living through a number of new regulatory approaches in solid waste management, building construction, and environmental regulation

2009 Budget Explanation

Base Adjustments
The 2008 adopted budget was adjusted to set the budget base for 2009. The base includes the anticipated growth in salaries and fringes for 2009 for employees related to the bargaining process. It also includes inflation on services and materials.

Mayor's Recommendation
The net proposed budget in DSI is $20,305,691, or a 5% increase from the 2008 adopted budget. The budget includes a significant shift in resources from the license and permit function to the code inspection function. The budget for the license and permit special fund is proposed to decrease by over $900,000 due to a significant anticipated decrease in building permit revenue related to the economy-driven slowdown in building construction. Additional resources and some license and permit costs are shifted to code inspection to help address the significant increase in vacant and foreclosed property in the City, as well as to support the new fire certificate of occupancy program for one and two unit rentals. A net of 2.3 FTEs are added to the budget, including two fire aides and clerical support.

New revenue sources in the general fund include an additional $920,000 expected from the vacant building monitoring and code compliance inspection fee increases that were adopted by City Council. Proposed fee increases in the License and Permit fund include a 5% across the board increase for business licenses and a 10% across the board increase for building permits, which is expected to generate approximately $800,000 in increased revenue.

2009 Budget Explanation (continued)

Council Actions
The City Council adopted the Safety & Inspections budget and recommendations as proposed by the Mayor and approved the following changes:

General Fund

- Increased vacant building monitoring and code compliance revenue by $684,361 to reflect new fees adopted by City Council during 2008.
- Reduced business license revenue by $41,400 to reflect a reduction in the Mayor's proposed fee increase from 5% to 3.5%.
- Absorbed staff shifts from the License and Permit special fund, totaling $626,365 and 7.0 FTE.
- Adjusted worker's compensation and energy spending by $2,492 to reflect updated projections.

Special Funds

- Reduced building permit and plan review revenue by an additional $1,011,925 to reflect updated revenue projections. This decrease is in addition to the $1,426,131 reduced in the Mayor's proposed budget.
- Increased revenue for adverse actions on business licenses by $100,000.
- Reduced the planned use of fund balance by $150,889.
- Added $27,916 in revenue to reflect a transfer from Public Works to fund their share of a water resource coordinator position.
- Eliminated 4 vacant positions with a total savings of $287,792
- Shifted 7.0 FTE to the general fund to focus on vacant building issues, which reduced spending by $634,936.
- Reduced central service overhead spending by $55,803 to reflect position reductions.
- Reduced travel and training spending by $59,000.
- Reduced worker's compensation spending by $25,367 to reflect updated projections.
- Added $28,000 to fund a heritage preservation study of vacant buildings.

The 2009 adopted budget is $6,995,635 in the General Fund and $12,944,015 in special funds.