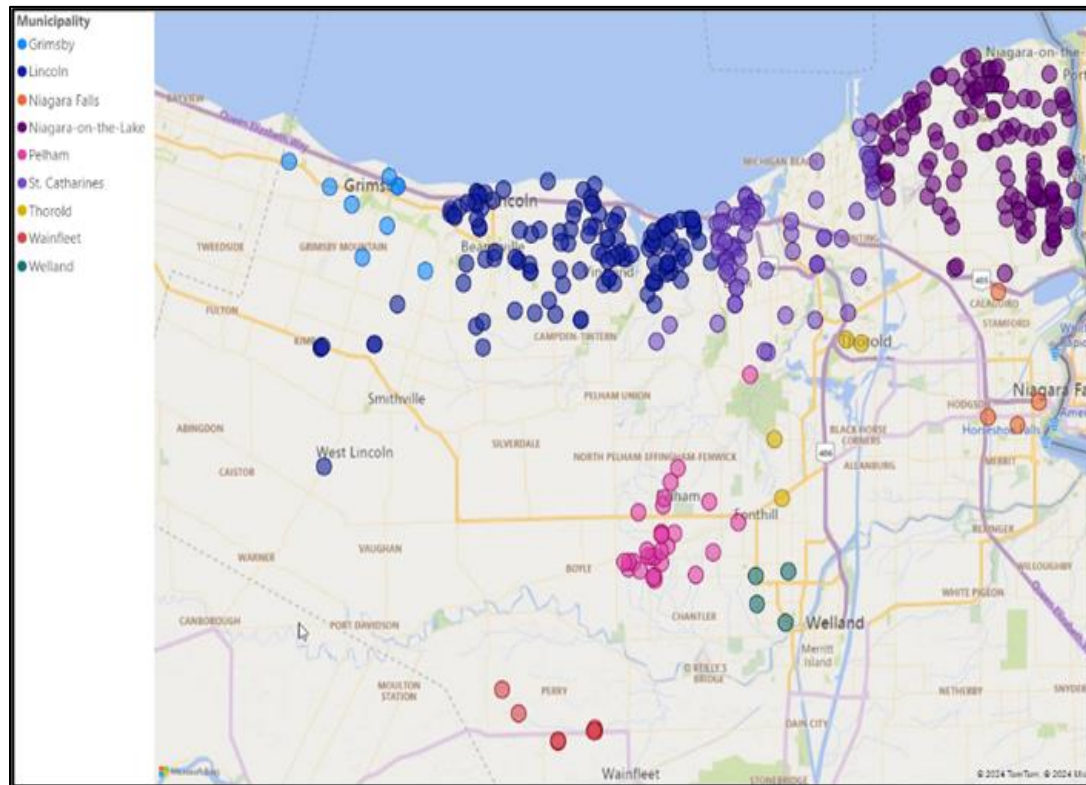


Protecting the Health and Safety of Niagara's International Agricultural Workers (IAWs): The Role of Public Health Inspectors

Prepared by: Niagara Region Public Health & Emergency Services
Presented by: Anthony Habjan and Chris Gaspar

International Agricultural Workers in Niagara



On a local level, Ontario brings in the highest number of international agricultural workers in Canada and the **Niagara Region has the second highest concentration of workers in Ontario**

Who We Are...

Public Health Inspectors

- Possess specialized training and educational expertise in the field of environmental health
- Conduct risk assessments to inform follow-up to eliminate or mitigate a potential health hazard

Why We Inspect...

- To ensure compliance with provincial/federal regulations/guidelines
- To protect and promote the health and well-being of our IAWs

Interagency Collaboration

- Municipal Fire, Building, and By-law Departments
- Niagara Region's Planning Department
- Community/Sector Partners

Jurisdictional Documents

Three Key Documents:

- Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines (2010)
- Service Canada – Schedule F Housing Inspection Report
- Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)

Inspection Overview

Approval inspections include assessment of:

- Housing units exterior and interior
- Sanitary and laundry facilities
- Food service areas
- Safe water and sewage disposal
- Maximum occupancy

IAW Approval Inspection Report

Niagara Region Public Health

International Agricultural Worker (IAW) Housing Inspection Report

Facility Inspected: Test Farm	Inspection #: MF-03-00001-121200
Primary owner:	Inspection Date: 17-Apr-2024
Site Address: ON	Inspected By: Chris Haggerty
	Facility Type: IAW Housing
	Inspection Type: On Demand
	Violations: 41

C = In Compliance N/A = Not Applicable X = Not in Compliance

IAW Housing

Housing Inspection Summary

- This inspection report is for the:
 - Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program administered by FARMS (Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Service) as per the requirements specified in the Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines.
 - Agricultural Stream (previously NOC C&D) administered by Service Canada as per the requirements specified in the Seasonal Farm Worker Housing Guidelines.
- Type of Housing provided:
 - Apartment
 - Mobile home
 - Single family dwelling
 - Bunkhouse
- MAXIMUM CAPACITY:
- WATER SUPPLY:
 - municipal
 - private
 - drilled well
 - dug well
 - cistern
- SEWAGE SYSTEM:
 - municipal
 - private
- WASHROOM FIXTURES:
- LAUNDRY:
- WORKERS EXPECTED ARRIVAL DATE:

Housing Exterior

- Dwelling(s) are located 98 feet or 30 meters away from any building used or intended to be used for sheltering animals or poultry. X
- Dwelling(s) are detached from any building where highly flammable materials are used or stored. X
 - Dwelling(s) to be free of safety hazards.
 - Dwelling(s) to be free from any chemical substance or condition that may become hazardous to the workers.
- Multiple dwellings have 10 meters of space between each housing unit. X
- The dwelling(s) exterior is in good condition, weatherproof and rodent/pest proof. X
 - Exterior components include: roof, wall surfaces, downspouts, gutters, windows and doors.

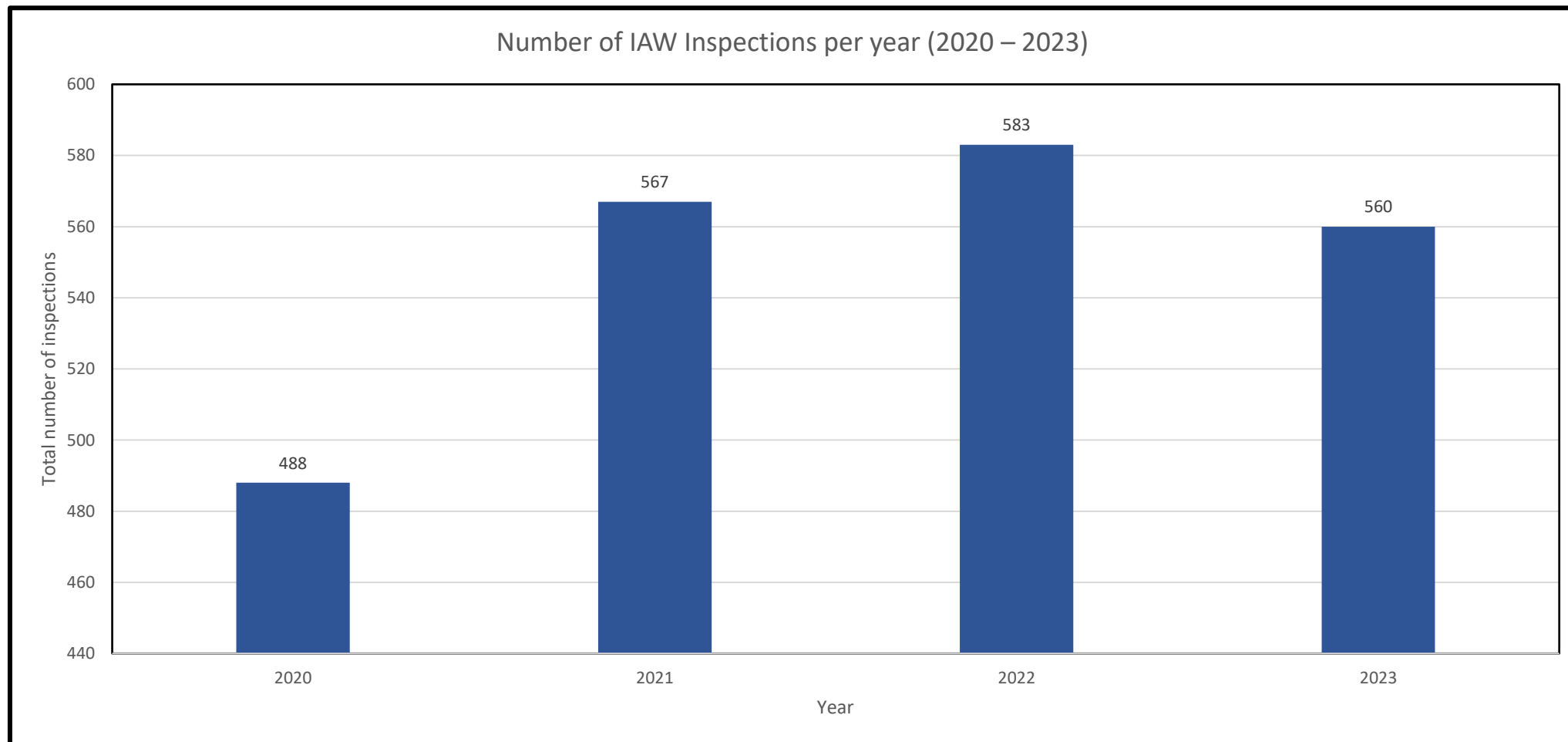
Inspection # MF-03-00001-121200

Page 1 of 5

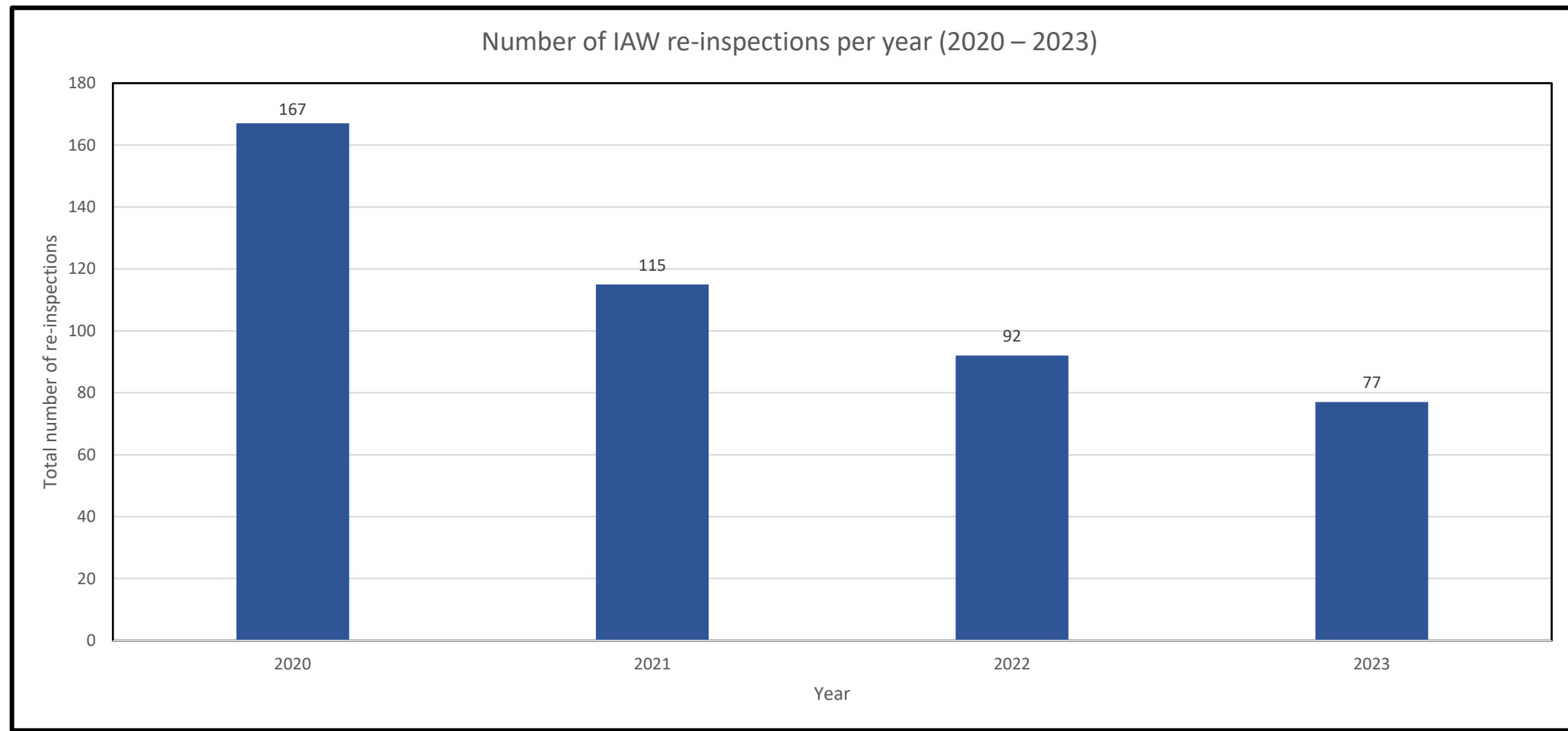
IAW Approval Inspection Report cont'd

Test Farm [MF-03-00001]	International Agricultural Worker (IAW) Housing Inspection Report
Facility Contact:	
Facility Address: ON	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exterior walls to be tight fitting to prevent rodent/pest entry. - Roofs are to be tight fitting and waterproof. - Mobile homes to have skirting around the bottom perimeter. - Rodent and/or pest control to be implemented. 	
Housing Interior	
13. Dwelling interior is in good condition and rodent/pest proof. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interior components of the house to be appropriately sealed from the outside and free from drafts of external air. - Interior walls to be tight fitting and non-absorbent. - Floors to be tight fitting, smooth, non-absorbent and readily cleanable. - Rodent and/or pest control to be implemented. 	X
14. Adequate lighting by either natural or artificial means is provided in each dwelling unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easily accessible light switches and fixtures to be provided. 	X
15. Adequate ventilation by either natural or artificial means is provided in each dwelling unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Window(s) to be provided for natural ventilation. - Exhaust fan(s) to be provided for artificial ventilation (i.e. ceiling fans). 	X
16. Windows and doors have a screen covering. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Screens to windows and doors to be provided between the first day of May to the first day of November. - Repair all ripped/torn screens. - Exception to screen coverings are permitted for windows that hold portable air conditioning units or where central air conditioning is provided. 	X
17. A minimum temperature of 20C (68F) is maintained within the dwelling unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A permanent heating system that can maintain a minimum temperature of 20C is to be available within the dwelling(s). - Portable space heaters cannot be used as a primary source of heating for any living space within the dwelling(s). 	X
18. Combustion-type stoves or heaters are directly vented to the outside. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact local Fire Department for review of ventilation. 	X
19. There is sufficient basic furnishings available inside the dwelling(s) to accommodate the number of workers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic furnishings include tables, chairs, couches, etc. - Basic furnishings may accommodate different schedules/shift work (i.e. number of kitchen chairs may be lower than total number of workers). 	X
Garbage Disposal	
20. There is sufficient rodent/pest proof garbage containers provided inside and outside of all housing units. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Garbage containers to be large enough to allow for proper disposal between collection. - Garbage containers to be rodent/pest proof. - Garbage containers to be provided that can be easily cleaned and sanitized. - Garbage is to be collected and removed from the property at least once per week. 	X
Sleeping Facilities	
21. Bedrooms are separated from other living areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beds to be located within the assigned sleeping areas. - Sleeping facilities to be separated from other living areas by walls. 	X
22. Separate bed(s) are provided for each worker. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Separate mattress to be provided for each worker (each bunk must only sleep one person). - Suitable amount of space above/below each bunk provided. - Bunk/mattress is located 18 in or 45 cm apart from another bed/mattress (except when lengthwise on the wall). - At minimum, a twin size mattress (99 x 109 cm) with a bed base is provided for each worker. 	X
23. The bed/mattress is located 12 in or 30 cm off the floor.	X
24. The mattress provided is maintained in good condition.	X
25. There is a supply of clean blankets, sheets, pillow and pillowcase provided and available.	X
Inspection # MF-03-00001-121200	Page 2 of 5

Number of IAW Approval Inspections



Number of IAW Re-inspections



Operational Pressures

Mandated work increasing exponentially

- Number of inspected businesses
- Number of complaints/investigations

A direct result of increased tourism and economic growth and development witnessed within the Niagara Region

Operational Pressures cont'd

- Forecasted growth in IAW housing inspections
- Public Health Inspectors continued involvement ensures:
 - The availability of safe/suitable housing; and
 - The seamless arrival of IAW's to support employer's business needs

Planning For The Future

Public Health Inspector capacity is diminishing due to the demands of growing mandated work

How can we achieve sustained IAW program delivery?

Through Cost Recovery

Plan: To move towards an approval inspection fee model in 2026

Purpose: To ensure sustainable program delivery for our local employers of International Agricultural Workers

Objectives:

- Reduce re-inspections
- Increase customer service
- Reduced wait times through embedded efficiencies

Through Innovation

Creation of an online digital request platform for approval inspections

- Resulting in reduced inspection scheduling turnaround, enhancing customer service

IAW Niagara Region Webpage

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the IAW Niagara Region website. On the left is the Niagara Region logo. On the right are a search bar and a menu icon. Below the navigation bar is a sidebar with a vertical list of links: Inspection Results, Vaccinations, Parenting, Physical Activity, Nutrition, Smoking, Drugs, Mental Health, Schools, Paramedics, Dispatch, and Contact Health. The main content area is titled "International Agricultural Workers" and contains a paragraph about essential workers, a "Housing" section, and a grey-shaded box titled "Employer resources" with a list of links.

Niagara Region Search... Menu

Public Health

- Inspection Results
- Vaccinations
- Parenting
- Physical Activity, Nutrition
- Smoking, Drugs
- Mental Health
- Schools
- Paramedics, Dispatch
- Contact Health

International Agricultural Workers

International agricultural workers are considered essential workers that come to Ontario to work in the seasonal agricultural sector.

Housing

Housing accommodations for international agricultural workers must be inspected by Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services and comply with all local building, fire and zoning requirements before the worker arrives.

Employer resources

- [Drinking water](#)
- [Hand washing posters](#) (English and Spanish versions)
- [Foreign Agricultural Resource Management Services \(F.A.R.M.S.\)](#)
- [Private sewage systems](#)
- [QUEST Community Health Centre](#)

IAW Inspection Request

Public Health

[Inspection Results](#)

[Vaccinations](#)

[Parenting](#)

[Physical Activity,
Nutrition](#)

[Smoking, Drugs](#)

[Mental Health](#)

[Schools](#)

[Paramedics, Dispatch](#)

[Contact Health](#)

International Agricultural Worker Inspection/Information Request

Effective - January 1, 2025 all seasonal housing inspection requests must be submitted through the Niagara Region online portal (below)

The seasonal housing accommodations must meet minimum requirements as set out in the Seasonal Housing Guidelines before an onsite inspection is conducted by the Health Unit.

Seasonal Housing Owners/Operators are required to ensure accommodations comply with all local building, fire and zoning requirements.

* = Required

Next Steps...

- Continue with current inspection processes to ensure adherence to all housing guidelines/regulatory requirements
- Continue development of our IAW digitized request platform

Thank you!