CITY OF NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AGENDA

Municipal Building Conference Room
201 West Gray

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2015

4:00 P.M.

1. **CONTINUED DISCUSSION REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF "FEATHER/TEARDROP" BANNERS IN THE CITY SIGN CODE.**

2. **UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS.**

3. **MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

TO: Council Business and Community Affairs Committee

THRU: Steve Lewis, City Manager

FROM: Terry Floyd, Development Coordinator

DATE: November 30, 2015

SUBJECT: December 3, 2015 Meeting

At the November 5, 2015, the Business and Community Affairs Committee (BACA) meeting, staff presented information to the Committee regarding wind signs or "feather" banners and the possibility of making amendments to Chapter 18 of the City Code (Sign Code) to allow these type of signs to be displayed. From that discussion, the Committee asked staff to bring back draft amendments to the Sign Code that would allow for these signs for further Committee discussion.

A Memo outlining these amendments and a draft of potential Sign Code amendments from the Planning and Community Development Department are included in Attachment A.

Additionally, staff will present results of the spring 2015 Development Services Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey. Beginning in May 2015, the City of Norman began a process of surveying residential building permit applicants in an effort to collect input and enhance customer service for customers utilizing the Development Services Division. City staff worked with the Builders Association of South Central Oklahoma (BASCO) to develop the survey instrument, and over a four month period, residential trade contractors, general contractors and builders were emailed a link to a 26-question online survey which gathered both demographic data and input/ratings related to building permitting, individual inspections, and overall experience with the residential building process in Norman. This was the first City survey of residential trades and contractors, but staff has been surveying commercial trades and contractors on a monthly basis since December 2013.

Over 480 individual surveys were sent, with 96 responses received (20% response rate). From staff research, response rates over 12% are generally considered above average compared to similar surveys submitted in other communities. Satisfaction was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very dissatisfied" and 5 being "very satisfied" with service in an individual area.

The highest ratings from survey respondents came in the areas of:

- Helpfulness and professionalism of the front counter permit technicians & plan examiners (4.51 average rating)
- Speed of the permit application review process (4.31 average rating)
- Overall experience with the building permit process (4.23 average rating)

Some of the lower ratings in the survey came in the areas of:

- Reasonableness of building permit fees (3.46 average rating)
- Consistent interpretation of codes by the inspectors (3.46 average rating)
- Overall experience with electrical inspections (3.27 average rating)

A copy of the full report is included as Attachment B.

These subjects will be presented for further Committee discussion and review at the December 3, 2015, BACA meeting. If you have any questions in advance of the meeting, please feel free to contact me.

Attachment A – Memo and Draft Sign Code Amendments

(see following pages)

office memorandum

Date: November 24, 2015

To: Business and Community Affairs Committee

From: Susan Connors, Director of Planning and Community Development

Subject: Sign Code Amendment – Feather flags

At the November 5, 2015 Council Business and Community Affairs Committee (BACA) meeting, staff presented information regarding a potential City Sign Code amendment to allow "feather flags." As requested, we are returning with options for amending the Sign Code (attached).

Suggested language clarifies their temporary nature yet permits them as an exception to otherwise prohibited "wind" signs. They could be regulated as to duration, location, size, spacing, setback, illumination and number. Language which currently prohibits feather flags would be revised.

The definition of "feather flag" as agreed to at the BACA meeting on November 5th is the following:

> "A feather flag is a free standing sign typically constructed with a plastic or metal shaft driven in the ground and an attached pennant typically in the shape of a feather, teardrop or rectangle that is vertically elongated and attached to the shaft."

Because the Sign Code is written in regards to zoning, feather flag regulations would need to be added to the industrial, commercial, office, medium density residential and low density residential zone sign standards. The following are options for consideration:

1. Do you want to allow them in all zones (industrial, commercial, office, medium density residential, low density residential)? Or do you want to prohibit them from certain zones (for example, allow them only in industrial, commercial and/or office zones)? Staff suggests allowing them in industrial, commercial and office zones, but prohibiting them in residential zones which would include multi-family development.
2. Should they require a building permit? Wind signs that are currently allowed require permits with a fee. For example, pennants without graphics are allowed for 30 days with a $25 permit. Staff suggests requiring a $25 permit for 30 consecutive days.
3. Do you want to consider these "temporary" signs or "wind" signs? If they are considered "temporary" signs they are not allowed if there are annual banners and would be included in the regulated number

and square footage of signage on a lot. If they are "wind" signs, then they are allowed regardless of other temporary signs on the lot. Staff suggests putting them into the Sign Code as "wind" signs.

4. Do you want to regulate spacing of individual feather flags? Should the number per business be regulated, or the number per linear feet of lot frontage, or a combination? When more than one business shares a lot, there is the potential for one business to dominate the lot with an unlimited number of feather flags so others have no room to put out feather flags or temporary signs. It has been suggested that 15 feet might be appropriate. Staff suggests they should be no closer than 15 feet to another feather flag and also suggests no more than 4 per tenant per street frontage in industrial and commercial zones. If they are to be allowed in office zones, Staff suggests a limit of 2 per street frontage that is adjacent to residential because one of the Sign Code's goals is to minimize the office/commercial impacts on residential areas.
5. Do you want to allow them any place on the property or restrict them to the same setback as other signs allowed in each zone? Industrial zones have no setback. Some commercial zones have no setback and some have a 25 foot setback. Office zones have a 10 foot setback. Residential zones have a 25 foot setback. The Sign Code already says signs may not be placed in sight triangles or the public rights-of-way. Staff suggests treating them the same as other signs in the same zoning district regarding setbacks.
6. Do you want to limit the maximum height and/or area? Review of the market suggests that a height of 15 feet and area of 45 square feet should easily encompass most signs available on the market today. Some cities limit the sizes to 30 or 32 square feet. Staff suggests a maximum 15 foot height and a maximum sign size of 45 square feet.
7. Illumination could be a concern if not addressed. Do you want to prohibit illumination? Staff suggests prohibiting illumination.
8. Do you want to make a statement regarding securing the sign so it does not blow away from its mooring? A statement (such as "feather flags shall be securely fastened to the ground in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications") might be appropriate. Staff suggests such a statement should be included.

Staff will be presenting this information for Committee discussion at the December 3, 2015 BACA meeting. If you have any questions in advance of the meeting, please feel free to contact staff.

Attachment

ARTICLE II. - DEFINITIONS

Sec. 18-201. - Words and terms.

The following are definitions of words and terms as they are used in this chapter. Any term not contained within this list shall be construed to be used in this chapter as defined in the latest edition of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.

Electric sign: Any sign containing electrical wiring, but not including signs illuminated solely by exterior light sources, such as floodlights.

Feather flag: A free standing sign typically constructed with a plastic or metal shaft driven in the ground and an attached pennant typically in the shape of a feather, teardrop or rectangle that is vertically elongated and attached to the shaft.

Fence signs: Signs displayed on any structure used as a fence.

Sec. 18-402. - Prohibited signs.

The following signs shall not be permitted, erected or maintain in the City:

(6) Wind signs as herein defined, except for ~~grand opening~~ signs which are otherwise permitted in other sections of this Code.

Sec. 18-503.1. - Industrial zone sign standards.

(b) *Specific regulations.*

(11) *Wind signs:* Prohibited, except:

a. Balloons up to a six-foot maximum diameter and pennants with no words or graphics be allowed for thirty (30) days as temporary signs with a twenty-five dollar ($25.00) permit;

b. One (1) balloon, flag, or pennant may be attached to each vehicle offered for sale, provided the vehicle is legally parked on the property to which the permit is issued;

1. Balloons, flags or pennants must be attached to the vehicle, and may not exceed eighteen (18) inches in greatest dimension, not extend more than seven (7) feet above ground level;

2. May be displayed after 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and must be removed by close of business day on Saturday;

3. An annual permit will cost fifty dollars ($50.00) for each separate lot.

c. Feather flags may be permitted for 30 continuous days with a $25 fee per sign in accordance with the following:.

1. Location – Feather flags may only be on-premise signs. Must not be placed in public right-of-way or in sight triangles. May not extend over public sidewalks, alleys, streets, obstruct the view of traffic signals or otherwise endanger the public.

2. Size – Maximum height 15 feet. Maximum area 45 square feet per face.

3. Spacing - Minimum of 15 feet between feather flags.

4. Setback - Must meet the setback of all signs in their zoning district.

5. Illumination - Feather flags shall not be illuminated.

6. Feather flags shall be securely fastened to the ground in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

7. Number – No more than four feather flags allowed per tenant per street frontage.

8. Maintenance – Feather flags are subject to the maintenance requirements of Section 18-708 and shall be removed as soon as torn or damaged.

Sec. 18-504. - Commercial zone sign standards.

(b) *Specific regulations.*

(13) *Wind signs:* Prohibited, except

a. Balloons up to a six-foot maximum diameter and pennants with no words or graphics be allowed for thirty (30) days as temporary signs with a twenty-five dollar permit in the C-1 and C-2 Districts;

b. One (1) balloon, flag, or pennant may be attached to each vehicle offered for sale, provided the vehicle is legally parked on the property to which the permit is issued;

1. Balloons, flags, or pennants must be attached to the vehicle, and may not exceed eighteen (18) inches in greatest dimension, nor extend more than seven (7) feet above ground level;

2. May be installed after 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and must be removed by close of business on Saturday;

3. An annual permit will cost fifty dollars ($50.00) for each separate lot.

c. Feather flags may be permitted for 30 continuous days with a $25 fee per sign in accordance with the following:.

1. Location – Feather flags may only be on-premise signs. May not be placed in public right-of-way or in sight triangles. May not extend over public sidewalks, alleys, streets, obstruct the view of traffic signals or otherwise endanger the public.

2. Size – Maximum height 15 feet. Maximum sign area 45 square feet per face.

3. Spacing - Minimum of 15 feet between feather flags.

4. Setback - Must meet sign setback of all signs in their zoning district.

5. Illumination - Feather flags shall not be illuminated.

6. Feather flags shall be securely fastened to the ground in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

7. Number – No more than four feather flags allowed per tenant per street frontage.

8. Maintenance – Feather flags are subject to the maintenance requirements of Section 18-708 and shall be removed as soon as torn or damaged.

Sec. 18-504.1. - Office zone sign standards.

(b) *Specific regulations.*

(11) *Wind signs:* Prohibited, except

a. balloons up to a six-foot maximum diameter and pennants with no words or graphics be allowed for thirty (30) days as temporary signs for special events with a twenty-five-dollar permit.

b. Feather flags may be permitted for 30 continuous days with a $25 fee per sign in accordance with the following:.

1. Location – Feather flags may only be on-premise signs. May not be placed in public right-of-way or in sight triangles. May not extend over public sidewalks, alleys, streets, obstruct the view of traffic signals or otherwise endanger the public.

2. Size - Maximum height allowed shall be 15 feet. Maximum sign area allowed shall be 45 square feet per face.

3. Spacing - Minimum of 15 feet between feather flags.

4. Setback - Must meet the setback of all signs in their zoning district.

5. Illumination - Feather flags shall not be illuminated.

6. Feather flags shall be securely fastened to the ground in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

7. Number – No more than four feather flags allowed per street frontage, except on street frontages adjacent to residentially zoned or used property there shall be no more than two feather flags allowed on that street frontage.

8. Maintenance – Feather flags are subject to the maintenance requirements of Section 18-708 and shall be removed as soon as torn or damaged.

Sec. 18-505. - Medium density residential sign standards.

(b) *Specific regulations.*

(17) ~~*Reserved.*~~ Feather flags – prohibited

Sec. 18-506. - Low density residential zone sign standards.

(b) *Specific regulations.*

(16) *Feather flags:* Prohibited.

Attachment B – Spring 2015 Development Services Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey

(see following pages)

Customer Satisfaction Survey
Development Services

Spring 2015 Annual Report

November 23, 2015

Survey Background and Summary

In May 2015, the City of Norman began a process of surveying residential building permit applicants in an effort to collect input and enhance customer service for customers utilizing the Development Services Division. City staff worked with the Builders Association of South Central Oklahoma (BASCO) to develop the survey instrument, and over a four month period, residential trade contractors, general contractors and builders were emailed a link to a 26-question online survey which gathered both demographic data and input/ratings related to building permitting, individual inspections, and overall experience with the residential building process in Norman. This is the first City survey of residential trades and contractors, but the City has been surveying commercial trades and contractors on a monthly basis since December 2013.

The following data relays the results of the survey from May 13, 2015, to September 16, 2015. Over 480 individual surveys were sent, with 96 responses received (20% response rate). From staff research, response rates over 12% are generally considered above average compared to similar surveys submitted in other communities. Satisfaction was rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "very dissatisfied" and 5 being "very satisfied" with service in an individual area.

Generally, the survey results were positive. The largest number of survey respondents was sub-contractors (58.5% of the respondents). About 68% of the respondents had worked in Norman a minimum of 10 years.

The highest ratings from survey respondents came in the areas of:

- Helpfulness and professionalism of the front counter permit technicians & plan examiners *(4.51 average rating)*
- Speed of the permit application review process *(4.31 average rating)*
- Overall experience with the building permit process *(4.23 average rating)*

Some of the lower ratings in the survey came in the areas of:

- Reasonableness of building permit fees *(3.46 average rating)*
- Consistent interpretation of codes by the inspectors *(3.46 average rating)*
- Overall experience with electrical inspections *(3.27 average rating)*

Respondents that requested contact from the Development Coordinator (26) received a return phone call to discuss issues or other items related to their permitting process. Any information and/or issues were related to the appropriate Department Director.

The following pages provide statistical information related to the survey results.

Survey Statistics and Service/Process Ratings

Survey Response Rate

- **Number of Surveys Submitted (between May 13, 2015 and Sept. 16, 2015): 486**
- **Number of Individual Responses (between May 13, 2015 and Sept. 16, 2015): 96**
- **Response Rate: 20%**
- **Number of Respondents Requesting Follow-Up Call: 26**

Demographic Statistics

Years Performing Work in Norman

- 0-4 years – 15.79%
- 5-9 years – 15.79%
- 10-14 years – 21.05%
- 15-19 years – 12.63%
- 20+ years – 34.74%

Residential Projects Completed Annually

- Less than 3 – 27.66%
- Between 4 and 10 – 27.66%
- Between 11 and 20 – 13.83%
- More than 20 – 30.85%

Percentage of Residential Building Projects Completed in Norman

- Less than 10% - 43.01%
- Between 10-25% - 10.75%
- Between 25-40% - 9.68%
- More than 40% - 36.56%

Role in Project Development

- General contractor – 30.85%
- Sub-contractor – 58.51%
- Other – 11.70%

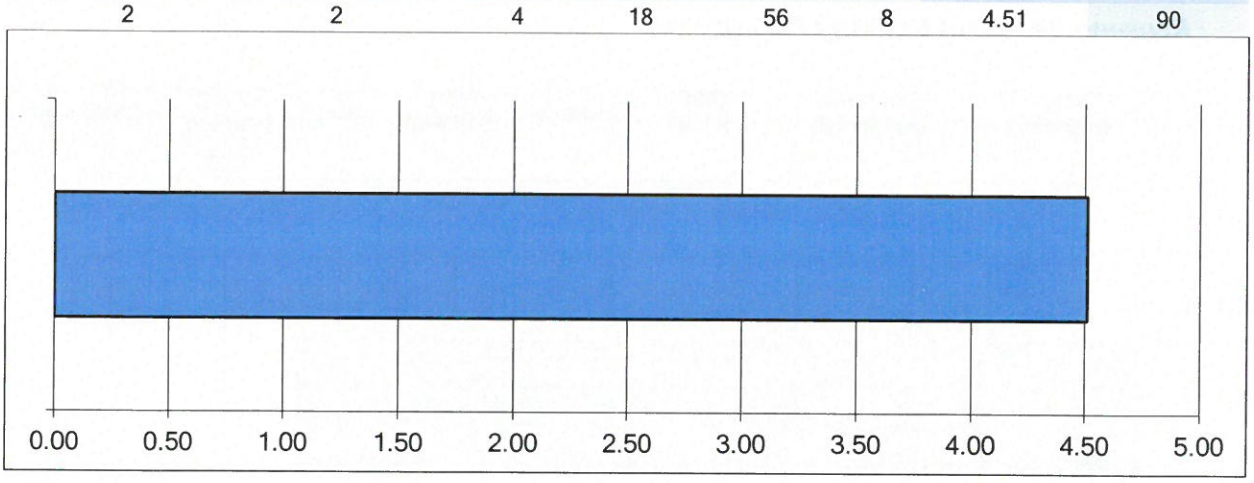
Types of Inspections Performed on Project

- Building – 14.29%
- Electrical – 21.98%
- Plumbing – 41.76%
- Mechanical – 40.66%
- Slab/Foundation – 13.19%
- Pad/Elevation Grading – 14.29%
- All of the above – 28.57%

Ratings for Staff Services and Process Requirements

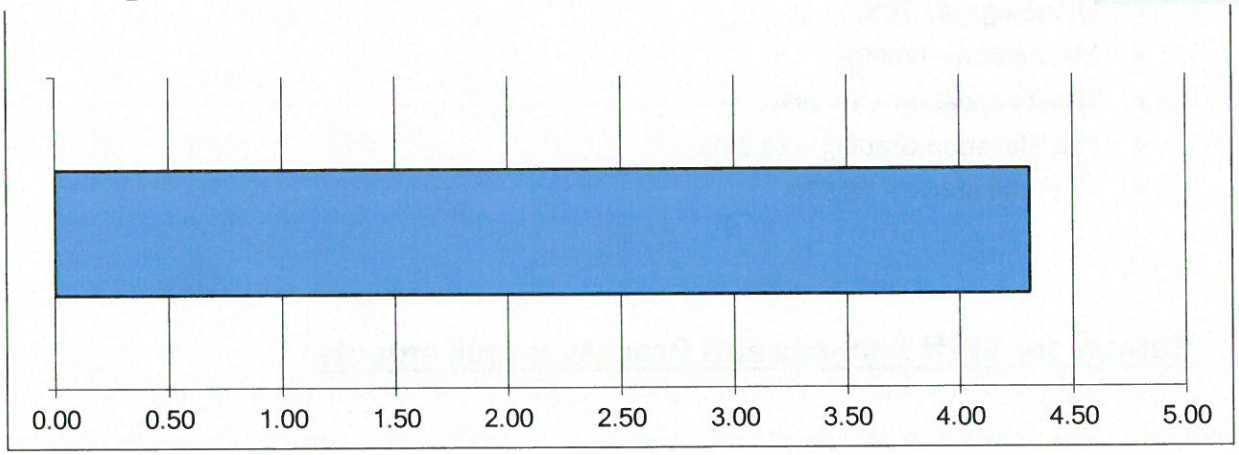
Helpfulness and Professionalism of the Front Counter Permit Technicians

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
2	2	4	18	56	8	4.51	90



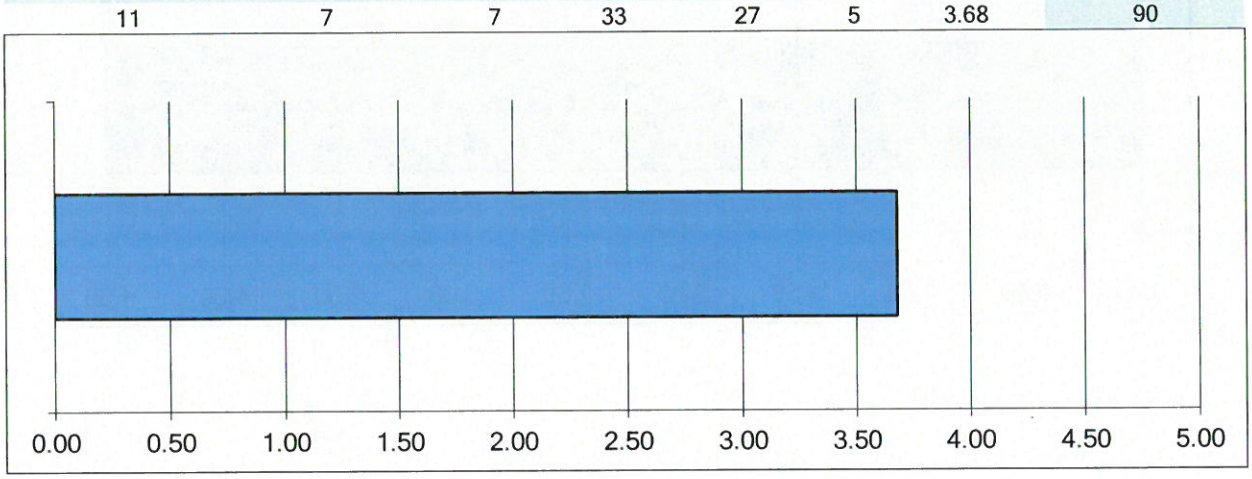
Speed of the Permit Application Process

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
2	6	4	23	48	7	4.31	90



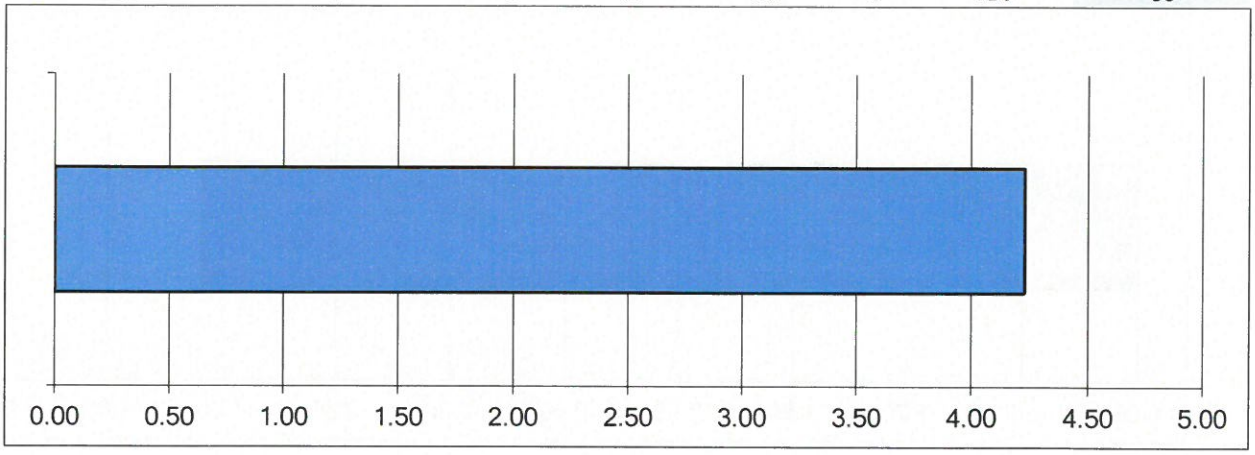
Reasonableness of Building Permit Fees

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
11	7	7	33	27	5	3.68	90



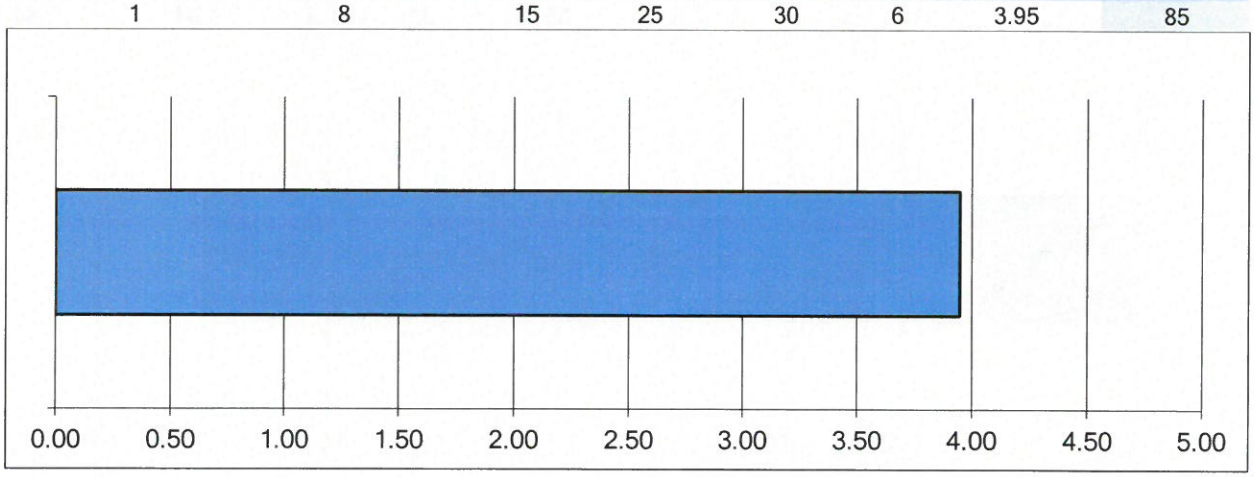
Overall Experience with the Building Permitting Process

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
2	4	3	39	36	6	4.23	90



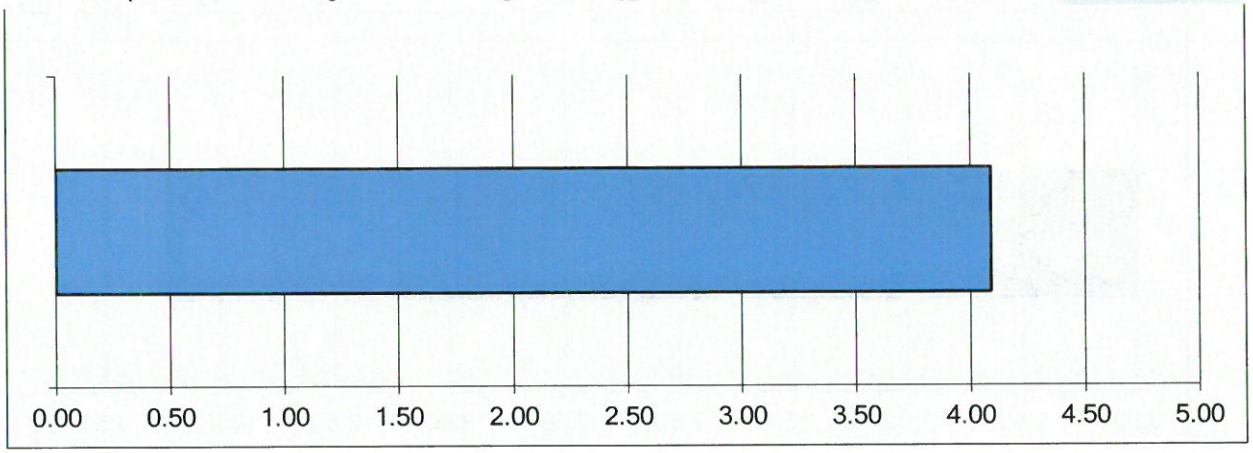
Ease of Scheduling an Inspection via online inspection requests (Click2Gov)

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
1	8	15	25	30	6	3.95	85



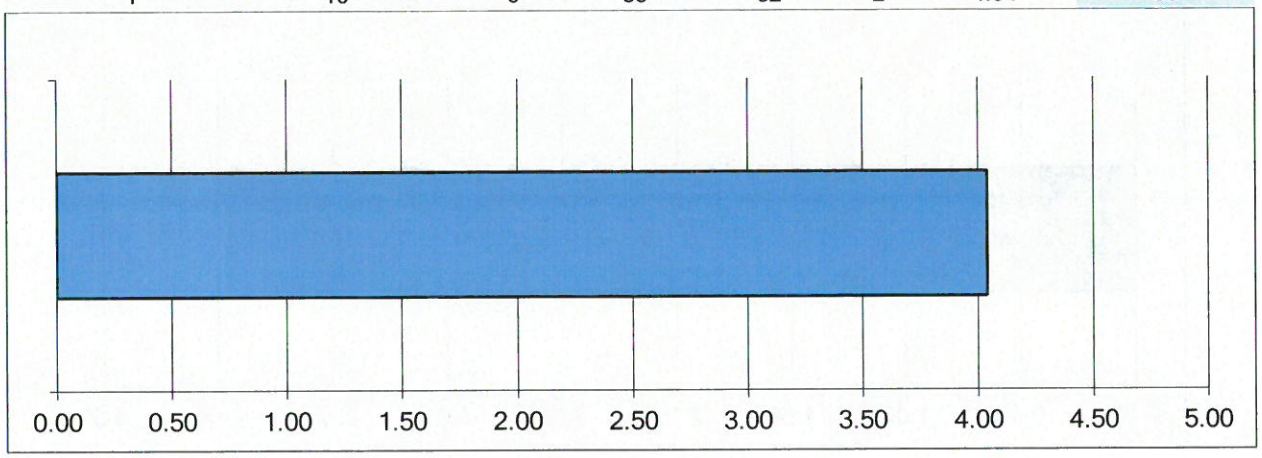
Ease of Scheduling an Inspection via the Automated Phone Line (IVR)

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
1	6	8	32	30	8	4.09	85



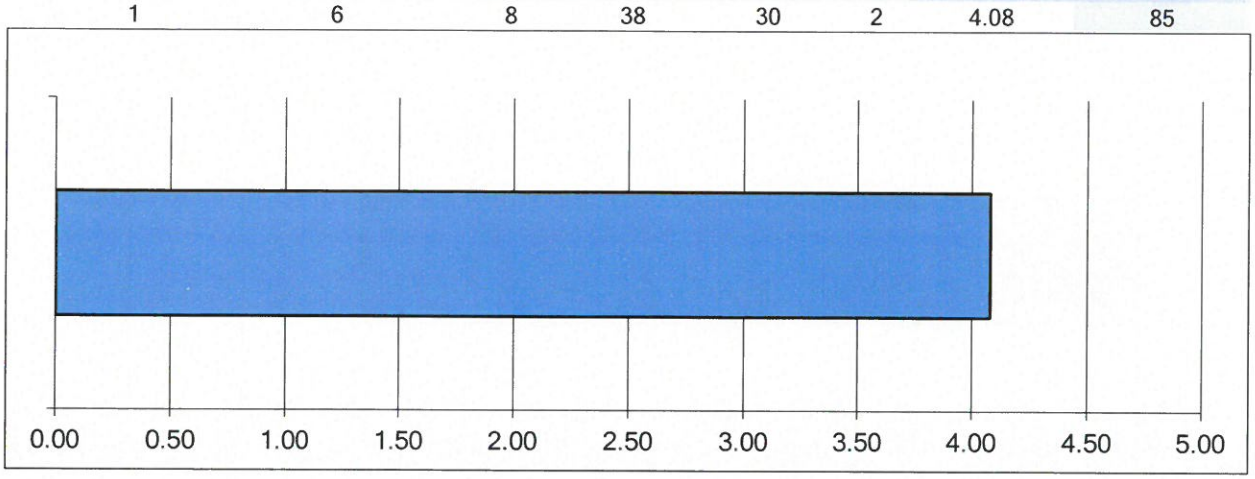
Timeliness of Inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
1	10	6	35	32	2	4.04	86



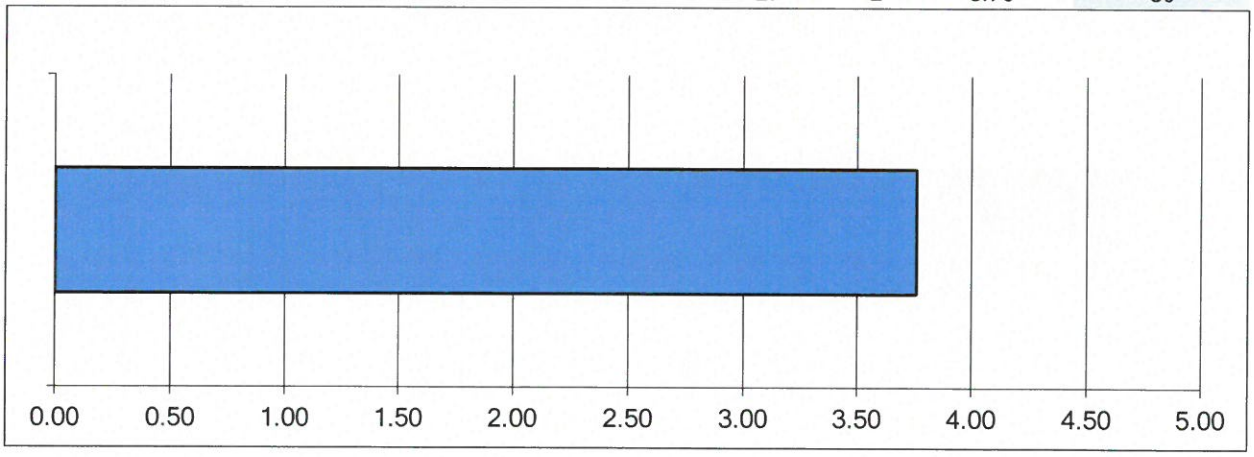
Coordination of Inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
1	6	8	38	30	2	4.08	85



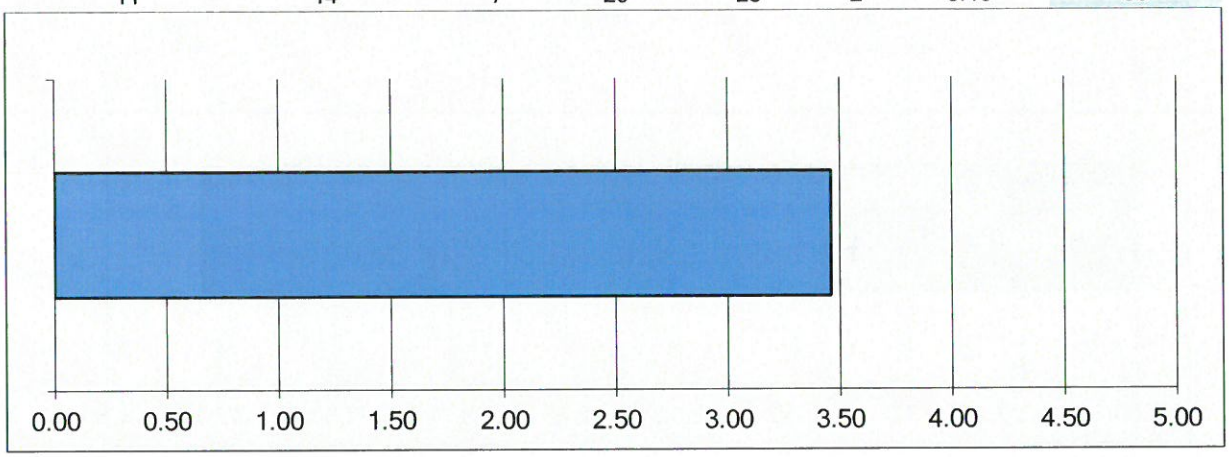
Inspector's Application of Codes and Ordinances

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
6	12	5	34	27	2	3.76	86



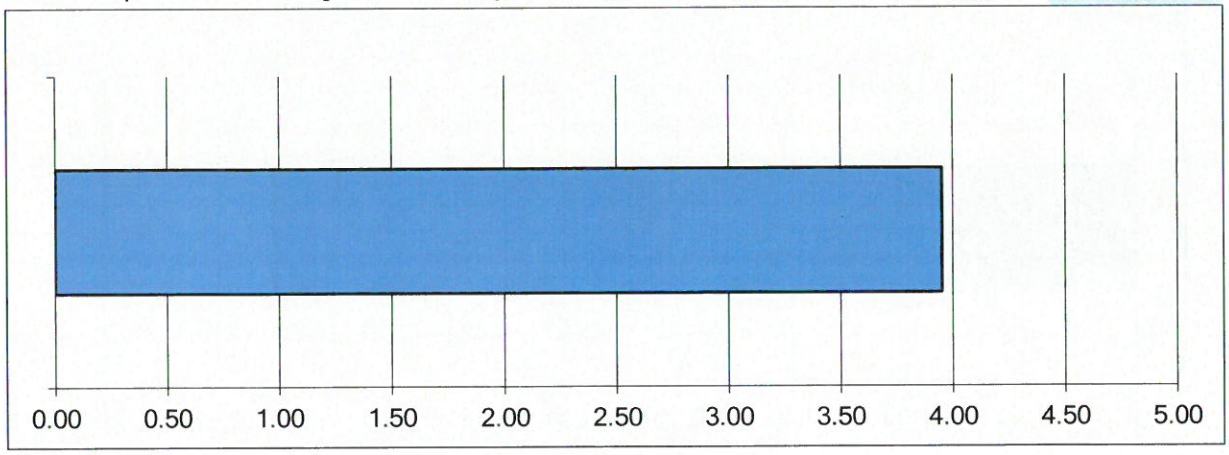
Consistent Interpretation of Codes by the Inspectors

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
11	14	7	29	23	2	3.46	86



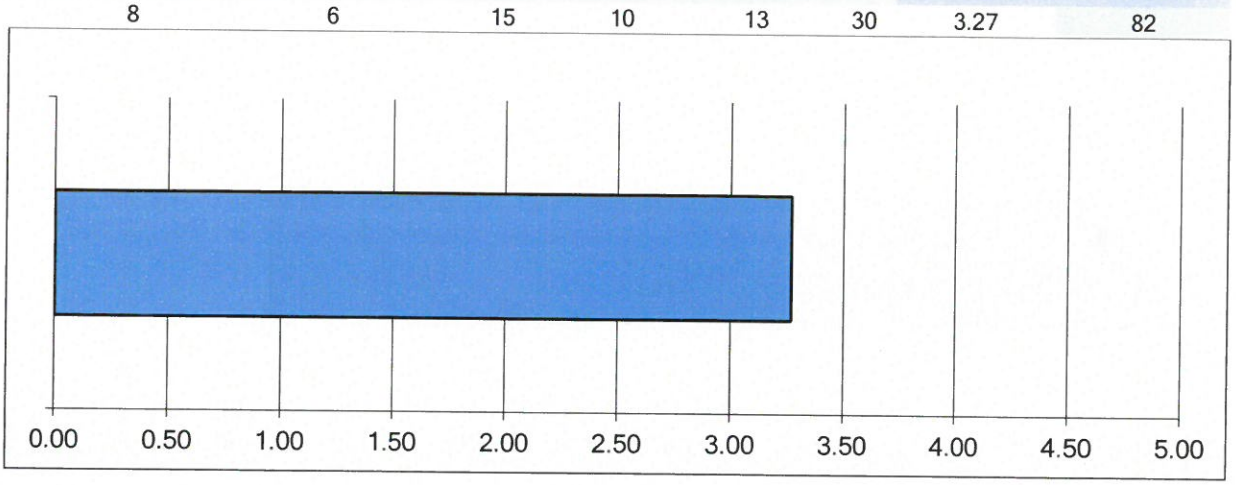
Professional Demeanor of the Inspectors

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
7	5	9	27	36	2	3.95	86



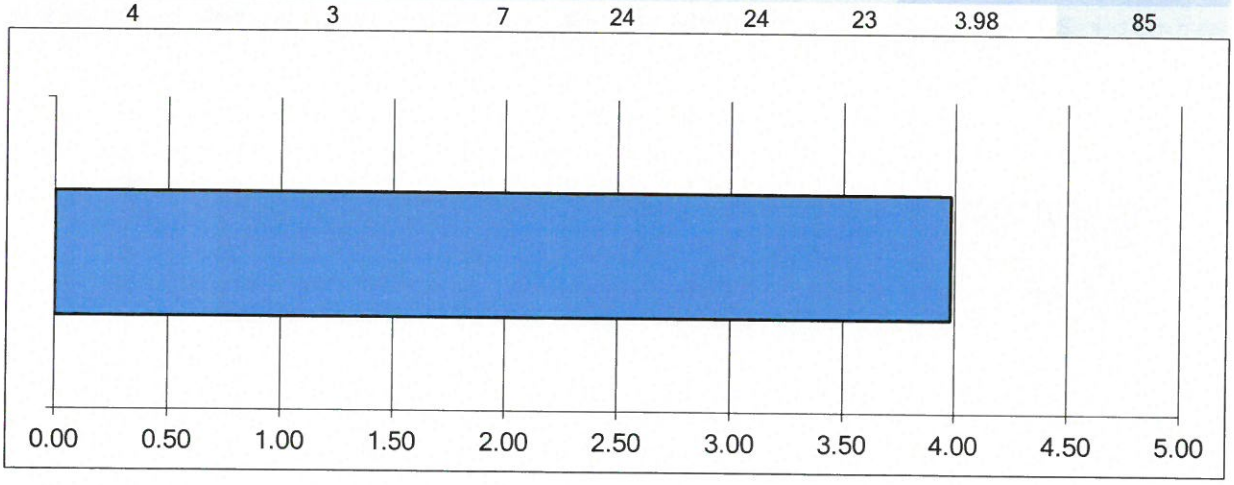
Overall Experience with Electrical Inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
8	6	15	10	13	30	3.27	82



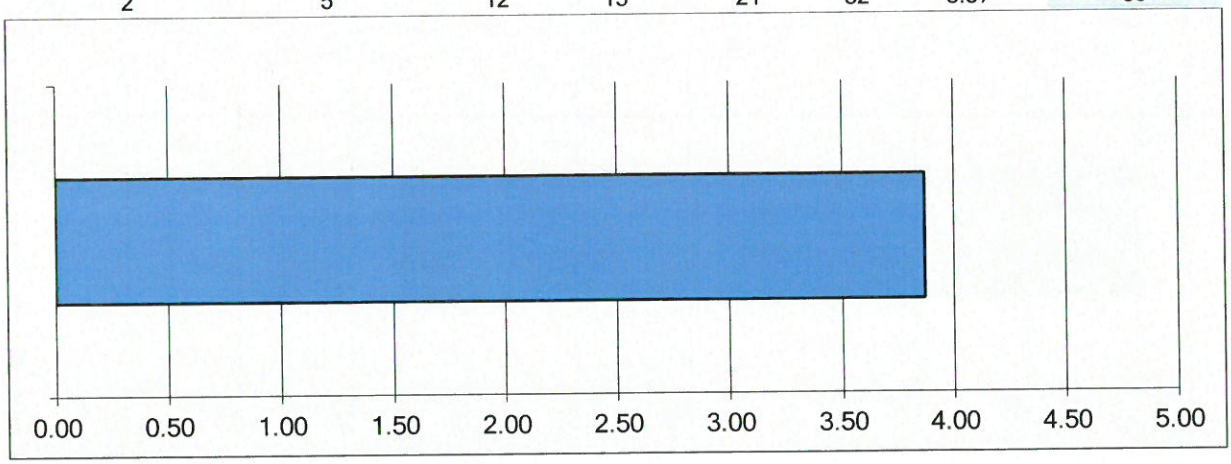
Overall Experience with Mechanical Inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
4	3	7	24	24	23	3.98	85



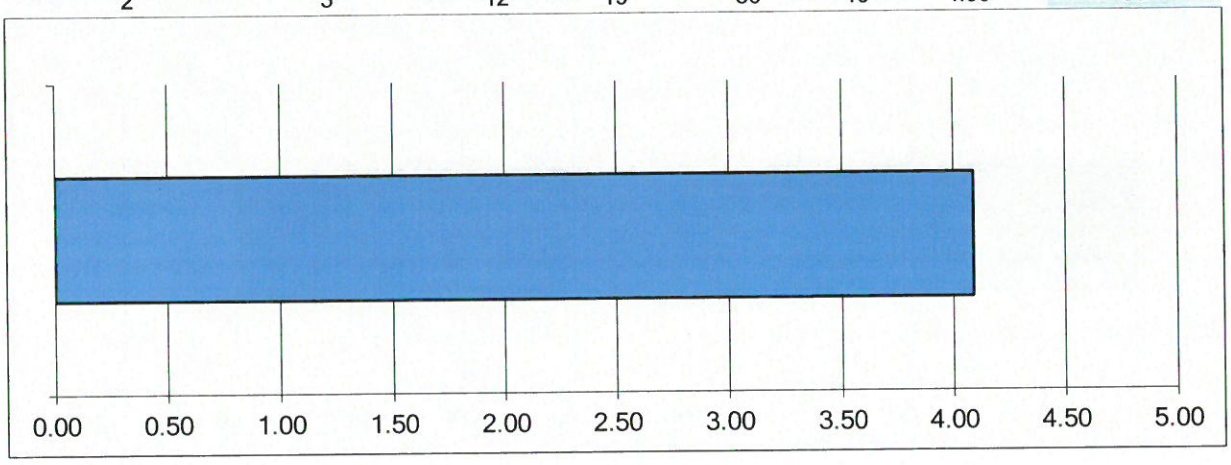
Overall Experience with Building Inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
2	5	12	13	21	32	3.87	85



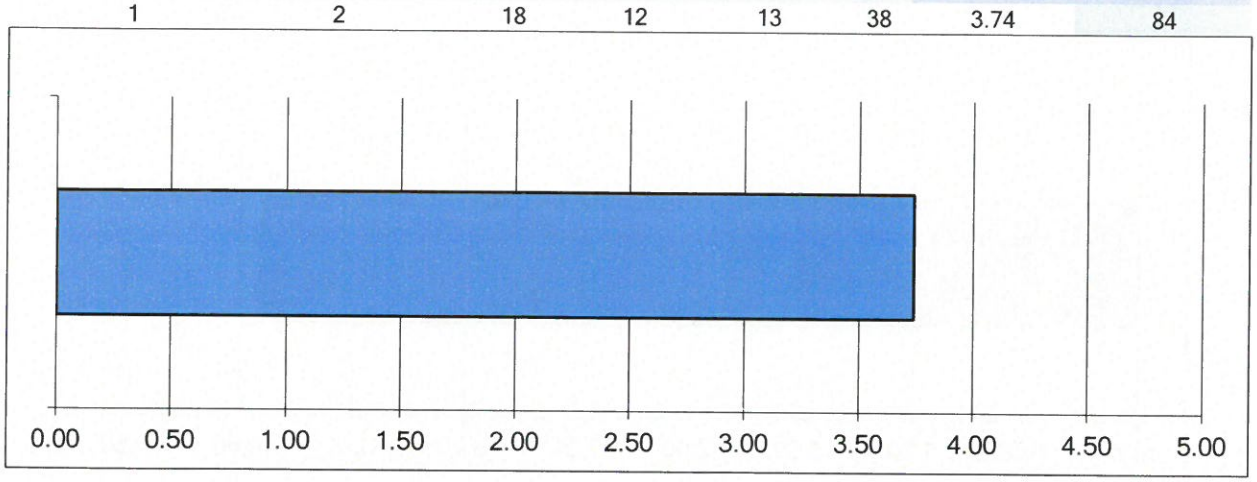
Overall Experience with Plumbing Inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
2	3	12	19	30	19	4.09	85



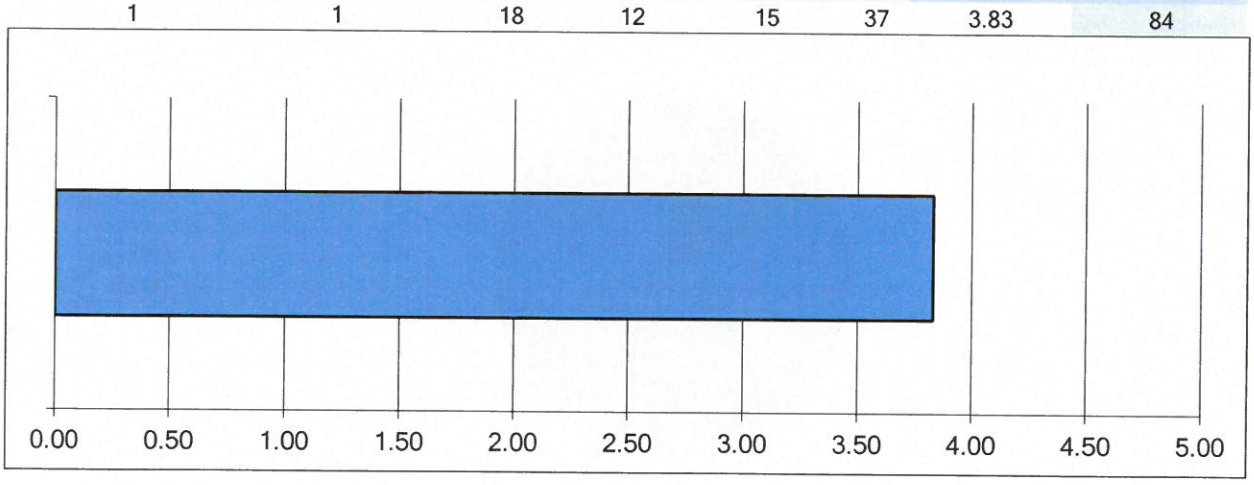
Overall Experience with slab/foundation inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
1	2	18	12	13	38	3.74	84



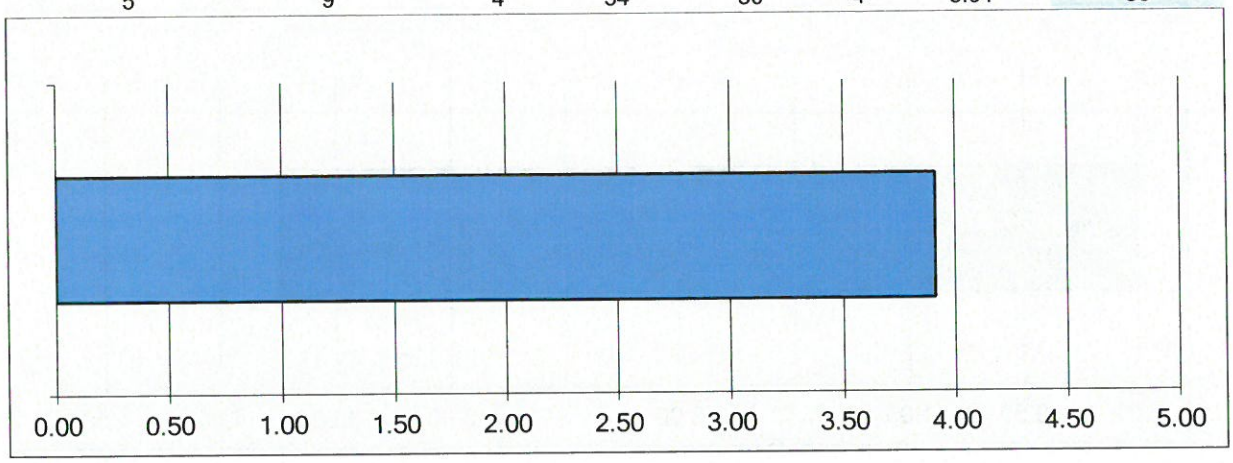
Overall Experience with elevation/grading inspections

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
1	1	18	12	15	37	3.83	84

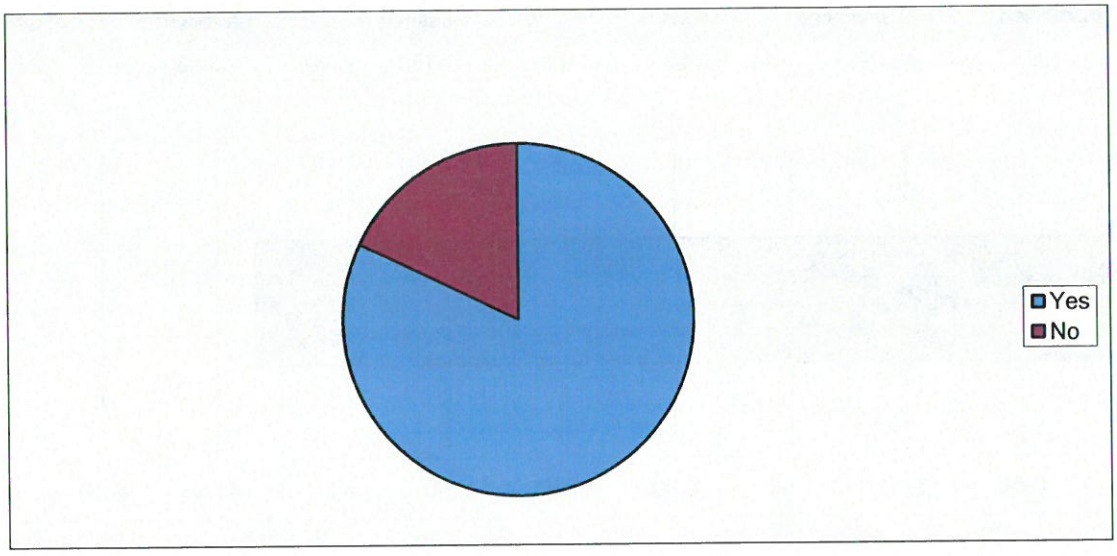


Overall Experience with the ENTIRE Inspection Process

Very Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Don't Know	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	N/A	Rating Average	Response Count
5	9	4	34	30	4	3.91	86



Did the inspector(s) sufficiently explain verbally or in writing the reasons why inspected work failed to pass?



Yes	82.1%	69
No	17.9%	15