

# Mecklenburg County – LUESA

## 2017 Code Enforcement Customer Satisfaction Survey

### BDC Overview of Results

#### Survey Overview – Structure/Response Rate

- ❖ Conducted in early 2017 by CSS, Inc. following similar surveys in 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014.
- ❖ Targeted industry groups who access County Code Enforcement services.
  - Designed three similar survey instruments: Oversight (general contractors, developers, owners, project managers), Plan Review/Permitting (architects, engineers), and Inspections (sub-contractors).
- ❖ Oversight and Inspections surveys delivered in hardcopy followed by e-mail invitations to web surveys.
- ❖ Plan Review/Permitting Survey web only as done in recent past.
- ❖ Level of responses received provided statistically valid results (885 responses; 16.4% Response Rate).

#### Summary of Significant Findings - Oversight Survey

Respondents were generally more pleased than in 2014. The Top Areas of Concern (*Ability to reach the right person, timeliness of permit request process, timeliness of inspections*) are the same as 2014, and they are more significant concerns. CSS noted the *seamless nature of work between the City/County* had the most significant impact on the Oversight customer's satisfaction and willingness to recommend. Therefore, those 3 Top Areas of Concern and building a seamless working relationship with the City seem to be top priorities for Oversight customers. Other key findings follow:

- ❖ 8 of the 17 attributes rated for Satisfaction were 4.0 or higher this year. Top Attributes for Satisfaction: *Ease with which I can check on inspection results, Ease with which I can schedule inspections, Courtesy of staff in permitting.*

#### Summary of Significant Findings - Professionals Survey

Plan Review/Permitting respondents were more dissatisfied with most aspects of their experience v. 2014. Many of the concerns voiced were web/submittal-related. Other key findings follow:

- ❖ Customer's *ability to reach the right person to address their need* became a more significant concern than in 2014.
- ❖ All 11 attributes evaluated for Importance and Satisfaction had a flat or increasing (worsening) Performance Gap.
- ❖ Respondents voiced multiple concerns with the web – from the file size constraints to compatibility concerns with certain operating systems and browsers to the manual/redundant nature of information submittals.
- ❖ Interactive Review was viewed favorably, and 89% of respondents noted that it helped with their pass rate.
- ❖ Based on the Correlation Analysis, the *timeliness of the permit process* and *seamless nature of work between the City/County* impacted customer satisfaction and willingness to recommend the most.

#### Summary of Significant Findings - Inspections Survey

Respondents were more pleased overall, as 9 Satisfaction attributes were 4.0 or higher, and all Performance Gaps decreased (i.e., performance improved). There are awareness issues relating to several Code Enforcement services, functions, etc. Concerns were voiced about particular staff functions (such as multi-trade and newer inspectors) as well as consistency/timeliness/method of notification of inspector arrival and inspector no-show. Other key findings follow:

- ❖ Top Attributes for Satisfaction: *Ease with which I can check on inspection results, Ease with which I can schedule inspections, Ease with which I can make payments.*
- ❖ Respondents were more pleased than in 2014 with their *ability to reach the right person to address their need*. Although this attribute is not considered a strength, overall performance improved.
- ❖ Plumbing respondents generally had higher ratings, while Building respondents generally offered lower ratings.
- ❖ Based on the Correlation Analysis, *Satisfaction with the Residential Inspections Team* had the highest correlation to customer satisfaction and the willingness to recommend.



## Other Overall Findings/Conclusions

- ❖ CSS incorporated a new attribute evaluating the County as a Development Services Partner, using a 10-point scale, and the respondents consistently provided ratings of 6.22-6.59 across the 3 surveys.
- ❖ There was a varied understanding of who's responsible for processing Zoning permits (Town/City/County) across the surveys.
- ❖ Also similar across all 3 surveys, Commercial respondents had higher overall ratings than Residential respondents.
- ❖ Finally, there was a general awareness gap of the role of the Project Manager and Code Administrator as well as knowing who filled that role for their projects.

## Key Recommendations

1. Continue with current efforts to partner with the City to provide more seamless development services, as that aspect of the customer's work with the County impacts the customer's satisfaction and willingness to recommend.
2. Across the organization, continue to work on processes, systems, and protocol that make it easier for the customer to quickly reach *the right person to address their need*. This has been a consistent issue for a great deal of time, and it's becoming a greater concern for Oversight and Professionals customers.
3. Review the website to evaluate the self-evident nature, particularly for new customers to find the needed information and understand processes and requirements upfront.
4. Reinforce with staff the need to return phone call messages and by when they should be returned. In addition, review department's callback timeframe policy in light of customer's expectation to have call backs same day. Ensure that there is consistency between policy and customer expectations either by ensuring a quick response to messages and/or working to reset customer expectations about callback timeframes.
5. Recognize those involved with Interactive Review, as it was generally viewed favorably and is impactful in improving the customer's pass rate. Also look for opportunities to continually improve and expand its use, as customers offered several comments/suggestions in the survey.
6. Review the organization's overall Awareness-building strategy to develop and implement communications to build greater knowledge of the use of the Project Manager, Pass Rate Incentive Program, Notify Me, Department Shared Vision, Code Administrator (who and what the position is), etc.
7. Assess internal protocols (and the adherence to protocols) used for notifying customers when inspectors will not show on a scheduled day to determine improvements to make, particularly for residential customers with homeowners waiting for service.
8. Investigate methods for calling customers instead of and/or in addition to e-mail notification when inspectors are on their way to a job site. With technology advances, even if a personal call is not always an option, automated systems are capable of calling customers with advanced notice of appointments or reminders.
9. Ensure that the Residential Inspections Team understands its impact on overall customer satisfaction and willingness to recommend, and work with them to provide consistently timely and well-communicated inspections services.

