

OUR CITY. OUR FUTURE.



# Customer Service - Survey Results

## Inspection Services



Prepared by Organizational Performance and Strategy  
November 2021

**ST. JOHN'S**



## Inspection Services

Inspection Services is part of the Regulatory Services Division, which is also responsible for by-law enforcement and parking enforcement.

Inspection Services performs a technical review of all components of construction/renovation/occupancy changes for new and existing commercial and residential buildings. This review ensures that buildings are constructed and maintained to meet applicable standards including the National Building Code, Electrical Code, Plumbing Code, and Fire and Life Safety Code. The division is also responsible for ensuring the safe use of properties and the sustainability of the built environment through the enforcement of maintenance standards and by-laws.

# Survey Objectives

- **Purpose:**
  - Obtain feedback on the level of service from City staff in Inspection Services
  - Assess quality of customer experiences
- **Goals:**
  - Identify possible areas for improvement
  - Focus efforts, working with staff based on responses
  - Together with the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, align with Service Excellence Strategy



## Survey Methodology

- Online survey, 25 questions
- Sent to approx. 600 clients
- Responses collected between March 16 and April 2, 2021
- Total number of responses collected: 139
- The number of respondents for each question is denoted throughout this report by “n=”





## WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY?



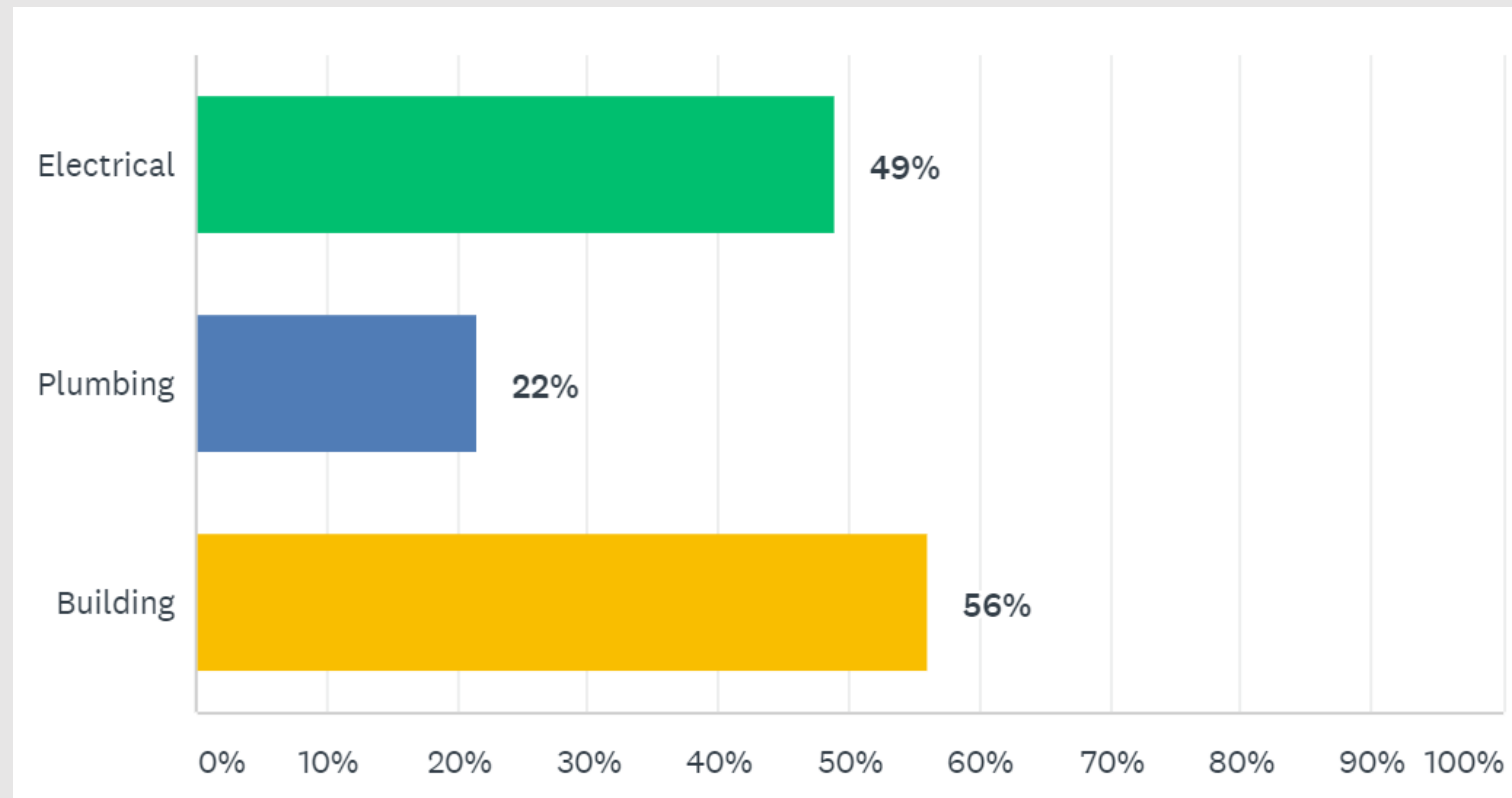


## Types of Inspection

- 68 - Electrical
- 30 - Plumbing
- 78 - Building

n=139

Users were able to select more than one option.



## Experience with Process

70% of survey respondents have many years of experience with the process (4 years or more)

How long have you been requesting permits from the City of St. John's?

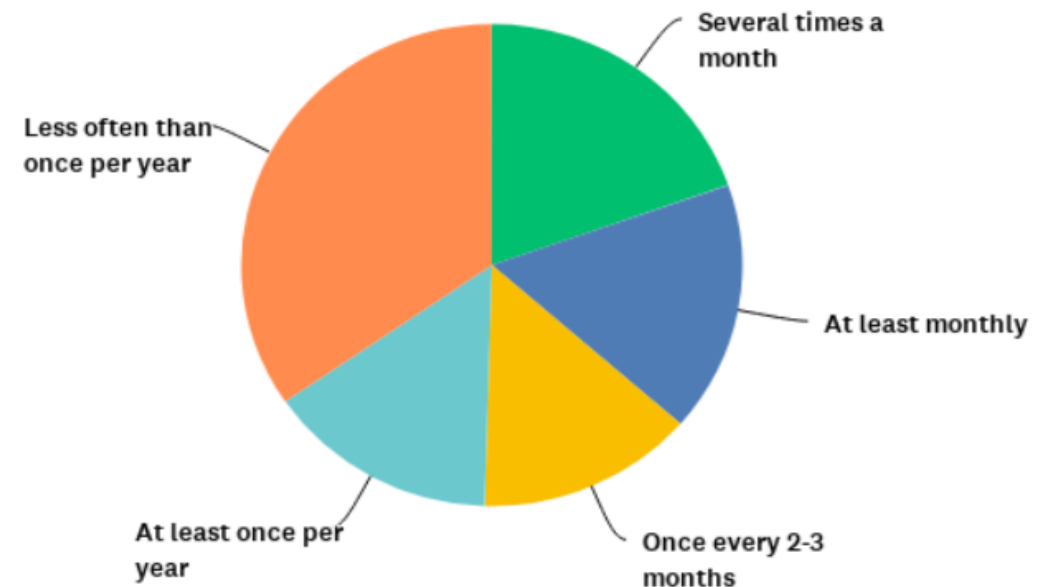
Less than a year	18%
1-3 years	12%
4-6 years	13%
7-10 years	11%
More than 10 years	46%

n=107

## How Frequently

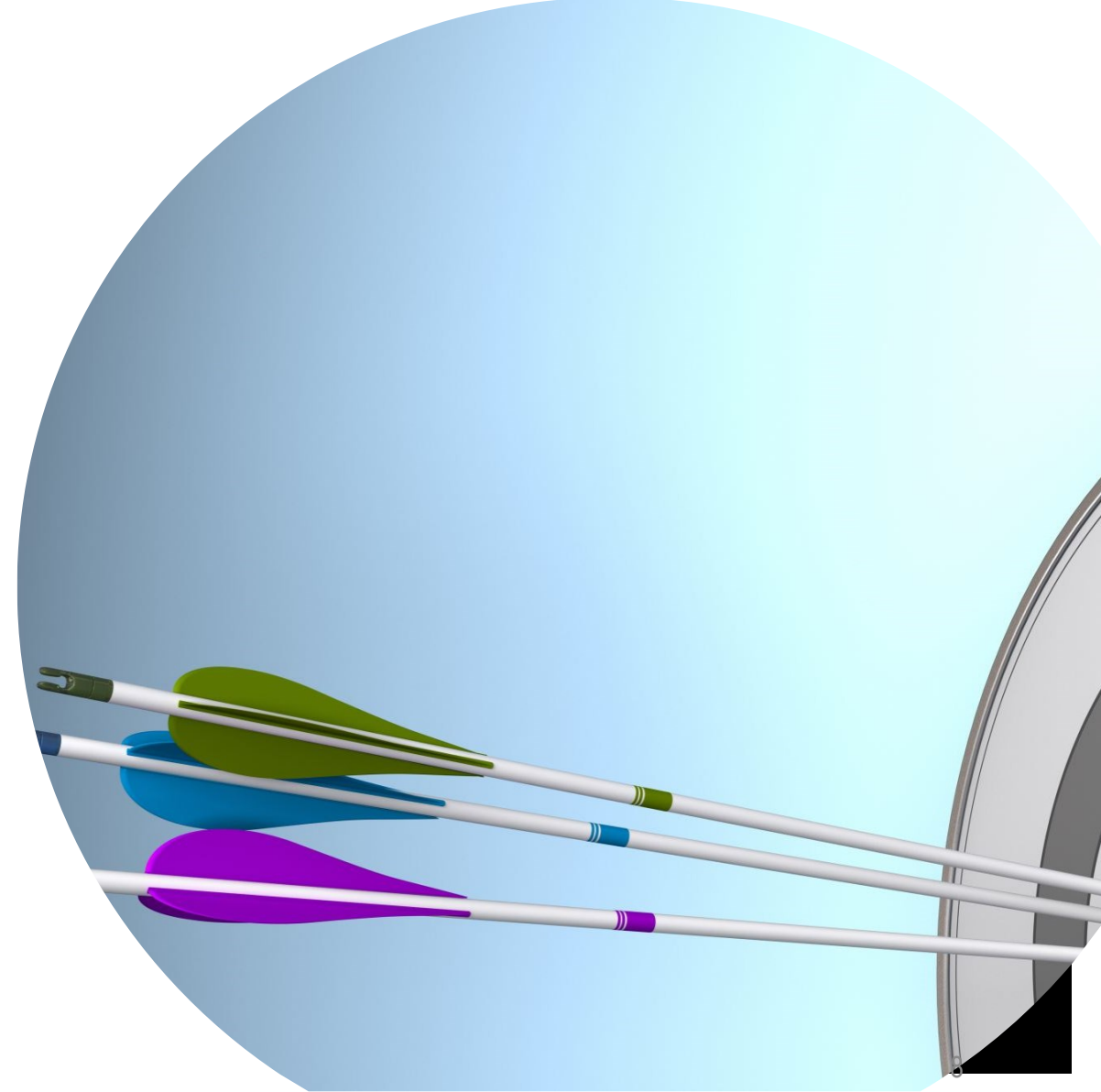
50% of survey respondents are infrequent customers of the process (once a year or less often)

Q24 How frequently do you request permits?





# SATISFACTION MEASURES



# Electrical

For those who selected Electrical (49%):

84% felt the process was easy to understand

86% felt respected

82% felt their needs were understood

77% felt they were treated fairly

84% were satisfied with the processing time

n = 56



# Plumbing

For those who selected Plumbing (22%):

85% felt the process was easy to understand

88% felt respected

85% felt their needs were understood

88% felt they were treated fairly

88% were satisfied with the processing time

n = 26



# Building

For those who selected Building (56%):

76% felt the process was easy to understand

81% felt respected

76% felt their needs were understood

79% felt they were treated fairly

79% were satisfied with the processing time

n = 63



**Survey respondents rated their satisfaction with various elements within the inspection and permit process on scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was poor and 5 was excellent.**





## Was satisfaction linked to how familiar customers were with the process?

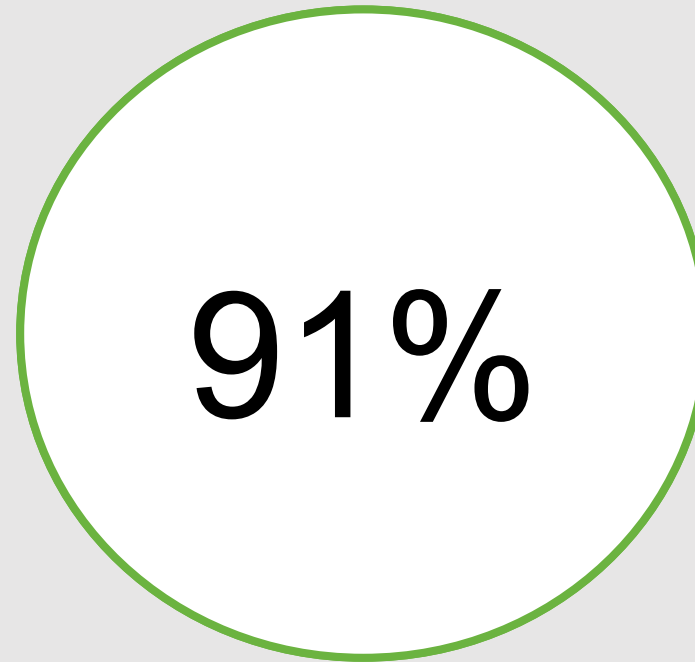
Analyzed the possibility of a relationship between how long customers have been requesting permits, how often they request permits, and their satisfaction with different elements of the process.

**No apparent link** between familiarity with process and satisfaction.\* The differences appear to be based on individual experiences.

\*Statistical analysis based on responses received and is not necessarily representative



For inspections that required follow-up, customers were clear on what they needed to do.



n = 56\*

\*56 respondents said they required follow-up. These 56 were asked whether it was clear what they needed to do.





# DETAILED RESPONSES



## Why Customers were not Satisfied - Electrical

Inspector was a no show
Scheduling issues
COVID19-related
We work in many provinces where this is not required
It took too long

5 comments received from the 16% who were not satisfied.



# Customers Suggestions - Electrical

More notice of the inspection time would be awesome

The process was not entirely clear

A booklet with upgrade rules is all I could ask

Inspections should be done by appointment

Adopt the system Service NL uses for inspections

Consistency among inspectors

Have the same inspector that did the initial inspection, come back for the follow up or final inspection

40 comments received.

## Why Customers were not Satisfied - Plumbing

Lack of communication throughout the process

It took too long

3 comments received from the 12% who were not satisfied.



## Customers Suggestions - Plumbing

Having to be there with the inspector takes a lot of time and money away from other projects

It would be nice to pick a day and a time instead of being told what time

Arranging online inspections needs to be improved

15 comments received.

## Why Customers were not Satisfied - Building

Inconsistencies in process and in timing

It took too long

Concerns about heritage policies

10 comments received from the 21% who were not satisfied.



# Customers Suggestions - Building

More  
communication  
with the  
homeowner

Make payments  
easier, reduce contact  
points

Some code guidance  
documents on specific  
topics

Timeline between  
application and the  
permit being ready  
could be improved

Simplified  
application

Easier access to  
find the correct  
request form

50 comments received (largest amount).

# Alignment with Citizen Satisfaction Survey

Permits and Inspections were identified as a secondary area for improvement:

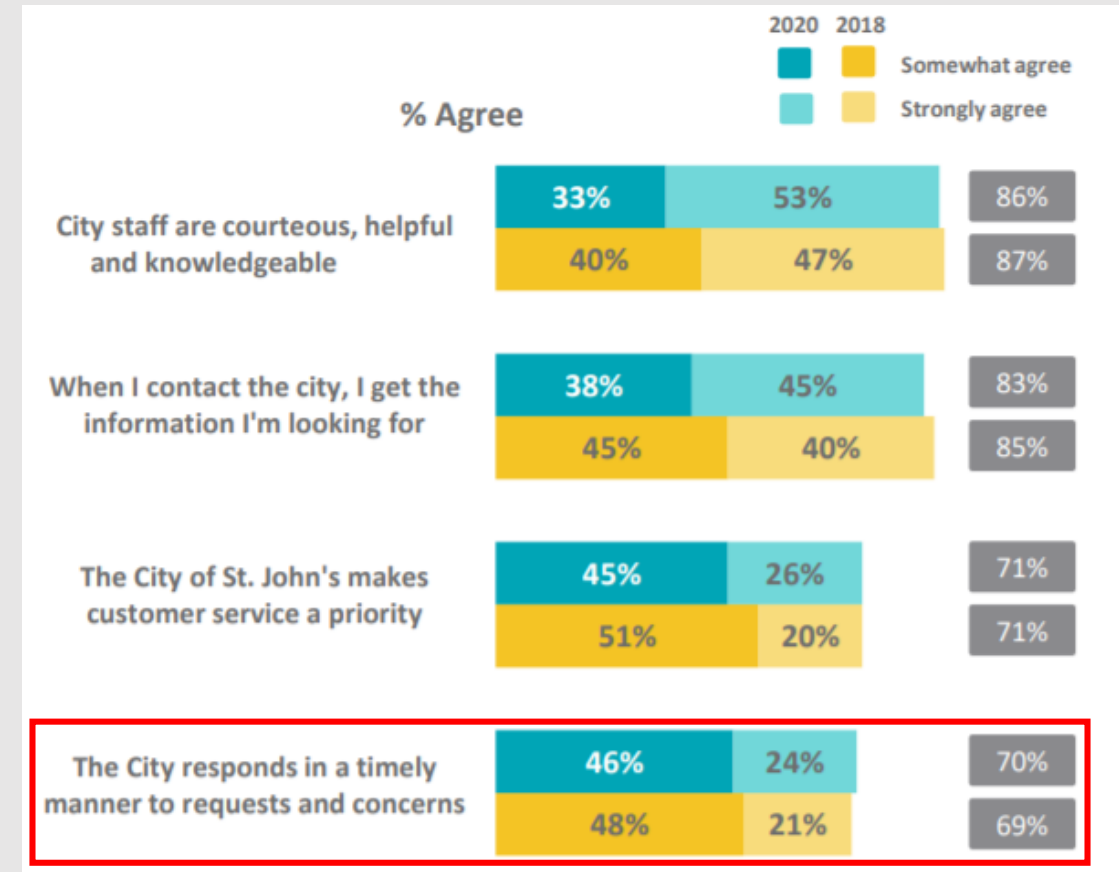


Gap analysis on the importance and satisfaction for Permits and Inspections shows improvements are relevant:

Table 5: Importance		% 8 or higher		Difference
	Importance	Satisfaction	+/-	
Road maintenance	93%	22%	-71	
Sidewalk snow clearing	87%	20%	-67	
Road snow clearing	97%	44%	-43	
Traffic planning	84%	42%	-42	
Land use planning	78%	41%	-37	
Metrobus service*	77%	43%	-34	
Heritage preservation	73%	45%	-28	
Permits and inspections process	77%	51%	-26	
Parking services	62%	37%	-25	
GoBus/Accessible taxi service*	82%	59%	-23	
Recreation facilities/programs/activities	85%	62%	-23	
Residential water and sewer repairs	97%	75%	-22	
Parks, open spaces, and trails	93%	78%	-15	
Curbside recycling	87%	72%	-15	
Arts/cultural grants	66%	52%	-14	
311/Access St. John's	79%	70%	-9	
Garbage collection	98%	89%	-9	
Animal care and adoption services	74%	68%	-6	
Yard waste collection	66%	62%	-4	
Community events	59%	59%	-	

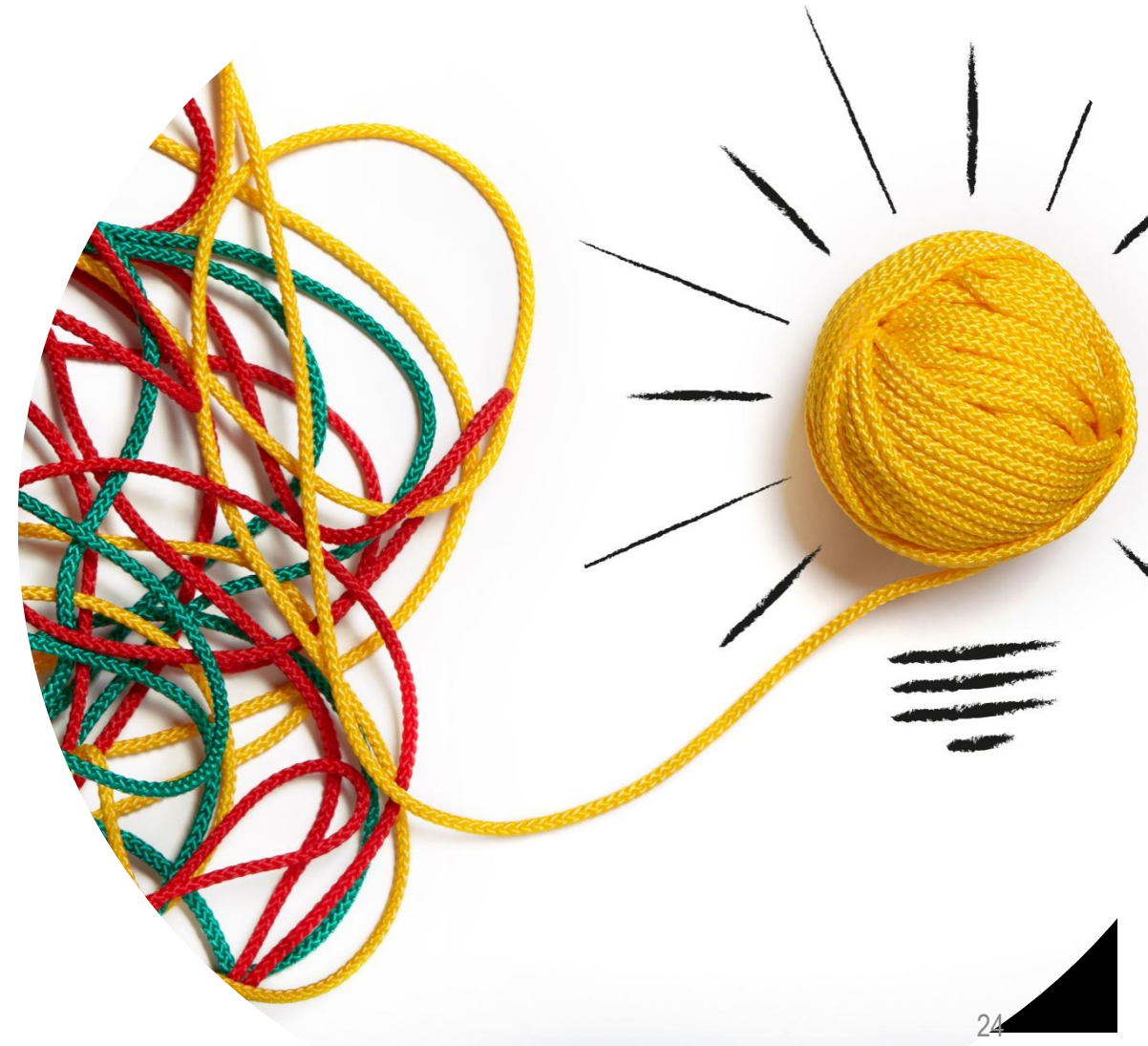
# Alignment with Citizen Satisfaction Survey

‘Timeliness’ was identified as an area for possible improvement, though not specifically related to permits and inspections.





## ANALYSIS AND NEXT STEPS



## Analysis of Results

Question	Average*
Felt the process was easy to understand	4.08
Felt respected	4.25
Felt needs were understood	4.13
Was treated fairly	4.18
Satisfied with the processing time	4.10

These calculations represent all disciplines. Lowest ratings in red text, though they are still quite high.

Overall Satisfaction - Electrical	4.14
Overall Satisfaction - Plumbing	4.32
Overall Satisfaction - Building	4.07



# Analysis of Results

The following analysis integrates satisfaction measures, customer comments, and Citizen Satisfaction data, and may inform possible improvements.

Improve consistency: customers' experiences differ.

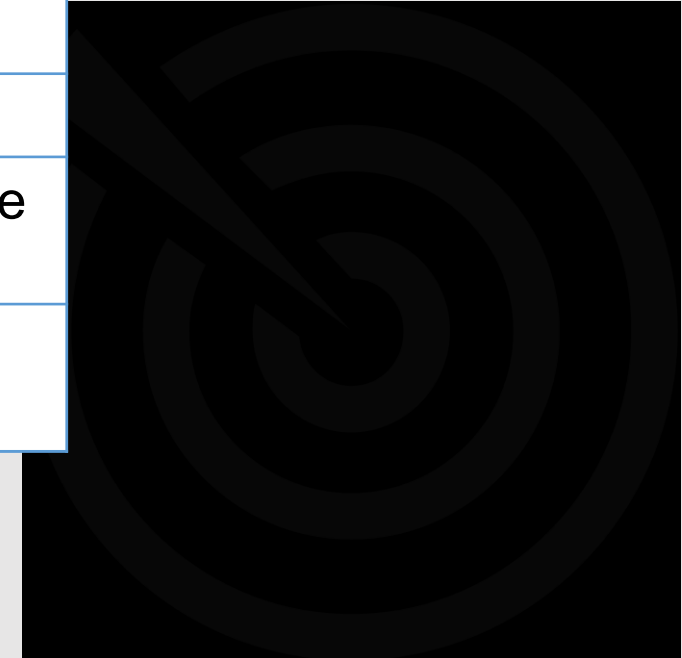
Simplify the application process.

Reduce number of contact points.

Increase communications with requestors and owners.

Improve scheduling, incorporating online services or self-serve where appropriate.

Implement, monitor, and communicate a service standard for timeliness.



# Ongoing Feedback

- Additional “evergreen” online survey sent with every electronic permit issuance
  - 48 responses received so far
  - Permits issued within the past 3 months:

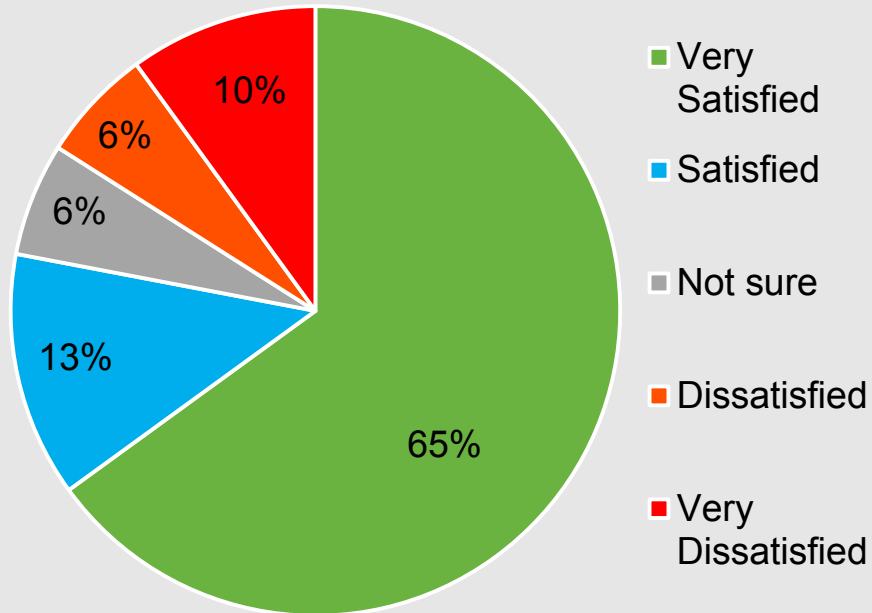
	Building Permits	Electrical Permits	Plumbing Permits
September	188	261	48
October	256	158	61
November	190	193	58

## Questions:

1. How would you rate your experience with the City of St. John’s permit process, on a scale of 1-5, where 5=Very Satisfied and 1=Very Unsatisfied?
2. What was the best part of your experience, or which part of the Inspection Services process did you find the easiest to work with?
3. If you could change or improve one thing with Inspection Services, what would it be?



# Ongoing Feedback



**78% SATISFIED or VERY SATISFIED**

n = 48

## Positive Comments

Staff were helpful and efficient

Clear instructions

Can submit electronically

Quick turnaround

Payment was easy

## Suggestions for Improvement

More inspectors available at peak times

More instructions on City website

Clearer communication between staff