Development and Infrastructure Services Department Customer Survey Analysis

Prosper, Texas

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matrix consulting group

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1. Introduction

This document shows the results and findings of the customer survey conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group for the Development and Infrastructure Services Department. This survey was conducted as a follow-up to the 2014 and 2017 surveys conducted by Zucker Systems. This survey was designed to gauge customer opinions and impressions on the Department's performance and their experiences with development in the Town of Prosper.

The survey was conducted online using SurveyMonkey. The survey was initiated on August 6, 2021 and distributed via email to customers who had conducted business with the department in the last two years. While the survey respondents were not necessarily the same group who provided responses to the 2017 survey (which was conducted by mail rather than email), they represent the constituency with the most recent knowledge and experience with the Department. The survey was open for response until August 29, 2021. A total of 149 responses were received out of 2,368 emails delivered, for a response rate of 6.3%. It should be noted that only 1,475 of the email invitations were opened by the recipients. Of those who opened the survey email, the response rate was 10.1%. This response rate generally aligns with the level of participation on previous similar efforts by the project team. In our prior experience, it is not uncommon for survey respondents to be more heavily represented by those who are more critical in their responses as they have a specific issue to share and desire a specific change.   It is also common for customers who have had a positive experience to less frequently complete the survey or attend focus group meeting requests. Overall, the results of this survey are more positive than other recent development review related surveys completed by the project team.

In addition to conducting the online survey, the project team reached out and conducted one-on-one interviews with prior customers and conducted two in-person stakeholder focus group meetings. Overall, a total of 11 individual conversations were held with builders, developers and engineers. A total of nine individuals attended the focus group meetings. A broad representative group of individuals provided feedback during these two outreach methods in addition to the responses received as part of the online survey.

The analysis is presented in two sections. The first will focus on the information received from the online survey and outreach efforts and compare the responses received to the previous survey.   The second section will outline observations and potential recommendations (based on feedback received) to improve the development review process.

2. Customer Feedback Analysis

This section of the analysis will focus on the feedback received from the online customer survey. The online survey included a combination of multiple choice questions and open-ended questions. The multiple choice questions were the same questions asked in the prior survey, with the exception of two questions related to the new electronic application submittal process. Also, there were two open ended questions asked so that respondents could identify current strengths and opportunities for improvement in their own words.

The previous survey was completed in 2017 and this survey was completed approximately 17 months after the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Town was open for business during the pandemic and had already transitioned to processing development related applications via electronic submittal which enables staff to continue service delivery without significant impacts due to COVID. Staff indicated that they attempted to provide the same level of service they had prior to March 2020 although there may have been different approaches utilized. By implementing the change to allow digital application submittals and remaining open for in-person services, the Town continued to provide a high level of accessibility and service to its customers during the pandemic. Many other local governments transitioned to remote services during the initial stages of the pandemic, often resulting in delays in the processing of applications. The Town was generally able to maintain the service level that was established prior to March 2020. The impacts of the pandemic may have influenced the results of this survey, but the specific degree of impact is unknown.

1. Key Findings

While the following sections discuss survey responses in more depth, the key takeaways from the survey are summarized in the following bullet points.

- Responses were highly positive. Most participants expressed positive opinions about their customer experience with the Town and its development process. Without exception, every multiple choice statement received a majority of agreement. Only six of the 33 questions received a disagreement rate greater than 25%. Also, there were also more responses listing the Town's strengths than those listing improvement opportunities in the open-ended response portion of the survey.

- 84% of the respondents indicated that the transition to digital application submittals was smooth and that the digital process is efficient.

- Opinions of the Town's development process have become slightly more negative since the prior survey completed in 2017. Of the 31 statements, a total of nine statement had disagreement rates higher than 10% than in the 2017 survey.

- Respondents who stated that their primary interaction is with the Fire Department consistently expressed more concerns than customers of other departments, including statements about responsiveness, timeliness, and professionalism. This trend aligns with responses from individual customer interviews conducted, where the Fire Department's role in development was frequently a point of frustration. 10.7% of the survey respondents indicated they had interacted with the Fire Department. This minority of respondents were more vocal about their past experiences than other groups.

- Developers would like to see the Town's processes streamlined. 75% of respondents who identified as developers said that the Town's development processes are unnecessarily burdensome and complex and that projects are regularly held up unjustifiably or due to small issues. Developers comprised 8.1% of the respondents and responses for this subgroup were partially skewed due to the small sample size. 55% of Developer respondents selected strongly disagree/disagree on many responses when compared to approximately 20% to 25% of the overall respondents.

- A sizeable minority (43%) of respondents said they have experienced a situation where staff made subsequent comments, not attributed to changes in the application, which should have been identified during initial review. This percentage was higher (above 60%) among engineers, developers, commercial builders, and citizens/business owners. Participants most frequently attributed these situations to the engineering review process. Several also cited multiple rounds of comments as an issue in their open-ended responses.

- Respondents doing business with the Town as private citizens or business owners tended to take issue more than other respondents with the timeliness of reviews, the fairness with which codes are applied, and the inspection process. This is a common issue among these response groups as they are often unfamiliar with the development review, permitting, and inspection processes compared to other respondent's professions.

- More than half of commercial builders (12 total respondents) said that they do not understand the Department's structure and do not find the website to be helpful or

easily navigable. Overall, approximately 70% of respondents understood the department's structure and found the website to be helpful.

• Compared to the customer survey results of previous Matrix Consulting Group's clients, Prosper's customers rated the Town well above average in the primary categories of customer service, responsiveness, timeliness, and process.

The following sections explore the survey and analyze the responses received in more detail.

2.   Respondent Demographics

While the survey was anonymous, it did ask respondents to identify the role in which they interact with the Department and the nature of those interactions. The following tables show the responses received to these identifying questions.

(1)   Contractors/Trades Workers Represent the Largest Group of Survey Respondents.

The first question asked respondents to indicate their primary profession in their interactions with the Town's development process.

**Please indicate your primary profession in your interaction
with Town staff or its third party firm, Bureau Veritas.**

Response	% of Responses	# of Responses
Contractor/Trades	46.3%	69
Residential Builder	9.4%	14
Engineer	8.7%	13
Citizen/Business Owner	8.1%	12
Commercial Builder	8.1%	12
Developer	8.1%	12
Architect	2.0%	3
Planner	0.7%	1
Legal Counsel	0.7%	1
Landscape Architect	0.0%	0
Other	8.1%	12

Among those selecting "other" were pool builders, backflow testers, an electrical contractor, a sign company, an irrigation contractor, a zoning consultant, and a local government agency.

(2)   Residential and Commercial Permit Applications Are the Most Common Type of Submittals for Survey Respondents.

The second question asked respondents to indicate the types of applications they have submitted within the last year. Respondents could choose multiple responses, so the percentages add up to more than 100%.

**Please indicate the types of development-related actions
you have applied for during the past 12 months.**

Response	% of Responses	# of Responses
Residential Permits	46.7%	71
Commercial Permits	39.0%	58
Engineering/Civil Plan Review	27.5%	41
Inspection	26.2%	39
Site Plan	21.5%	32
Commercial Plan Review	18.8%	28
Landscape Plan Review	18.1%	27
Rezoning/Planned Development	18.1%	27
Residential Plan Review	12.1%	18
Façade Plan Review	12.1%	18
Fire Suppression Inspection	11.4%	17
Subdivision Plat	11.4%	17
Specific Use Permit	8.7%	13
Variance	4.7%	7
Special Purpose Sign District	2.0%	3
Annexation	1.3%	2
Garage Sale Permit	0.7%	1

(3)   Most Respondents Have Experience with Town Staff Rather than Bureau Veritas.

The third question asked participants who had submitted a building permit application whether they interacted more with the Town or their third-party contractor, Bureau Veritas. There were 149 responses.

**If I submitted a building permit application, the majority of
my interaction regarding plan review and inspections is with:**

Response	% of Responses	# of Responses
Town staff	71.8%	107
Bureau Veritas	2.7%	4
N/A	25.5%	38

(4)   Building Is the Most Commonly Encountered Town Department/Division, Followed by Engineering and Planning.

The fourth question asked respondents who have worked with Town staff which departments or divisions they primarily interacted with. Because respondents could choose multiple responses, the percentages add up to more than 100%.

**If I work with Town staff regarding any development related project, the
majority of my interaction is with personnel in the following Divisions or Departments.**

Response	% of Responses	# of Responses
Building Inspections	61.8%	99
Engineering	34.9%	51
Planning	34.3%	50
Parks	15.1%	22
Fire	11.0%	16

Respondents represent a wide array of individuals and functions within the development review process and provide a broad representation of the development industry.

3.   Multiple-Choice Responses

The next section of the survey was multiple-choice; it primarily asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with a series of questions about the customer experience and process of development services in the Town. Most of the statements in this section were the same as the questions asked in the Town's 2017 survey. This allows comparison of responses from the previous survey.

(1)   Most Respondents Have a Good Customer Experience with the Town, with Some Exceptions for Commercial Builders and Customers Who Interact with the Fire Department.

Survey participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements regarding their customer experience with the Town of Prosper. The following table and chart show the percentages of responses received. Response categories were: "Strongly Agree (SA)", "Agree (A)", "Disagree (D)", or "Strongly Disagree (SD)".

#	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Tot #
1	My calls to Town staff for development related services are quickly answered and routed to the appropriate staff member.	5%	11%	41%	43%	132
2	When I call Bureau Veritas for inspections, my call is quickly answered, and inspections are conducted in a timely manner.	1%	7%	53%	40%	91
3	Town staff is courteous and respectful.	5%	6%	32%	57%	132
4	Bureau Veritas staff is courteous and respectful.	2%	6%	46%	46%	89
5	Town staff responds to my emails or voicemails in a timely manner.	8%	15%	42%	34%	131
6	The automated phone directory is easy to understand and routes me to the appropriate staff within the Department.	5%	9%	58%	28%	110
7	I understand the organizational structure of the Development & Infrastructure Services Department.	6%	18%	48%	28%	125
8	The handouts supplied by the Department are useful and informative in explaining the requirements to be met.	6%	15%	54%	25%	115
9	I am aware of and utilize the Town's information on its website.	2%	4%	50%	44%	124
10	The Town's website provides comprehensive and useful information related to my needs.	4%	15%	48%	33%	122
11	The Development & Infrastructure Services Department website is easy to navigate.	4%	17%	50%	29%	119

Every statement in this section received at least 75% agreement. The following points explore statements where responses varied by different participant groups. Noting that many of these participant groups represent less than 12% of the total respondents.

- Commercial builders tended to disagree more than others with Statement #7 that they understand the Department's organizational structure (55% disagreement compared to 24% disagreement overall), Statement #10 that the website is helpful (55% disagreement compared to 19% disagreement overall), and Statement #11 that the website is easy to navigate (55% disagreement compared to 21% disagreement overall).

- Statement #5, that Town staff respond to emails or voicemails in a timely manner, received 46% disagreement from engineers and residential builders as opposed to 23% disagreement overall.

- Respondents who said they mostly work with the Town's Fire Department responded with more disagreement than other survey participants to several statements, including Statement #1, that the Town answers calls quickly (50% disagreement compared to 16% among all respondents), Statement #3, that Town staff are courteous and respectful (44% disagreement as opposed to 11% for all respondents), Statement #5, that the Town is responsive to voicemails and emails (56% disagreement compared to 23% for all respondents), and Statement #10, that the Town's website provides comprehensive and useful information (40% disagreement as opposed to 19% disagreement among all respondents).

(2)   Most Customers Have a Good Experience with the Town's Development Process; Commercial Builders, Developers, and Those Dealing with the Fire Department Provided Higher Levels of Dissent.

Survey participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with statements regarding the development review process in the Town of Prosper. The following table and chart show the percentages of responses received. Response categories were: "Strongly Agree (SA)", "Agree (A)", "Disagree (D)", or "Strongly Disagree (SD)".

#	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Tot #
1	The Development & Infrastructure Services Department website is easy to navigate.	4%	17%	59%	20%	110
2	I understand the development review or plan review processes.	4%	10%	58%	28%	116
3	The development review or plan review processes are not unnecessarily cumbersome or complex.	11%	24%	46%	20%	113
4	If I attended a pre-application meeting, I found the process to be valuable for my project.	4%	9%	61%	26%	93
5	I have generally found the front counter staff who take in applications to be responsive and helpful.	2%	5%	41%	53%	111
6	The transition to digital application submittals has been smooth.	5%	10%	51%	35%	105
7	The digital application submittal process is efficient.	4%	12%	50%	35%	105
8	Staff provides prompt feedback on incomplete submittals.	5%	18%	45%	32%	110
9	In general, after application acceptance, staff anticipated obstacles early on and provided options where available.	10%	18%	47%	25%	108

Each statement in this section received a majority of at least 50% agreement, and all but two statements received 75% agreement or more. The following points discuss areas where the responses of different participant groups varied.

- Commercial builders (12 total respondents) tended to disagree more than others with many statements in this section. These included Statement #2 that they understand the development review process (36% disagreement compared to 14% disagreement among all respondents), Statement #4 that pre-application meetings are useful for their projects (40% disagreement compared to 13% disagreement overall), Statement #6 that the transition to digital submittals has been smooth (50% disagreement as opposed to 15% disagreement overall), Statement #7 that the digital application submittal process is efficient (40% disagreement compared to 16% disagreement among all respondents), and Statement #8 that staff provides prompt feedback on incomplete submittals (50% disagreement compared to 23% disagreement overall).

- 75% of Developers (12 total respondents) disagreed with Statement #3, that the development review or plan review processes are not unnecessarily cumbersome or complex. This was more than twice the level of disagreement (35%) among respondents overall. This was also unique for this group of respondents, who agreed with most statements, at a rate of 75%.

- As in the prior section, respondents who said they mostly interact with the Fire Department (16 total respondents) responded more negatively than those whose primary exposure is to another department or division. This was true for every question in this section; examples include Statement #6, that the transition to digital application submittals has been smooth (50% disagreement in contrast with 15% overall disagreement), and Statement #8, that staff provides prompt feedback on incomplete submittals (50% disagreement compared to 23% overall disagreement).

(3)   A Slim Minority of Respondents, but One Which Represents Majorities of Multiple Respondent Groups, Have Received Comments Which Should Have Been Identified in the Initial Review. This Is Most Common in the Engineering Division.

Respondents were asked whether they have experienced a situation where staff made subsequent comments, not attributed to changes in the plan, which should have been identified during initial review. If the answer was yes, they were asked to indicate the department involved.

I have experienced a situation where staff made subsequent comments, not attributed to changes in the plan, which should have been identified during initial review.

Response	% of Responses	# of Responses
Yes	43.2%	54
No	56.8%	71

Most respondents – including more than 80% of Contractor/Trades (the largest group) – selected "no", indicating that they had not experienced such an issue.

Respondents who chose "yes" were asked to indicate the department/division which had subsequent comments that should have been provided at initial review.

If you agreed with the above-noted experience, please note the Division personnel that generated subsequent comments.

Response	% of Responses	# of Responses
Civil Engineers	56.9%	29
Planners	33.3%	17
Building Inspection Plan Review (Town staff)	33.3%	17
Building Inspector	19.6%	10
Landscape Architects	19.6%	10
Permit Techs	13.7%	7
Building Inspection Plan Review (Bureau Veritas)	5.88%	3
Other	11.8%	6

More than half of respondents (56.9%) who said they had experienced this situation cited the civil engineering division as the source of these comments.

(4)   Most Participants Responded Positively Regarding the Development Review Process.

Survey participants were presented with an additional set of statements about the development review process in the Town of Prosper and asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement. The following table and chart show the percentages of responses received. Response categories were: "Strongly Agree (SA)", "Agree (A)", "Disagree (D)", or "Strongly Disagree (SD)".

#	Statement	SD	D	A	SA	Tot #
11	Plan review conducted by the Town's Building Inspection staff is completed by the date promised.	8%	19%	45%	28%	84
12	Building Inspection plan review services conducted by Bureau Veritas were completed by the date promised.	0%	6%	61%	32%	62
13	Zoning, site plan, or plat application reviews were completed by the date promised.	5%	17%	48%	30%	77
14	Landscape plan application reviews were completed by the date promised.	4%	10%	57%	29%	70
15	Engineering plan application reviews were completed by the date promised.	5%	25%	41%	28%	75
16	I know the Town's stated review time for my application.	6%	15%	45%	35%	89
17	The promised delivery dates are reasonable and acceptable.	6%	17%	47%	30%	89
18	Codes and policies are applied by staff in a fair and practical manner.	10%	12%	48%	30%	90
19	The turnaround time for my application was not any longer in Prosper than other cities where I filed similar applications.	14%	18%	37%	30%	93
20	If a project is delayed, the delay is typically justifiable. Projects are not delayed over minor issues.	10%	35%	37%	18%	92
21	Staff was easily accessible when I needed assistance in resolving problems.	8%	11%	49%	32%	99

Every statement in this section received a majority agreement of at least 50%. The following points address areas of difference in responses from one group of participants to another.

- Citizens/business owners tended to disagree more than the overall response pattern with a number of statements in this section. These are Statement #11 that building inspection reviews are completed in a timely manner (60% disagreement compared to 27% overall), Statement #17 that the promised delivery dates are reasonable and acceptable (60% disagreement as opposed to 23% overall), and Statement #21 that staff are accessible when assistance is needed to solve problems (50% disagreement compared to 19% overall).

- Both citizen/business owners and commercial builders responded with a higher level of disagreement (50%) than the overall response (22%) to Statement #13, that zoning, site plan, or plat application reviews were completed in a timely manner.

- Statement #14, that landscape plan application reviews were completed in a timely manner, received 40% disagreement from citizen/business owners and 33% disagreement from commercial builders, as opposed to just 14% disagreement from respondents overall.

- Statement #15, that plan application reviews were completed by the date promised, received 92% agreement from respondents who identified as contractors/trades workers, a stronger rate of agreement than the 67% overall agreement from all respondents.

- Statement #18, that codes and policies are applied by staff in a fair and practical manner, received more disagreement from citizen/business owners (60% disagreement) and commercial builders (55%) than the 22% overall disagreement level.

- Statement #20, that projects are not typically delayed over unjustifiable or minor issues, received more disagreement (75%) from developers than the 45% overall disagreement level from respondents indicating that developers feel more impacted than others by delays.

- Respondents whose primary interaction has been with the Fire Department were more likely than others to disagree with each statement in this section; in particular Statement #11, that plan review conducted by the Town's Building Inspection staff is completed by the date promised (80% disagreement compared to 27% disagreement among all respondents), Statement #13, that zoning/site plan/plat application reviews were completed by the date promised (58% disagreement as opposed to 22% disagreement for all participants), and Statement #21, that staff is easily accessible for assistance in resolving problems (67% disagreement as opposed to 19% disagreement for all participants).

4.   Open-Ended Responses

The final section of the survey asked respondents to discuss the Department's strengths and improvement opportunities. The following points outline the major themes of these responses. However, some of the themes identified are found in both the strengths and opportunities for improvement sections which reflects a difference of opinion by respondent category. The following results were from the online survey only. However, much of the feedback received through the one-on-one conversations and focus group meetings were similarly aligned with these findings. Specific examples were provided through conversations with prior customers for both positive and negative experiences with the Town's development review, permitting, and inspection processes. Overall, the survey received more positive responses (109) than negative (88).

(1)   Respondents View the Capabilities, Responsiveness, and Attitudes of Staff as the Department's Greatest Strengths.

Survey participants were asked to identify the three greatest strengths of the Department in their own words. The following points summarize the most common themes from the 109 responses received.

• **Staff Capability:** The most common theme among these responses had to do with the approach and effectiveness of the Town's staff, which were described as professional, knowledgeable, helpful, fair, and reasonable. There were 19 responses on this topic, including statements such as: *"willing to discuss and work through solutions when one-off scenarios present themselves"*, *"Staff are generally knowledgeable about the requirements"*, and *"Very helpful with providing guidance on items of concern"*.

• **Communication and Responsiveness:** 14 responses pointed to the communication skills and responsiveness of staff as strengths including statements such as, *"Very good availability and communication with staff"*, *"Good about stating expectations for code"*, and *"Quick to respond to questions"*.

• **Staff Attitudes:** Nine responses focused on the friendly attitudes of the Town's staff which included, *"Friendly department personnel"* and *"Very good attitudes throughout"*.

• **Process Clarity:** Eight responses listed the clarity of the development review and inspection process as a strength for the Town including *"Design guidelines are easy to locate"*, *"Easy to navigate and follow"*, and *"Calendar and deadlines were clear"*.

• **Process Efficiency:** There were five responses which cited the Town's efficient process as a strength. These included statements such as *"Having a Pre-Application Meeting before submitting zoning and plats"*, and *"Permits are provided in full once completed."*

(2)   Participants Listed Communication, Burdensome Requirements, Rigid Decision-Making, and Multiple Rounds of Changes as the Key Improvement Opportunities for the Department.

Survey participants were asked to identify the three greatest opportunities for improvement in the Department. There were a total of 88 responses. The following points summarize the most common themes from these responses. Noting that some of these responses may contradict strengths identified by respondents in the previous section.

- **Communication and Responsiveness:** A common theme among responses was the need for improved communication and responsiveness on the part of the City. There were 13 of these responses, including statements such as, *"Better communication when permits are not approved or have issues"*, *"Improve the communication efficiency with 3rd party reviewers"*, and *"ensure all staff members are on the same page to avoid confusion/re-work."*

- **Burdensome Requirements:** Ten responses cited the complexity or burdensome nature of specific requirements as an opportunity for improvement, or the application of these requirements to small projects. Representative comments include *"Modification of commercial requirements for downtown renovations"*, *"Remove requirements that require improvement on adjacent property"*, and *"Need different approach for small commercial projects versus developments."*

- **Impractical or Unreasonable Decisions:** Seven responses described a need for the Town to apply more flexibility or case-by-case practicality to applications. Typical comments were *"be practical about the design and construction of the project"*, *"need to be more open minded about possible solutions to engineering problems"*, and *"empower staff to make common-sense allowances"*.

- **Multiple Rounds of Changes:** There were six responses which listed the specific issue of staff providing too many rounds of changes, or requiring changes late which they had ignored earlier in the process. These included, *"changes after the Stamped plans are already approved by Town"*, *"final Plat comments that should have been commented during preliminary plat"*, and *"revisions by Parks/ Landscaping after plans are finalized"*.

- **Unclear Feedback:** Five responses described a need for more clarity regarding application feedback and requirements. These included, *"The engineering comments and review process takes longer due to lack of clarification"*, and *"more precise responses"*.

5.   Comparison of Results to Prior Survey

The following table shows the percentages of total disagreement (disagreeing and strongly disagreeing responses) for statements which appeared on both the 2017 survey and this survey. It also indicates the percentage point change in total disagreement responses over the 4-year time period. Changes of more than five percentage points are highlighted, with the darker shade highlighting a disagreement level of 15% or greater.

#	Statement	2017	2021	% Point Change
	Customer Experience			
1	My calls to Town staff for development related services are quickly answered and routed to the appropriate staff member.	16%	16%	0%
2	When I call Bureau Veritas for inspections, my call is quickly answered, and inspections are conducted in a timely manner.	6%	8%	2%
3	Town staff is courteous and respectful.	5%	11%	6%
4	Bureau Veritas staff is courteous and respectful.	4%	8%	4%
5	Town staff responds to my emails in a timely manner.[1]	10%	24%	14%
	Town staff responds to my voicemails in a timely manner.	15%	24%	9%
6	The automated phone directory is easy to understand and routes me to the appropriate staff within the Department.	12%	14%	2%
7	I understand the organizational structure of the Development & Infrastructure Services Department.	8%	24%	16%
8	The handouts supplied by the Department are useful and informative in explaining the requirements to be met.	7%	21%	14%
9	I am aware of and utilize the Town's information on its website.	6%	7%	1%
10	The Town's website provides comprehensive and useful information related to my needs.	17%	19%	2%
11	The Development & Infrastructure Services Department website is easy to navigate. [2]	9%	21%	12%
	Development Review Process (1)			
1	The Development & Infrastructure Services Department website is easy to navigate.[3]	9%	21%	12%
2	I understand the development review or plan review processes.	4%	14%	10%

[1] The 2017 survey asked separately about emails and voicemails, while the 2021 survey combined them by asking about responsiveness to "emails or voicemails".
[2] The 2017 survey asked about individual divisions' websites and reported the compiled responses to those statements as totaling 9% disagreement, while the 2021 survey asked a blanket question about the Department's website.
[3] This question was asked twice on the 2021 survey.

#	Statement	2017	2021	% Point Change
3	The development review or plan review processes are not unnecessarily cumbersome or complex.	40%	35%	(5%)
4	If I attended a pre-application meeting, I found the process to be valuable for my project.	8%	13%	5%
5	I have generally found the front counter staff who take in applications to be responsive and helpful.	4%	6%	2%
6	The transition to digital application submittals has been smooth.[4]	-	14%	N/A
7	The digital application submittal process is efficient.[5]	-	15%	N/A
8	Staff provides prompt feedback on incomplete submittals.	9%	23%	14%
9	In general, after application acceptance, staff anticipated obstacles early on and provided options where available.	14%	28%	14%
	I experienced a situation where staff made subsequent comments, not attributed to changes in the plan, which should have been identified during initial review.[6]	41%	-	N/A
	Development Review Process (2)			
11	Plan review conducted by the Town's Building Inspection staff is completed by the date promised.	14%	28%	14%
12	Building Inspection plan review services conducted by Bureau Veritas were completed by the date promised.	5%	6%	1%
13	Zoning, site plan, or plat application reviews were completed by the date promised.	10%	22%	12%
14	Landscape plan application reviews were completed by the date promised.	8%	14%	6%
15	Engineering plan application reviews were completed by the date promised.	11%	31%	20%
16	I know the Town's stated review time for my application.	13%	20%	7%
17	The promised delivery dates are reasonable and acceptable.	11%	22%	11%
18	Codes and policies are applied by staff in a fair and practical manner.	14%	22%	8%
19	The turnaround time for my application was not any longer in Prosper than other cities where I filed similar applications.	19%	33%	14%
20	If a project is delayed, the delay is typically justifiable. Projects are not delayed over minor issues.	11%	45%	34%
21	Staff was easily accessible when I needed assistance in resolving problems.	7%	19%	12%

[4] This question was not asked on the 2017 survey.
[5] This question was not asked on the 2017 survey.
[6] This question was asked separately and differently from the rest of the multiple-choice in the 2021 survey (see Section 3(3)).

Most responses saw an increase in disagreeing responses stay below 15%. There were three statements which saw the percentage of disagreeing responses rise by 15 percentage points or more from 2017 to 2021:

- Statement #7, that respondents clearly understood the organizational structure of the Department. Note that fewer than 50% of commercial builders agreed with this statement in 2021.

- Statement #15, that engineering plan application reviews are completed by the date promised had a 20% point increase in the level of disagreement While 92% of contractors/trade workers agreed in 2021, overall agreement levels fell to 69% from 89% in 2017. This was due to high rates of disagreement among developers, engineers, commercial builders, and citizens

- Statement #20, that project delays are typically justifiable and not held up over minor issues had a 34% point increase in the level of disagreement. Overall, 45% of respondents disagreed with this statement. Developers in particularly disagreed with this statement, responding with 75% disagreement.

In addition to these areas, there was one statement which showed a small improvement since 2017. This was Statement #3, that the development review or plan review processes are not unnecessarily cumbersome or complex. While developers strongly disagreed with this statement, overall disagreement fell slightly from 40% disagreement to 35% disagreement.

Each of these statements align with responses received in the multiple choice and open ended statements.

6.   Comparative Assessment

The overall results of this survey had declined slightly from the results of the 2017 customer survey. While there were several subgroups that pushed the overall results of the survey lower, the services provided by the Town of Prosper are generally well regarded by prior customers.

The Town requested comparison of the 2021 survey to past development review, permitting, and inspection surveys completed by the Matrix Consulting Group. The same statements/questions were not asked in prior surveys, but similar questions were used and grouped by four categories. The four categories included: customer service,

responsiveness, timeliness of service, and process related questions. Between five and ten statements were included in each category.

A total of five prior survey responses were used and compared to Prosper. The five communities are experiencing significant development and growth and have a population greater than 30,000.

The following graphic indicates how Prosper compares to the responses received from the comparative jurisdictions for the four categories. The blue area represents the average agreement range of the comparative jurisdictions, and the gray windmill represents Prosper's average agreement responses.
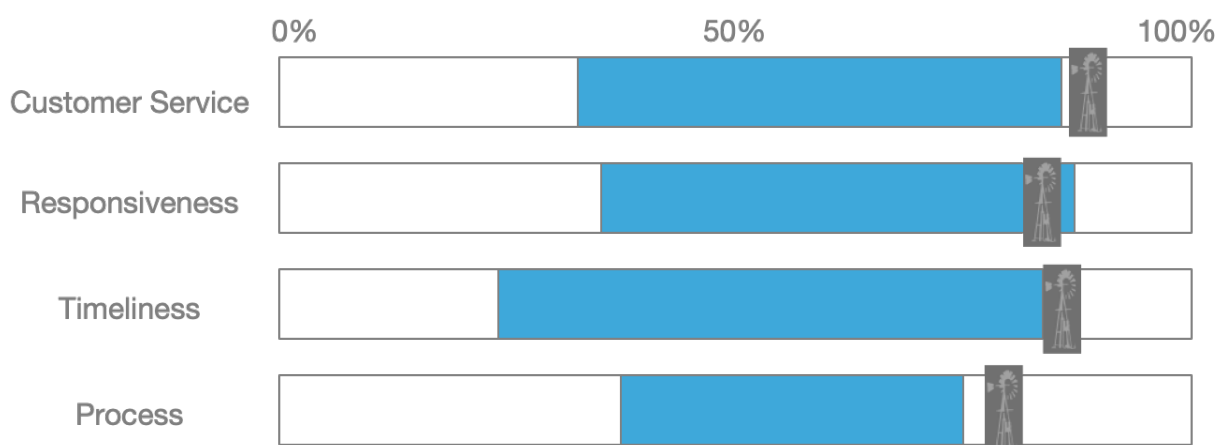
As seen in the graphic above, the agreement responses provided by Prosper's customers are above the range of the comparatives for customer service and process. Responses received regarding responsiveness and timeliness statements Prosper were at the high end of the comparative agreement rates. Prosper is well above the average and median values for agreement statements in the comparative jurisdictions.

3. Recommendations

Based on the feedback received from prior customers and our own experience we provided a number of suggestions below. Please keep in mind, these suggestions are solely based on customer comments and do not include independent verification of information. Recommendations that are carry overs from the previous survey are identified. Suggestions have been grouped by common themes.

Communication, Customer Service, and Information

1. Provide a realistic timeframe for review completion. For example if it will take 22 days to complete an application review when submitted, state that versus what the adopted performance metric is.

2. Create performance requirements for staff on responsiveness to customer emails and phone calls to enhance consistency among all staff.

3. Ensure all new staff receive adequate onboard training that outlines specific communication and customer service goals adopted by the Town and departments (e.g., respond to all emails within established timelines).

4. Standardized email signature blocks to provide consistent contact information for staff. Consider requiring all staff to provide their phone number in their email signature.

5. Develop a communication plan and protocols to provide a consistent approach in communicating with customers and how to properly approach customers with a helpful attitude.

6. Incorporate communication protocols with all third party reviewers/contractors regarding interaction between contracted staff and the applicant. Standards should be incorporated into all future contracts.

7. Regularly provide customer service training to all development review staff with an emphasis with developing soft skills and positive customer approaches.

8. Online monthly activity reports should include performance metrics related to timeliness of application review and inspection completion. Examples of typical performance metrics include: percent of reviews completed within the adopted timeline; average review time for a new single family home application; number of building inspections completed next day, etc.

9.   Create a real time dashboard that provides current review processing times by application types. This should be a part of the new permitting/land management software program.

10. Establish an online development review webpage that consolidates all development review information in one location. This development review webpage should include applicable links to all departments/divisions involved in the review process.

11. The online development guide should be accessible from Building Inspection, Engineering, and Planning webpages. Currently, it is only accessible from Planning's webpage.

12. All staff should receive continuing education training to ensure that they have the proper skills to perform their duties.

13. Develop a formal policy and process to share with and provide training to all development staff upon adoption of new standards and ordinances.

Review and Inspection Processes

15. Provide formal follow-up for each predevelopment meeting to memorialize the meeting and the guidance provided to the applicant.

15. Incorporate checklists for application review comments and require as part of the resubmittal to help ensure that subsequent reviews focus on previously identified issues.

16. Supervisors should conduct periodic review of second or subsequent rechecks to determine if those corrections should have been included in the initial application review. (This was noted in the 2017 analysis as recommendation #6).

17. Conduct a regularly scheduled internal meeting with development review staff to ensure staff understand their role in the process along with other individual's and departmental roles in the review process.

18. Town Council should receive training regarding their role in the development review and approval process and focus their input on policy compliance versus more detailed reviews such as design elements.

19. Design standards and details should be provided online in both PDF and CAD formats for easy incorporation into the application submittal.

20. The Final Inspection / Certificate of Occupancy process should be digitized and the CO should be issued electronically. Discontinue the use of the Blue Card system for obtaining inspector signatures.

21. Review comments should be consolidated into a single document / comment letter and provided to the applicant upon the completion of all applicable reviews.

22. Each application should have an assigned project manager who will serve as the primary point of contact for the applicant except when the applicant has a specific or technical question for individual reviewers.

23. All review disciplines should be held to the same review timeline standards (by application type) and focus on providing timely services. Staffing levels should be adjusted (internally and contractual) to meet performance timeframes.

24. All review disciplines should focus comments on their specific areas of review and consult other Town staff when issues arise in their respective areas of expertise.

Technology

The recommendations discussed below should be included in the new permitting system that the Town is in the process of developing and implementing. This list is not exclusive but includes minimum elements that should be included with the new software system.

25. Application submittal should be through an online portal that is linked or directly through the City's permitting software solution.

26. Permitting systems should calculate application and permitting fees in the system. (Impact fees may be excluded)

27. Application payment should be completed directly through the application portal. (Impact fees may be excluded)

28. All inspections should be requested through the online permitting system.

29. Applicants should be able to track the progress of their application review through the online permitting system.

30. An active development map should be provided on the Town's website that provides information about projects under review and construction. Map should be interactive and includes project details similar to what is currently provided in the monthly reports.

31. Integrate the Town's GIS system into the permitting system. Examples include utility information, easements, zoning, planned developments, comprehensive plan information, etc.

32. Staff should receive automatic notifications of pending tasks.

33. All reviewers should have the ability to see other reviewer's comments.

34.   Utilize templates to prepopulate standardized information for review comment letters, staff reports, checklist, etc.

35.   Ability to store and link approved plan set to the permit and address files.

36.   Capability to run performance reports from the system and report them directly to an online dashboard.

4.   Open Ended Responses

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to identify up to three strengths and opportunities for improvement.   The following sections list the responses received. Comments were only edited to remove references to specific staff members.

1.   Current Strengths

- Professional
- Very responsive with questions
- Planning Department was very responsive and helpful.
- Quick to respond to questions
- friendly staff
- Predictable
- Staff is generally very reasonable to work with.
- ___ is an asset to Prosper.
- Quick response to any questions
- Transparent
- fast
- Great help from ___, ___ and ___
- ease of submitting a permit application online
- Knowledgeable reviewers
- After six visits to the planning dept the staff warmed up and assisted me
- ___ is a very Strong Positive, ___ is great
- They have taken action in adding staff to handle the additional load
- Communication
- Engineers use good judgement and are reasonable for projects that need it
- Efficient
- Very good availability and communication with staff
- Online System
- Consistent
- timeliness
- Friendly and professional staff
- Front Office Staff Does a great job
- Having a Pre-Application Meeting before submitting zoning and plats
- Staff is always accessible and helpful.
- most are friendly
- planning and development staff were extremely helpful
- efficient and timely. other cities take months, Prosper is weeks
- Professional Communication
- Efficient
- Ordinances are easy to find and navigate; much easier than most other cities.
- Conveyance Plat used for subdivision of land

- Have become better at communicating.
- Friendly Staff
- Professional
- Easy to follow
- Most staff is courteous
- Employees at front desk
- Courteous
- Very helpful with providing guidance on items of concern
- Calendar and deadlines were clear
- Provided alternative solutions to issues
- Consistent
- Comments are typically clear and communicated early on (PSP, prelim plat, etc.)
- ___ is an asset to Proper.
- Easy of accessible
- Friendly
- convenient
- Approachable staff
- Communication is good
- Courteous and respectful.
- Service
- Engineering is consistent with applying criteria most of the time
- Effective
- Staff is organized and understands the ordinances/standards
- Review Process
- Professional
- detailed
- Receiving all first round comments together
- Our inspectors were a blessing
- fair and balanced.
- Clearer Path to Completion than the Past
- Professional
- Staff are generally knowledgeable about the requirements
- strong staff members at key positions
- Responsive staff
- Communicate fairly well.
- Good about stating expectations for code
- Permits are provided in full once completed
- Inspectors
- Fair
- Open communication is very valuable and key resolving any questions on development
- Design guidelines are easy to locate
- Easy to work with - helped to create friendly partnership
- Reasonable
- ___ is an asset to Prosper. Always willing to try and get asked questions answered.

- Directed to proper channels if needed
- Easy to navigate and follow
- easy
- Friendly department personnel
- Good training for the new employees
- Inspectors
- Thorough
- Very good attitudes throughout
- easy to understand
- great communication skills
- Outstanding
- Moving to digital applications has been extremely helpful
- willing to discuss and work through solutions when one-off scenarios present themselves
- Helpful staff
- Consistent
- Prompt on getting permit back

2.   Opportunities for Improvement

- Make clear designations between public/private utilities expectations
- Issue a "top most city civil review comments" list so that the number of rounds is less
- Timeliness
- Opportunity to ensure all staff members are on the same page to avoid confusion/re-work.
- Inspector knowledge of Town Spec's. Sr Inspect knows but previous field personnel, not so much.
- Remove requirements that require improvement on adjacent property
- One at this time
- Better coordination between Bureau Veritas and the Town
- If there is a hold on a permit, let us know so we can address it be resolved quicker
- Quicker turnaround
- Be practical about the design and construction of the project
- Better communication when permits are not approved or have issues.
- Communications, timeliness, helpful attitudes, clarity
- Easier On-line application
- The arrogance displayed by staff is completely unacceptable
- Improve the communication efficiency with 3rd party reviewers.
- More precise responses
- It would be beneficial to view each project individually
- Response to emails
- Revisions by Parks/ Landscaping after plans are finalized
- Quit the politics
- Communication Throughout the Departments- Civil to FD to Building
- Complete first round comments. Second round comments also grouped together.

- Prosper needs to develop processes for smaller projects.
- Communication
- Speedy process
- complete crap show, what process? worse than local cities
- Modification of commercial requirements for downtown renovations
- it's not broken, don't fix it. so much better than other cities we build in.
- Empower Staff to Make Common Sense Allowances
- Inspector accessibility
- Website navigation is unique in a bad way; it should be simplified
- more staff could help with timelines of reviews
- Submitting application and plans at different times - makes process longer
- Inspection Staff Needs training, very inconsistent
- Ordinance doesn't match what plan reviewers request
- New people
- Replace the Chief Building Inspector w/ someone competent.
- response time
- Fire Dept ___ is consistently rude, arrogant, disrespectful to anyone who asks questions.
- The engineering comments and review process takes longer due to lack of clarification.
- Avoid new comments
- Inspector availability - not enough inspectors to handle work load in Town.
- Minimize requirements for offsite easements
- Treat everyone the equally regardless of race or gender
- More availability to phone calls for questions.
- Helpfulness from beginning of the process to completion
- More comprehensive website to view inspections and statuses
- Clarity in information requested
- Need to be more open minded about possible solutions to engineering problems rather than apply blanket policies/ordinances/standards
- Response to issuing the approved permit
- Stop railroading projects you don't like,
- Changes after the Stamped plans are already approved derived by Town
- Final Plat comments that should have been commented during preliminary plat
- Requirements for smaller scale projects are cumbersome.
- Reasonable
- never had so many changes to plans... ever!!! changed some items 3 and 4 times!
- Website
- being able to pay for the application online would help tremendously
- no good process for issues with inspection items being discussed.
- Need one system to process permits
- New process
- Replace the Fire Chief's Inspectors w/ respectful professional people.
- actual guidance for contractors on projects outside of trade permits for town staff
- Engineering is working on better communication in the field
- City slow or cannot get offset easements.

- The use of certain material to build is constraining and costly
- A greater willingness and more positive and encouraging attitude
- Each project/property is different and sometimes need to be planned/designed "outside of the box"
- Current EDC ___needs to go, untruthful, political, listens to town gossip
- Responsiveness from Staff
- Need different approach for small commercial projects versus developments.
- Trustworthy
- Not all changes are driven by code, ultra-political good ol boy system
- Inspection results
- Can take too long to process permits
- New culture
- Learn to communicate w/ contractors better so that the process is smoother for everyone involved.
- generator permit process is quite unorganized and hard to get through compared to other cities