



## Kitsap County Department of Community Development 2019 Zoning Use Table Update Summary of Recent Customer Survey

In July 2018, Kitsap County Department of Community Development conducted a survey for a project that will update the County's allowed land use tables. The purpose of the survey was to understand the experience of our recent customers and how they navigate the County's development regulations. The survey contained six questions that focused on:



- how frequently participants worked with the Department;
- at what point in the permit planning process they contacted the Department;
- if they encountered any surprises in the permit review process; and
- what suggestions they had to improve their experience in the future.

The survey was distributed to 1,552 customers that contacted the Department in the last 12 months for land use questions or to obtain a permit. The survey was distributed via the County's GovDelivery electronic notification system and was open for two weeks. A total of 105 responses were received.

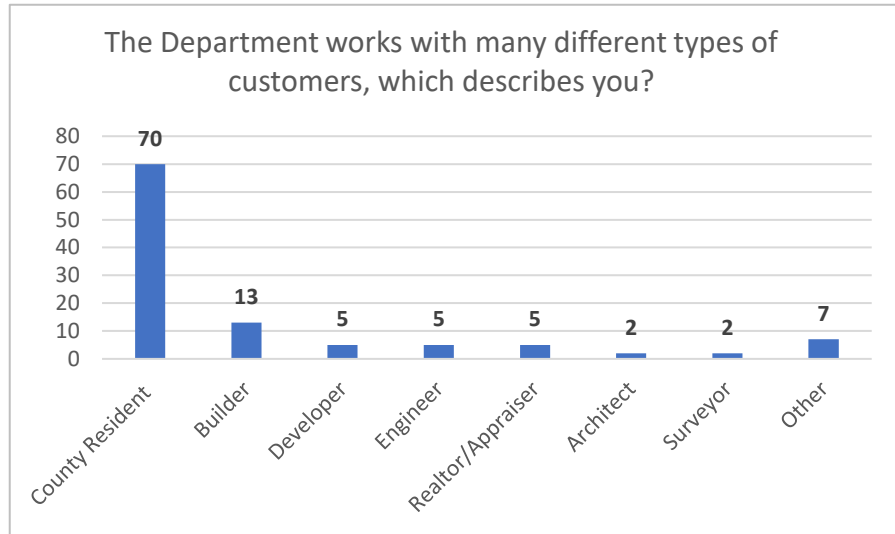
The major themes that emerged from the recent customer survey include:

- **Most respondents have only interacted with the Department once or twice:** Approximately 42% of respondents reported that they have only worked with the Department once or twice.
- **Most respondents contacted the Department for projects they knew were allowed:** Approximately 50% of participants reported that they contacted the Department because they needed a permit for a project and/or land use that they knew was allowed.
- **Inconsistent or Unclear Information and Requirements:** Many participants expressed that they had difficulty understanding the language of the regulations/requirements online to determine what was required of them for their permit and/or project. Participants also reported inconsistencies between what they read online and what they were told in person by staff. To improve the process, participants suggested having better staff availability to spend more time with customers and having an option to submit permits in person.
- **Amount of Reports and Permits Needed:** Many participants reported that they were surprised by the amount of reports, permits, and/or inspections that their project needed, such as Geotechnical Reports or Health Department Review. Several participants also expressed that they felt there were unnecessary or rigid regulations and suggested that the Department be more flexible in their requirements and permits required for a project.
- **Costs and Length of Process:** Many participants indicated that they were surprised by the costs associated with the process, such as technical reports or permit fees, and the length of the process. Participants suggested the Department be clearer upfront about the costs, reduce costs, and improve processing time.

The graphs that follow display the categorized responses to questions asked in the recent customer survey.

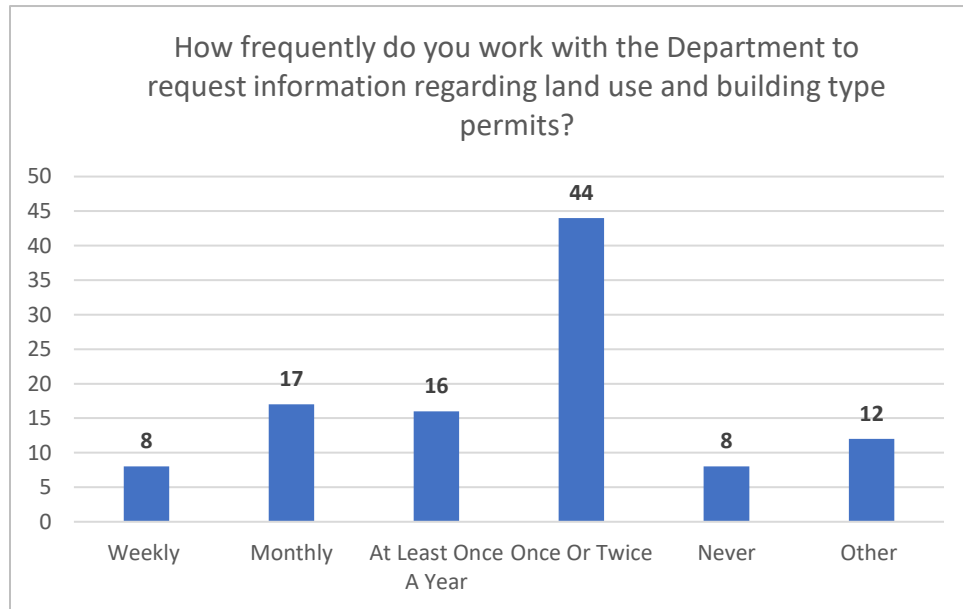
**Customer Type**

Participants were first asked what type of customer they were. Participants selected multiple responses to this question. Approximately 67% of participants reported that they were County residents. Approximately 12% of participants reported that they were builders. Additionally, approximately 5% reported they were developers, engineers, or realtors/appraisers and approximately 2% were architects or surveyors.



**Frequency**

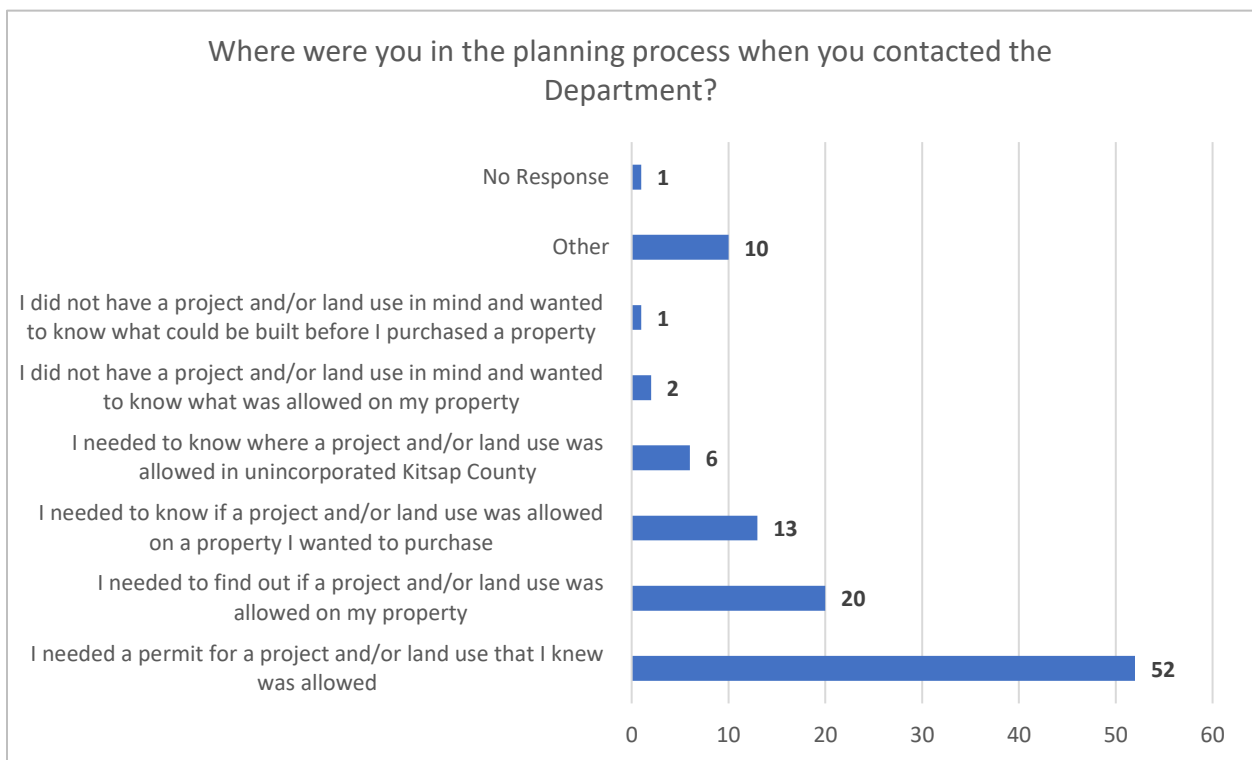
Participants were asked how frequently they worked with the Department to request information regarding land use and building permits. Approximately 42% of participants reported that they have worked with the Department



once or twice. Approximately 16% participants reported they work with the Department monthly and approximately 15% reported they work with the Department at least once a year. Additionally, approximately 8% work with the Department weekly and approximately 8% reported that they had never worked with the Department.

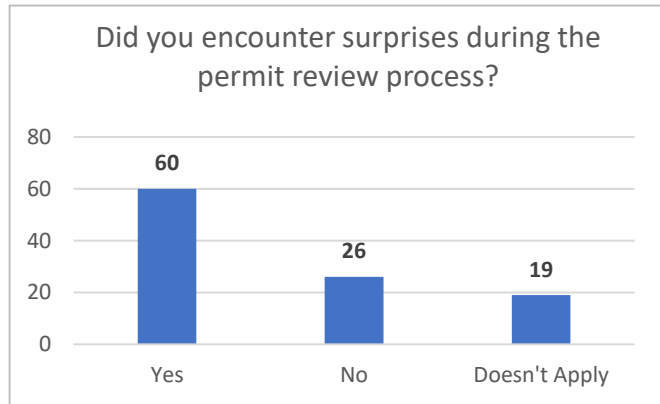
**Stage of the Permit Planning Process**

Participants were asked where in the permit planning process they were when they contacted the Department. Approximately half (50%) of the participants reported that they contacted the Department when they needed a permit for a project and/or land use that they knew was allowed. For participants that wanted to know if a project and/or land use was allowed, approximately 19% were inquiring if the use was allowed on their property and approximately 12% were inquiring if the use was allowed on a property they wanted to purchase. Approximately 6% of participants contacted the Department because they needed to know where a project and/or land use was allowed in unincorporated Kitsap County. For participants that did not have a specific project and/or land use in mind, approximately 2% wanted to know what was allowed on their property and one participant wanted to know what could be built before they purchased a property. Responses in the Other category include responses specific to the respondent’s experience with the Department, such as wanting information on an adjacent property or questions about an existing permit they have.

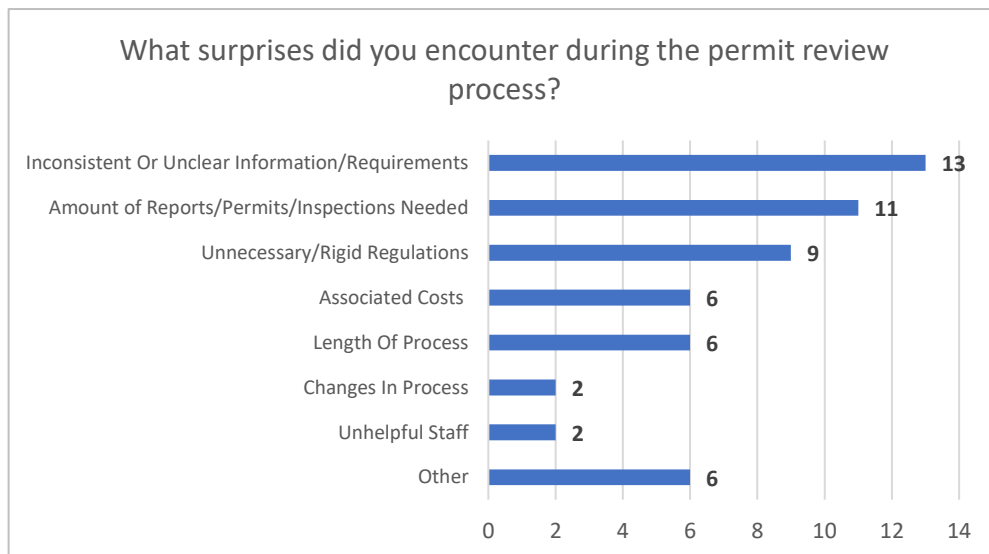


**Surprises**

Participants were asked if they encountered any surprises in the permit review process. Approximately 56% of participants reported that they did encounter a surprise. Approximately 25% of participants reported that they did not encounter a surprise and approximately 18% reported that the question did not apply.



Participants were asked to describe surprises they encountered during the permit review process. 49 participants responded to this question and shared multiple surprises. Approximately 26% of participants reported they encountered inconsistent or unclear information about the requirements for their project. Responses in this category include participants who expressed they had difficulty understanding the language of the regulations/requirements online, inconsistencies between what they read online and what they were told by staff, and inconsistencies in what they heard from different staff members. Approximately 22% of participants reported that they were surprised by the amount of reports, permits, and/or inspections required for their project, such as a Health Department Review, Geotechnical Report, or multiple permits for the same project. Approximately 18% of participants expressed that they ran into unnecessary and/or rigid regulations. Responses in this category include requiring a Site Development Activity Permit (SDAP), Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) regulations, limitations in where their project could be built, and needing to meet density requirements. Approximately 12% of participants were surprised by the costs associated with their permit and the length of the permitting process. Approximately 4% of



participants reported they were surprised by changes in the permitting process and approximately 4% were surprised by unhelpful staff.

## Suggestions

Participants were asked what suggestions they had to improve the permitting process in the future. 71 participants responded to this question and offered multiple suggestions. Approximately 21% of participants suggested there be less regulations and more flexibility on permits required for a project. Responses in this category include carrying over review from one permit to another (if multiple permits are required for the same project), incorporating SDAP into other permits/review, being more flexible in evaluating permits on a project by project basis, and generally fewer regulations. Approximately 14% of participants offered suggestions relating to better staff availability, such as taking more time with customers, visiting project sites, and having an option to submit permits in person. Faster processing times and lower costs associated with the permit review process were suggested by approximately 13% of participants. Additionally, approximately 13% suggested changing the language of the requirements to be clearer and more user-friendly. Approximately 7% suggested improving the online portal by fixing glitches and adding more information to the County’s mapping platform Parcel Search. Approximately 6% of participants would like to see better coordination with other departments, such as the Kitsap County Health Department and the Washington State Department of Ecology. Approximately 6% of participants offered suggestions related to improving staff consistency, such as having the same inspector for each inspection at a project or making sure all inspectors have the same interpretation of code. Additionally, approximately 6% reported that they had a positive experience and approximately 13% of participants reported that they had no suggestions for improvements.

