DBI Focus Groups

As a part of this customer study, three focus groups were held in late June 2015. While Group 1 and Group 2 included respondents who had greater familiarity with DBI, participants of Group 3 had fewer than five interactions with DBI within the past year.

Other than this difference in frequency of DBI interaction, all three groups recruited participants with a broad range of age, occupation/professional background, and race/ethnicity. While there were some Property Owners in each of the three groups, Group 3 had the highest share of Property Owners, most of whom were individual homeowners.
Feedback Common to All Three Groups

The three focus groups differed in many significant ways – but equally notable were the themes and ideas which were common among all three groups. This includes:

- **Everyone who has received services from DBI for any length of time said that DBI's operations had improved substantially.** Customers who had interacted with DBI for 5 years, 10 years, or longer, said that they had definitely seen improvements in the last 5-10 years. They made note of the efficiencies, such as the 5th floor reorganization, and felt that changes such as this, as well as an improvement in customer service, had made the experience much better than it had been.

- **DBI is busy/understaffed.** All three focus groups had a majority of respondents indicate that DBI needs additional staffing. Some respondents in each group questioned expansion into additional programs (such as the in-law unit legalization and soft story compliance) when there was clearly a chronic unaddressed need to boost staffing. Respondents in every group cited the current economic boom as adding to the workload as well – with the sense that increasing property values and a robust economy meant more Property Owners were likely doing more work on their properties and, as a result, keeping DBI busier.

- **There was some confusion between DBI and Planning among less experienced respondents – and even those who are more experienced indicated that long waits in Planning exacerbated feelings of impatience in dealing with DBI.** Said one Group 1 respondent who is experienced with the department: "You have to spend eight months in Planning [on more complex projects] – by the time you get to DBI you're desperate to move forward."

- **Part of DBI's staffing/workload issue comes from the variety of customers it serves.** Both Contractors and homeowners felt that homeowners took more time and were less likely to understand the process fully. Homeowners mentioned times when Contractors, who knew the system more, allowed the homeowner go in front of them in line, or answered questions to try to help. Some respondents in each group suggested some sort of internal directional help – alternately referred to as an ombudsman, an internal expeditor, or separate lines/staff for homeowners/less experienced.

- **Some respondents in each of the groups indicated that the resurfacing of expeditors, and/or those who 'gamed the system', added to the inefficiency in scheduling.** Some respondents in Groups 1 and 2 mentioned the apparent 'resurfacing' of expeditors, and blamed some of the scheduling inefficiencies on expeditors' tendencies to have multiple projects to discuss in one visit. Respondents in Group 3 noted that some customers (who may or may not be expeditors) would sign up on multiple wait lists – jamming up the flow of customers when they could not make it to every desk/department.
Among all three groups, respondents indicated that a lack of a feedback loop may be causing additional scheduling pressure. Discussion in all three groups requested a bona fide, clear feedback mechanism – most commonly cited when an inspector disagreed with advice given from a plan checker or other office personnel, or a customer felt that an inspector was conducting an inspection based on priorities outside of the building code. Some members of all groups expressed concern that providing such feedback now would result in greater difficulties down the road (or even their current project coming to a standstill) in retaliation. Some participants said they had tried to talk to a supervisor, but did not receive a response. Participants in all three groups mentioned that either they, or people they knew, would cancel and reschedule an inspection or plan check, or leave and return another day for another appointment, if certain personnel they felt were unprofessional were assigned.

Respondents in Group 1 and Group 2 compared DBI very favorably against Building Inspection departments in other cities/counties. Respondents in Group 1, particularly, said that even though there were certain things that worked better here and there (such as Oakland’s sign-in system), San Francisco compared very favorably, particularly given the complexity and volume the department handles. Some respondents made clear that they did not want to see efficiency gained by outsourcing – and said having plan check in-house was a key positive when compared to other cities, like Palo Alto.

Most respondents felt recent improvements were only a beginning and wanted greater efficiencies to be implemented. The most commonly cited efficiencies were:
- Eliminating paper sign-in sheets at DBI offices, moving to electronic sign-in instead; respondents in Group 3 also felt this would eliminate sign-in abuses (where one person would sign up for multiple lists);
- Staggering lunch hours so that there was less of a scheduling void at midday;
- Making more processes electronic and/or online;
- Providing real-time wait times on the website or otherwise publicly available so that customers could see how busy/how much of a backlog existed before deciding to visit DBI offices;
- Electronic plan submission, setting up appointments only after DBI staff had reviewed the plans; and
- Using something like Oakland’s numbering system was suggested specifically.
**Familiarity and Overall Rating of DBI**

Respondents of Group 1 and Group 2 indicated they were much more familiar with DBI than respondents of Group 3.

When asked to rate DBI overall, Group 1 (one of the two groups of more experienced customers, mostly Contractors) rated the department most highly – 2.92 – just shy of a 3.00 "Good" rating. Group 2 rated DBI considerably lower – at 2.42 – with a 0.50 difference. Group 3, the least experienced group, rated DBI barely above a "Fair" rating – at 2.29 overall.

Among Group 2 respondents, 4 of the 12 members gave their overall rating a "1" (Poor). The most commonly cited reasons for this rating were inconsistencies in the inspection/plan check processes and the length of time required (often due to conflicting opinions and/or incorrect direction which caused unnecessary extra steps).

**Q1. How familiar are you with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?**

4=Very Familiar; 3=Somewhat Familiar; 2=Not Too Familiar; 1=Not at All Familiar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>3.67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.46 ALL GROUPS**

**Q2. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the SF Department of Building Inspection in the past year? Would you say . . .**

4=Excellent; 3=Good; 2=Only Fair; 1=Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>2.92</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2.54 ALL GROUPS**
## Comments – Why They Gave DBI That Particular Rating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 Good</td>
<td>Not much to say. Passed all my inspections. When there is a fail – way to get answers for corrections. *Complaints made – street space – parking is too expensive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1     | 3 Good         | • Efficient permit issuance for routine work.  
• Efficient inspection scheduling for routine work.  
• Arbitrary enforcement of codes and creation of non-existent codes.  
• Survey permits – feel like they owe you a problem. |
| 1     | 1 Poor         | Inconsistent answers and requirements during plan check.  
Poor knowledge of new Title 24 requirements. Some VERY bad inspectors.  
Plumbing inspector that is arbitrary. He has, on 2 properties, caused delay and cost – had to be overruled one time – suggested to plumber that he was generating work for him on the other! |
| 1     | 3 Good         | Most of my engineered construction jobs have been passed. Only a small amount have had problems. One in particular happened on an underpin area addition 2 months ago where new concrete had been poured. A new inspector required laboratory cylinder tests on the concrete. I felt this was unnecessary. |
| 1     | 3 Good         | Permit process . . . OTC permits is one of the best in DBI. However, waiting and scheduling is long; waiting for plan checkers; code issues and meaning. |
| 1     | 3 Good         | After many years of obtaining permits, we have learned how the system works. Also, much needed improvements were made in the permitting process a few years back. We have learned which plans examiners to avoid. |
| 1     | 4 Excellent    | 1. The department helped us out when we got difficulties on our jobs.  
2. They are doing better than before. Example: Use multi-monitors when pulling our permits.  
3. Easy to reach the Inspector.  
4. Posted a lot of info on website. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Excellent     | - Prompt response time given staffing vs. construction  
        - Balanced judgment in enforcing strict code compliance with old buildings, renovations, and retrofits  
        - Useful plan check comments  
        - Does not require more than one iteration in plan check  
        - Can schedule inspections when not overscheduled staff  
        - Standardized internal procedures  
        - Online access to most information  
        - Good access to old records and plans  
        - Access to higher management to resolve disputes  
        - Quick to implement policy for new situations  
        - Open to public input |
| 1     | Only Fair     | I have been in several times, and it has been very hit or miss with regards to getting help. One time I went in to pull permits and had a couple questions answered. I went to the floor I was supposed to and there was no one to help me – just tons of people waiting in front of me and I realized I would need to come back another day even though it was early in the afternoon, which pushed my project back a week. Other times I was helped promptly and completely. |
| 1     | Good          | - Inspections of my owner-permits has gone smoothly. Not very many nightmares.  
        - Inspectors are sometimes backlogged. It recently took 10-15 days to get a building inspection.  
        - Sometimes the answers at the 5th floor can vary.  
        - Complaints by neighbors are not screened and are often proven to be without merit. |
| 1     | Good          | 1. Permit processing is lengthy.  
        2. Have had negative experience with planner and it did not seem like he was a good steward of DBI, nor dealing strictly with life safety issues.  
        3. Recently I have had a good experience with the younger planners. |
<p>| 1     | Good          | They've exploited the permit process for over the counter building permits. The electrical-plumbing permits are usually very fast unless you go there at lunch. |
| 2     | Good          | For the most part, favorable – occasionally, we run into unfavorable comments. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2     | 1 Poor         | - Massive bureaucracy  
- Too much paper  
- Excessively slow  
- Digitally incompetent  
- Bad cop mentality |
| 2     | 4 Excellent    | I have learned the process, have gotten to know the staff. Have had a good rapport with each division. Parking is convenient underneath.  
The inspectors, once on site, are generally fair and pleasant. The staff allows revisions on plans. The HVAC people are congenial. |
| 2     | 3 Good         | Small projects – over the counter permits provide opportunity to discuss/respond to clarify project with a plan checker.  
Field inspectors have been, for the most part, reasonable.  
Negative: Would like the online building code more user-friendly. |
| 2     | 3 Good         | Sometimes there are long waits to pay. Some of the plan checkers are not good with communication. Some are not good with speaking English. There are inconsistencies with plan checkers, but overall, things have improved over the last 10 years. |
| 2     | 2 Only Fair    | Inspectors' lack of customer service – inconsistent demands. Demands beyond approved plans, schooling us . . . acting like they are the ones who know everything and we know nothing. Power tripping . . . they need training in customer service. Remember, they are public employees. |
| 2     | 3 Good         | I primarily use them for 3R reports and so far, they provide me with the reports in a timely manner and consistently, but then, the fee is outrageous in my opinion. |
| 2     | 1 Poor         | Inspectors are difficult. It takes nearly forever to get someone out. Paperwork is cumbersome. It's an old boys' club and if you ever get on the wrong side of one of them, you are screwed. |
| 2     | 1 Poor         | - Random nature of plan checks.  
- Unwillingness for some plan checkers to do their jobs.  
- Average about 2.5 months and 3-5 visits to get a permit for mandated soft-story permits.  
- Simply not enough time to achieve goal of retrofitting approximately 3,000 buildings if it takes 2+ months to permit one often resulting in little or no changes to plans. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 Good</td>
<td>All the departments that have to approve the plans for permits are located in one location and permit process has sped a lot for that reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4 Excellent</td>
<td>Constantly pulling permits; know the inspectors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2     | 1 Poor         | - Red tape  
- Long lines at lunchtime.  
- Permit process not available online for general Contractors  
- Sign in, sign out at front desk  
- Hours are short  
- Inspection schedule IVR takes too long  
- Refund of fees non-existent  
- Code inquiries take too long  
- Housing -- ???  
- Plan check with structural takes too long |
| 3     | Don't Know     | Have dealt with department before – just rating this experience  
Getting permit was hard. They denied permit after 1.5 years. Never got to inspection. |
| 3     | 1 Poor         | - Long wait times  
- Inconsistent interpretation of code  
- Attitude of 'no help' to homeowner  
- Fees inconsistent with value provided  
- Force special inspections which city should provide  
- Poor linkage between planning and DBI  
- Field inspector not aligned with plan checkers  
- Impractical application of codes to real-life situations  
- Submission of 32 x 48 drawings/plans costly and ineffective – could all be done electronically  
- Unfair permit requirements when not needed  
- More of the service should be able to be handled via web/electronic service |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Only Fair</td>
<td>I've had a number of permits and work required as part of a condo conversion (from TIC). Before this, I had no experience with DBI. In getting permits I ran into many challenges, even for very simple items, such as replacing windows (just an over the counter permit). The reviewer increased the value significantly over my bids and actual costs. I later went back and DBI reduced this partially, but I still overpaid. This stems from, in my view, the process of review is oriented towards Contractors and professionals . . . and not suited to homeowners. I recall in the review the reviewer even asked my wife surprise, &quot;Are you a homeowner?&quot; indicating they are not usually dealing with non-pros (or that was my impression).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 Only Fair</td>
<td>The inconsistent answers to questions concerning condo conversion process, as it relates to the permit/inspection process. In my experience, I got so many different answers and wasted so much time going back and forth with different people with different expectations of what was needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3     | 2 Only Fair    | • The people in the front office on Market were very helpful.  
• No one could help me with a permit (?)  
• The inspectors for my kitchen, windows, electrical were fantastic  
• Pulling permits for a garage door but not a driveway redo is insane to me  
• Whole permit process is so difficult and expensive ($$$). I have decided not to add a room and a deck onto my house. |
| 3     | 2 Only Fair    | Long wait times!  
Inconsistent plan check from one checker to the next in same area: mechanical, structural, etc.  
Lack of communication between planning and building overzealous plan checking with unreasonable requests.  
No continuity if a recheck is required. No one wants to be accountable. |
| 3     | 3 Good         | 1. Most of the time, the Contractors are dealing with the inspectors. It seems to me they are pretty much satisfied with the inspections.  
2. The personnel of DBI desks are very helpful. It is only on my part. I do not know why there are so many various fees for one project. |
| 3     | 4 Excellent    | Inspector came to the house unannounced. He was courteous, direct, knew what he was after and good to work with. |
Rating of Specific DBI Attributes

Focus group participants were asked to rate DBI on a variety of specific attributes, using the rating scale where 5 = Applies Strongly and 1 = Does not apply.

Overall, Group 1 (more experienced/mostly Contractors) tended to rate attributes most highly, followed by Group 2 (more experienced/mostly Contractors but more negative in some key areas), with Group 3 (more Property Owners/least experienced with DBI) providing the lowest ratings for nearly every attribute.

The exception was the highest rated attribute among all focus group respondents. As a result of Group 3's high rating (of 3.63), "Timely scheduling of inspections" was the highest rated attribute overall, with no group rating it lower than 3.00.

The lowest rated attribute was "Staff decisions are consistent," which was rated 2.92 or lower by each group.

The second highest ranked attribute, "Able to solve your problems and answer your questions," was rated very highly by Group 1 (4.25) and somewhat high by Group 2 (3.42). Group 3 brought this rating down, by rating it 2.13. In discussing why they rated it the way they did, Group 3 respondents discussed their frustration at getting different answers, having to do what appeared to be repeat steps/unnecessary steps, and at times not really feeling as if they could obtain a reasonable answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timely scheduling of inspections</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able to solve your problems and answer your questions</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient and professional staff</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear communication of fees</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straightforward communication of steps needed to obtain your permit/inspection</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear communication on steps needed to close out a project</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well run City department</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely permit process</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff decisions are consistent</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group-specific averages are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th>Group 2</th>
<th>Group 3</th>
<th>ALL GROUPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able to solve your problems and answer your questions</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear communication of fees</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient and professional staff</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straightforward communication of steps needed to obtain your permit/Inspection</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear communication on steps needed to close out a project</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well run City department</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timely permit process</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timely scheduling of inspections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>3.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| All Groups | 3.32 |

Staff decisions are consistent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>2.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| All Groups | 2.22 |
Public Perception of DBI

When asked what DBI's public perception was, all three groups gave words/phrases like:

- Corrupt
- Slow
- Scary
- Mysterious
- Frustrating
- Arbitrary

All three groups also brought up the sense that an inspector can insist on any requirements and you have no choice but to comply (if you want your project to move forward).

However, Group 1, particularly, understood the vital role DBI plays. One Group 1 respondent said, "[There's a perception that] Inspectors come in and give you arbitrary corrections – what I explain is the permits protect the end user, this is your investment, you want to protect yourself." Another Group 1 respondent said, "Most clients don't have a clue what happens; many have only heard horror stories." Another Group 1 respondent said, "There's a lot of expertise in that building [at DBI]. They are genuinely making buildings safer."

In Group 1, it was noted that some Contractors cover up their own mistakes/incompetence by (incorrectly) blaming DBI.

Group 3 brought up the idea that you hire a contractor to deal with DBI – as a homeowner, you would rather not handle it – although several homeowners in the same group noted they had interacted with DBI as a way to save money on their projects.

In Group 2, several respondents pointed out the important service DBI provides to renters – that if, for example, you do not have running water in your apartment, DBI is an important safety net to ensure rental units are working properly.

Group 3 did not mention the protection aspect at all – but rather, equated public perception of DBI to overall negative feelings towards government departments/agencies in general, and viewed DBI as more of a service provider (with comparisons made to hiring someone to fix your car or someone providing services such as Uber/Lyft).
Comments on Current/Recent Improvements

All three groups were asked whether they were aware of, and what they thought of, several recent organizational changes:
- Reorganization of the 5th Floor; and
- Opening longer hours (in 2012 from 8 am to 5 pm Monday-Friday; later, opening permits at 7:30 am)

5th Floor Reorganization
Most respondents in Group 1 and Group 2 were aware of the 5th Floor reorganization. While overall these respondents liked what had been done, they were eager to see additional changes to further improve the process. Suggestions made included:
- Better signage; and
- Improving flow so the process is more logical/linear.
- Suggestions (as noted in the beginning of this Focus Group section) regarding more efficient sign-up were also mentioned.
In Group 2, particularly, there was some awareness that an electronic signup system had been tried but did not work.

Most respondents in Group 3 were not aware of the reorganization.

Hours of Operation
Very few respondents in any group were aware that DBI now opened for permit processing at 7:30 am. All respondents, however, welcomed the extended hours of operation.

While all respondents welcomed it, Group 2 respondents, particularly, suggested they continue to expand the hours of operation, and include nights/weekends as well.

At least some Group 3 respondents felt that, if hours continued to expand, they might try focusing homeowners on certain hours and Contractors on others.
Legalization of In-Law Units

Nearly all respondents in Group 1 and Group 2, and more than half in Group 3, had heard of the legislation which encouraged legalization of in-law units.

The reaction from all three groups was generally positive. Respondents overall felt it was a 'win-win', in that Property Owners got a chance to 'legalize' a portion of their property and San Francisco got more rentable units. Contractors in Group 1 and 2 also noted that it boosted their business.

There were, however, several group-specific comments as well:

- Group 1 respondents were overall fairly positive about the legislation. They felt that it is good that many code-related issues might be addressed in the process.
- Group 2 was also fairly positive, but questioned the ability of DBI to handle the additional workload. Respondents of Group 2, while positive about the concept, felt that there were some additional items to iron out to make the process clearer – that the actual process was not quite 'ready'.
- Group 3 was also fairly positive, although at least one respondent noted the units would be under rent control, and that was a consideration.
- At least one respondent in each Group 1 and Group 2 had had an experience where they tried to legalize an in-law unit, but the unit was not capable of being legalized due to other code/structural issues. Generally, the person who raised this issue was unhappy and felt let down by the legislation, although other group respondents indicated that this was bound to happen – that some units would not be able to take advantage of the legislation.
Soft Story Program

All respondents were aware of the Soft Story retrofit program enacted in 2013. Among Group 3 respondents, who were largely Property Owners, they noted that there had been heavy media coverage of the program when it was introduced.

All three groups were favorable towards the program – but cost was a key consideration, and there was much less awareness of the more recent legislation to add an additional unit to buildings undergoing this process (which was introduced in April 2015).

- Group 1 was very favorable about the program. While it definitely generated business for some members, they also felt that it was preventing many of these buildings from completely collapsing during the next large earthquake. While cost was not as large of a concern for this group, they suggested that work like this – where no value-added work was being done – should perhaps have fees greatly reduced or eliminated to encourage Property Owners to complete the process.

- Group 2 was also favorable, but some in the group who were Property Owners brought up the extensive cost in doing the work. Discussion of the ability to add an additional unit, something many in the group were unaware of, was raised. There was a general consensus in the group that this would help offset the expense of the work in the long-run (by having a unit to rent at currently high rental rates).

- Group 3 was similar in outlook to Group 2 – understanding the extensive cost involved, but admitting that the ability to add a unit as part of the process made it much more economically feasible.
Discussion Topics and Comments from PAC Meeting

On June 24, 2015, the Department of Building Inspection held a Public Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting with an Agenda Item (#5) specifically focused on garnering feedback from the general public on topics discussed in this study. Approximately 8-9 members of the public attended, as well as approximately 5 members of DBI staff.

In the following pages are meeting notes summarizing the direct public feedback received.
Department of Building Inspection Perception

- Public’s perception of the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection
  - Public afraid of department
  - Big challenge is many combine DBI in with Planning
  - Staff who work at DBI are very good
  - Complicated process
  - Only place you can get a permit in one day – this is not possible in any other jurisdiction in this area.
  - Distrust
  - Unsure
  - If you know what you are doing, you are in good shape
  - DBI has made some changes for the better, would be good if DBI can get this information out to the public

- How does DBI compare to other SF City Departments
  - Most departments are similar
  - DBI is the only department aware of the timeline pressures developers’ face. Other departments, such as DPW, good people but no sensitivity to the timeliness those in this industry face.
  - Planning is department that can be a problem; DBI much better

Strengths and Areas of Improvement

- Key areas that SF DBI is outstanding/exceptional
  - Over the counter plan check is exceptional
  - Organizationally – DBI is top notch
  - Only SF does this...Over The Counter Plan Check in one day
  - 5th floor
  - Inspectors in the field

- Suggestions to improve the customer service experience with DBI
  - Consistency with code interpretation
  - Electronic permit processing (like electrical and plumbing)
  - DBI working on consistency issue
  - Plan checkers at lower level sometimes afraid to make decisions. Need to go back to their supervisors. Takes time since they need to wait for supervisor to decide.
  - Brown bag meeting related to planning could be successful, would help mitigate fear of planning. This is related to DBI since the two groups work together – there is no getting around that.

Changes and Improvements

- Fifth Floor improvements – over-the-counter permit services
  - Great – better organized, more efficient, faster
  - Easy process to figure out. System is really well set up.
Logical, can get thru quickly
Much better than Berkeley

Counter hours of DBI changed to accommodate small Contractors
Early morning (7:30am) is ideal. Allows you to be out the door by 8am or 8:30am.

Services
 Permit Process overall
Planning is the problem when it comes to permits
 Inspection Services
Building, Plumbing and Electrical
- Field inspectors are great
- If you do what you are supposed to do, works great
- Inspection scheduling is excellent; quick turnaround
- Would be nice if same inspector came out rather than a new guy.
- Very responsive
- Are able to get a scheduled time within 24 hours, at times
Housing
- Don’t deal with housing much

Programs
 Legalization of in-law Unit Program
Good for Property Owners
Does change planning. May want a uniform approach to addressing the rapid increase in housing.
May be a problem from a planning perspective; all of these units popping up throughout City
 Mandatory Soft Story Program
Unit Addition Program (April 2015)
- Aware of this
- Unit addition – doing one now

Comparisons / Emerging Practices
 Comparison of San Francisco DBI with other Bay Area Counties
5th floor better
Over the counter permit services is excellent
Inspections scheduled quickly here
On 5th floor they have supervisors there. Questions get answered quickly.
San Jose has a coffee bar, that would be nice
Drive by permits; would like that
 Specific emerging practices that DBI should consider
Electronic transfer of permits
Preferred Communication from DBI

- Social media, signage, web, email, or other?
  - Should analyze how people get info, and use those channels
  - Public service link would be helpful
  - Email architect and engineering firms, they will get this information out to their members
  - Facebook – does DBI have Facebook? Let people know.
  - Public service messages
  - Notification of Facebook/twitter on hardcopy documents (receipts?)
  - At the fairs, good place for DBIs to get their info out
  - Targeted information – info specific to architects or engineers would be better received
Appendices

Supporting documents including:
1. Intercept Questionnaire
2. Telephone Questionnaire
3. Focus Group Topic Guide
4. Focus Group Recruiting Screener
5. Online Stakeholder Questionnaire
San Francisco Department of Building Inspection | Customer Survey

The San Francisco Department of Building Inspection is seeking the opinions of its customers. Please take a few moments to complete this questionnaire. You may return it to the interviewer when you are done. Thank you!

1. Did you go through a preliminary review of your plans through the San Francisco Planning Department?  
   □ Yes   □ No   □ Don’t Know

   Note: The questions on this survey are based only on your experience with the Department of Building Inspection, and NOT on your experience with the Planning Department.

   Permit Services

2. Have you applied for or received a permit through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection in the past 12 months?  
   □ Yes  
   □ No ► Skip to next section

3. Which of the following permits have you personally applied for in the past 12 months? (Check all that apply)  
   □ Building Permit   □ Electrical Permit   □ Plumbing Permit

   4. Permit Services. 1st floor Please indicate how strongly you agree; 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

   a. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions
   b. Clear communication of fees
   c. Efficient and professional staff
   d. Received accurate information on steps needed to obtain your permit
   e. Wait-time at the permit counter was reasonable
   f. Decisions were consistent among all staff that reviewed your permit
   g. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested


   Expanded Over-The-Counter Services (5th Floor)

5. Have you visited the expanded Over-The-Counter plan check services on the 5th floor in the past 12 months?  
   □ Yes  
   □ No ► Skip to next section

6. Over-the-Counter plan check services. 5th floor Please indicate how strongly you agree; 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

   a. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions
   b. Staff was efficient and professional
   c. Received accurate information on steps needed to obtain your permit
   d. Wait-time at the review stations was reasonable
   e. Consistent staff decisions and code interpretations
   f. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested
PLAN CHECK SERVICES (2nd Floor)

7a. Were you personally involved in a Plan Check at the Department of Building Inspection in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ▶ Skip to next section

7b. Are you aware that the Department of Building Inspection offers a premium plan review process?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Unsure

7c. Have you ever used DBI’s premium plan review process?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Unsure

8. Plan Check Services. Please indicate how strongly you agree; 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Staff was efficient and professional</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Reasonable turnaround times for your project</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Staff decisions and code interpretations were consistent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Staff was timely in returning phone calls</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INSPECTION SERVICES (3rd Floor)

9a. Have you personally been involved in the inspection process of a project in the past 12 months?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ▶ Skip to next section

9b. Which Division did you work with? Select all that apply
☐ Building ☐ Plumbing ☐ Electrical ☐ Housing ☐ Don’t Know

9c. Did you schedule your inspection by phone, in person, or online?
☐ By Phone ☐ In Person ☐ Online ☐ Don’t Know

10. Inspection Process of your project(s). Please indicate how strongly each applies, 5 means “applies strongly” and 1 means “does not apply”. Please indicate how strongly you agree; 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Satisfied with inspection scheduling process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Able to accommodate your inspection scheduling needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Consistent code interpretations and decisions made in the field</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Staff was timely in returning phone calls</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Efficient and professional staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECORDS (MICROFILM AND REPORT OF RESIDENTIAL RECORDS [3R] (4th Floor)

11. Have you requested copies of microfilm records, or a 3R Report, within the past 12 months?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  Skip to next section

12. Records and Microfilm at the Department of Building Inspection. Please indicate how strongly you agree; 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Process was timely and efficient</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Process policies were clearly explained</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Satisfied with turnaround times and fees</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Requested information was accurate</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction with Department of Building Inspection (General)

13. About how many times have you visited the Building Inspection office in the past year?
☐ 1-2 times  ☐ 3-5 times  ☐ 6-10 times  ☐ 11-20 times  ☐ 20+ times  ☐ Don’t know

14. In the past 12 months, have you visited the Public Information Counter on the first floor?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Don’t Know

15. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Public Information counter? (Please check one)
☐ Very Satisfied  ☐ Somewhat Satisfied  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied  ☐ Very Dissatisfied

16. In the past 12 months, have you visited the Help Desk/Technical Services on the first floor?
☐ Yes  ☐ No  ☐ Don’t Know

17. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Help Desk/Technical Services?
☐ Very Satisfied  ☐ Somewhat Satisfied  ☐ Neutral  ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied  ☐ Very Dissatisfied

18a. Which of the following categories describes the scope of work of your project(s) in the past year? Select all that apply
☐ Alteration or addition to a single family home or duplex
☐ Alteration or addition to commercial building or multi-unit residential building
☐ New Construction Please answer Q18b. below
☐ Mixed Use – commercial and residential
☐ Other (specify): ______________________________

18b. What type of new construction? Select all that apply
☐ Single family home or duplex
☐ Multi-unit residential building
☐ Commercial or office building
☐ Other (specify): ______________________________

19. In what neighborhood was your most recent project property located? ______________________________
20. How would you rate your overall experience with the Department of Building Inspection?

☐ Very Satisfied    ☐ Somewhat Satisfied    ☐ Neutral    ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied    ☐ Very Dissatisfied

21a. Over the past 12 months would you say the services provided by the Department of Building Inspection have improved, declined, or are about the same?

☐ Improved    ☐ Declined    ☐ About the Same    ☐ Don't know

21b. Why is that?

22a. Have you ever visited the Department of Building Inspection’s website?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ Don’t Know

if yes above in 22a 22b. Have you used the website to . . . check all that apply

☐ track permit    ☐ review informational sheets, administrative bulletins, or reports

☐ apply for permits    ☐ request a 3R report

23. Briefly, what other information would you like to see on the website?

24. Do you follow the Department of Building Inspection on . . . check all that apply

☐ Twitter    ☐ Facebook    ☐ YouTube    ☐ Other social media (specify) ________    ☐ None of these

25a. Have you filed a complaint with the Department of Building Inspection in the past 12 months?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

(if “yes” please answer 25b/25c)

25b. Did you file the complaint online or by phone?

☐ Online    ☐ By phone

25c. Did they follow up on the complaint properly or not?

☐ Yes    ☐ Somewhat    ☐ No

Demographic and Organizational Questions These next few questions are for classification purposes only.

26a. Age ________

26b. Gender: ☐ Male    ☐ Female    ☐ Other (specify) ________

27. Ethnicity Please check all that apply

☐ African American    ☐ Hispanic / Latino    ☐ Asian / Pacific Islander

☐ Caucasian    ☐ Other (specify) ________

28a. In the past year, have you dealt with the Department of Building Inspection as a . . . check all that apply

☐ Plumber    ☐ Engineer

☐ Electrician    ☐ Architect

☐ Property owner    ☐ Contractor

☐ Both contractor and property owner    ☐ Other (specify) ________

(if a Contractor, Architect, Engineer, or other Professional)

28b. Approximately how many people are currently employed in your organization? ________

28c. About how many projects have you processed through the Department of Building Inspection in the past year?

☐ 1    ☐ 2-4    ☐ 5-10    ☐ 11-20    ☐ 21-100    ☐ 100+

29. Do you have any final suggestions on ways the Department of Building Inspection can improve the service it provides?

Please hand your completed survey to the survey coordinator, OR mail to: SFDI Survey, c/o CC&G Research, 447 Sutter Street, Penthouse North, San Francisco, CA 94108. To complete online visit: www.orconsulting1.com/DBIS/login.html
Hello, this is ________with Corey Research, may I please speak with _________(pick up from sample sheet). We are conducting an important survey regarding the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection. We’re interested in getting your opinion about your recent contact with the department.

.INTERVIEWER NOTES: If necessary explain:
- The survey should take between 10 – 12 minutes to administer.
- If person on phone was not involved in dealing with the SFDBI, ask to speak to the person in the household or office who handled this.
- The study is being done for the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection.
- Your name and contact information was included on a permit application to the SFDBI – we’d like to get your opinions about your experience with the department.
- No selling is involved.
- All responses will be treated in confidence.

1. Our records indicate that you have worked with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection on one or more projects during the past 12 months. Is that correct?
   Yes .................................................. 1
   No .................................................. 2 (thank and discontinue)
   Refused ............................................ 3 (thank and discontinue)

1a. Have you visited the Department of Building Inspection at 1660 Mission St in the past 12 months?
   Yes .................................................. 1
   No .................................................. 2 (thank and discontinue)
   Refused ............................................ 3 (thank and discontinue)
2. Which of the following have you been personally involved in (over the past 12 months)...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Applied for or received a permit through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Went through a plan check through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Received an inspection through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Applied for a 3R Report or a Microfilm Record Request through the Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interviewer notes:*
- Refer to your training document to provide explanation of the above, if necessary.
- Plan check includes “over the counter” plan check review on 5th floor of SF DBI building.
- If not personally involved in 1a or 2a or 2b or 2c, or 2d ask to speak to another in household who was personally involved. Otherwise, thank and discontinue.

3. Did you, or your architect or contractor, go through a preliminary review of your plans through the San Francisco Planning Department

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Applied for or received a permit through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(If “yes” or “don’t know”, read the following) : The questions on this survey are to be based only on your experience with the Department of Building Inspection, and NOT on your experience with the Planning Department.

PERMIT SERVICES
*(Ask if yes in Q2a. Otherwise skip to next section)*

4. Which of the following permits have you personally applied for in the past 12 months?

*Read List*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Permit</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Building Permit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Electrical Permit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Plumbing Permit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Permit Services** is responsible for routing plans and issuing permits, and is located on the 1st floor of the 1660 Mission Street building. I’m going to read you some statements related to Permit Services. Please indicate how strongly each applies using a 5 point scale, where 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Clear communication of fees........................... 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Efficient and professional staff ....................... 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Received accurate information on steps needed to obtain your permit ....................... 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Wait-time at the permit counter was reasonable .................................................... 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Decisions were consistent among all staff that reviewed your permit ......................... 5 4 3 2 1 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interviewer note: If only one staff member reviewed permit, code as not applicable.

| g. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested ........................... 5 4 3 2 1 0 |
EXPANDED OVER-THE-COUNTER PLAN CHECK SERVICES (5th Floor)
(Ask if yes in Q2b. Otherwise skip to next section)
6. Have you visited the expanded Over-The-Counter plan check services on the 5th floor in the past 12 months?
   Yes .................................................................................................................................................. 1
   No ............................................................................................................................................... 2 (skip to next section)
   Don’t Know .................................................................................................................................. 3 (skip to next section)

   Interviewer- If necessary, you may provide the following information to respondents:
   > This is where you get your plans reviewed by building, mechanical, and fire staff while you wait.
   > Located on 5th floor of 1660 Mission Street building.

7. I’m going to read you some statements related to the Over-the-Counter plan check services. Please indicate how strongly each applies using a 5 point scale, where 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

   Agree Strongly | Disagree Strongly | Don’t Know/NA

   a. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions
      5 4 3 2 1 0

   b. Staff was efficient and professional
      5 4 3 2 1 0

   c. Received accurate information on steps needed to obtain your permit
      5 4 3 2 1 0

   d. Wait-time at the review stations was reasonable
      5 4 3 2 1 0

   e. Consistent staff decisions and code interpretations
      5 4 3 2 1 0

   f. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested
      5 4 3 2 1 0
8. Am I correct that you were personally involved in a Plan Check at the Department of Building Inspection in the past 12 months?
   - Yes, went through a plan check.................... 1
   - No, did not ................................................ 2 (skip to next section)
   - Don’t Know ................................................ 3 (skip to next section)

   Interviewer: If necessary, you may provide the following information to respondents:
   > This is where you got your plan check of any submitted jobs under review by the department.

8a. Are you aware that the Department of Building Inspection offers a premium plan review process?
   - Yes .......................................................... 1
   - No ............................................................ 2 (skip to next section)
   - Don’t know .................................................. 3 (skip to next section)

8b. Have you ever used DBI’s premium plan review process?
   - Yes .......................................................... 1
   - No ............................................................ 2
   - Don’t know .................................................. 3

9. Now I’m going to read you some statements related to the Plan Check of your project. Please indicate how strongly each applies using a 5 point scale, where 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Staff was efficient and professional</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Reasonable turnaround times for your project</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Staff decisions and code interpretations were consistent</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Staff was timely in returning phone calls</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSPECTION SERVICES (3rd Floor)
(Ask if yes in Q2c. Otherwise skip to next section)

10. Am I correct that you have personally been involved in the inspection process of a project in the past 12 months?

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>..............................................................</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>..............................................................</td>
<td>2 (skip to next section)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>..............................................................</td>
<td>3 (skip to next section)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10a. Which division did you work with? (Read List. Select all that apply)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10b. Did you schedule your inspection by phone, in person, or online?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By Phone</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Person</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Now I’m going to read you some statements related to the Inspection Process of your project(s). Please indicate how strongly each applies using a 5 point scale, where 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Satisfied with inspection scheduling process</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Able to accommodate your inspection scheduling needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Consistent code interpretations and decisions made in the field</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Staff was timely in returning phone calls</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Staff was helpful in addressing your questions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Efficient and professional staff</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Supervisory staff was available for second opinion, if requested</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### RECORDS (MICROFILM AND REPORT OF RESIDENTIAL RECORDS [3R]) (4th Floor)

*(Ask if yes in Q2d. Otherwise skip to next section )*  

12. Have you requested copies of microfilm records, or a 3R Report, within the past 12 months?  
   - Yes ................................................................. 1  
   - No .................................................................... 2 (skip to next section)  
   - Don’t Know ..................................................... 3 (skip to next section)

Now I’m going to read you some statements related to **Records and Microfilm** at the Department of Building Inspection. Please indicate how strongly each applies using a 5 point scale, where 5 means “Agree Strongly” and 1 means “Disagree Strongly”. You may choose any number between 1 and 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Don’t Know/NA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Process was timely and efficient......................</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Process policies were clearly explained..............</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Satisfied with turnaround times and fees......</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Requested information was accurate....................</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interaction with Department

13. When was the last time you visited the Department of Building Inspection office at 1660 Mission Street in San Francisco? (Read list)
- Within the past month................................. 1
- 2 – 6 months ago........................................ 2
- 6 months to 1 year ago................................. 3
- More than one year ago............................... 4
- Don’t know (Do not read)............................. 5

14. About how many times have you visited the Building Inspection office in the past 12 months? (Read List)
- 1 – 2 times................................................ 1
- 3 – 5 times............................................... 2
- 6 – 10 times............................................. 3
- 11 – 20 times........................................... 4
- More than 20 times.................................... 5
- Never..................................................... 6
- Don’t know (Do not read)......................... 7

14a. In the past 12 months, have you visited the Public Information Counter on the first floor?
- Yes....................................................... 1
- No......................................................... 2 (skip to Q14c)
- Don’t know............................................. 3 (skip to Q14c)

14b. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Public Information counter? Would you say (read list)...
- Very Satisfied ................................. 5
- Somewhat Satisfied ....................... 4
- Neutral .......................................... 3
- Somewhat Dissatisfied ................. 2
- Very Dissatisfied......................... 1
- Don’t know (Do not read)............ 0

14c. In the past 12 months, have you visited the Help Desk/Technical Services on the first floor?
- Yes....................................................... 1
- No......................................................... 2 (skip to Q15)
- Don’t know............................................. 3 (skip to Q15)
14d. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the Help Desk/Technical Services? Would you say (read list)...

- Very Satisfied ......................... 5
- Somewhat Satisfied .................. 4
- Neutral .................................. 3
- Somewhat Dissatisfied............... 2
- Very Dissatisfied...................... 1
- Don’t know (Do not read)............ 0

15. Which of the following categories describes the scope of work of your project(s) in the past year? (Read List. Select all that apply)

- Alteration or addition to a single family home or duplex ........................... 1
- Alteration or addition to commercial building or multi-unit residential building ............................... 2
- New Construction .................................................. 3
- Mixed Use – commercial and residential ........ 4
- Other (specify): ________________________________

(If new construction, ask)

15a. What type of new construction? (Read List. Select all that apply)

- Single family home or duplex ............. 1
- Multi-unit residential building ............ 2
- Commercial or office building .......... 3
- Other (specify): _______________________

16. In what neighborhood was your most recent project property located?

_____________________________________________________________________________(list neighborhoods)

Department in General

Now I’d like you to think about the Department of Building Inspection overall.

17. How would you rate your overall experience with the Department of Building Inspection. Would you say... (Read List)

- Very Satisfied ........................................ 5
- Somewhat Satisfied ....................... 4
- Neutral .............................................. 3
- Somewhat Dissatisfied .................. 2
- Very Dissatisfied.............................. 1
- Don’t know (Do not read) ............... 0
18. Over the past 12 months would you say the services provided by the Department of Building Inspection have improved, declined, or are about the same?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declined</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Same</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know (Do not read)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ask unless don’t know)

18a. Why is that?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

19. Have you ever visited the Department of Building Inspection’s website?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/Don’t remember</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Ask if Yes in Q19, ask Q20 series)

20. Have you used the website to... (ask for each)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. track permits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. apply for permits</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. review informational sheets, administrative bulletins, or reports</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. request a 3R report</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. Briefly, what other information would you like to see on the website?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

22. Do you follow the Department of Building Inspection on Twitter, Facebook or YouTube? (Select all that apply)

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Twitter</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, Facebook</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, YouTube</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
22a. Have you filed a complaint with the Department of Building Inspection in the past 12 months?

Yes ............................................................... 1
No ............................................................... 2 (skip to next section)

22b. Did you file the complaint online or by phone?

Online .......................................................... 1
By phone .......................................................... 2

22c. Did they follow up on the complaint properly or not?

Yes – followed up on properly ............................... 1
Somewhat ...................................................... 2
No – not properly followed up ............................... 3

Demographics
These next few questions are for classification purposes only.

23. May I ask your approximate age? ............__________ (programmer note: 999 = don’t know/refused)

24. What ethnic group do you consider yourself a member of? (If hesitates, ask): Are you white, African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or of some other ethnic or racial background?

White ............................................................. 1
African American............................................. 2
Hispanic / Latino.............................................. 3
Asian / Pacific Islander ................................. 4
Other (specify) .............................................. 5
Refused .......................................................... 6

RespCode
In the past year, have you dealt with the Department of Building Inspection as a...
Contractor, Architect or other type of building professional
OR as a...
Property Owner

1  Contractor / Architect / Engineer / Other Professional
2  Property Owner
3  Both (contractor and property owner)
4  Other (specify)
25. Approximately how many people are currently employed in your organization?

___________ (write in) *(programmer note: 9999 = don’t know/refused)*

27. About how many projects have you processed through the Department of Building Inspection in the past year? *(Read list if necessary)*

- One............................................ 1
- Two – Four ................................. 2
- Five – Ten ................................. 3
- Eleven – Twenty .......................... 4
- Twenty – One Hundred............... 5
- More than One Hundred .......... 6
- Don’t know................................. 7
- Not applicable ......................... 8

*(Q28 deleted)*

29. And for validation purposes, may I please have your first name...

__________________________________

Those are all the questions I have.

30. Do you have any final suggestions on ways the Department of Building Inspection can improve the service it provides?

31. Gender (by observation):

- Male ........................................ 1
- Female ....................................... 2

*(PICK UP FROM SAMPLE SHEET)*

32. Phone Number: _____________________
**TOPIC GUIDE**

*SF DBI FOCUS GROUPS*

(version 3.1, June 23, 2015)

**Introductions**

Moderator Introduction: Moderator (Jon Canapary) introduces himself and explains purpose and procedures:

- The study is being conducted on specific issues involving the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection to hear from customers on their satisfaction of Department’s services.
- Moderator is there to ask questions and direct commentary rather than participate in the discussion or answer questions. He explains that all comments will be treated in confidence, it is important to hear from everyone, and the group is being audio tape recorded.

Respondent Introduction: Respondents introduce themselves giving first name, occupation, household composition and neighborhood in which they reside.

**Building / Renovating Property in San Francisco**

- General discussion.
- Positives (short words and phrases).
- Negatives (short words and phrases).

**San Francisco Department of Building Inspection – Familiarity and Overall Rating**

- Role of the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (SF DBI).
- *Moderator asks respondents to fill out SAQ #1 (Overall Familiarity and Rating)*
- Familiarity with SF DBI (short discussion).
- Positives (short words and phrases).
- Negatives (short words and phrases).
- How would you rate your overall experience with DBI’s services, programs, etc.
  - General discussion about rating

**Service Attributes**

- *Moderator hands out SAQ #2 (Rating of Service). This questionnaire lists words/phrases and asks how strongly each applies to the SF DBI.*
- Discussion of each service attribute related to DBI.
  - Able to solve your problems and answer your questions
  - Clear communication of fees
  - Efficient and professional staff
  - Straightforward communication on steps needed to obtain a permit and/or inspection needed
- Clear communication on steps needed to take to close out project
- Well run City department
- Timely permit process
- Timely scheduling of inspections
- Staff decisions are consistent

**Department of Building Inspection Perception**

*Moderator distributes Exhibit A (DBI Background Sheet) with brief background and facts/figures regarding DBI.*

- Public’s perception of the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (short words and phrases).
- As a department, how does DBI compare to other SF City Departments.
- Awareness of any major issues/problems facing the Department.
- Key areas that SF DBI is outstanding/exceptional.

**Areas of Improvement/Innovation**

- Suggestions to improve DBI’s processes, services, and programs.
- Other suggestions to improve the customer service experience with DBI.

**Services**

- Fifth Floor improvements – over-the-counter permit services
  (includes: reorganizing departmental counters – Fire, Public Works, SFPUC, SFMTA - as well as DBI’s service counters, larger work stations, open space plan providing circular processing)
  - Awareness
  - Reaction
- Counter hours of DBI recently changed to accommodate small Contractors
  (2010 – department hours 8am-5pm M-F; 2012 – open permit doors starting at 7:30am.
  - Awareness
  - Reaction
- Public Records/3R Reports
  - Usage/Awareness of this service
  - Reaction
- Permit Process overall (general discussion)
- Inspection Services
  - Building, Plumbing and Electrical (general discussion)
  - Housing (awareness of housing inspection services; general discussion)

**Programs**

*Moderator distributes Exhibit B (Legalization of In-Law Units) with brief background on this program.*

- Legalization of in-law Unit Program
Moderator distributes Exhibit C (Soft Story Program) with brief background on this program.

- Legislation on seismic improvements (Soft Story)
  - Awareness
  - Reaction

Comparisons / Emerging Practices
- Comparison of San Francisco DBI with other Bay Area Counties, as applicable.
- Positives / Negatives when compared to other building inspection departments.
- Specific emerging practices that DBI should consider.

Role Play
The moderator asks respondents to role play that they are members of the Building Inspection Committee responsible for making recommendations to the SF DBI. Their task is to make (at least 3) specific changes to the Department in order to improve the customer service experience. They are also to advise the Department on how to communicate those changes to the customers. A spokesperson is appointed and group participants are given five to ten minutes to make their deliberations. The moderator returns and listens to recommendations from the group as a whole.

Wrap Up
- Around the table (ask all respondents) – If you could make one recommendation to the DBI director, what would that be?
SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE #1

1. How familiar are you with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?
   - [ ] Very Familiar
   - [ ] Somewhat Familiar
   - [ ] Not Too Familiar
   - [ ] Not at All Familiar

2. Overall, how would you rate your experience with the S.F. Department of Building Inspection in the past year? Would you say...
   - [ ] Excellent
   - [ ] Good
   - [ ] Only Fair
   - [ ] Poor
   - [ ] Don’t Know

3. Why is that?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

(WHEN FINISHED PLEASE TURN SHEET OVER)
**SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE #2**

1. Please indicate **how strongly each word or phrase applies** to the Department of Building Inspection.

   |                                  | applies strongly | does not apply |
---|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Able to solve your problems and answer your questions                     | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Clear communication of fees                                              | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Efficient and professional staff                                          | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Straightforward communication of steps needed to obtain your permit and/or inspection needed | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Clear communication on steps needed to close out a project                | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Well run City department                                                 | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Timely permit process                                                    | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Timely scheduling of inspections                                         | 5 4 3 2 1        |
| Staff decisions are consistent                                           | 5 4 3 2 1        |

*(WHEN FINISHED PLEASE TURN SHEET OVER)*
EXHIBIT A
SF DBI Background

PURPOSE
Ensure that life and property within the City and County of San Francisco are safeguarded through code-compliant building safety practices, and to provide a public forum for community involvement in that process.

MISSION STATEMENT
Under the direction and management of the seven-member citizen Building Inspection Commission, to oversee the effective, efficient, fair and safe enforcement of the City and County of San Francisco 's Building, Housing, Plumbing, Electrical, and Mechanical Codes, along with the Disability Access Regulations.

Primary Professional Services:

1. PLAN REVIEW & PERMIT SERVICES
   Responsible for permit approval coordination, final approval and permit issuance to assure that the proposed construction work meets all safety requirements of the codes; and ensures that the process is performed in a timely manner that is always professional and courteous to all DBI customers.

2. INSPECTION SERVICES
   Inspects buildings for appropriate code- compliance; verifies that the scope of work complies with issued plans and building permits; and responds to/investigates complaints on residential and commercial buildings.

3. CODE ENFORCEMENT
   When owners fail to respond to Notices of Violation, code enforcement provides a stipulated legal process including a Director’s Hearing, possible Order of Abatement, property lien, and referral to the City Attorney for litigation to achieve code-compliance.

DBI Quick Facts
- As of July 1, 2015, we have 280+ employees - engineers, plan reviewers, inspectors, permit technicians and clerks who work in consultation with customers, city departments, Contractors, developers and peer reviewers
- Oversees the building and life safety of more than 200,000 buildings – commercial and residential
- Issues more than 70,000 permits annually ~ 300 permits per day
- Performs more than 150,000 annual inspections
- Biggest building/construction boom since the 1906 Quake Recovery
  - 2015 costs valuations up to $6B in construction projects
• 265 projects valued at over $5M+ each
• 30+ cranes dotting 2015 SF skyline
EXHIBIT B
Legalization of In-Law Units

Established in May 2014, unauthorized dwelling units or, “in-law” units may apply to be legalized. This is a voluntary program that allows Property Owners to formally register and rent their in-law units in San Francisco assuming all life-safety conditions are met. An in-law unit is an additional dwelling inside a property that was intended to be a single unit. Homeowners often convert and rent unused space in their homes. Although it is common, this has been illegal. With this new ordinance, one of these existing units may legally join the housing market should the owner follow the stipulated process.

Property owners may receive an estimation of the costs to legalize their units by undergoing an initial screening process. This screening is an informal consultation with DBI staff, non-binding and free of charge.

In order to apply:

- Home owners must first hire a professional representative (engineer, architect, or contractor) who will be responsible for providing the owner with a professional assessment of what legalization may entail.
- Afterwards, they may visit the Unit Legalization Counter found at the 1st Floor of 1660 Mission Street. DBI Technical Services will help them arrive at an estimated cost, based upon the professional engineer/architect’s assessment.

Following this screening process, when the owner has essential information needed for a decision, they may then formally apply for legalization with the Planning Department and DBI.
EXHIBIT C
Mandatory Soft Story Program

The Mandatory Soft Story Retrofit Program (MSSP) was created in 2013 as a multi-year community-based effort enforced by the Department of Building Inspection to ensure the safety and resilience of San Francisco's housing stock through the retrofit of older, wood-framed, multi-family buildings in San Francisco with a soft-story condition.

Property owners of soft story buildings are encouraged to take the necessary steps to comply with program requirements by filing for a permit to ensure their properties are seismically safe in anticipation of the next big quake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compliance Tier</th>
<th>Submittal of Permit Application with Plans for Seismic Retrofit Work</th>
<th>Completion of Work and Issuance of Certificate of Final Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September 15, 2015</td>
<td>September 15, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 15, 2016</td>
<td>September 15, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>September 15, 2017</td>
<td>September 15, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 15, 2018</td>
<td>September 15, 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This new ordinance was adopted to guide Property Owners on seismic strengthening in order to better protect highly vulnerable buildings from collapse during the next major earthquake. Extensive research has found that buildings in the ‘soft-story’ category are highly susceptible to major structural damage – making the seismic strengthening of such buildings a civic priority to protect those living or doing business in such buildings.

The Association of Bay Area Governments estimates that soft-story residential buildings will be responsible for 66 percent of the uninhabitable housing following a seismic event on the Hayward fault.
Corey, Canapary & Galanis  
Screening Questionnaire * SFDBI Focus Groups

Name  
☐ Cell phone (high priority) ( )  
☐ Work ☐ Home ( )  
Company (REQUIRED if deals w/DBI as a professional)  
Email  
Address  
Source  
City ZIP  
Recruited for: ☐ Group #1: June 23, 2015 (TUE) - 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm (Q4 = 3-6)  
☐ Group #2: June 23, 2015 (TUE) – 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm (Q4 = 3-6)  
☐ Group #3: June 24, 2015 (WED) – 6 pm to 8 pm (Q4 = 1-3)  

Note: ALL group will be held at a central location in San Francisco. If qualified, participants will be paid $125 for participating in one of the groups.

Introduction

Hello, I’m _______________ with Corey Research. We are recruiting those with relatively recent experience with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection. [If asked: This study is being conducted for SFDBI]

Let me ask you a few questions to see if you fit the general profile we are looking for. (If necessary, say: Some of these questions may be similar to the survey questions you answered earlier, but please answer them again to confirm your response.)

[Introduction wording may vary. OK to modify wording above this gray line; read questions as written below gray line.]

1. Our records indicate that you have worked with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection on one or more projects during the past 12 months. Is that correct?  
   Yes………………………………………. 1  
   No……………………………………… 2  (thank and discontinue)  
   Refused………………………………… 3  (thank and discontinue)
2. What type(s) of interaction have you had with SF DBI in the past 12 months (check all that apply)? Have you...

- Visited SF DBI offices (1660 Mission Street) 1
- Spoke with SF DBI personnel by phone 2
- Visited the SF DBI website .................................. 3
- Met with an inspector at property on-site 4
- Other (specify)_________________________________ 5

3. When was the last time you had any contact with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?

- Within the past month ...................................... 1
- 2 – 6 months ago .............................................. 2
- 6 months to 1 year ago ..................................... 3
- More than one year ago ................................. 4
- Don’t know (terminate) ................................. 5

4. About how many times have you had any type of interaction with SF DBI in the past 12 months?

- 1 time ................................................... 1
- 2 – 3 times ............................................ 2
- 3 – 5 times ............................................ 3
- 6 – 10 times .......................................... 4
- 11 – 20 times ........................................ 5
- More than 20 times ................................... 6
- Never .................................................... 7 (terminate)
- Don’t know (Do not read) ........................... 8 (terminate)

5. In the past year, have you dealt with the Department of Building Inspection as a...Contractor, Architect or other type of building professional OR as a Property Owner

- 1 Contractor
- 2 Architect
- 3 Engineer
- 4 Other Professional (specify)_______________________
- 5 Property Owner
- 6 Other (specify)__________________________________

Note: If only 6 (other/specify) above, confirm with supervisor this role is part of our recruit.

6. Which of the following have you been personally involved in (over the past 12 months)...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Applied for or received a permit through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Went through a plan check through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Received an inspection through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection


d. Applied for a 3R Report or a Microfilm Record Request through the Department of Building Inspection

Occupation and Demographic Questions

7. What is your current occupation?

[get specifics; for generic occupations, e.g. 'salesman' or 'tech support', ask "Which industry or sector do you work in?"]

8. Do you or anyone in your immediate household happen to work for:

- San Francisco Department of Building Inspection
- San Francisco Planning Department
- San Francisco Department of Public Works
- A planning or building inspection department for another city/county
- A market research firm

(Terminate if ANY of the above are checked; note exceptions/explanations here)

9. Have you participated in any research related to building renovation, development, or building codes? [if yes] How long ago? Would you describe the research [or 'How did you participate']? [probe for details; if research has been within the past 2 years, terminate]

Demographics

I just have a few additional questions to ask. We ask these questions to ensure that we have a good cross-section of those who have worked with SF DBI.

10. About how long have you been involved in your current occupation? [Read list if necessary]

- Less than one year
- One – five years
- Six – ten years
- Eleven – twenty years
11. What is your exact age? __________

12. Gender (by observation; ask if necessary)
   □ Male  □ Female

13. What is your racial or ethnic background?
   □ Caucasian/White □ Asian / Pacific Islander
   □ Hispanic/Latino/Spanish □ Black / African American
   □ American Indian or Alaska Native □ Other: _______________(specify)

14. For statistical purposes, what is your approximate total household income before taxes?
   [may wish to add: "Note that we are not looking for a specific number here, just broad ranges; let me read you the categories]
   □ Under $25,000 □ $60,000-$74,999
   □ $25,000-$29,999 □ $75,000-$99,999
   □ $30,000-$39,999 □ $100,000-$149,999
   □ $40,000-$49,999 □ $150,000 or more
   □ $50,000-$59,999

[Verify answers as needed; check with supervisor before confirming recruit. If recruited, fill out top of Page 1, including ALL contact info – company/address, telephone number, email. OBTAIN CELL PHONE NUMBER if at all possible. MUST obtain company name if respondent deals with SF DBI as a professional.]
SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING INSPECTION
STAKEHOLDER ONLINE SURVEY

==============================================================================
QUESTIONS
==============================================================================

Question List
==============================================================================

Start (Questionnaire Access and Passwords)

Q1 (Select)
Q2 (Select)
Q3 (Select)
Q4 (Select)
Q4a (Open-end)
Q5 (Select)
Q6 (Grid)
Q7 (Select)
Q7a (Select)
Q8 (Open-end)
Q9 (Select)
Q10 (Select)
Q11 (Grid)
Q12 (Select)
Q13 (Select)
Q14 (Open-end)
Q15 (Select)
Q16 (Select)
Q17 (Select)
Q18 (Select)
Q18a (Open-end)
Q19 (Open-end)
Q20 (Select)
Q21 (Select)
Q22 (Open-end)
Q23 (Open-end)
Thank (Terminate / Link)

========================================
Data Field Usage
========================================
Q1 (1)
Q2 (1)
Q3 (1)
Q4 (1)
Q4a (1)
Q5 (1)
Q6 (8)
Q7 (2)
Q7a (2)
Q8 (1)
Q9 (2)
Q10 (1)
Q11 (4)
Q12 (1)
Q13 (2)
Q14 (1)
Q15 (1)
Q16 (1)
Q17 (2)
Q18 (1)
Q18a (1)
Q19 (1)
Q20 (2)
Q21 (2)
Q22 (1)
Q23 (1)

========================================
Questionnaire
========================================
Type: Questionnaire Access and Passwords

[Header 2]: The San Francisco Department of Building Inspection (DBI) is conducting an opinion survey. DBI is responsible for overseeing fair and safe enforcement of the City and County of San Francisco's various codes (e.g. Building, Housing, Plumbing, Electrical, Mechanical, and Disability Access codes) of the more than 200,000 residential and commercial city buildings. You have been identified as someone who may be able to provide valuable feedback. Please press the arrow below to begin.

[Question]: How familiar are you with the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?

[Response Options]:
1. Very Familiar
2. Somewhat Familiar
3. Not too Familiar
4. Not at all Familiar

[Footer]: Note: For this survey your responses should be based only on your experience with the Department of Building Inspection, and NOT on your experience with the Planning Department. The Department of Building Inspection is responsible for the safe and code-compliant structural safety of a home or commercial building, while the Planning Department is responsible for determining what types of buildings are permitted to be built in specific parts of the City (zoning), and for exterior design consistency or conformity with the Planning Codes (or how buildings look).
Question Name: Q2
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Question]:
When was the last time you visited or had some interaction with the Department of Building Inspection?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q2List
Type: Predefined

1 Within the past month
2 2 to 6 months ago
3 6 months to 1 year ago
4 More than 1 year ago

Question Name: Q3
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: YES

[Question]:
About how many times have you visited the Building Inspection office at 1660 Mission in the past 12 months?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q3List
Type: Predefined

1 1 to 2 times
2 3 to 5 times
3 6 to 10 times
4 11 to 20 times
5 More than 20 times
Have not visited in the past 12 months

---<PAGE BREAK>---

---

Question Name: Q4
---

Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: YES
---

[Header 2]:
These questions pertain to the Department of Building Inspection overall.

[Question]:
How would you rate your overall experience with the Department of Building Inspection. Would you say you are . . .

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q4List
Type: Predefined

1  Very Satisfied
2  Somewhat Satisfied
3  Neutral
4  Somewhat Dissatisfied
5  Very Dissatisfied

---

Question Name: Q4a
---

Type: Open-end (multiple lines)
Required: NO
Max Characters: 9999
---

[Question]:
Why is that?
Question Name: Q5
================================
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: YES

[Header 2]:
These questions pertain to the Department of Building Inspection overall.

[Question]:
Over the past 12 months would you say the services provided by the Department of Building Inspection have improved, declined, or are about the same?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q5List
Type: Predefined

1    Improved
2    Declined
3    About the same
4    Don't know (have not interacted in past 12 months)

=================================<PAGE BREAK>================================

Question Name: Q6
================================
Type: Grid
Question Direction: Rows

[Header 1]:
Please indicate how strongly you agree with each of the following statements about the SF Department of Building Inspection. Please use a 5-point scale where 5 means "Agree Strongly" and 1 means "Disagree Strongly".

[Row List]:
List Name: Q6RowList
Type: Predefined
Randomized: YES

1    Able to solve your problems and answer your questions
2    Clear communication of fees
3  Efficient and professional staff
4  Straightforward communication on steps needed to obtain a permit
5  Well run City department
6  Timely permit process
7  Timely scheduling of inspections
8  Staff decisions are consistent

[Column List]:
List Name: Q6ColList
Type: Predefined

1  5 - Strongly AGREE
2  4
3  3
4  2
5  1 - Strongly DISAGREE
6  Don't Know/NA
Total

[Row 1]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 2]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 3]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 4]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 5]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 6]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO
[Row 7]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 8]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

Question Name: Q7
Type: Select (Check Box)
Minimum Checks Required: 1
Maximum Checks Required: 5

[Header 2]:
Types of Properties

[Question]:
What type(s) of properties have you received permits on in the past year? (Please select all that apply)

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q7List
Type: Predefined

1  Alteration or addition to a single family home or duplex
2  Alteration or addition to commercial building or multi-unit residential building
3  New Construction
4  Mixed Use - commercial and residential
5  Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]
6  Not applicable [Exclusive]

[Post-Skips]:
Post-Skip: Skip from Q7 to Q9 if Q7_6=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q7 to Q7a if Q7_3=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q7 to Q8 if Q7_3=0 AND Q7_6=0

--------------------------------------------------------------------------<PAGE BREAK>--------------------------------------------------------------------------
Question Name: Q7a
Type: Select (Check Box)
Minimum Checks Required: 0
Maximum Checks Required: 3

[Header 2]:
Types of Properties (continued)

[Question]:
What type of new construction? (Please select all that apply)

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q7aList
Type: Predefined
1 Single family home or duplex
2 Multi-unit residential building
3 Commercial or office building
4 Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]

---------<PAGE BREAK>---------

Question Name: Q8
Type: Open-end (multiple lines)
Required: NO
Max Characters: 3000

[Header 2]:
Types of Properties (continued)

[Question]:
In what neighborhood was your most recent project property located?

[Footer]:
If uncertain of neighborhood name, you may also provide nearest major intersection.

---------<PAGE BREAK>---------
Question Name: Q9

Type: Select (Check Box)
Minimum Checks Required: 1
Maximum Checks Required: 3

[Header 2]:
Interaction with DBI

[Question]:
In the past year, have you dealt with the Department of Building Inspection as a . . . (please select all that apply)

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q9List
Type: Predefined

1  Contractor/Architect/Engineer/Other Professional
2  Property Owner
3  Both (contractor and property owner)
4  Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]
5  NA - have not dealt with the Department of Building Inspection in the past year

[Exclusive]

[Post-Skips]:
Post-Skip: Skip from Q9 to Q12 if Q9_5=1

Question Name: Q10

Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: YES

[Header 2]:
Interaction with DBI

[Question]:
About how many projects have you processed through the Department of Building Inspection in the past year?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q10List
Type: Predefined

1   1 project
2   2 to 4 projects
3   5 to 10 projects
4   11 to 20 projects
5   20 to 100 projects
6   More than 100 projects
7   Don't know
8   None/not applicable [Exclusive]

[Post-Skips]:
Post-Skip: Skip from Q10 to Q12 if Q10 = 7 or Q10 = 8

---<PAGE BREAK>---

Question Name: Q11
Type: Grid
Question Direction: Rows

[Header 2]:
<b>In the past 12 months, have you <i>personally</i> . . . </b>

[Row List]:
List Name: Q11RowList
Type: Predefined

1   Applied for or received a <u>permit</u> through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?
2   Went through a <u>plan check</u> through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?
3   Received an <u>inspection</u> through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?
4   Applied for a 3R Report or a Microfilm Record Request through the Department of Building Inspection?
[Column List]:
List Name: Q11ColList
Type: Predefined

1  Yes
2  No
3  Don't know
Total

[Row 1]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 2]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 3]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Row 4]:
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

==================================================================

Question Name: Q12
==================================================================
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: YES

-------------------------------

[Question]:
Have you <u>ever</u> visited the Department of Building Inspection's website?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q12List
Type: Predefined

1  Yes
2    No
3    Don't know/don't remember

[Post-Skips]:
Post-Skip: Skip from Q12 to Q13 if Q2=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q12 to Q15 if Q12=2 or Q12=3

======================================================================<PAGE BREAK>======================================================================

Question Name: Q13
======================================================================
Type: Select (Check Box)
Checks Required: ANY AMOUNT

======================================================================

[Question]:
Have you used the website to . . . (please select all that apply)

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q13List
Type: Predefined
Randomized: YES

1    Track permits
2    Apply for permits
3    Review informational sheets, administrative bulletins, or reports
4    Request a 3R report
5    Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]
6    None of the above [Exclusive]

======================================================================

Question Name: Q14
======================================================================
Type: Open-end (multiple lines)
Required: NO
Max Characters: 3000

======================================================================

[Question]:
Briefly, what other information would you like to see on the website?
Question Name: Q15
Type: Select (Check Box)
Checks Required: ANY AMOUNT

[Question]:
Do you follow the Department of Building Inspection on . . . (please select all that apply)

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q15List
Type: Predefined
Randomized: YES

1 Twitter
2 Facebook
3 YouTube
4 None of these [Exclusive]

Question Name: Q16
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: YES

[Question]:
Have you filed a complaint with the Department of Building Inspection in the past 12 months?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q16List
Type: Predefined

1 Yes
2 No

[Post-Skips]:
Post-Skip: Skip from Q16 to Q17 if Q16=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q16 to Q19 if Q16=2

Question Name: Q17
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Question]:
Did you file the complaint online or by phone?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q17List
Type: Predefined

1   Online
2   By phone
3   Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]

Question Name: Q18
Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Question]:
Did they follow up on the complaint properly or not?

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q18List
Type: Predefined

1   Yes - followed up properly
2   Somewhat
3   No - not properly followed up
Question Name: Q18a

Type: Open-end (multiple lines)
Required: NO
Max Characters: 3000

[Question]:
Comments:

Question Name: Q19

Type: Open-end (single line)
Required: NO
Max Characters: 3000

[Header 2]:
<b>Demographics</b> - These questions are for classification purposes only.

[Question]:
Age

Question Name: Q20

Type: Select (Radio Button)
Required: NO

[Question]:
Gender

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q20List
Type: Predefined

1    Male
2    Female
3 Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]
4 Refused [Exclusive]

Question Name: Q21
Type: Select (Check Box)
Checks Required: ANY AMOUNT

[Question]:
Ethnicity (please select all that apply)

[Response Options]:
List Name: Q21List
Type: Predefined

1 White
2 African American
3 Hispanic/Latino
4 Asian/Pacific Islander
5 Other (specify) [Respondent Specify]
6 Refused [Exclusive]

Question Name: Q22
Type: Open-end (multiple lines)
Required: YES
Min Characters: 1
Max Characters: 3000

[Question]:
How were you made aware of this online survey?

[Footer]:
Please list any groups/organizations who provided the link.
Question Name: Q23
Type: Open-end (multiple lines)
Required: NO
Max Characters: 3000

[Question]:
Do you have any final suggestions on ways the Department of Building Inspection can improve the service it provides?

[Post-Skips]:
Post-Skip: Skip from Q23 to Thank ALWAYS SKIP

---<PAGE BREAK>---

Question Name: Thank
Type: Terminate / Link
Terminate Respondent: YES
Termination Status: Qualified / Complete (5)

[Question]:
Those are all of the questions we have. Thank you very much for completing this survey!<br/>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;You may now close your browser.

Randomization

Loops

---

SKIP SECTION

Post-Skip: Skip from Q7 to Q9 if Q7_6=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q7 to Q7a if Q7_3=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q7 to Q8 if Q7_3=0 AND Q7_6=0

Post-Skip: Skip from Q9 to Q12 if Q9_5=1

Post-Skip: Skip from Q10 to Q12 if Q10 = 7 or Q10 = 8

Post-Skip: Skip from Q12 to Q13 if Q2=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q12 to Q15 if Q12=2 or Q12=3

Post-Skip: Skip from Q16 to Q17 if Q16=1
Post-Skip: Skip from Q16 to Q19 if Q16=2

Post-Skip: Skip from Q23 to Thank ALWAYS SKIP
**LIST SECTION**

List Name: Q10List

Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 to 4 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 to 10 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11 to 20 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20 to 100 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>More than 100 projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>None/not applicable [Exclusive]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List Name: Q11ColList

Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

List Name: Q11RowList

Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Applied for or received a &lt;u&gt;permit&lt;/u&gt; through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Went through a &lt;u&gt;plan check&lt;/u&gt; through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3  Received an <u>inspection</u> through the San Francisco Department of Building Inspection?

4  Applied for a 3R Report or a Microfilm Record Request through the Department of Building Inspection?

===========================
List Name: Q12List
===========================
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 3

1  Yes
2  No
3  Don't know/don't remember

===========================
List Name: Q13List
===========================
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 6

1  Track permits
2  Apply for permits
3  Review informational sheets, administrative bulletins, or reports
4  Request a 3R report
5  Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]
6  None of the above [Exclusive]

===========================
List Name: Q15List
===========================
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4

1  Twitter
2  Facebook
3  YouTube
4    None of these [Exclusive]

List Name: Q16List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 2

1    Yes
2    No

List Name: Q17List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 3

1    Online
2    By phone
3    Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]

List Name: Q18List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 3

1    Yes - followed up properly
2    Somewhat
3    No - not properly followed up

List Name: Q1List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4
1 Very Familiar
2 Somewhat Familiar
3 Not too Familiar
4 Not at all Familiar

List Name: Q20List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4

1 Male
2 Female
3 Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]
4 Refused [Exclusive]

List Name: Q21List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 6

1 White
2 African American
3 Hispanic/Latino
4 Asian/Pacific Islander
5 Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]
6 Refused [Exclusive]

List Name: Q2List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4
1. Within the past month
2. 2 to 6 months ago
3. 6 months to 1 year ago
4. More than 1 year ago

List Name: Q3List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 6

1. 1 to 2 times
2. 3 to 5 times
3. 6 to 10 times
4. 11 to 20 times
5. More than 20 times
6. Have not visited in the past 12 months

List Name: Q4List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 5

1. Very Satisfied
2. Somewhat Satisfied
3. Neutral
4. Somewhat Dissatisfied
5. Very Dissatisfied

List Name: Q5List
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4

1. Improved
2 Declined
3 About the same
4 Don't know (have not interacted in past 12 months)

===========================
List Name: Q6ColList
===========================
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 6

1 5 - Strongly AGREE
2 4
3 3
4 2
5 1 - Strongly DISAGREE
6 Don't Know/NA

===========================
List Name: Q6RowList
===========================
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 8

1 Able to solve your problems and answer your questions
2 Clear communication of fees
3 Efficient and professional staff
4 Straightforward communication on steps needed to obtain a permit
5 Well run City department
6 Timely permit process
7 Timely scheduling of inspections
8 Staff decisions are consistent

===========================
List Name: Q7aList
===========================
Type: Predefined
Number of Items: 4
1. Single family home or duplex
2. Multi-unit residential building
3. Commercial or office building
4. Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]

---

**List Name: Q7List**
**Type: Predefined**
**Number of Items: 6**

1. Alteration or addition to a single family home or duplex
2. Alteration or addition to commercial building or multi-unit residential building
3. New Construction
4. Mixed Use - commercial and residential
5. Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]
6. Not applicable [Exclusive]

---

**List Name: Q9List**
**Type: Predefined**
**Number of Items: 5**

1. Contractor/Architect/Engineer/Other Professional
2. Property Owner
3. Both (contractor and property owner)
4. Other (specify) [Respondent Specify - Required: YES | Min Chars: 1 | Max Chars: 100]
5. NA - have not dealt with the Department of Building Inspection in the past year [Exclusive]