

# Citizen Verification Project: Sanitation Property Survey

OIG-CVP-10001

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The Citizen Verification Project: Sanitation Property Survey was a collaborative effort by the New Orleans Office of Inspector General and Common Good, with the assistance of Beacon of Hope Resource Center and lowernine.org, to verify locations served by the City's trash collection services. This project was made possible by the community response to a request for volunteers to conduct neighborhood surveys throughout the City. The City owes a debt of gratitude to the 65 citizens who donated their time and energy to this project. This citizen participation is a tribute to the people of this City and their commitment to good government. The OIG thanks everyone who helped with this endeavor and looks forward to working with these dedicated volunteers in the future to make City government work for all citizens.

The OIG undertook this Citizen Verification Project because the cost of trash collection services has increased dramatically in recent years and contributes substantially to the City's difficulty in achieving a balanced budget. In 2009, the City of New Orleans paid \$31.2 million for trash collection services for residents and small businesses and is on target to spend nearly \$35 million in 2010. Even after adjusting for inflation, the City's expenditures on trash collection have increased by 60% from the pre-Katrina annual cost despite a decrease in the City's population.<sup>1</sup> The OIG also found that the City paid substantially more per capita for trash collection than eight other comparable cities in a 2009 benchmarking study.<sup>2</sup>

The City pays for trash collection services based on a price per serviced location (address). This method of determining contractors' compensation places a substantial burden on the City for contract oversight, to ensure that the City is not billed for addresses that are not eligible. Eligible addresses include residential properties with four or fewer units and commercial establishments that generate less than 96 gallons of trash per regular collection period.<sup>3</sup> Residential complexes, including apartments and condominiums, with more than four units are not eligible for City services and must contract privately for trash collection. Businesses that generate larger volumes of trash and all restaurants, hotels, and bars are also required to contract and pay for their own trash collection. The City also has a large number of blighted properties that are unoccupied and therefore should not be counted as serviced locations.

In 2006, the City solicited bids for trash collection services for three different geographical areas of the City. Each bidder submitted a price per serviced location, based on the City's estimated numbers of eligible households and businesses in each geographic area. The City awarded three contracts, one for each geographic area. Contractors were initially required to provide trash carts to eligible residents and businesses, who would register the carts with the City to create a list of actual serviced addresses. However, the City determined that the cart registration system did not produce an accurate count, and contractors continued to bill the City based on estimated numbers rather than actual lists of locations.

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<sup>1</sup> The City spent \$18.74 million for trash collection in 2004. Using the CPI to adjust for inflation, this figure is equivalent to about \$21.7 million in 2010 dollars.

<sup>2</sup> The results of the benchmarking comparison are included in this Office's report, "Review of 2009 Budget Process for the City of New Orleans," found at [www.nolaoig.org](http://www.nolaoig.org).

<sup>3</sup> In most areas of the City, the contractors are required to provide residents and eligible small businesses with 96 gallon trash containers. In the French Quarter and Central Business District, smaller carts are used and collections are more frequent. In those areas, the maximum volume is based on the size of the smaller carts.

Over the past four years, the City has attempted to use several methods to verify the eligibility of households and small business served by each contractor. In 2008, the City hired a consultant to develop a more accurate determination of the number of eligible locations. The consultant planned to use several verification methods, including data on utility usage and field surveys. However, the City decided to abandon the field surveys before they were completed and asked the consultant to produce an assessment based only on cart registration and utility usage.<sup>4</sup> This verification method had inherent limitations and could not capture all of the relevant data to assess eligibility fully.

The City has not systematically used field survey information to verify the eligibility of the addresses on the contractor billings lists. Field inspections yield important information, including the status and use of the location, which can be critical to determining eligibility. For example, an inspection can establish the number of units in a residential complex or the type of business operated in a commercial location, factors which could make the location ineligible for City-funded trash collection.

A comprehensive field survey of the more than 100,000 addresses on the trash contractor billing lists would be a major undertaking requiring a substantial commitment of time and money. This Citizen Verification Project was designed to yield field survey data in a short timeframe for a minimal cost. To accomplish this, the project used a random sampling methodology to assess the validity of each contractor's August 2010 serviced locations list.

The OIG selected a random sample of between 600 and 700 serviced addresses from each of the three lists, for a total of 2,009 locations. The number of addresses in each sample was determined by statistical formula, based on the total number of serviced addresses on the contractor's list. The number of serviced addresses in each sample is shown below in Table 1.<sup>5</sup>

**TABLE 1**

CONTRACTOR	SERVICED ADDRESSES ON CONTRACTOR'S LIST	SERVICED ADDRESSES IN SAMPLE
Metro Disposal, Inc.	55,943	705
Richards Disposal, Inc.	66,525	699
SDT Waste and Debris Services, L.L.C.	3,437	605
<b>Total</b>	<b>125,905</b>	<b>2,009</b>

OIG staff and volunteers surveyed the 2,009 addresses selected for the three samples and recorded their observations about each property, as described in the Methodology section of this report (Appendix A). Based on these observations, OIG staff attempted to determine whether or not each location was eligible for City-funded trash collection. If there was not enough information to make a determination, the address was classified as unknown. OIG staff then determined the percentage of addresses classified as eligible, ineligible, and unknown in each of the three samples.

<sup>4</sup> The 2008 assessment is discussed in more detail in the OIG's 2009 audit report titled "The Department of Sanitation Contract Oversight Performance Audit," which can be found at [www.nolaog.org](http://www.nolaog.org).

<sup>5</sup> The sample size calculation is not based on equal percentages of the three separate populations. Rather, in statistics, each population is taken into account along with the desired level of confidence and margin of error to yield the minimum number of addresses needed to be sampled from that specific population in order to justifiably make inferences about that population from the sample findings. The OIG randomly sampled more than the minimum required from each of the contractor lists to be 99% confident, with a margin of error of 5%, that each of the samples represents the corresponding population.

Based on the number of randomly selected addresses sampled for each of these three contracts, it is possible to predict, in a scientifically valid manner, the likely number of addresses on each contractor's list that are not eligible for City-funded trash collection. The Project was designed to establish to a 99% probability that the percentage of ineligible addresses on each contractor's list is within 5% of the percentage identified in the sample.

Because this project surveyed only a sample of serviced addresses rather than the entire list, it did not identify all of the ineligible locations. Rather, the project established to a high degree of probability the accuracy of each contractor's list of serviced addresses. This information can be used to extrapolate the likely number of ineligible addresses included in each list.

### Results

The results of this project suggest that there is money to be saved by the City regarding each of the contracts for solid waste collection services:

#### *Metro Disposal, Inc.*

The August 2010 serviced location list for Metro contained a total of 55,943 billable units, from which a random sample of 705 addresses was drawn. All 705 locations were surveyed and classified as eligible, ineligible, or unknown. As seen in Table 2, 90% of the addresses sampled from Metro's list were deemed eligible for City-provided solid waste collection, while 6% were determined ineligible and 4% were classified as unknown.

**TABLE 2**  
*Metro Classification Totals*

CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF SAMPLED ADDRESSES	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL (+/- 5%)
<i>Eligible</i>	636	90% (85 - 95%)
<i>Not Eligible</i>	43	6% (1 - 11%)
<i>Unknown</i>	26	4% (0 - 9%)
<b><i>Sample Total</i></b>	<b>705</b>	<b>100%</b>

(n = 705, Confidence Level of 99% and Margin of Error of 5%)

The survey determined that 43 out of the 705 addresses sampled from Metro's serviced location list – 6% of the sample – were not eligible for City-funded trash collection. Because this survey had a 5% margin of error, it is likely that the actual number of ineligible addresses on Metro's entire list of serviced locations is between 1% and 11% of the total. Metro's list has a total of 55,943 serviced addresses, so the survey suggests that the total number of ineligible addresses on Metro's list is between 559 and 6,154. Maintaining an accurate count of all eligible addresses is a difficult task; hence the proportion of ineligible locations on this list is not alarmingly high. Nonetheless, the City would almost certainly benefit from devoting more effort to monitoring the contract to eliminate ineligible addresses from the list. The unit cost under Metro's contact is \$18.15 per month, so eliminating even 1% (559 addresses) would reduce the monthly cost by \$10,146; eliminating 11% (6,154 addresses) would save the City \$111,695 every month, as shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3***Potential City Savings Based on the Range of Ineligible Addresses on Metro's List*

	<b>1%</b> <b>(559 ADDRESSES)</b>	<b>6%</b> <b>(3,357 ADDRESSES)</b>	<b>11%</b> <b>(6,154 ADDRESSES)</b>
<i>Monthly Savings</i>	\$10,146	\$60,930	\$111,695
<i>Annual Savings</i>	\$121,750	\$731,155	\$1,340,341

*Richards Disposal, Inc.*

The August 2010 serviced location list for Richards contained a total of 66,525 billable units, from which a random sample of 699 addresses was drawn. All 699 locations were surveyed and classified as eligible, ineligible, or unknown. As seen in Table 4, 84% of the addresses sampled from Richard's list were deemed eligible for City-provided solid waste collection, while 7% were determined ineligible and 9% were classified as unknown.

**TABLE 4***Richards Classification Totals*

<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SAMPLED ADDRESSES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL (+/- 5%)</b>
<i>Eligible</i>	584	84% (79 - 89%)
<i>Not Eligible</i>	50	7% (2 - 12%)
<i>Unknown</i>	65	9% (4 - 14%)
<b>Sample Total</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>100%</b>

(n = 699, Confidence Level of 99% and Margin of Error of 5%)

Because this survey has a 5% margin of error, the finding that 7% of the addresses sampled were ineligible indicates that the actual number of ineligible addresses in the entire serviced location list is between 2% and 12%. The entire list contains 66,525 addresses, so it is likely that the total number of ineligible locations is between 1,331 and 7,983. This is not an alarmingly high proportion of ineligible addresses considering the difficulty inherent in the task of accurately counting eligible locations. Nonetheless, the cost of this contract justifies an investment of more effort to monitor billings and eliminate ineligible addresses. In this case, the monthly contract cost is \$22 per unit, so eliminating 1,331 addresses would save \$29,282 per month and eliminating 7,983 addresses would reduce the monthly cost by \$175,626, as shown in Table 5.

**TABLE 5***Potential City Savings Based on the Range of Ineligible Addresses on Richards' List*

	<b>2%</b> <b>(1,331 ADDRESSES)</b>	<b>7%</b> <b>(4,657 ADDRESSES)</b>	<b>12%</b> <b>(7,983 ADDRESSES)</b>
<i>Monthly Savings</i>	\$29,282	\$102,454	\$175,626
<i>Annual Savings</i>	\$351,384	\$1,229,448	\$2,107,512

*SDT Waste and Debris Services, L.L.C.*

The August 2010 serviced location list for SDT contained a total of 3,437 billable units, from which the OIG randomly sampled 605 addresses. All 605 locations were surveyed and classified as eligible, ineligible, or unknown. As seen in Table 6, 44% of the addresses sampled from SDT's list were deemed eligible for City-provided solid waste collection, while 20% were determined ineligible and 36% were classified as unknown.

**TABLE 6**  
*SDT Classification Totals*

<b>CLASSIFICATION</b>	<b>NUMBER OF SAMPLED ADDRESSES</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL (+/- 5%)</b>
<i>Eligible</i>	265	44% (39 - 49%)
<i>Not Eligible</i>	123	20% (15 - 25%)
<i>Unknown</i>	217	36% (31 - 41%)
<b>Sample Total</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>100%</b>

(n = 605, Confidence Level of 99% and Margin of Error of 5%)

The finding that 20% of the addresses sampled were ineligible indicates that the overall rate of error in this serviced location list is very high. The geographic areas covered by this contract include the French Quarter and the Downtown Development District, which have a very high proportion of commercial and mixed-use properties. The extremely high percentage of "unknown" addresses, which could not be readily classified as either eligible or ineligible, demonstrates the challenge of determining which locations fall within the residential or small business classifications that are eligible for City-funded services. Although the task of classifying the eligibility of addresses in these areas is admittedly difficult, the survey identified numerous properties that were obviously ineligible, including the W New Orleans French Quarter Hotel, the Roosevelt Hotel, Rick's Sporting Saloon, Maison DuPuy Hotel, Ramada Plaza Inn, and the Staybridge Suites Hotel. The City's failure to purge these locations from the list for City-funded trash collection raises concerns about whether the City has made a serious effort to monitor this contract.

The sample selected for this survey was drawn from the list provided by the City to the OIG of 3,437 locations served under the SDT contract. However, the OIG compared this list with a bill for August 2010, which showed that SDT charged the City for collecting trash from 4,062 serviced locations. The Director of Sanitation told OIG staff that the City and SDT agreed to use the 4,062 number for billing purposes, based on data from multiple sources. The City could not, however, provide a list that identified the specific locations included in this agreed-upon number.

Because the City does not have an accurate list of serviced locations for SDT, the City cannot effectively monitor this contract. The OIG survey found 20% of the sampled addresses randomly selected from the list provided by the City for SDT's service area were ineligible for service. This survey has a 5% margin of error, which indicates that the actual number of ineligible addresses in the list of 3,437 locations is between 15% and 25%. Out of the list the City provided to the OIG, it is likely that between 516 and 859 are ineligible for City-provided solid waste collection. When the numbers are multiplied by SDT's monthly cost per unit (\$23), the extra cost to the City per month could range anywhere from \$11,868 to \$19,757 per month, as shown in Table 7.

**TABLE 7***Potential City Savings Based on the Range of Ineligible Addresses on SDT's List*

	<b>15%</b> <b>(516 ADDRESSES)</b>	<b>20%</b> <b>(687 ADDRESSES)</b>	<b>25%</b> <b>(859 ADDRESSES)</b>
<i>Monthly Savings</i>	\$11,868	\$15,801	\$19,757
<i>Annual Savings</i>	\$142,416	\$189,612	\$237,084

This Citizen Verification Project, which was completed in less than two weeks, provides important data to City managers. This data demonstrates the vital role of effective contract monitoring to ensure that the City obtains the services citizens have a right to expect for their tax dollars. Investing resources in maintaining accurate counts on the number of eligible locations served by the City's trash collectors and regularly purging the lists of ineligible locations can pay dividends in cost savings.

#### Considerations

This Citizen Verification Project should not be interpreted as being a finite evaluation of all potential erroneous billings. The Director of the Sanitation Department should take additional steps to address potential erroneous billings for situations which may conflict with the restrictions articulated in City Code Sec. 138-45. For example, the Director should ensure that the contractor lists do not include eligible addresses multiple times and should ensure that locations that do not qualify for the City-provided solid waste service are not billed to the City. There were several addresses in this project's sample which were not found upon visual inspection of the address. In some cases, the address was combined with another to form a single family dwelling occupying more than a single municipal lot. Similarly, other addresses once belonged to the half of a "double" which was renovated into a single family dwelling. In New Orleans, many homes originally constructed as "doubles" have been renovated into single family dwellings that still look like multiple family residences, suggesting there may be many ineligible addresses included on the lists that were not captured by this survey. Potentially, multiple addresses could be assigned to a single family dwelling, thereby causing the City to pay multiple times for one residence.

The addresses on the billing list should be cross-referenced with City resources, such as Safety and Permits and the Assessor, to determine the precise number of dwelling units for the address. This will ensure the City is not being overbilled for single family dwellings and it will also protect the City from paying for multi-dwelling units that otherwise qualify as "condominium, apartment, or other residential complexes containing five or more residential units" which must contract for private waste collection as provided in City Code Sec. 138-45.

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## OIG-CVP-10001

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### Methodology

*Sample Size.* Each contractor list served as a unique population from which an independent and random sample was drawn. The City provided these lists, which were formatted in separate Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, enabling the OIG to use the computer program Active Data to randomly select the addresses to be included in the survey. The sample sizes were as follows: Metro (n = 705), Richards (n = 699), and SDT (n = 605).<sup>1</sup> Sample sizes were determined by using a mathematical calculation that would yield the minimum number of locations needed to be surveyed per list to ensure 99% confidence in the findings, with a margin of error of 5%.

*Observers.* Seventy-six trained observers (65 citizen volunteers and 11 employees of the Office of Inspector General) surveyed a total of 2,009 addresses throughout the City of New Orleans over a 5-day period. The citizen volunteers were recruited via an email sent to the leaders of approximately 20 organizations in partnership with Common Good, including educational, faith-based, and civic groups representing a diverse population of citizens in New Orleans. The email called for interested citizens to attend a mandatory training session to learn how to assist the OIG in surveying the sample of addresses throughout the City. The volunteers were also told they would be provided with a copy of the final report and a debriefing on the findings after the completion of the study.

*Volunteer Training.* All volunteers were required to attend the OIG training session developed for the current project.<sup>2</sup> The OIG conducted the training at Loyola University on three separate nights to accommodate interested volunteers. At the start of the session, volunteers were introduced to the project and informed of their responsibilities. Volunteer responsibilities included completing the training, committing to approximately 2 to 3 hours of data collection, meeting a firm deadline for submitting their survey forms, and serving as a professional representative of the project. Upon committing to the project, volunteers were assigned a minimum of one packet, depending on how many addresses they were willing to survey. Each packet consisted of a unique Survey Form (Appendix B), a copy of the Survey Guidelines (Appendix C), a set of tips and best practices for surveying properties (Appendix D), a map marking each of the addresses for that packet (Appendix E), and an information card (Appendix F).

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<sup>1</sup> The serviced locations lists provided by Metro and Richards contained the exact number of units these firms invoiced to the City; however, the list provided by SDT contained 3,437 serviced locations, which did not correspond to the number of units charged to the City (4,062). When asked about the discrepancy, the director of the Sanitation Department said the house count of 4,062 was “agreed upon by all parties” and was determined by assimilating “multiple data sources.” Because the City was unable to provide a serviced locations list for SDT that contained the same number of locations billed to the City, the OIG selected a random sample from the 3,437 locations provided for SDT.

<sup>2</sup> The OIG trained staff members from Beacon of Hope Resource Center and lowernine.org to train citizens involved with their organizations unable to make one of the Loyola training sessions.

### *Materials*

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The following materials were provided to the trained observers by the OIG:

*Survey Form.* The Survey Form (Appendix B) was the sheet used by observers to record their observations for each address surveyed. There were a total of 255 unique survey forms, each containing a maximum of ten sampled addresses from the same zip code. Across the top of the form were five categories under which space was provided for the surveyor to mark observations about each address. The categories of interest and the corresponding response options were as follows: A. Property Type (e.g. Commercial, Residential, Vacant Lot, Other, Unknown); B. Commercial Type (e.g. Bar, Restaurant, Hotel, Other, Unknown); C. Property Appearance (e.g. Occupied, Abandoned, Construction, Unknown); D. Number of Visible Mailboxes and Electricity Meters, and E. Number of Residential Units. The Survey Form also contained space to indicate whether the information provided by the volunteer was verified by the resident of the property, a neighbor of the property, or by a photo, and a section for additional comments.

*Survey Guidelines.* The Survey Guidelines (Appendix C) contained the definitions of each response option on the Survey Form.<sup>3</sup> This sheet was provided to the volunteers and reviewed comprehensively to ensure all observers understood how to describe the properties.

*Observation Tips & Best Practices.* Every volunteer was given a sheet of observation tips and best practices (Appendix D) to maximize safety when surveying in unfamiliar neighborhoods. These recommendations were obtained from the Beacon of Hope Resource Center, whose staff members have extensive experience surveying properties throughout New Orleans.

*Map.* The Beacon of Hope Resource Center used a GIS system to plot clusters of addresses in close proximity on a series of maps to be included in the volunteer packets. See Appendix E for an example.

*Information Card.* Attached to each volunteer packet were at least two information cards (Appendix F) containing the name of the project and contact information for the volunteer coordinator and project leader. Volunteers were instructed to give the card to anyone encountered in the field curious about the project.

### *Data Collection*

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Volunteers were instructed to complete the survey forms to the best of their ability according to the training, and to elaborate with as much detail about each property as possible. Volunteers did not make eligibility decisions; rather, once the survey forms were returned, two OIG employees independently reviewed the information and, to the best of their ability given the information provided, classified each property as eligible, ineligible, or unknown.

*Eligibility Determination.* Eligibility was determined based on information obtained from the City's sanitation ordinance, the sanitation department's contracts with the service providers, and the director of the sanitation department. The OIG employees making the eligibility decisions used the information provided by the volunteers to make their best judgment. When eligibility was unclear, the address was classified as unknown.

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<sup>3</sup> The OIG referenced the City's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to define each of the response options.

If a property was identified as commercial, the type of commercial activity was subsequently provided. Any address identified as a bar, restaurant, or hotel was classified as ineligible, unless the address also contained a residence, in which case the property was classified as eligible. If the surveyor was unsure as to whether a residence was attached, the OIG classified the property as unknown. If a commercial property was identified as “other”, the OIG classified it as unknown.<sup>4</sup> Properties identified as residential with one to four units were classified as eligible and any residences with five or more units were classified as ineligible. If the number of units could not be determined, the property was classified as unknown.

Regardless of type of property, if an address was identified as “abandoned” by a volunteer, and other information included on the survey form supported that observation, the property was classified as ineligible. For example, if a property appeared to be an abandoned home, the OIG would look at other factors, such as whether the property was missing an electricity meter, before making an eligibility determination. If there was insufficient evidence of abandonment, the property was classified as unknown.

#### *Data analysis*

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Inter-rater reliability was calculated to determine the relationship between eligibility decisions made for survey forms submitted by volunteers and survey forms submitted by OIG staff. A total of 153 addresses were randomly sampled from all of the addresses surveyed by trained volunteers; a minimum of 50 from each contractor sample. OIG employees visited these locations, and independent of what the volunteers previously recorded, noted their observations. When the reliability data were returned, the two OIG employees who determined eligibility status for all sampled properties reviewed the newly submitted reliability surveys and made a second eligibility determination for the addresses surveyed twice. The two raters were blind to the determinations they had made previously for the same properties. The two independent classifications were then compared using Pearson’s product-moment correlation to yield a correlation coefficient of .65.

After all of the addresses were classified and inter-rater reliability was established, the percentages of eligible, ineligible, and unknown addresses were calculated separately for each of the contractor samples (See Tables 2-7).

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<sup>4</sup> Volunteers were instructed to make a one-time visual inspection of each property. Due to this methodology, volunteers were not able to determine how much trash a small business produces on a weekly basis, which is what determines whether or not it qualifies for solid waste services from the City. As a result, all small businesses other than bars, restaurants, and hotels (which are ineligible) were classified as unknown, unless less than 5 residential units were attached to the address, making the location eligible.

Please check ALL boxes that apply for categories A-C, & F and write in responses for categories D, E, & as needed in \*G.

#	Address	A. Property Type:					B. If <u>Commercial</u> , what type?				C. Property Appearance				D. Please write the number of visible:		E. If <u>Residence</u> , write the # of units:		F. Observation Verification			*G. Use this space to elaborate if you checked "Other" or "Don't Know" for any categories and/or to add details about your observation.	OIG	
		Commercial	Residential	Vacant Lot	Other*	Don't Know*	Bar	Restaurant	Hotel	Other*	Don't Know*	Occupied	Abandoned	Construction	Don't Know*	Mailboxes	Electricity Meters	Number	Don't Know*	Spoke w/Resident	Spoke w/Neighbor			Photo Attached
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2																								
3																								
4																								
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APPENDIX B

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Survey Guidelines

### A. Property Type:

Commercial – Property on which the building, or portion of, used to provide a for-profit service or product to the general public.

Residential – Building, or portion of, designed and used by one or more individuals or families as a dwelling. Examples include single- or multiple-unit houses, apartment complexes, condominiums, town houses, bed and breakfasts, group homes, dormitories, and alternative dwellings attached to commercial properties.

Vacant Lot – Parcel of land void of any buildings.

\*Other – Property on which the building, or portion of, is not used for residential or commercial purposes. Examples include non-organizations and churches. *Please specify the type of property in comment section.*

\*Don't Know – Properties on which use of land and/or building(s) is unknown. *Please elaborate in comment section.*

### B. If Commercial, what type?

Bar – Establishment sells alcoholic beverages for consumption on/off premises.

Restaurant – Establishment where prepared foods, desserts, or beverages are offered for sale for consumption on or off the premises and where the sales of such, exclusive of alcoholic beverages, constitute 50% or more of the revenue for said establishment (excluding snowball stands).

Hotel – Building containing fifteen (15) or more individual sleeping rooms or suites, having each a private bath attached thereto, and rented in their entirety to a single party, for the purpose of providing overnight lodging facilities to the general public for compensation.

\*Other – Establishment determined not to be a bar, restaurant, or hotel. *Please write the name and/or type of business in comment section.*

\*Don't Know – Establishment for which the use cannot be determined. *Please elaborate in comment section.*

### C. Property Appearance:

Occupied – People are observed entering and/or leaving property lawfully; grass and weeds appear maintained; property is receiving mail/newspaper; and house appears secure.

Abandoned – Doors & windows boarded up or not secure; significant trash on lot; plants & weeds not maintained (> 18 inches); and appears hazardous (i.e. roof falling in, abandoned equipment).

Construction – Property is currently being repaired and/or renovated.

\*Don't Know – Unable to determine one of the above. *Please elaborate in comment section.*

### D. Number of (visible):

Mailboxes – Write the number of mailboxes attached to the property being observed.

Electricity Meters – Write the number of electricity meters attached to the property being observed.

### E. If Residence, how many units?

Number – Write the number of units (i.e. apartments, condos, etc.) contained or attached to the property being observed.

\*Don't Know – Number of residential units cannot be determined. *Please elaborate in comment section.*

### F. Observation Verification:

Spoke w/Resident – Check this box if you verified your data with the resident of the property.

Spoke w/Neighbor – Check this box if you verified your data with a neighbor of the property.

Photo Attached – Check this box if you took any pictures of this property and they are included with the data you returned.

### Observation Tips and Best Practices

- *Always let someone know when and where you are observing, and when you return from surveying.*
- *Carry a cell phone for emergencies.*
- *Consider carrying mace for personal safety.*
- *Conduct your observations in pairs or with a friend.*
- *Conduct your observations during the day.*
- *Always be aware of your surroundings and use your best judgment if entering an unfamiliar neighborhood.*
- *Walking onto property could be considered trespassing. Use your best judgment when attempting to count mail boxes, electricity meters, etc.*
- *If you are unsure about a property, mark "Don't Know" and elaborate as best you can in the comment section.*

*If you encounter any problems, please contact:*

*Dr. Michael Cowan  
Common Good  
(504)864-7081  
[mcowan@loyno.edu](mailto:mcowan@loyno.edu)*

*-or-*

*Dr. Sarah Fontenelle  
Office of Inspector General  
Office: (504) 681-3200  
[surveys@nolaioig.org](mailto:surveys@nolaioig.org)*



**Legend**

**Packet Number**

- <all other values>

**Packet**

- P026-70119
- P027-70121
- P027-70122
- P028-70122
- P029-70122

# Packet 26



Data Sources: 2006 Parcels, 2008 Streets, and 2007 Parks from CNOGIS, and 2006 Water from US Census

Disclaimer: The data herein, including but not limited to geographic data, tabular data, analytical data, electronic data structures or files, are provided "as is" without warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, or statutory, including, but not limited to, the implied warranties or merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose.

**APPENDIX F**

**CITIZEN VERIFICATION PROJECT**

COMMON GOOD  
In conjunction with  
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL/  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

**For questions about volunteers:**  
**Dr. Michael Cowan, Common Good**  
(504) 864-7081 mcowan@loyno.edu

**For questions about surveys:**  
**Dr. Sarah Fontenelle, Office of Inspector General**  
(504) 681-3200 surveys@nolaog.org

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(504) 864-7081 mcowan@loyno.edu

**For questions about surveys:**  
**Dr. Sarah Fontenelle, Office of Inspector General**  
(504) 681-3200 surveys@nolaog.org

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