

APPENDIX D

New Orleans Tour Offerings Research

New Orleans is an excellent subject for economic opportunity tied to dark tourism. The city has a thriving tourism industry and few places have their cultural identity made up of a mingling of empirical history, folklore, film, curious history, and magical thinking as does New Orleans, Louisiana (NOLA). As a personal observation, I have been to few American cities with as high a density of walking tours offered. You could hardly throw a stone in the French Quarter without hitting one tour group or another.

In order to administer tours in New Orleans, a tour guide must be licensed by the city Ground Transportation Bureau. Applicants must be 18 or older and not convicted of a felony in the past 5 years. Additionally, all applicants must “Pass written test on history and culture of New Orleans with a minimum score of 70%. At the discretion of the Department of Safety and Permits the applicant may be required to have a verbal examination and an interview.” A permit is valid for 2 years, expiring on the applicant’s birthday. The initial fee is \$50 and \$20 for each renewal. Planners and Companies permit holders must additionally reside and maintain an office in Orleans Parish. The permit cost is \$500.00 per year for Tour Planners (Category 1) and \$1,000.00 per year for Tour Companies (Category 2). They are also required to be insured.

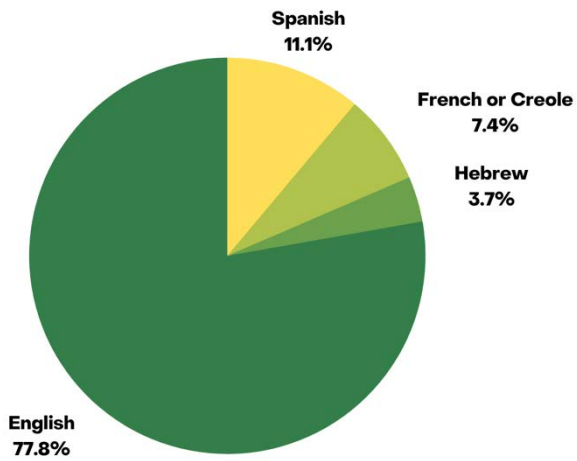
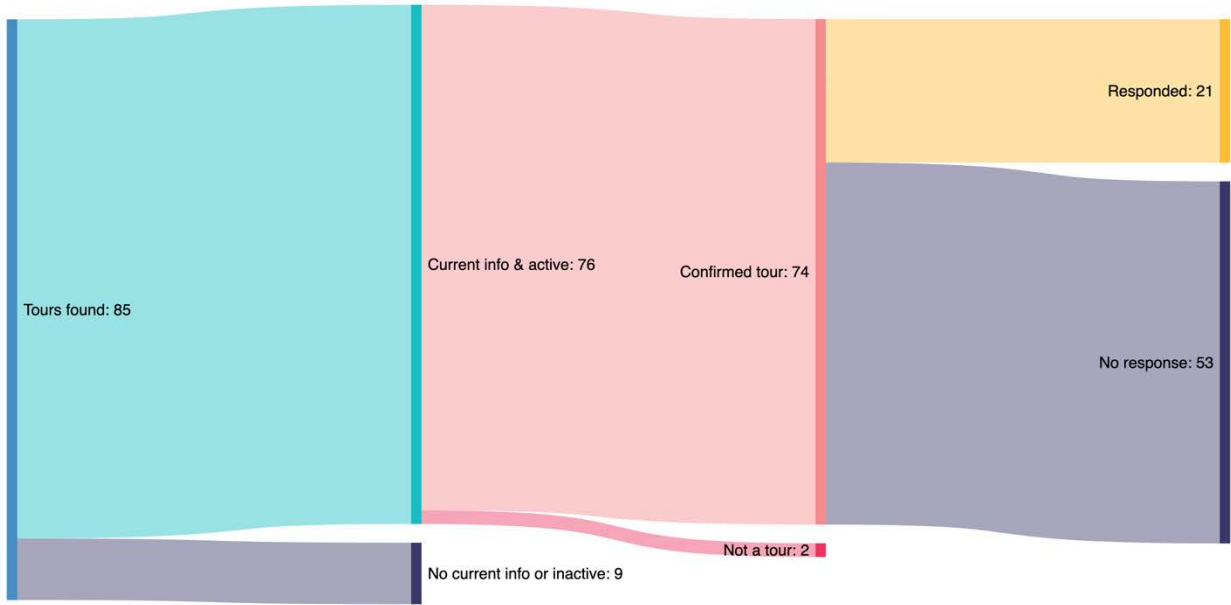
Hypothesis:

A large portion of New Orleans, Louisiana tours incorporate dark history, folklore, and fiction. For the purpose of this survey, dark history included sites of suffering or death. This includes cemeteries, true crime locations, battlefields, memorials, and locations associated with slavery or genocide.

Methodology:

I collected a list of tours and guides through searching the City of New Orleans tour license records, the city’s tourism website, key word Google searches, and searching each list I found on the topic.

I compiled a list of 85 apparently active tour guides or companies. I searched individual websites, tour company listings, and Facebook business pages for contact information, but 9 tour guides or companies did not have current contact information available or were seemingly inactive and appeared to not hold tours in the last few years. Of the remaining 76, two companies were listed as tours, but are static attractions—a haunted house and an animal encounter. I contacted the remaining 74 actual tours which appeared to be active tours with current contact information with a request to complete this survey. Of this group of 74, 21 tour representatives responded. 30% of respondents were from tours titled in such a way that the name indicates they have some degree of dark or supernatural content. Almost a quarter of the larger group solicited had names that indicate the tour includes dark or fantastic content—including words like paranormal, ghosts, spectral, phantoms, Voodoo, etc.



Only four websites I reviewed advertised tours in languages other than English. Spanish (3), Creole/French (2), or Hebrew (1).

Six offered tours under a parent company that offers tours in other cities in the U.S. or internationally, while the rest were solely based in New Orleans.



Survey as Administered

New Orleans Tours Survey

I'm researching the content of tours which take place in New Orleans, Louisiana. My name is Darby Campbell-Firkus. I am conducting this survey as part of my internship with McDoux Preservation LLC. I am currently a Public History, Historic Preservation and Cultural Resource Management M.A. student at Middle Tennessee State University. This information will be used as quantitative data about the content of tours in New Orleans and the growth of dark history topics in the tourism industry. I'd like to hear from tours that don't have dark history offerings, too!

I greatly appreciate your participation!

If you do not want to answer a question, you can simply leave it blank and fill out the rest of the survey.

If you would like your tour company to be listed by name, please let me know, otherwise, it will be anonymous.

If you have any questions or would like to share more information, please feel free to reach out to me at Darby.Campbell@mtsu.edu

1. What is the name of your tour company?
2. What year did you start offering tours?
3. Do your tours include any of the following subjects/topics?*

(Select all that apply.)

- a. Dark history
- b. True crime
- c. Cemetery
- d. Murder
- e. Death
- f. Suffering
- g. Torture (i.e. Madame LaLaurie)
- h. Voodoo, Conjure, or Hoodoo
- i. Folklore
- j. Ghosts
- k. Vampire, Werewolves, any monster or cryptid

- l. Sites or stories connected to fiction- literary, television, or film
 - m. Slavery
 - n. Plantations
 - o. Architecture
 - p. War
 - q. Political History
 - r. Black History
 - s. Women's History
 - t. Natural Disasters
 - u. Other (please specify)
4. If you originally did not offer tours that included content concerning: dark history, true crime, cemetery, murder, death, suffering, ghosts, vampires, or slavery, but currently offer them—what year did you start offering tours on any of the subjects listed above?
5. Do your tours include any of the following offerings?
(Please select all that apply.)
- a. Day Time Hours
 - b. Night Time Hours
 - c. Walking Tour
 - d. Bus, Streetcar, or Carriage Tour
 - e. Water vehicle
 - f. Alcohol
 - g. Food
 - h. Adult Only
 - i. Tours for Families or Children
 - j. Souvenir Shop Stop
 - k. Other (please specify)
6. Do your tour offerings fluctuate seasonally?
7. Do you have higher numbers during Voodoo fest or the Halloween season than the rest of the year?
- a. Yes.
 - b. Yes, but it matches other peak tourism times like Mardi Gras.
 - c. No.
8. How many employees (including volunteers) does your company employ?
9. On average, about how many attendees do you give tours to annually? (A ballpark estimate is fine!)
10. On average, how much revenue does your tour service yield annually?

*Notes on question 3

While the academic definition of “dark history” is generally understood in the circles of those who study the topic, those who interpret or work in the places labeled as dark history sites often balk at the characterization. In order to parse out how tour guides self-identified their content, I divided out the “dark history/tourism” label into as many subcategories as possible. Some of the topics listed do not fall under conventional understandings of dark tourism, but rather an expanded definition of historical offerings which incorporates folklore, cultural identities, and a sites relationship to fiction.

Findings

As a matter of confidentiality, this report will not identify individuals by tour guide or company name except where permitted.

Three respondents said that they did not originally offer tours with the listed dark history topics, but started offering them in 2011, 2013, and 2017 in response to the market demands.

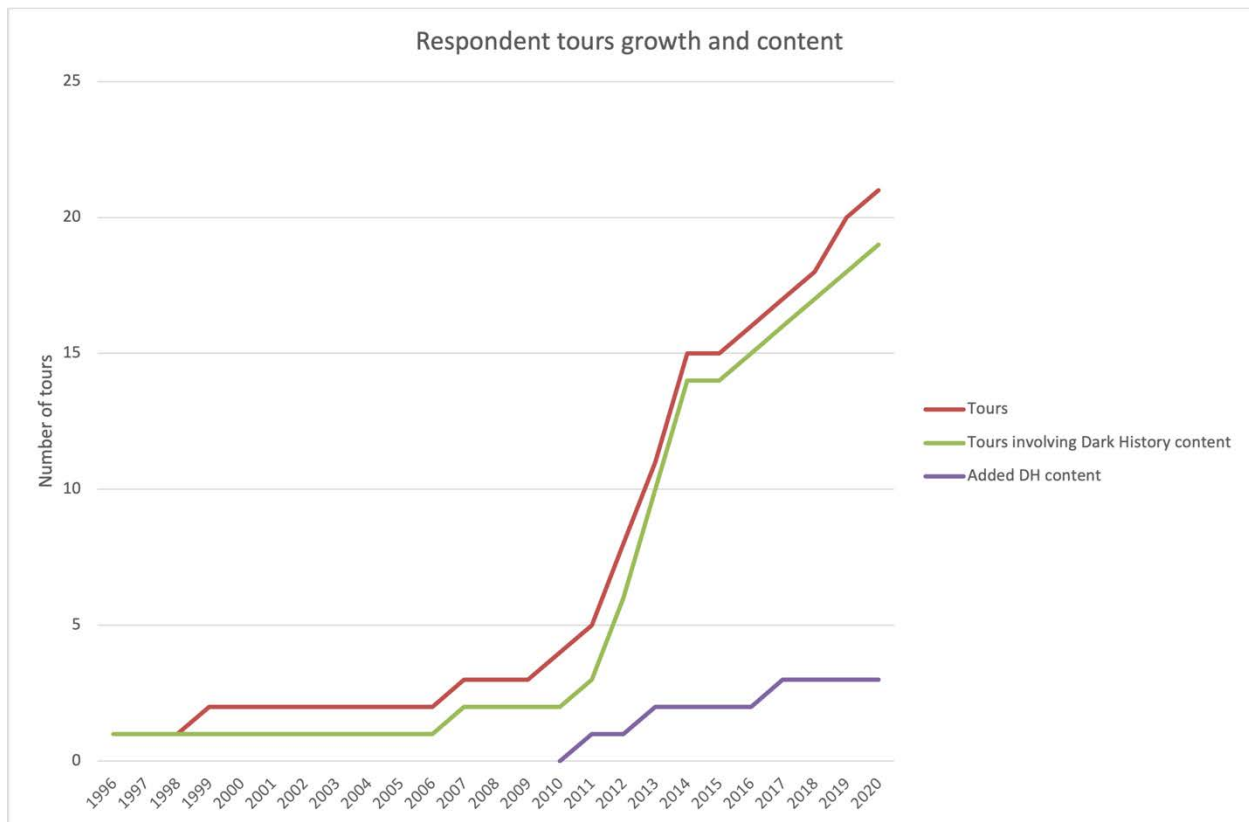


Figure 1 Combines survey questions 2 and 4.

Dark history	28.57%
True crime	38.10%
Cemetery	57.14%
Murder	33.33%
Death	33.33%
Suffering	23.81%
Torture (i.e. Madame LaLaurie)	23.81%
Voodoo, Conjure, or Hoodoo	57.14%
Folklore	33.33%
Ghosts	23.81%
Vampires, Werewolves, any monster or cryptid	19.05%
Sites or stories connected to fiction - literary, television, or film	47.62%
Slavery	66.67%
Plantations	33.33%
Architecture	66.67%
War	33.33%
Political History	47.62%
Black History	47.62%
Women's History	52.38%
Natural Disasters	52.38%

Figure 2 Question 3 Tour Topics responses with exact percentages (graph below)

Only 28.5% self-identified as including dark history offerings, even though over 90% of respondents indicated an inclusion of some facet of dark tourism content as traditionally defined.

Likewise, the most puzzling finding of the tour survey responses was that while 66.67% of respondents said their tours included the topic of slavery, but only 47.62% selected Black History as a topic. This indicates that 4 of the tour guides don't view slavery as a part of Black History.

"Other" answers for question 3 included prostitution content and nature tours.

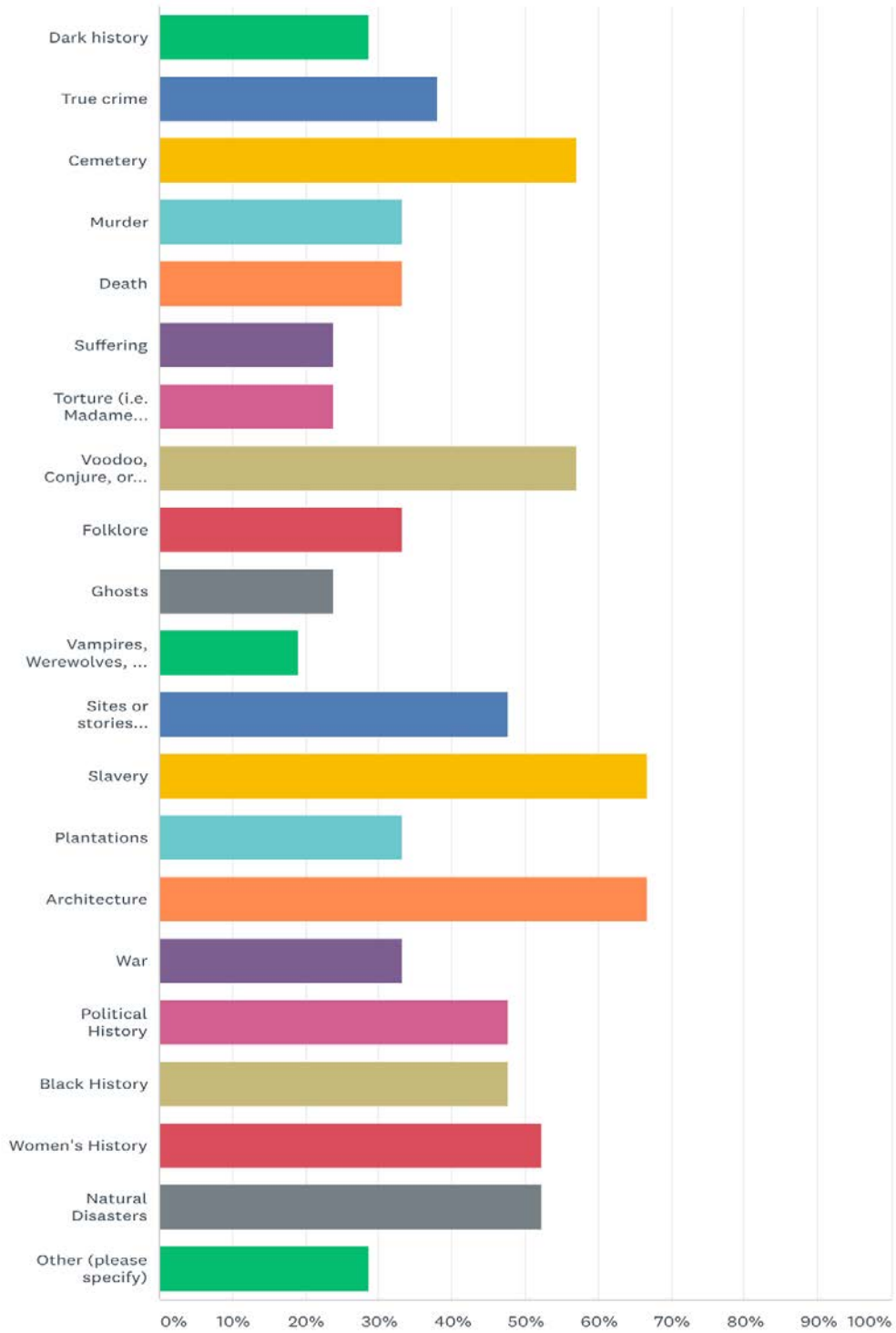


Figure 3 Question 3 responses

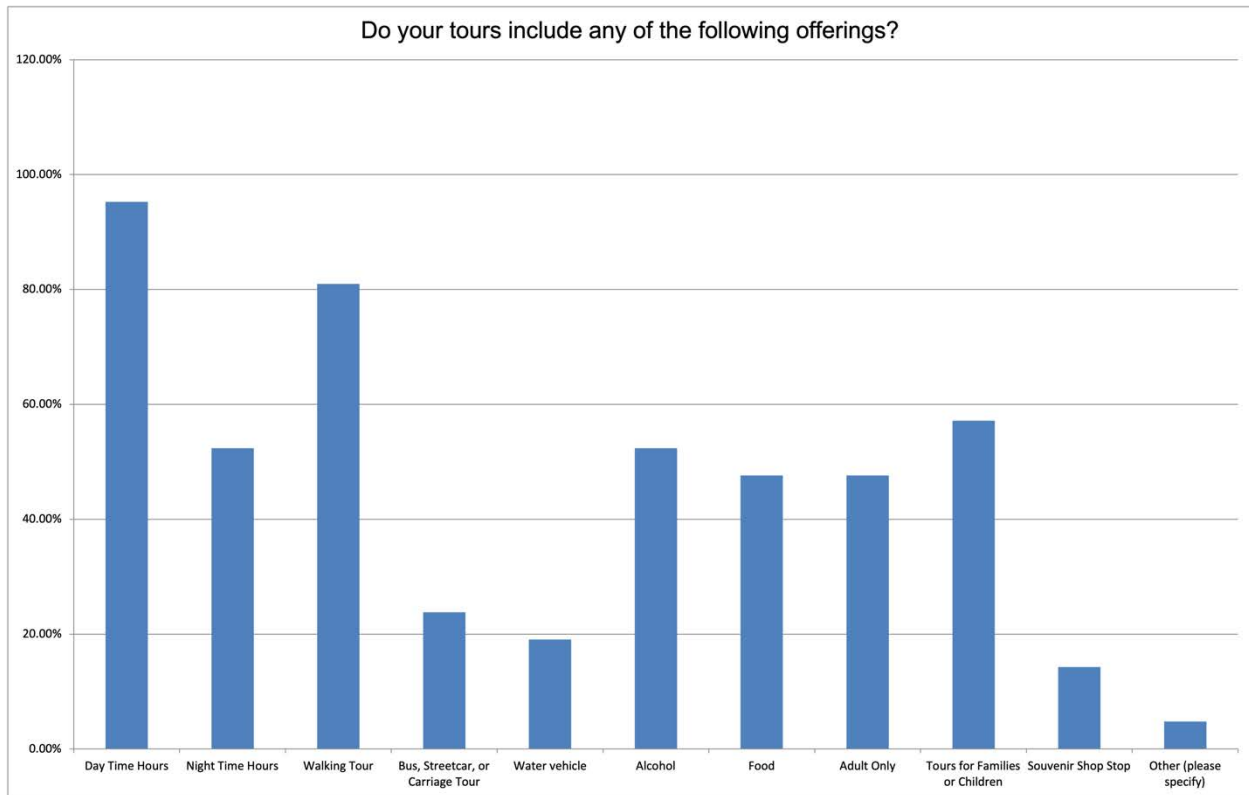


Figure 4 Question 5 Tour Offerings responses

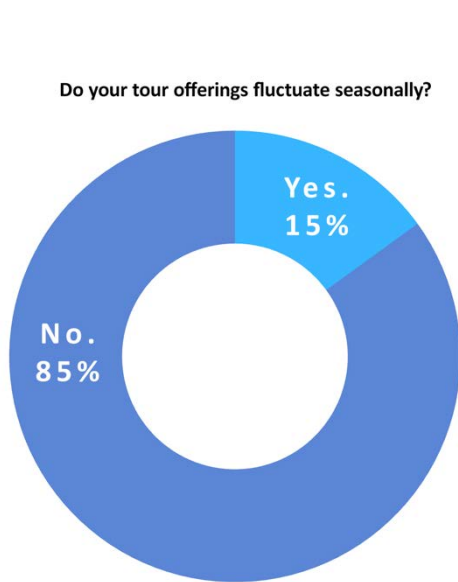


Figure 6 Question 6 responses

Do you have higher numbers during Voodoo fest or the Halloween season than the rest of the year?

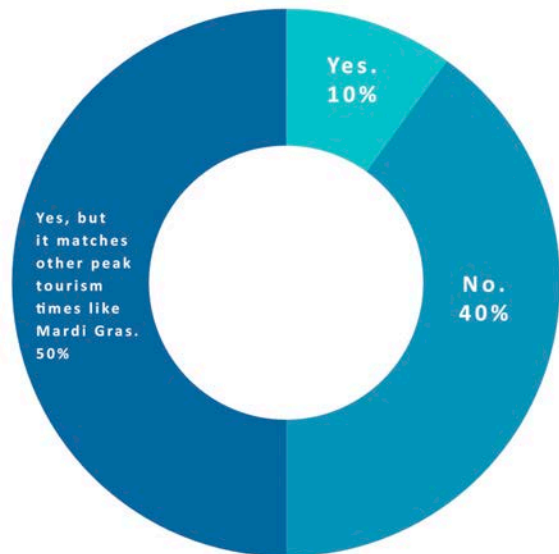
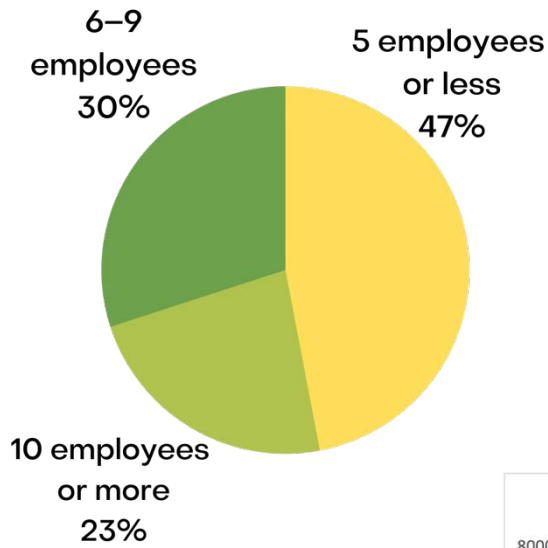
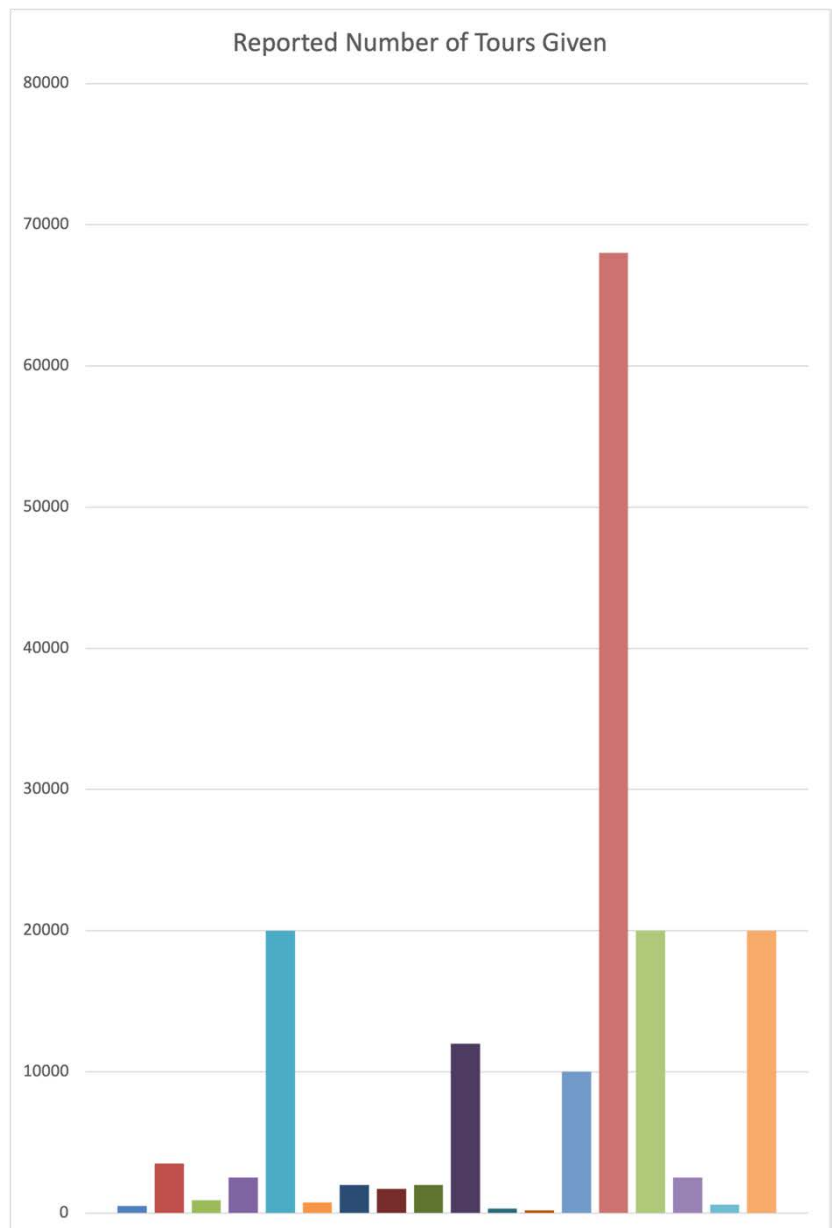


Figure 5 Question 7 responses



Of the 17 responding tour companies, the average number of employees is 7, with almost half (47%) having 5 or less employees and less than a quarter (23%) having 10 or more.

When asked about the number of tourists they see annually, the 18 responding tour companies give an average of 9,300 tours each year. The company sizes were evenly distributed. The smaller companies (33%) gave less than 1,000 tours, gave the larger companies (33%) gave 10,000 or more tours, and the mid-sized third stayed in the 1,700-3,500 range. The largest reported number of annual tours was 68,000 and the smallest was 300. Notably, the high-end outlier gives waterway tours to literal boatloads of tourists.



The most profitable tour from the pool of respondents is a nature-focused aquatic tour that annually yields a reported ~\$1.5 million.

The most lucrative on-the-ground tour of any responding company is a dark tourism themed adult-only walking tour which offers tours day or night covering the broadest spectrum of topics connected to dark tourism- including folklore, fiction, magic, and the paranormal.

Respondent comments (edited for spelling):

“Pretty much all history is a history of human suffering and while it's a little macabre that so many people want to visit a site like Auschwitz at the same time it would be perhaps much worse to not allow anyone to see it... Ghost tours, which I don't conduct, are a different animal altogether. They are more like a theatrical performance with a ghost tour guide telling a story (usually some sort of local folklore) in grotesque detail. You can trace the history of these particular tours to the late 19th century and the George Washington Cable book *Strange True Stories*. I'm pretty sure it's the first published mention of the Lalaurie mansion.

Also, probably worth mentioning *The French Quarter underworld* by Herbert Asbury. Asbury collected a bunch of 19th century tabloids and rewrote them. It's entertaining reading though I'd venture to guess not at all historically accurate.

I bring this up because New Orleans has a long dark history and has almost as long as history of tour operators profiting from its long dark history. Much of this comes from Anne Rice books being so popular in the 90s and *Haunted History* which is the oldest ghost tour operator in the city (I think). They come from a long line of liars. And in their defense, there is a huge market for it. When people come to New Orleans they think of ghost tours, it's on everyone's bucket list, they want to be scared and hear the grotesque.

The French Quarter was at one point the largest slave market in the South, so I think it's hard to separate our "dark" history from just our regular history. All the wealthy families who formed Mardi Gras krewes come from slave and sugar money. Their profits are directly tied to human suffering (aren't all profits though?). First comes laughter, then comes tears and both comedy and tragedy are intertwined in the history of this city, there's a reason that this is the most common Mardi Gras decoration you'll see on people's houses.”

“The typical New Orleans Cemetery tour is not a dark history tour.”

“I have performed research on the gendering of ghosts, murder ballads, and my thesis is on the agency of prostitutes in 19th century New Orleans. We need more historians in the field and

more historians working to correct some of the romanticized and mythologized, as well as apocryphal, history that exists in areas like tourism.

You will notice from our survey that we do not focus on slavery (especially a bad idea in haunted history) and our Madame Lalaurie story is the only thing that comes close, also focusing on the gendering of crime and ghosts. Our tour stories are curated and/or approved by me. Even on the ghost tour. My goal as the historian in the company is to correct some of these issues and encourage the industry as a whole to participate in changing the often-bad reputation of how tour guides (walking, carriage, and bus) present New Orleans history.

“Due to the other large events in the city highly commercialized events like Mardi Gras and Voodoo Fest (including the Halloween season) are actually much slower for tours than non-large event seasons. During Mardi Gras it is very difficult to compete with a free parade - and during Halloween there are so many "haunted house" attractions that pop up just for the season that they take away from our business.”

“One more thing, we have streetcars not trolleys!”
(The survey originally mislabeled the streetcars as trolleys, which was promptly corrected.)

“We only offer cemetery tours as it pertains to architecture, and historical funerary customs. We do not involve ourselves in ghost stories or anything of that nature, as it does not fit under that category of Architecture. The vampire and ghost tour companies can do a better job of it, I think.”

“The history of humanity is the history of suffering.”

Fiction as a Tourism Driver

If vampires were real, where would they live in America? Thanks to Anne Rice's *The Vampire Chronicles* and Charlaine Harris' Southern Vampire series (basis for the True Blood television show), most people would guess New Orleans, though New York City and Forks, Washington would be popular answers as well.

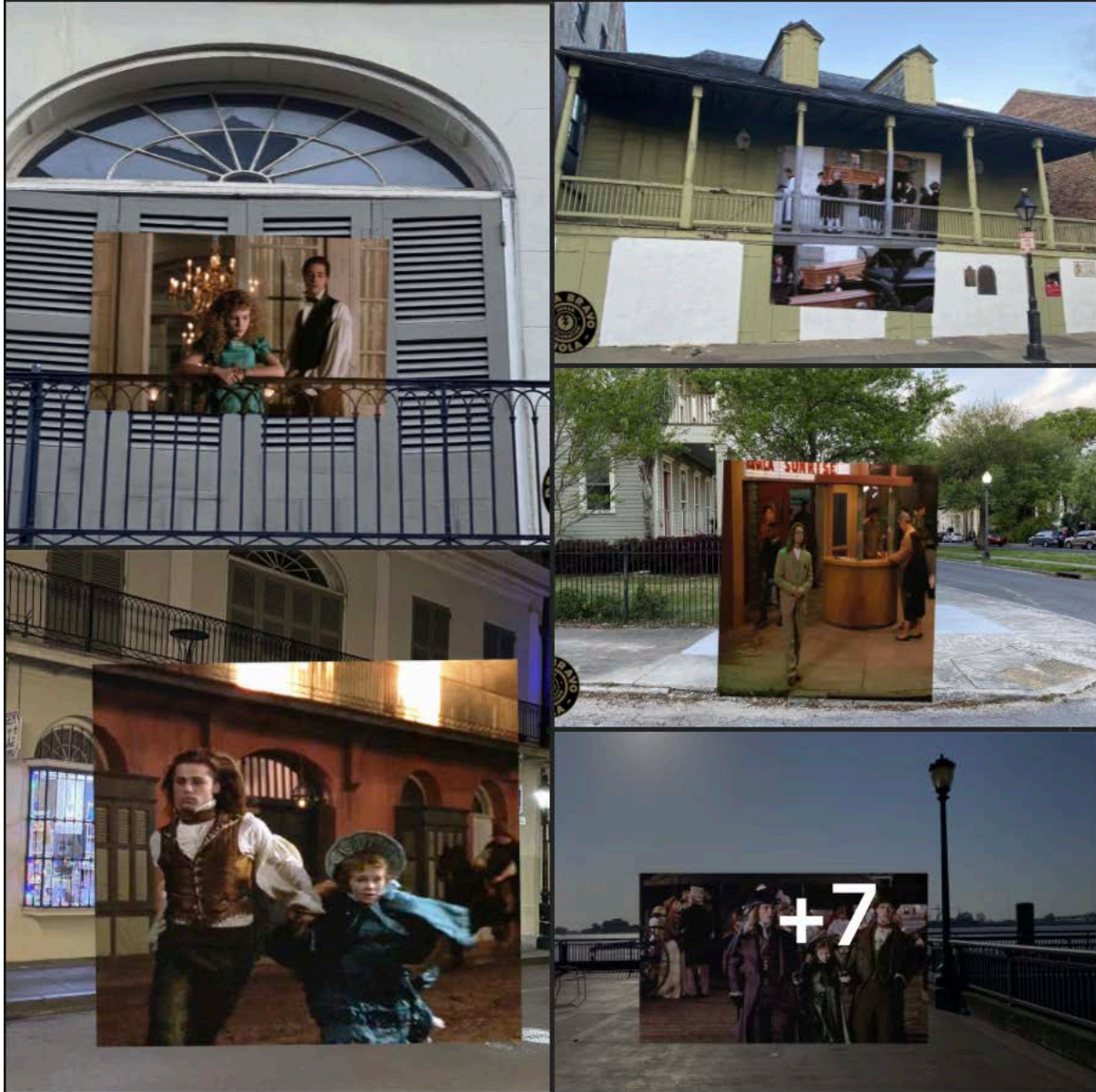
New Orleans is a popular setting for works of literary fiction, television, and films. Almost half of survey respondents said their tours included sites associated with these types of entertainment. One tour company, New Orleans Movie & TV Tours, exclusively focuses on nearly 200 movies and television shows associated with NOLA. The city serves as a fictional or real setting in over a thousand works of fiction.

Some of the major works include:

<i>12 Years A Slave</i>	<i>Jurassic World</i>
<i>21 Jump Street</i>	<i>King Creole</i>
<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>	<i>The Magnificent Seven</i>
<i>American Horror Story: Coven</i>	<i>NCIS: New Orleans</i>
<i>American Horror Story: Freakshow</i>	<i>Now You See Me</i>
<i>The Big Easy</i>	<i>Oldboy (2010 Remake)</i>
<i>The Big Short</i>	<i>The Originals</i>
<i>The Curious Case of Benjamin Button</i>	<i>The Pelican Brief</i>
<i>Daddy's Home</i>	<i>Pitch Perfect 2</i>
<i>Dallas Buyers Club</i>	<i>The Princess and the Frog</i>
<i>Dawn of the Planet of the Apes</i>	<i>Ray</i>
<i>Déjà Vu</i>	<i>Runaway Jury</i>
<i>Django Unchained</i>	<i>Scream Queens</i>
<i>Double Jeopardy</i>	<i>Skeleton Key</i>
<i>Easy Rider</i>	<i>Streetcar Named Desire</i>
<i>Gone with the Wind</i>	<i>Terminator: Genisys</i>
<i>The Green Book</i>	<i>True Detective</i>
<i>Interview with the Vampire</i>	<i>Twilight: Breaking Dawn</i>
<i>Jack Reacher: Never Go Back</i>	<i>Vampire Diaries</i>
<i>James Bond: Live and Let Die</i>	<i>Vieux Carre</i>
<i>JFK</i>	<i>X-Men Origins: Wolverine</i>

After Hurricane Katrina, Six Flags New Orleans was shut down but reborn as a major film set. The abandoned amusement park has been the set for *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, *Jurassic World*, *Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters*, *Killer Joe*, and *Stolen*.

For the Anne Rice fans out there.



Danny Johnson ▸ New Orleans Uncovered

April 9 at 8:01 AM · 🌐

Interview with the Vampire (1994)

Filming locations ~ Nola

Figure 7 Facebook post showing film stills from Interview with a Vampire overlaid in the actual locations filming took place.

American Horror Story: Coven reignites interest in local haunts



Figure 7 Buckner Mansion 1410 Jackson Avenue



Figure 9 Lafayette Cemetery No 1 located on Washington Ave. in the Garden District



Figure 10 The former location of Marie Laveau's cottage located in the French Quarter



Figure 11 Historical image of the LaLaurie Mansion located in the French Quarter

The Buckner Mansion was built utilizing slave labor in 1856 by Henry Sullivan Buckner and his vast cotton fortune. For a period it served as Soule College, one of the first business schools in the South. The antebellum mansion is purportedly “haunted” and can be rented for \$4,000 a night. While it has long been crowning architectural gem of the Garden District, the home became wildly popular after it was featured as “Miss Robichaux's Academy for Exceptional Young Ladies.” The same can be said of the nearby Lafayette Cemetery No 1 which was also portrayed.

The historical figures Marie Laveau, known as “The Voodoo Queen,” and Madame Delphine LaLaurie, a woman infamous for the grotesque torture of enslaved peoples, were also featured on American Horror Story: Coven breathing new life into their mythologies. These larger-than-life characters have been elevated beyond verifiable history through local folklore and dramatization. The locations of their homes are still a popular stop for tours. The LaLaurie mansion was partially destroyed in a fire (purportedly set by an enslaved woman in hopes of escaping), but the 1140 Royal Street structure stands in much the same condition today. Locals believe the building to be both haunted and cursed. No person has lived in the home for more than five years since Delphine LaLaurie. Even though Marie Laveau’s cottage was demolished, the site is visited by tour groups and voodoo practitioners alike.

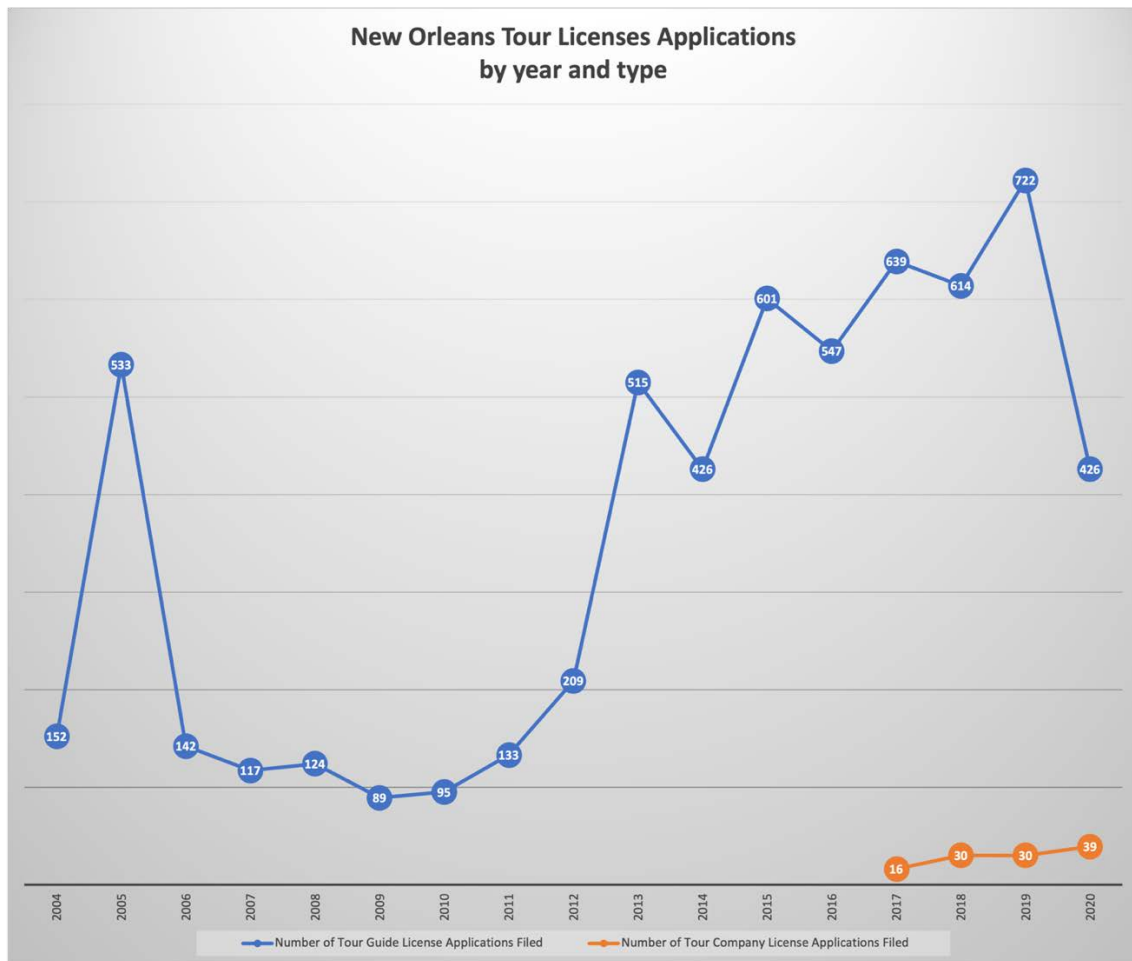
Tour Industry Growth and Disaster Tourism in New Orleans

My information request to the City of New Orleans City Attorney's Office submitted April 12, 2021:

Please provide a list of the following:

- 2021 valid tour planning companies with city-issued permits
- 2021 valid tour operating companies
- The current number of those with valid tour guide licenses
- The number of permits issued in the earliest year permits were issued or record-keeping began
- The number of permits issued in the year that is the halfway point between 2021 and the earliest year permits were issued or record-keeping began
- Valid tour operating companies the earliest year permits were issued or record-keeping began

When charted, this data reveals an interesting trend that links industry growth with disasters.



According to the City Attorney's Office, City of New Orleans, Department of Safety and Permits, there are, as of April 2021, 1,167 licensed tour guides in the City of New Orleans up from 1,088 in 2019 (7% increase in under 2 years).

Disaster tourism

Hurricane Katrina brought in droves of tourists. There is a marked spike in the applications for tour guide licenses in 2005. The following years while the city was rebuilding go back to the previous lower numbers and then begin to climb again in 2012, peaking in 2019 and dropping again in 2020, likely due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

I spoke with Isabelle Cossart, owner and operator of Tours by Isabelle. She moved to New Orleans from France and began offering tours in 1979. In her 2015 article, "I Was The face Of Disaster Tourism In Post-Katrina New Orleans" she wrote about her experiences as a tour guide in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and the inevitable disaster tourism which followed.¹

"In the fall of 2005, the demand for tours showing the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina became impossible to ignore. It was the only thing customers asked for." She experienced accusations of exploitation, while also being one of the people that suffered—losing her business, home, and possessions. She spoke of the curious tourists, "It was only human nature, I figured, for people to want to see for themselves what's happened here. And besides, I desperately needed the work."

She created a 49-mile tour showcasing accessible disaster sites—lost neighborhoods, failed levees, and breached floodwalls. Cossart chose to try to educate the tourists, not just about what had been, but the situation they were currently in. "I thought I had a responsibility, like a journalist, to tell every visitor the truth of this disaster and its crazy scope, its ugly and unjust consequences in terms of lives lost and property destroyed. I asked customers to ask their lawmakers to hold the Army Corps of Engineers accountable for their mistakes."

Conclusions

New Orleans is a prime example of a culturally rich and tourism-driven economy. The array of different types of tours offered almost all touch on dark tourism topics. Tour guides reject the dark tourism label. You cannot talk about the history, culture, and heritage of New Orleans by examining exclusively empirical data. There must be an allowance for folklore, fiction, magic, and the paranormal when taking a broader view of cultural heritage. Dark tourism, including disaster tourism, is an economic opportunity for entrepreneurs and the city.

¹ Cossart, Isabelle. "I Was The face Of Disaster Tourism In Post-Katrina New Orleans." BuzzFeed News. August 24, 2015. <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/isabellecossart/i-was-the-face-of-disaster-tourism-in-post-katrina-new-orlea>

APPENDIX E

Administrative Review Offer

McDoux Preservation LLC

18214 Upper Bay Road #58114
Houston, Texas 77058 1-
833-MCD-PRES
www.mcdoux.com



<<First Name>> <<Last Name>>
<<Contact City of>>
<<Contact Street>>
<<City>>, <<State>> <<ZIPCode>>

Dear <<First Name>>,

I've spent the past 15 years working with city planners who are responsible for historic preservation programs, and I don't know a single planner who wants to spend *more time* working on staff reports for Certificates of Appropriateness. Similarly, as a historic commission member, it was always frustrating to spend our time considering minor projects, like replacing roof shingles — things that could have been approved by staff.

That's why I'm writing to you today. **Administrative review** allows city staff to approve Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) for certain types of minor projects without going to the historic commission. Staff reports, if still required, are minimal — saving an average of 10 hours of staff time per COA, and applicants get approval more quickly. Perhaps most importantly, reducing the time spent on regulatory matters increases the time that staff and commission have to become *a resource for the community*. Think of all the other things you could do if you had fewer staff reports to prepare!

Working with clients like the City of Houston, Texas, we've worked out the most cost-effective way to determine how much time and money your city might save by adopting administrative review and which projects your city should include. We can provide you with everything you need to make a case for and adopt administrative review, including sample ordinance language.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact me at steph.mcdougal@mcdoux.com or 1-833-623-7737 ext. 1. I look forward to speaking with you! We're all in this together.

Very best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steph McDougal".

Steph McDougal
Principal Consultant
McDoux Preservation LLC

What does this service include?

Step 1: Review

Our team of preservation professionals will analyze your city's existing historic preservation ordinance, and up to 150 of your most recent Certificate of Appropriateness staff reports to determine the types and number of projects best suited for administrative review in your city.

Step 2: Recommendations

We will provide you with a summary report of best practices, our methodology and findings, recommendations for minor projects to include in administrative review (again, specifically for your city), and an estimate of the time and money that your city could save annually by adopting administrative review. We will also provide you with a short PowerPoint summarizing these findings, suitable for presenting to Council, and sample ordinance language for adopting administrative review.

Step 3: Follow-up

We'll keep in touch to ensure you have what you need and find out how administrative review is working for you.

What are the benefits?

The City of Houston, Texas, historic preservation office processes between 300-400 COA applications each year. Since adopting administrative review several years ago, they have been able to approve 130-220 COA (35-58%) administratively – saving an average of nearly \$41,000 a year in staff time. This is consistent with our research across cities of all sizes throughout the U.S.; even small cities with much fewer COAs benefit from the time and cost savings of administrative review, and of course, applicants appreciate it, too!

What are the next steps?

We're happy to answer any questions you might have. Once you're ready to go, we'll send you a service agreement; after that's signed, you'll send us a copy of your ordinance and up to 150 COA. Our analysis and report will be completed in about four weeks for a one-time fee of \$2,950.00.

Have questions or want to get started? **Give us a call at 1-833-623-7737 ext. 1.**