



Why collect this data? How to collect this data? Where does it go? What else can I do with data?

Blexting Bootcamp



Why are we here?

Because Detroit is a constantly changing city. **Blexting** allows us to document these changes.

19469 DANBURY

Blexted February 3, 2014



19469 DANBURY

Blexted July 1, 2014



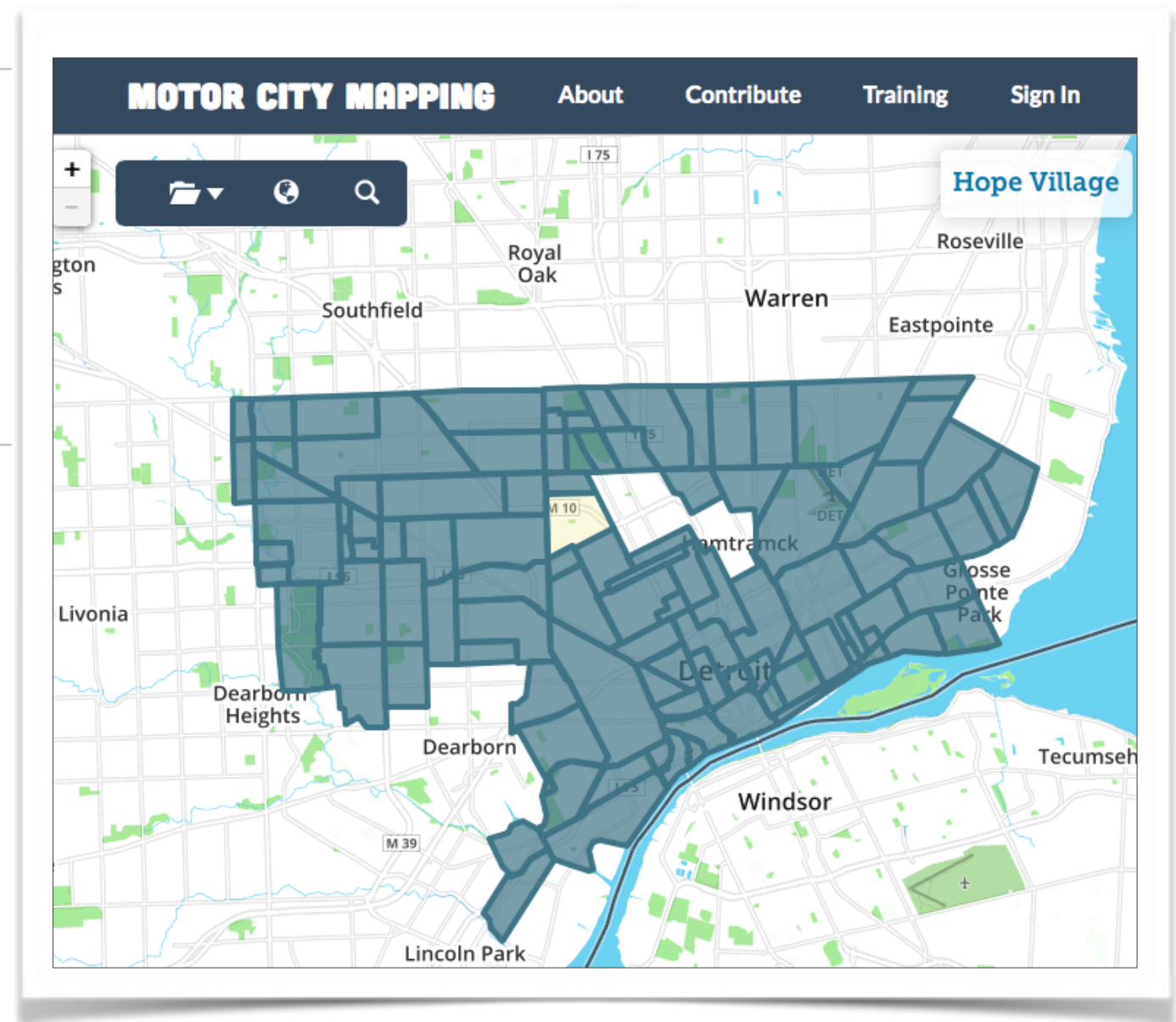
The Application

Blexting communicates property related data from you to the database through photo capturing and survey questions.



The Database

Every property in the city is stored on the **Motor City Mapping** database that contains information about the buildings, condition, and ownership.



How does it work?

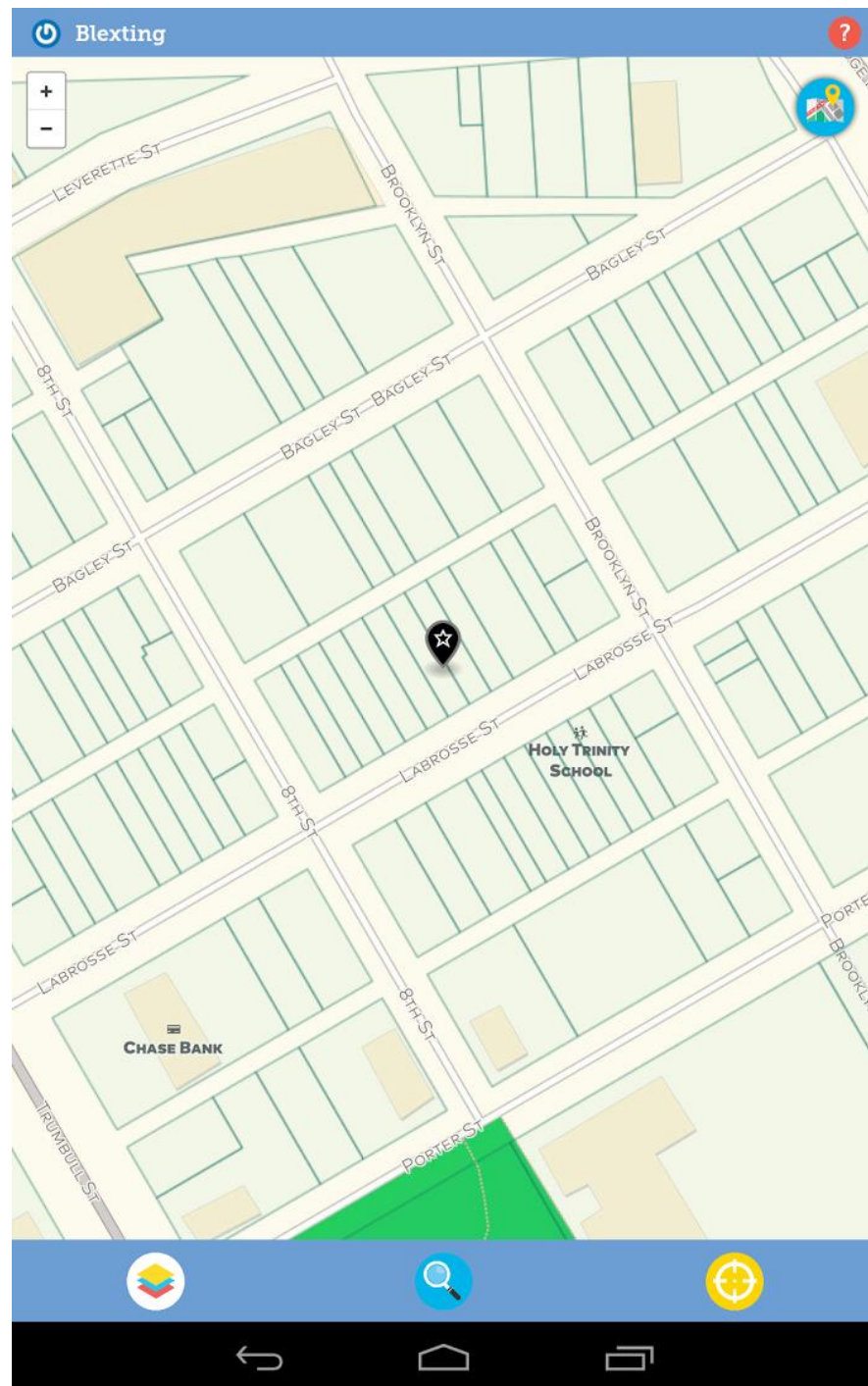
Using The Blexting App



The Blexting App is available for most mobile devices, including Android and Apple iOS. But not Blackberry.

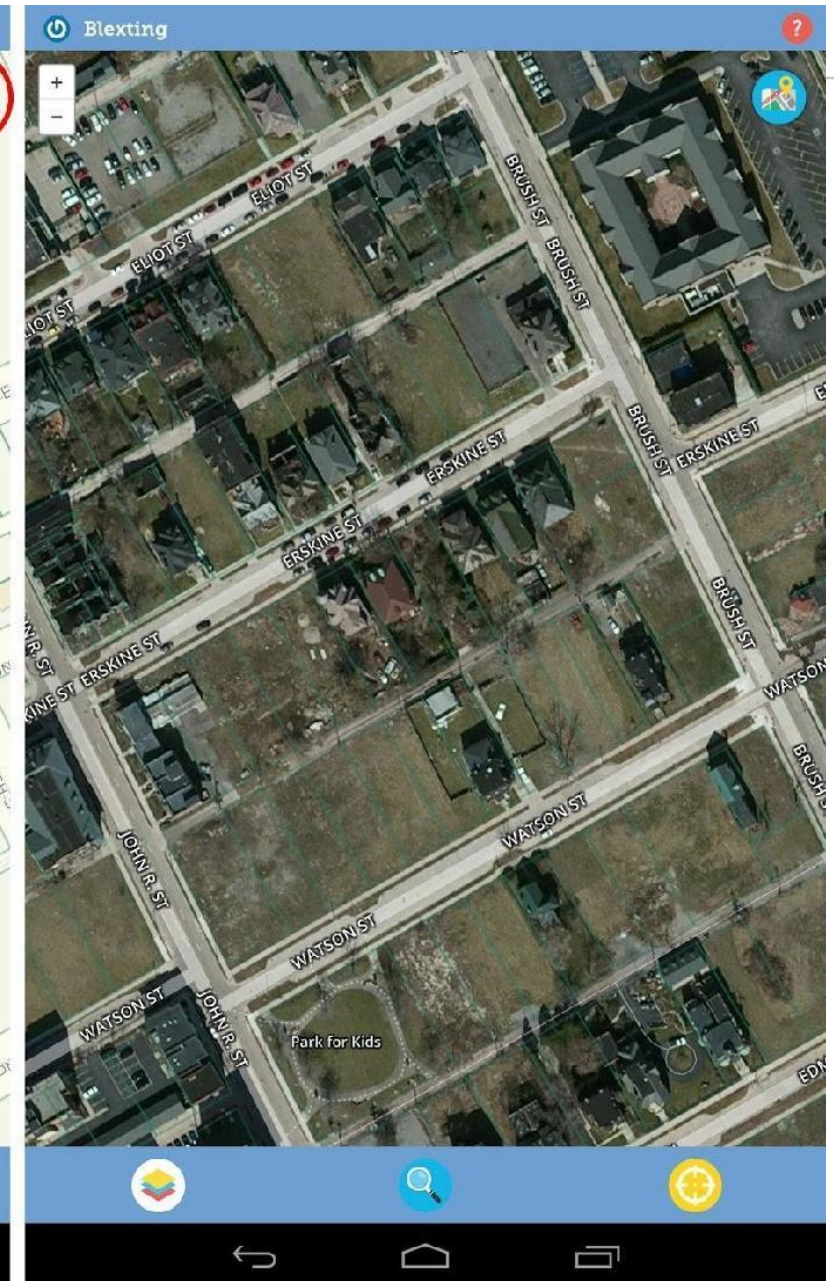
To start the app, select the icon on your device.

Using The Blexting App

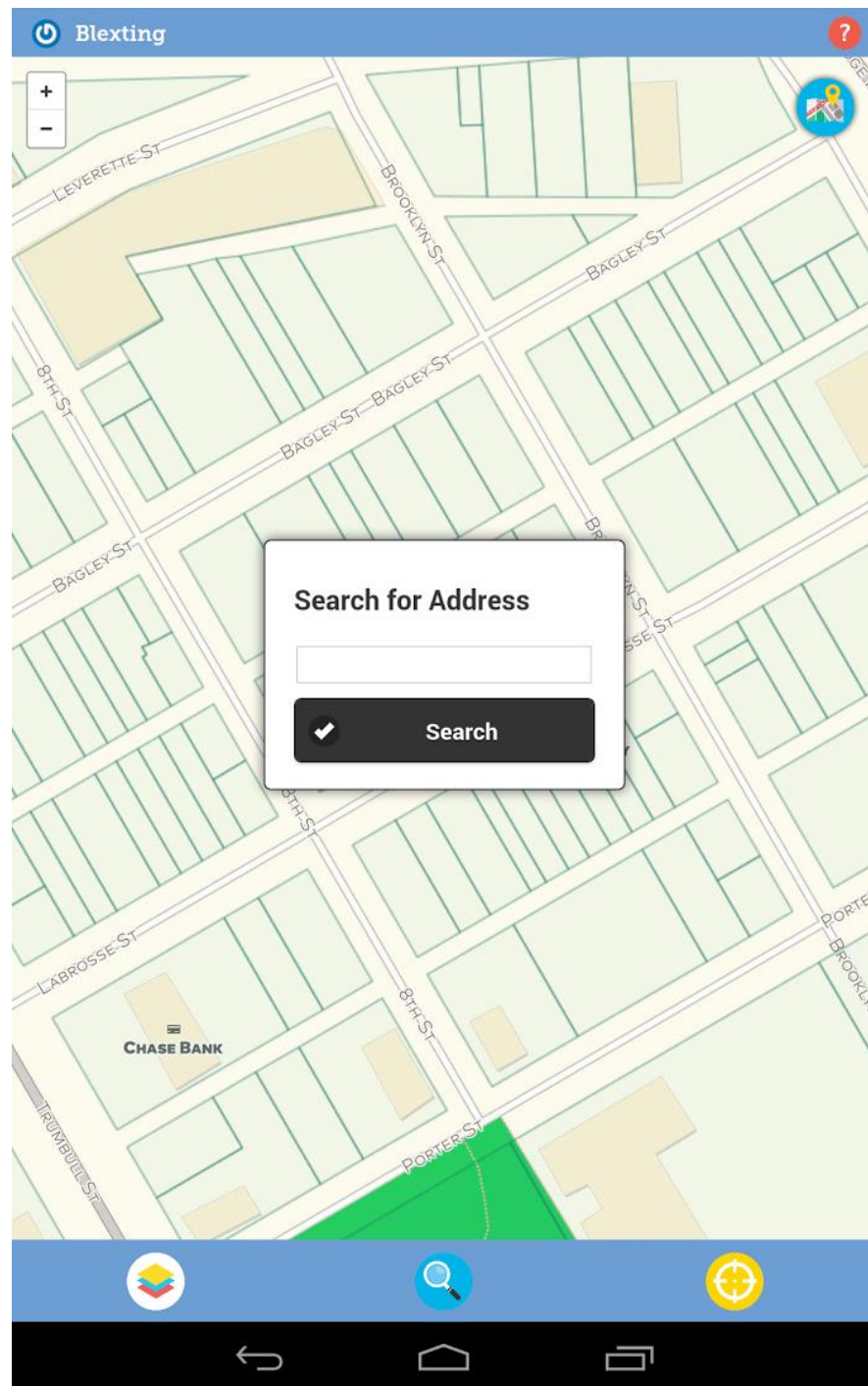


A few moments after starting up, the Blexting app will automatically go to your current location based on your device's GPS or wireless signal.

It can sometimes be difficult to pinpoint exactly where the parcel you're looking for is located. Use GPS and the aerial view to improve your accuracy.

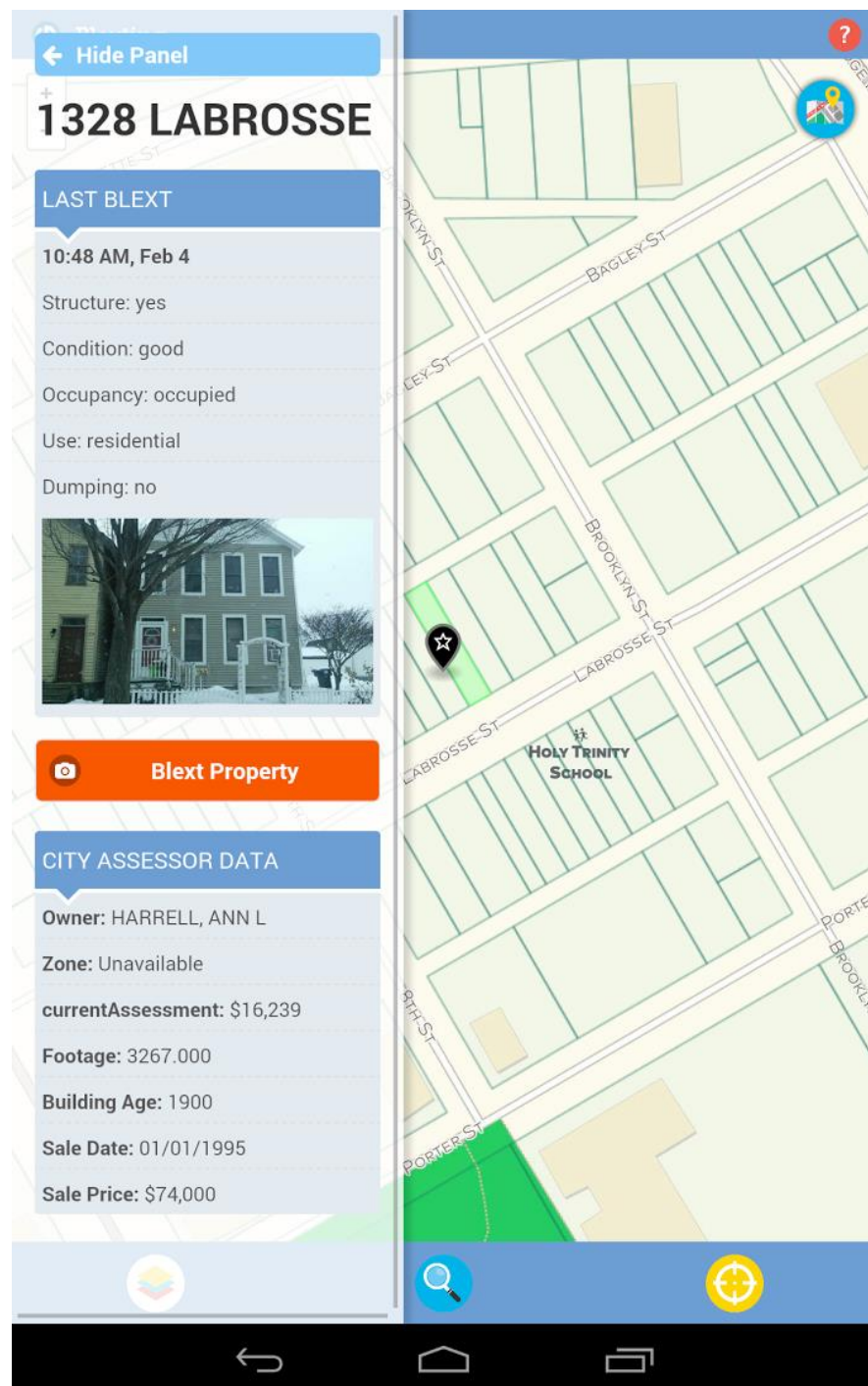


Using The Blexting App



You can also touch the blue magnifying glass on the bottom to enter an address manually.

Using The Blexting App



Once you have selected a parcel, a sidebar with pictures and information about the property will appear. To update or add a new blext, press the orange “Blext Property” button. This will start your mobile device’s camera.

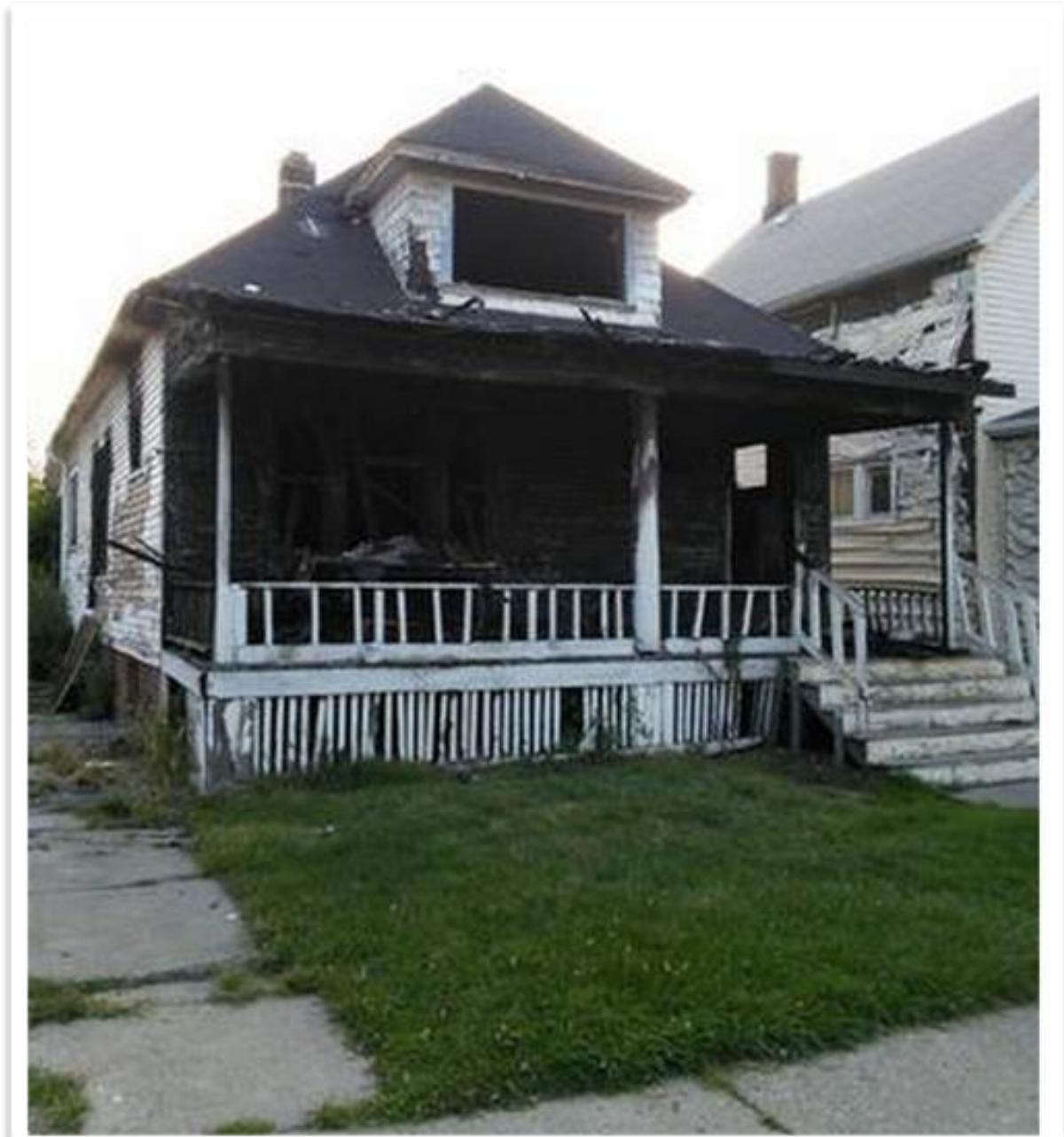
Taking a Picture



Using the built-in camera on your tablet or phone, you can take pictures of properties and add them to the database.

Let's cover some basic guidelines for taking good pictures.

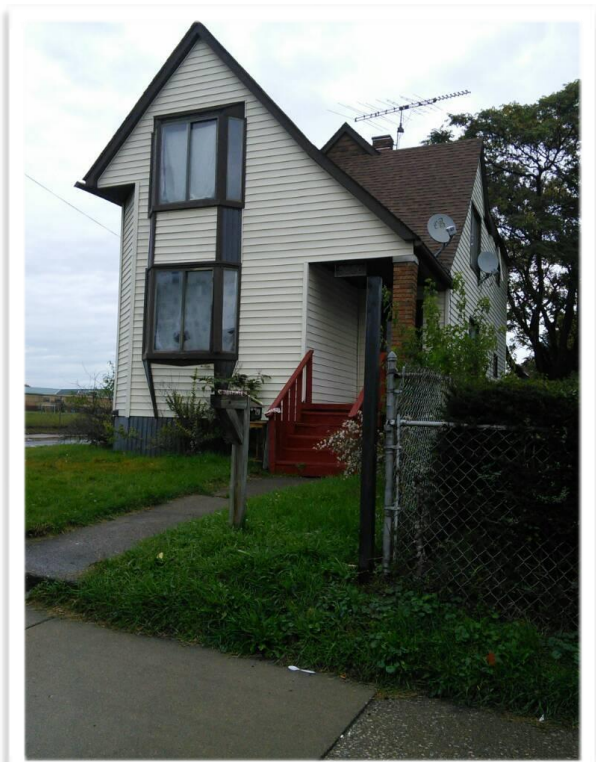
Things to Consider When Taking a Picture



- Include the entire front facade of the building
- Leave some margins on either side. Don't zoom in too close.
- Is the picture level or crooked?
- Is it clear which property you're photographing?

Take multiple pictures

Multiple pictures of a property from different angles allows quality control to see things that might not always be obvious from just one picture.



In this picture, the house looks fine.



Behind the house, though, is dumping and indications of a fire in the basement.

Consider your Perspective

Looks can be deceiving...



From the front, this looks like a single family dwelling.



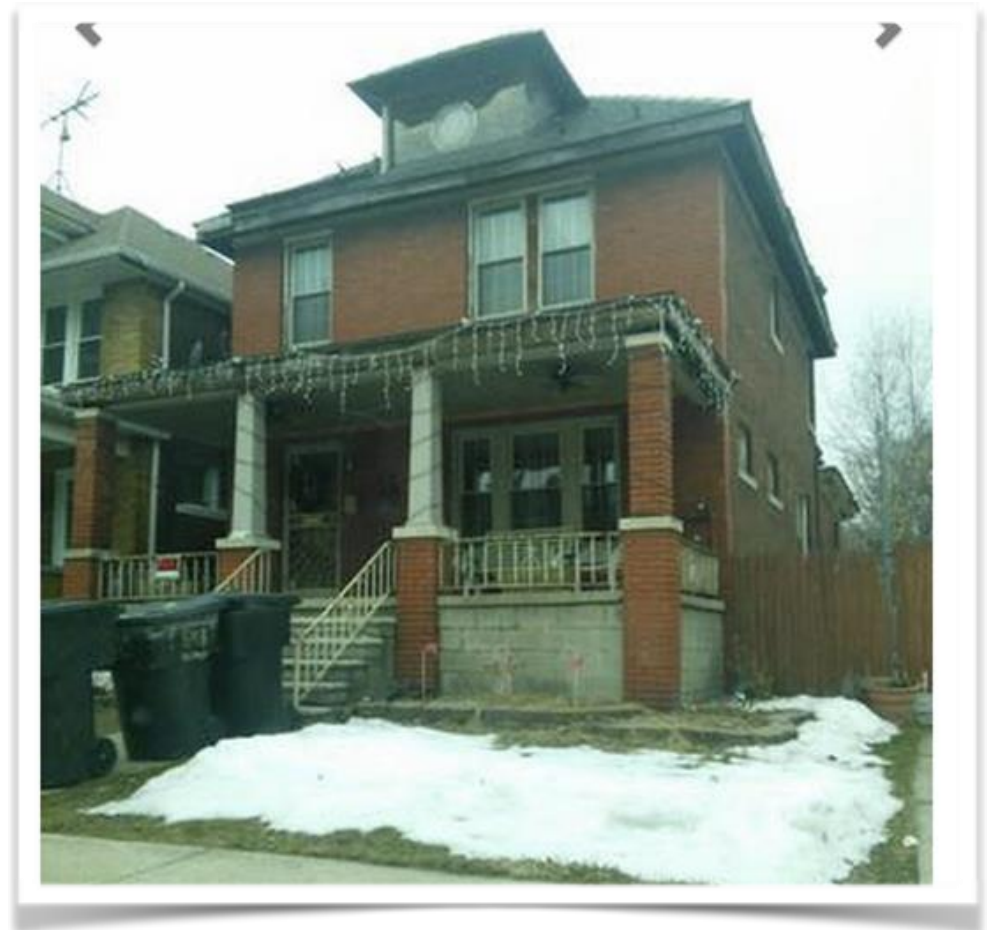
But from the side, it becomes clear that it's a multi-family dwelling.

If Quality Control only sees the first picture, they might come to the wrong conclusion about what type of building it is.

Common Problem #1: Too Far



This photo was taken from too far back, and has more than one property visible in it. It isn't clear which house is intended to be photographed.



This photo is close enough to show details of the house, and is isolated from the houses around it.

Common Problem #2: Too Close



This picture was taken too close. It's difficult to tell what the building is.



The solution is to take the picture from further back and show the entire building.

Common Problem #3: Ambiguity



This picture has a vacant lot in the foreground and a building in the background. It isn't clear which property is being photographed.

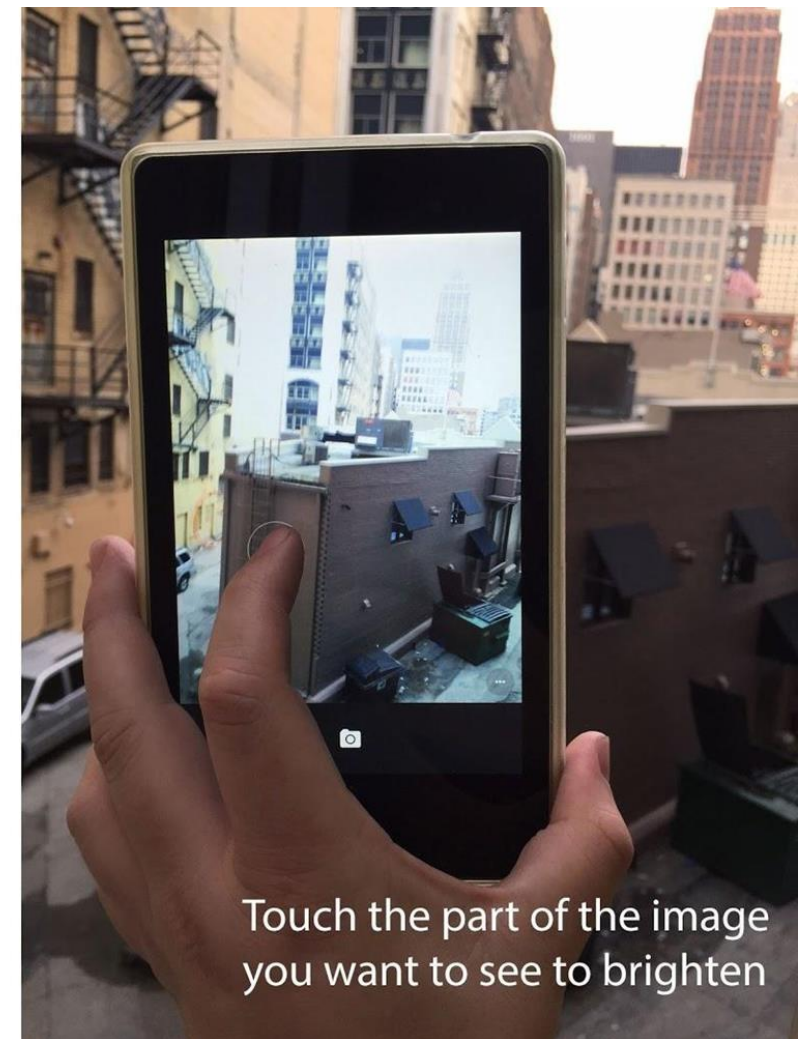


In this picture, it's obvious that the fenced lot is the subject of the photograph.

Common Problem #4: Lighting

Sunlight in the picture will sometimes trick the camera into thinking that it's too bright, leaving the building in the foreground too dark to recognize.

To get around this, tap the screen of your device to tell it to focus on the part of the image you want to expose for.



Common Problem #5: Windows

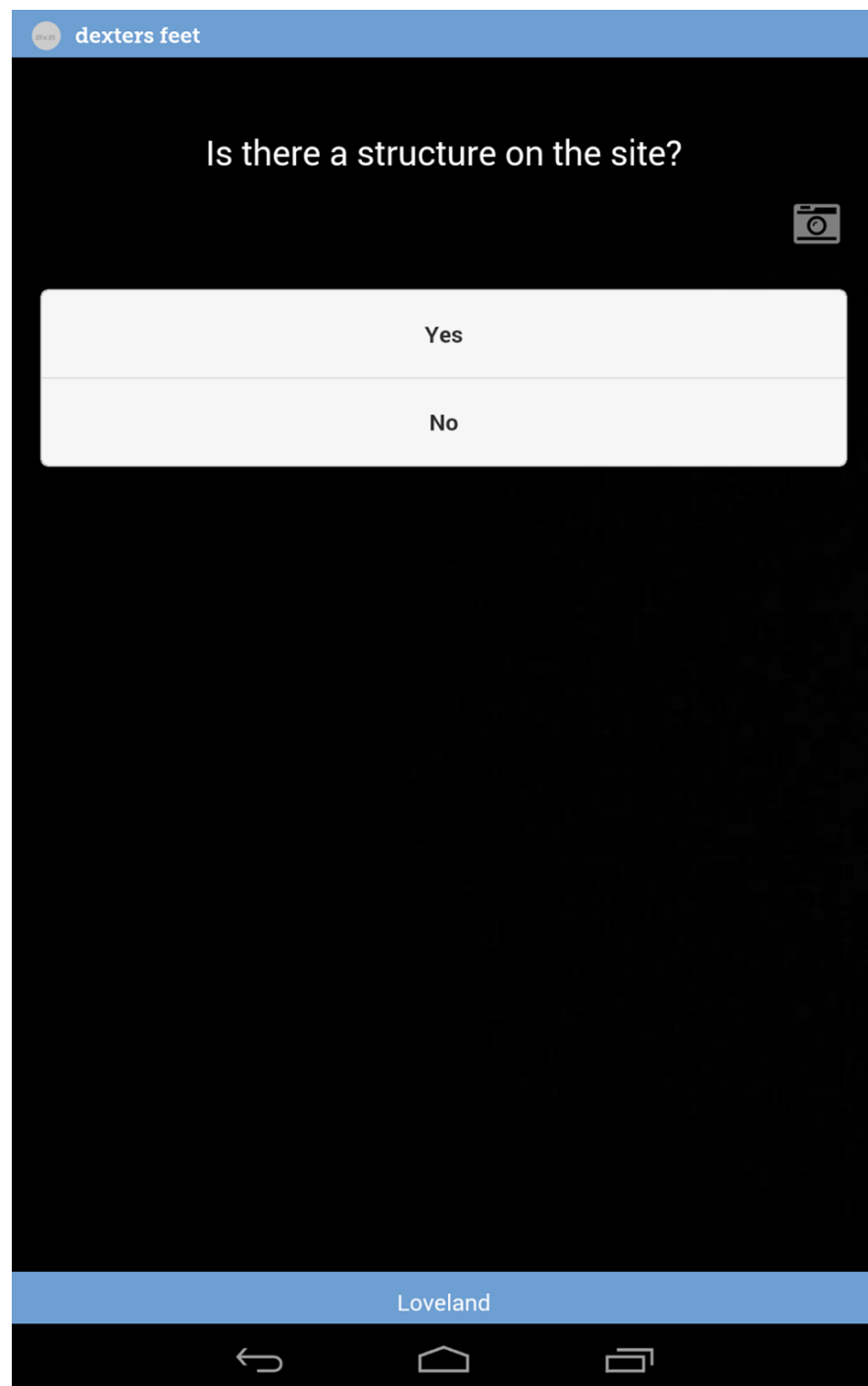
When it is raining or snowing, sometimes its tempting to just take a picture through the window of your car.

While you may stay warmer and drier with the window up, your camera won't always focus right. Windows are sometimes tinted, which give the pictures a strange color.

For best results, roll down the window or step out of the car.



Structure or no structure?



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface with a dark background. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text "dexters feet" and a small circular icon. Below the header, the question "Is there a structure on the site?" is displayed in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question, there are two white rectangular buttons with rounded corners. The top button is labeled "Yes" and the bottom button is labeled "No". At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text "Loveland" in white. Below this bar is a black navigation bar with three white icons: a back arrow, a home icon, and a recent apps icon.

After you take the picture, the first question you'll see asks if there is a structure on the site or not.

This question divides parcels into two categories - ones that have something built on them, and ones don't.

A structure is a permanent building located on the site. This includes houses, garages, buildings - anything built on the land.

If the site is empty or has temporary structures, like trailers, temporary sheds, or mobile homes, then it does not have a structure on site.

Structure Examples

Permanent Structures



Temporary Structures



Structure Occupancy

dexters feet

Occupancy

Occupied

Unoccupied

Possibly Unoccupied

Loveland

After selecting Yes, the occupancy question covers if the structure is occupied.

Occupied: The structure shows visible activity and consistent use or maintenance. Common characteristics are: porch furniture, a well-kept lawn, good landscaping, fences, cars in the driveway, a maintained garden, or a play area.

Unoccupied: Common characteristics are: neglected facades, eviction notices, empty interiors, substantial physical or structural damages, extensive security measures, uncut or tall grass, weeds, scrub trees, trash or debris accumulated over time, or accumulated flyers on the porch or door.

Possibly Unoccupied: The property displays characteristics from both categories above, making it difficult to assess whether there is consistent use or maintenance.

Occupancy / Vacancy Indicators



It's not always easy to tell if a building is occupied or not, but there are indicators to look out for that may offer clues:

Grass/Weeds/ Bushes/Landscaping

Cars in driveway

Presence of Dumping

Windows/Doors

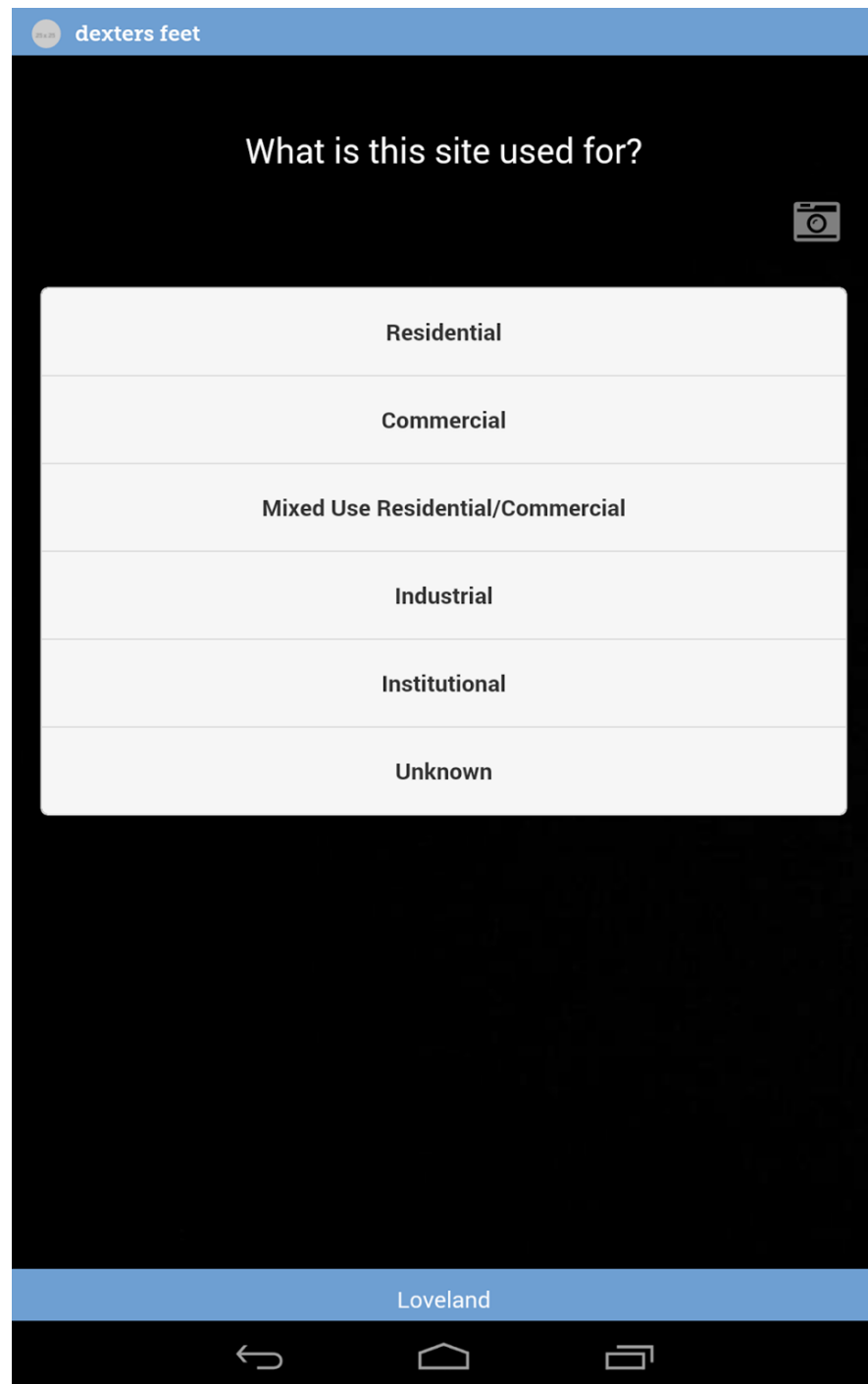
Porch Furniture

Children's toys

Porch lights



Structure Type



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for 'dexters feet'. At the top, there is a blue header with the text 'dexters feet'. Below the header, the question 'What is this site used for?' is displayed in white text on a black background. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question is a white rectangular box containing a list of structure types: Residential, Commercial, Mixed Use Residential/Commercial, Industrial, Institutional, and Unknown. At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland' and a black bar with three white navigation icons: a back arrow, a home icon, and a recent apps icon.

Structure Type
Residential
Commercial
Mixed Use Residential/Commercial
Industrial
Institutional
Unknown

Residential: Includes single-family homes, duplexes, apartment buildings, senior living facilities, condominiums, and row houses.

Commercial: Includes properties used for retail, office, entertainment, hotels, parking, and other services.

Mixed-use Residential / Commercial: Includes multi-level structures where the ground level supports commercial uses like retail, while the top levels support residential uses like apartments, condominiums, lofts, etc.

Industrial: Includes properties used for manufacturing, storage areas, warehousing, junk yards, landfill operations, and waste disposal sites.

Institutional: Includes all public and religious buildings, including churches, schools, government offices, libraries, permanent park structures, and hospitals.

Unknown: The use of the property cannot be determined from looking at the outside alone.

Structure Type Examples

Residential: Includes single-family homes, duplexes, apartment buildings, senior living facilities, condominiums, and row houses.



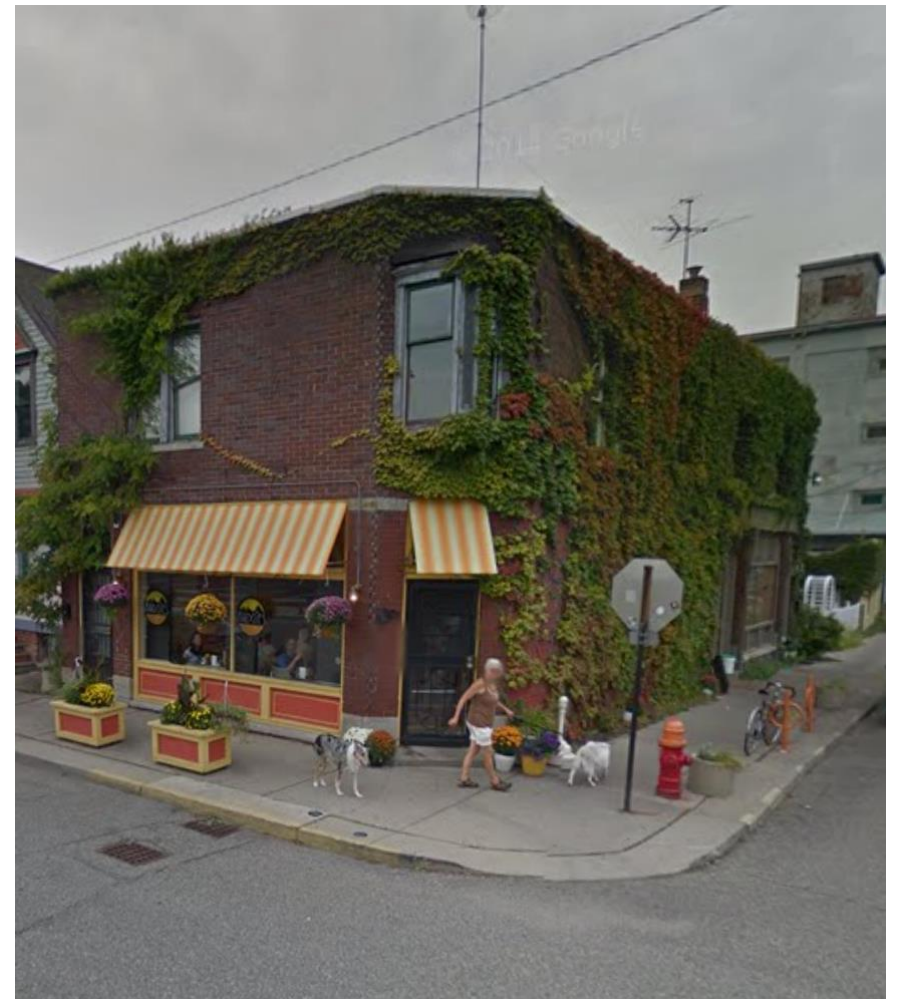
Structure Type Examples

Commercial: Includes properties used for retail, office, entertainment, hotels, parking, and other services.



Structure Type Examples

Mixed-use Residential / Commercial: Includes multi-level structures where the ground level supports commercial uses like retail, while the top levels support residential uses like apartments, condominiums, lofts, etc.



Structure Type Examples

Industrial: Includes properties used for manufacturing, storage areas, warehousing, junk yards, land fill operations, and waste disposal sites.



Structure Type Examples

Institutional: Includes all public and religious buildings, including churches, schools, governmental offices, libraries, permanent park structures, and hospitals.



Structure Type Examples

Unknown: The use of the property cannot be determined from looking at the outside alone. These types of buildings may not fit into a specific category and require further research.



Number of units

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface with a blue header bar containing the text 'dexters feet'. Below the header, the question 'How many residential units?' is displayed in white text on a black background. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question is a white rectangular box with a thin border, containing four options: 'Garage or Shed', 'Single Family', 'Multi-Family', and 'Apartments'. At the bottom of the screen is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland'. Below the blue bar is a black bar with three white icons: a back arrow, a house icon, and a document icon.

Residential buildings can range from garages to 100+ unit apartment buildings.

We use “units” to determine how many different separate living spaces or addresses there are in a specific building.

Garage or Shed: A detached garage or shed which is the only structure on the parcel.

Single Family: A house designed for occupancy for one family and has only one address number.

Multi-Family: A single building designed for occupancy for one to three families with multiple addresses.

Apartments: Individual or multiple buildings designed for occupancy by 4 or more families.

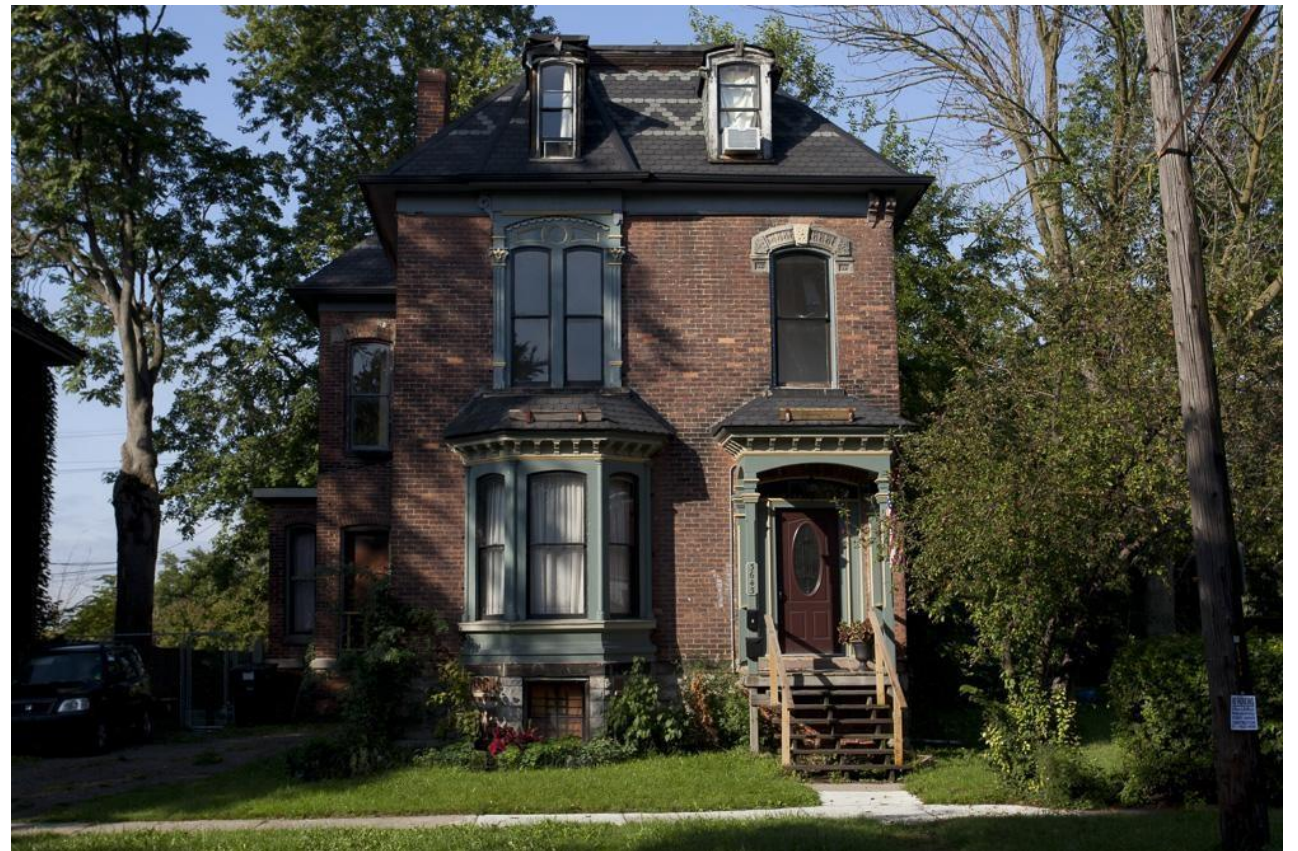
Number of units Examples

Garage or Shed: A detached garage or shed which is the only structure on the parcel.



Number of units Examples

Single Family: A house designed for occupancy for one family and has only one address number.
(Cues: *one front door or one mailbox*).



Number of units Examples

Multi-Family: A single building designed for occupancy for one to three families with multiple addresses.
(Cues: two to three doors or mailboxes)



Number of units Examples

Apartments: Individual or multiple buildings designed for occupancy by 4 or more families.



Structure Condition

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for 'dexters feet'. At the top, there is a blue header with the text 'dexters feet'. Below the header, the main screen has a black background with the question 'What is the condition of the structure?' in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question is a white rectangular box containing four options: 'Good', 'Fair', 'Poor', and 'Suggest Demolition'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland' and a black bar with three white icons: a back arrow, a house icon, and a document icon.

Structure condition is a grade given to a building based on the visible exterior and interior condition.

The line between “good,” “fair,” and “poor” can sometimes be difficult to find. Rather than use a strict criteria, building condition is determined by the surveyor, using these as basic guidelines:

Good: No obvious repairs needed.

Fair: Needs minor repairs. Windows and doors intact, but roof may be missing shingles, exterior elements may be sagging, paint / siding missing, graffiti.

Poor: Needs major repairs. Windows and doors are broken or boarded up. Light fire damage that can be repaired. Non-load-bearing elements like awnings, porches collapsed. Holes in roof.

Suggest Demolition: No longer shaped like a building. Damaged beyond practical repair or renovation. Structural damage including collapse of roof, walls, foundation. Uninhabitable.

Structure Condition Examples

Good: No obvious repairs needed.



Structure Condition Examples

Fair: Needs minor repairs. Windows and doors intact, but roof may be missing shingles, exterior elements may be sagging, paint / siding missing, graffiti.



Structure Condition Examples

Poor: Needs major repairs. Windows and doors are broken or boarded up. Light fire damage that can be repaired. Non-load-bearing elements like awnings, porches collapsed. Holes in roof.

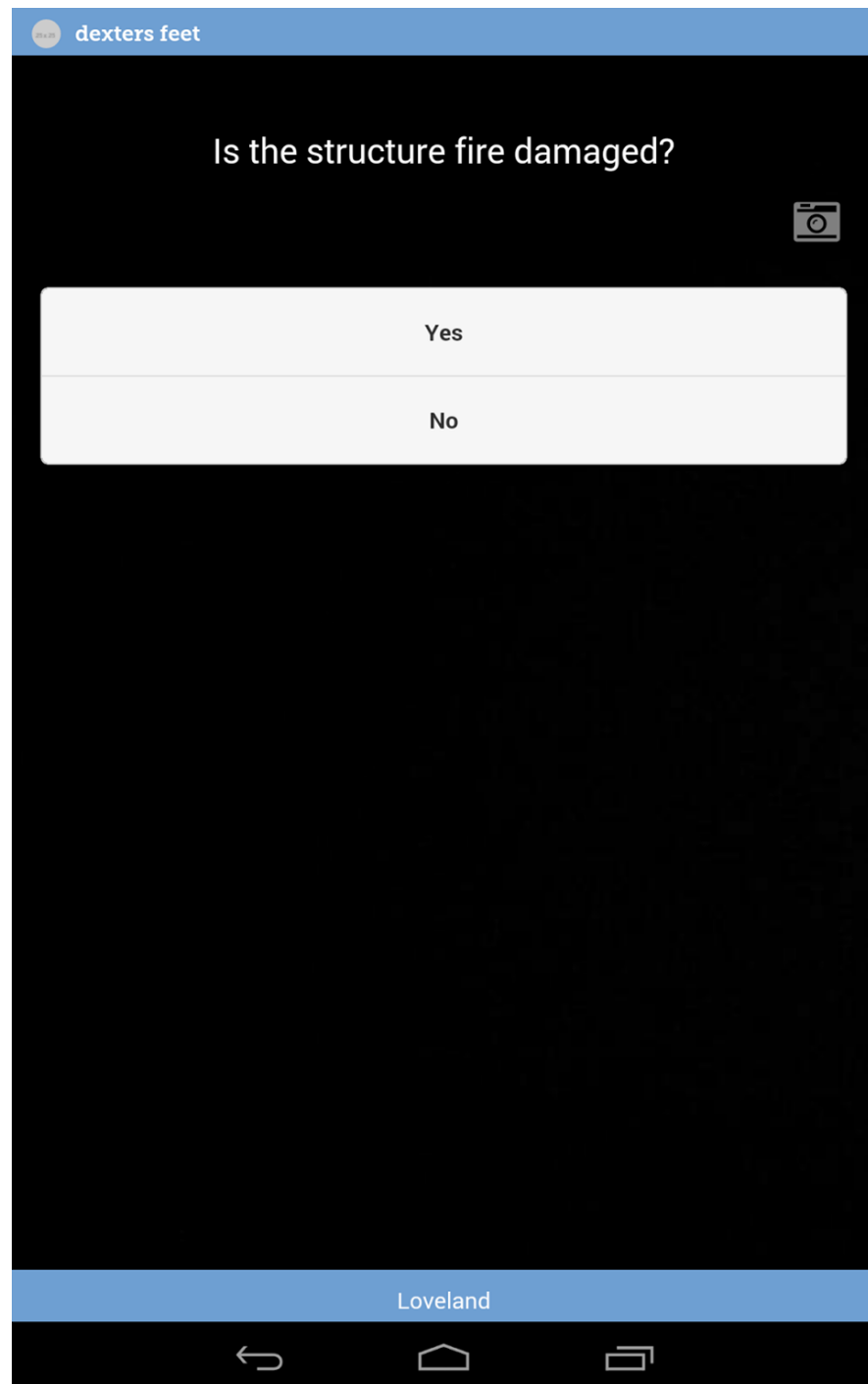


Structure Condition Examples

Suggest Demolition: No longer shaped like a building. Damaged beyond practical repair or renovation. Structural damage including collapse of roof, walls, foundation. Uninhabitable.



Structure Fire Damage



The image shows a mobile application interface for 'dexters feet'. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text 'dexters feet' and a small circular icon. Below the header, the main screen has a black background with the question 'Is the structure fire damaged?' in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question is a white rectangular button with two options: 'Yes' and 'No'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland' and a standard Android navigation bar with back, home, and recent apps icons.

dexters feet

Is the structure fire damaged?

Yes

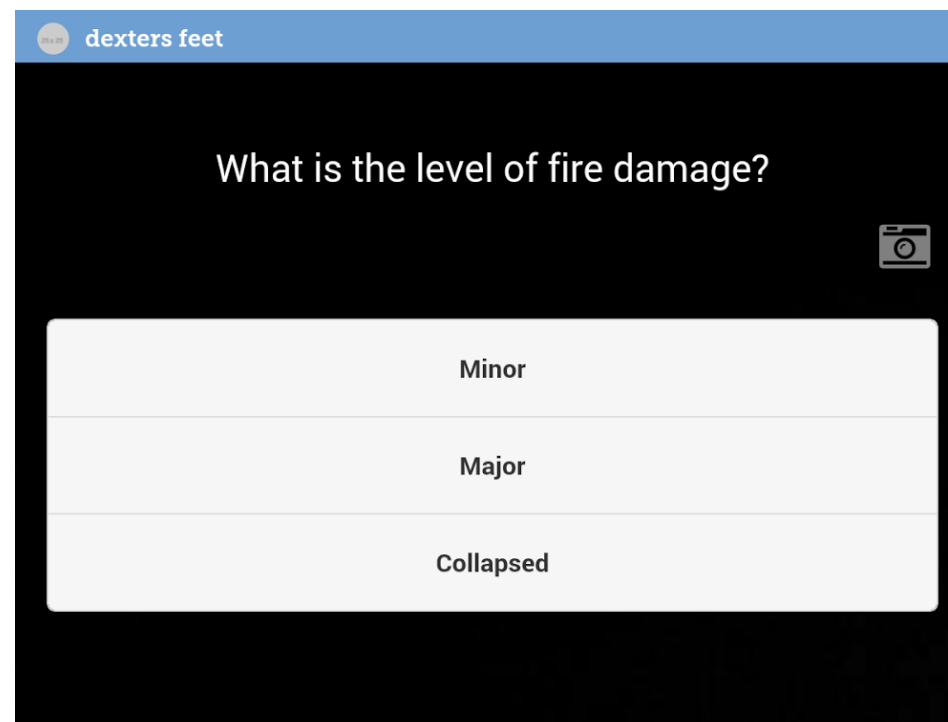
No

Loveland

Is the structure fire damaged?

Yes: Indications of fire in or around the structure that caused visible damage, from as small as melted siding to buildings that have burned down to the ground.

If yes, a second question is asked about the level of damage the fire caused:



The image shows a mobile application interface for 'dexters feet'. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text 'dexters feet' and a small circular icon. Below the header, the main screen has a black background with the question 'What is the level of fire damage?' in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question is a white rectangular button with three options: 'Minor', 'Major', and 'Collapsed'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland' and a standard Android navigation bar with back, home, and recent apps icons.

dexters feet

What is the level of fire damage?

Minor

Major

Collapsed

Loveland

Structure Fire Damage Examples

Minor: Visible damage to the building that is superficial or repairable, and does not render the building uninhabitable. Includes soot marks around doorways and windows.



Structure Fire Damage Examples

Major: Significant damage to the building that would be costly to repair and makes it uninhabitable. Major may include holes in the roof, but once there is any sort of structural collapse, the damage level is considered collapsed.

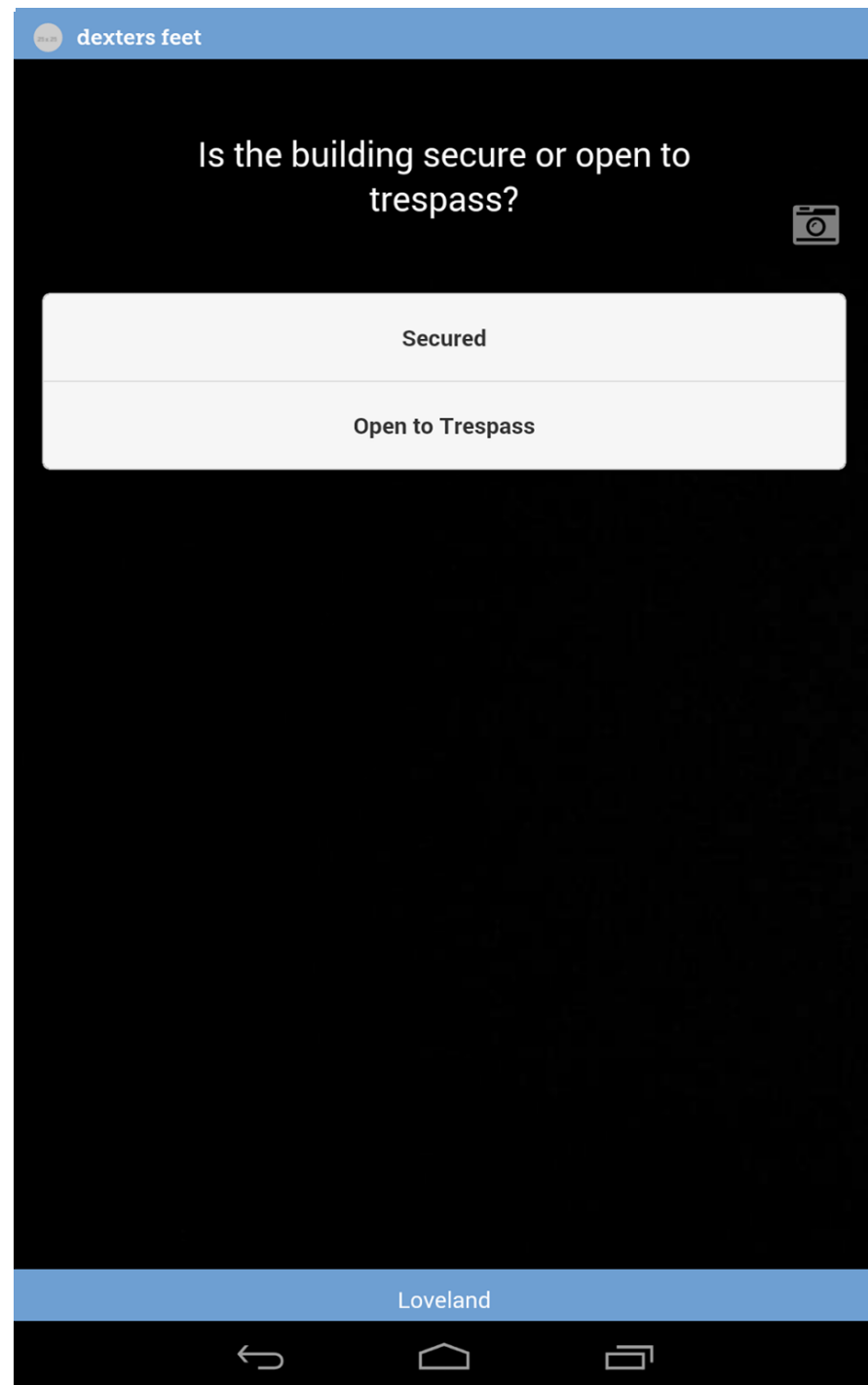


Structure Fire Damage Examples

Collapsed: Fire that has caused partial or total structural collapse, making it no longer building-shaped. This includes buildings that have burned down to the foundation. Walls may still be standing, but parts or all of the roof have caved in.



Secure or Open to Trespass?



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface with a blue header bar containing the text "dexters feet" and a small circular icon. The main content area is black and displays the question "Is the building secure or open to trespass?" in white text. To the right of the question is a small icon of a building with a camera. Below the question are two white rectangular buttons with black text: "Secured" and "Open to Trespass". At the bottom of the screen is a blue bar with the text "Loveland" and a standard Android navigation bar with back, home, and recent apps icons.

A building is secured when all windows or doors are intact or secured. This includes occupied buildings with original windows / doors, and buildings that may be vacant but are not open to trespass.

If a building has missing windows, doors or is otherwise open and accessible to scrappers, squatters, or vandals, it is open to trespass.

Secure or Open Examples

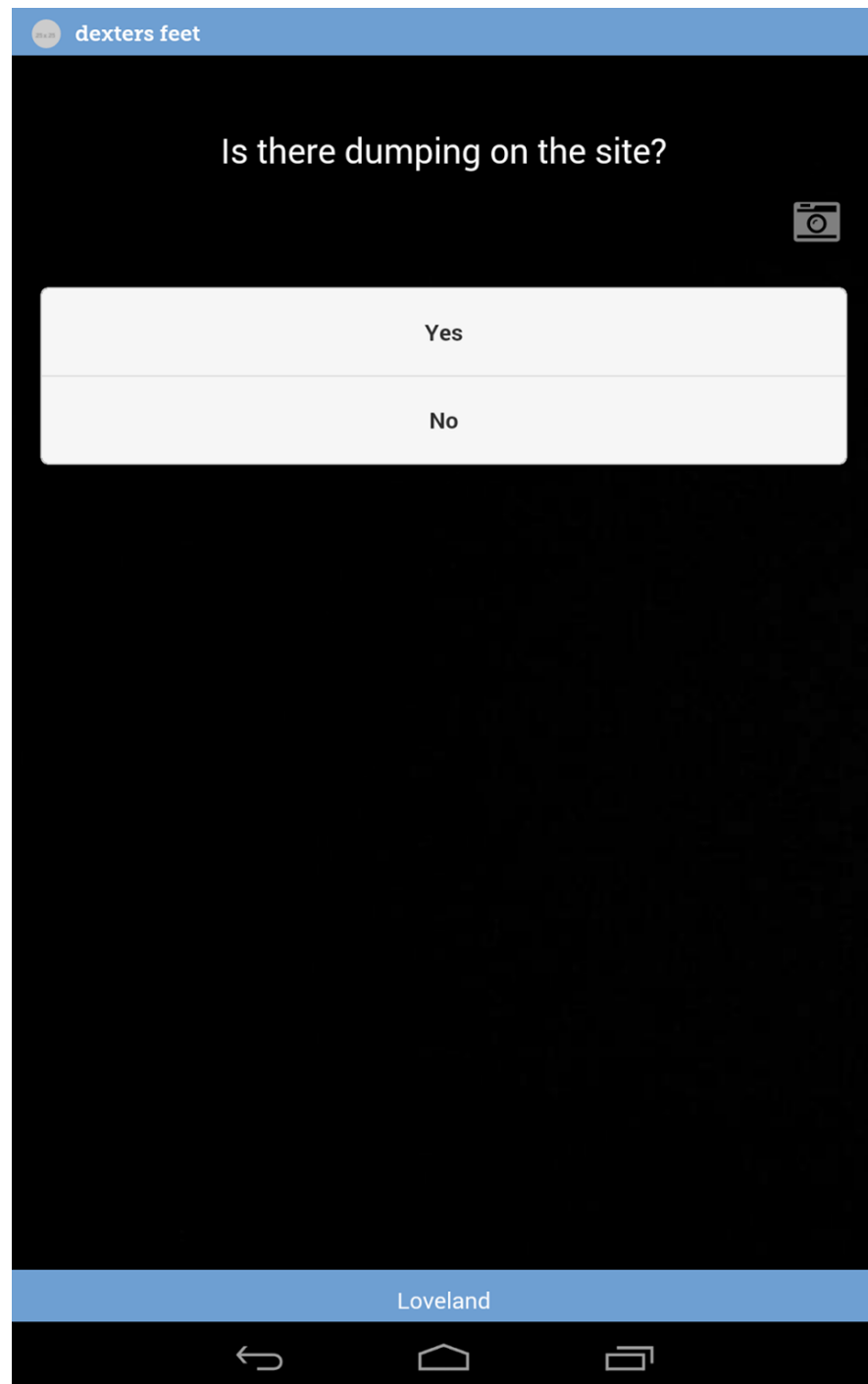
Secured



Open to Trespass



Is the Dumping on the Site?



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface with a blue header bar containing the text "dexters feet". The main content area has a black background with the question "Is there dumping on the site?" in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question are two white rectangular buttons with rounded corners, labeled "Yes" and "No". At the bottom of the screen is a blue bar with the text "Loveland" and a black bar with three white navigation icons: a back arrow, a home icon, and a recent apps icon.

A building or vacant lot is considered to have dumping when debris has been purposely left or placed on the property.

Dumping Examples

Unwanted trash and debris left on the lot is considered dumping.



Abandoned vehicles left on a lot constitute dumping.

Not Dumping Examples

Litter is not dumping.



Debris from a demolition in progress are not dumping.



Debris from a house fire that have spilled onto the ground are not considered dumping.

Notes

dexters feet

Any other notes?

Finish

Add Extra Photo

Loveland

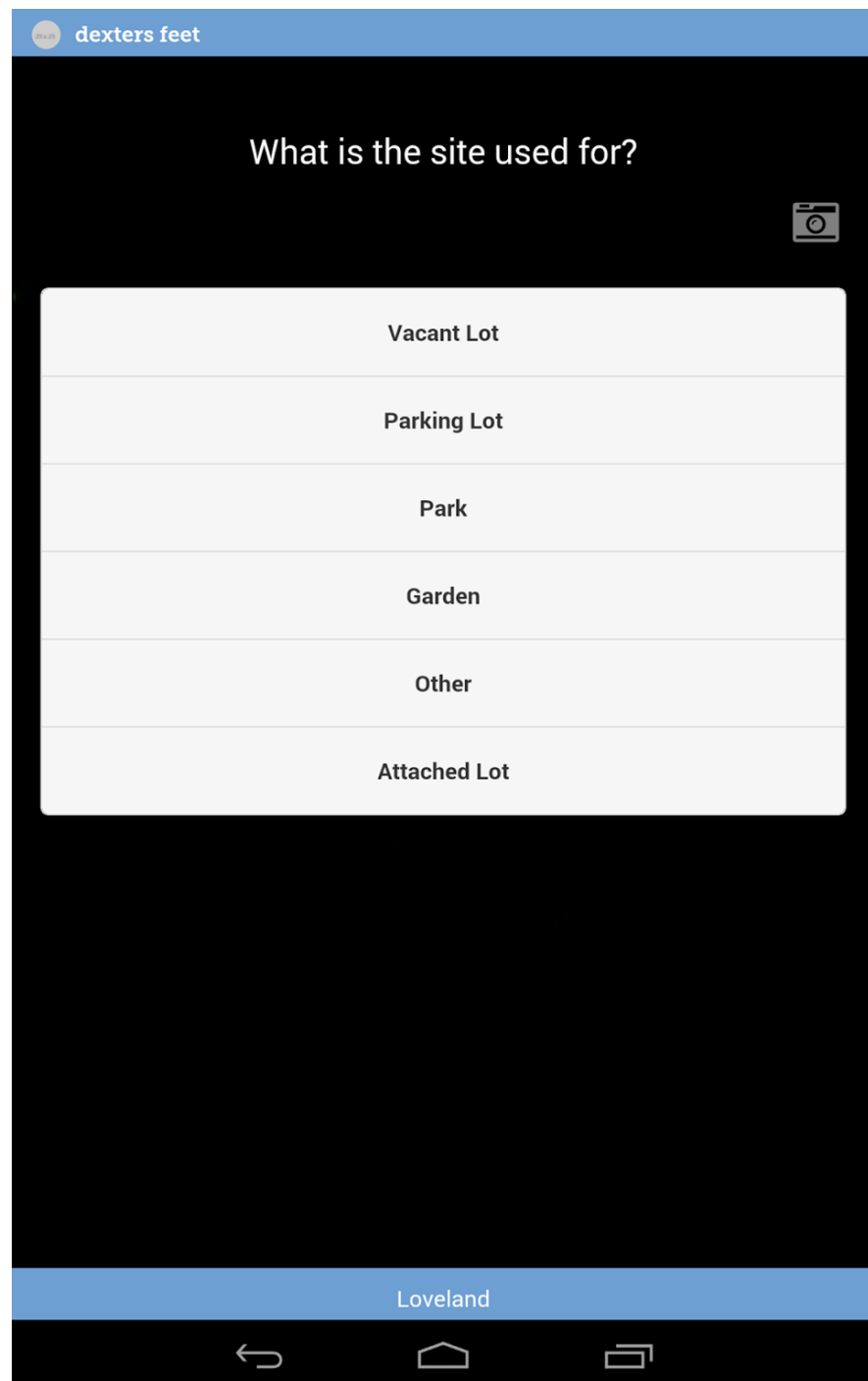
Notes are one of the most important things a surveyor can do to help improve the accuracy of the data we collect. If there are details about the building that aren't obvious from the pictures, write them out so that the quality control team knows about them too.

At this point, you can either add extra photos, or press Finish to submit the blext.

Whew. This is a lot of information.

Break?

When There is No Structure



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface with a blue header bar containing the text 'dexters feet'. Below the header, a black box contains the question 'What is the site used for?' in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question is a white rectangular list box with a black border. The list contains six items: 'Vacant Lot', 'Parking Lot', 'Park', 'Garden', 'Other', and 'Attached Lot'. At the bottom of the screen is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland' in white. Below the blue bar is a black bar with three white icons: a back arrow, a house icon, and a document icon.

What is the site used for?
Vacant Lot
Parking Lot
Park
Garden
Other
Attached Lot

Loveland

Selecting No at the structure question gives you a different set of questions that relate to empty or vacant lots.

Vacant Lot: A lot that is not being used..

Parking Lot: Lot used for parking, can be paved or unpaved. Does not include cars on lawns.

Park: A lot that is clearly designated or has some permanent indicator of park use such as playground equipment and trails.

Garden: Land being used for agricultural purposes, includes personal gardens and larger farms.

Other: For when you're unsure about what the lot is being used for.

Attached Lot: A lot adjacent to or in between occupied houses that is clearly maintained or used as an extension of an existing property. Attached Lots are not considered vacant lots because they are in use.

Vacant Parcel Examples

Vacant Lot: A lot that is not being used.



Vacant Parcel Examples

Parking Lot: Lot used for parking, can be paved or unpaved. Does not include cars on lawns.



Vacant Parcel Examples

Park: A lot that is clearly designated or has some permanent indicator of park use such as playground equipment and trails.



Vacant Parcel Examples

Garden: Land being used for agricultural purposes, includes personal gardens and larger farms.

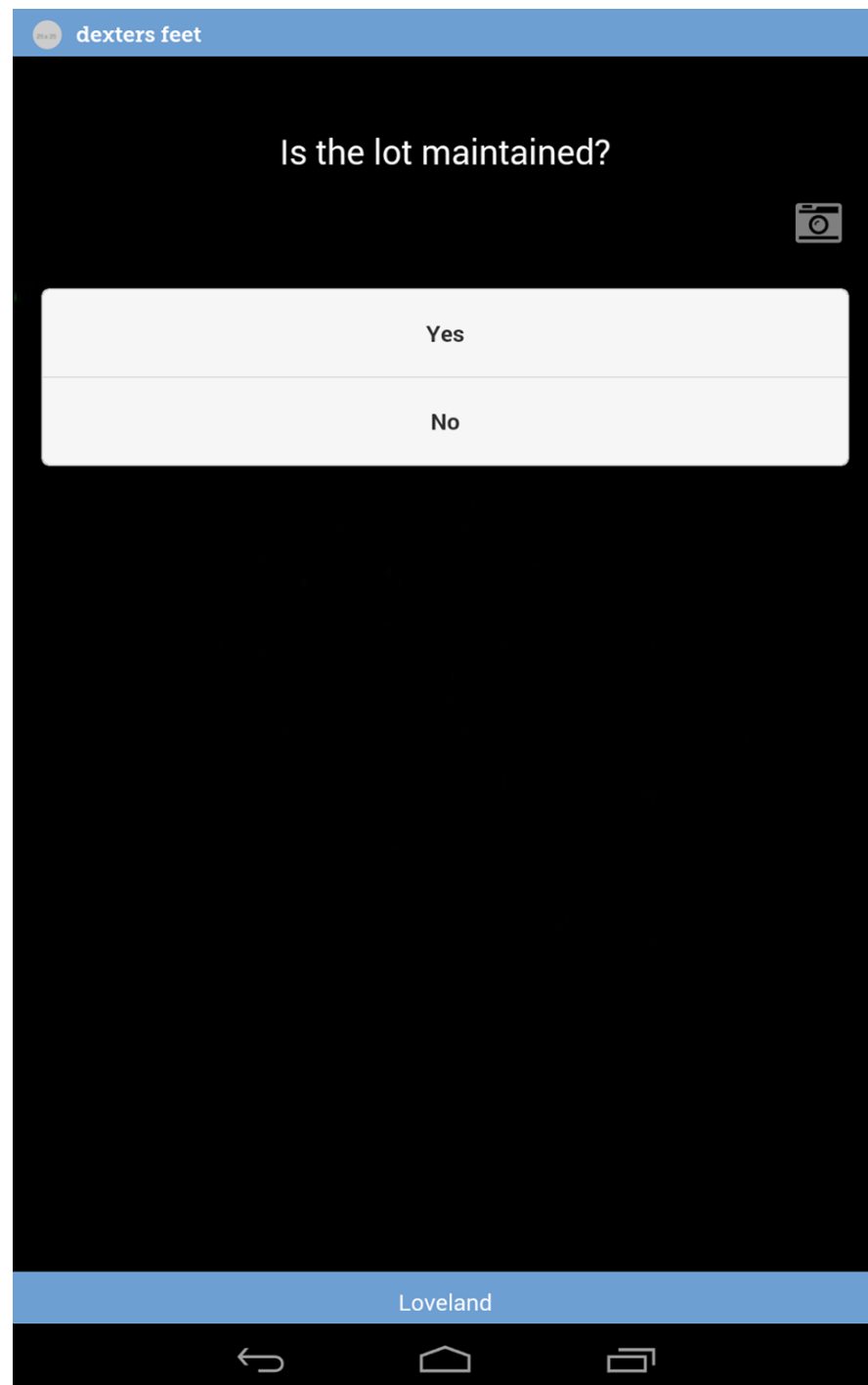


Vacant Parcel Examples

Attached Lot: A lot adjacent to or in between occupied houses that is clearly maintained or used as an extension of an existing property. Attached Lots are not considered vacant lots because they are in use.



Is The Lot Maintained?



The screenshot shows a mobile application interface. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text 'dexters feet' and a small circular icon to its left. Below the header, the main content area has a black background. In the center, the question 'Is the lot maintained?' is displayed in white text. To the right of the question is a small camera icon. Below the question, there are two white rectangular buttons with black text: 'Yes' and 'No'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland'. Below this bar is a black navigation bar with three white icons: a back arrow, a house icon, and a folder icon.

A lot is maintained when the lot shows sign of care and maintenance, regardless of what is physically on the lot. Grassy lots are mowed with some regularity and paved lots show signs of consistent care.

Characteristics of an unmaintained lot include tall grass, overgrown trees or bushes, weeds in the cracks of pavement, and so on.

Lot Maintenance Examples

Maintained



Not Maintained

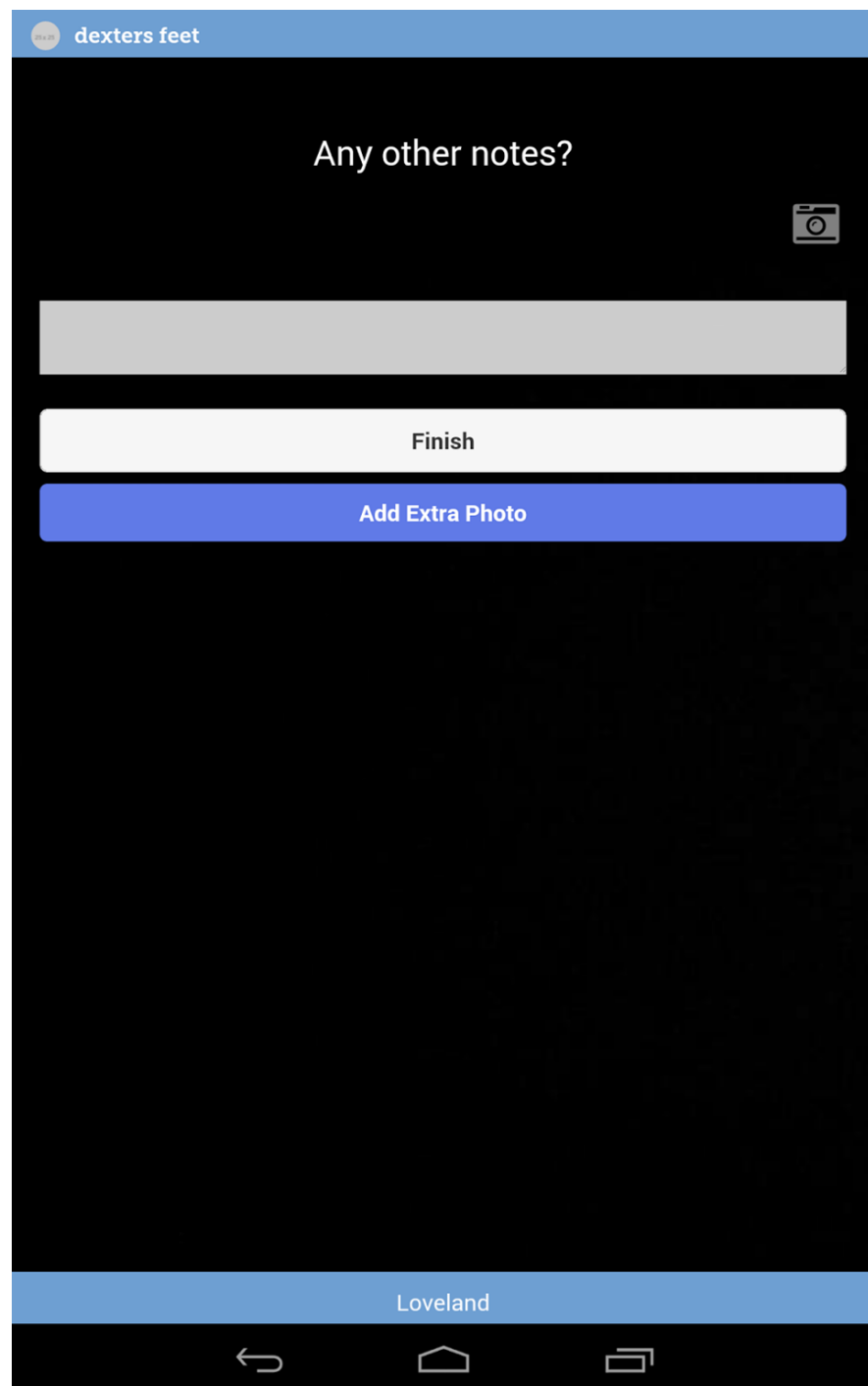


Is There Dumping on the site?

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text 'dexters feet' and a small circular icon to its left. Below the header, the main area has a dark background. In the center, the question 'Is there dumping on the site?' is displayed in white text. To the right of the question is a small icon of a camera. Below the question, there are two white rectangular buttons with rounded corners. The top button is labeled 'Yes' and the bottom button is labeled 'No'. At the bottom of the screen, there is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland'. Below this bar is a black bar containing three white icons: a back arrow, a home icon, and a recent apps icon.

This is identical to the structure dumping question, only for vacant lots.

Notes Again



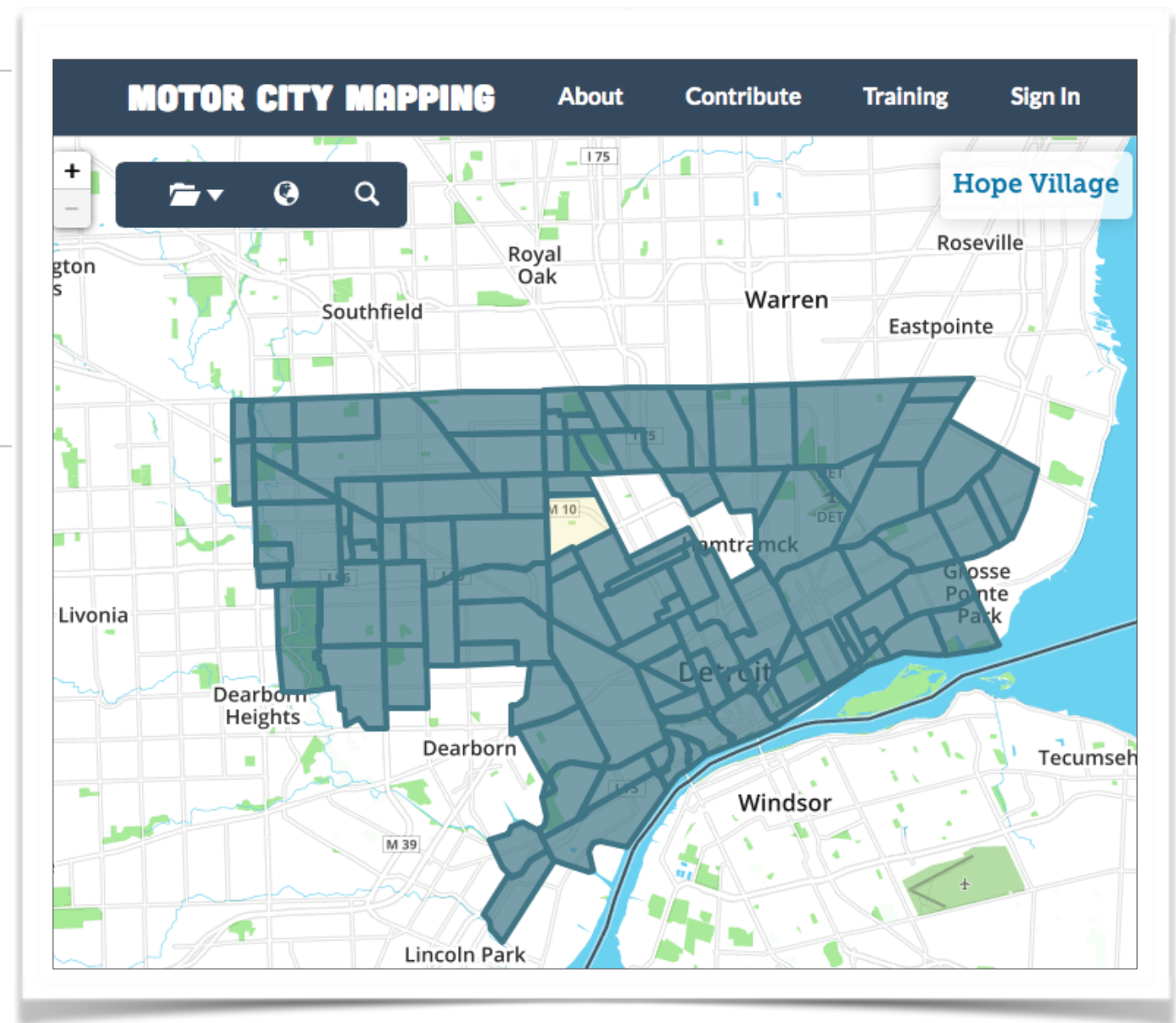
The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for 'dexters feet'. At the top, there is a blue header bar with the text 'dexters feet' and a small circular icon. Below this, the main screen has a black background. The text 'Any other notes?' is displayed in white. To the right of this text is a small camera icon. Below the text is a large, empty white rectangular area for writing notes. At the bottom of this area are two buttons: a white button labeled 'Finish' and a blue button labeled 'Add Extra Photo'. At the very bottom of the screen is a blue bar with the text 'Loveland'. Below this bar is a black navigation bar with three white icons: a back arrow, a home icon, and a recent apps icon.

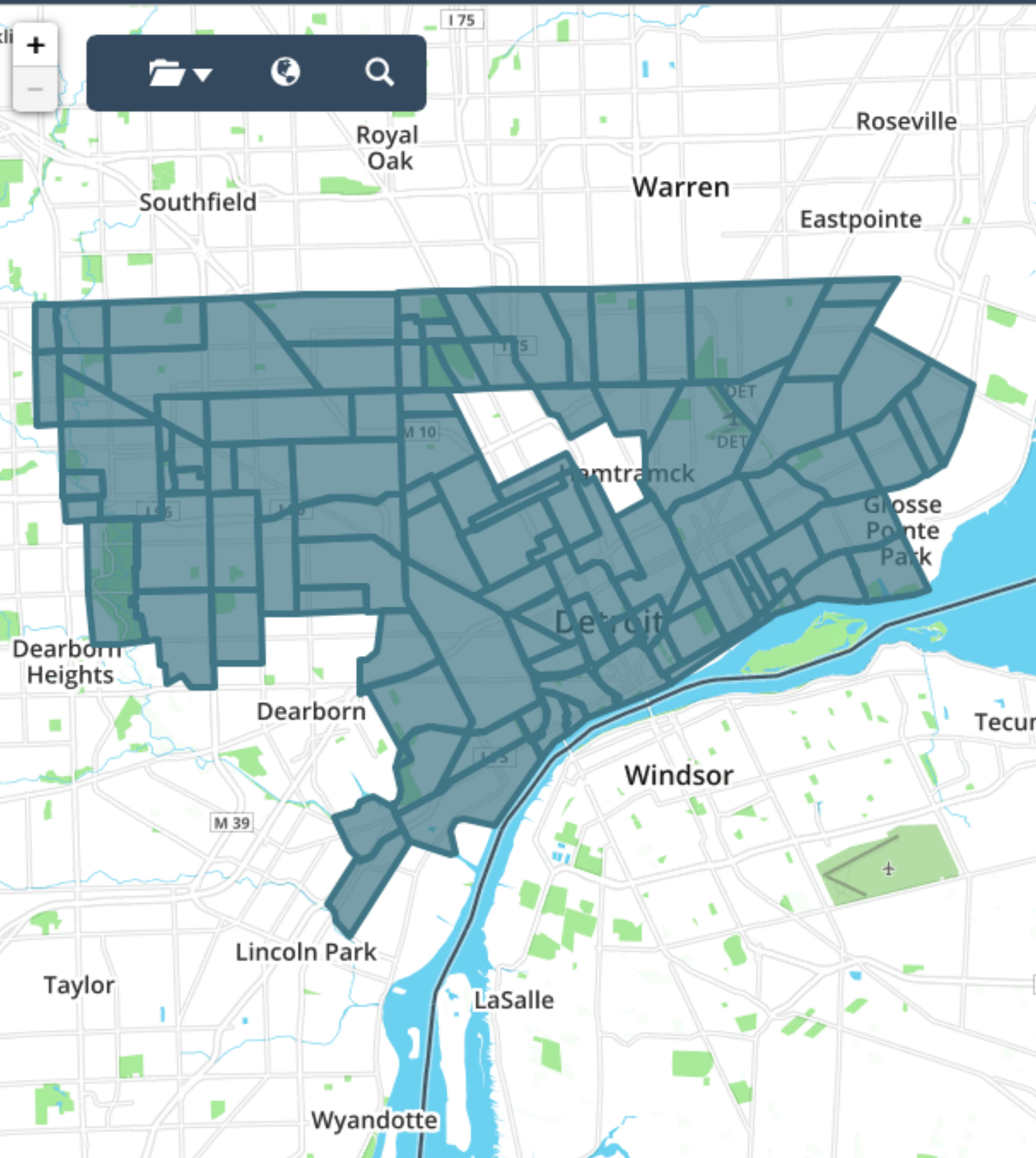
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At this point, you can either add extra photos, or press Finish to submit the blext.

Back to The Database

Every property in the city is stored on the **Motor City Mapping** database that contains information about the buildings, condition, and ownership.





DETROIT

Overview

Explore

Blexts

Search

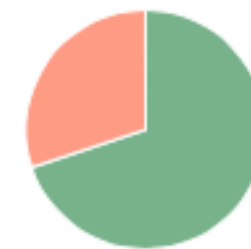
All

Publicly Owned

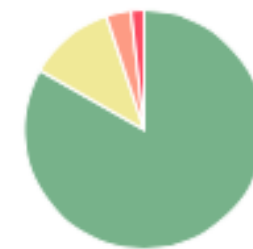
Privately Owned



374,049 properties surveyed

Structures
vs Lots

good: 217,520
fair: 30,474
poor: 8,814
sugg. demo: 4

Structure
ConditionStructure
Occupancy

possibly occup:
occupied: 200
unoccupied: 4



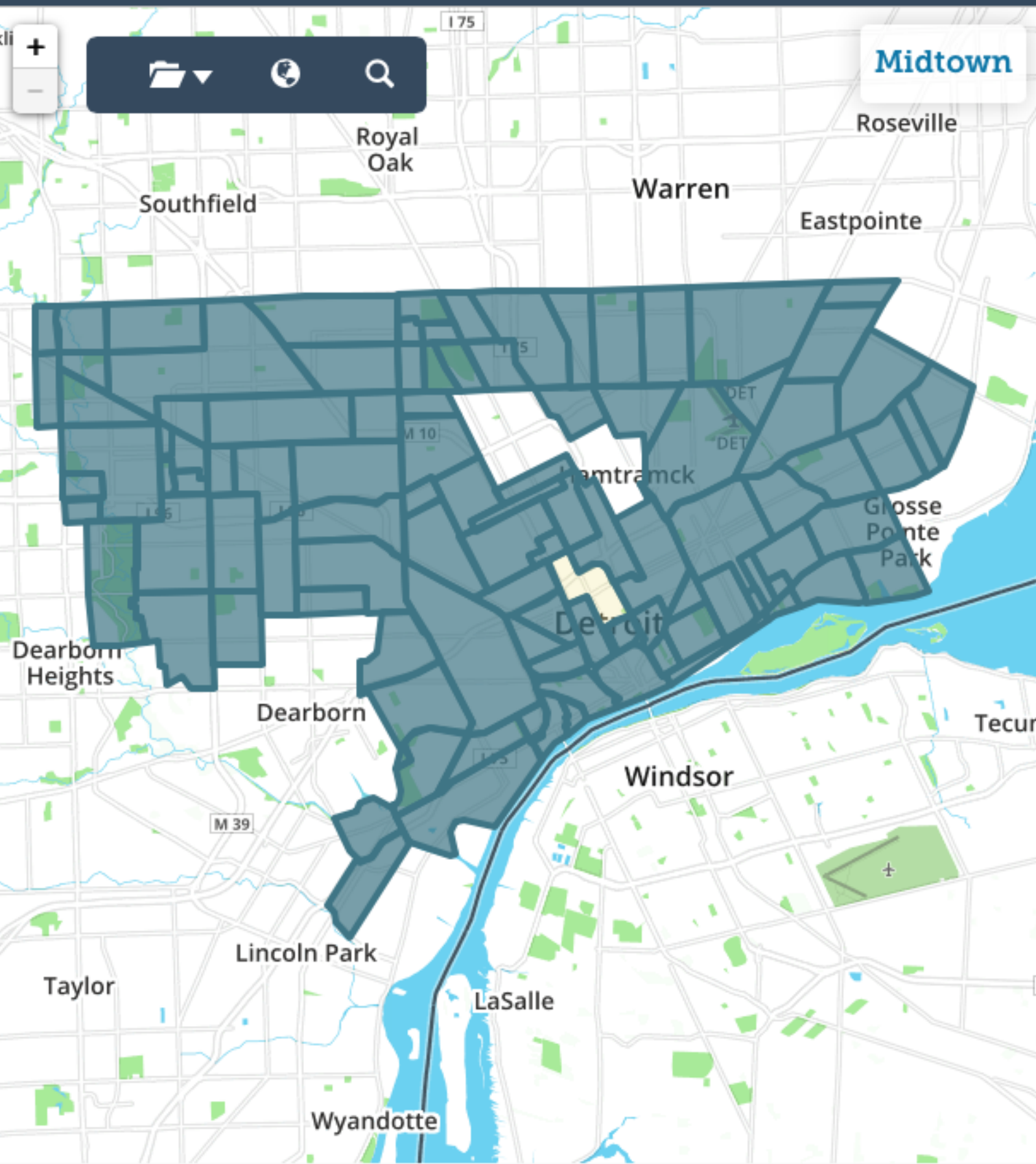
Lots with
Dumping:
5,966



Structures
with Fire
Damage:
7,083



Structures
needing
Boarding:
28,180



DETROIT

Overview

Explore

Blexts

Search

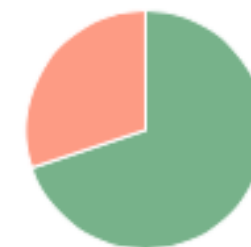
All

Publicly Owned

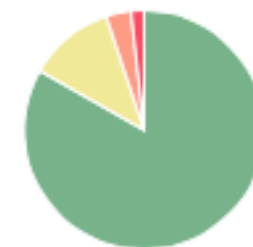
Privately Owned



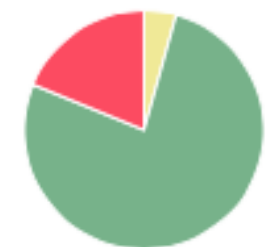
374,049 properties surveyed

Structures
vs Lots

structures: 26
lots: 112,558

Structure
Condition

good: 217,520
fair: 30,474
poor: 8,814

Structure
Occupancy

possibly occup
occupied: 200
unoccupied: 4
sugg. demo: 4



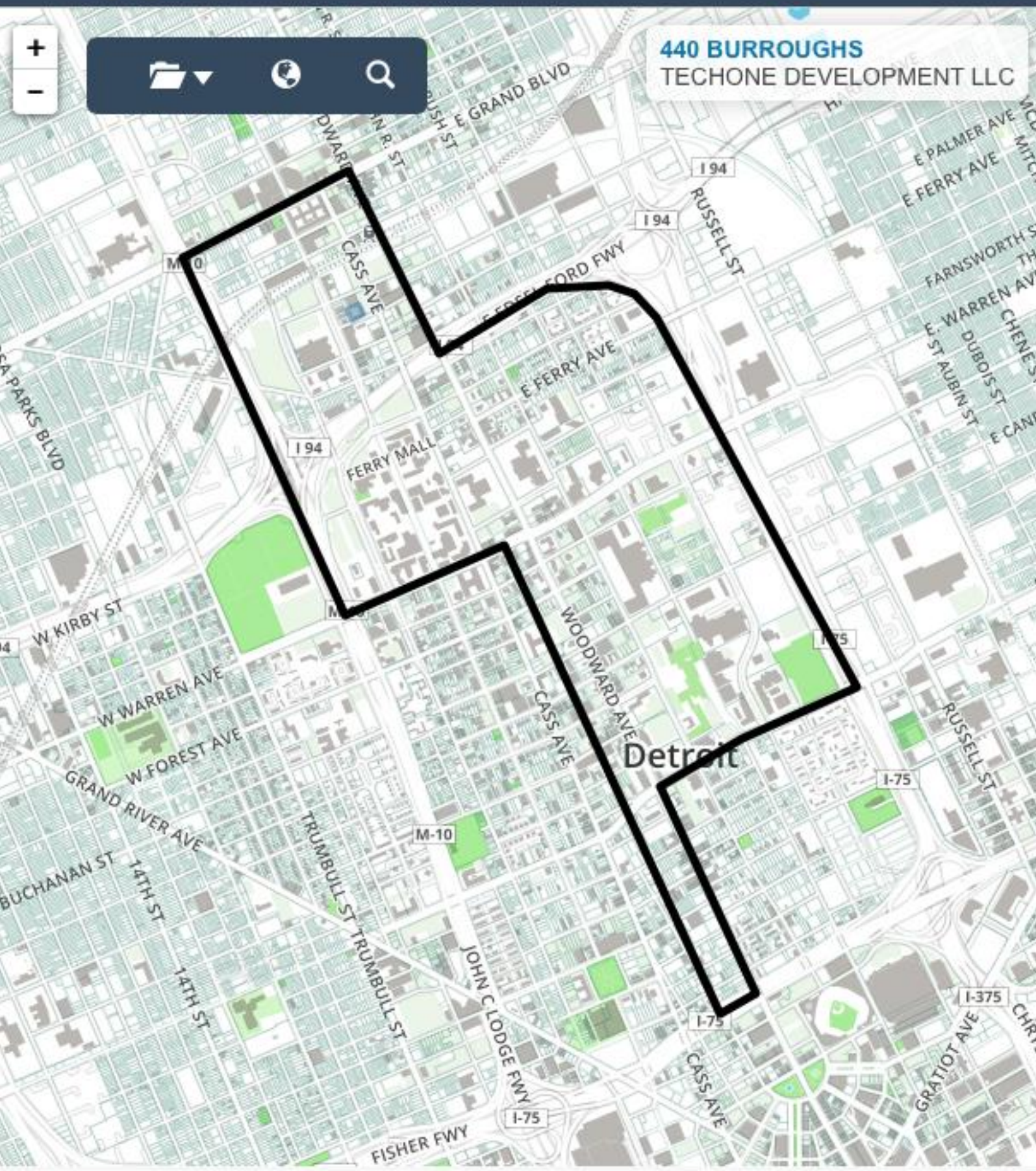
Lots with
Dumping:
5,966



Structures
with Fire
Damage:
7,083



Structures
needing
Boarding:
28,180



« MIDTOWN

Overview

Explore

Blexts

Search

All

Publicly Owned

Privately Owned



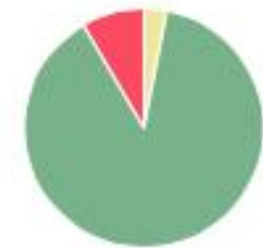
851 properties surveyed

Structures
vs Lots

structures: 39
lots: 459

Structure
Condition

good: 371
fair: 16
poor: 3

Structure
Occupancy

possibly occup
occupied: 345
unoccupied: 3

Lots with
Dumping:

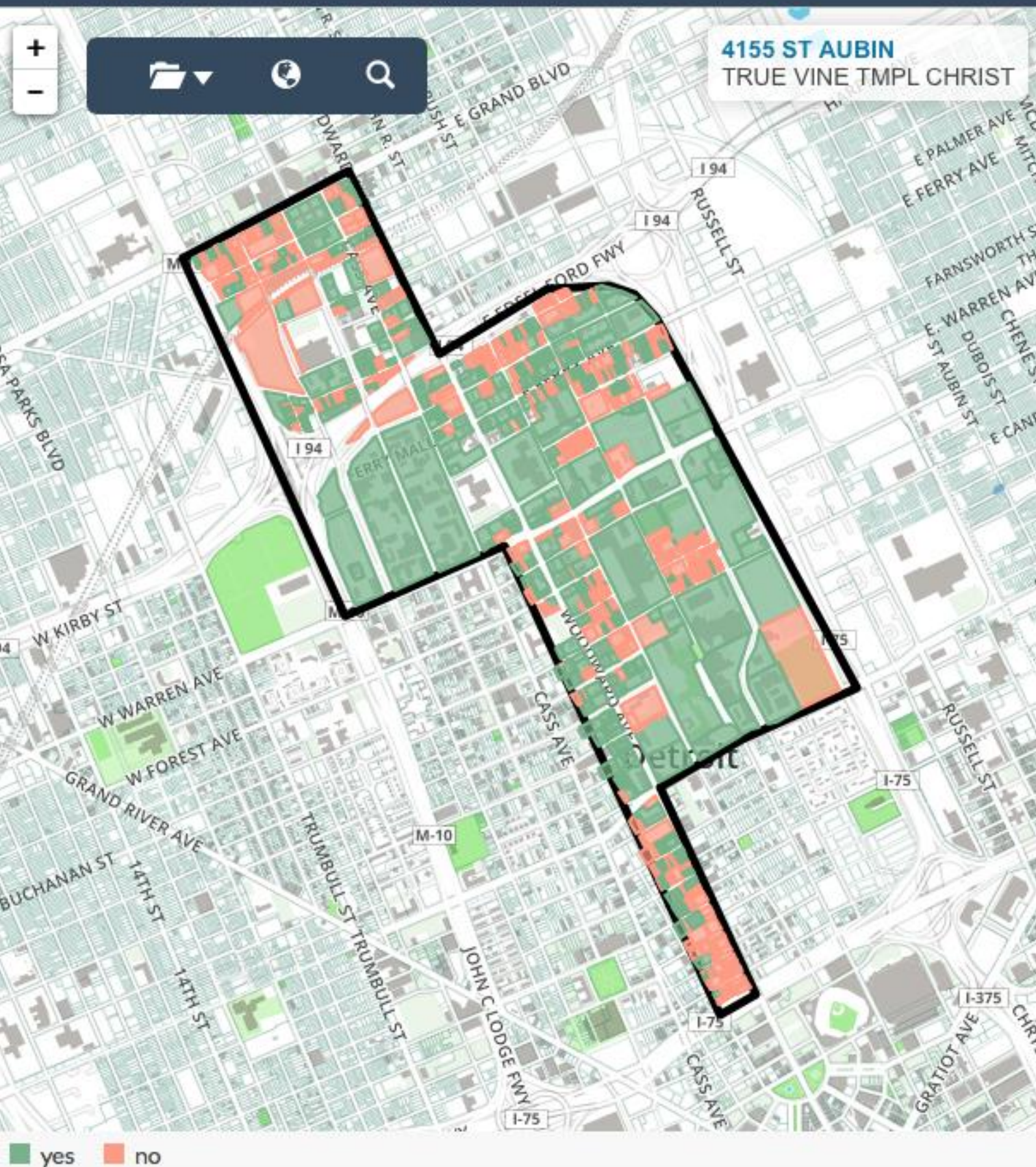
7

Structures
with Fire
Damage:

3

Structures
needing
Boarding:

11



« MIDTOWN

Overview

Explore

Blexts

Search

All

Publicly Owned

Privately Owned



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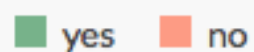
7

Structures
with Fire
Damage:

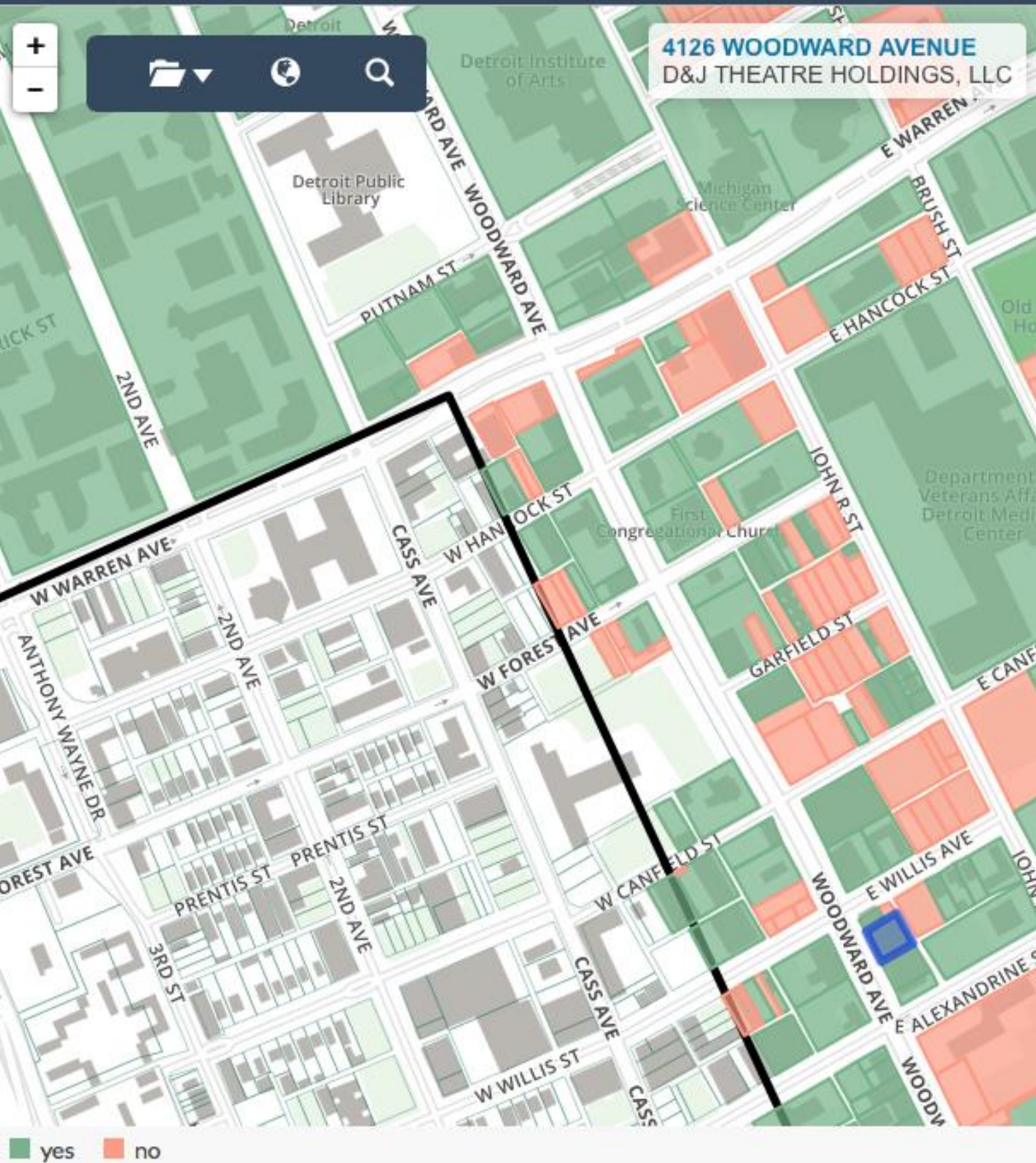
3

Structures
needing
Boarding:

11



11



« MIDTOWN

Overview

Explore

Blexts

Search

4126 WOODWARD AVENUE

Blexted January 30, 2014



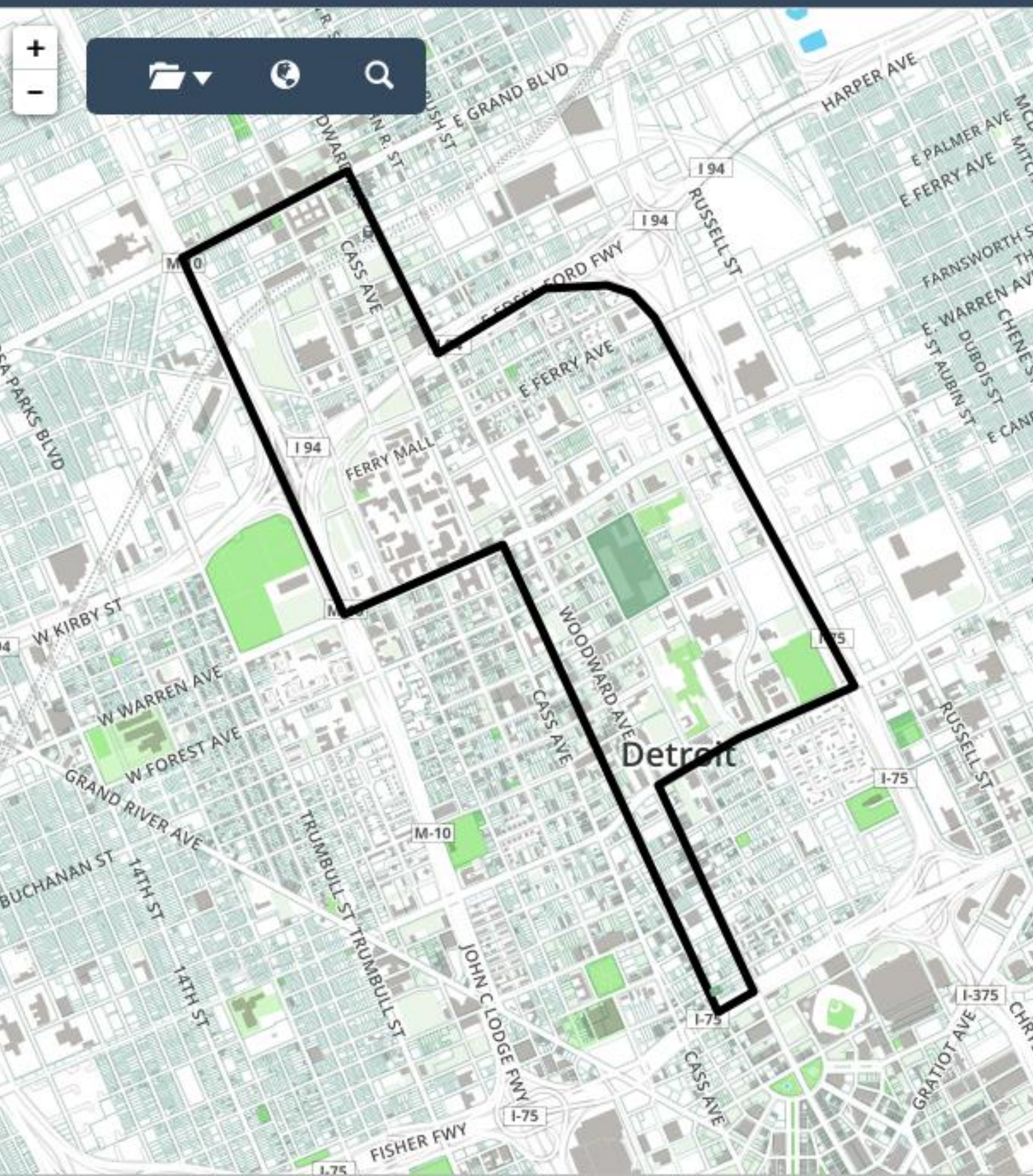
Structure: yes

Use: commercial

Condition: good

Occupancy: occupied

Needs Boarding: no



« MIDTOWN

Overview

Explore

Blexts

Search

All

Structures ▾

Lots ▾

Condition ▾



Sort ▾

**457 E Kirby**

structure: yes, use: residential,
condition: good, occupancy:
occupied, needs boarding: no, fire

damage: no, dumping: no, units: 4+ units

6:31 PM, Sep 9

**580 Frederick**

structure: yes, use: institutional,
condition: good, occupancy:
unoccupied, needs boarding: no, fire

damage: no, dumping: no

6:28 PM, Sep 9

**650 W Baltimore**

structure: yes, use: commercial,
condition: good, occupancy:
occupied, needs boarding: no, fire

damage: no, dumping: no

The business just added a beautiful patio on the lot



Data Driven Detroit provides accessible high-quality information and analysis to drive informed decision-making.



Collection



Visualization



Analysis



Accessibility



Data-Driven Outcomes



OUR SERVICES

Data Driven Detroit assists our community partners by specializing in the following areas:

Data Collection



Mapping & Visualization



Data Analysis



Information Accessibility



Data-Driven Outcomes



RECENT BLOG POSTS



AUG
9

The Detroit Environmental Agenda Has Been Released

With generous funding from the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, Data Driven Detroit is proud to have provided technical support for the Detroit Env ...



MAY
31

Meet the D3 Staff: Jeffrey Bross

This Q&A is the fifth in a series of profiles of Data Driven Detroit staff members. When Project Manager Jeffrey Bross joined the team at Data Driven Detroit ...



APR
18

Thank you, Mario Goetz!

Mario Goetz joined the D3 team in January as a Semester in Detroit Intern. Mario is pursuing a bachelor's degree in History and Social Theory in Practice at the ...



JUL
26

"City of Detroit Building Demolitions" Interactive Map Presented by The City of Detroit and Data Driven Detroit

Interactive demolition map it is well known that vacant and abandoned homes have become a public safety threat and an overall burden on the recovery of neighbo ...



MAY
10

The Obama Effect: African Americans turned out last year in record numbers

One of the narratives that has come front and center in the last two Presidential Elections is that of race in America, with an emphasis on its role in the Ame ...



MAR
14

Michigan's First Year of Population Growth Shows Wide Variations

The Census Bureau has released its latest population estimates for 2012 today. The estimates cover metropolitan statistical areas, micropolitan statistical are ...

The background of the slide is an aerial photograph of a city street grid, overlaid with a red halftone dot pattern. The dots are arranged in a regular grid, with some areas where the dots are more densely packed, creating a textured effect. The text is centered in a white rectangular box.

Thank You!

Please contact us with any questions at:
info@motorcitymapping.org