

A Note on Processing the Motor City Mapping Parcels

The parcel file maintained by the City of Detroit Assessment Division exists primarily to identify property ownership. Using the Assessor parcel file posed challenges for surveying. For example, several thousand parcels – condominiums in particular – can have many owners in a single structure, all of which are represented by a separate parcel object. In the more extreme cases, this could require a surveyor to fill out the same data hundreds of times to completely survey a single structure.

To simplify this process, D3 created a parcel layer designed specifically so that, as often as possible, a surveyor looking at one structure would see one shape. To do this, we merged a number of parcels, reducing the number of total parcels across the city from roughly 385,000 to 380,233, which was the total number of parcel objects used to conduct the Motor City Mapping Survey. As such, a many-to-one relationship exists between the standard City of Detroit Assessor file and the D3 survey parcel layer, where several Assessor parcels align with only one Motor City Mapping record.

MCM surveyors successfully recorded data on 378,136 parcels. The remaining 2,097 parcels are unsurveyed largely because surveyors could not access the property. The majority of these parcels are located within gated communities and industrial campuses. D3 further reduced the number of parcels surveyed to eliminate records that need further review before publishing. The final total of 377,602 forms the baseline of parcels that D3 used to create the numbers in the Blight Removal Task Force report.

**Addendum, July 8, 2014:

Additional processing on the survey parcel layer has reduced the total number of objects to 379,549.