



Detroit group estimates city's population at 850,259

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Feb 24, 2011 |

Anticipating a census undercount, the Detroit Economic Growth Corp. released its own estimate of Detroit's population Wednesday -- 850,259 -- basing the number on [marketresearch](#) conducted by the nonprofit group Social Compact.

Although it is lower than previous U.S. census estimates that pegged the city's population at more than 900,000, the estimate is expected to be higher than the count the census will release by April 1. Demographers have suggested that the census will estimate the city's population at closer to 800,000.

The Social Compact study, known by its trade name DrillDown, also found that Detroiters spend an estimated \$1.5 billion each year outside the city, or about 30% of city residents' total retail buying power.

That "leakage" outside the city includes an estimated \$200 million spent on groceries, an estimated \$321 million on apparel and an estimated \$162 million in suburban restaurants.

The figures are meant to provide an alternative source of [data](#) to counter traditional market research that portrays cities such as Detroit as too poor and too depopulated to attract major retailers.

"The success of many retailers in Detroit belies the findings of conventional market data sources," said Olga Stella, DEGC vice president of [businessdevelopment](#). "The partnership with Social Compact and Data Driven Detroit will help businesses access accurate information about Detroit to help guide their investment decisions."

Alyssa Lee, interim president and CEO of Social Compact, said the data are based on multiple sources, including building permits and utility usage rates..

"When you release something that people term 'alternative,' there's always a level of suspicion, but our organization has been around for over 20 years," Lee said Wednesday.

She added that Social Compact data tends

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to confirm what people already know about their communities.

"For people who actually live in these cities, it's a confirmation: 'We are who we say we are. We know the strength of our communities.' "

The DrillDown report can be downloaded from www.socialcompact.org .

Organizations can request a customized report at www.datadrivendetroit.org and clicking on the "AskKurt" button, referring to demographer Kurt Metzger.

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