Downloading the app

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

Go to the app store, search for the “Blexting” application. Install the app on your device.
Using The Blexting App

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.

You are here.

The black marker indicates your current location.
Best Practices

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.

Tap this button for aerial view

Tap this button to center GPS
Using The Blexting App

You can also touch the **blue magnifying glass** on the bottom to enter an address manually.
Using The Blexting App

In order to “blext” you must first sign up and sign in. Click the blue circle in the upper left corner to get to the sign up/in page.
Using The Blexting App

First, **create an account**. Enter your email address and then choose a password.
Using The Blexting App

Next, **sign in** using your email address and password.
Using The Blexting App

Once signed in, select the Motor City Mapping survey.
Using The Blexting App

Once signed in, and the survey selected, you will be returned to the parcel map.
Using The Blexting App

Select a parcel to blext. 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 the picture:

Once the camera app is opened, **photograph** the selected parcel...

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 it’s 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.
Answering the Survey Questions:

After you take a picture you are satisfied with, you will be prompted to answer a series of survey questions.....
Structure or no structure?

After you take the picture, the first question you’ll see asks if there is a structure on the site.

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
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.
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

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

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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

**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.
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

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

Structure Fire Damage

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:
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?

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**.

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Is the building secure or open to trespass?

- Secured
- Open to Trespass
Secure or Open Examples

Secured

Open to Trespass
Is the Dumping on the Site?

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 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.
When There is No Structure

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

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Vacant Parcel Examples

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Vacant Parcel Examples

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**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?

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?

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