

PROJECT SIDEWALK: MAPPING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE WORLD THROUGH GOOGLE STREET VIEW

@jonfroehlich | Associate Professor | Computer Science | University of Washington





MAKEABILITY LAB

FALL 2013
DC MAKERFAIRE



MAKEABILITY LAB

SUMMER 2018

SEATTLE ARBORETUM





Our Mission

**DESIGN, BUILD, & STUDY INTERACTIVE
TOOLS & TECHNIQUES TO ADDRESS
PRESSING SOCIETAL CHALLENGES**

FOUR FOCUS AREAS



**ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY**



**HEALTH
& WELLNESS**



ACCESSIBILITY



**STEM
EDUCATION**

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**HEALTH
& WELLNESS**



ACCESSIBILITY



**STEM
EDUCATION**

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SUSTAINABILITY**



HEALTH
& WELLNESS



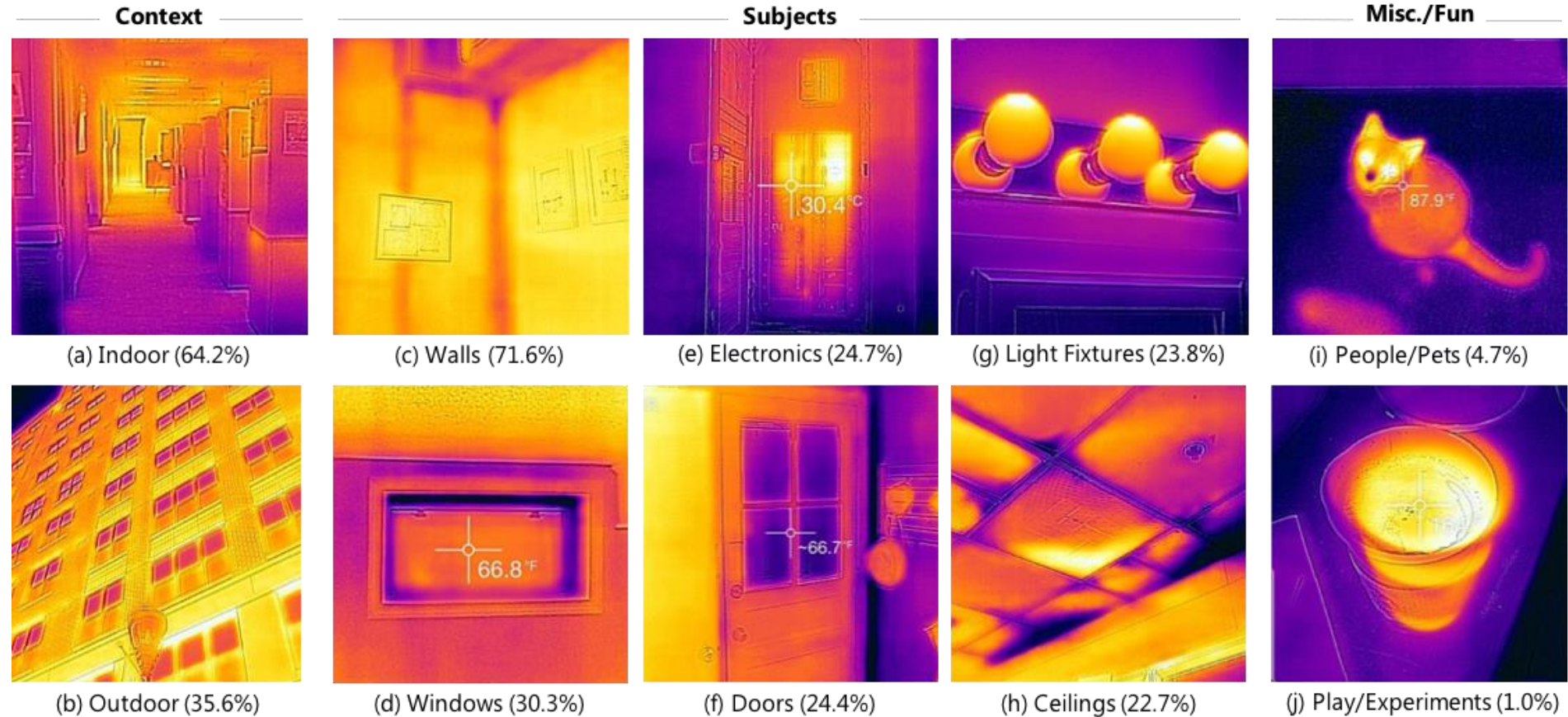
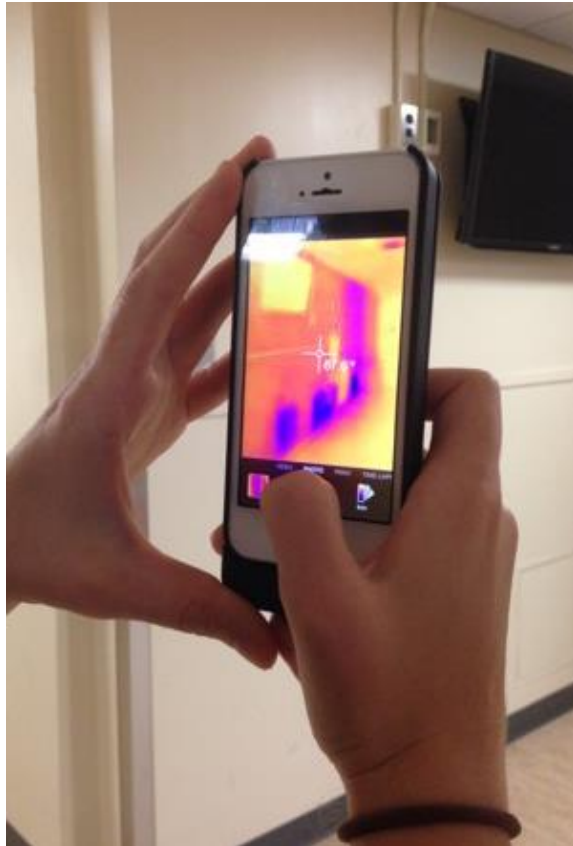
ACCESSIBILITY



STEM
EDUCATION

PERVASIVE THERMOGRAPHY

With recently graduated UMD CS PhD Student Matt Mauriello, now a post-doc at Stanford



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ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY



**HEALTH
& WELLNESS**



ACCESSIBILITY



STEM
EDUCATION

HEALTH & WELLNESS

DESIGNING HEALTH SUPPORT SYSTEMS



[CHI'13 Best Paper, CHI'14]

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ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY



**HEALTH
& WELLNESS**



ACCESSIBILITY



**STEM
EDUCATION**

HEALTH + STEM
BODYVIS



[IDC'13, CHI'15 Honorable Mention, ICLS'16, IDC'16, CHI'17, ICLS'18]

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**HEALTH
& WELLNESS**



ACCESSIBILITY



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EDUCATION**

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ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY



HEALTH
& WELLNESS



ACCESSIBILITY



STEM
EDUCATION

IMPROVING ACCESS TO THE PHYSICAL WORLD

OUR OVERARCHING RESEARCH QUESTION



How can we...

develop solutions that collect, model, verify,
& visualize urban accessibility at scale?

PROJECT SIDEWALK

[ASSETS'12, CHI'13, HCOMP'13, ASSETS'13 Best Paper, UIST'14, TACCESS'15, SIGACCESS'15, CHI'16, ASSETS'17, ASSETS'18 x2]

30.6

**million U.S. adults
have a mobility impairment**



Source: US Census, 210

15.2

million use an assistive aid







NO CURB RAMPS

A photograph of a sidewalk made of concrete slabs and brick pavers. A dark wooden utility pole stands in the foreground, casting a long shadow. In the background, there is a brick pillar, a metal fence, and a grassy area. A white text box with the words "PHYSICAL OBSTACLES" is overlaid on the image, with a line pointing to the base of the wooden pole.

PHYSICAL OBSTACLES



INCOMPLETE SIDEWALKS

SURFACE PROBLEMS





PHYSICAL OBSTACLES

NO CURB RAMP

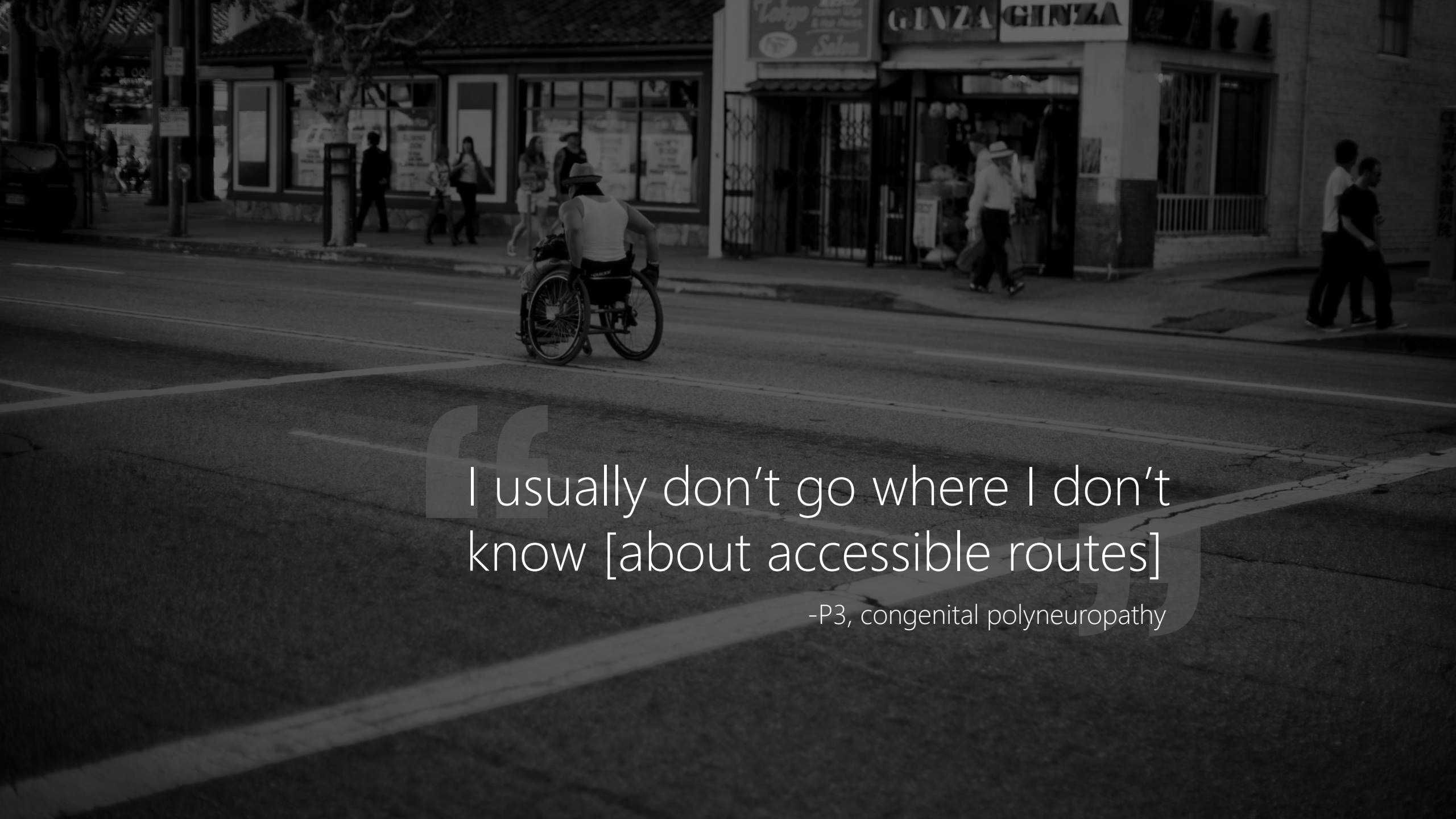
SURFACE DEGRADATION

Accessible infrastructure
has a significant impact
on the **independence**
and **mobility** of citizens

[Thapar *et al.*, 2004 ; Nuernberger, 2008]







I usually don't go where I don't
know [about accessible routes]

-P3, congenital polyneuropathy

The National Council on Disability noted that there is **no comprehensive information** on “the degree to which sidewalks are accessible” in cities.



National Council on Disability, 2007

The impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act: Assessing the progress toward achieving the goals of the ADA

There are many approaches for data collection but they typically require **onsite reporting**, which **limits scalability**

TRADITIONAL ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS



Walkability Audit
Wake County, North Carolina




Walkability Audit
Wake County, North Carolina



Safe Routes to School Walkability Audit
Rock Hill, South Carolina

311 SYSTEMS



Choose Request Types ...

Recycling Requested

...

Rodent/Insect Control

...

Rodent Inspection and Treatment

...

Sanitation Enforcement

...

Sidewalk Repair

...

Open

Closed

Street/Alley Lights

...

Street/Alley Repair

...

Street/Alley Repave

...

DC 311 Service Request Map (last 30 days)

+

-

🔄

Find address in DC

🔍

⋮

📍

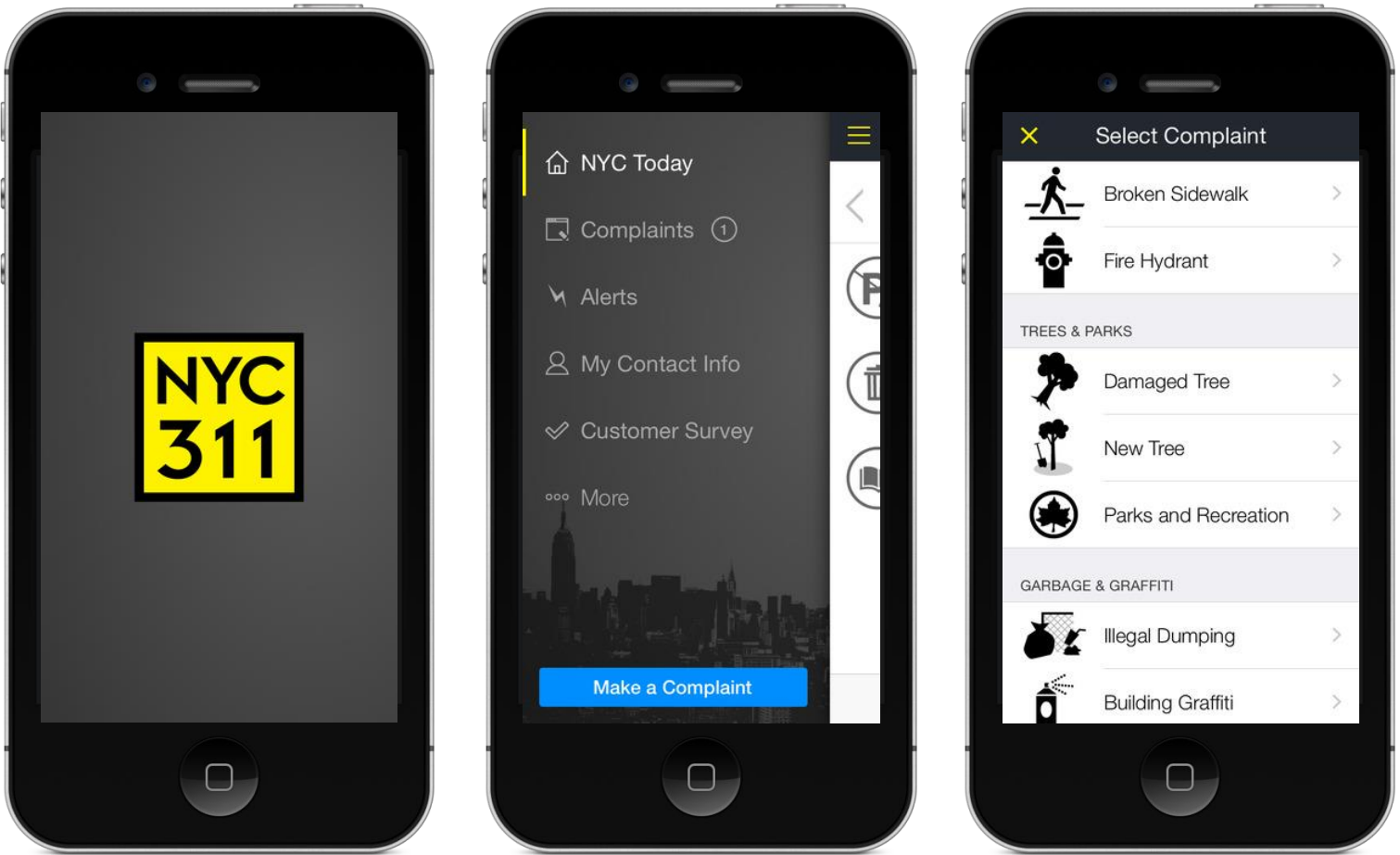
📈

📄

📦

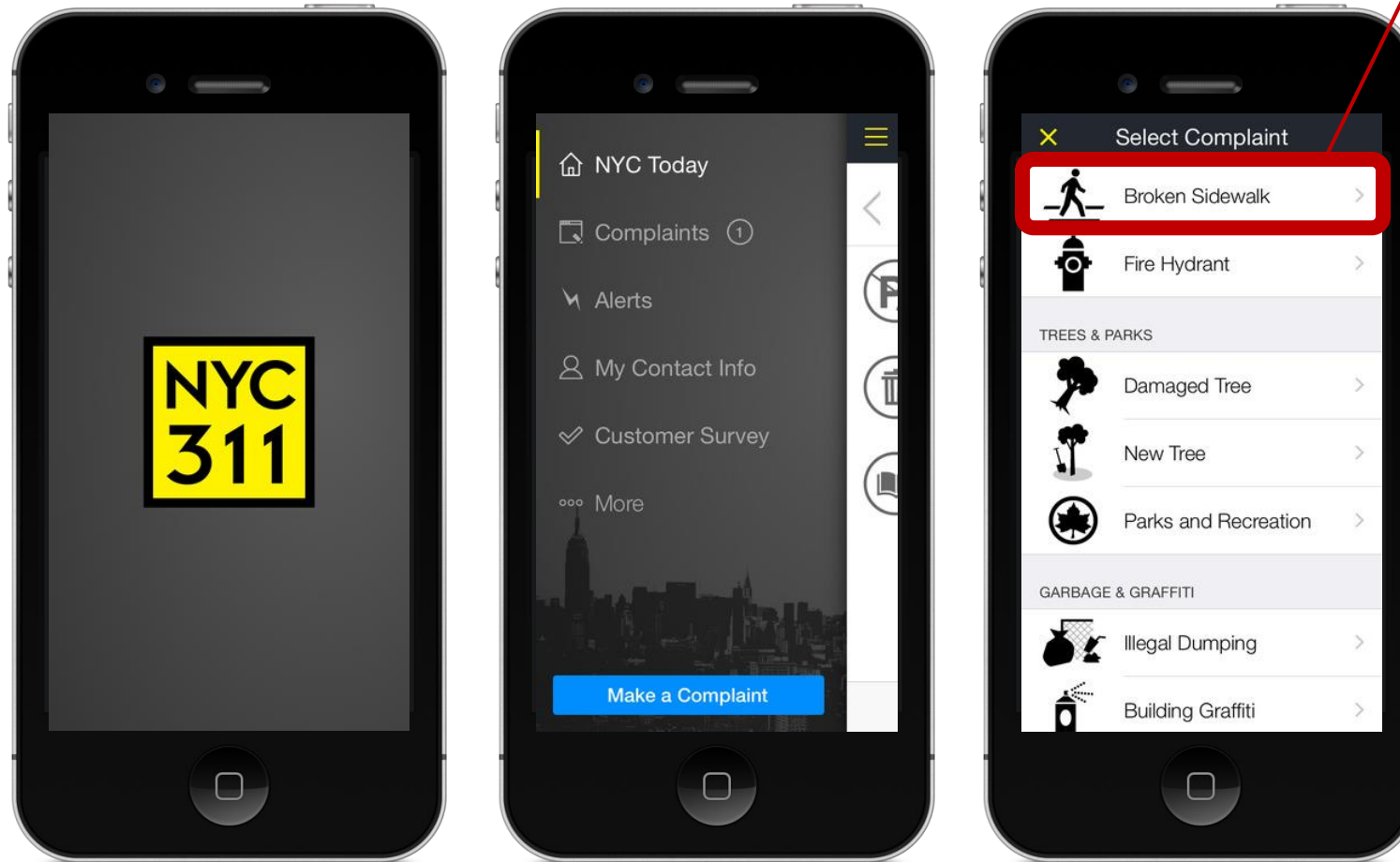
ACCESSIBILITY DATA COLLECTION

MOBILE REPORTING SOLUTIONS



MOBILE REPORTING SOLUTIONS

The NYC311 app has a specific option for **broken sidewalks**



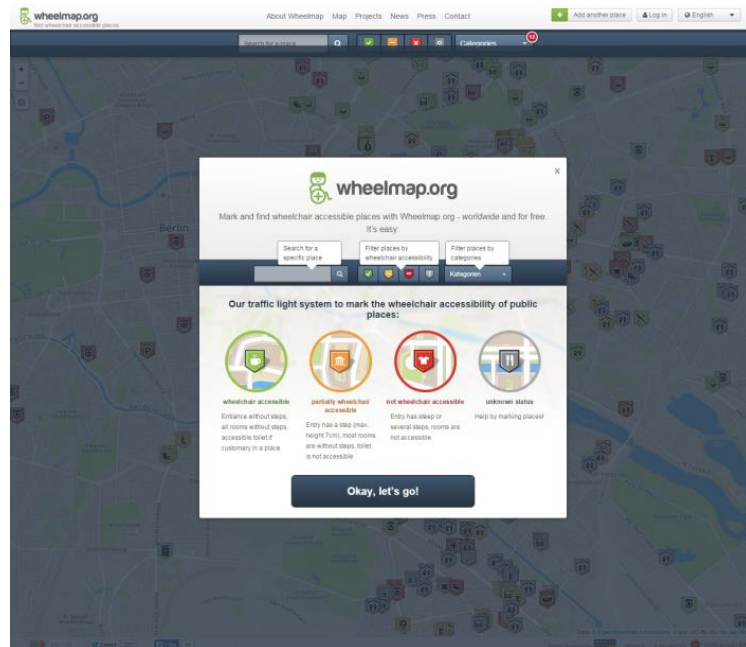
Get Involved while on-the-go.

Report, track, and discuss issues in your neighborhood. With just a few clicks, fellow citizens and your government can find and manage 311 issues instantly. Available across devices and on mobile web browsers, anyone can get involved in their community.

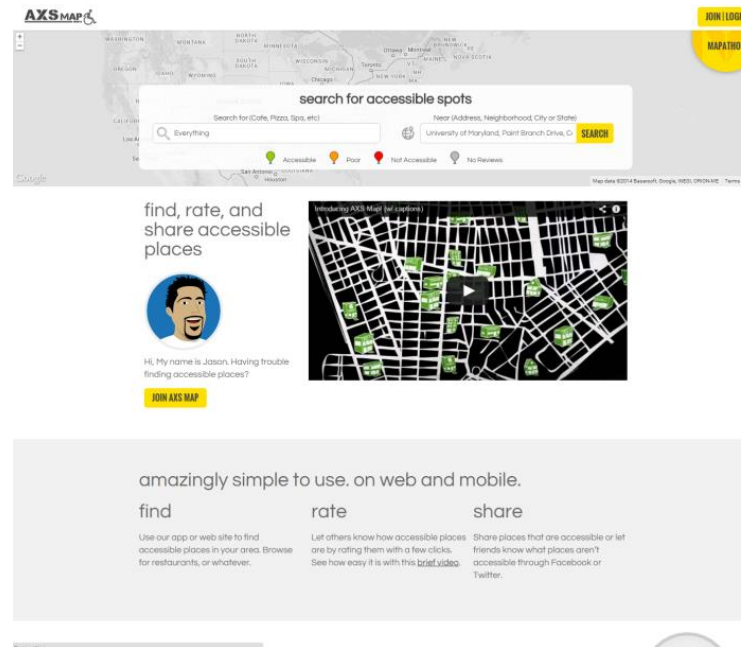
[Download Now!](#)[Download using our QR code](#)

Be a good neighbor. Everywhere.

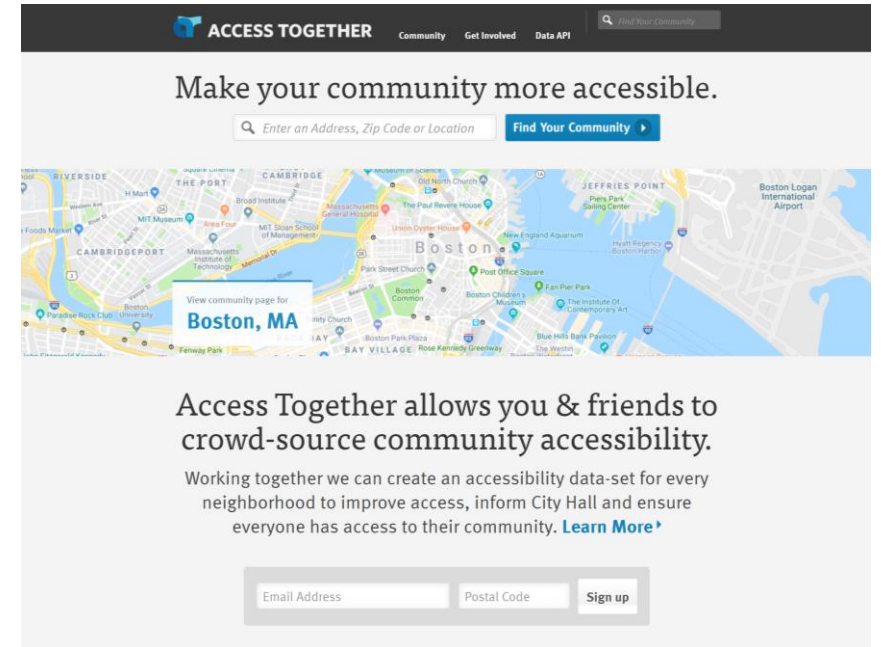
REPORTING ON ACCESSIBILITY OF PLACES



<http://wheelmap.org>

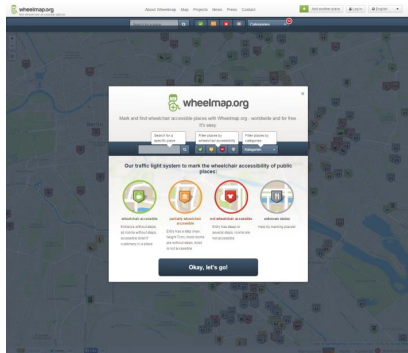


<http://axsmap.com>

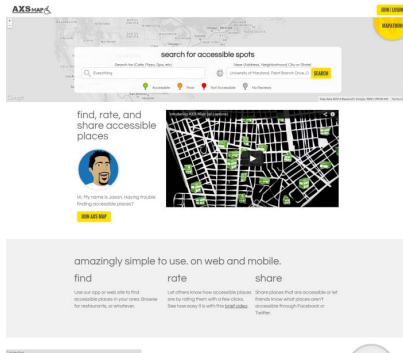


<http://accesstogether.org>

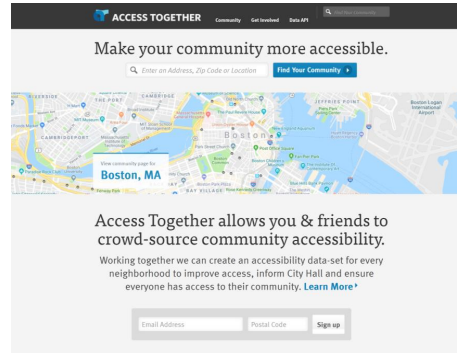
REPORTING ON ACCESSIBILITY OF PLACES



<http://wheelmap.org>



<http://axsmap.com>



<http://accesstogether.org>

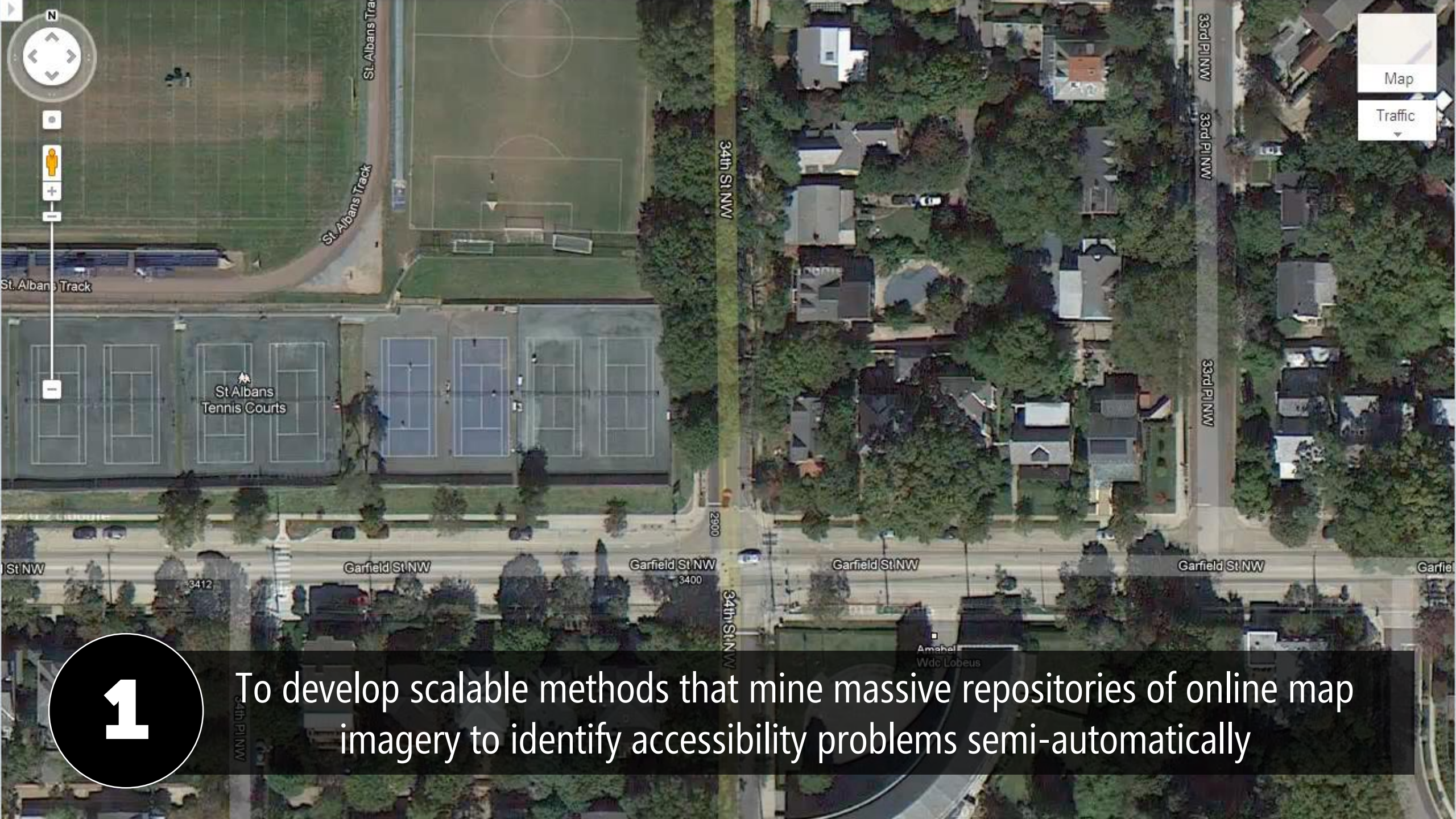
Important crowdsourcing tools

Reliance on local population for reporting limits *who* can supply data and *how* much they supply

Recent survey by Ding *et al.*, 2014 found that only 1.6% of Wheelmap POIs had data about accessibility

Focus is on *places* rather than *sidewalk infrastructure*

We are pursuing a complementary **two-fold approach**



1

To develop scalable methods that mine massive repositories of online map imagery to identify accessibility problems semi-automatically

Access Score_{beta}

Use the sliders below to adjust the significance of each accessibility feature.



To enable new urban accessibility analyses and create accessibility-aware mapping tools not previously possible

2

● Curb Ramp ● Missing Curb Ramp ● Sidewalk Obstacle ● Surface Problem Inaccessible ● Accessible

MAPPING THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE WORLD

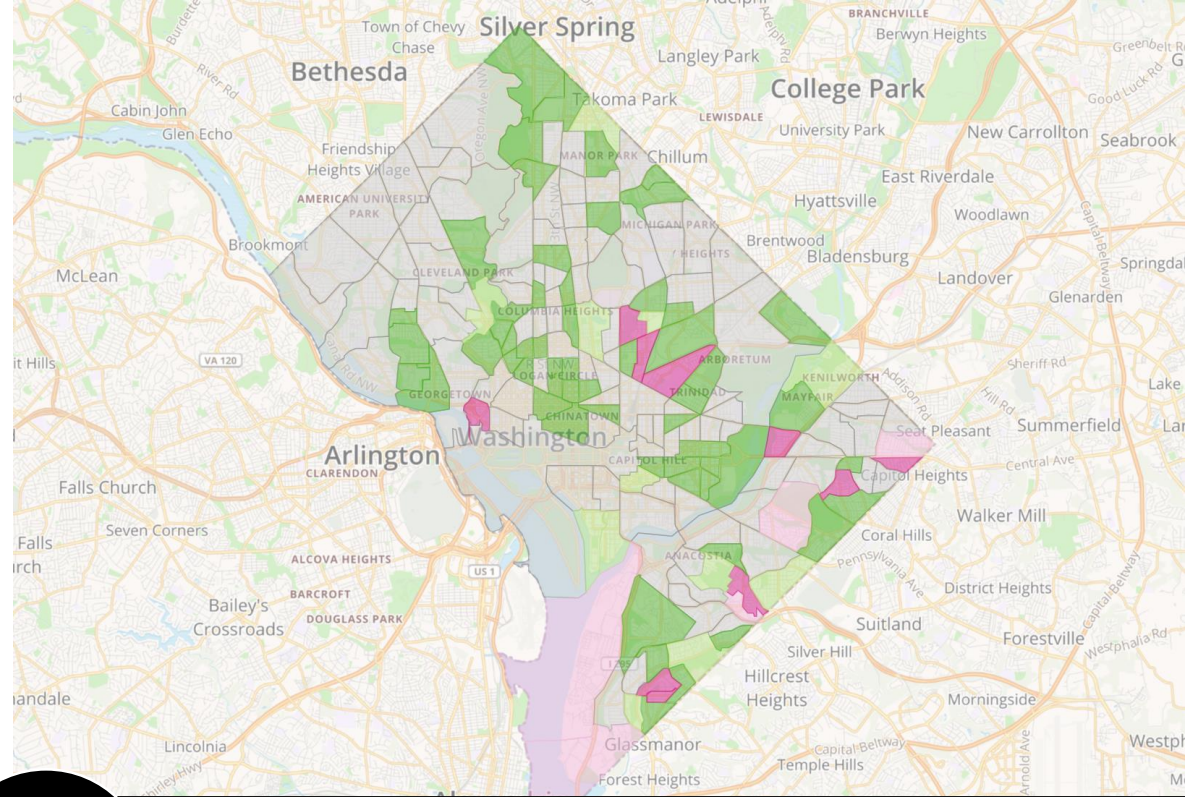
TWO FOCUS AREAS



1

SCALABLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

[ASSETS'12, CHI'13, HCOMP'13, ASSETS'13, UIST'14, TACCESS'15, ASSETS'17, ASSETS'18]



2

NEW URBAN ACCESS ANALYTICS & TOOLS

[SIGACCESS '15, CHI'16, ASSETS'18]

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1

SCALABLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

[ASSETS'12, CHI'13, HCOMP'13, ASSETS'13, UIST'14, TACCESS'15, ASSETS'17, ASSSETS'18]

Is **online map imagery** a good source for accessibility data?

Can we **create interactive tools** that enable crowd workers to find accessibility problems?

How can we **leverage computational techniques** to scale our approach?

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1

SCALABLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

[ASSETS'12, CHI'13, HCOMP'13, ASSETS'13, UIST'14, TACCESS'15, ASSETS'17, ASSETS'18]

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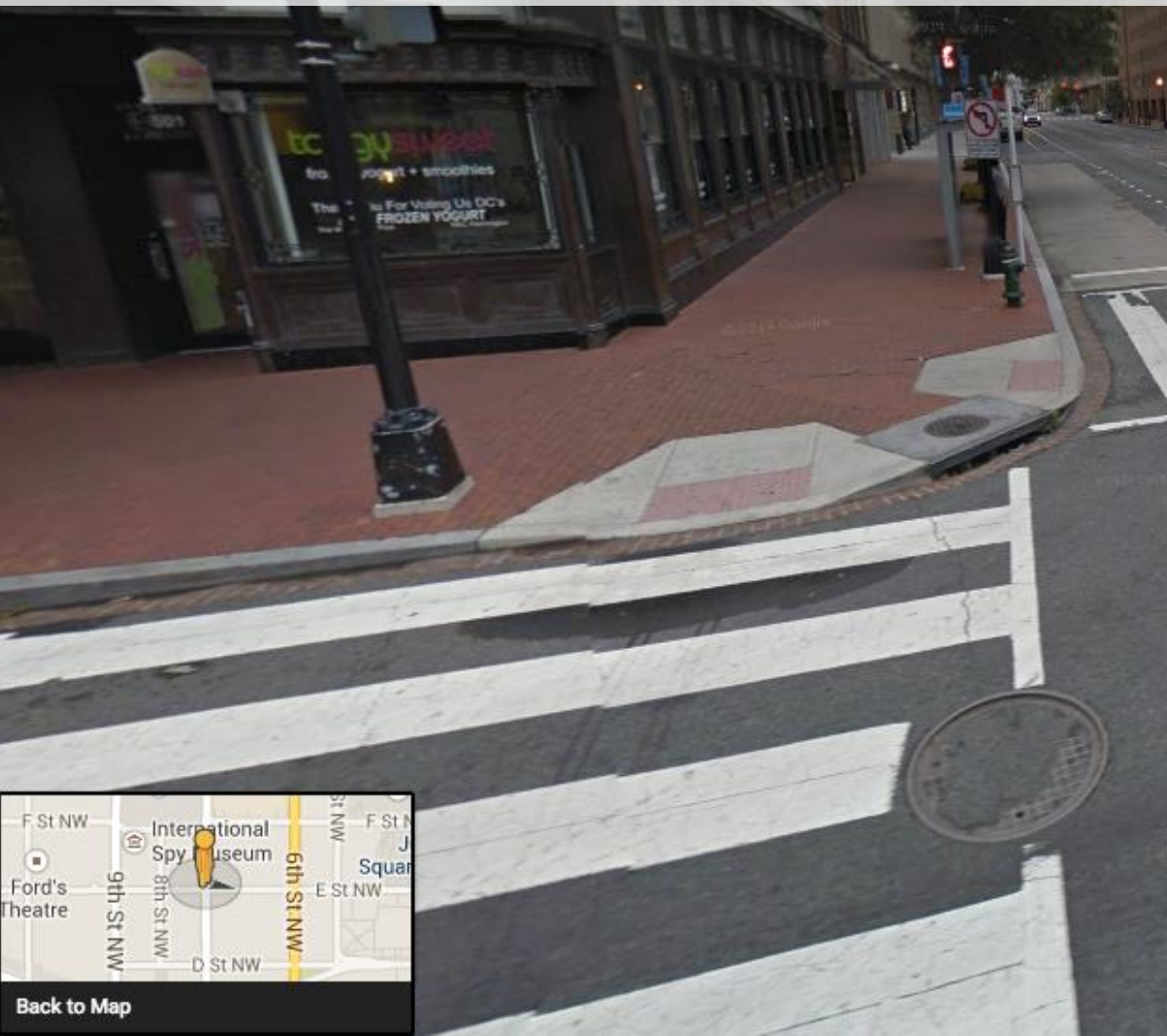
How well do accessibility problems found in **Google Street View** correspond with the **real world**?



Can you tell **which image** comes from Google Street View and which image we took ourselves with our iPhone?



GOOGLE STREETVIEW



[Back to Map](#)



REAL WORLD



IS GOOGLE STREET VIEW A REASONABLE DATASET FOR ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS?

PHYSICAL AUDITS VS. GSV: SURVEYED 76KM



179 BUS STOPS

Washington DC & Seattle | 42 km surveyed



273 INTERSECTIONS

Washington DC & Baltimore | 34 km surveyed

IS GOOGLE STREET VIEW A REASONABLE DATASET FOR ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS?

COMPARISON RESULTS: SPEARMAN RANK COEFFICIENTS

BUS STOPS



PHYSICAL AUDIT DATA

vs.



GSV AUDIT DATA

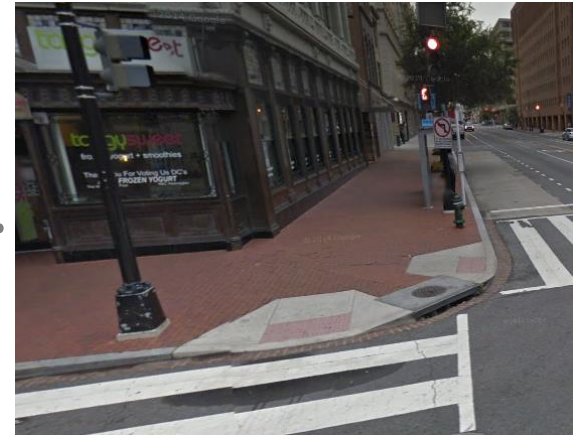
$$\rho = 0.88$$

INTERSECTIONS



PHYSICAL AUDIT DATA

vs.



GSV AUDIT DATA

$$\rho = 0.98$$

All results statistically significant at $p < 0.001$

IS GOOGLE STREET VIEW A REASONABLE DATASET FOR ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS?

CONSISTENT WITH FINDINGS IN URBAN STUDIES & PUBLIC HEALTH LITERATURE

Systematic social observation of children’s neighborhoods using Google Street View: a reliable and cost-effective method

Candice L. Odgers,¹ Avshalom Caspi,^{2,3} Christopher J. Bates,⁴ Robert J. Sampson,⁵ and Terrie E. Moffitt^{2,3}

¹Center for Child and Family Policy and the Sanford School of Public Policy, Duke University, Durham, NC, USA; ²Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, and Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, and Institute for Genome Sciences and Policy, Duke University, Durham, NC, USA; ³Social, Genetic, and Developmental Psychiatry Centre, Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London, UK; ⁴Department of Psychology and Social Behavior, University of California, Irvine, CA, USA; ⁵Department of Sociology, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA

Background: Children growing up in poor versus affluent neighborhoods are more likely to spend time in prison, develop health problems and die at an early age. The question of how neighborhood conditions influence our behavior and health has attracted the attention of public health officials and scholars for generations. Online tools are now providing new opportunities to measure neighborhood features and may provide a cost effective way to advance our understanding of neighborhood effects on child health. **Method:** A virtual systematic social observation (SSO) study was conducted to test whether Google Street View could be used to reliably capture the neighborhood conditions of families participating in the Environmental-Risk (E-Risk) Longitudinal Twin Study. Multiple raters coded a subsample of 120 neighborhoods and convergent and discriminant validity was evaluated on the full sample of over 1,000 neighborhoods by linking virtual SSO measures to: (a) consumer based geo-demographic classifications of deprivation and health, (b) local resident surveys of disorder and safety, and (c) parent and teacher assessments of children’s antisocial behavior, prosocial behavior, and body mass index. **Results:** High levels of observed agreement were documented for signs of physical disorder, physical decay, dangerousness and street safety. Inter-rater agreement estimates fell within the moderate to substantial range for all of the scales (ICCs ranged from .48 to .91). Negative neighborhood features, including SSO-rated disorder and decay and dangerousness corresponded with local resident reports, demonstrated a graded relationship with census-defined indices of socioeconomic status, and predicted higher levels of antisocial behavior among local children. In addition, positive neighborhood features, including SSO-rated street safety and the percentage of green space, were associated with higher prosocial behavior and healthy weight status among children. **Conclusions:** Our results support the use of Google Street View as a reliable and cost effective tool for measuring both negative and positive features of local neighborhoods. **Keywords:** Systematic social observation, Google Street View, neighborhood disorder, neighborhood deprivation, antisocial behavior, body mass index.

Introduction

Children who grow up in poor versus affluent neighborhoods are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior, experience mental health problems and become overweight (Chen & Paterson, 2006; Duncan, Brooksgunn, & Klebanov, 1994; Papas et al., 2007). A recent World Health Organization (WHO) Commission reported that individuals living in poor neighborhoods will die earlier than their peers in affluent settings and will spend more of their life – approximately 17 years – suffering from a disability (CSDH, 2008). The Commission concluded that these types of social inequalities are ‘killing people on a grand scale’ (p. 26) and cautioned that the social environment can have far reaching effects

on health even within the most affluent countries. For example, comparisons between socio-demographic and geographically clustered subgroups in the United States reveal average life expectancies ranging from the highest on record to those typically observed in developing countries (Murray et al., 2006). Similarly, a more than twofold difference in mortality rates has been documented between individuals living in the most versus least deprived neighborhoods in the United Kingdom (Romeri, Baker, & Griffiths, 2006).

The robust relationships between social inequalities and health across the social gradient serves as a constant reminder of the need to understand how the settings where we live, work and play affect our health (Marmot, et al., 2008). Exposure to adverse social conditions are believed to have strong effects in childhood and there are now urgent calls for research that integrates assessments spanning from ‘neurons-to-neighborhoods’ (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Unfortunately, most studies are not

Conflict of interest statement:

The authors declare no conflicts of interest. Candice L. Odgers had full access to all the data and takes responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis.

BRIEF REPORT

Using Google Street View to Audit the Built Environment: Inter-rater Reliability Results

Cheryl M. Kelly, PhD · Jeffrey S. Wilson, PhD · Elizabeth A. Baker, PhD, MPH · Douglas K. Miller, MD · Mario Schootman, PhD

Published online: 2 October 2012
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Abstract

Background Observational field audits are recommended for public health research to collect data on built environment characteristics. A reliable, standardized alternative to field audits that uses publicly available information could provide the ability to efficiently compare results across different study sites and time.

Purpose This study aimed to assess inter-rater reliability of built environment audits conducted using Google Street View imagery.

Methods In 2011, street segments from St. Louis and Indianapolis were geographically stratified to ensure representation of neighborhoods with different land use and socioeconomic

characteristics in both cities. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using observed agreement and the prevalence-adjusted bias-adjusted kappa statistic (PABAK).

Results The mean PABAK for all items was 0.84. Ninety-five percent of the items had substantial (PABAK ≥ 0.60) or nearly perfect (PABAK ≥ 0.80) agreement.

Conclusions Using Google Street View imagery to audit the built environment is a reliable method for assessing characteristics of the built environment.

Keywords Physical activity · Measurement · Imagery

Background

Advocates of physical activity promotion have recognized that interventions must address not only individual-level factors (e.g., lack of time or motivation) but also interpersonal (e.g., social support), community or environmental (e.g., improving sidewalks), and policy (e.g., land use planning) factors [1–4]. Public health researchers and practitioners recognize that interventions at the environmental or policy level provide opportunities, support, and cues to help people engage in physical activity and have the potential to benefit the population exposed to the environment, as potential complements to more individually focused interventions [4–6].

Observational field audits are one method used in public health research to collect data on built environment characteristics that affect health-related behaviors and outcomes, including physical activity [7]. However, field audits are time and resource intensive because they require auditors to travel to each location that must be observed. This limits practicality of implementing field audits across large or geographically dispersed areas (e.g., local, regional, national, or international study

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Assessing the Built Environment Using Omnidirectional Imagery

Jeffrey S. Wilson, PhD, Cheryl M. Kelly, PhD, Mario Schootman, PhD, Elizabeth A. Baker, PhD, Aniruddha Banerjee, PhD, Morgan Clennin, MPH, Douglas K. Miller, MD

This activity is available for CME credit. See page A4 for information.

Observational audits commonly are used in public health research to collect data on built environment characteristics that affect health-related behaviors and outcomes, including physical activity and weight status. However, implementing in-person field audits can be expensive if observations are needed over large or geographically dispersed areas or at multiple points in time. A reliable and more efficient method for observational audits could facilitate extendibility (i.e., expanded geographic and temporal scope) and lead to more standardized assessment that strengthens the ability to compare results across different regions and studies. The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the degree of agreement between field audits and audits derived from interpretation of three types of omnidirectional imagery.

Street segments from St. Louis MO and Indianapolis IN were stratified geographically to ensure representation of neighborhoods with different socioeconomic characteristics in both cities. Audits were conducted in 2008 and 2009 using four methods: field audits, and interpretation of archived imagery, new imagery, and Google Street View™ imagery. Agreement between field audits and image-based audits was assessed using observed agreement and the prevalence-adjusted bias-adjusted kappa statistic (PABAK). Data analysis was conducted in 2010. When measuring the agreement between field audits and audits from the different sources of imagery, the mean PABAK statistic for all items on the instrument was 0.78 (archived); 0.80 (new); and 0.81 (Street View imagery), indicating substantial to nearly perfect agreement among methods. It was determined that image-based audits represent a reliable method that can be used in place of field audits to measure several key characteristics of the built environment important to public health research.

(Am J Prev Med 2012;42(2):193–199) © 2012 American Journal of Preventive Medicine

Introduction

Physical inactivity is a leading contributor to the rise of the prevalence of overweight and obesity.¹ Although physical activity is influenced by individual and interpersonal factors, researchers increasingly are examining built environment characteristics as potential determinants of physical activity behavior. For example, a 2008 review² suggests that mixed land use, shorter distances to nonresidential destinations, and development density are consistent correlates of utilitarian walking among adults. Researchers^{3–6} also have reported associations between children’s participation in physical activity

and recreational and pedestrian infrastructure. Accumulating evidence^{5–7} for built environment effects on physical activity has prompted advocacy for environmental interventions to increase physical activity in communities as a way to counteract the overweight and obesity epidemic.

Despite the emerging evidence base, there are currently several limitations to conducting studies of built environment effects on physical activity. A 2009 review⁸ of methods for measuring the built environment identified three general approaches: (1) perceived measures obtained by surveys (e.g., of community residents); (2) extracting objective measures from archival data sets (e.g., census-based GIS data); and (3) systematic observational audits by trained observers. Each of these methods provides different but complementary insight into the built environment. However, studies examining detailed observational characteristics of the built environment from the human perspective currently face several challenges.

When comparing perceived versus objective measures of built environment, fair to low levels of agreement between resident perceptions of environmental supports for physical activity and objective measures of these features have been reported.⁹ Perceptions are susceptible

From the Department of Geography (Wilson, Banerjee), Indiana University–Purdue University, the Regenstein Institute, Inc., and Center for Aging Research (Miller), Indiana University, Indianapolis, Indiana; Beth-el College of Nursing and Health Sciences, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, Colorado (Kelly); the School of Public Health (Baker, Clennin), Saint Louis University, and the School of Medicine (Schootman), Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri

Cheryl Kelly was with the School of Public Health at St. Louis University when this research was conducted.

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0749-3797/13\$6.00
doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2011.09.029

See: Odgers *et al.*, 2012; Wilson *et al.*, 2013; Kelly *et al.*, 2013; Bader, *et al.*, 2017

IS GOOGLE STREET VIEW A REASONABLE DATASET FOR ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS?

CITY INFRASTRUCTURE CHANGES SLOWLY

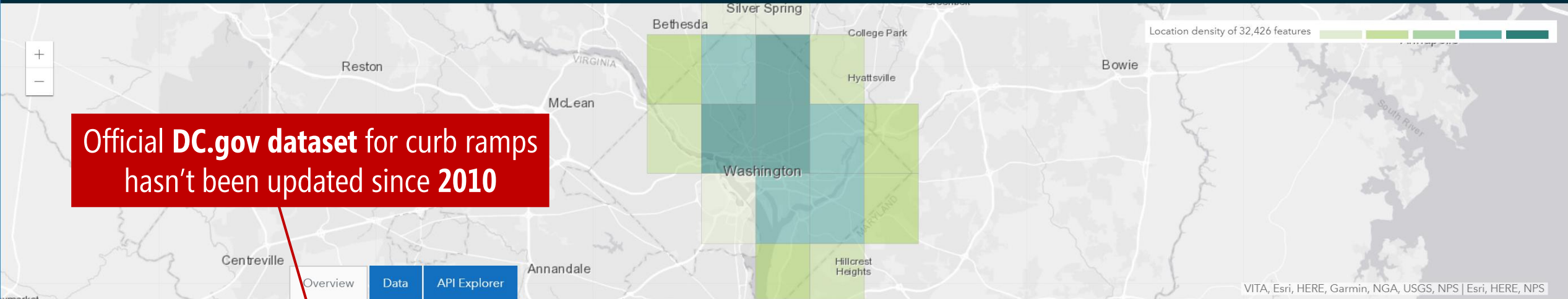


AVG IMAGE AGE IN BUS STOP DATASET

1.7 yrs (SD=0.7)

AVG IMAGE AGE IN INTERSECTION DATASET

1.5 yrs (SD=0.7)



Sidewalk Ramps 2010

☆ Favorite

Download

APIs



3/20/2011

Spatial Dataset

32,426 Rows

0 Comments

Wheelchair Ramp. The dataset contains polygons representing planimetric wheelchair ramps, created as part of the DC Geographic Information System (DC GIS) for the D.C. Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO). These features were originally captured in 1999 and updated in 2005, 2008, and 2010. The following planimetric layers were updated:

- Building Polygons (BldgPly) - Bridge and Tunnel Polygons (BrdTunPly) - Horizontal and Vertical Control Points

More

Attributes

Chart Map Visualization

CAPTUREACTION	CAPTUREYEAR	DESCRIPTION	FEATURECODE	GIS_ID	SHOW MORE
Text	Date or Time	Text	Number	Number	2 Attributes

Related Data



Sidewalks 2010

Sidewalk. The dataset contains polygons representing planimetric sidewalks, created as part of the DC Geographic



Building and Tunnel Entrances 2010

Bridges and Tunnel. The dataset contains polygons representing planimetric bridge and tunnel entrances, created as part of the

Google Street View is a reasonable proxy for studying the state of street-level accessibility

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1

SCALABLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

[ASSETS'12, CHI'13, HCOMP'13, ASSETS'13, UIST'14, TACCESS'15, ASSETS'17, ASSSETS'18]

Is **online map imagery** a good source for accessibility data?

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INITIAL CROWDSOURCING SYSTEM



LABELING INTERFACE



VERIFICATION INTERFACE


WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (0) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image

There are no accessibility problems in this image

Thumbnail examples on the right:

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk


WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (0) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

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- Curb Ramp Missing
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WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem
2. Categorize problem

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Select sidewalk accessibility problem

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk
- Other

Press Esc to cancel your outline.

Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (1) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image

There are no accessibility problems in this image

Thumbnail examples:

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk


WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem
2. Categorize problem

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Select sidewalk accessibility problem

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk
- Other


Press Esc to cancel your outline.

Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (1) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)


Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image


There are no accessibility problems in this image




Curb Ramp Missing



Object in Path



Surface Problem



Prematurely Ending Sidewalk

WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem
2. Categorize problem
3. Rate problem severity

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Press Esc to cancel your outline.

Select sidewalk accessibility problem

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path**
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk
- Other

Passable 1 2 3 4 5 Not Passable

Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (0) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image

There are no accessibility problems in this image

Thumbnail examples:

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk

WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem
2. Categorize problem
3. Rate problem severity

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Press Esc to cancel your outline.

Select sidewalk accessibility problem

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path**
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk
- Other

Passable 1 2 3 4 5 Not Passable

Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (0) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image

There are no accessibility problems in this image



Curb Ramp Missing



Object in Path



Surface Problem



Prematurely Ending Sidewalk


WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE

4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem
2. Categorize problem
3. Rate problem severity
4. Submit work

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Press Esc to cancel your outline.

Select sidewalk accessibility problem

Curb Ramp Missing

Object in Path

Severity : 5
Not passable

Surface Problem

Prematurely Ending Sidewalk

Other

Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (1) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image

There are no accessibility problems in this image

WEB-BASED LABELING INTERFACE


4-STEP PROCESS

1. Find & label problem
2. Categorize problem
3. Rate problem severity
4. Submit work

Receive another image to label & process repeats.

Show instruction

You are now working on the Default task out of Default required for this HIT.



Problems found: Curb Ramp Missing (0) Object in Path (0) Surface Problem (0) Prematurely Ending Sidewalk (0) Other (0)

Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Skip the image

There are no accessibility problems in this image

Thumbnail examples:

- Curb Ramp Missing
- Object in Path
- Surface Problem
- Prematurely Ending Sidewalk

WEB-BASED VERIFICATION INTERFACE

3-STEP PROCESS

1. Verify label



WEB-BASED VERIFICATION INTERFACE

3-STEP PROCESS

1. Verify label



WEB-BASED VERIFICATION INTERFACE

3-STEP PROCESS

1. Verify label
2. Verify rating



WEB-BASED VERIFICATION INTERFACE

3-STEP PROCESS

1. Verify label
2. Verify rating
3. Provide details



Please enter any additional comments about this street or sidewalk that may affect mobility impaired persons or feedback on the hit itself (optional)

Next image

WEB-BASED VERIFICATION INTERFACE

3-STEP PROCESS

1. Verify label
2. Verify rating
3. Provide details

Check for false negatives



STUDY METHOD

1. Create image dataset
2. Generate ground truth labels
3. Deploy our tools to crowd
4. Compare performance to ground truth

1

CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY METHOD

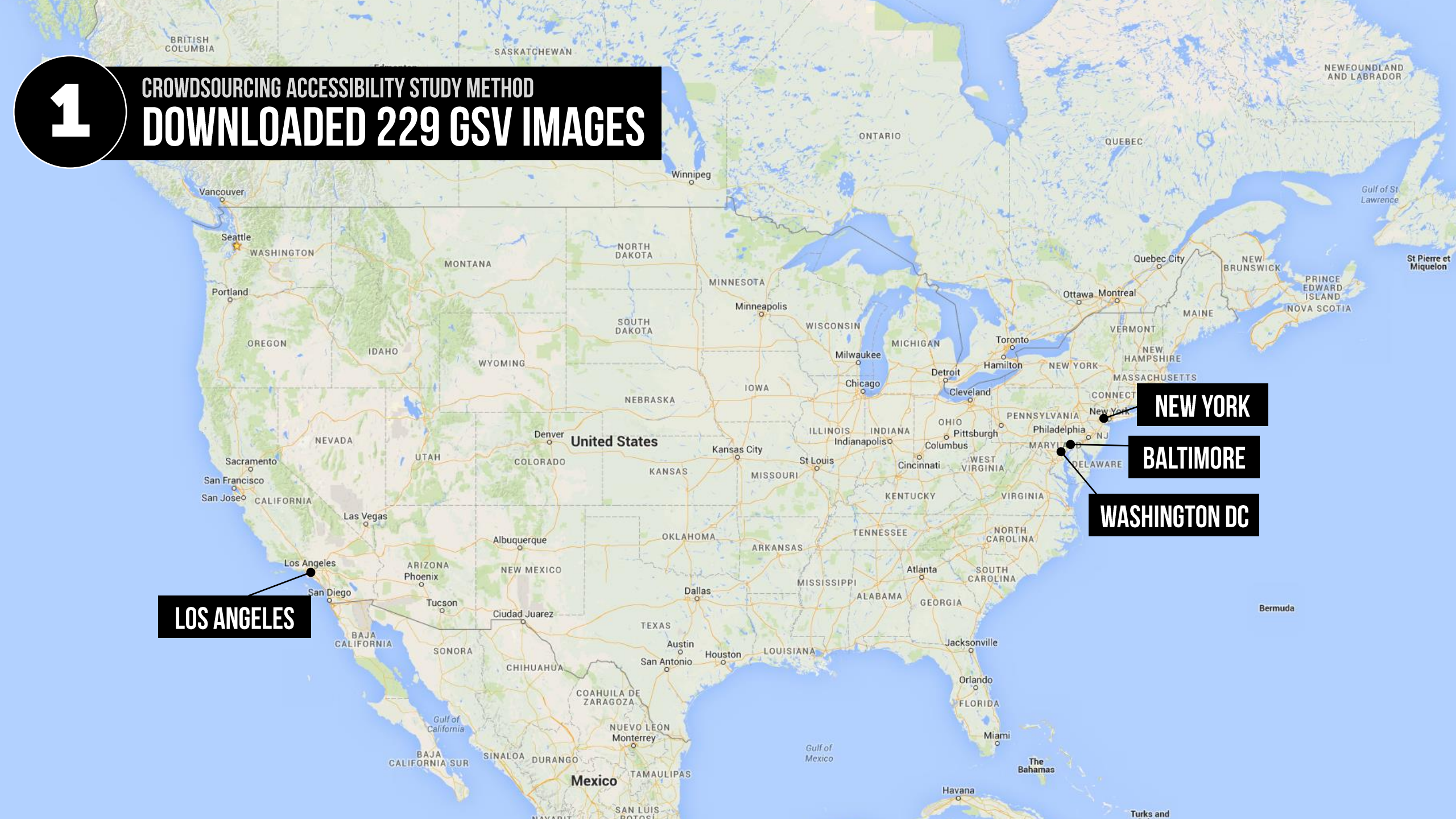
DOWNLOADED 229 GSV IMAGES

LOS ANGELES

NEW YORK

BALTIMORE

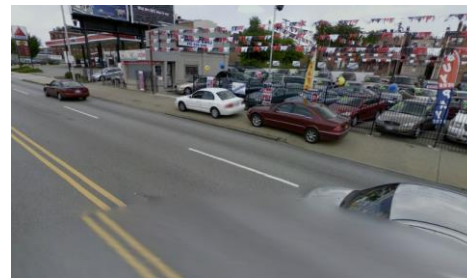
WASHINGTON DC



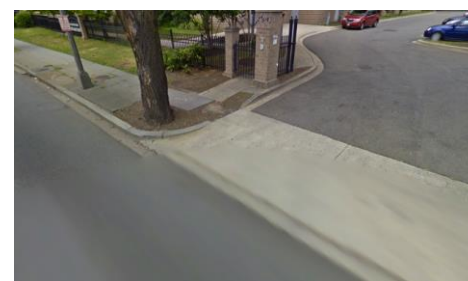
50 images
Sidewalk Ending



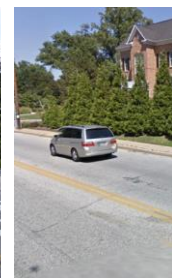
66 images
Object in Path



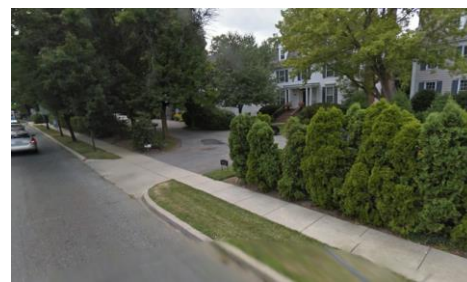
67 images
Surface Problems



47 images
Missing Curb Ramps



50 images
No Problems



STUDY METHOD

1. Create image dataset
2. Generate ground truth labels

2

CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY METHOD

CREATE GROUND TRUTH LABELS



Bob



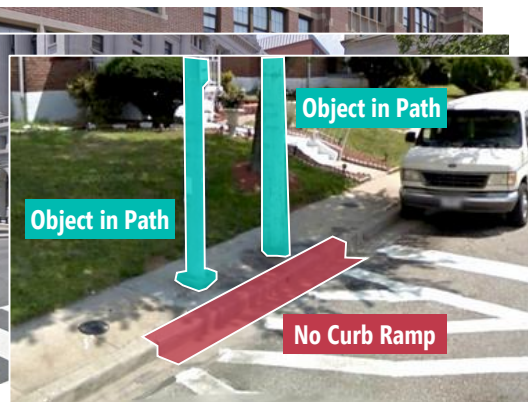
Sue



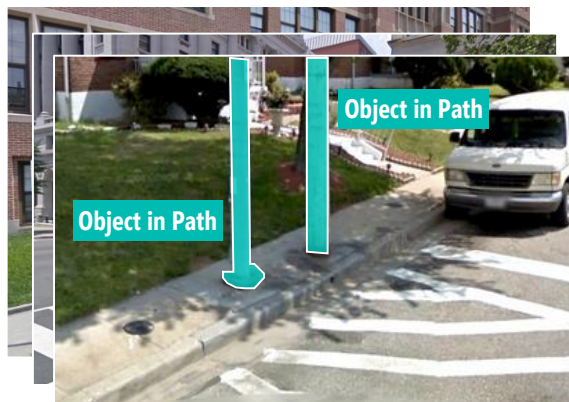
Alice



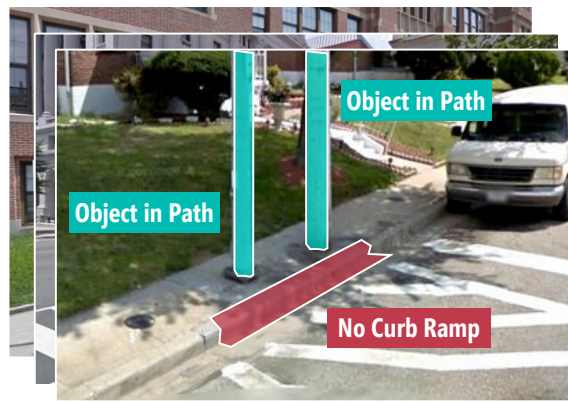
Majority
Vote



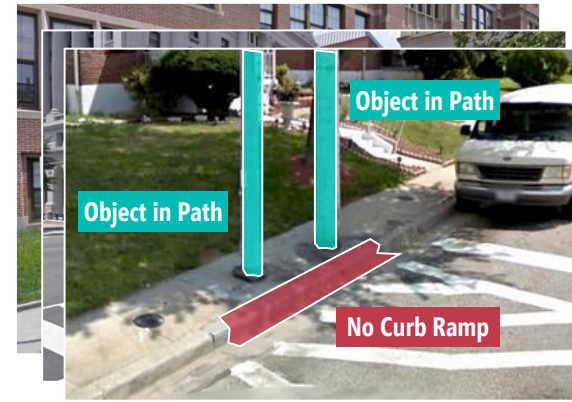
Bob's Labels



Sue's Labels



Alice's Labels



Researcher Ground Truth

STUDY METHOD

1. Create image dataset
2. Generate ground truth labels
3. Deploy our tools to crowd

3

CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY METHOD

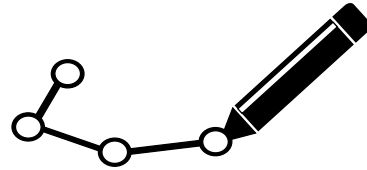
DEPLOY TOOLS TO MECHANICAL TURK



MTURK STUDY STATISTICS



185
LABELERS



7,517
LABELS



35.2s
LABEL AN IMAGE



273
VERIFIERS



19,189
VERIFICATIONS

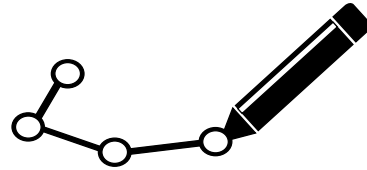


10.5s
VERIFY AN IMAGE

MTURK STUDY STATISTICS



185
LABELERS



7,517
LABELS



35.2s
LABEL AN IMAGE



273
VERIFIERS



19,189
VERIFICATIONS



10.5s
VERIFY AN IMAGE

3x as fast!

STUDY METHOD

1. Create image dataset
2. Generate ground truth labels
3. Deploy our tools to crowd
4. Compare performance to ground truth

Are crowd workers capable of **finding
accessibility problems** in online map imagery?

CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

OVERALL LABELING ACCURACY

With one labeler per image

CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

OVERALL LABELING ACCURACY

With one labeler per image



SIDEWALK ENDING

85%

CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

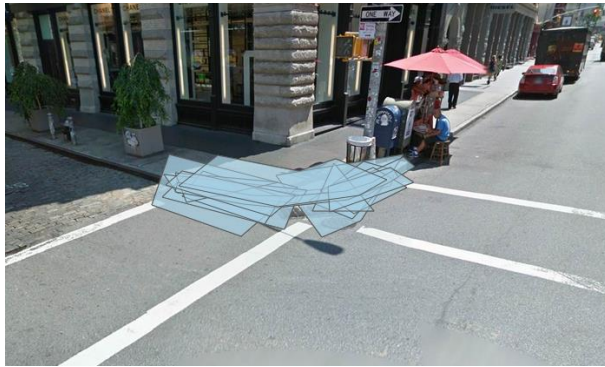
OVERALL LABELING ACCURACY

With one labeler per image



SIDEWALK ENDING

85%



MISSING CURB RAMPS

79%



SURFACE PROBLEM

77%



OBJECT IN PATH

73%

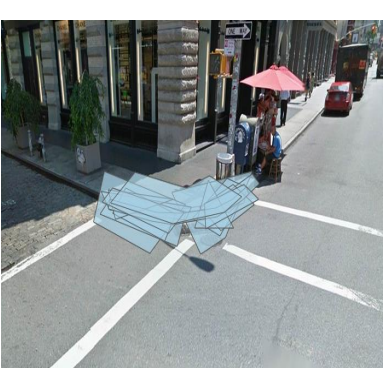
OVERALL LABELING ACCURACY

With one labeler per image



SIDEWALK ENDING

85%



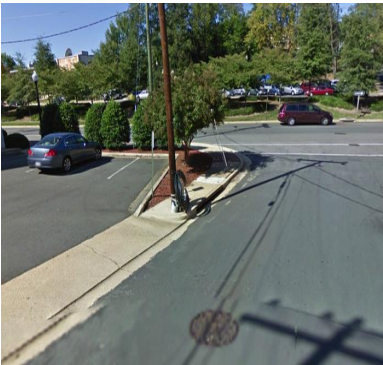
MISSING CURB RAMPS

79%



SURFACE PROBLEM

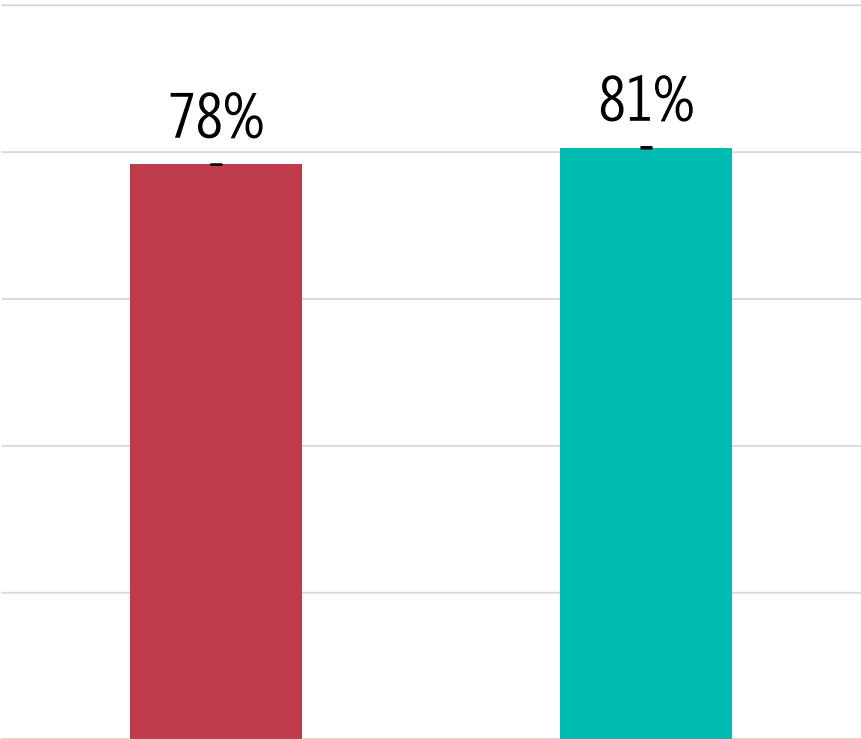
77%



OBJECT IN PATH

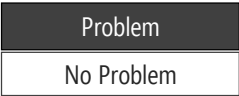
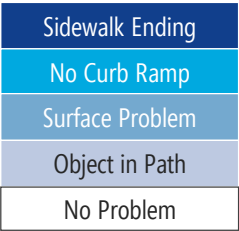
73%

AVERAGE OVERALL ACCURACY



Multiclass Overall

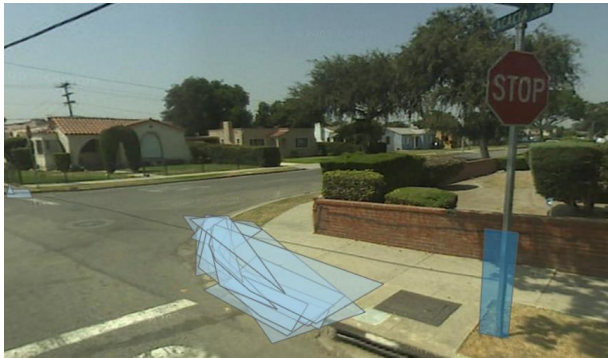
Binary Overall



CROWDSOURCING ACCESSIBILITY STUDY RESULTS

COMMON LABELER MISTAKES

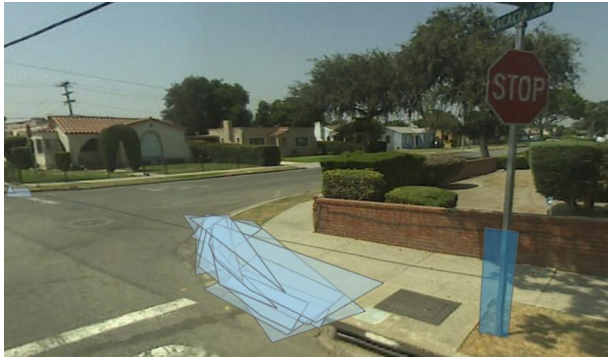
COMMON LABELER MISTAKES



OVER LABELING

(*i.e.*, tendency towards false positives)

COMMON LABELER MISTAKES



OVER LABELING

(*i.e.*, tendency towards false positives)

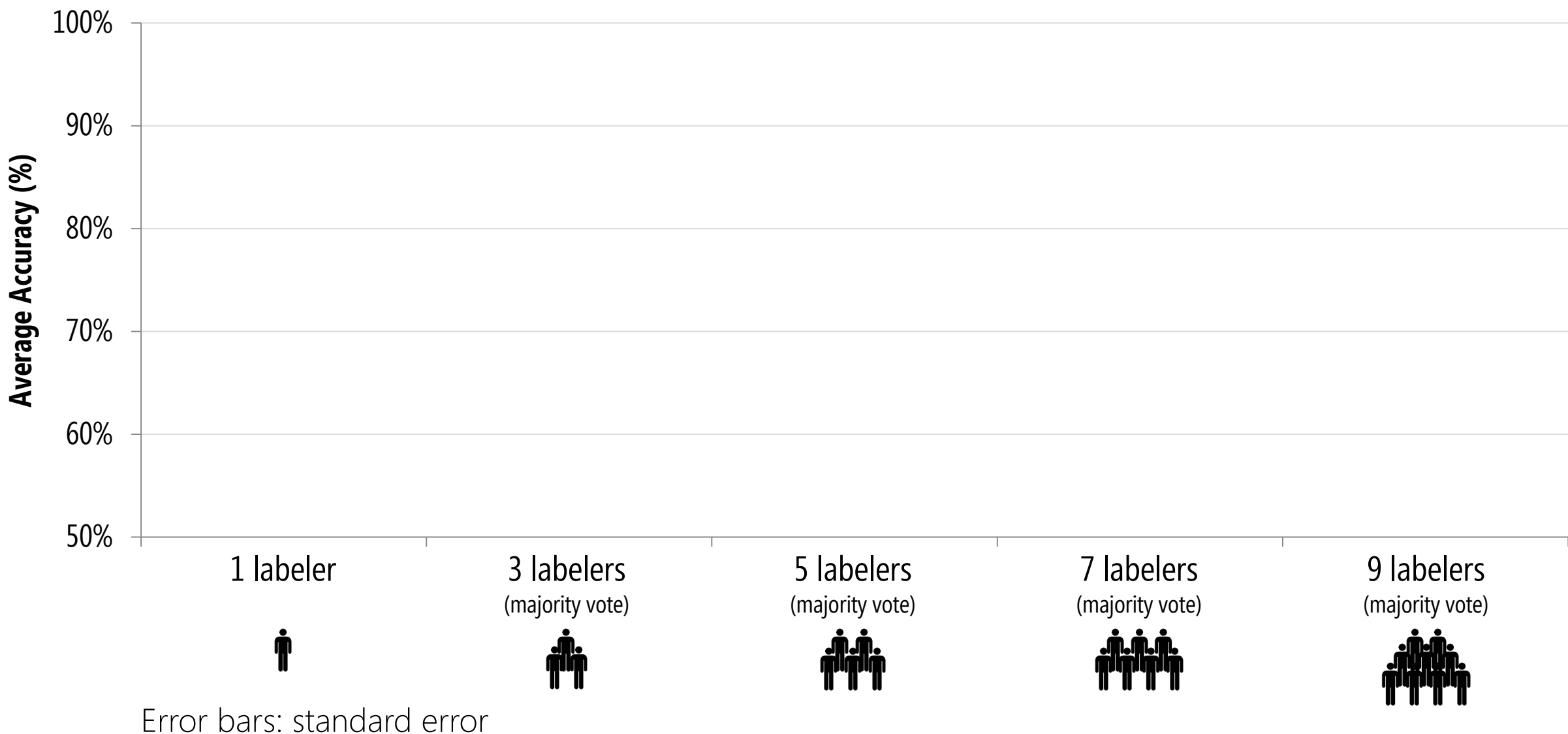
RANDOM LABELS

(*e.g.*, misunderstanding, malevolence)

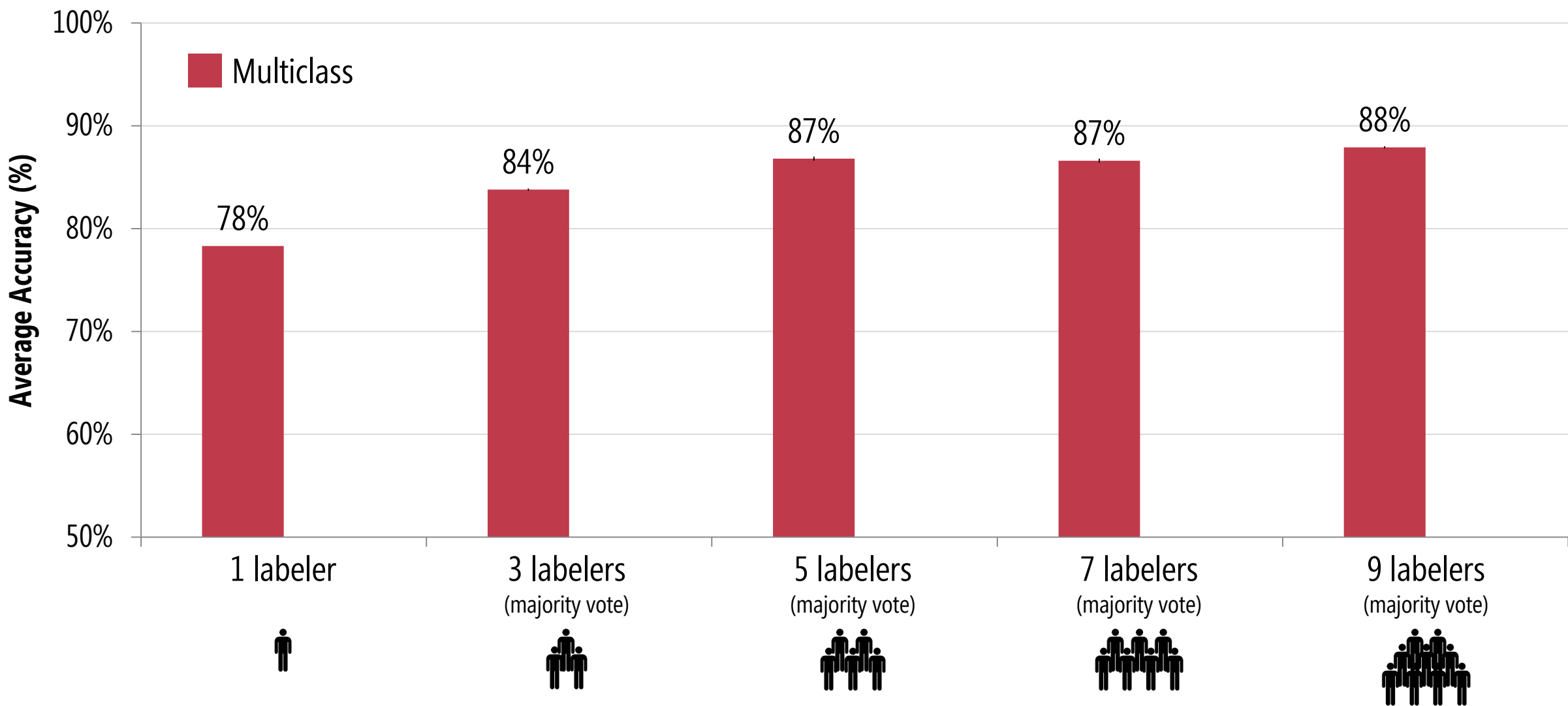
CATEGORY ERRORS

(*i.e.*, ambiguous problem category)

ACCURACY AS A FUNCTION OF LABELERS PER IMAGE

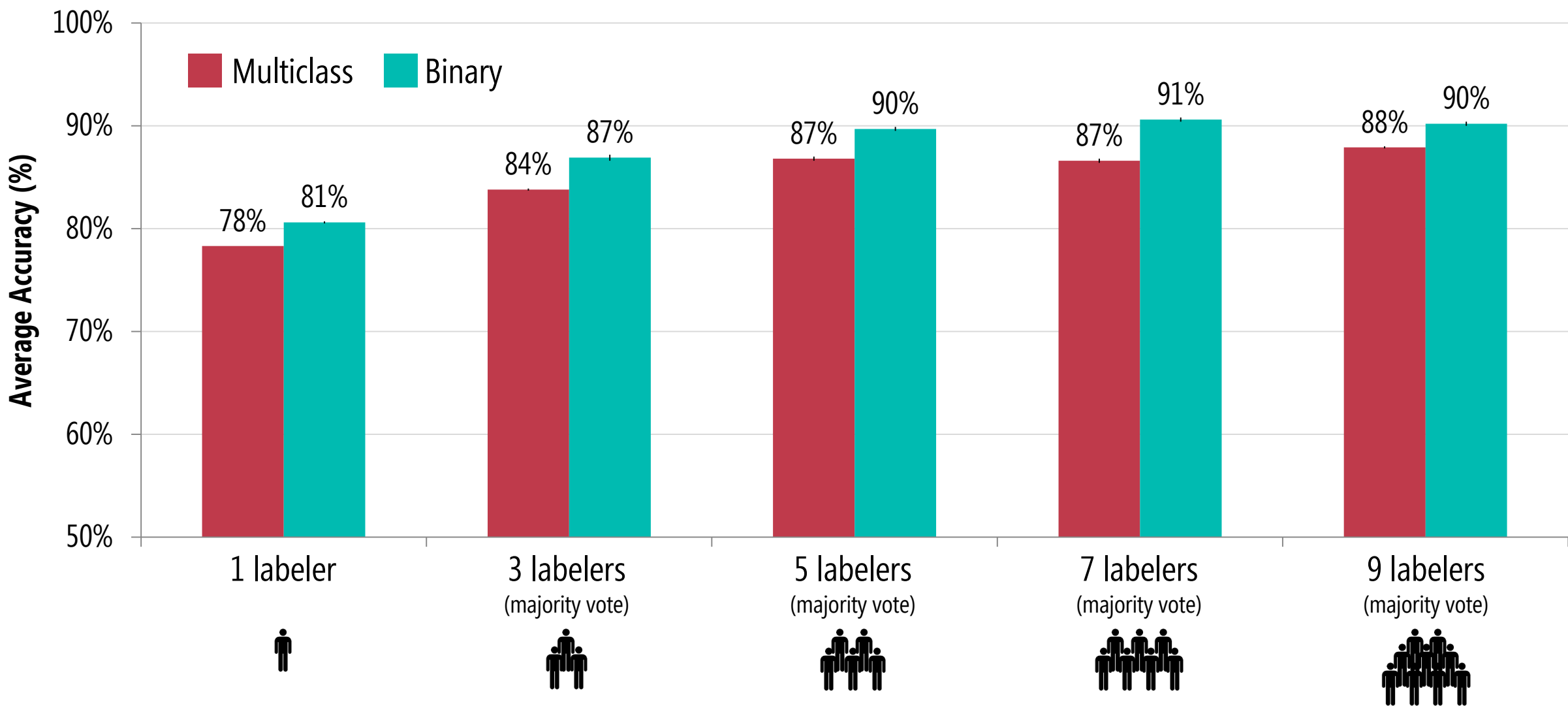


ACCURACY AS A FUNCTION OF LABELERS PER IMAGE



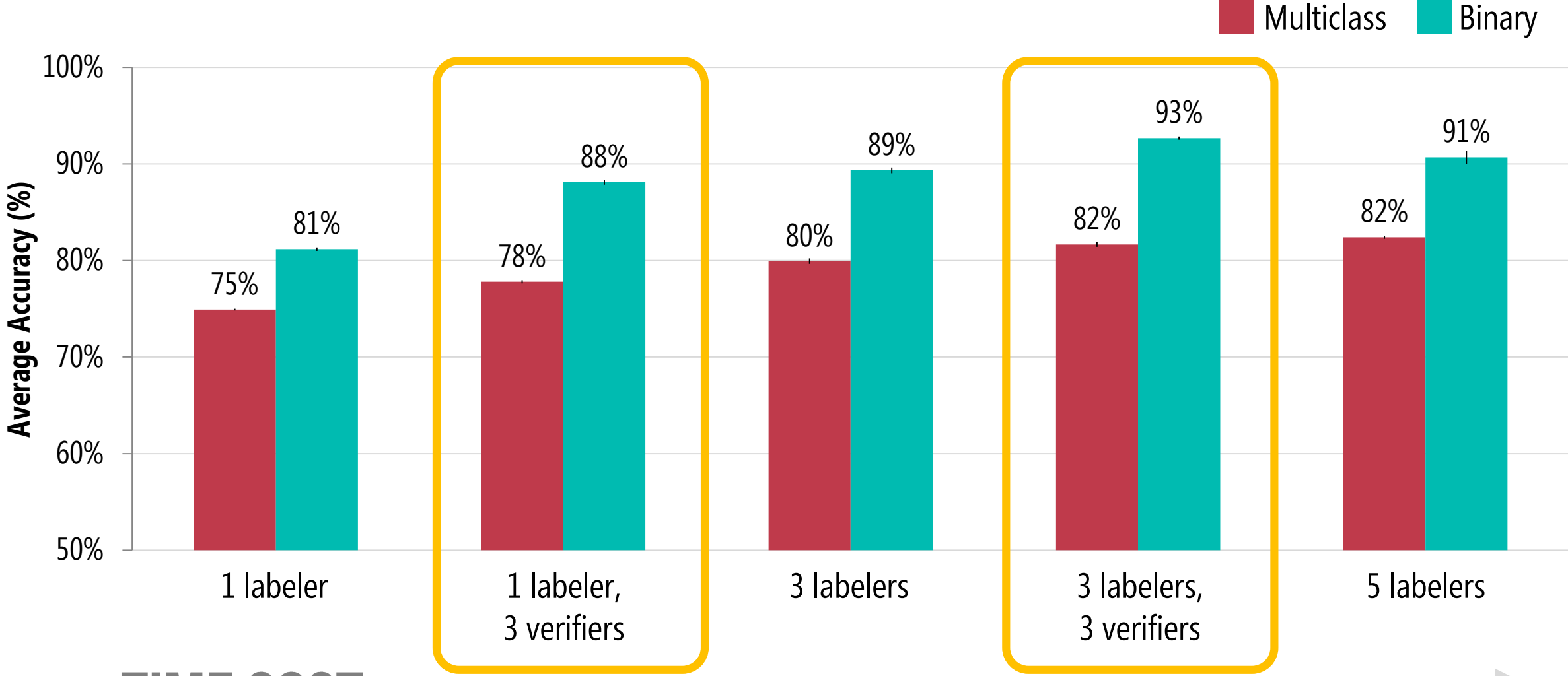
Error bars: standard error

ACCURACY AS A FUNCTION OF LABELERS PER IMAGE



Error bars: standard error

ACCURACY WITH CROWD VERIFICATION



TIME COST →

Error bars: standard error; experiments run on subset of data

With basic quality control measures, **minimally trained crowd** workers can find accessibility problems with an accuracy of **~93%**

But this approach relied **purely on manual labor**. Can we do better?

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS



1

SCALABLE DATA COLLECTION METHODS

[ASSETS'12, CHI'13, HCOMP'13, ASSETS'13, UIST'14, TACCESS'15, ASSETS'17, ASSSETS'18]

Is **online map imagery** a good source for accessibility data?

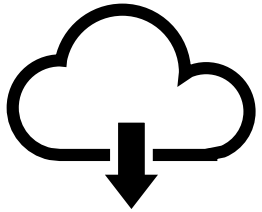
Can we **create interactive tools** that enable crowd workers to find accessibility problems?

How can we **leverage computational techniques** to scale our approach?

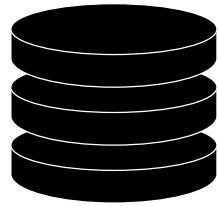
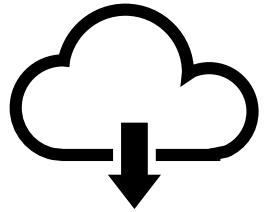
Tohme

遠目・*Remote Eye*

① svCrawl Web Scraper



1 svCrawl Web Scraper



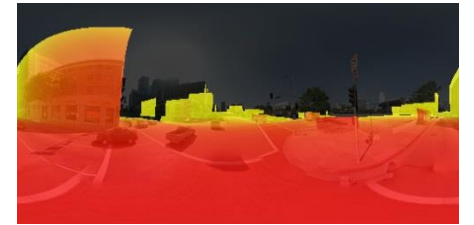
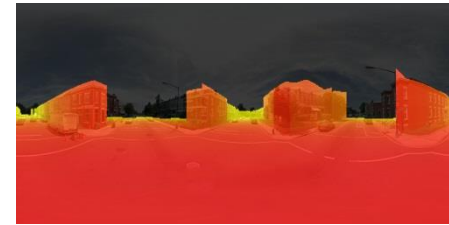
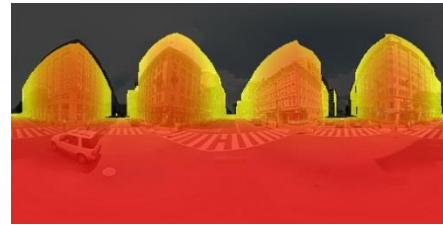
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata

2 Street Dataset

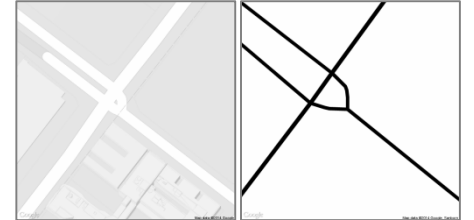
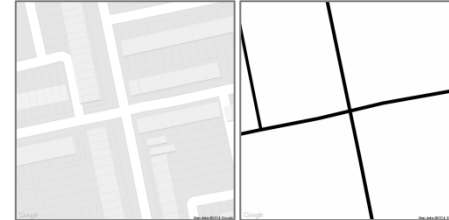
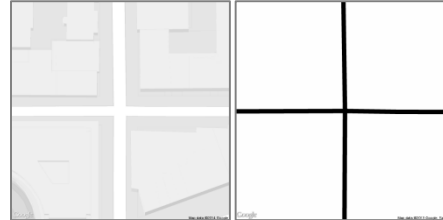
Google Street View Panoramas



3D Point-cloud Data



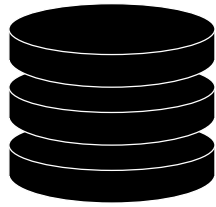
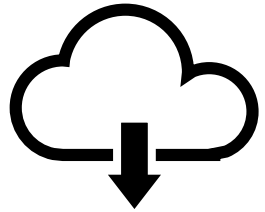
Top-down Google Maps Imagery



GIS Metadata

<Latitude & longitude/>
<GSV image age/>
<Street & city names/>
<Intersection topology/>

1 svCrawl Web Scraper

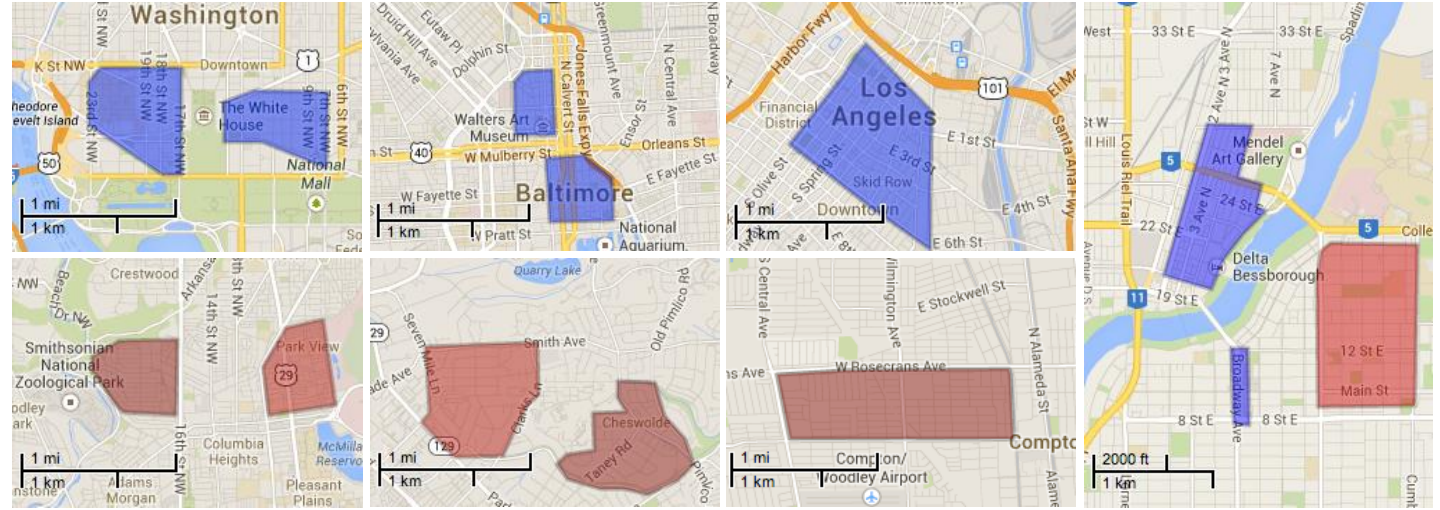


Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata

2 Street Dataset

Scraped Area: 11.3 km²

Urban Residential



D.C.

Baltimore

Los Angeles

Saskatoon

Dataset Statistics



1,086
intersections



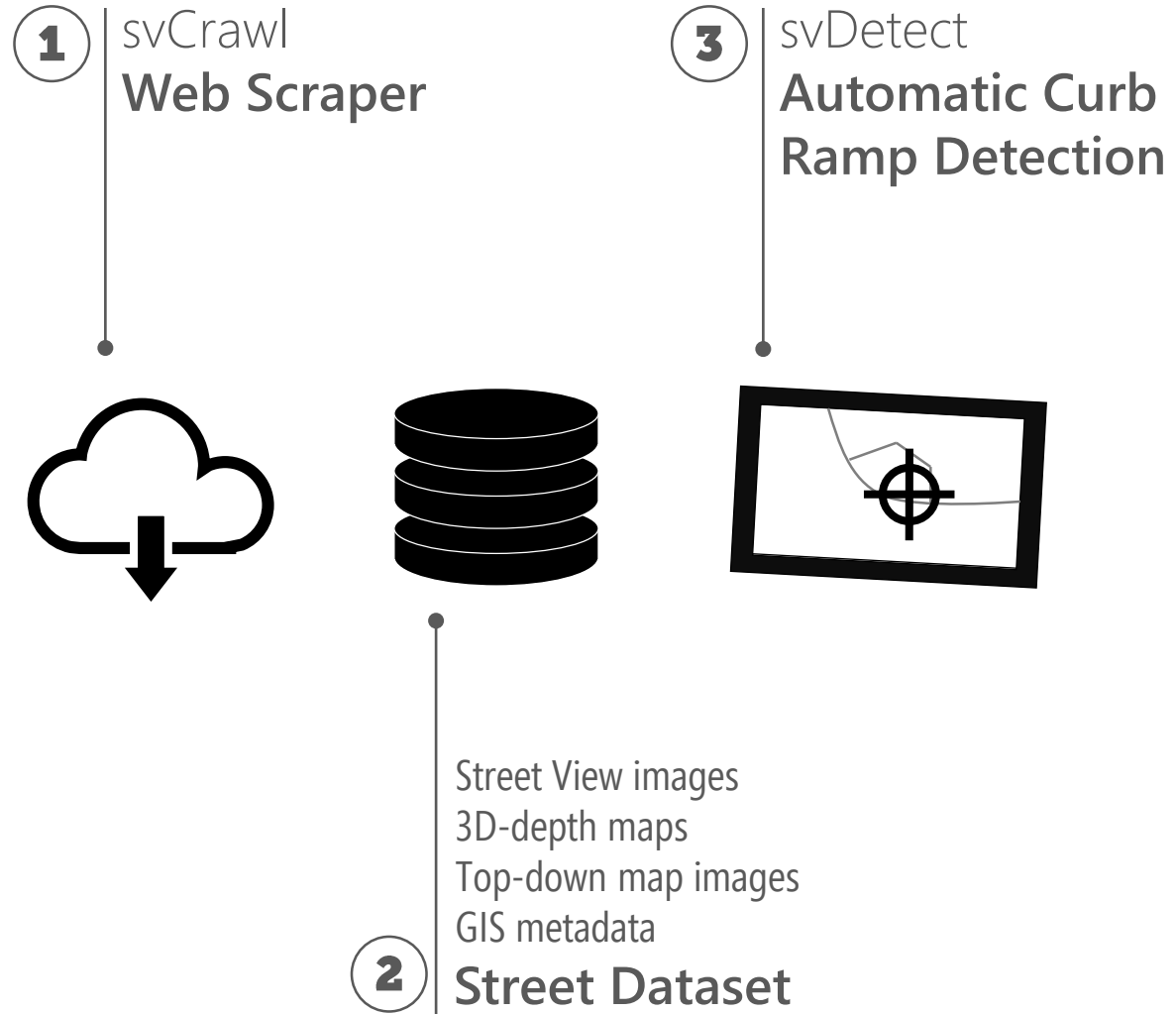
2,877
curb ramps

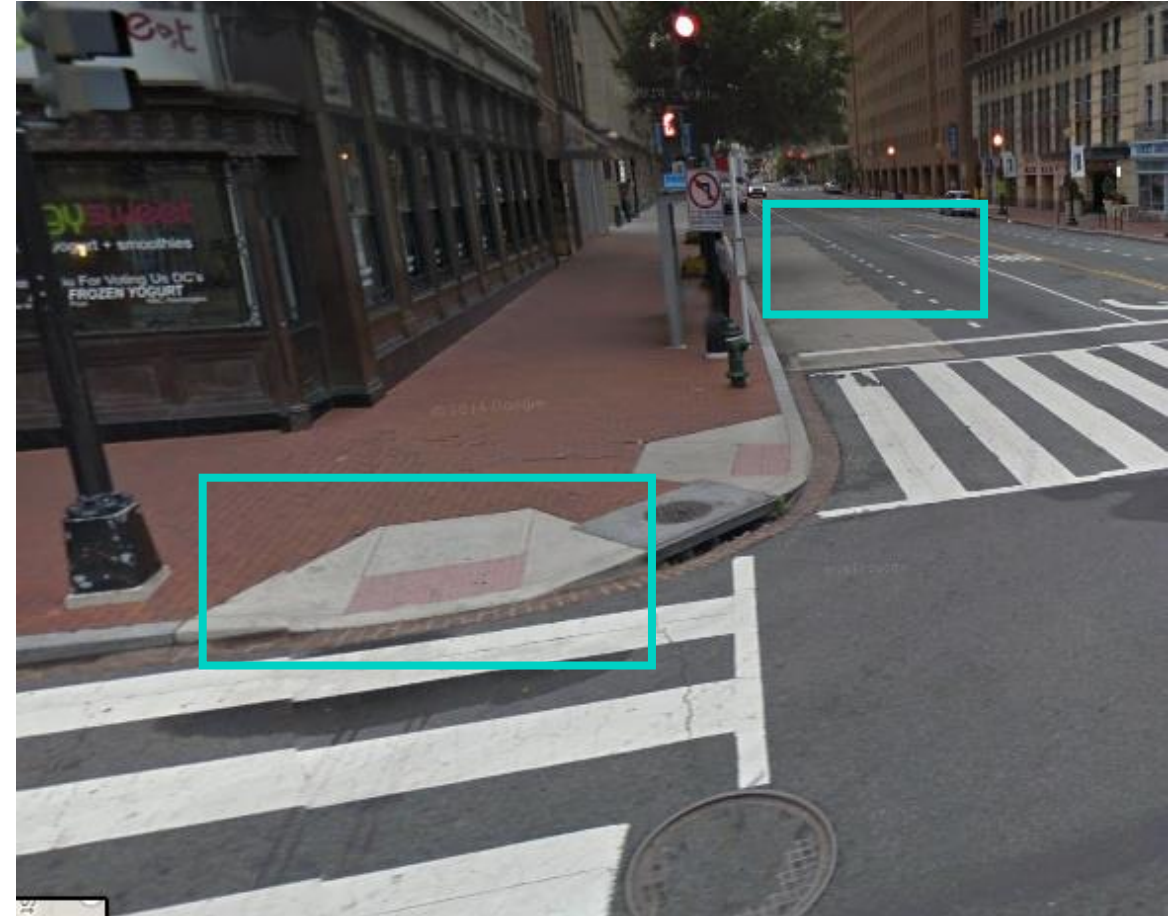
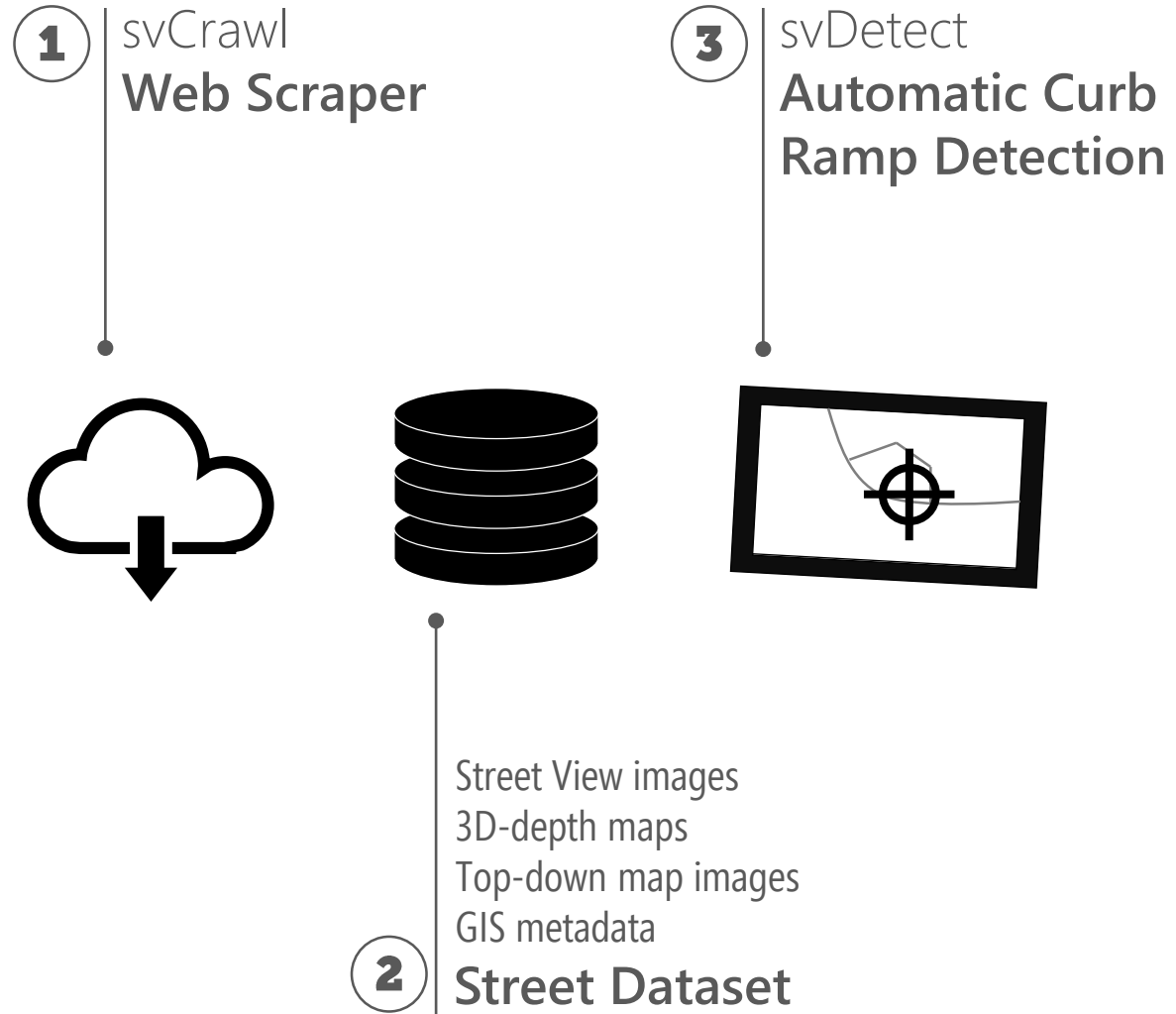


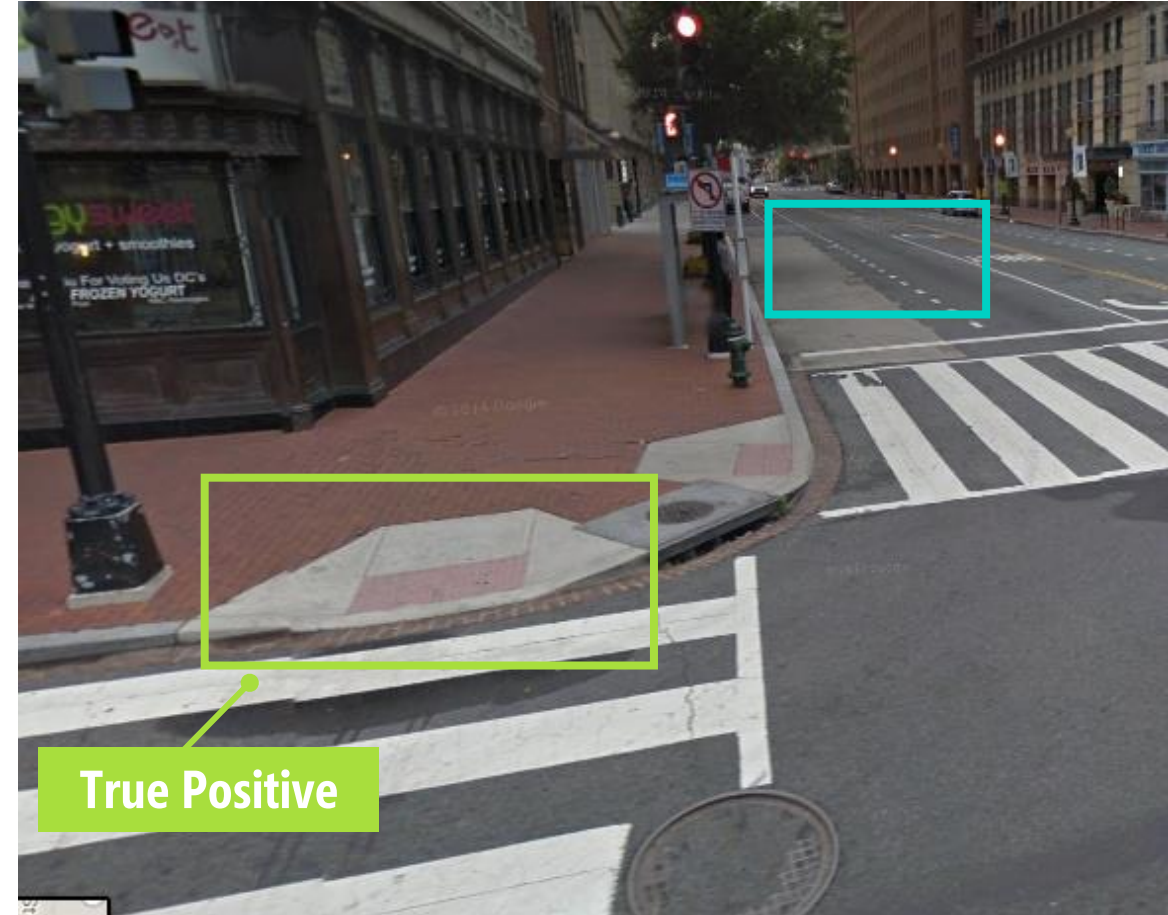
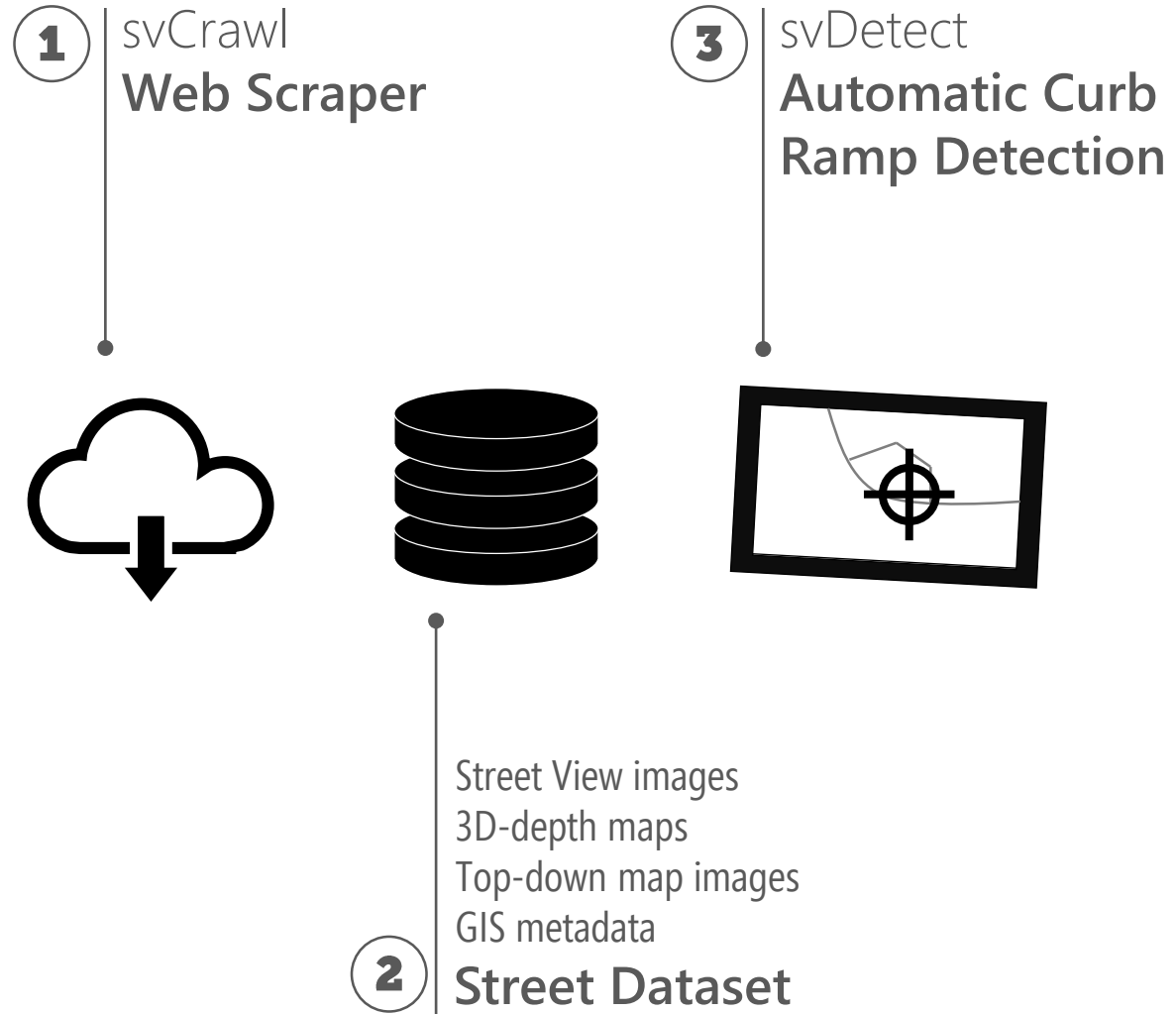
647
missing
curb ramps

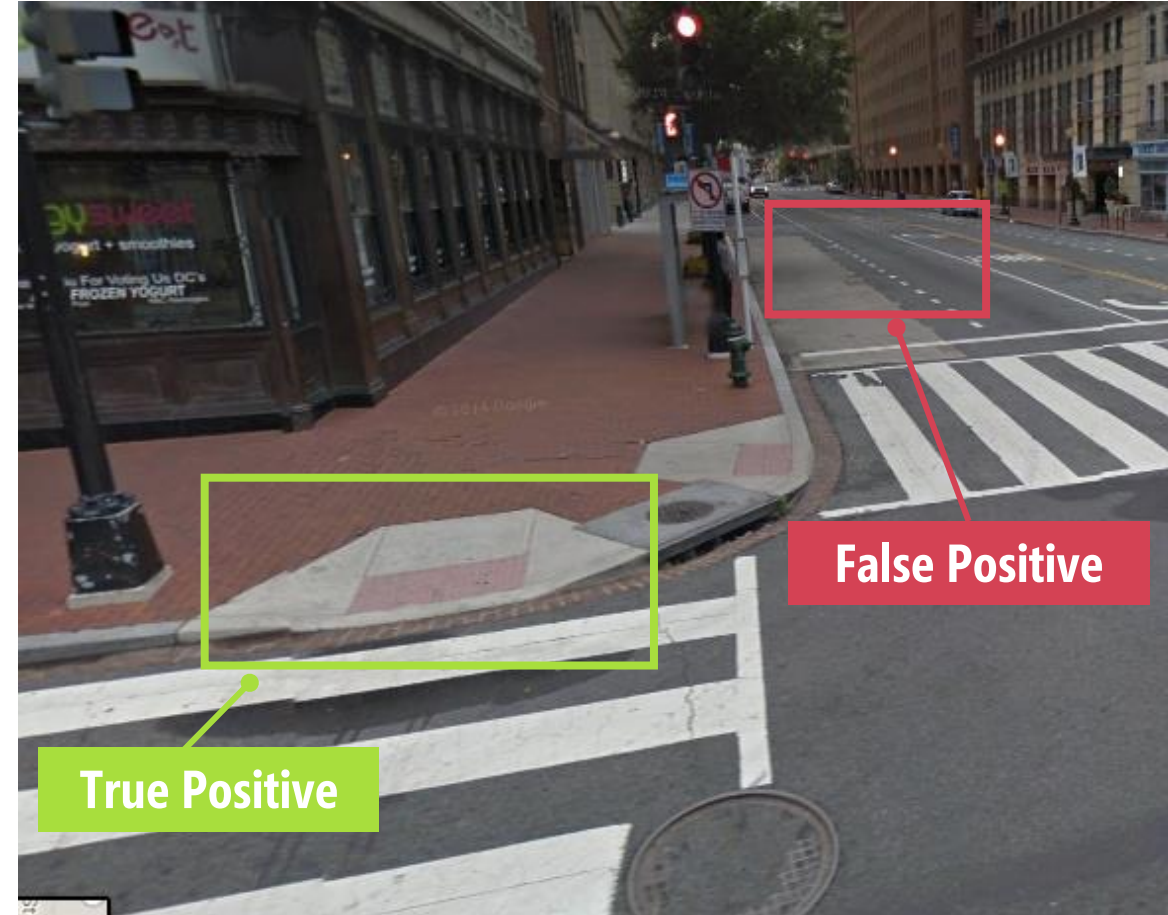
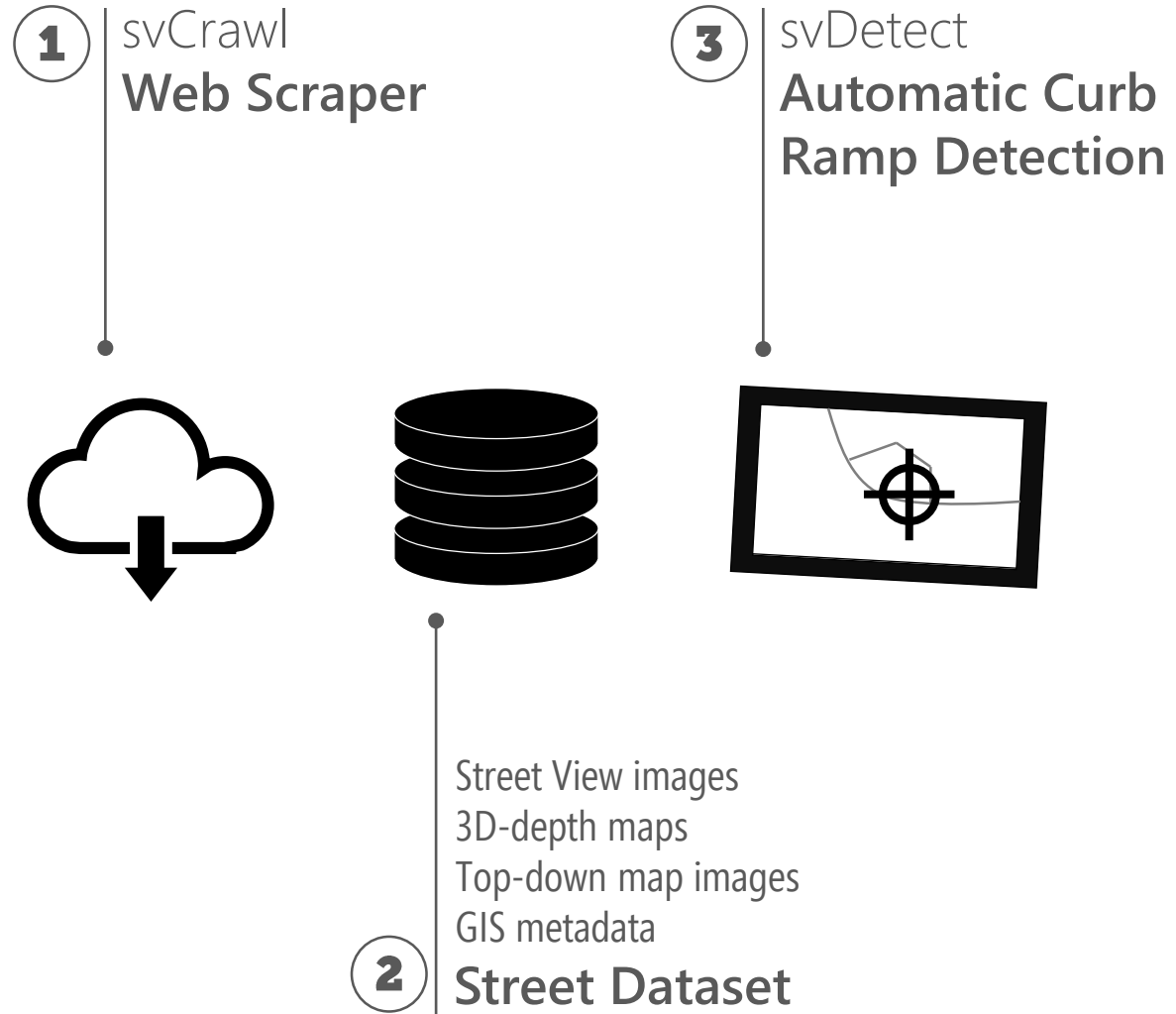


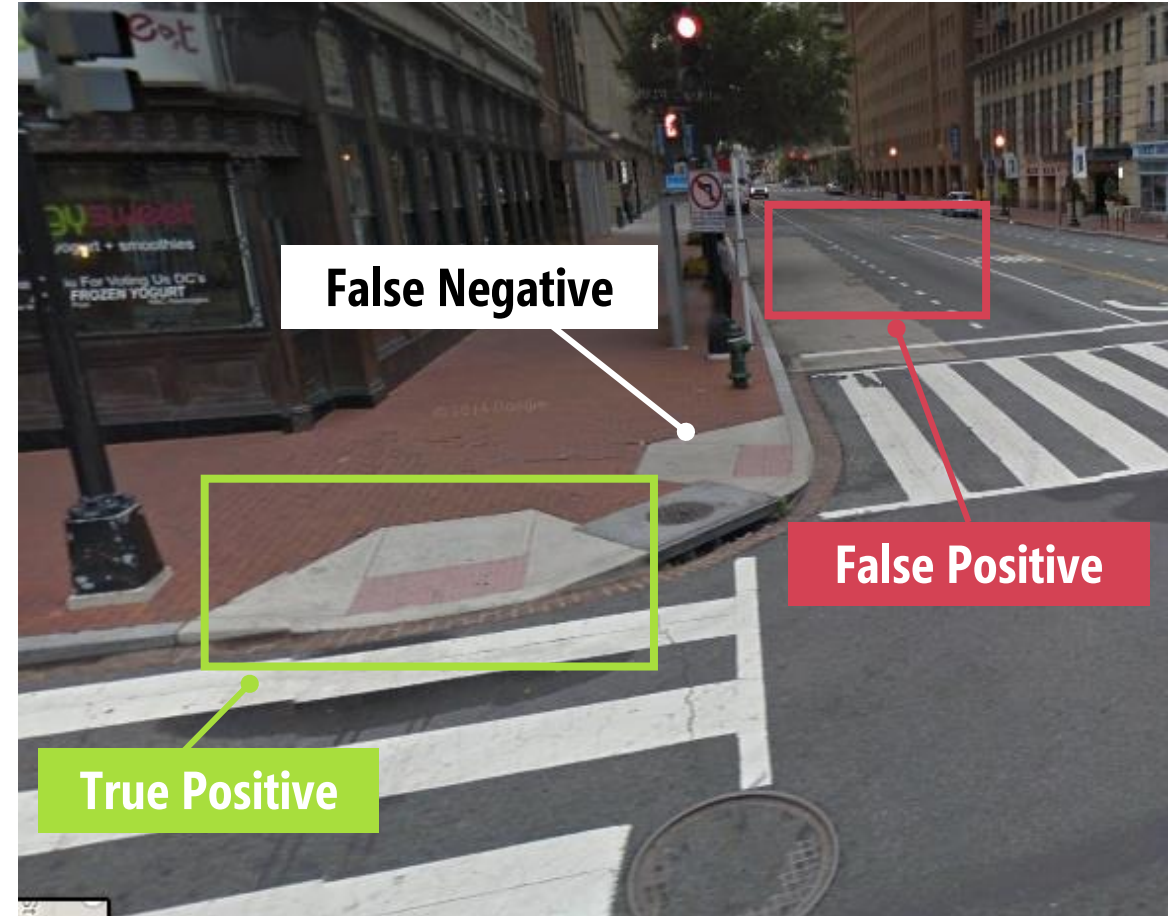
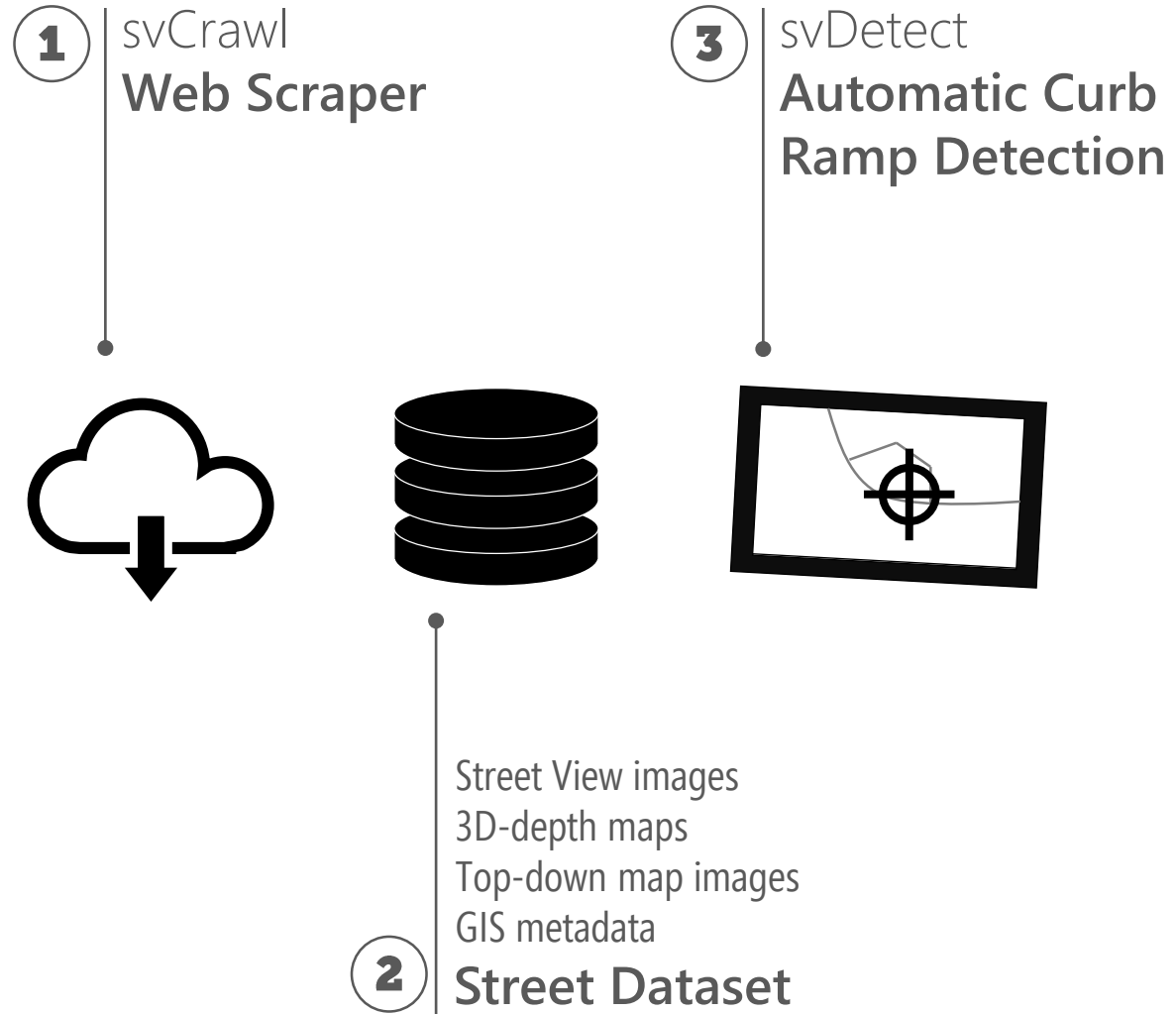
2.2 yrs (SD=1.3)
average GSV image age

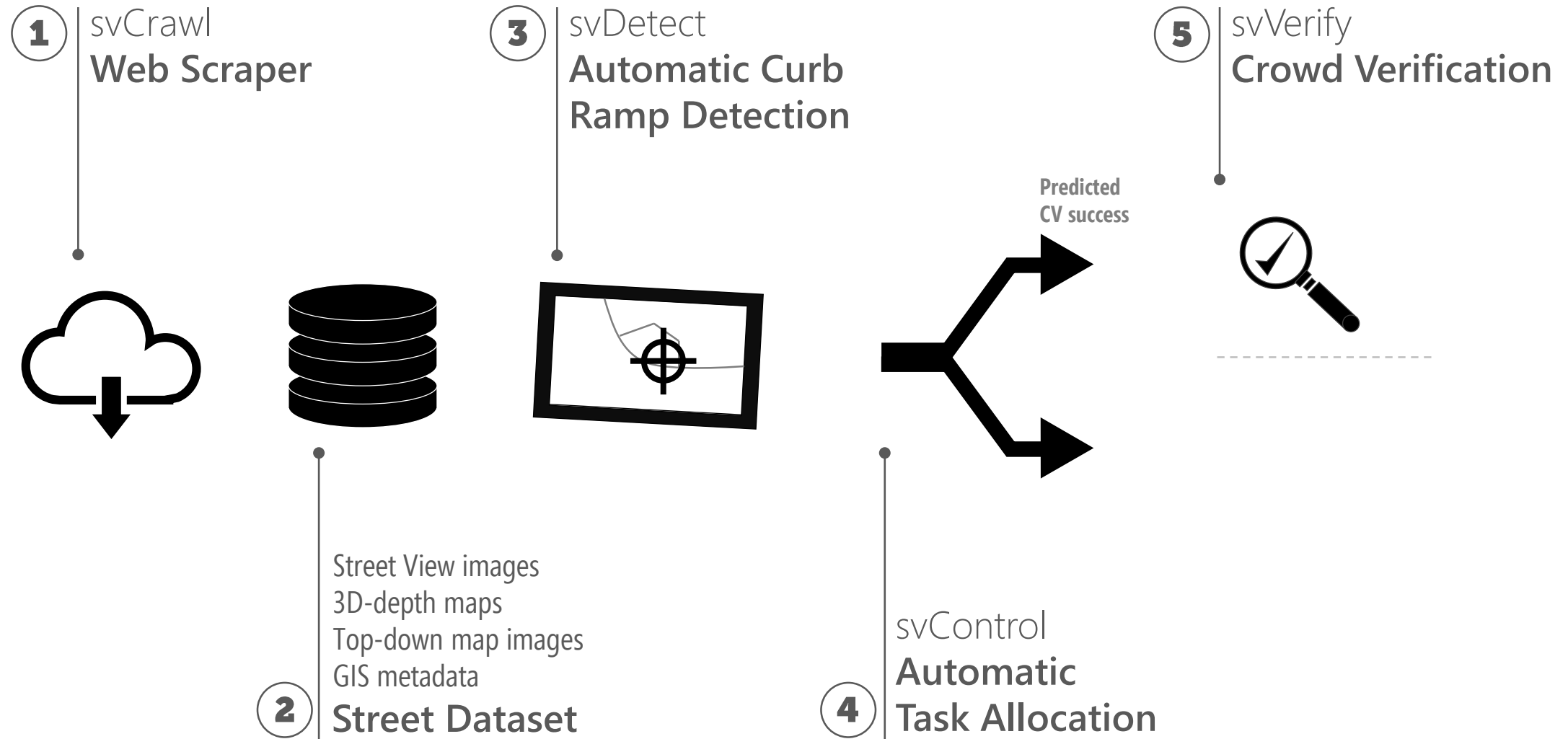


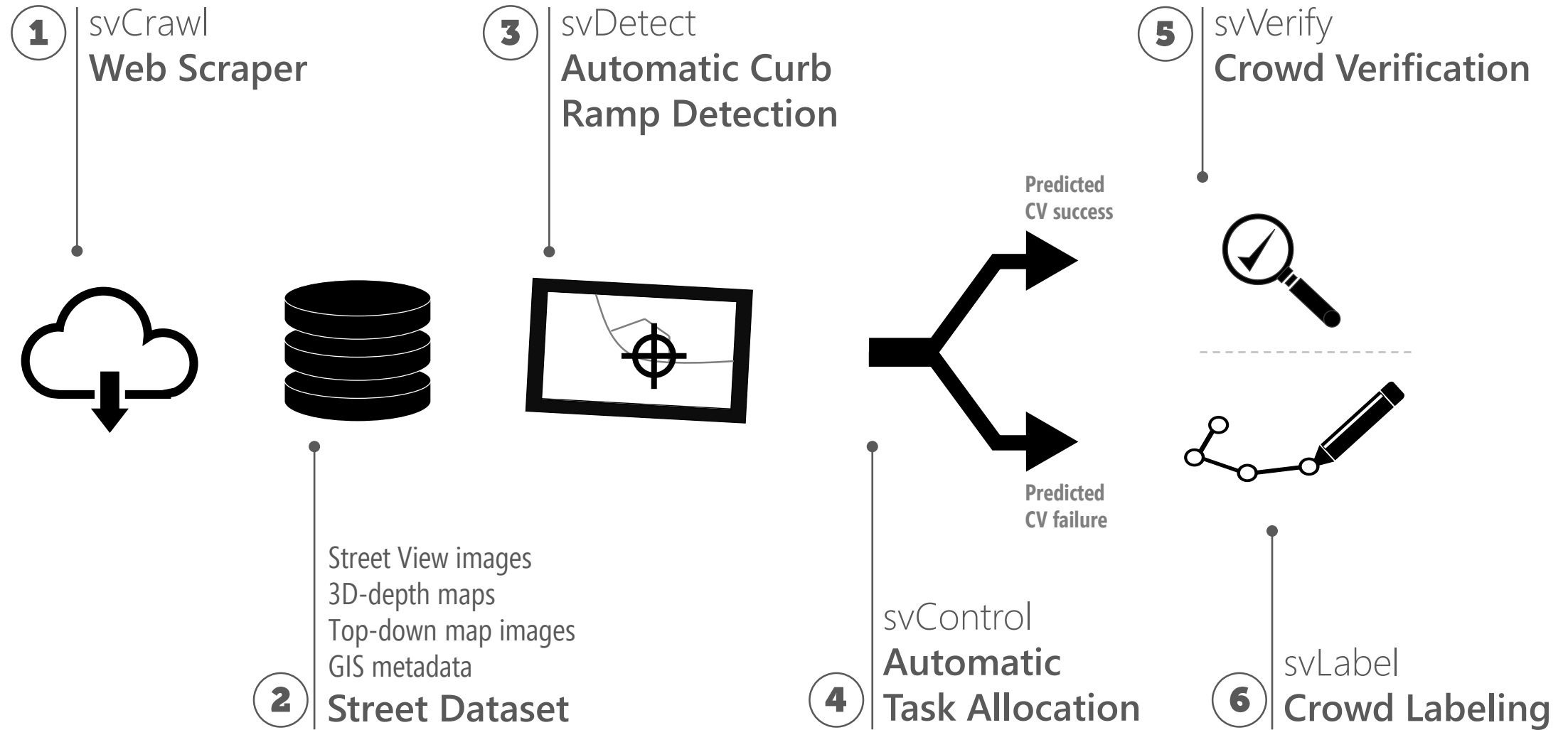




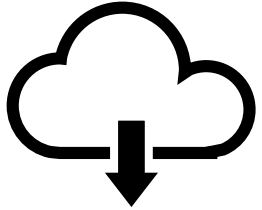




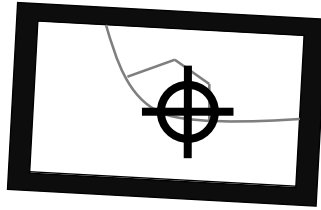




① svCrawl
Web Scraper



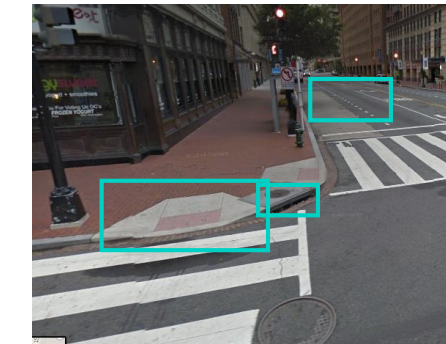
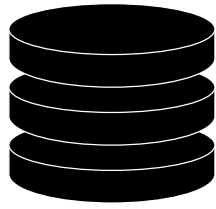
③ svDetect
**Automatic Curb
Ramp Detection**



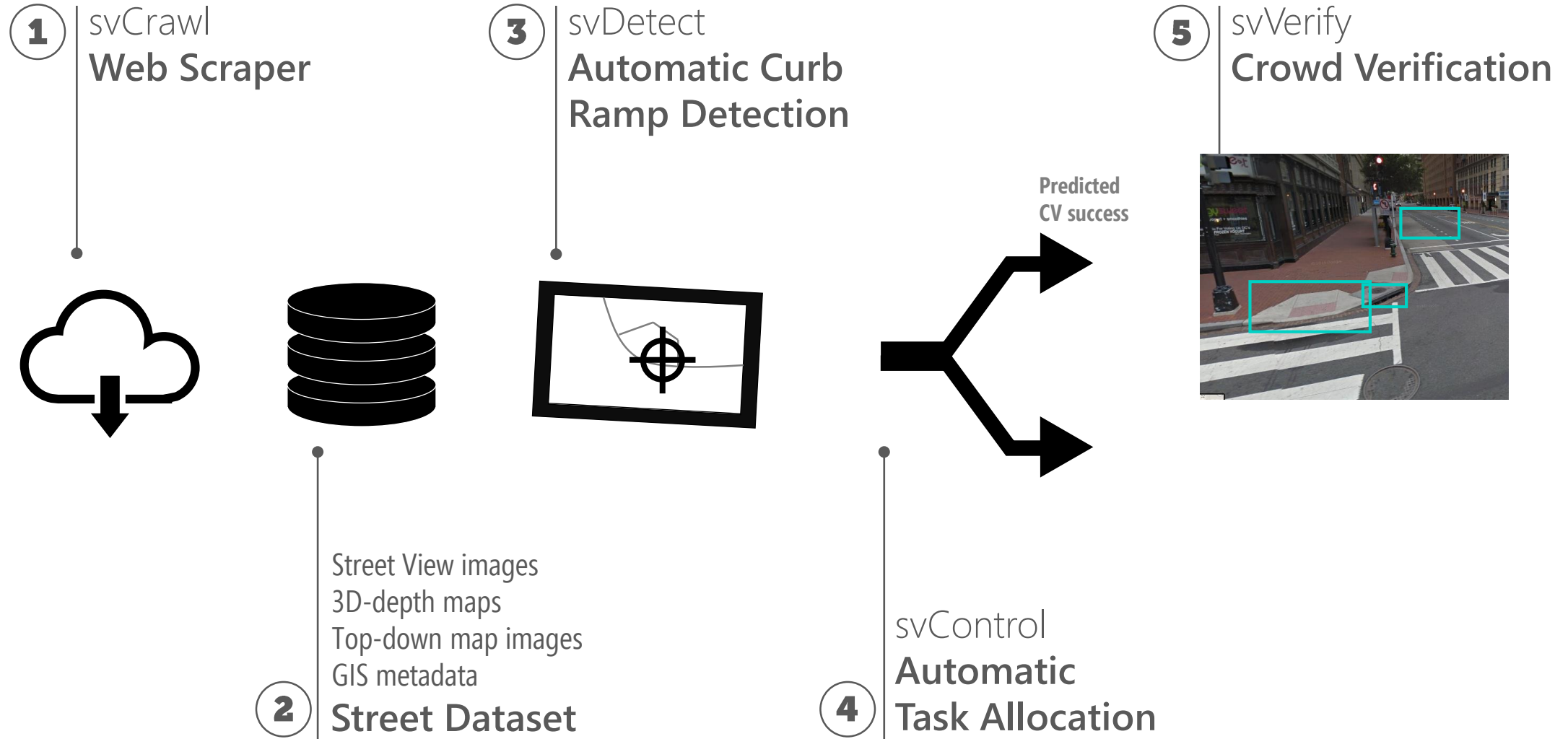
⑤ svVerify
Crowd Verification

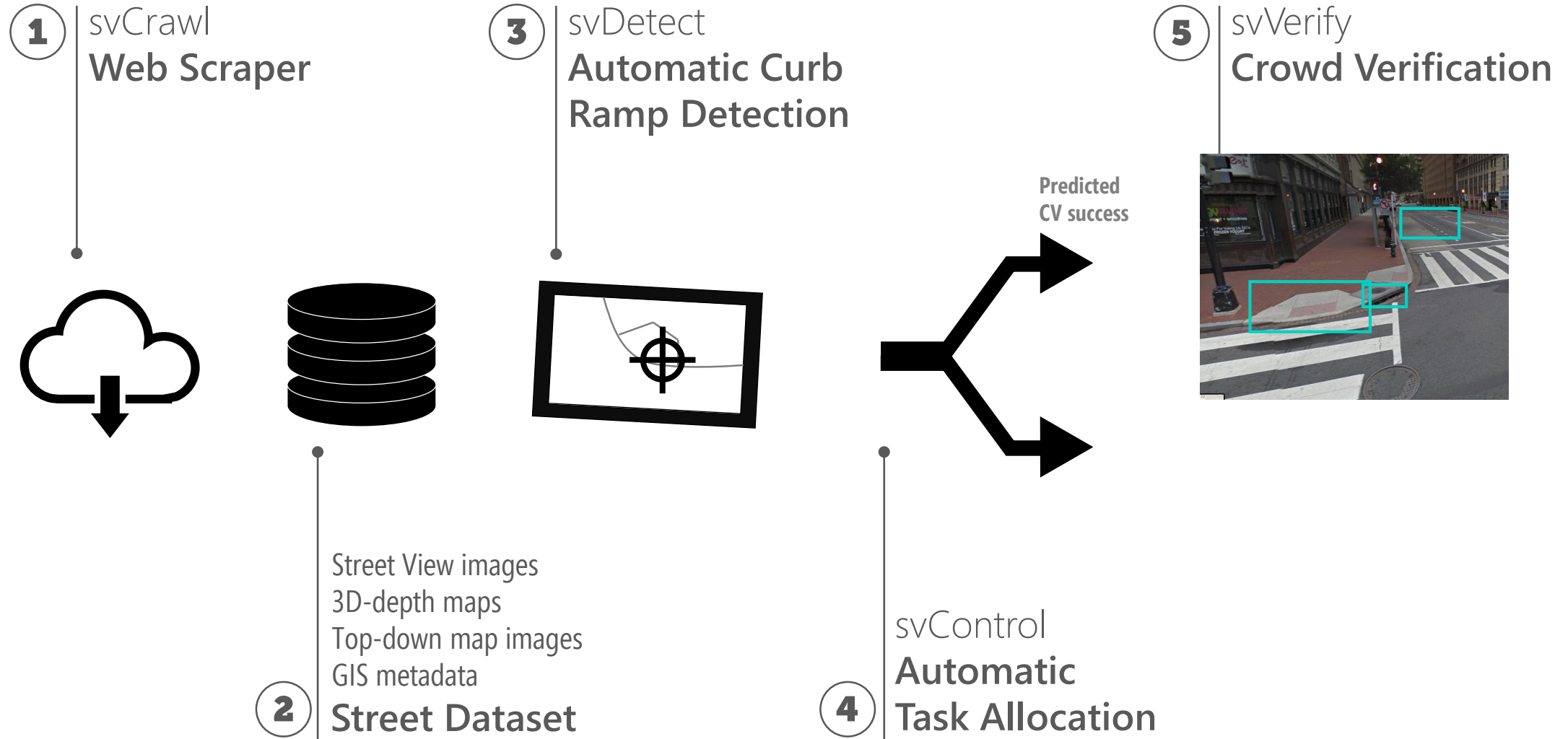


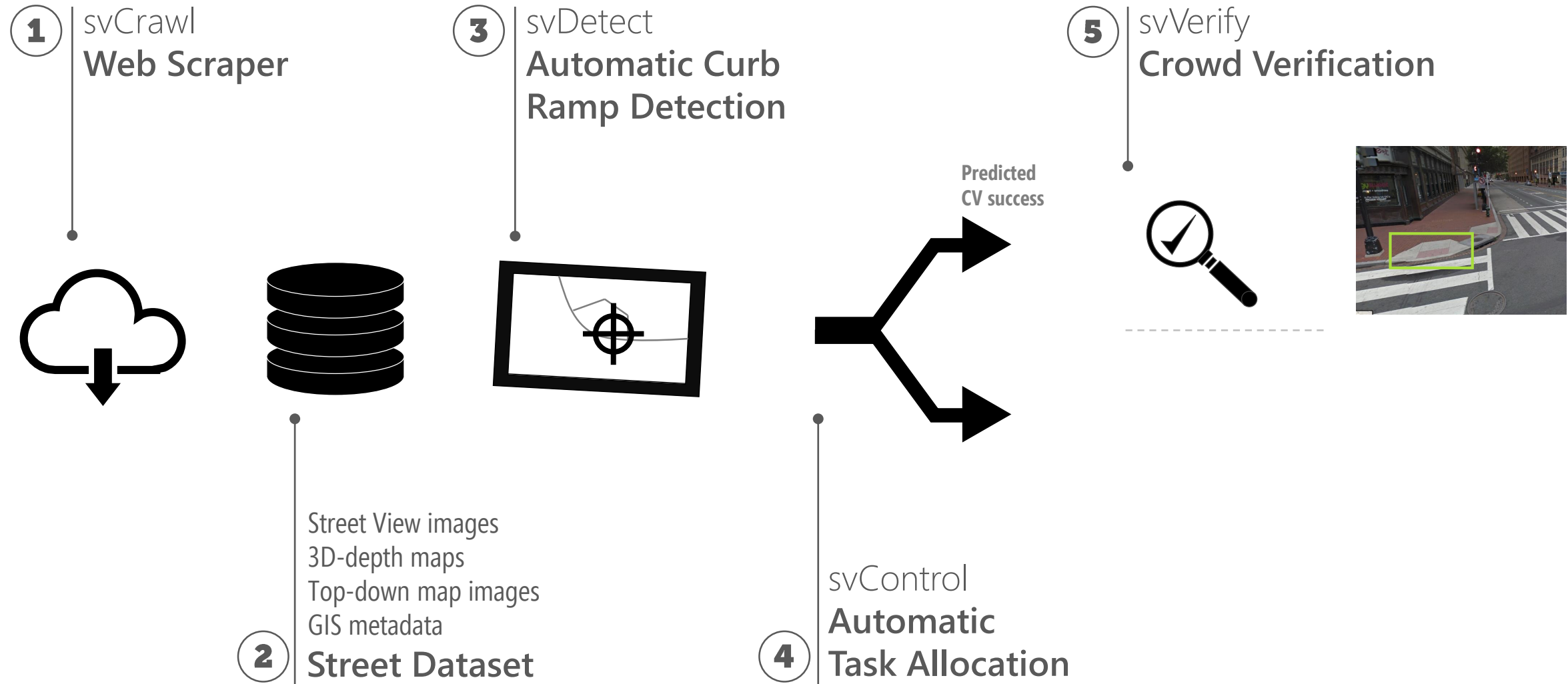
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata
② **Street Dataset**



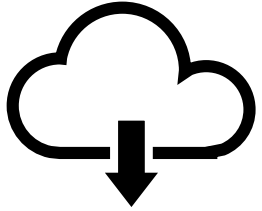
④ svControl
**Automatic
Task Allocation**



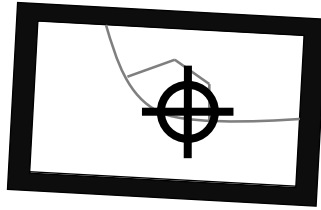




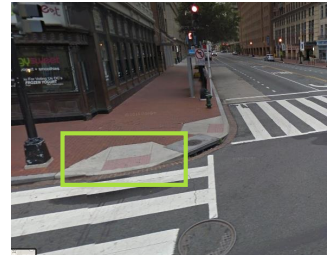
① svCrawl
Web Scraper



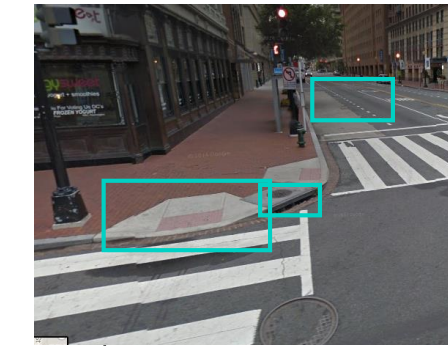
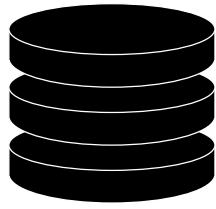
③ svDetect
**Automatic Curb
Ramp Detection**



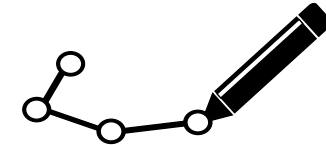
⑤ svVerify
Crowd Verification



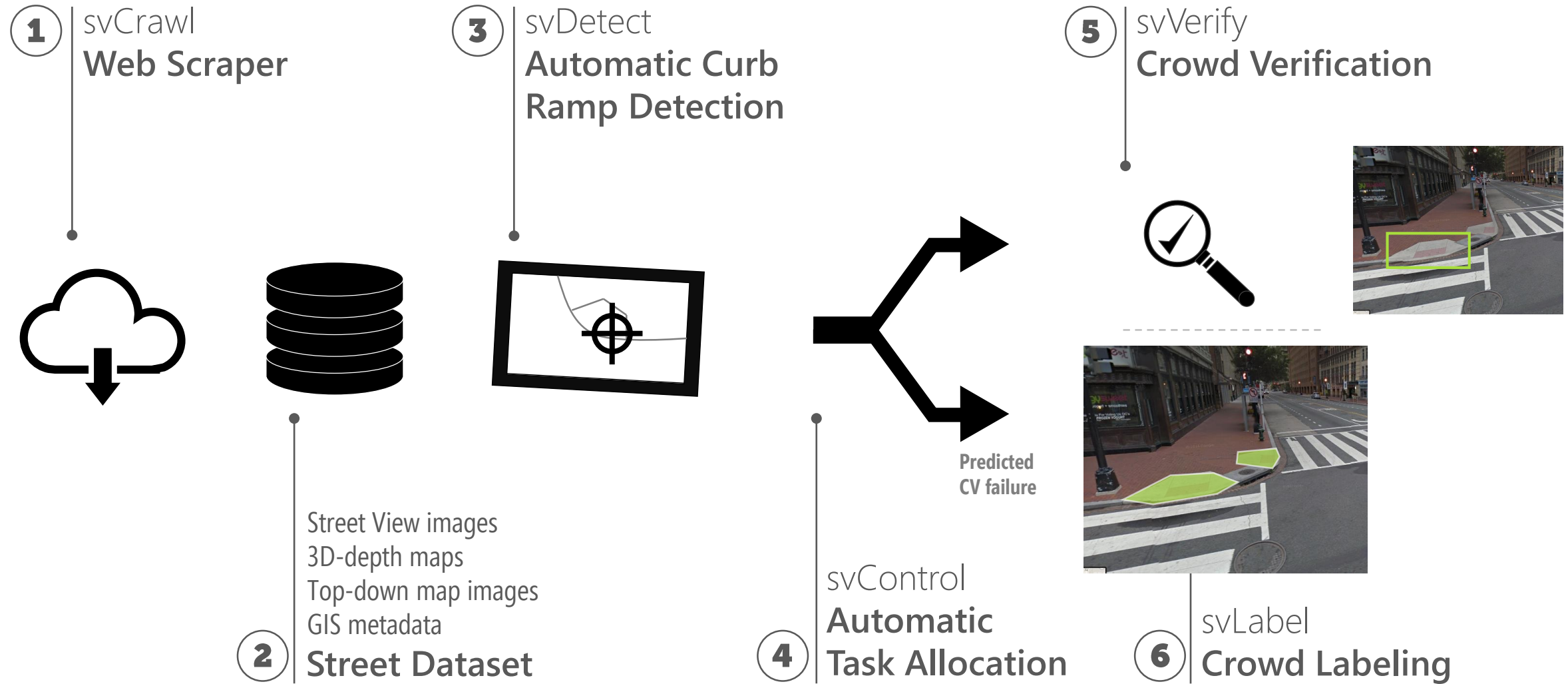
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata
② **Street Dataset**

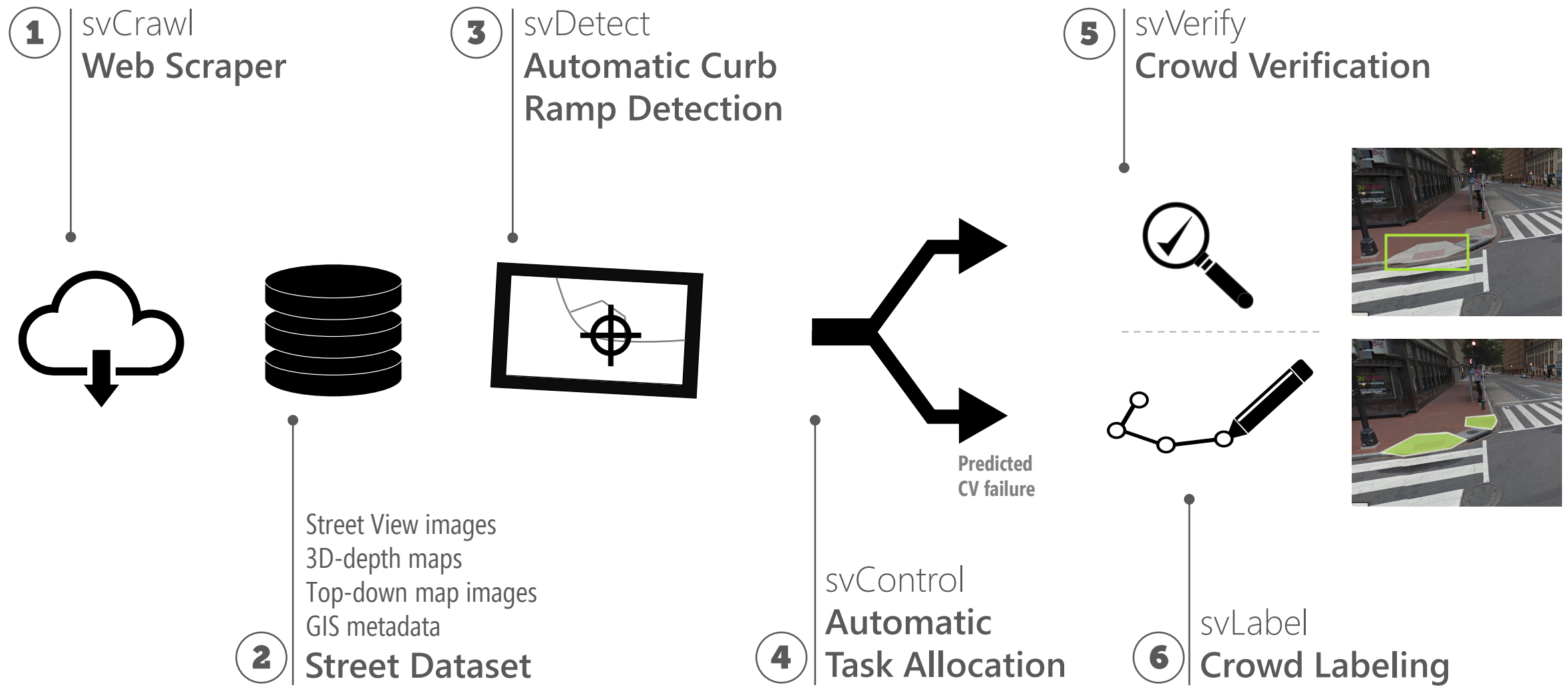


④ svControl
**Automatic
Task Allocation**

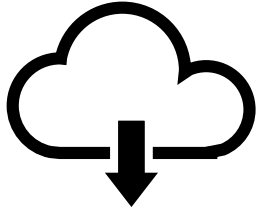


⑥ svLabel
Crowd Labeling

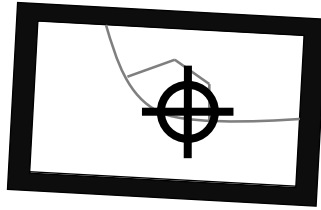




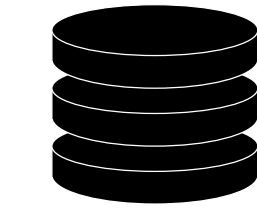
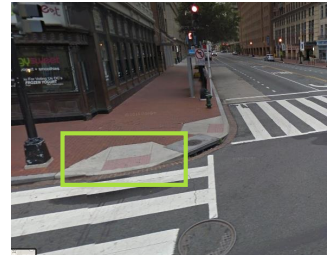
① svCrawl
Web Scraper



③ svDetect
**Automatic Curb
Ramp Detection**



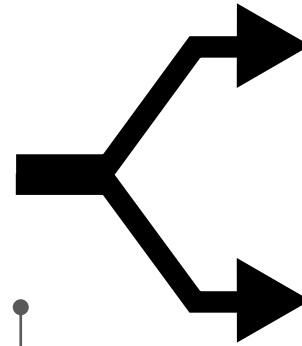
⑤ svVerify
Crowd Verification



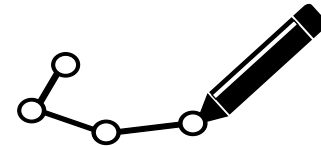
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata

② **Street Dataset**

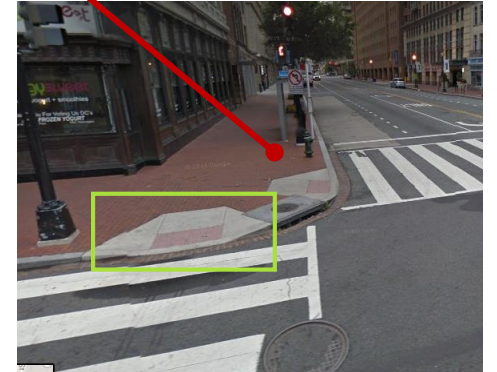
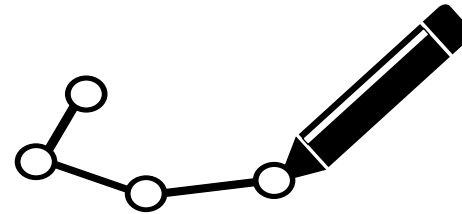
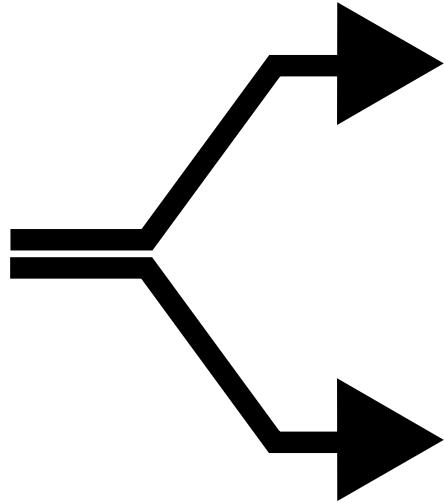
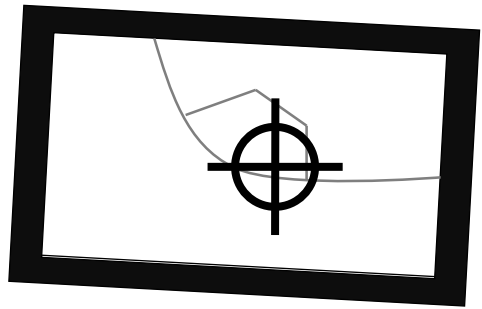
④ svControl
**Automatic
Task Allocation**

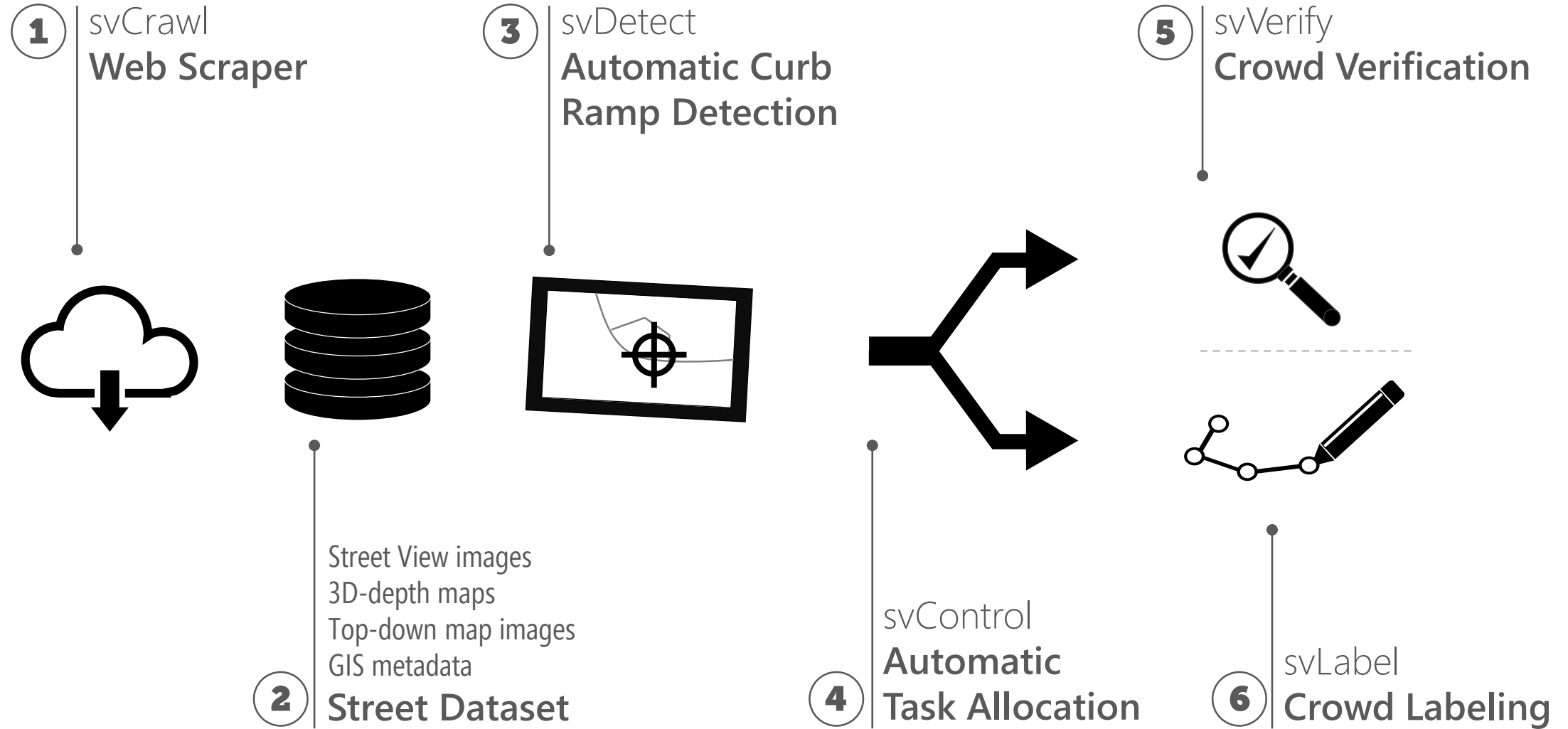


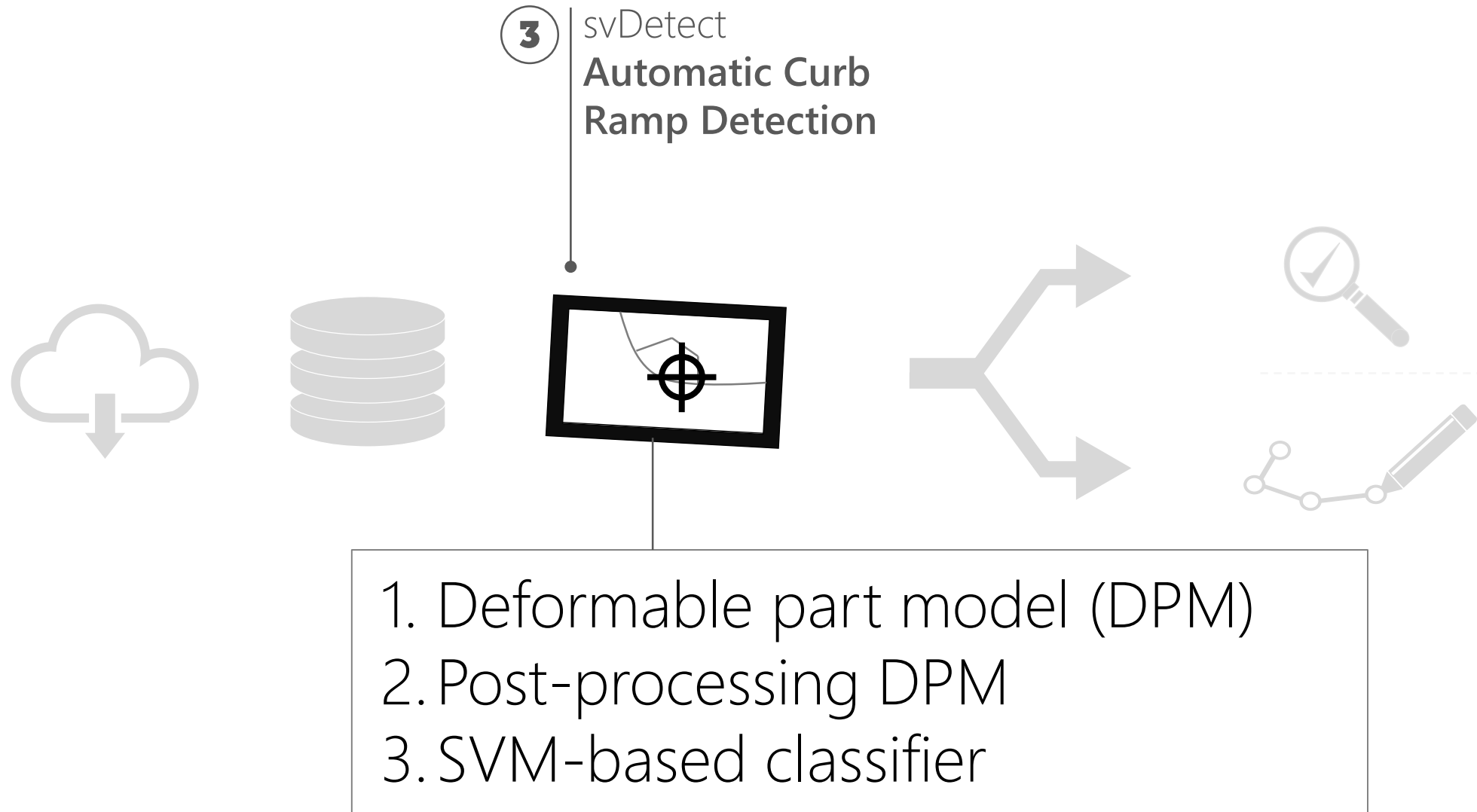
⑥ svLabel
Crowd Labeling



Verifiers **cannot fix false negatives**
(*i.e.*, they cannot add new labels)



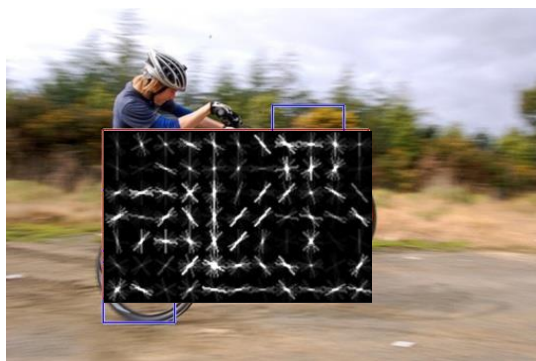
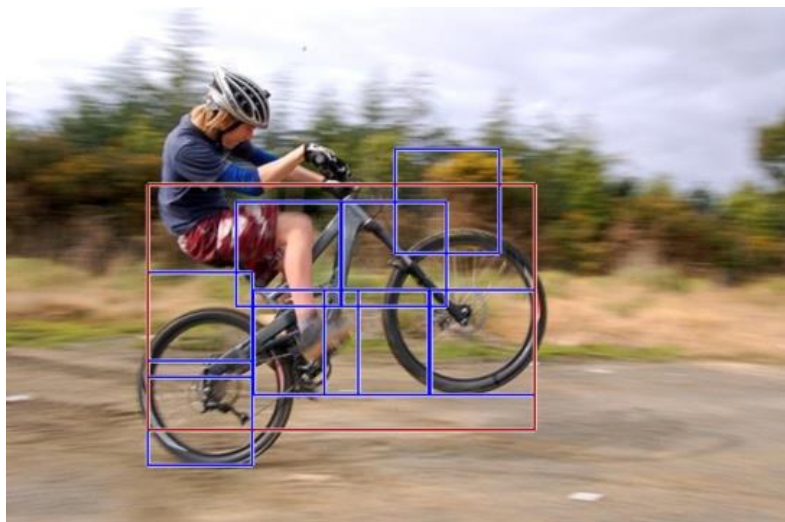




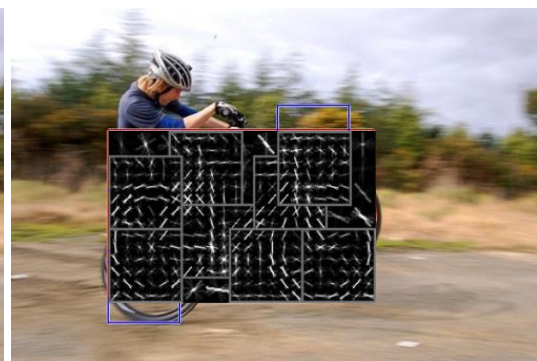
1

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

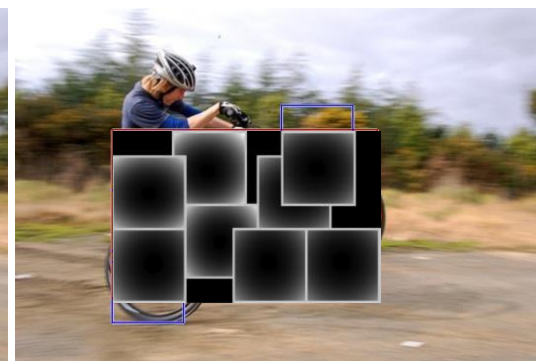
DEFORMABLE PART MODEL



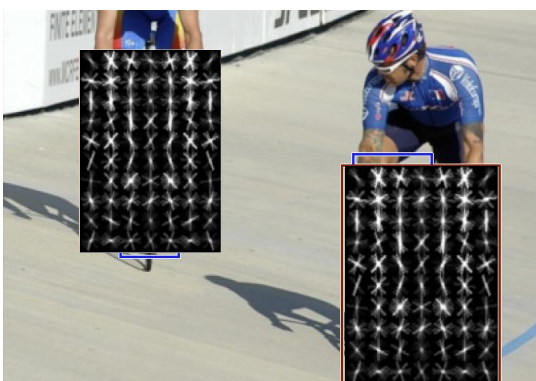
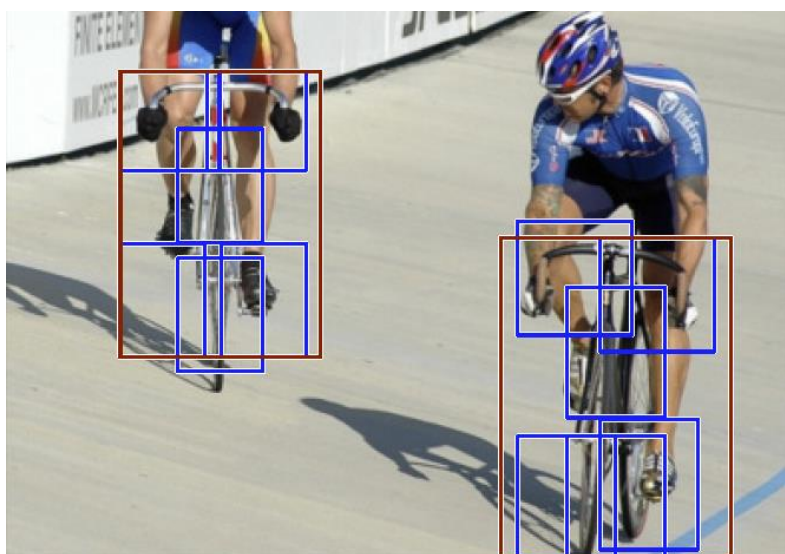
Root filter



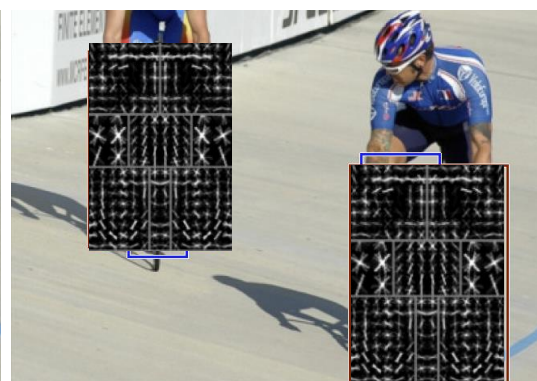
Parts filter



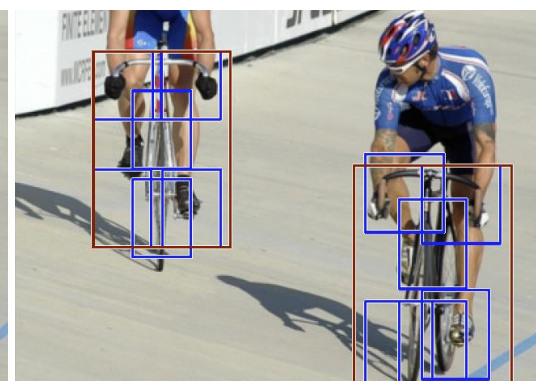
Displacement cost



Root filter



Parts filter



Displacement cost

1

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

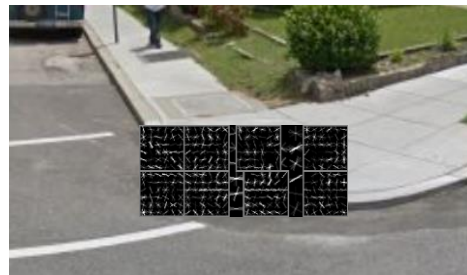
DEFORMABLE PART MODEL



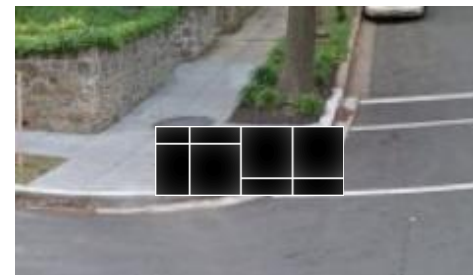
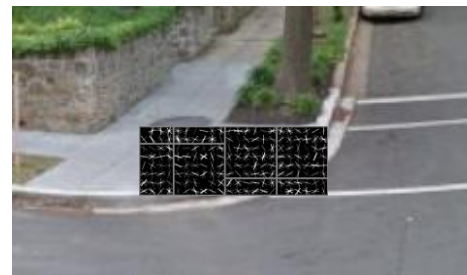
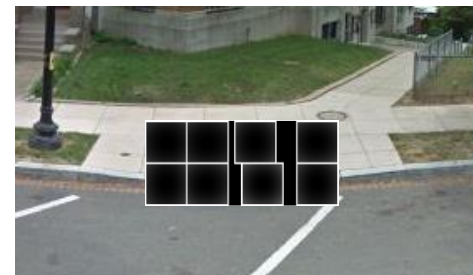
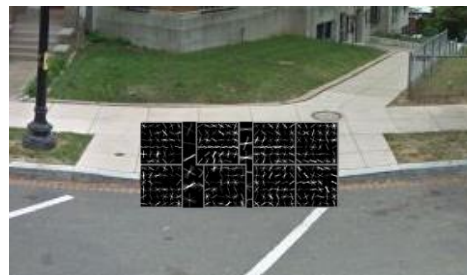
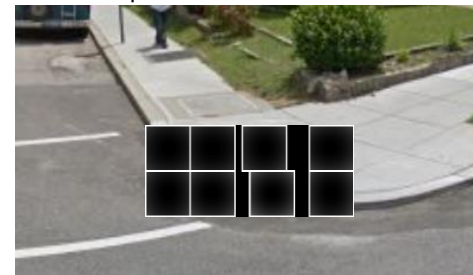
Root filter



Parts filter



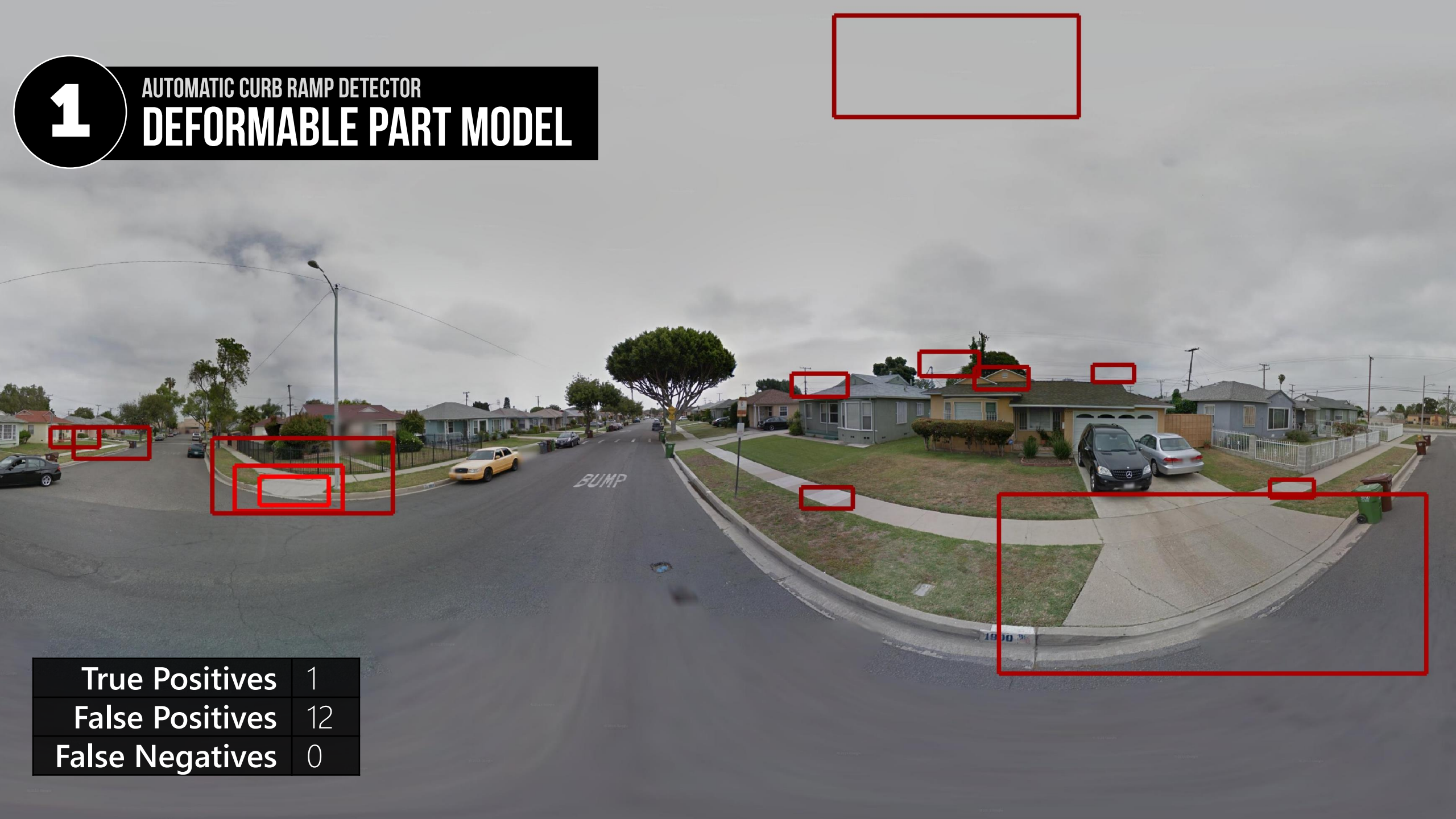
Displacement cost



1

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

DEFORMABLE PART MODEL



True Positives	1
False Positives	12
False Negatives	0

1

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

DEFORMABLE PART MODEL

**CURB RAMPS DETECTED
IN SKY & ON ROOFS**

**MULTIPLE REDUNDANT
DETECTION BOXES**

True Positives	1
False Positives	12
False Negatives	0

2

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

POST-PROCESS DPM OUTPUT

3D-POINT CLOUD TO REMOVE
CURB RAMPS ABOVE GROUND



2

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

POST-PROCESS DPM OUTPUT

NON-MAXIMUM SUPPRESSION TO
REMOVE OVERLAPPING DETECTIONS



True Positives	1
False Positives	12
False Negatives	0

2

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR

POST-PROCESS DPM OUTPUT



True Positives	1
False Positives	5
False Negatives	0

3

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR SVM-BASED REFINEMENT

SVM FILTERS DETECTIONS BASED ON
SIZE, COLOR, & POSITION IN SCENE

True Positives	1
False Positives	5
False Negatives	0

3

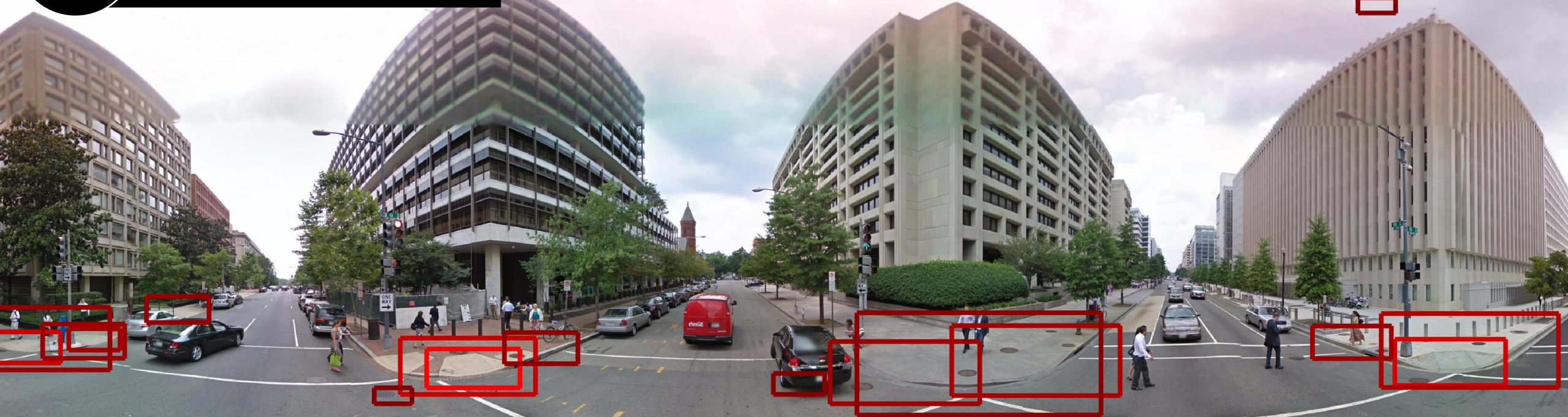
AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR FINAL OUTPUT



True Positives	1
False Positives	3
False Negatives	0

1

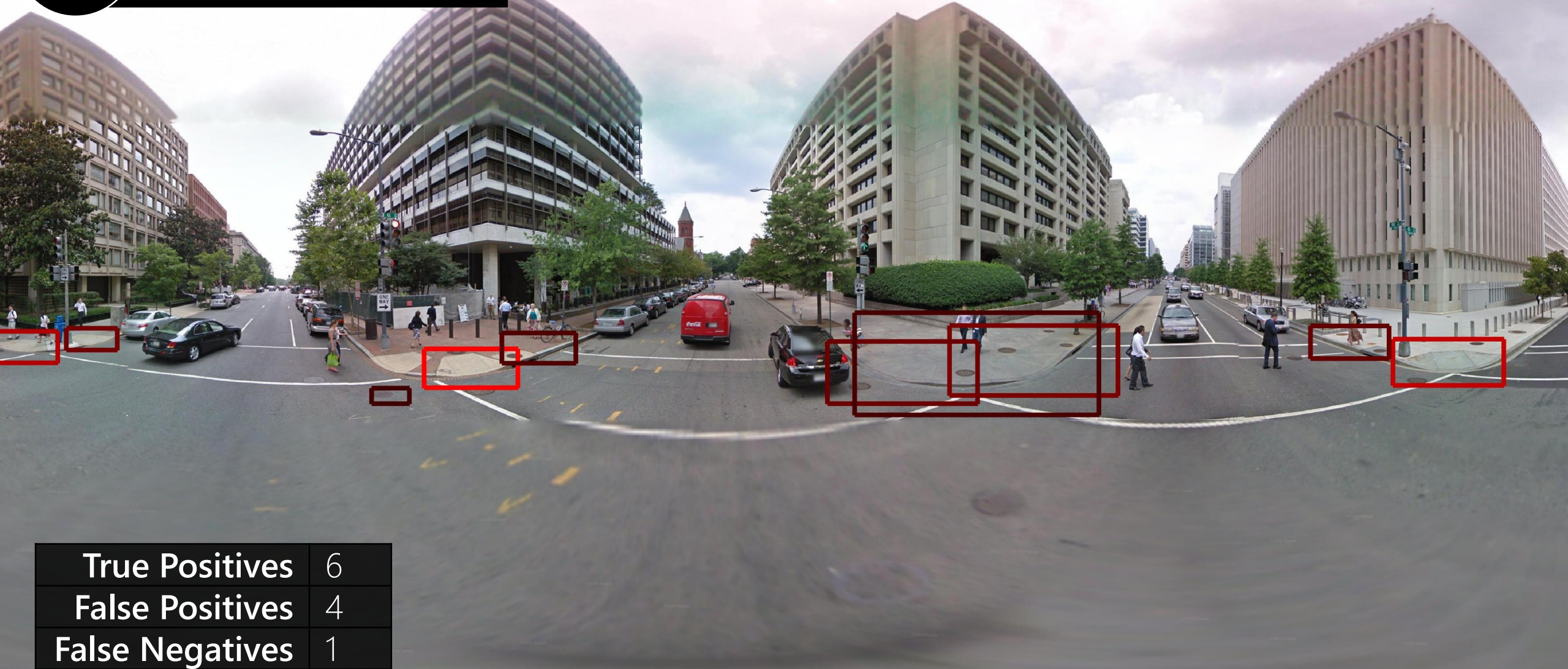
AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR DPM OUTPUT



True Positives	6
False Positives	11
False Negatives	1

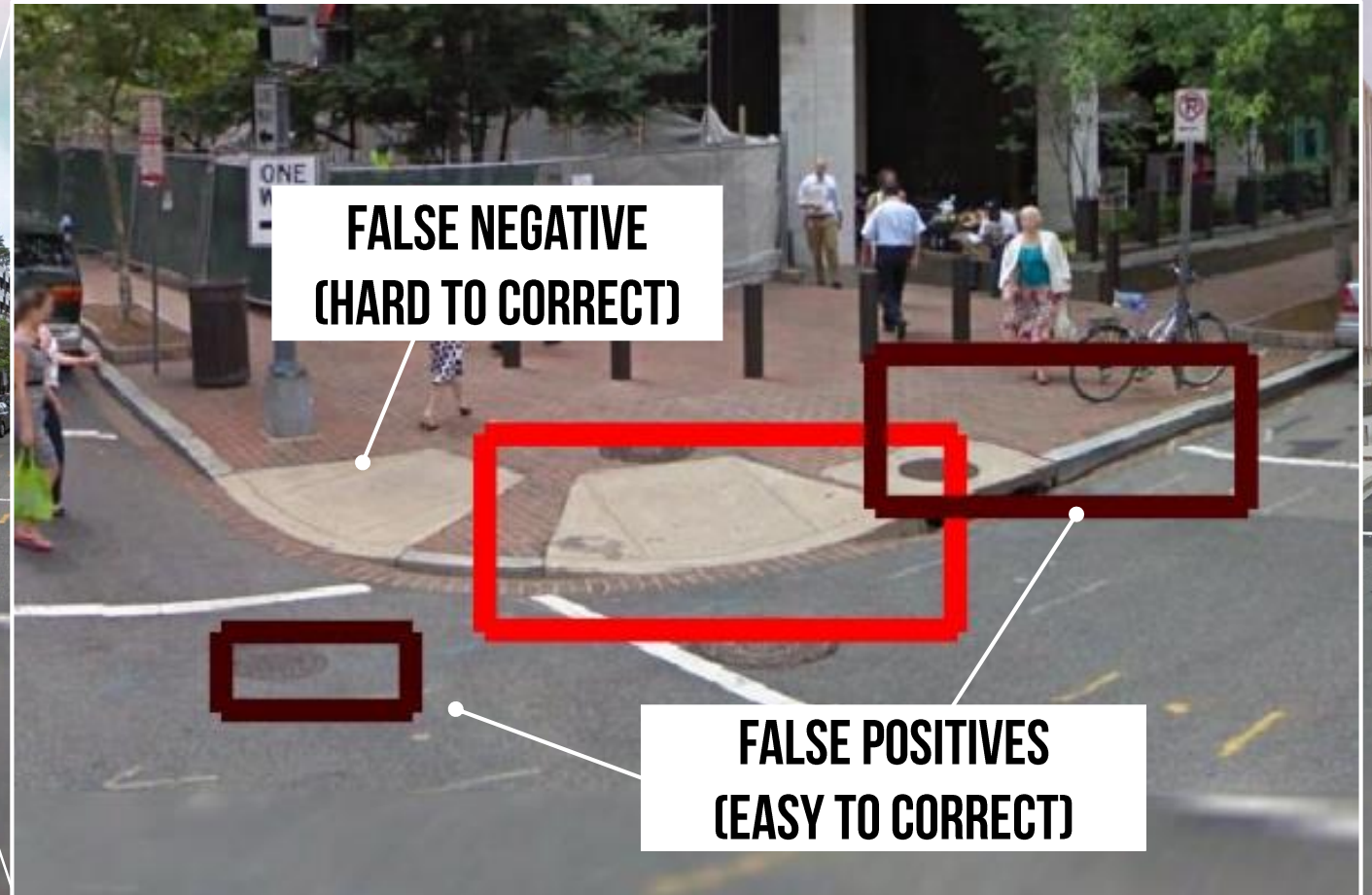
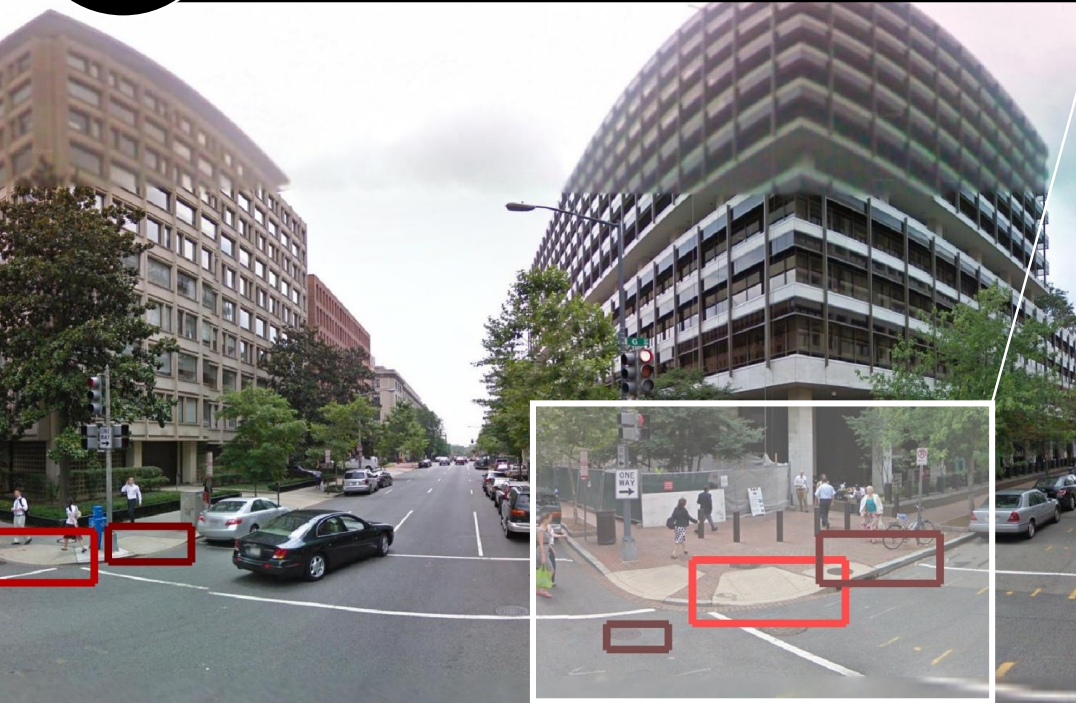
3

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR FINAL OUTPUT



3

AUTOMATIC CURB RAMP DETECTOR FINAL OUTPUT

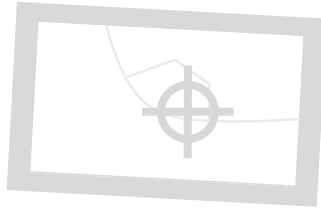


True Positives	6
False Positives	4
False Negatives	1

① svCrawl
Web Scraper



③ svDetect
**Automatic Curb
Ramp Detection**



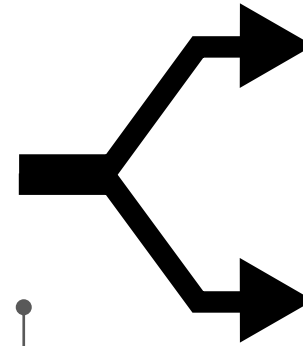
⑤ svVerify
Crowd Verification



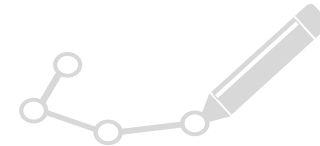
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata

②
Street Dataset

④ svControl
**Automatic
Task Allocation**

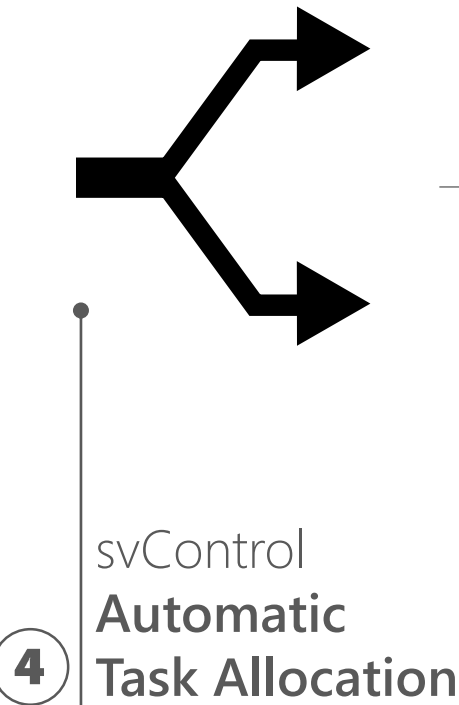


⑥ svLabel
Crowd Labeling

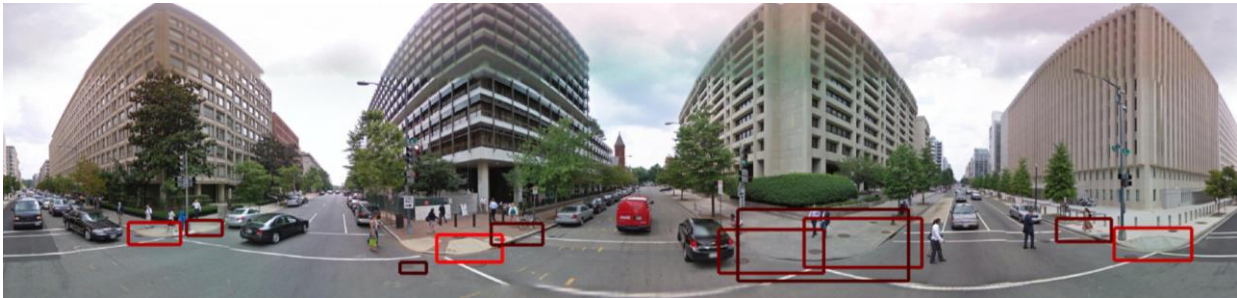


SVM TRAINED WITH 23 INPUT FEATURES

Binary classifier trained to predict occurrence of false negatives from svDetect stage



Curb Ramp Detector Output (16 Features)



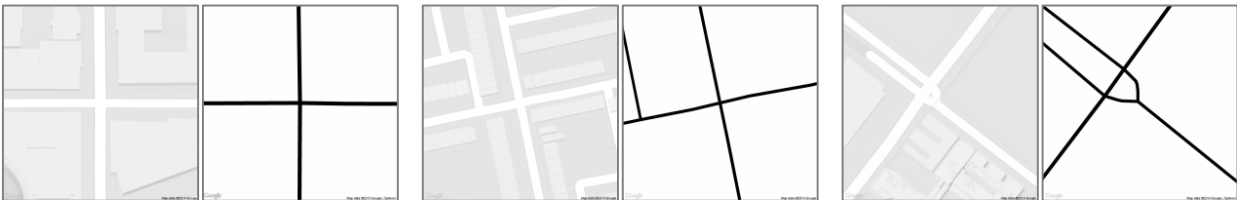
Raw # of bounding boxes
Descriptive stats of confidence scores
Descriptive stats of XY-coordinates

3D-Point Cloud Data (5 Features)



Descriptive stats of depth information
(*e.g.*, average, median, variance) of pixel depth

Intersection Complexity (2 Features)

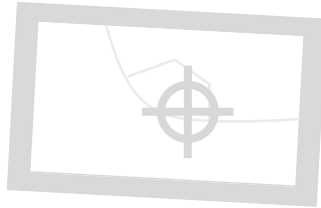


Cardinality (# of connected streets)
Amount of road

① svCrawl
Web Scraper



③ svDetect
**Automatic Curb
Ramp Detection**



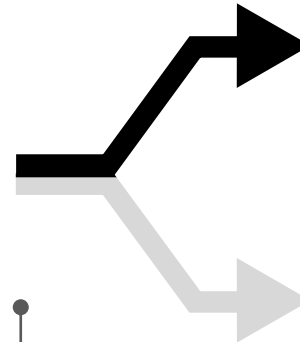
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata
② **Street Dataset**



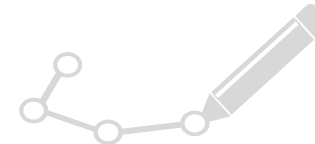
Predicted
CV success

Predicted
CV failure

④ svControl
**Automatic
Task Allocation**



⑤ svVerify
Crowd Verification



⑥ svLabel
Crowd Labeling

VERIFICATION TOOL


Correct false positives from computer vision

Zoom In

Zoom Out

Undo


Redo



Status

Mission:
Your mission is to **verify** the presence of curb ramps at intersections.


Progress:
You have finished 0 out of 1.

Labeled Curb Ramps:
 11

Keyboard Shortcuts:

Arrow Keys	Navigate
Z	Zoom in
Shift+Z	Zoom out

The area of the scene you have observed: 14%



Please enter any comments about this bus stop that may affect people with visual impairment (optional)

Submit

VERIFICATION TOOL


Correct false positives from computer vision

Zoom In

Zoom Out

Undo

Redo



Google

© 2014 Google Terms of Use Report a problem

Please enter any comments about this bus stop that may affect people with visual impairment (optional)

Submit

Status


Mission:

Your mission is to **verify** the presence of curb ramps at intersections.

Progress:

You have finished 0 out of 1.

Labeled Curb Ramps:

 11

Keyboard Shortcuts:

Arrow Keys

Navigate

Z


Zoom in

Shift+Z

Zoom out

The area of the scene you have observed:

14%



Google

Map Data Terms of Use

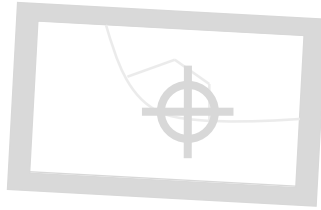
Playback Speed: 2x

This study is being conducted by the University of Maryland.

① svCrawl
Web Scraper



③ svDetect
**Automatic Curb
Ramp Detection**



⑤ svVerify
Crowd Verification



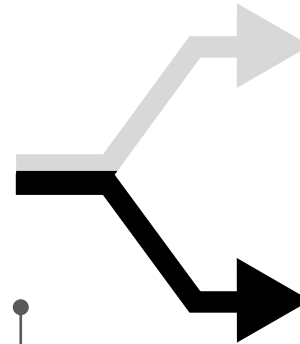
②
Street View images
3D-depth maps
Top-down map images
GIS metadata
Street Dataset



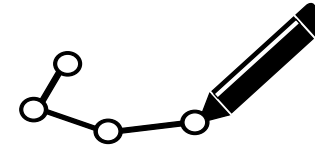
④ svControl
**Automatic
Task Allocation**

Predicted
CV success

Predicted
CV failure



⑥ svLabel
Crowd Labeling



CROWD INTERFACES

LABELING TOOL

Explore

Find and label the following

Curb Ramp

Missing Curb Ramp

Zoom In

Zoom Out

Undo

Redo

Google

© 2014 Google | Terms of Use | Report a problem

Status

Mission:

Your mission is to **find and label** the presence and absence of curb ramps at intersections.

Progress:

You have finished 0 out of 5.

Labeled Landmarks:

0

0

You've submitted 0 curb ramp labels and 0 missing curb ramp labels.

Keyboard Shortcuts:

ESC: Cancel drawing

Z / Shift+Z: Zoom in / Zoom out

Observed area: 1.4%

Google

Map Data

Terms of Use

Please enter any comments about this intersection that may affect people with mobility impairment (optional)

Skip

Submit

CROWD INTERFACES

LABELING TOOL

Explore

Find and label the following

Curb Ramp

Missing Curb Ramp

Zoom In

Zoom Out

Undo

Redo

Status

Mission:

Your mission is to **find and label** the presence and absence of curb ramps at intersections.

Progress:

You have finished 0 out of 5.

Labeled Landmarks:

0

0

You've submitted 0 curb ramp labels and 0 missing curb ramp labels.

Keyboard Shortcuts:

ESC:

Cancel drawing

Z / Shift+Z:

Zoom in / Zoom out

Observed area: 1.4%

Google

Map Data

Terms of Use

Google

© 2014 Google | Terms of Use | Report a problem

Please enter any comments about this intersection that may affect people with mobility impairment (optional)

Skip

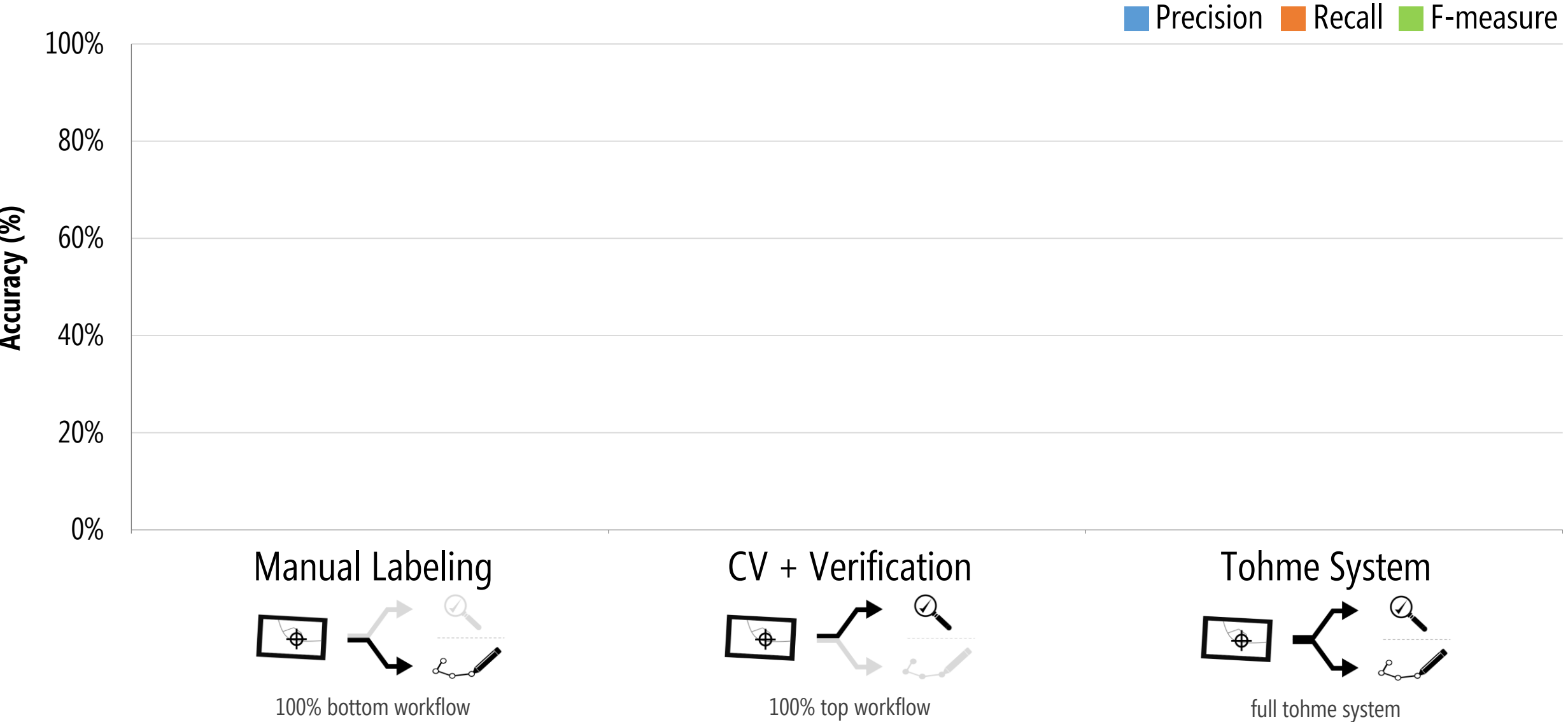
Submit

Playback Speed: 2x

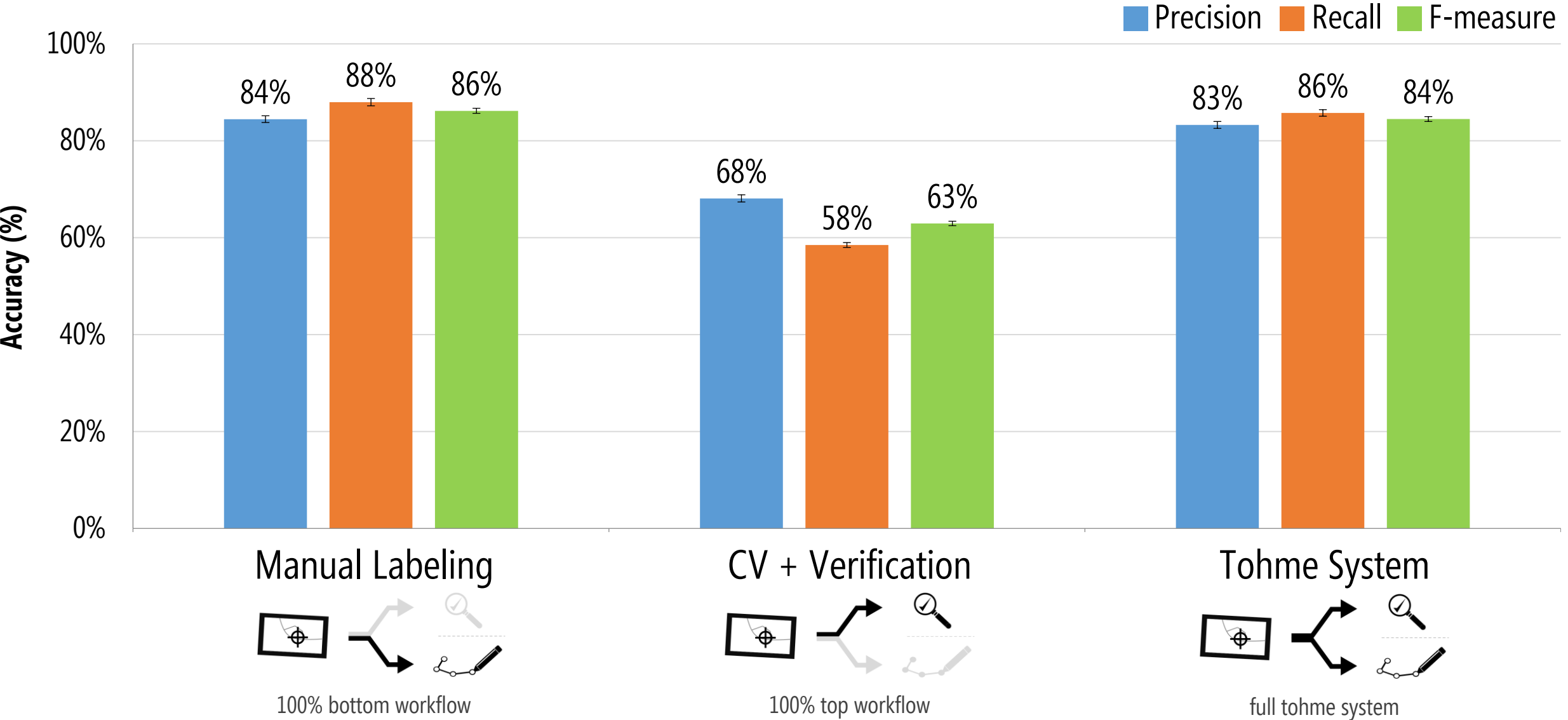
STUDY METHOD

1. Generate ground truth labels
2. Train computer vision & task controller
3. Deploy Tohme to Mechanical Turk
4. Compare Tohme to baseline

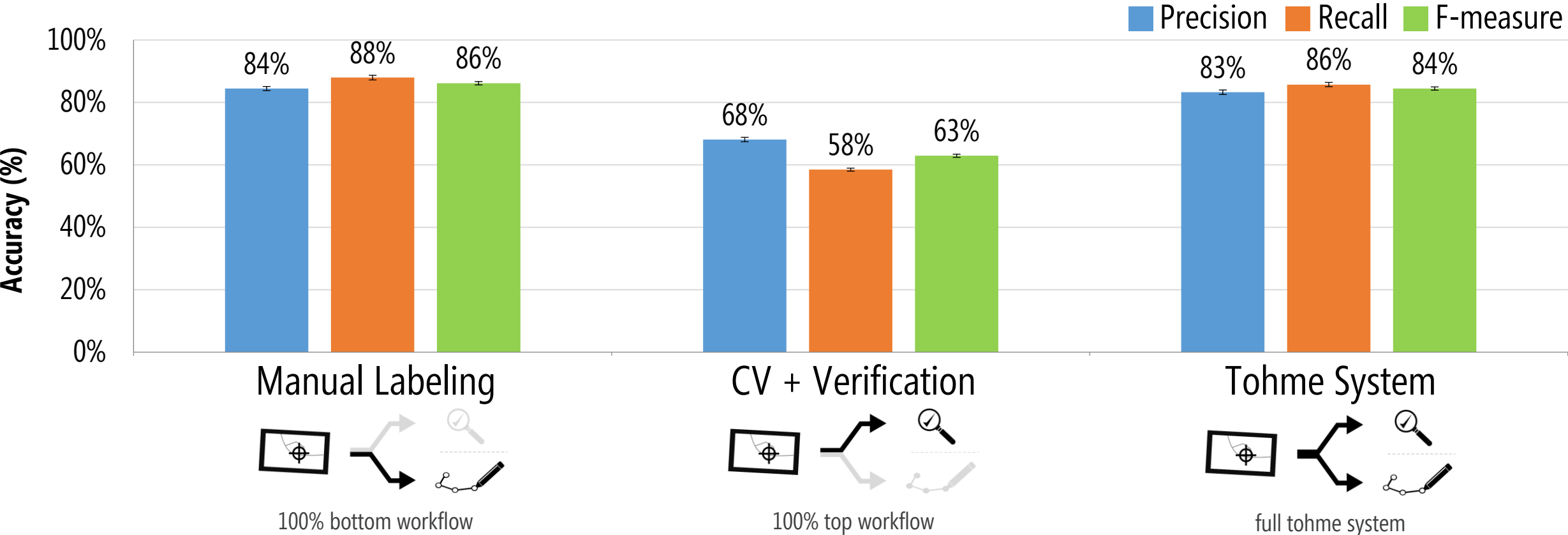
OVERALL RESULTS



OVERALL RESULTS



OVERALL RESULTS



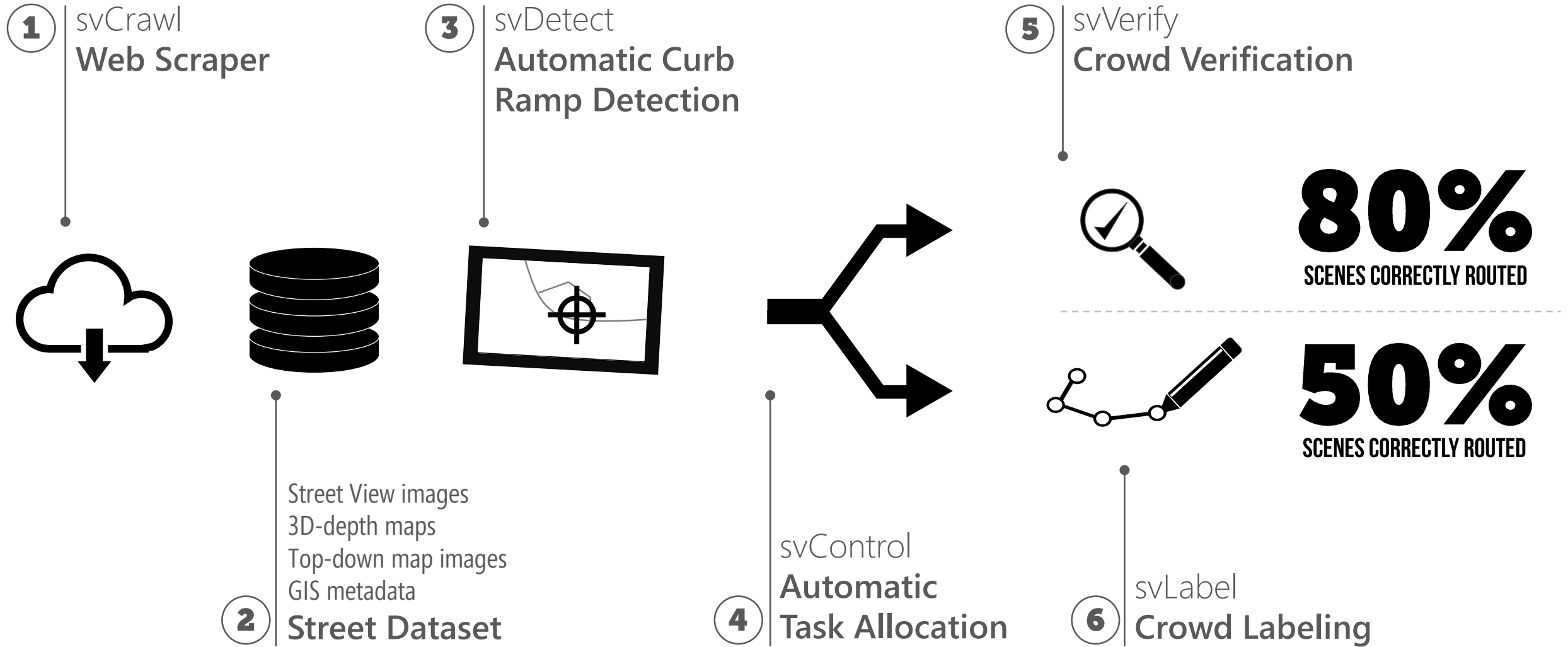
94s
PER SCENE

42s
PER SCENE

81s
PER SCENE

14% faster

TASK CONTROLLER PERFORMANCE



SIMULATED PERFECT TASK CONTROLLER

rb
on

5 svVerify
Crowd Verification

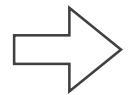
Simulated perfect task controller

100%
SCENES CORRECTLY ROUTED

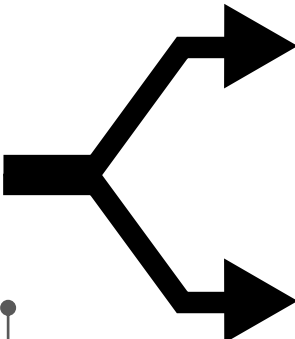
100%
SCENES CORRECTLY ROUTED

OVERALL SPEEDUP INCREASES OVER MANUAL BASELINE

14%
SPEEDUP



27%
SPEEDUP



4 svControl
Automatic
Task Allocation

6 svLabel
Crowd Labeling

IMPROVING DETECTION ALGORITHMS

AUTOMATIC DETECTION IS HARD

IMPROVING DETECTION ALGORITHMS

AUTOMATIC DETECTION IS HARD

Occlusion



Illumination



Viewpoint Variation



Structures Similar to Curb Ramps



Scale



Curb Ramp Design Variation





PROJECT
SIDEWALK

[HTTP://PROJECTSIDEWALK.IO](http://PROJECTSIDEWALK.IO)

A man with glasses and a dark jacket is sitting in a wheelchair on a paved path. He is looking to his right. The path is surrounded by trees and grass, suggesting a park or a quiet street. The overall tone is calm and focused.


Let's create a path for everyone


[Start Mapping](#)


How you can help


Virtually explore city streets to find and label accessibility


Find and label the following



Explore


Curb Ramp


Missing Curb Ramp


Obstacle in Path


Surface Problem


Other


Zoom In


Zoom Out


Undo


Redo


Current Neighborhood
[Fort Stanton, D.C.](#)

Audit 1000ft of Fort Stanton




Your mission is to audit 1000ft of Fort Stanton and find all the accessibility features that affect mobility impaired travelers!

OK


Sound


Jump

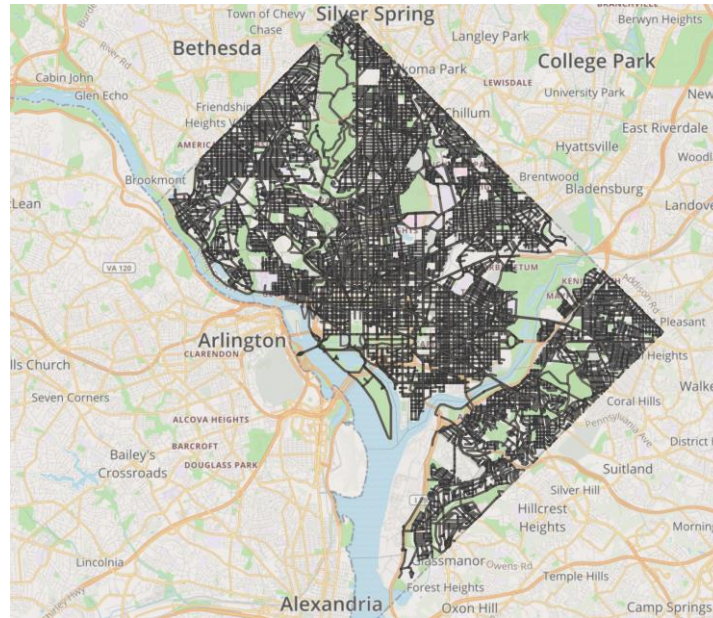

Feedback

PROJECT SIDEWALK

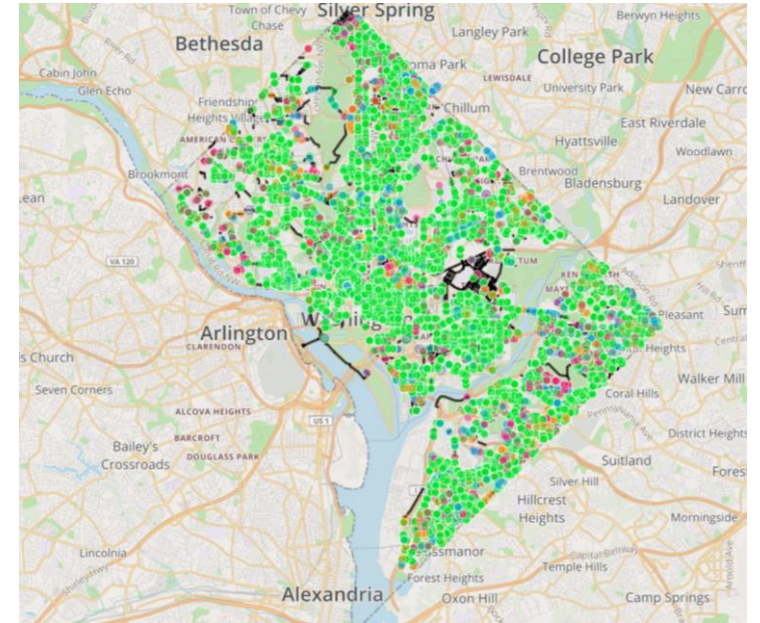
PROJECT SIDEWALK CONTRIBUTIONS



3600+
USERS



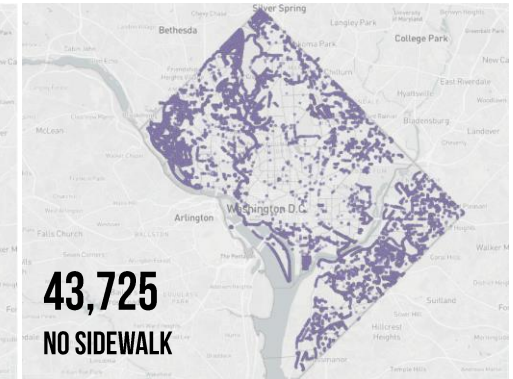
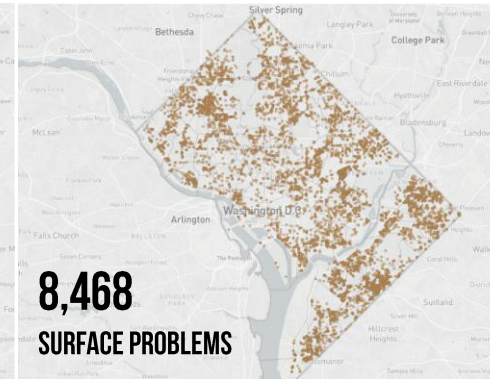
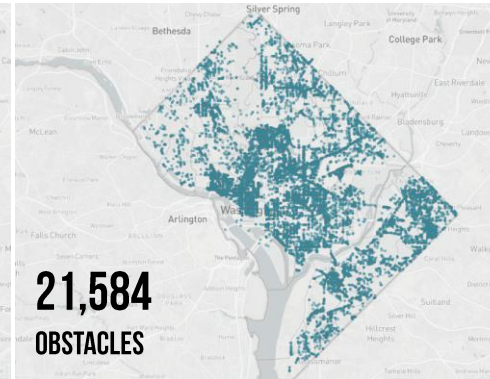
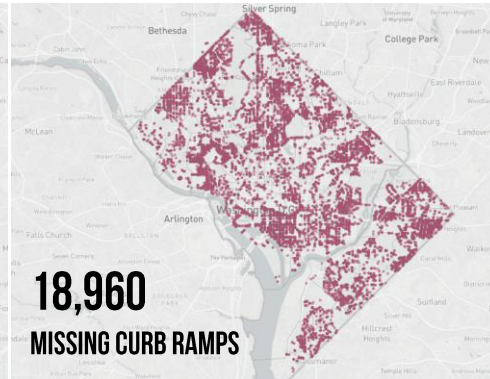
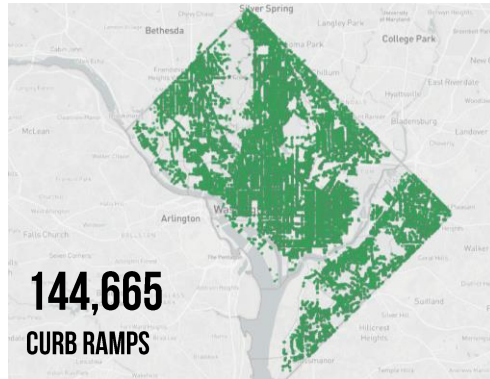
1,075
MILES



255,000+
LABELS

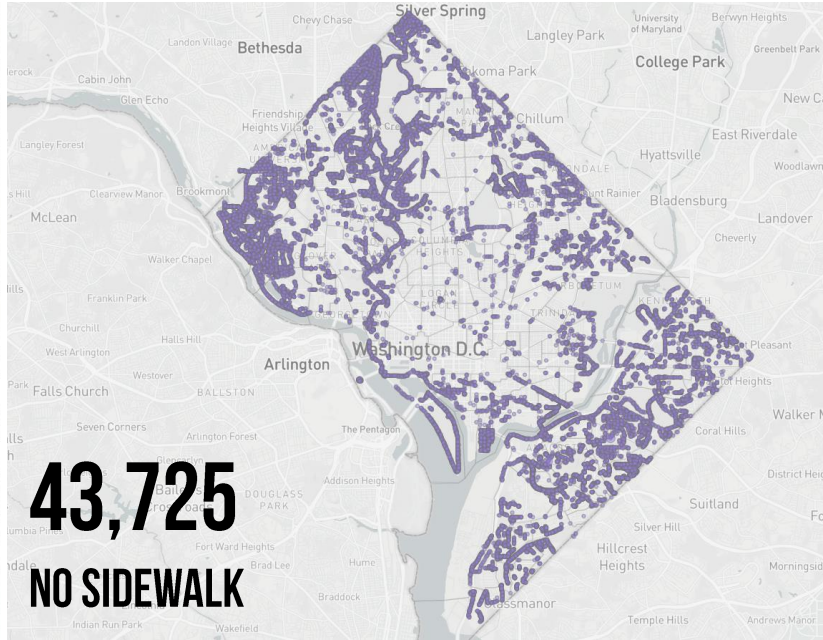
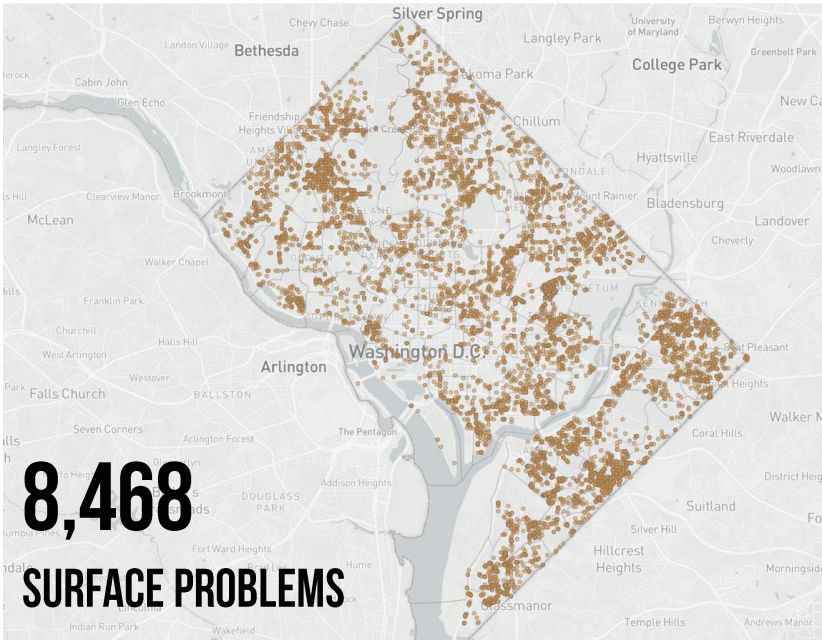
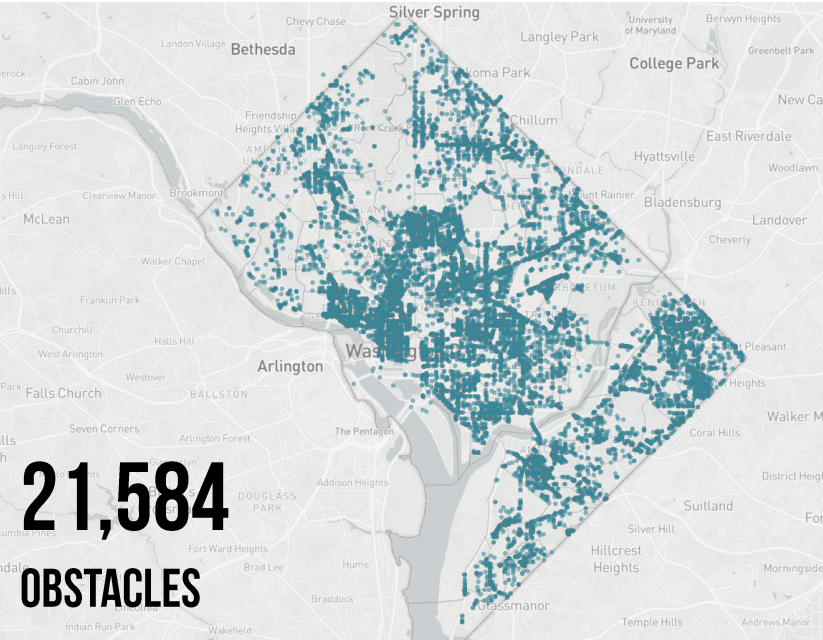
WHERE ARE THE (IN)ACCESSIBLE AREAS OF DC?

What are the correlates to accessibility? Census tract data, real estate pricing, school quality, park density?



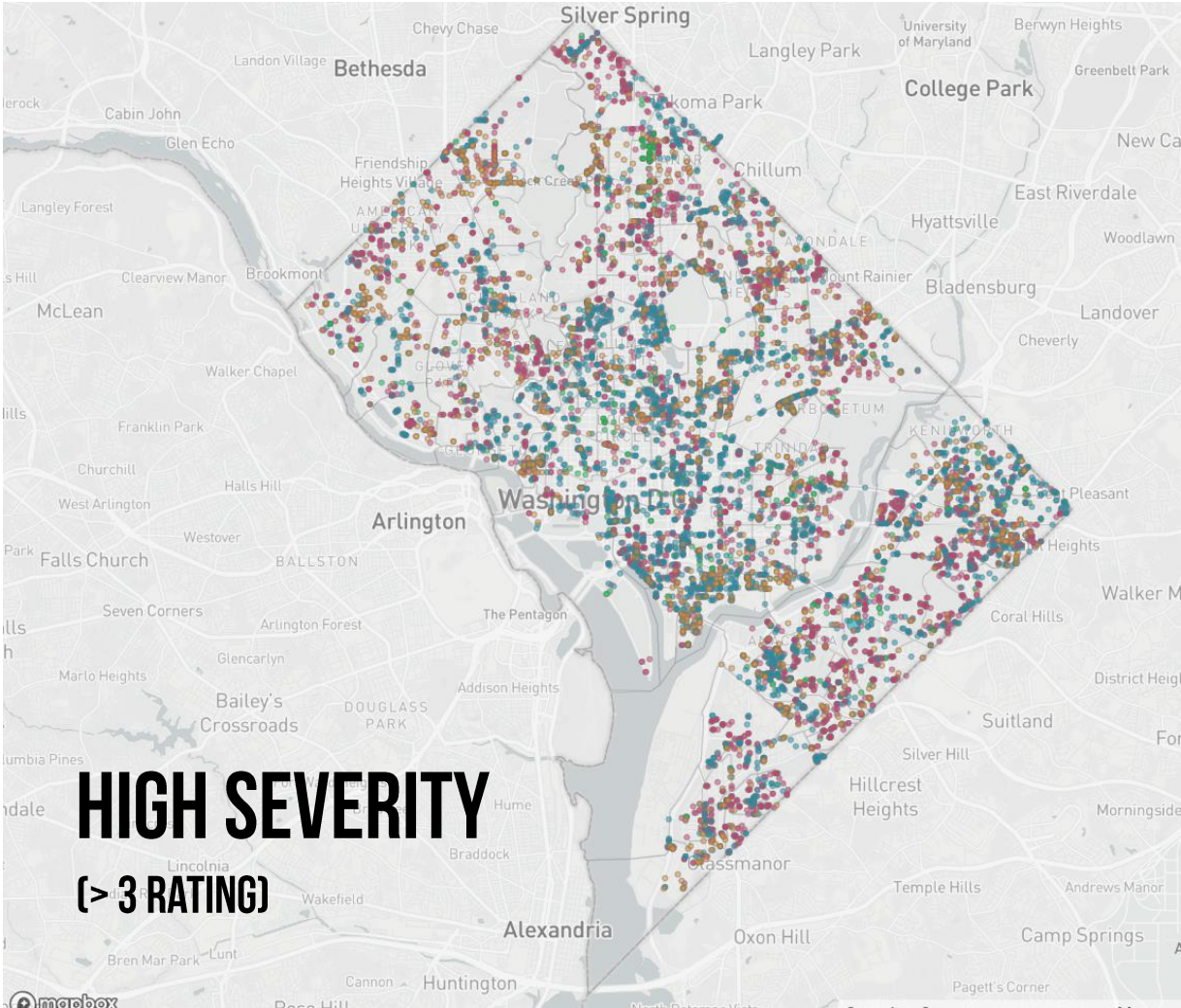
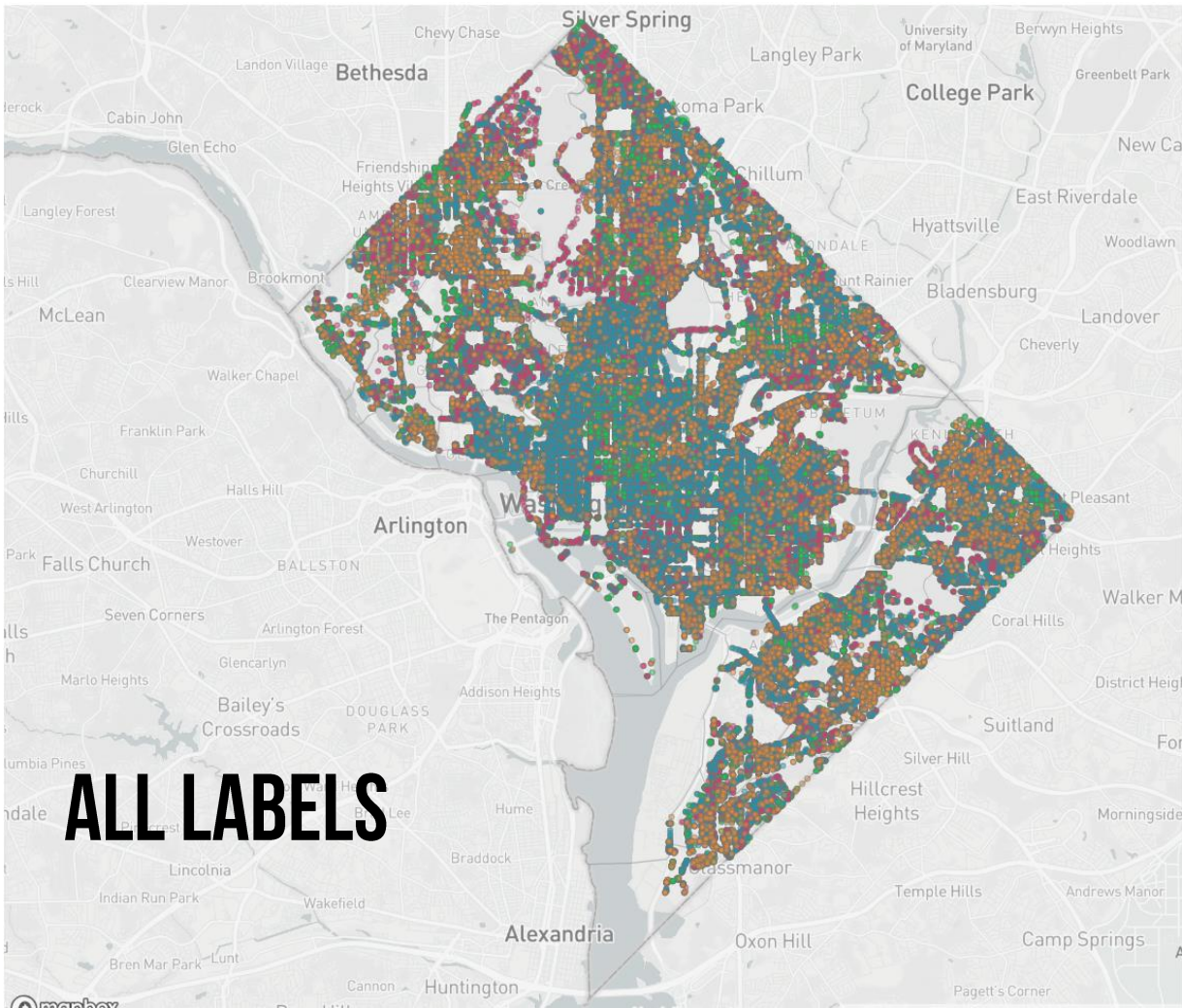
PROJECT SIDEWALK

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

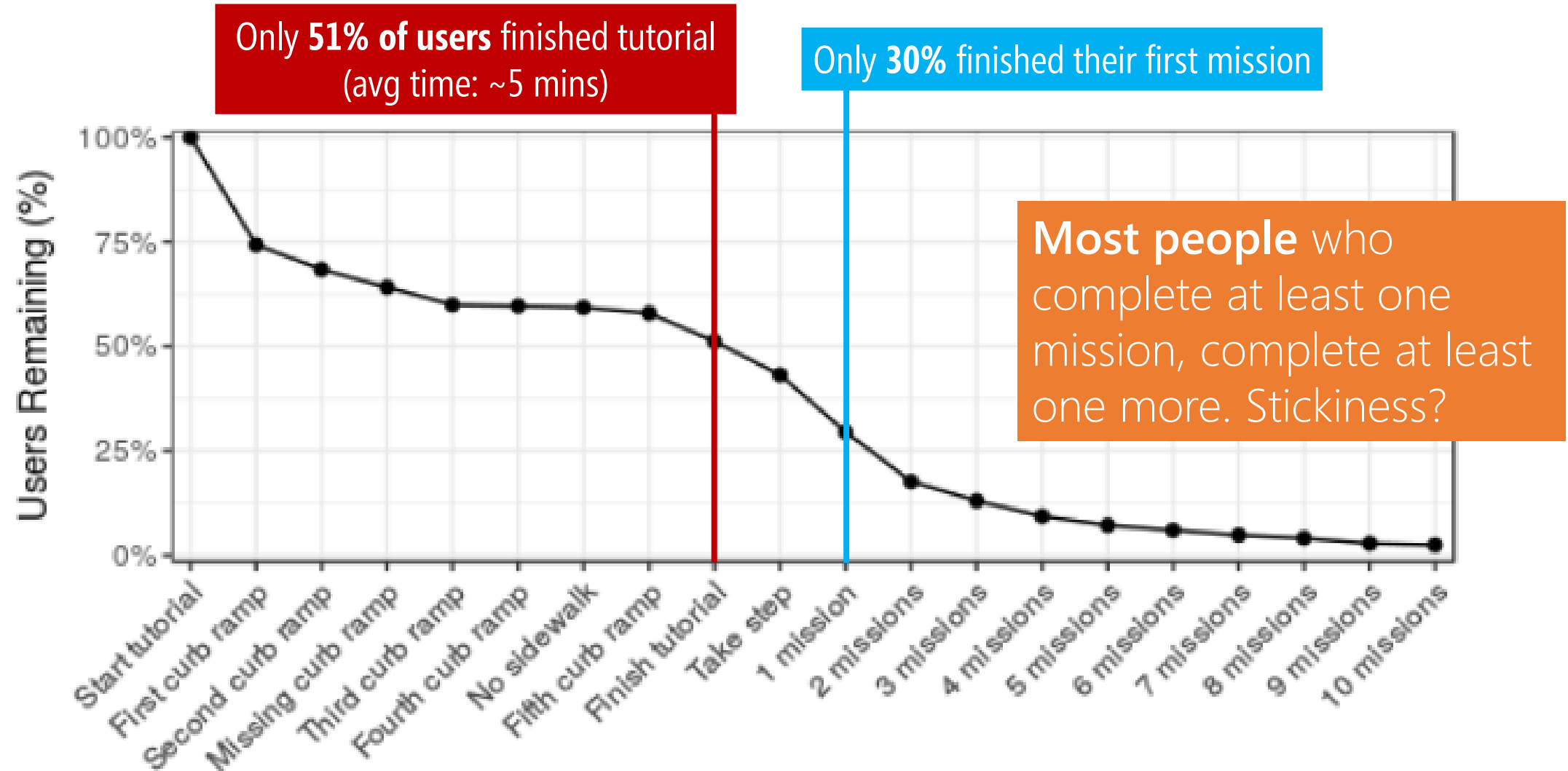


PROJECT SIDEWALK

WHERE ARE THE HIGH SEVERITY ISSUES?



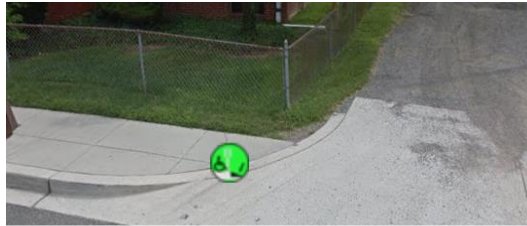
HOW DO WE BETTER ENGAGE & SUSTAIN PARTICIPATION?



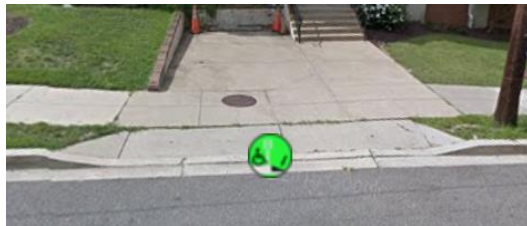
HOW DO WE HELP USERS LABEL MORE ACCURATELY?

Randomly sampled 54 false positives and 54 false negatives for each label type (432 total error samples analyzed). False positives shown below.

Curb Ramps



44.4% driveway transition



22.2% driveways



14.8% random

Missing Curb Ramps



29.6% house-to-curb



25.9% no pedestrian route

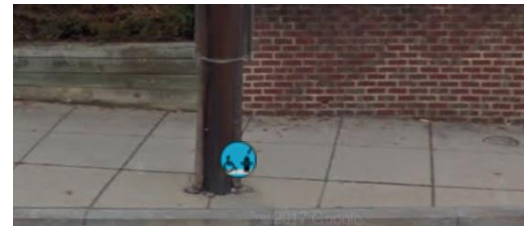


24.1% curb ramp exists

Obstacles



42.6% not on pedestrian route



37.0% space to avoid obstacle



9.3% wrong label type

Surface Problems



46.2% not on pedestrian route



32.7% incorrect label type



11% normal sidewalk tiling

FUTURE WORK

We are actively seeking
collaborators on this work!

Improving data collection methods.

Predicting work quality,
better integration with
computer vision, more
sophisticated feedback and
training

Data/urban science questions.

What factors correlate with
urban accessibility? How can
we create models that allow
us to compare across cities?

New applications of method.

How can we track urban
accessibility changes over
time? Could we create a
reusable GSV-based
platform to support other
studies?

Creating new interactive tools.

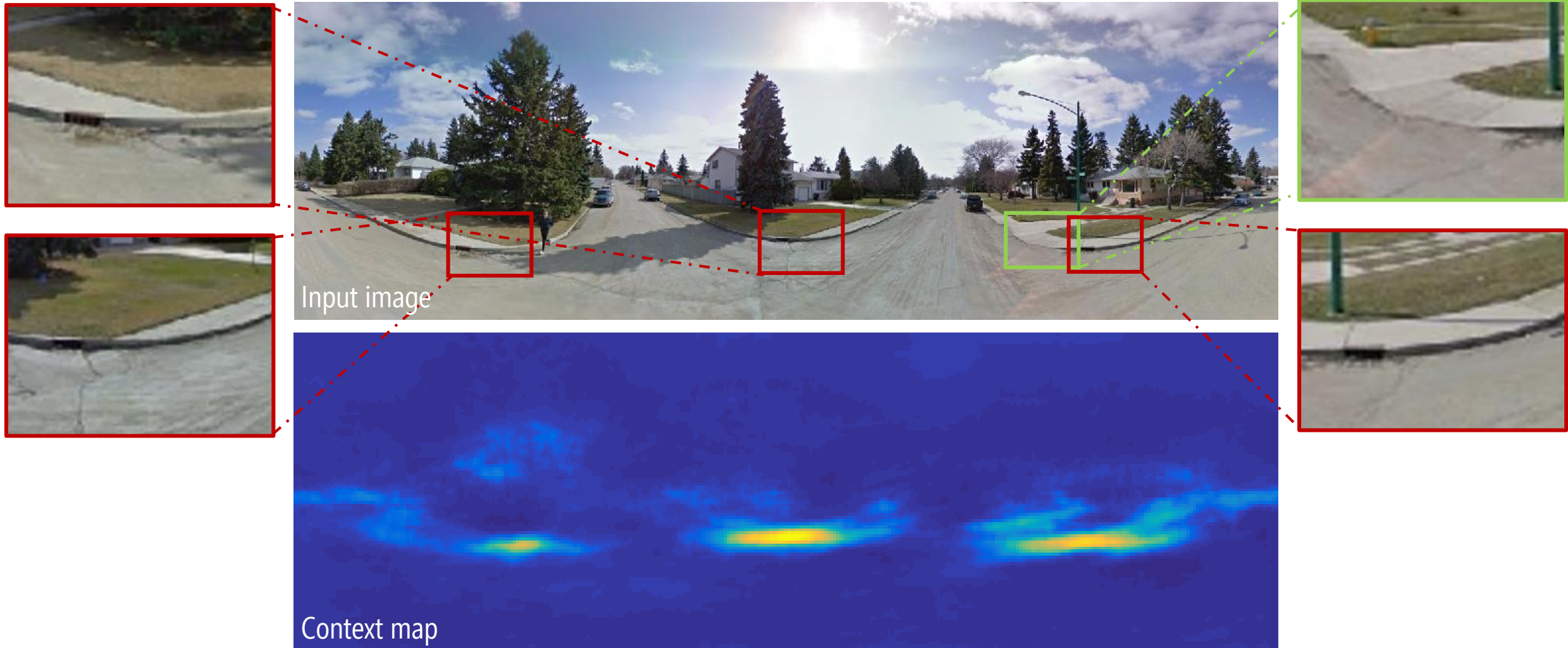
Interactive visualizations of
neighborhood accessibility,
'smart routing' that takes
into account accessibility
obstacles



FUTURE WORK: IMPROVING DATA COLLECTION METHODS

APPLYING DEEP LEARNING METHODS TO AUTOMATIC DETECTION









Follow-up to UIST'14, published at CVPR'17.



NEW HYBRID WORKFLOWS & INTERFACES

Are there curb ramps in these pictures? [Click here for more instruction.](#)









You have verified 0 images. 50 more to go!

 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>	 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>	 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>	 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>
 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>	 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>	 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>	 <div><div>Yes</div><div>No</div><div>Not sure</div></div>

NEW HYBRID WORKFLOWS & INTERFACES

Are there curb ramps in these pictures? [Click here for more instruction.](#)

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FUTURE WORK: NEW APPLICATIONS OF METHOD

TRACKING ACCESSIBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE OVER TIME

A Feasibility Study of Using Google Street View and Computer Vision to Track the Evolution of Urban Accessibility

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Figure 1. In this paper, we examine the feasibility of using Google Street View’s “time machine” feature [4] and basic computer vision algorithms to track changes in urban accessibility over time. For each location, accessibility problems are manually labeled in the most recent Street View image (blue outline) then are automatically back propagated through time (red outlines) to track and discover potential changes. In the example here, an object in the pedestrian path has persisted over time to the most recent data (2014), while a sidewalk surface problem from 2007 was resolved by 2009.

ABSTRACT

Previous work has explored scalable methods to collect data on the accessibility of the built environment by combining manual labeling, computer vision, and online map imagery. In this poster paper, we explore how to extend these methods to track the evolution of urban accessibility over time. Using Google Street View’s “time machine” feature, we introduce a three-stage classification framework: (i) manually labeling accessibility problems in one time period; (ii) classifying the labeled image patch into one of five accessibility categories; (iii) localizing the patch in all previous snapshots. Our preliminary results analyzing 1633 Street View images across 376 locations demonstrate feasibility.

Author Keywords
Urban accessibility; computer vision; Google Street View

ACM Classification Keywords
H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI)

INTRODUCTION

Recent work has explored scalable methods to identify and characterize accessibility features in the built environment using remote crowdsourcing, machine learning, and online map datasets (e.g., *Google Street View* (GSV) [5, 7, 11], satellite photographs [1]). For example, *TakeTime* [7] combines computer vision with web-based crowd work to semi-automatically label curb ramps in GSV. While accurately finding and assessing accessibility features in map imagery is still an active research area, in this poster paper, we begin to explore a related but even more data-intensive process—how to semi-automatically track the evolution of urban accessibility over time using historical map data (Figure 1).

Our work builds on decades of past research in urban studies, geography, and ecology, which analyze temporal changes in

land use from remote sensors. Typically, however, the focus is on macroscopic trends (e.g., urbanization [8, 14, 18], deforestation [13]), which do not require the detailed sensing of small entities that our work requires (e.g., light poles, curb ramps). In addition, rather than rely on satellite images, we use the historical omnidirectional panoramic imagery found in GSV’s “time machine” [4]. With the emergence of large-scale image sets and an interest in vision algorithms to support autonomous vehicles, computer scientists have also begun to develop techniques to detect and model urban change [2, 9, 12]. Our techniques are informed by these approaches but with a distinct focus on tracking accessibility.

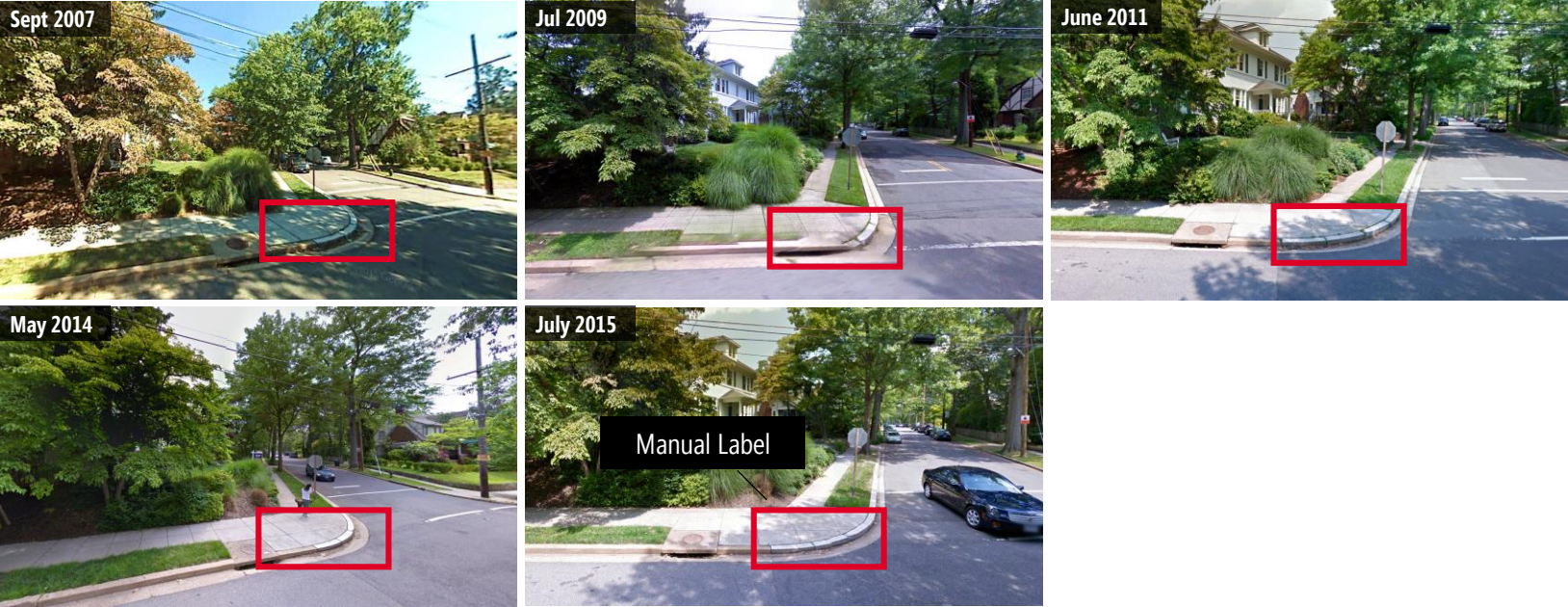
Our contributions include: (i) a preliminary examination of using GSV’s “time machine” as a data source for tracking (in)accessible pedestrian infrastructure over time; (ii) an initial three-stage classification framework for labeling and categorizing accessibility features through time; (iii) a preliminary study validating our approach.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

To examine the feasibility of our approach, we created a test dataset, implemented a classification framework, and performed initial validation. Based on [6, 11], we track five classes of sidewalk features: *accessible sidewalks* (i.e., no problems), *accessible curb ramps*, *missing curb ramps*, *objects in path*, and *surface problems*.

Dataset

We built our dataset by randomly selecting locations in Washington DC and Maryland, examining the GSV imagery to identify accessibility features, and then using “time machine” to capture historical panoramas. As we are primarily interested in how accessibility features change over time, we iteratively diversified the dataset to include locations where features: (i) changed over time; (ii) persisted over time; or (iii) were occluded in at least one time period (e.g., by a passing car), making it difficult to track temporal changes. For each location, we captured a screenshot of all available images across time and recorded GPS coordinates, Street View URL, capture timestamp, and the camera’s yaw, pitch, and field-of-view.



FUTURE WORK: CREATING NEW INTERACTIVE TOOLS

INTERACTIVELY MODELING & VISUALIZING ACCESSIBILITY

Interactively Modeling and Visualizing Neighborhood Accessibility at Scale: An Initial Study of Washington DC

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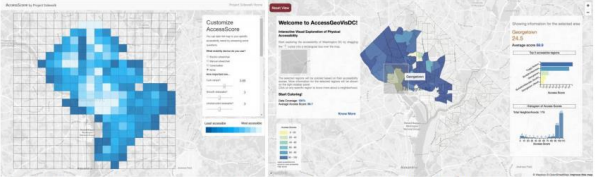


Figure 1. In this poster paper, we explore the initial design and implementation of two interactive geo-visualizations of neighborhood accessibility for people with mobility impairments: (a) *AccessScore* and (b) *AccessVisDC*. Both prototypes model and visualize accessibility using Project Sidewalk’s API [9].

ABSTRACT

Walkability indices such as walkscore.com model the proximity and density of walkable destinations within a neighborhood. While these metrics have gained widespread use (e.g., incorporated into real-estate tools), they do not integrate accessibility-related features such as sidewalk conditions or curb ramps—thereby excluding a significant portion of the population. In this poster paper, we explore the initial design and implementation of neighborhood accessibility models and visualizations for people with mobility impairments. We are able to overcome previous data availability challenges by using the Project Sidewalk API, which provides access to 255,000+ labels about the accessibility and location of DC sidewalks.

Author Keywords

Urban accessibility; geo-visualization; walkability indices

ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI)

INTRODUCTION

Websites such as walkscore.com model and visualize the “walkability” of neighborhoods by measuring the proximity and density of walkable destinations (e.g., grocery stores, parks, and restaurants). While recent work suggests that

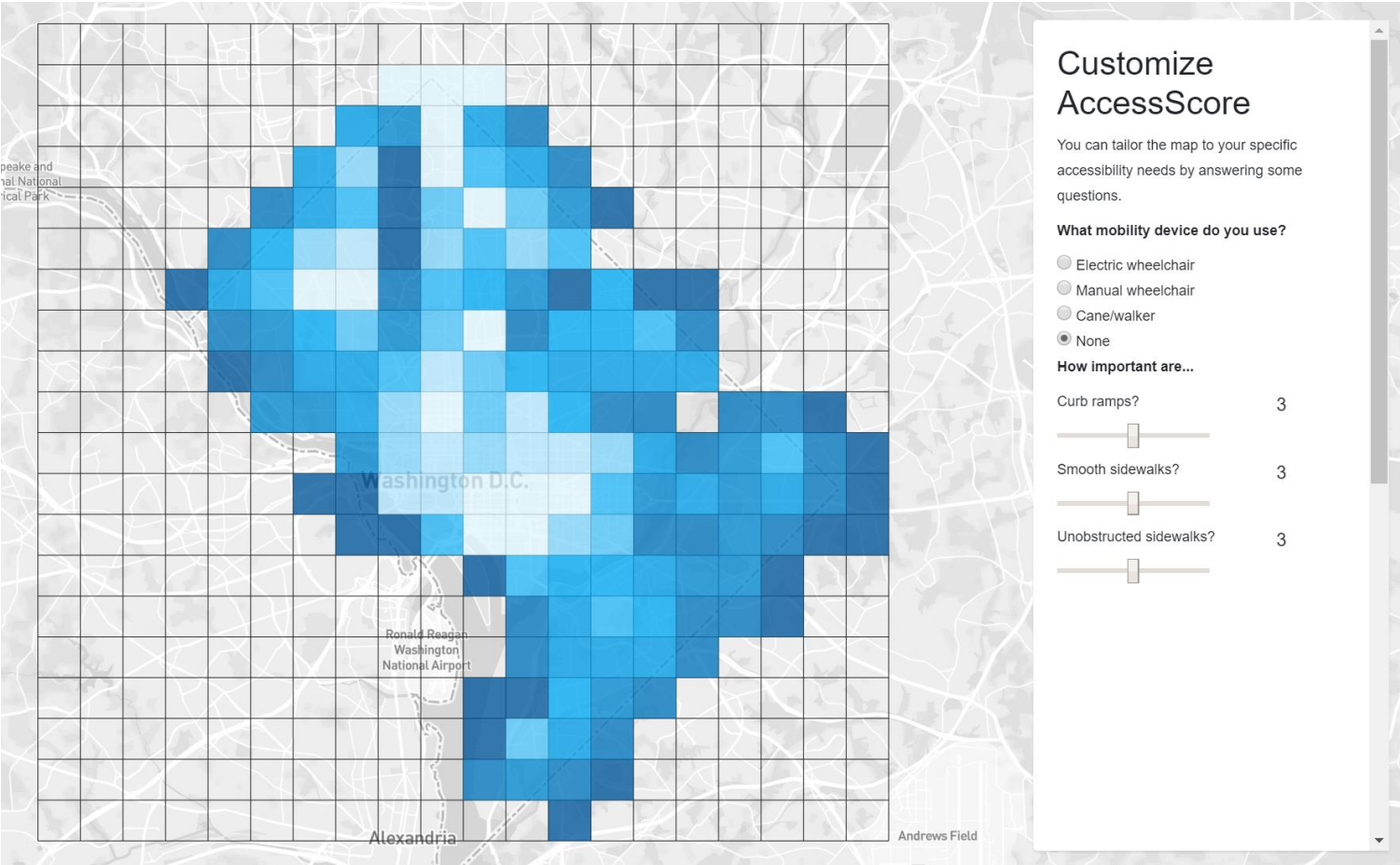
neighborhood walkability correlates with real estate value, lower crime rates, and more walking trips for non-work purposes [3, 7], these metrics do not incorporate accessibility-related features such as sidewalk conditions, the presence of curb ramps, and road grade. One key challenge has been data availability.

Enabled by Project Sidewalk’s API (projectsidewalk.io/api), which provides access to 255,000+ labels describing the accessibility and location of Washington DC sidewalks [9], we designed and implemented two interactive geo-visualizations of neighborhood accessibility for people with mobility impairments (Figure 1). While recent work has explored accessibility-aware pedestrian routing algorithms and tools [1, 11], these systems are focused on wayfinding rather than modeling and visualizing higher-level abstractions of accessibility. Our aim is complementary: to provide personalizable, interactive, and glanceable visualizations of city-wide accessibility.

As early work, our research questions are exploratory: how can we develop algorithmic models that accurately describe the accessibility of streets and sidewalks? How can we make these models and resulting visualizations parameterizable to meet the needs of different users (e.g., manual vs. electric wheelchair users)? How can we make our visualizations responsive and interactive over the web (even with 100,000+ data points)? To begin addressing these questions, we report on the initial development of two open-source prototype visualization tools: *AccessScore* and *AccessVisDC*.

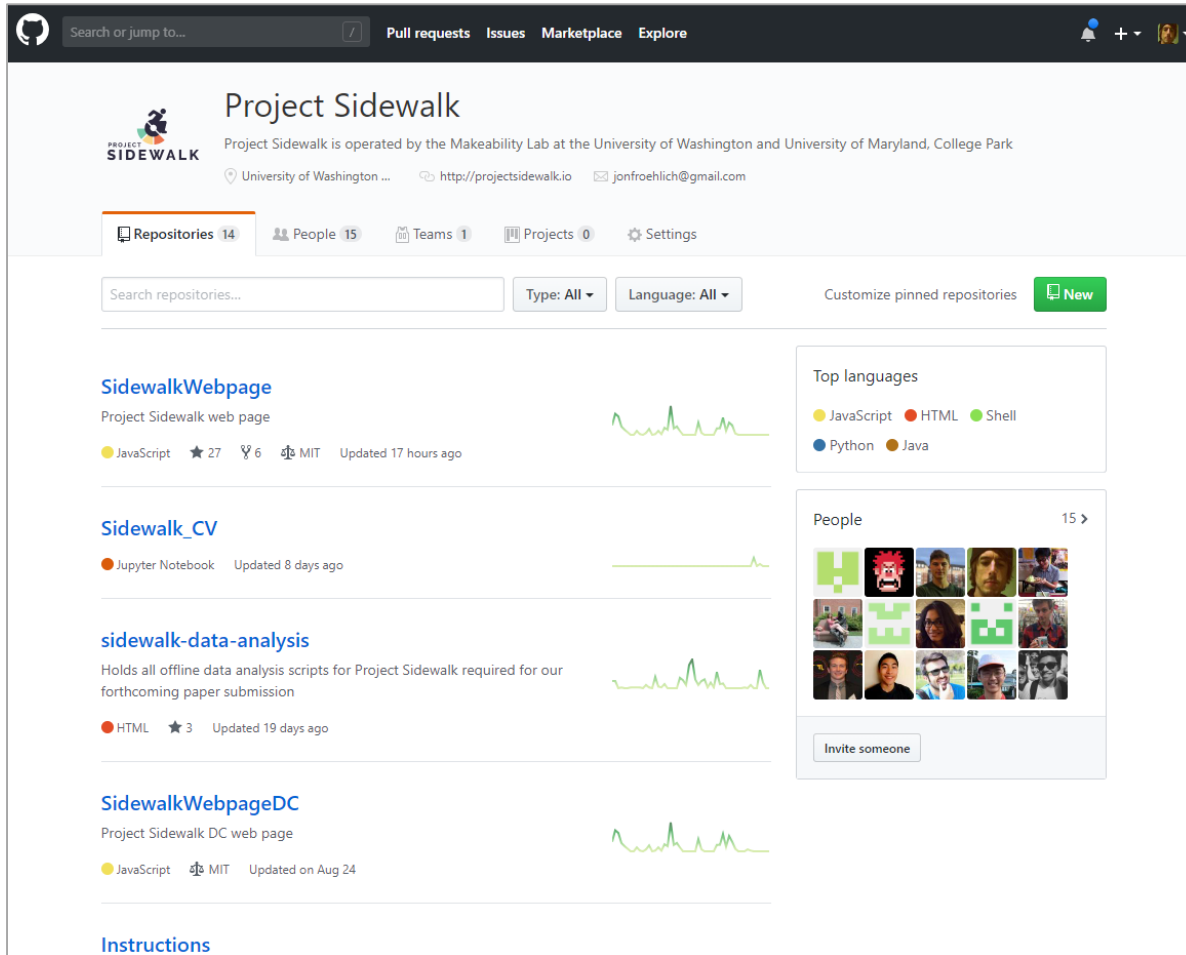
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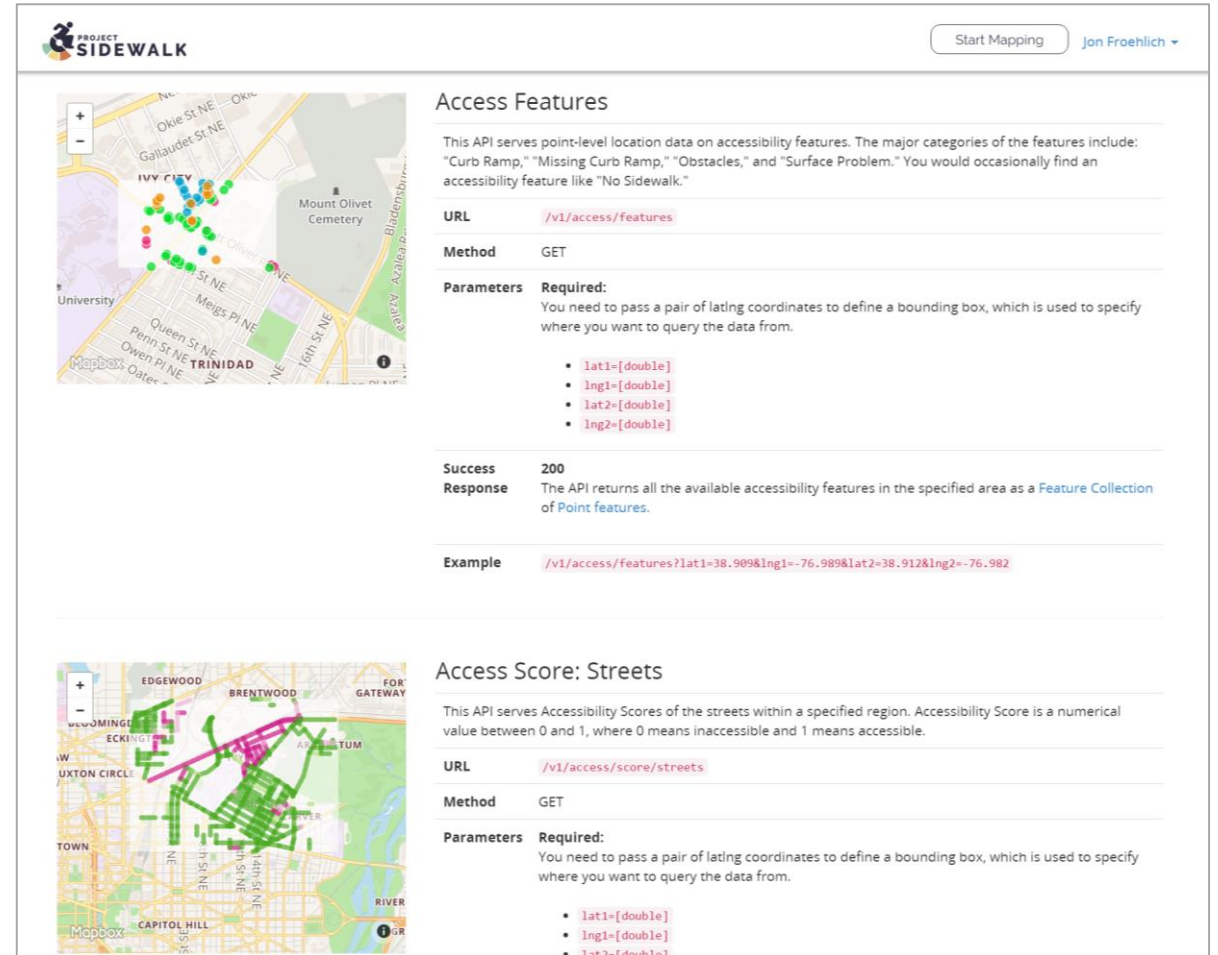
PROJECT SIDEWALK

OPEN SOURCE & OPEN DATA



The screenshot shows the GitHub repository page for Project Sidewalk. The header includes the GitHub logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Pull requests, Issues, Marketplace, and Explore. The repository name "Project Sidewalk" is prominently displayed, along with a description: "Project Sidewalk is operated by the Makeability Lab at the University of Washington and University of Maryland, College Park." Below this, there are links to the University of Washington, the website http://projectsidewalk.io, and the email jonfroehlich@gmail.com. The repository statistics show 14 repositories, 15 people, 1 team, and 0 projects. A search bar for repositories is present, along with filters for Type (All) and Language (All). A "New" button is also visible. The repository list includes "SidewalkWebpage" (JavaScript, 27 stars, 6 forks, MIT license, updated 17 hours ago), "Sidewalk_CV" (Jupyter Notebook, updated 8 days ago), "sidewalk-data-analysis" (HTML, 3 stars, updated 19 days ago), and "SidewalkWebpageDC" (JavaScript, MIT license, updated on Aug 24). A "People" section shows a grid of profile pictures and an "Invite someone" button. A "Top languages" section shows JavaScript, HTML, Shell, Python, and Java.

<https://github.com/ProjectSidewalk>



The screenshot shows the Project Sidewalk API documentation page. The header includes the Project Sidewalk logo, a "Start Mapping" button, and the name Jon Froehlich. The page is divided into two main sections: "Access Features" and "Access Score: Streets".

Access Features

This API serves point-level location data on accessibility features. The major categories of the features include: "Curb Ramp," "Missing Curb Ramp," "Obstacles," and "Surface Problem." You would occasionally find an accessibility feature like "No Sidewalk."

URL `/v1/access/features`

Method GET

Parameters Required: You need to pass a pair of latlng coordinates to define a bounding box, which is used to specify where you want to query the data from.

- `lat1=[double]`
- `lng1=[double]`
- `lat2=[double]`
- `lng2=[double]`

Success Response 200 The API returns all the available accessibility features in the specified area as a [Feature Collection of Point features](#).

Example `/v1/access/features?lat1=38.909&lng1=-76.989&lat2=38.912&lng2=-76.982`

Access Score: Streets

This API serves Accessibility Scores of the streets within a specified region. Accessibility Score is a numerical value between 0 and 1, where 0 means inaccessible and 1 means accessible.

URL `/v1/access/score/streets`

Method GET

Parameters Required: You need to pass a pair of latlng coordinates to define a bounding box, which is used to specify where you want to query the data from.

- `lat1=[double]`
- `lng1=[double]`
- `lat2=[double]`

<http://projectsidewalk.io/api>

Help make the world more accessible for everyone!

Join us. Email: jonf@cs.uw.edu.



**PROJECT
SIDEWALK**

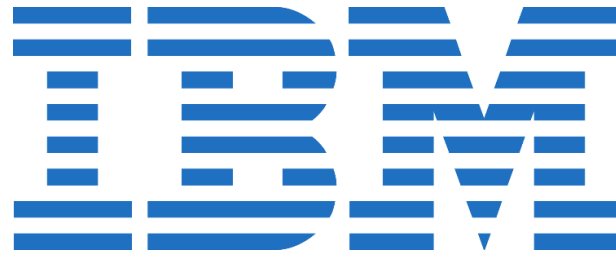
[HTTP://PROJECTSIDEWALK.IO](http://PROJECTSIDEWALK.IO)

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PI Froehlich, Co-PI David Jacobs



PROJECT SIDEWALK: CURRENT TEAM



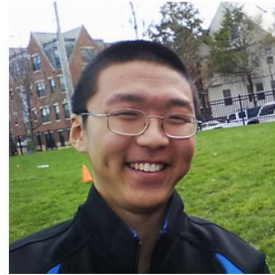
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Mikey Saugstad
May 2017 - Present
Research Scientist



Manaswi Saha
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PhD Student



Anthony Li
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Undergrad

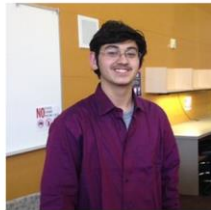


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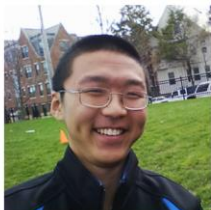
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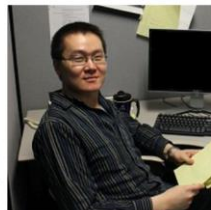
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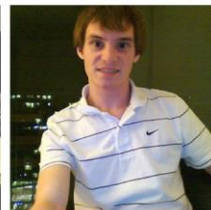
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