

Alignment Issues: Zoning Layer and Parcel Layer

There is a small alignment error between the parcel and the zoning data layers - you need to zoom-in tight to see that some of the polygon boundaries are shifted/offset by perhaps 1 foot. That's the reality of using real-world data – the zoning polygon edges should presumably match the parcel polygon edges perfectly...but they don't.

You can't see that unless you zoom-in tight, but of course the Select by Location tool is 100 percent precise...so if there is even a tiny corner or section of a parcel 'sticking-out' it is not selected.

- Select by Location – *are completely within* to get just those parcels that are correctly-zoned. That misses some parcels due to small alignment issues between the zoning and the parcel data.
- Select by Location – *are within* – and apply a reasonable search distance, for example 1 foot to account for the effect of minor alignment issues.
- Select by Location – *have their centroid in* to get those parcels that are correctly-zoned. This selection looks good visually, but does incorrectly select some parcels that have a small corner or section sticking outside of the commercial or industrial zoning.

The centroid selection seems reasonable here to deal with these alignment issues because a small error on the alignment of the polygon boundaries is not going to affect the location of the polygon centroid too much.

So now you have a choice: an error of omission or an error of addition...

You can either continue with parcels missing or with too many parcels. It is generally easier to manually exclude a few parcels later on than adding some in that you lost earlier – because you don't even know about them. Plus, all we care about is parcels with 10 acres plus, so any small parcel incorrectly selected at this point will be eliminated anyways.

Some of these parcels still have a section sticking-out...now you could assume this is due to mis-alignment of the data and consider your selection done. Or, you manually inspect all final parcels and make a judgment call as to whether to include the parcel or not.

Either way...as long as you document what you do and your decisions everything is conducted properly. Someone might disagree with your decision, but as long as you are open about it...at least you can't be accused of hiding something!

Take-Home Message:

***Know your data! Confirm your selections match your intentions!
Don't assume anything!***