

Mason County Assessor News

Notice of Value

The 2024 Notice of Values (NOV) are scheduled to be mailed on **8/23/2023**. They will be on postcards unless you have multiple parcels. The last day to file an appeal if an owner disagrees with the new value will be **09/25/2023**.

New values are based on sales of similar properties *prior* to January 1, 2023. All sales occurring in 2023 will not be used to set assessed values until next year. Sales and Statistical data are available online at <https://masoncountywa.gov/assessor/sales-data.php>.

The Notice of Value indicates the assessed value of your land and improvements. The assessment of "improvements" to real property includes additions to or enhancements of raw land. Buildings, structures, and attachments to land are considered "improvements" as permanent additions to the real property, which are designed to enhance the overall value of your property. Common examples of "improvements" can include single family residences, mobile homes, paving, wells, water systems, and septic systems.

Washington State Mandate

State law requires assessors to value all taxable property at 100% of its true and fair market value according to the highest and best use of the property. Assessors measure appraisal level by comparing appraised values to sales prices. This relationship is commonly referred to as the "ratio" and is calculated by dividing the appraised value by the sales price. For example, a ratio of 85% would indicate a positive market adjustment to increase the assessed value and a negative market adjustment would be made to decrease assessed values with ratios above 100%.

Revaluation Cycle

To improve uniformity in taxation, Washington state requires a county-wide annual revaluation cycle. Annual review and revaluation provide the means for assessors to adjust values to reflect shifting market conditions, property changes, and recalibrated valuation models. Annual revaluation generally increases consistency of values throughout the county and brings assessed values closer to market value.

Mason County is divided into six geographical areas. Each area contains multiple neighborhoods. On an annual revaluation cycle, one area is physically inspected each year while the other five areas are updated statistically using sales ratio analysis.

Area 6 was the physical inspection area for this cycle, tax year 2024. Area 6 includes Harstine Island, Pickering and Grapeview Loops, Emerald, Spencer and Phillips Lakes, Timberlake's, Agate and Shorecrest, and a portion of Highway 3 to the Deer Creek area. Development costs have increased significantly over the past few years. The Assessor's Office receives updated development costs from Marshall & Swift Cost Handbook by CoreLogic annually. These costs are adjusted to the local market.

Property Tax

Many property owners don't understand that taxes do not generally go up or down at the same rate as the assessed value. It is generally believed that property taxes are like sales taxes and any percentage increase in assessed value creates a like percentage increase in property taxes. A 10% increase in assessed value is not equal to a 10% increase in the next year's taxes. It is important to understand the assessment is a direct result of market transactions that have taken place, and it is

required to be 100% of market value.

Appeal Period

During the 30-day appeal window, it is imperative for property owners who are concerned about their new values to discuss property values with the Assessor's Office. Talking to the property owner helps the Assessor's Office correct any errors and gives the property owner a better understanding of the assessment process. It is beneficial to everyone if we can resolve any issues prior to going through the appeal process. Please don't hesitate to call our office with any questions.

Assessment Standards and Audits

Washington State Department of Revenue (DOR) performs a *Real Property Ratio Study* annually to determine the level of assessment for each county. The 2022 Real Property Ratio was 84.4%. This is due to the continued increasing market. Ratios are considered to be 'conforming' when they are between 90%- 110% per International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) standards. The result in an *increasing market* is a lower overall DOR sales study ratio and indicates that assessed values must be raised to meet IAAO standards. DOR also performs a *Valid Sales Study* report every three years to compare the level of assessment on properties that have not sold to properties that have sold to determine if they are being similarly assessed. That study also includes analysis of how different types of property and different assessment levels relate to each other. The results of the Valid Sales Study reports show Mason County meets or exceeds all IAAO standards.

Reminder

Please remember that you only have until **09/25/2023** to appeal your 2024 value.

Senior Citizen and People with Disabilities Exemption

Washington state offers a property tax exemption if you meet certain criteria based on age or disability, ownership, residency, and income requirements. To qualify, you must be at least 61, *or* retired from regular employment due to a disability, *or* a veteran of the armed forces with a disability rating of 80% or higher *and* own/occupy the residence with a combined disposable income of \$55,000 or less (effective 2024 tax year - SHB 1355). Applications are available at our office, on our website, or may be mailed upon request.

It is the intent of the Assessor's Office to have accurate information on record for each property and to generate fair and equitable values. If you have any questions about your NOV, exemption eligibility, or any other property tax concern, please contact the Assessor's Office at (360) 427-9670 ext. 491.

Thank you,

Patti McLean, Mason County Assessor

