

2023 Town of Fremont Reassessment Project

Information for Property Owners

March 1, 2023

Fair Assessments??

How are assessments handled in NY State

- **The “NYS Assessment Standard”
(Real Property Tax Law 305):**

“all real property in each assessing unit shall be assessed at a uniform percentage of value.”

- **"value" is defined as "market value" - the most probable sale price, in a competitive and open market, between a willing and knowledgeable buyer and seller, made without duress to either party**
- **tax bills must display the municipality's uniform percentage or Equalization Rate and the parcel's market value.**

EQUITY is the GOAL

New York State law requires that every property within a municipality be assessed at the same uniform percentage of value.

When assessment equity exists, it ensures the tax burden is distributed equally and fairly among ALL Taxpayers

The Job of the Assessor

- **Provide fair assessments by determining the market value of each property.**
- **Keep inventory on all properties accurate and current.**
- **Help taxpayers understand assessments.**
- **Process exemptions, such as STAR, Senior Citizens, and Veterans.**
- **Maintain all changes related to the assessment roll using computerized software.**

Assessor's Job – Fair Assessments

- **Assessors have no interest to overvalue or undervalue any real property. The objective is to produce an equitable assessment roll for the fair distribution of the real property tax burden.**

Assessment Equity

- **Equity with respect to assessments and real property taxes means:**
 - **Properties are assessed at a uniform percentage of value-100%**
 - **Properties with similar values have similar assessments**
 - **Taxpayers pay only their **FAIR** share**

Equity versus Inequity

- **If one property or neighborhood is significantly under-assessed, not only are they paying too little in taxes, but other property owners are subsidizing that taxpayer's or neighborhood's share of the tax levy.**

Effect of Inequitable Assessments

2018



Mrs. Smith

**Full Market Value =
\$100,000**

Assessed Value = \$100,000

2018



Mrs. Jones

**Full Market Value =
\$100,000**

**Assessed Value =
\$100,000**

Effect of Inequitable Assessments

2022



Mrs. Smith

**Full Market Value =
\$300,000**

Assessed Value = \$100,000

2022



Mrs. Jones

**Full Market Value =
\$150,000**

**Assessed Value =
\$100,000**

Mrs. Jones is subsidizing Mrs. Smith's taxes!

Remember!!

- **Property Taxes** – based on value
- **Value** is defined as market value – what a willing buyer will pay a willing seller in a fair and open real estate market.
- You want to pay **only** your fair share of the tax levy

How Is Market Value Determined?

- **The Assessor does NOT create market value**
- **Market value is determined by the interaction of buyers and sellers.**
- **The Assessor monitors and analyzes real estate transactions to establish market value estimates for real property within the town.**
- **The Assessor uses several comparable sales that match your property**

What Drives Market Value?

- ***Location, Location, Location***
- **Some locations are more desirable than others.**
 - **Some people may desire lakefront or lake-view property.**
 - **Some people may prefer to be near a city**
 - **Others may want to get back to nature**

What Else Drives Market Value?

- **Economic influences**
- **House Style (Ranch vs. 2 Story) and Size-Number of Bedrooms/Bathrooms**
- **Type and size of Land**
- **Interest rates**
- **Availability of amenities and jobs**
- **Commuting distance to industry**
- **Consumer needs and the condition and amenities of a property-Construction Grade and Condition**

Changes in Property Values

- **One thing is a given: Different types of properties, in different locations, change in value at a different pace.**
- **After a period of time without a reassessment / systematic analysis of all property values, the equity is likely to erode.**
- **Loss of assessment equity will result in some people paying more than their fair share in taxes and some people paying less!**

2023 Reassessment Schedule

- Disclosure Notices with **PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT**
Mailed to taxpayer – 3/1/23
- Informal Reviews– Mid March/Beginning April
- Notification of Review Results – 10 Days prior to
Grievance Day
- Tentative Assessment Roll – May 1, 2023
- Grievance Day – Fourth Tuesday in May thru Second
Tuesday in June (check with your Town for exact date).
- Final Assessment Roll – July 1, 2023

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What can taxpayers do when they have questions or concerns regarding their assessed value?

- **Most information at the Assessor's office is open to the public.**
- **Check the County office of Real Property Tax Services, town and village halls for information regarding assessments and sales.**
- **Make an appointment with the assessor for Informal Review.**

What do you need when challenging your value

- **You want to use Comparable sales of homes-similar style, size, age, neighborhood.**
- **Make sure your property inventory matches what the Assessor has-Square Footage, Bedrooms, Bathroom etc.**
- **If information about your property is incorrect, or you feel you have condition issues that affect value, allow an inspection by the Assessor.**
- **If your home has had an Arms Length sale in the last ± 4 years, that will influence value.**

What is an Arms Length Transaction?

- an agreement made by two parties *freely* and *independently* of each other, and *without some special relationship, such as being a relative, having another deal on the side or one party having complete control of the other.*

The question to ask yourself . . .

- **Is the market value estimate the assessor has derived for your property a reasonable representation of what you would expect to receive for your property if it was offered for sale on the open market?**

Presumption of Law:
The Burden of Proof is on YOU!

- **Your assessment is assumed to be correct.**
- **Taxpayer MUST present convincing evidence that the assessor's judgment was incorrect – present Condition issues-internal or external, appraisal reports, review of comparable sales**

Next Steps After Informal Review

- **Assessor** “sits” with Roll in May (TBD date)
- **Board of Assessment Review (BAR)**-If you are still not satisfied, you can submit a completed grievance form at the Assessor’s office prior to Grievance Day. Grievance Day is typically the fourth Tuesday in May.
- **SCAR** – Small Claims Assessment Review – for one, two or three-family, owner-occupied residential properties who have already gone before the Board of Assessment Review.
- **Court challenge** – must have an attorney.

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

- Notwithstanding its shortcomings and its unpopularity, it seems likely that the property tax, for lack of anything more palatable, will be with us for a long time to come.
- We must make the best of it and try to ensure that it is administered equitably for the benefit of all of our citizens.
- Do not be fearful of the Reassessment Project-the goal is only to ensure a fair and equitable value on your property, so you pay your **FAIR SHARE** of the tax levy
- The question you want to ask yourself when you get your new assessment is this what my property would sell for. If you feel it is too high, take one of the steps to challenge it
- Remember , change in Assessments do not necessarily cause an increase , decrease or no change in your total taxes-Assessors do not control spending.
- The goal in the Assessors office is to treat everyone in a fair manner

Assessor's Calendar



Valuation Date	July 1st, preceding year
Taxable Status Date	March 1st
Exemption Filing Deadline	March 1st
Tentative Roll Filed	May 1st
Grievance Day	Fourth Tuesday in May thru second Tuesday in June (check with your Town for exact date).
Final Roll Filed	July 1st

What does “Taxable Status Date” mean to you?

- Real property is assessed with respect to its ownership and condition on that date. If you build a deck the day AFTER the taxable status date, its contribution to market value will not be reflected on the assessment roll (and your tax bill) until the following year.
- But if it is in place on taxable status date it will be valued for the current year. If your house is under construction on taxable status date, its estimated percentage of completion on that date will be the basis for the assessment.
- If the assessment roll and taxable values were constantly changing it would never be possible to set a tax rate.

The Property Tax

- **Administered locally**
- **All revenues go to support local services; none to the state or federal governments**
- **Based on the value of real property**
- **It is an Ad Valorem (At Value) Tax**
- **The only form of taxation that provides the taxpayer the opportunity to dispute the base assessments.**
- **It's a broad tax – all property owners pay.**

- **Nothing your assessor can do will change the total dollar figure to be raised by taxes. He or she only determines the proportionate amount you pay.**



Budget vs. Levy

- **The taxing jurisdiction – school, town, county, etc. are responsible for developing and adopting a budget.**
- **Revenue from all sources other than the property tax is determined.**
- **These revenues are subtracted from the budget to arrive at the tax levy.**
- **Total Cost – Other Sources of Aid = TAX LEVY-THE AMOUNT TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION**

More on Budgets and Taxes

- There are two additional factors besides the **levy** that determine your property taxes:

- The **tax rate** is determined by dividing the tax levy by the total taxable assessed value of all taxable real property in your community.

- **Assessments** – determined by the assessor.
How the total tax is shared

Tax Rate = Levy ÷ Taxable Assessed Value

\$10,000,000 ÷ \$500,000,000 = \$20.00 per thou.

Tax Rate x Your Taxable Assessed Value ÷ 1000 = Your Share of Levy

Assessments and Taxes

- **Remember**; Although assessments play an integral part of the tax calculation, **the tax levy** is the **controlling factor** in the amount of your tax bill.
- **If your Assessed Value has not changed since the last year but Your Tax bill has increased it is because the LEVY has increased**

Assessments Vs. Taxes

What's the difference

Your assessment could increase,
and your tax bill could decrease

Last Year		→	This Year	
Your Assessment	\$100,000		Your Assessment: (5% increase)	\$105,000
Total Value of the Town:	\$50,000,000		Total Value of the Town: (8% avg. increase)	\$54,000,000
Tax Levy:	\$1,500,000		Tax Levy:	\$1,500,000
Tax Rate:	\$30 per \$1000		Tax Rate:	\$27.78 per \$1,000
Your Property Tax Bill:	\$3,000		Your Property Tax Bill: <u>(decrease \$83)</u>	\$2,917

Taxable Assessed Value increases while Tax Levy remains the same

Assessments Vs. Taxes

What's the difference

Your assessment could increase,
and your tax bill could stay the same

	Last Year	→	This Year	
Your Assessment	\$100,000		Your Assessment: (5% increase)	\$105,000
Total Value of the Town:	\$50,000,000		Total Value of the Town: (8% avg. increase)	\$54,000,000
Tax Levy:	\$1,500,000		Tax Levy: (2.86% increase)	\$1,542,855
Tax Rate:	\$30 per \$1000		Tax Rate:	\$28.57 per \$1,000
Your Property Tax Bill:	\$3,000		Your Property Tax Bill: <u>(no change)</u>	\$3,000

Taxable Assessed Value increases at a greater proportion than Tax Levy increases

Assessments Vs. Taxes

What's the difference

Your assessment could decrease,
and your tax bill could increase



Last Year		This Year	
Your Assessment	\$100,000	Your Assessment: (5% decrease)	\$95,000
Total Value of the Town:	\$50,000,000	Total Value of the Town: (5% avg. decrease)	\$47,500,000
Tax Levy:	\$1,500,000	Tax Levy: (2.86% increase)	\$1,542,855
Tax Rate:	\$30 per \$1000	Tax Rate:	\$32.48 per \$1,000
Your Property Tax Bill:	\$3,000	Your Property Tax Bill: <u>(increase \$85.60)</u>	\$3,085.60

Taxable Assessed Value decreases while Tax Levy increases

Equalization Rates

- When a Municipality is not at 100%, it is the percentage of value you are assessed at-Very Confusing
- For example, in a town with a 90% equalization rate a home assessed at \$90,000 has a Full Market Value of \$100,000
- Towns will be at 100% after the 2022 program
- It is easier to understand Your Assessed Value when it equals your Market Value.

Equalization Rates

Other Benefits:

- When you are at 100%, you get the Full value of Exemptions, not a percentage based on your Equalization Rate
- For example, Veterans get the Full Exemption, not a percentage based on your Equalization Rate
- Most Importantly..

Your Assessed Value is your Market Value

How Can we Keep Assessments Fair and Equitable?

- **The way to keep assessments fair for all taxpayers is through frequent reassessments.**
- **What is a reassessment?**
 - **A systematic review of all locally assessed parcels to assure that all assessments are at a stated uniform percentage of value as of the valuation date of the assessment roll upon which the assessments appear. (Section 102, Real Property Tax Law.)**
 - **Why do we need to reassess?**

Why are Frequent Reassessments Necessary?

- 1. The real estate market is constantly changing**
- 2. Not all properties will change in value at the same rate.**

As Values change, so does your share of the Tax Levy-You only want to pay your fair share

Advantages of a Stable Property Tax Base through Reassessment

- **Equity - Property owners receive fair and equal treatment when all properties are assessed at a uniform level. Up-to-date assessments eliminate the “sticker shock” that taxpayers experience when assessments are adjusted after years of neglect. Taxes do not go up as a result of reassessment itself, those who were unfairly paying too much will pay less, and those who are unfairly paying too little will pay more. Reassessment merely corrects the inequities, with no tax increase reassessment is a zero-sum game.**
- **Fewer Court Challenges – By keeping assessments up-to-date, municipalities are likely to have fewer tax certiorari cases.**
- **Improved Bond Rating - Bonding companies such as Moody’s and Standard & Poor recognize the fiscal advantages of a stable property tax base in rate policy.**
- **Increase State Land Assessments – Because Taxable State owned land assessments are frozen based on the last municipal reassessment, the reassessment allows for taxable value increases that would otherwise not be allowed.**

Myths and Facts

- **Myth**: Tax levies grow at a faster rate in municipalities that conduct reassessments.
- **Fact**: “Budget” or dollar driven systems force the tax rate to float and require the budget to be set without regard to the underlying taxable value.
- The Levy is the key to your tax rate, has it increased, decreased or stayed the same. This will determine your taxes paid.

FACT:
In the Year of a Reval...

- **The tax rate usually decreases creating the illusion that the town has reduced taxes.**
- **This creates a misconception that the increased assessments are causing the increase in tax bills.**

FACT:
In a Non-Reval Year....

- If the municipality needs **MORE** money, they will raise the **LEVY** causing a **HIGHER** tax rate.
- Your assessment did not raise your taxes

Example:

- 2020 tax rate \$10.00 per thousand/AV
\$100,000. Total Taxes = \$1,000
- 2021 tax rate is \$11.00 per thousand/AV
\$100,000. Total Taxes \$1,100

Myths and Facts

- **Myth**: Assessors raise values in response to taxing district pressure for revenue (the town needs more money).
- **Fact**: Values change in response to economic changes measurable in the market place.
- **Fact** : Tax rates should drop proportionately to assessment increases- otherwise, additional taxes are being collected.

Myths and Facts

- **Myth:** The assessor sets the property taxes
- **Fact:** Property tax levies and rates are set by school boards, town council, town boards, village boards, and county legislatures, not by assessors.
- **Fact:** The assessor is only responsible for placing a fair market value on each property.

QUESTIONS