

To: Property Owners in the City of Franklin

Re: City-wide Revaluation

The city is working to complete a city-wide revaluation for the 2024 assessment year. This process will affect all properties in the city. Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions that should help answer many of your questions.

Our goal is to conduct an accurate and transparent revaluation. We greatly appreciate your cooperation in the revaluation process and ask that you please direct any additional questions to the Assessor's Office at assessor@franklinwi.gov or (414) 425-1416.

Revaluation FAQs

1. What is a revaluation?

A revaluation is a process by which the assessors go through each property record in the city and give it a new value (they "revalue" each property). There are different types of revaluations, but the goal of all revaluations is the same: produce a more accurate and equitable value than was in place previously on a given property and City-wide. This means that assessments should reflect market sale prices, and properties with comparable amenities should be assessed similarly.

For example, if a property's assessed value is \$400,000, we would expect the property to sell for about \$400,000. In other words, the assessed value is supposed to be 100% of the market value. Foreclosure sales, sales between related parties, and any other sale concluded under duress do not reflect market value.

Being 100% for every property annually is an ideal and unrealistic situation. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) recognizes that and allows a cushion of +/- 10% (i.e., between 90% - 110% of estimated market value) to comply with the law. This allows for both market fluctuations and the human element of a sale.

From our previous example, if a home sells for \$400,000, the assessed value should be between \$360,000-\$440,000.

2. Why is the city undergoing this revaluation process?

Upon inspection of property records for the City of Franklin, a high level of inconsistency was found between assessments. We are undergoing a revaluation to ensure records are accurate and up to date and to ensure fairness and equitability between assessments.

3. Who is performing the revaluation?

The Assessor's Office contracted through Forward Appraisal LLC, a professionally licensed appraisal company, will perform the revaluation.

4. How does the revaluation work?

Different revaluations can be undertaken: market update, drive-by revaluation, exterior revaluation, and full revaluation. In this case, the city will be undergoing a combination of a market update and drive-by revaluation.

Appraisers will review each property’s record card to confirm that our information on file is accurate via electronic and remote means (e.g., satellite/GIS imagery, Google Maps, etc.). Then, we will perform sales studies, neighborhood studies, income/expense studies (for income-producing properties), and other necessary studies to assist in creating new models. Using these models, we will adjust valuation models as required to reflect market conditions better. We will then field verify a percentage of the values before sending out the final assessment notices.

5. How are City taxes calculated?

Tax rates are built using total City valuation and total City budget. The tax rate then gets applied to each property’s valuation to determine the taxes each property is responsible for. Given that the budget is put in place after the values are set, there is no way to determine exact tax rates or amounts during the revaluation.

6. How is this going to change my property’s taxes?

Some property owners may see a decrease in value and taxes owed, some may notice an increase in both value and taxes owed, and some may see an increase or decrease in value and the opposite in taxes owed. A tax increase is not solely based on a property’s value increase.

We can use sample numbers to illustrate this concept.

Total Budget = \$20,000,000
City Valuation Total = \$1,000,000,000

Tax Rate (Mill Rate): $\$20,000,000 \div \$1,000,000,000 = \$0.0200$ (or \$20.00 per thousand)

For a home valued at \$400,000, the taxes owed would be \$8,000.

Now, let us suppose the sample underwent a revaluation.

Total Budget* = \$20,000,000 **Not affected by revaluation*
City Valuation Total = \$1,100,000,000

Tax Rate (Mill Rate): $\$20,000,000 \div \$1,100,000,000 = \$0.0182$ (or \$18.20 per thousand)

For a home valued at \$400,000, the taxes owed would be \$7,280.

It is important to remember that all property values are adjusted closer to market value during a revaluation. If the sample home were reassessed from \$400,000 to \$440,000, the taxes would be \$8,008 (similar to those owed before the revaluation).

Please note that the Assessor's Office is strictly tasked with attaining accuracy in valuation. This is true of revaluation and non-revaluation ("maintenance") years. Technically, taxes and budgets are outside the scope of the Assessor's Office. Please also understand that the total tax rate includes other taxing entities such as the Franklin Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College, and Milwaukee County.

7. Do I personally need to do anything for my property to get revalued? (OR) Does this mean somebody needs to go through my house?

Most work will be done in the office and through select field reviews. Some reasons we might attempt a field review would be inspections for new permits, sales, and rechecks for work from prior years. Remember, the goal of any review is to achieve the most accurate and updated data possible.

If you want someone to go through your home, for whatever reason, the Assessor's office will accommodate your wishes. Mayor John R. Nelson has volunteered for his home to be the first in Franklin to be reviewed.

8. I just installed a new garage (or updated my kitchen, tore down a shed, etc.). Does the assessor know that?

It never hurts to bring any changes to the attention of the Assessor's Office. If the changes were done without permits, then that's information that the Assessor's Office might not have. Any changes that would have been completed with a permit will be inspected independently of the revaluation process.

9. When will notices of new assessments be mailed?

Notices of changed assessments will be mailed to property owners after values are reviewed in late summer or early fall.

10. Where can I see my property information?

All property data will be available in an online portal on the City's website beginning at Open Book. We encourage property owners to look at and verify their property information and bring any discrepancies they find to our attention.

11. What is an "Open book"

Open book is a set period for property owners to contact our office with questions regarding their new values. After notices are mailed, property owners with questions are encouraged to contact our office via phone or email. If a property owner wishes to meet with an appraiser in person, an appointment will be set to discuss their property.

12. What if I disagree with my value after my Open Book appointment?

A property owner who still disagrees with the assessed value has the right to appear before the Board of Review. This board acts like a court by taking oral testimony from the property owner and the Assessor's office. The board then makes decisions based on the evidence presented. The Assessor's value is presumed correct unless compelling contrary evidence is presented. Information on the board of review and how to object to your valuation will be referenced on each assessment notice and available on the Department of Revenue's website.

13. What information can I use to contest my value if I disagree with it?

The best indicator of market value is a recent sale of the subject property. This would be a sale on the open market between a willing buyer and seller under no duress to sell or any compulsion to buy. Additional relevant information can include similar homes nearby with lower assessments or sale prices, a recent market value appraisal, and construction costs if recently built.

14. What information cannot be used to contest my value if I disagree with it?

Concerns specific to the taxes, rather than the assessed value, will not be reviewed. Our job is to determine an assessed value that closely represents market value. We do not determine, set, or collect taxes. Assessed values in other communities will not be considered as they do not represent the market value within our City.

15. Who can I contact with further questions?

You can call, email, or mail the Assessor's Office. The Assessor's Office is open by appointment only. We prefer to meet at a property for inspection. We typically try to respond to all inquiries within 48 hours.

Questions specific to the revaluation can be directed to assessor@franklinwi.gov.

Thank you,

City of Franklin
Assessor's Office