

How the Assessor Estimates Your Market Value

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Property Tax Fact Sheet 2

Fact Sheet

Estimated market value is one of the factors used to determine your property taxes. This fact sheet explains how that value is calculated and used.

How does the assessor estimate the market value of my property?

Assessors value properties using a mass appraisal process to review sales of similar properties in the area over a set time period.

This “estimated market value” represents what your property would sell for in an “arms-length” sale on the open market (where buyer and seller are not related and both are educated about the property).

Assessors review sales from October 1 to September 30. They adjust the prices for market trends to estimate the market value of your property on the next assessment date (January 2).

An example of this timeline is:

- To estimate a property’s 2016 market value, the assessor reviews property sales from October 1, 2014, to September 30, 2015.
- Property owners may appeal their market value and classification. This process occurs from April 1, 2016, to June 30, 2016.
- Property values and classifications become final on July 1, 2016. These values are used to determine taxes for 2017.

Assessors also review other data such as supply and demand, marketing times, and vacancy rates. This helps them determine if the real estate market in your area is increasing, stable, or decreasing.

What is the difference between ‘Estimated Market Value’ and ‘Taxable Market Value’?

While estimated market value (EMV) shows what your property would likely sell for on the open market, “taxable market value” (TMV) is used to determine your taxes.

A property’s TMV is its estimated market value minus any tax exemptions, deferrals, and value exclusions that apply. For example, many homeowners have a Homestead Market Value Exclusion, which reduces the amount of home value that is subject to tax.

How does my property value affect my property taxes?

Property value does not directly affect your property tax bill. It is used to calculate your share of the local property tax levy for the year.

This levy is the total property tax revenue needed to fund the budgets set by your county, city or town, and school district.

Your property’s taxable market value is multiplied by its classification rate to determine its share of the levy.

Increasing or decreasing your property’s market value does not change the overall amount of property tax revenue that is collected.

For more information, see Fact Sheet 1, *Understanding Property Taxes*.

How do assessors verify their estimated values are in line with the market?

The Department of Revenue and assessors do a “sales ratio study” each year to see how assessors’ values compare to actual sales prices.

A sales ratio is the assessor’s EMV of a property divided by its actual sales price:

$$\text{Sales Ratio} = \frac{\text{Assessor EMV}}{\text{Actual Sales Price}}$$

For example, assume a home was valued at by the assessor at \$200,000 and sold for \$210,000. The sales ratio is calculated like this:

$$\text{Sales Ratio} = \frac{\$200,000}{\$210,000} = 0.952 = 95\%$$

The overall EMVs should be within 90 to 105 percent of actual sales prices. Otherwise the Department of Revenue may order the assessor to adjust property values.

Where do assessors get sales information?

This information comes from sales of real estate. A Certificate of Real Estate Value (CRV) is filed whenever real estate sells for more than \$1,000.

CRVs have important details about each transaction. Assessors use this information to help estimate market values and for the sales ratio study.

Before using a CRV in the sales ratio study, the assessor must verify the sale was an open-market, arms-length sale. Otherwise it cannot be used in the study.

How do I know if my assessor has the right information for my property?

Assessors are required to inspect properties in person at least once every 5 years. They also inspect property if new construction or demolition takes place.

You may contact the assessor to verify information about your property such as dimensions, age, and condition of any structures.

If your property has new improvements or other changes the assessor may not know about, you can ask the assessor to review and adjust your property records.

If you disagree with the assessor’s value for your property, you may appeal. For more information, see Fact Sheet 3, *How to Appeal Your Value and Classification*.

Can the values of some properties decrease while others increase?

Yes. Sales prices for different types of property can vary widely depending on market conditions and other factors.

In recent years, for example, sales of farmland were generally stronger than residential or commercial sales in most areas of the state.

No two properties are exactly alike. A property’s market value or sales price is also affected by its unique characteristics – such as location, square footage, number of rooms, etc.

Do property values in all areas increase or decline at the same rate?

No. Local real estate markets can be affected by a wide range of factors, such as new construction, changing demand for property, or economic trends.

Each area or neighborhood is different; its values can change at a faster (or slower) rate than others.

Where can I get more information?

If you have questions or need more information:

- Refer to:
 - Fact Sheet 1, *Understanding Property Taxes*; and
 - Fact Sheet 3, *How to Appeal Your Value and Classification*.
- Go to www.revenue.state.mn.us and type **property tax fact sheets** into the Search box.
- Contact your County Assessor.