

Do all assessments change at the same rate?

No. There are differences between individual properties and between neighborhoods. In one area, property sales may indicate an increase in value in a given year. In another neighborhood, there may be very little change or a decrease in property values.

Different types of properties within the same neighborhood may also show different value changes. For example, one story houses may be more in demand than two story houses, or vice versa. Older homes in the same area may be rising in value more slowly than newer homes. There are numerous factors to be considered for each property that will cause the values to differ. Some of the factors that can affect value are location, condition, size, age, quality of construction, bedroom count, number of bathrooms, basement finish and garages.

What do I do if I don't agree with my assessment?

If you disagree with your assessed value, (not your tax bill), please contact the Assessor's office.

Before Open Book and Board of Review you can request a review of your property assessment by filing a "request for review" form available on the assessor's website at www.wauwatosa.net. This form can only be filed by the property owner or an agent if an agent authorization form is also filed.

Open Book Period will be in August 2019 in this revaluation year.

During open book, please contact the assessor's office directly to request an informal review of your assessment. The appraiser assigned to your neighborhood will review your property's description to make sure it is accurate and discuss how the value was determined.

What is the Board of Review?

The Board of Review is a quasi-judicial body that operates under State of Wisconsin Statutes and decisions reached in previous court cases. If you feel your assessment is not correct, you can appeal your assessment to the Board of Review. While you can appeal your assessment directly to the Board of Review, it is highly recommended that you first contact the Assessor's Office. Minor errors and misunderstandings can often be corrected at an informal meeting with the Assessor's office first.

To appeal your assessment to the Board of Review, you must be able to demonstrate in a factual and meaningful way, that there is an error in the assessor's valuation. Only actual sales of comparable properties are accepted as evidence.

The Board of Review does not recognize a comparison of the assessed value of your property to those of other properties as a basis to change assessments. Wisconsin Case Law precludes this type of comparison since it is impossible to determine that the assessed values of the comparable properties used are correct. People interested in appealing their assessment to the Board of Review need to contact the City Clerk's Office.

Will I be notified if there is a change in my assessment?

Yes. Wisconsin law requires notification whenever an assessment is changed.

How will my taxes change as a result of a new assessment?

Though the value of your property affects your share of taxes, the actual amount you pay is determined by the budget needs of the schools, city, county, sewer district, and technical college. All of these taxing units decide what services they will provide in the coming year and how much money they will need to provide those services. Once this decision is made, a tax rate is adopted that will generate the needed dollars.

There are 5 taxing authorities that approve a budget each year that together become the Tax Levy.

- Common Council
- School Board
- MATC Board
- MMSD Board
- County Board

The City of Wauwatosa

Important Information Concerning The 2019 Revaluation



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City of Wauwatosa,
It's a Way of Life



About the Revaluation & Timeline

In 2019, our Assessor's Office will complete a revaluation. This is a city-wide complete and thorough review of all property assessments. We make value adjustments where necessary to guarantee that all property is assessed at market value. This ensures that taxes are distributed equitably.

When was the last revaluation performed?

The last city-wide revaluation was in 2013.

What is the schedule for the 2019 revaluation?

Data gathering, analysis and valuation:
Fall 2018 – July 2019

Notices mailed to property owners:
Mid August 2019

Open Book period (informal reviews):
August 2019– September 2019

Board of Review (formal reviews):
September 2019

Tax Bills mailed with new assessments:
December 2019

Frequently Asked Questions

What authority does the City have to conduct a revaluation?

Wisconsin Law requires municipalities to periodically revalue all property to keep pace with changes in the market. During a revaluation, all assessments are examined and adjustments are made where necessary to guarantee that all property is assessed at market value. This is done to assure that taxes are distributed equitably and uniformly.

What is the Assessor's role?

The Assessor's office is staffed by state certified individuals whose duties are to analyze, discover, list and value all taxable real and personal property in the city, in a uniform manner. The Assessor's office is not involved in the collection of property taxes or the calculation of the mill/tax rate.

What tools does the Assessor's office use to set values?

The best tools are the appraiser's knowledge and experience concerning the local market. That experience along with a computer aided mass appraisal system (CAMA) will be used to help us set equitable and uniform assessment for all properties. Additionally, sales activity within the municipality is used by the assessor in analyzing and setting assessed values.

What is the process of setting assessed values?

We, as appraisers set the values. The CAMA system is just a tool that assists us in our work. Internally, every value generated by our system is reviewed for "reasonableness." If a generated value does not appear appropriate, either for its neighborhood or property type, other value indicators are considered.

Externally, our work is reviewed by the Department of Revenue (DOR) as to the degree of "equity" achieved. We receive reports from the DOR that measure our assessment results.

Can the assessment on my property change even if the assessor has not been inside my property?

Yes. The real estate market changes continuously. Even though the physical record of your property may not have changed, the economic conditions of the market may have affected the value of your property.

Do I have to allow the assessor into my home if an inspection is requested?

The State of Wisconsin recognizes a property owner's right to privacy. Therefore, they are within their right to refuse entry into their home by the local assessor's office. However, by denying an interior view, an estimate of the property's description and condition is made, that may not be as accurate if the assessor obtained an actual view of the property.

How can my assessment change when I haven't done anything to my property?

General economic conditions such as fluctuating interest rates, sales inflation rates, supply and demand and changes in tax laws will influence the value of real estate. As property values change, those changes must be reflected on the assessment roll.

Does the assessor have defined goals which they are expected to meet?

The assessor is expected to value all properties fairly and uniformly. To assist in meeting that goal, we are required to value in conformance with Chapter 70, of the Wisconsin State Statutes, and to use as a resource, the prescribed Wisconsin Property Assessment Manual. As stated earlier, the Department of Revenue monitors our results on an annual basis.

What is the difference between Assessed Value and Estimated Fair Market Value?

For most properties, the assessment was established at the last revaluation, unless changes in a property description may occur after the last revaluation that may result in a different assessed value. The estimated fair market value is calculated by taking the assessment and dividing it by the city wide assessment ratio.

This ratio is determined by the Department of Revenue and the same ratio shows up on all tax bills within Wauwatosa. However, the ratio and its resulting estimated fair market value is not specific to location or type of property as it reflects all sales activity from the previous year.