

OUR CITY OF MADISON



City Assessor

Alder and Resident Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) & Answers

Michelle Drea, Esq. City Assessor

Megan Lukens, Business Systems Manager

Scott West, Assessment Operations Manager

FAQ Overview

Inclusive – Innovative – Thriving



Frequently Asked Questions

Alders and Residents commonly ask our agency the following questions:

Questions

Can we reduce property taxes for senior citizens or veterans?

Why did the assessment on my home increase?

Why are my taxes so high?

If a permit is pulled for work on my home, will my assessed value increase?

Can the City employ different tax policy, including how assessments are derived, from the state?

Can we freeze assessments?

My constituent is upset about their assessment, what can they do?

FAQ Answers



QUESTION 1: Can we reduce property taxes for senior citizens or veterans?

- Property tax relief in the state of Wisconsin requires a change to the State Constitution, specifically amending the Uniformity Clause
- We link to resources on this topic from our website and encourage those who contact us to engage in dialogue with their legislators

QUESTION 2: Why did the assessment on my home increase?

- Property Assessments can increase for a number of reasons:
 - Sale: Per Wisconsin Statute 70.32 the assessor is required to use a valid, arms-length transaction to establish the assessed value
 - Building Permit: some permits result in an improvement to the value of the home and result in a change in the assessed value. This is explored further on the answer to Question 5
 - Interim Market Update: The City of Madison undergoes a review of the sales market every year. See next slide for more detail.

QUESTION 2: Why did the assessment on my home increase? (Continued)

- Annual Review of Madison Market:
 - For Residential: The Assessor's Office divides the City up into individual neighborhoods called assessment areas. The Assessor then reviews the market data like recent sales to determine a market trend for that neighborhood.
 - For Commercial: The Assessor's Office reviews market trends based on "use", for example: Apartments, retail, offices, warehouses. Market data would include recent sales, capitalization rates, gross rent multipliers and vacancy rates.

QUESTION 3: Why are my taxes so high?

- There are four groups funded from property taxes in Wisconsin:
 - Dane County, City of Madison, School Districts, Technical Colleges
- Each of these groups require enough funding from property taxes to operate annually. A budget deficit in any one area can result in a change in property tax payments.
- While taxes are based on property assessments, the assessor office is not part of the process to determine the tax rate

QUESTION 4: If a permit is pulled for work on my home will my assessed value increase?

- It could... but not always
 - Some work is considered maintenance and these changes do not typically result in a change in value
 - Work that improves the condition, design, or utility of the property typically does increase the value
- As a buyer, what would you be willing to pay a higher premium for in a home? Those are the same items we consider in our valuation process.

QUESTION 5: Can the City employ different tax policy, including how assessments are derived, than the state?

- No, the assessment process is a municipal service that is entirely governed by state law. Changes in process or purpose requires revising state statutes.

QUESTION 6: Can we freeze assessments?

- No, the assessment process is a municipal service that is entirely governed by state law. Freezing assessments would require amending the State Constitution, specifically the Uniformity Clause.

QUESTION 7: My constituent is upset about their assessment, what can they do?

- Assessment notices are typically mailed in mid to late April each year and go live on our website the date of mailing. There are three opportunities to engage with our office after the notices are sent and updated values are posted:
 1. Open Book – lasts approximately one week after notices are mailed
 - During the Open Book period, you can review your assessment record with an appraiser to correct any errors. If any details are incorrect, we will correct the error and adjust your assessment. These might include:
 - Square feet of living area
 - Number of bathrooms
 - Completion or status of additions or renovations
 - If your property details are correct but you disagree with the assessed value of your property, you will need to file an objection with the Board of Assessors

QUESTION 7: My constituent is upset about their assessment, what can they do? (Continued)

2. Board of Assessors

- At the Board of Assessors (BOA), you can discuss the value of your property. If you believe the market value of your property is different from the assessed value, you can file an objection to share information and data with the appraisal staff.
- The BOA will review and process all objections. It is an internal board comprised of the Assessor, Assessment Operations Manager, and a rotating slate of four experienced appraisers.
- Assessments in the City are established through mass appraisal. During the objection process, the Board will appraise your property individually, and review all adjustments to arrive at market value.
- A report is provided with a recommended value subsequent to the individual appraisal. The Board votes and a determination is sent to the property owner.

QUESTION 7: My constituent is upset about their assessment, what can they do? (Continued)

3. Board of Review

- If you disagree with the determination of the Board of Assessors (BOA), the final municipal review of assessments is the Board of Review (BOR)
- After the determination is sent, the property owner has 15 days to provide notice to the City that they would like to proceed to BOR
- The BOR is a quasi-judicial body comprised of appointed City residents who hear the cases and make final determinations on value. The BOR meets as needed throughout mid-summer and early fall.

QUESTION 7: My constituent is upset about their assessment, what can they do? (Continued)

- What data should I provide in support of my opinion of value?
 - Residential property owners
 - Examples of sales in their neighborhoods that are similar to their property. Sales can be found on our webpage:
<https://www.cityofmadison.com/assessor/property/salesbyarea.cfm>
 - Recent arms-length sale of subject property, recent appraisals, or documentation of condition issues
 - Commercial property owners
 - Income and expense data or an arms-length sale of the subject property
 - Multi-family property owners
 - Rental income or an arms-length sale of the subject property

How Our Agency Provides Customer Service



We Provide Customer Service By...

- Engaging with the public transparently and accessibly
 - Our webpage includes a plethora of detailed information about every aspect of our work: <https://www.cityofmadison.com/assessor/>
 - Knowledgeable and kind staff members are available during business hours at 608-266-4531
 - For specific substantive topics, email our office:
 - assessor@cityofmadison.com
 - propertytaxexemptions@cityofmadison.com
 - assessordatarequests@cityofmadison.com
 - commercialproperty@cityofmadison.com
 - salessurveyrequest@cityofmadison.com

OUR CITY OF MADISON

Stay Connected!

Michelle Drea, Esq. City Assessor
mdrea@cityofmadison.com

Megan Lukens, Business Systems Manager
MLukens@cityofmadison.com

Scott West, Assessment Operations Manager
swest@cityofmadison.com



CITY OF **MADISON**