

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE REASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. What is a General Reassessment?

The Code of Virginia (§58.1-3252) requires that all jurisdictions in the Commonwealth periodically perform a general reassessment, requiring at least one reassessment every six years and mandates that all real property be assessed for taxation purposes at 100% of market value and be fair and equitable. A reassessment is a systematic review of all property in the County to determine a fair market value. A reassessment firm is contracted to reappraise every parcel at its fair market value. Sales information for real property sold in Alleghany County is reviewed and a sales ratio analysis is performed by the reassessment firm to determine fair market value. Assessing all real estate at fair market value assures all property owners are assessed fairly and equitably.

During a reassessment, all property values are examined and adjustments are made on individual properties where necessary based upon the above process. This is done to achieve a fair and equitable distribution of real estate taxes. Once this process is complete, reassessment notices are mailed to property owners reporting the new assessed values individually for both land and buildings. Should the property owner(s) believe their assessment is incorrect, they may request an informal appeal with staff assessors. The request must be made during the window of time noted on the reassessment notice.

If, after the informal appeal, the owner still disagrees with the assessed value, the owner may then request a formal appeal to the Board of Equalization which is an independent group of citizens appointed by the Circuit Court of Alleghany County. During the appeal process, the Board of Equalization may reduce the assessed value, increase the assessed value, or affirm the assessed value established during the reassessment process. If the owner is still in disagreement with the assessed value after the appeal to the Board of Equalization, the next level of appeal is directly to the Circuit Court of Alleghany County.

2. When is the next general reassessment?

The last general reassessment was conducted during 2018 and became effective January 1, 2019. The current reassessment was conducted during 2024 to become effective January 1, 2025.

3. How will this affect my taxes?

General reassessments are not designed to be a County-wide tax increase. This process is intended to align each property's value with its current market value. Thus, the tax burden is more fairly and equally spread among all property owners. The law ensures that a general reassessment cannot be blamed for an increase in taxes. Once the reassessment is complete, state law requires that the tax rate be adjusted and equalized to render the revenue neutral.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Supervisors to determine the budgetary needs of the County and the tax rate necessary to effectively meet those needs. If deemed necessary, the Board may propose a tax rate that generates more than 101% of the previous year's tax revenue by advertising and conducting a public hearing separate from the annual budget meeting.

4. Why was an outside firm hired to perform the reassessment?

The general reassessment process is very laborious and time intensive. The entire process takes between 12 and 18 months to perform and requires that an assessor physically visit and assess every parcel in the County. For the County to perform this task internally would require the addition of full-time staff and resources. Using economies of scale, an outside firm that specializes in such work can perform

the reassessment at a greatly reduced cost to the County. The 2025 General Reassessment was conducted by Wampler-Eanes Appraisal Group.

5. How did the assessor arrive at my value?

Recent sales are analyzed to determine market value rates for all applicable land, outbuilding, and structural features. Those rates are then applied to the factual data about each parcel and adjusted with quality and depreciation factors to equalize the property value with other like parcels.

6. Why is my assessment changing?

There are many reasons for a change in property value. The most obvious reason is that real property usually appreciates in value over time and the purpose of a general reassessment is to measure that change and update the fair market value. Value changes can also be created by additions, alterations, or demolitions. The real estate market is in constant change. Every sale, parcel map change or structure improvement is recorded and used to determine change in the fair market value of the real estate market. Even though market value changes all the time, the assessed value is not changed until the next general reassessment. The appraiser in charge of analyzing data for a general reassessment does not create the value. Citizens establish value by buying and selling real estate in the open market. The assessor's legal responsibility is to determine the fair market value of the property and to insure uniformity and equity amongst all properties.

7. How can a property be assessed for more than its purchase price?

Real estate may be assessed for more than the purchase price because the assessment reflects "fair market value." Fair market value is not necessarily the price paid for a piece of real estate, but rather, what it is worth on the real estate market at the date of measurement. Since the market value is determined at a place in time, market value continues to change after a sale takes place. Values also change, and the property value may have gone up since the purchase. This is especially true if a piece of real estate was purchased several years ago, or if a person happened to get a good buy because of a distress sale condition. Assessed value should represent fair market value at the time of the reassessment, which may or may not be the same as purchase price or a real estate sales price.

8. Does the location of my property affect value (i.e. river frontage, road frontage, view, etc.)?

As with all real estate analysis, location is a primary concern for assessing the valuation of a property. Features such as water frontage, accessibility, and pleasing views are extremely desirable and add to the intrinsic value of the property. Conversely, poor location such as proximity to a landfill or flood zones can decrease the value of a parcel.

9. How can my property increase in value when I have not bought, sold, or done any major repairs or additions to it?

The value of your property is a reflection of the local real estate market. As sales prices of similar properties increase, so will the value of your property.

10. How can my land value increase at a faster rate than my house?

As more and more land is developed, the supply of available vacant land decreases, driving the sales prices of land higher. As sales prices of land increase, so does the subsequent value of all land, improved or otherwise.

11. Why is my 3 acre tract valued at a higher rate per acre than my neighbor who has 50 acres?

Smaller tracts will typically sell at a higher unit value than larger tracts. For example, a one acre house site which sells for \$15,000 has a unit value of \$15,000 per acre. A 100 acre tract which sells for \$200,000 has a unit value of \$2,000 per acre.

12. What is a home site and how is it valued?

A "Home Site" or "House Site" is all or part of a parcel that is best suited for single family residential construction. Applying the concept of "highest and best use", this part of the land parcel is worth significantly more than the residual acreage.

13. I live in a manufactured "mobile" home, what is the "Improvement Value" that I am taxed for?

Manufactured/mobile homes are taxed as personal property unless they have been converted over to real estate. Prior to conversion, anyone who owns their own land and places a manufactured home on it will receive a real estate bill for the assessed value of the land and any improvements i.e. porches, decks, paved driveways, outbuildings, etc. The land and improvements are taxed as real estate, and the manufactured/mobile home is billed separately as personal property.

14. How can you tax an outbuilding that has no electricity and is not livable?

The assessed improvement value is the sum of the value of all the factors on your property. Outbuildings such as sheds, barns, and detached garages add functionality and utility to your property, thereby increasing the market value of your parcel.

15. How can I be taxed for a house that is not complete?

All real property must be assessed. Once a foundation has been laid, a structure is considered to exist and therefore has a certain value. Based on permits, building materials, plans, and other information, the completed value of the structure can be estimated. The assessment is based on whatever is present as of January 1st, at which time the structure may only be partially complete. To account for this, only a certain percentage of the estimated completed value is used in determining the current assessed value of the property.

16. What will the new levy/tax rate be?

The Board of Supervisors will determine the new tax rate once the reassessment is completed. According to the Code of Virginia (§58.1-3321) the overall amount of real property tax revenue cannot increase more than 1% without the Board of Supervisors conducting public hearings.

17. How do I figure my taxes using the tax rate and assessment?

The current real estate tax rate is \$0.73 per \$100 of assessed value. To compute the real estate tax on a property assessed at \$100,000, divide the assessed value by 100 and multiply by the tax rate: (\$100,000 divided by 100) x \$0.73 = \$730

Once the new rate (equalized) is set by the Board of Supervisors, you can utilize the same formula.

18. For what reasons would I make an appointment with the assessors?

If you feel that your assessment is not equitable with other properties in the County or does not accurately reflect the real estate market, then you should make an appointment with the assessors. You should be prepared to state your case and provide any evidence to support your position. For more information, contact the Commissioner of Revenue office.

19. How do I make an appointment with the assessors:

Initial informal appeals with the assessors must be made by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 by:

- Phone: (540) 958-1896
- Email: AlleghanyReassessment@gmail.com (preferred method)
- Mail: Alleghany County Reassessment Office

P.O. Box 685
Daleville, VA 24083

- Zoom Meetings: A zoom meeting can be scheduled.
- In-Person Meetings: Limited appointments will be scheduled to meet with the assessors face-to face by calling the above number. Those meetings will be held on Monday, February 10th and Tuesday, February 11th. An appointment is required.

20. I just had my property appraised, will that help me in the hearings process?

Any materials that may assist the assessors in gaining an accurate representation of your property may be used to support your position at the hearings. For an appraisal to accurately reflect market conditions, however, it must have been conducted within the past 6 months.

21. What are my other options to appeal?

Should you have a hearing with the Assessors but not be satisfied with the result, you may schedule a further hearing with the Board of Equalization. After the Board of Equalization has made its changes, should you still not be satisfied, you have the right to petition the Court for an appeal. The decision of that appeal will be final.

22. If I no longer own this property, what should I do with the notice?

Section 58.1-3330(c) of the Code of Virginia requires you to forward the notice to the new property owner.

23. When does the new reassessment go into effect?

The final assessed values will be used to calculate the taxes due for the current tax year beginning January 1, 2025.

24. If my taxes are paid through my mortgage escrow, do I have to do anything with this new assessment?

Yes. You should notify your mortgage company of your new assessment. Ask that they adjust your escrow account accordingly. Otherwise, your mortgage company will not be notified of any change in your tax amount until they receive the next tax bill. This could create a shortfall in your escrow account balance, potentially affecting your mortgage payment.

25. Can I obtain a copy of my real estate assessment card?

Yes, your current property information can be obtained from the Commissioner of Revenue office and the Assessors can provide you with a copy of your property card for the new assessment.

26. Is it possible to view my neighbor's assessment?

Yes, land books containing information on all taxable property will be available for public use on-site at the hearing's location and in the Commissioner of the Revenue's office.

27. I am over 65, retired, on disability, or on a fixed income; can I get a tax break?

You may qualify for the "Tax Relief for the Elderly and Disabled" program which is intended to address these concerns. For more information, please visit the Real Estate Tax Relief page at: <https://www.co.alleghany.va.us/commissioner-revenue/real-estate-tax-relief-elderly-disabled/>