



## **Questions & Answers about the North Haven 2014GL Revaluation**

### **1. What is a Revaluation?**

A Revaluation is the process of conducting the Data Collection and Market Analysis necessary to equalize the values (determine fair market value) of all properties within a municipality for the purpose of a fair distribution of the tax burden.

### **2. Why is the Town revaluing all properties?**

Section 12-62 of Connecticut Statutes requires that each municipality conduct a revaluation of all real property at least every five years with a physical inspection required every ten years. The purpose of this requirement is to insure uniformity in real property valuations (fair market value) by eliminating inequities that may have developed since the last revaluation due to changing market conditions.

A revaluation is undertaken to:

- A. Secure a more equitable distribution of the tax burden
- B. To bring the assessment level up to date
- C. To modernize assessment procedures, and
- D. To comply with the state statutes

Property values change over time; some types of property have appreciated or depreciated at different annual rates than other types of property since 2009. The last revaluation for the Town of North Haven was done in 2009. Real estate values in North Haven are currently set at the 2009 level. Because property values have changed since that time, inequities may have emerged. A properly conducted revaluation equalizes the inequities that the market has caused since the last revaluation. This equalization is accomplished by estimating the current fair market value as of October 1, 2014 of each real estate parcel in the Town of North Haven.

### **3. What happens during a Revaluation?**

The law requires towns to revalue property a minimum of every five years, towns must conduct a physical inspection of both the interior and exterior of each property every ten years, where building dimensions and characteristics are noted. The 2014GL revaluation is an interim revaluation where appraisers study the current sales and determine where the actual increases and decreases in value are occurring. This study of recent property sales allows comparisons to be made and appraisers to establish parameters to estimate the value of property that has not been sold. The appraisers then apply the determining factors of the sales analysis to come up with a value of each property.

There is no townwide inspection of properties for the 2014GL revaluation.

#### **4. What is Fair Market Value?**

Fair market value is a legal term defined by the courts as the probable price which a property would bring on the open market, given prudent, knowledgeable and willing buyers and sellers. Fair market value is the standard by which the fairness of all assessments is judged.

The real estate market determines the fair market value of real estate. The appraiser or assessor analyzes real estate transactions that occur within a community and determine the factors that lead to the final sale prices. Information developed through the analysis of these sales is used by appraisers and assessors to develop mathematical models that are utilized in estimating the market values of all properties in a community. Some of the typical factors that are used by an appraiser in estimating market values include location, condition, age, size and quality of improvements.

#### **5. Will this mean the Town is going to collect more taxes as a result of Revaluation?**

No. The purpose of revaluation is to redistribute the property tax burden by assessing all taxable property at the same level of value. A revaluation *is not intended* to artificially raise or lower revenues; its purpose is to value all properties by the same standard at the same point in time.

#### **6. My assessment is different than the true value of my property. Does this mean I am over or under assessed?**

No. Real Estate in North Haven is currently assessed at the state mandated 70% ratio of fair market value as of October 1, 2009. After the revaluation, all properties will continue to be assessed at 70% of fair market value as of October 1, 2014. Your assessment will likely change and the taxes you pay will likely change. This will result in lower taxes for people who are currently paying more than their fair share, and higher taxes for those who are currently paying less than their fair share.

#### **7. How is the Mill Rate established?**

The Board of Finance, through the adoption of the town's budget, establishes the tax rate annually. Establishing the mill rate begins with the preparation of the Town of North Haven's budget and concludes with the voters of North Haven's adoption of the budget.

The simplified formula for determining the mill rate is the Grand Levy divided by the Taxable Grand List. The Grand Levy is simply the amount of money the Town needs to generate through the property tax in order to provide town services. The Taxable Grand List is the total of all non-exempt assessments for all real estate, motor vehicles, and personal property located within the Town's boundaries.

### **8. What qualifications do the Appraisers have?**

The administration of this project shall be assigned to a Project Manager or Supervisor who shall be certified by the State of Connecticut as a Revaluation Supervisor pursuant to C.G.S. 12-2c and such other statutes and regulations that the State of Connecticut may promulgate from time to time. Project Supervisors are required to have no less than three (3) years of practical experience in the appraisal of commercial, industrial, apartment, farm and residential type properties. Residential Review Appraisers are required to have no less than two (2) years experience. In addition, both the Project Supervisor and Review Appraisers must pass a written comprehensive examination administered by the Office of Policy and Management.

### **9. What is an informal hearing?**

Towards the end of the Revaluation, every homeowner will receive a notice of his or her proposed valuation based on the analysis performed. These values are not final; they only become final after the hearings. When a homeowner has a question or concern about the proposed valuation, they are asked to call the firm and set a date and time to meet and discuss the valuation process and answer any questions the homeowner may have. An informal hearing is not a forum to discuss taxes, it is strictly meant to answer questions on the property valuations. Homeowners are asked to come prepared with questions and have compared their property to other comparable ones in their neighborhood. A Hearing Officer will determine if a review of the property is necessary. All changes to value that occur due to a hearing will be reflected in the change notice that is sent after hearings are complete.

### **10. How will the homeowner be notified of the new assessment?**

At the completion of the project, each homeowner will receive an individual notice of their new assessment. Property owners can then review the entire public assessed values; so that the property owner can see what the values are around his/her properties. All property owners are given the opportunity to discuss their values with the appraisal staff at an appointed time, which will be publicly announced towards the end of the revaluation. At a hearing the property owner can voice concerns, discuss inaccuracies or discrepancies with a qualified appraiser who will review the property record card and explain the value. Should an inspection or re-evaluation need to be done, the appraiser will make that determination and any changes that result will be sent to the property owner.

### **11. How will Vision Government Solutions appraise my property?**

Vision Government Solutions will estimate the value of properties by using the current data, and any updated data collected, and analyzing the recent sales of houses comparable to yours in your neighborhood.

**12. How will I know if my assessment is equitable?**

There are two very good methods for you to determine this. First, compare your properties to similar properties that sold in the previous year. Your value should be in line with these sale prices. Second, if no recent sales are available, compare your assessment to other similar properties in your area using the Street Listing of Values available in the Assessor's Office. Your value should be in line with these similar properties. Remember, very few properties are exactly alike. Your value should be comparable, but it seldom will be exactly the same as what seems to be a similar property.

**13. If I disagree with my assessment after a hearing, what are my options?**

If any property owner believes the assessment on their property is in excess of its Fair Market Value they should first notify the Assessor's Office. They may then appeal before the North Haven Board of Assessment Appeals. The Board of Assessment Appeals will review the case and make a determination as to the disposition of the appeal. Should the property owner still feel the assessment is incorrect, they may appeal to the Superior Court for the judicial district in which the municipality is located. All appeals to the Board of Assessment Appeals must be made by February 20, 2015 if the Assessor's office files the grand list by January 31st. If the town is granted an extension to file the grand list the filing deadline to the Board of Assessment Appeals is March 20, 2015. Always contact your local assessor's office with any questions pertaining to the filing dates for appeals.

**14. When will the reassessment first appear in tax bills?**

The reassessment will be reflected in tax bills issued for July 1, 2015. North Haven's Board of Finance will establish the mill rate for those bills in April 2015. Please do not multiply your new assessment by the previous year mill rate.

**15. What about elderly and veterans exemptions?**

The law requires that the Assessor appraise taxable property and not the people who own it. Under state law, all property is appraised at current fair market value. There are programs for Elderly or Totally Disabled Homeowners and Veterans that provide tax relief. Homeowners who currently qualify and are receiving those benefits will continue to receive them. Exemptions and Tax Credits are deducted from the tax bill sent in July. Homeowners who have questions about their eligibility for programs should contact the Assessor's Office.

04/30/2014