

Assessor's Report – August 2015 Edition

Assessor Appointed to Chair National Technology Committee

Assessor Lloyd Hara is passionate about his office's work to serve the community with fair and equitable property values through efficient and innovative technology. Earlier this month, his results-oriented leadership style and commitment to excellent customer service and government innovation were recognized.

National Association of Counties' ([NACo](#)) President Sallie Clark appointed Hara to chair the Information Technology Committee. He was also appointed to serve as a member of the organization's Large Urban County Caucus. NACo joins 3,069 county governments to advocate national policy issues, pursue cost-effective solutions, and enrich the public's understanding of County government.

Hara is also the Washington State Association of County Assessors' (WASAC) Computer Technology Committee Chair.

2015 Valuation Cycle Underway

Look for your 2015 property valuation notice in the mail. The first set of valuation postcards were mailed to King County property owners, and the mailings will continue through October. The notices list property values, which are determined by analyzing recent sales of comparable properties in the same area as of the January 1, 2015 assessment date.

Visit the Assessor's LocalScape [My Revalue](#) tab to stay informed about the 2015 revaluation cycle and follow us on Twitter.

Last year, 85 out of 86 residential areas increased in value, and we expect the trend to continue as most neighborhoods will be equal to or exceed 2008 property value levels. More information about the property assessment process can be found [here](#).

As part of enhancements made to this year's valuation cycle, property owners are able to scan a QR Code from the postcard notice with a mobile device to pull up their property information on [eReal Property](#). They are also able to pre-register to receive future valuation notices electronically via email using the six-digit EVN Code printed on the front of the postcard. Join with the hundreds who have already signed up!

Did you know?

- Taxing districts are held to a one percent annual increase limit in property tax revenue regardless of change in property values, unless voters approve special levies.
- Overall, property taxes increased by 4.11% in 2015, but individual property taxes vary depending on the property location.
- Individual property taxes are calculated based on the assessed value of a property, the total taxable property value in the community, voter-approved measures, and the budgets adopted by local governments.
- Only 17.5 cents of every property tax dollar supports services provided by King County government.

The Assessor's Office sets property valuations and administers exemptions. It does not set taxes, and there is not a dollar-to-dollar correlation between your property value increase and future property taxes. King County taxpayers who need advice and assistance with property tax related matters, including appeals, should contact the King County Tax Advisor at 206-477-1060 or by email at taxadvisor@kingcounty.gov.

In the News / Community Engagement

Last month, our office announced that [LocalScape](#) was recognized by NACo with a 2015 Achievement Award in the category of Civic Education and Public information.

Since then, [KING 5](#) coverage featured the innovative app that illustrates a rich landscape of information, including neighborhood values, sales, permit, census, and education data. LocalScape was also showcased as the Map of the Week in [The Urbanist](#).

The Assessor's Office aims to provide the highest level of transparency and data accessibility to the public.

For more information about LocalScape, to provide feedback, or to schedule a demonstration, contact us at 206-264-2261 or phillip.sit@kingcounty.gov.

Are You Eligible for Property Tax Relief?

The Washington State Legislature passed Senate Bill 5186, which increased the qualifying income from \$35,000 annual gross income to \$40,000 for the senior/disability property tax exemption.

This income change is not retroactive and will be applied to 2016 property taxes and subsequent years.

The King County Assessor's Office administers this exemption program for low-income seniors (61 years of age or older) and property owners with disabilities. Depending on your income, you may be eligible to receive a standard, partial, or full exemption. In addition, the value of your home will be frozen at the valuation of the initial application year and any property tax reduction does not have to be repaid upon transfer of ownership.

To check your [eligibility](#) or for more information, contact the Assessor's Office at 206.296.3920 or visit www.kingcounty.gov/assessor.

[Senate Bill 5186](#) also raised the income limit from \$40,000 to \$45,000 for the deferral program, which delays property taxes for seniors and the disabled until a later date. Under the deferral program, the Washington State Department of Revenue pays the property taxes and any special assessments on the property owner's behalf. The deferred amount, plus interest, becomes a lien on the home until the total amount is repaid.

To be eligible, the homeowner must be either at least 60 years old, unable to work because of a disability, or be at least 57 years old and the surviving spouse or partner of someone who was receiving a deferral at the time of death.