

# Question & Answer Brochure for Haddonfield Borough Reassessment Program

## Contact Information

*Haddonfield Borough  
Tax Assessor's Office  
242 Kings Highway E.  
Haddonfield, NJ 08033*

*Phone: (856)428-4700*

*Ext 226*

*Fax: (856)795-1445*

*Email:*

*[tcolavecchio@haddonfield-nj.gov](mailto:tcolavecchio@haddonfield-nj.gov)*

*Tax Assessor:*

**Thomas J. Colavecchio**

Dear Property Owner,

It has been almost twelve years since a reassessment was completed in the Borough of Haddonfield. New Jersey real estate taxation law mandates that all real estate be assessed at 100% of market value and there must be equalization among assessments.

Annually, the State of New Jersey, Division of Taxation, and the Camden County Board of Taxation complete a study of all the sales that have transacted in each community, including Haddonfield, and determine the relationship of assessed value to sale value for each usable sale.

It has been determined by the above mentioned agencies that the properties located within Haddonfield are currently assessed far below market value. The Camden County Board of taxation has ordered a reassessment of the Borough to be completed and implemented by the 2008 tax year.

Some of the major forces responsible for causing inequity in assessments are inflation and neighborhood trends. As a consequence, all properties have not increased in value at the same rate since the last revaluation; hence, imbalances have been created.

We have prepared this brochure to help you understand the process that takes place during a reassessment program. In addition, it is an attempt to answer some basic questions and to clear up common misconceptions.

It is obvious that no brochure can answer all property owner's questions and, therefore, if my office can be of further assistance in answering your inquiries please call us at 856-429-4700 ext 226. Thank you for your cooperation in helping my office complete this reassessment program.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Colavecchio, CTA

Tax Assessor

### **What is a Reassessment Program?**

A Reassessment Program seeks to spread property taxes equitably within a taxing district, such as the Borough of Haddonfield, by making sure that each property is assessed on the basis of its market value. Each parcel in the Borough will be inspected on the interior and exterior, if possible, and appraised. A market value, as of October 1, 2007, will be established. The reassessment process is revenue neutral, meaning, no additional taxes will be raised as a result of completion of this program.

### **What is the definition of Market Value?**

It is the highest price, as of a specific date, in cash, or it's equivalent, for which a property should sell after reasonable exposure in a competitive market, with buyer and seller each acting prudently, knowledgeably & for self-interest, and assuming that neither party is under undue duress.

### **What is meant by a "Comparable Sale"?**

A comparable sale is a property that has similar physical and locational characteristics to the property being appraised and has sold within a reasonable time period prior to the appraisal date.

### **When will the program begin and end?**

The program will begin with the receipt of this brochure and introduction letter. All work will be completed by December 2007 in order to use the new assessments for the 2008 tax year. Field inspections will run from Nov. 2006 to Aug. 2007.

### **How will the program work?**

Each property will be physically inspected on the exterior and interior by an experienced field representative. Structural and descriptive details of the property and neighborhood will be noted. The outside measurements of each building will be taken to determine the square footage content of the dwelling or building. This property data will be entered into a computer assisted mass appraisal program and a preliminary value estimate will be established utilizing the Real Property Appraisal Manual for New Jersey Assessors. The preliminary value estimate will then be adjusted to a final market value estimate using comparable sales data from that neighborhood or a homogeneous neighborhood if necessary. Some income producing commercial properties may be appraised using an income capitalization method.

### **Does the inspector need to get into my home?**

The validity of the market value estimate, to a great extent, depends on the interior inspection. Cooperation of residents and property owners is essential, particularly in the matter of interior inspection. The Tax Assessor's office and field inspector will make every effort to cause property owners the least possible inconvenience. Please notify all tenants of the Reassessment Program and to cooperative with the inspection process. Since a Reassessment Program is a mass appraisal project in which many thousands of properties must be appraised in a short period of time, individual appointments for interior inspections are not feasible. However, if there are extenuating circumstances, a property owner may call our office to arrange an individual appointment. Due to time and cost constraints, please do not call until after the inspector has made three attempts to inspect your property and left a card in your door for you to call.

### **Will photographs be used?**

Photographs of your property will also be taken by someone other than the field inspector. The photographs will be taken from a public right-of-way on a different date than the property inspection. You do not need to be present or involved in the photograph phase of the project.

### **Will the field inspector be able to tell me the new assessment?**

No. The inspector is only compiling information. A uniform formula will be applied to all properties to determine the new assessment.

### **What items will be considered in determining the market value of my property?**

Some of the items that will determine your market value include the type of neighborhood; building size; age and condition of improvements; the quality of construction; lot size; and the shape and topography of the lot. In addition features such as number of bathrooms; quality and condition of kitchen; basement (finished or not); garages; fireplaces; central air conditioning; in-ground pools; sheds; and other detached structures will be considered.

Other factors that affect market value include inflation, supply and demand, interest rates, and the cost of materials and labor.

### **When will I be advised of the proposed assessment?**

When every property in Haddonfield has been reassessed, you will receive a letter. Letters will be mailed in the late fall of 2007. You will be given the opportunity to discuss your appraisal and review your property description with a representative of the Borough Tax Assessor's Office. You will be provided the time and place for these reviews.

### **Will my assessment increase?**

Probably so. As previously mentioned, your present assessment was placed on your property nearly twelve years ago during the last revaluation and market values have risen substantially since that time.

### **What I really want to know is what effect will the Reassessment have on my tax bill?**

The Reassessment Process is revenue neutral. In other words, no additional taxes overall will be raised for the school, county or municipality as a result of the completion of this process. Generally, one-third of the properties see an increase in taxes, one-third stay the same and one-third go down.

### **What recourse do I have after discussing the value of my property with the Tax Assessor and I still am not satisfied?**

If you still disagree with your new assessment after discussions with the Tax Assessor you may file an appeal to the County Board of Taxation by **April 1, 2008**. Properties assessed for \$750,000 or higher may be appealed directly to the New Jersey Tax Court.

### **Why is the process being performed in-house?**

The Commissioners formally bid the reassessment project. The in-house cost provided by the Tax Assessor was less expensive than the other bids received. The Borough's Tax Assessor has over thirty-one years of experience in the municipal revaluation field.