

City of Philadelphia



(Bill No. 130443-A)

AN ORDINANCE

Amending Chapter 2-300 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Property Assessment,” by further providing for the manner in which assessments are determined, all under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, In order to achieve a fair system of property taxation, it is vitally important that property assessments be performed accurately and uniformly; and

WHEREAS, The market value of a property is determined by gathering timely and accurate data about the condition of the home or buildings on the land and the condition of any improvements to those structures; and

WHEREAS, Residential properties account for over 80 percent of all taxable properties in the City of Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The condition of the interior and exterior of a residential property is directly relevant to an accurate determination of current market value, taking into consideration such factors as the number of stories and square feet of living area; the number of bathrooms; the number of bedrooms; the age and type of heating and cooling systems; the presence or absence of specialty features; the presence or absence of amenities such as fireplaces, garages and off-street parking; and the quality, type and age of materials used in construction; and

WHEREAS, The collection, retention and use of accurate data by the Office of Property Assessment and the application of uniform and nationally recognized standards to that data are essential to ensure the City has a uniform and fair system of property assessments; now, therefore

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. Chapter 2-300 of The Philadelphia Code is amended as follows:

CHAPTER 2-300. PROPERTY ASSESSMENT

* * *

§ 2-305. Office of Property Assessment; Chief Assessment Officer; Powers and Duties.

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(2) Except as Council may ordain from time to time, the Chief Assessment Officer shall:

* * *

(d) Promulgate and make available on the City's official website Assessment Standards and Practices Regulations that with respect to assessments made in calendar year 2011 and thereafter:

(i) Set forth a methodology for the valuation of properties for taxation purposes. *The methodology employed shall be made available to the public, including an explanation of the extent to which the methodology employed conforms to nationally recognized assessment standards such as those approved by the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) for mass appraisals of real property. The Government of the District of Columbia's document "Appraiser's Reference Materials," attached as Appendix "I," shall serve as a point of reference.*

(ii) Set standards for property assessments that shall include, at a minimum, an acceptable limit on the deviation of the Common Level Ratio from the Predetermined Ratio, an acceptable limit on the Coefficient of Dispersion, and an acceptable range for the Price-Related Differential. The measurements against the standards shall be calculated following nationally recognized practices.

(iii) Require an annual reassessment through a professionally developed and maintained Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system.

(iv) Require that the annual reassessment be applied to all properties, including tax exempt properties, public utility property, and residential trailers.

(v) Establish standards for recommending tax exemption for properties.

(vi) Establish procedures for changing values on an administrative basis (for example, in the event of catastrophic loss or errors in data).

(e) *Publish annually on the City's official website the results of assessment-sales ratio studies for different types of real property for the entire City, and for different types of real property within each of the geographic areas utilized in making assessments. This report shall be in a format substantially similar to the document issued by the Government of the District of Columbia entitled "Assessment Ratio Report,"*

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attached as Appendix "2." A copy of this publication shall be delivered to the Mayor, President and Chief Clerk of Council by May 1st.

[(e)](f)	*	*	*
[(f)](g)	*	*	*
[(g)](h)	*	*	*
[(h)](i)	*	*	*
[(i)](j)	*	*	*
[(j)](k)	*	*	*
[(k)](l)	*	*	*
[(l)](m)	*	*	*
[(m)](n)	*	*	*

[(n)](o) Receive from the Department of Records a report of every deed or conveyance of land entered in the office for recording, which record shall set forth the following information: the recording date of the deed or conveyance; the names of the grantor and grantee in the deed; the consideration paid; [and] the location of the property; *and such additional information about the property's condition and characteristics as the Office of Property Assessment shall require in order to support its data collection requirements for accurate property valuation.* It shall be the further duty of the Department of Records at intervals to file such reports in the Office of Property Assessment together with a certificate appended thereto that such record is correct.

[(o)](p)	*	*	*
[(p)](q)	*	*	*
[(q)](r)	*	*	*

(s) *At least once every three years, beginning with the year 2014, undergo an audit by an independent firm in which the firm will complete a statistical analysis of the performance of the appraisers and the accuracy of the property assessment in order to ensure a uniform and accurate system of property taxation. The Council shall, by separate ordinance, name the firm to be engaged for this purpose, which shall be selected pursuant to the procedure set forth in Chapter 17-1400 for the awarding of non-competitively bid contracts. The individuals supervising or conducting the audit must*

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collectively possess the following qualifications: certification in real estate appraisal valuation by an organization belonging to The Appraisal Foundation or comparable organization; a current Certified General Appraiser License; at least three years of recent experience performing mass appraisal work for a jurisdiction where assessments are performed at least once every ten years; and at least three years of recent experience performing assessment-sales ratio studies, using standards approved by the IAEO. The final audit, including responses by the Office of Property Assessment, if any, shall be submitted to the Mayor, President and Chief Clerk of Council.

(t) *Publish annually all policies and procedures provided by the Department of Records to the Office of Property Assessment for maintaining and allowing public inspection and use of records that are necessary for the current exercise of the powers and the current performance of the duties of the Office of Property Assessment as required by Section 5-1101(b) of the Charter.*

(u) *Make underlying supporting data, documentation, methodology and any other information used to certify each property assessment publicly available by May 1.*

Explanation:

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted.
Italics indicate new matter added.

[Note: Exhibits to this Bill are on file in the Office of the Chief Clerk.]

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CERTIFICATION: This is a true and correct copy of the original Bill, Passed by the City Council on June 13, 2013. The Bill was Signed by the Mayor on September 6, 2013.



Michael A. Decker
Chief Clerk of the City Council