

## PREPARING YOUR APPEAL

Remember the issue before the Board of Equalization (BOE) is the *market value* of your property. **The amount of tax, the assessed value of other properties, the percentage of assessment increase, personal hardship, and other matters unrelated to the market value alone are not sufficient to win your case.** ‘Market value is the amount of money that a willing and unobligated buyer is willing to pay a willing and unobligated seller.’

Accordingly, you will need to demonstrate to the BOE that the Assessor’s valuation exceeds your property’s fair market value. State law requires the Assessor to value all taxable property at 100 percent of its true and fair market value according to the highest and best use of the property. State law presumes that the Assessor is correct. Therefore, it is up to you, the property owner, to prove that the Assessor is incorrect. You must demonstrate to the Board with “clear, cogent, and convincing evidence” that your estimate of value is closer to market value than that of the Assessor.

**The value you are contesting is for the 2022 assessment year, with an assessment date of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. Comparable sales used to indicate true market value must have a sale date occurring within the assessment cycle. The assessment cycle is any sale occurring up to 5 years prior to date you submitted your petition. Sales occurring closest to the assessment date and sales that are the most truly similar to the subject property are given the most weight.**

Your purchase price can be used to substantiate market value *provided* it occurred within the assessment cycle and was a true arm’s length transaction. The best comparable sales are sales located in your neighborhood/area, with similar land and improvement features that sold closest to the assessment date. Comparable properties do not have to exactly match your property. Look for sales that are most similar, note their differences, and identify superior and inferior property features. This comparison process should enable you to determine whether your property would sell for more than or less than the sale price for each comparable sale, leading you to a market value estimate. Be prepared to present and defend this analysis at the hearing.

Other successful forms of evidence include:

- Contractor estimates of costs to repair building or land defects.
- Letters/documents from government agencies or experts regarding development limitations or other issues related to your property.
- Deeds describing easements that impact value.
- Independent appraisals as long as the comparable sales within meet the standards described above.
- Photographs of features/conditions that you feel diminish your property’s market value.

Comparable sales can easily be obtained from Realtors or Title Companies, or for internet users, you can use the County Web Page to look up sales.

You can then enter in the search parameters such as sale type, sale dates, sale price, etc. Click search and look through the results to find parcels in your area. Select & click on a parcel # and then you can view the Assessor’s, Treasurer’s or Appraisal info, or even an area map for that parcel by selecting the icon of your choice. Use the Assessor’s info to show sale date & price and the Appraisal info to show how it compares to your property, i.e.: year built, square footage, acres, etc. at [www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us/443/Wahkiakum-County-Sales-Data](http://www.co.wahkiakum.wa.us/443/Wahkiakum-County-Sales-Data)

Documentary evidence used to support your case, **must be submitted no later than 21 business days prior to your hearing before the Board.** It is best to submit your evidence as soon as possible to ensure that you don’t miss the deadline, and so that the Board has time to be prepared with any questions they may have.

**If you have any questions regarding types of acceptable evidence, or the timeframe for comparable sales, please contact the Laurie Williams at [lwilliamsboe@co.wahkiakum.wa.us](mailto:lwilliamsboe@co.wahkiakum.wa.us) or by phone (360) 355-0742**