



BRUNSDON LAWREK & ASSOCIATES

REAL ESTATE APPRAISALS AND ADVISORY SERVICES

2019 SAAA Conference

Reviewing Property Taxes and Real Property Assessments



CLIENTS/TAXPAYERS

- Real property assessments serve one main purpose – the equitable distribution of municipal taxes amongst property owners
- Taxpayers are fundamental – it's the taxpayer's property, its their assessment, and its their property tax bill
- Tax Agents only represent Taxpayers
- Typically two client types:
 - Taxpayers concerned about a specific assessment
 - Portfolio clients, prudent business practice, do reviews every four years
- Professionalism – Accreditation - Standards and Ethics – always in play



ASSESSMENT REVIEW

- Client engagement – discuss property, discuss assessment concerns
- Client to supply – assessment/tax notices, property history, rent rolls, drawings, marketing materials, copies of forms sent to the assessor, check for compliance with municipal RFIs
- Municipal information – acquire copies of the subject assessment record, relevant market reports, sales listings
- Site visit – assignment specific
- Cross check information to ensure the assessment is reflective of the correct base data and check math



COMPARABLE/SIMILAR PROPERTIES

- Review data on similar properties – other strip malls, other office buildings, other auto dealerships, etc. in the same or similar cities, towns, villages ... depending on the property type.
- Review:
 - Sale levels
 - Lease rates, market rents
 - Capitalization rates
 - Assessment stratifications
 - Assessed values



RESOURCES

- Brunsdon Lawrek database, MLS
 - Historic appraisal files
 - SAMAVIEW, City online assessments
 - ISC, City mapping
 - Google and Google Maps
 - SMB website, Canlii, SAMA Handbook and Cost Guide
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- Appraisal knowledge, market experience
 - The Assessor
 - The Taxpayer
 - Colleagues, other appraisers/realtors, legal counsel



DRAW CONCLUSIONS

- Is the assessment representative of the property's market value as of the base date, based on the available market data?
- Is the assessment equitable with similar properties?
- If too high, why?
- Is there valid basis for appeal?
- Likelihood of success on appeal and/or that an agreement can be reached with the Assessor?





COMMUNICATE WITH CLIENT

- Communicate findings of assessment review
- Recommend appeal or not
- If assessment valid and appeal not recommended, close file
- If assessment deemed to be too high, recommend appeal
- Confirm client approval to file appeal, if recommended, and request filing fee cheque



COMMUNICATE WITH THE ASSESSOR

- May have already contacted the Assessor during the assessment review
- If not, now is the time to:
 - Discuss assessment concerns, data used ...
 - Ask questions, get feedback
 - Arrange re-inspection of property if warranted
- If still convinced an appeal is warranted, inform the assessor going to file and that the date and conversation will be noted on appeal form
- If new information from Assessor changes opinion, change recommendation to client – to not recommending an appeal



FILE AN APPEAL WHEN ...

- Assessment is too high and inequitable
- Have good evidence/argument for the BOR or know an agreement can be reached
- Have the client/taxpayer's authorization and filing fee cheque
- Note: An appeal is challenging the Assessment, not the Assessor!
Have to say "the Assessor erred ..."



CHALLENGES

- System Design – reviewing inequitable assessments that we can't do anything about
- Co-operation/non-co-operation – Clients/taxpayers and Assessors/municipalities
- Timing – everything happens all at once !!!
- Staffing and succession – stress levels, hours, compensation structure



REWARDS

- Interesting work, different every day, learning all the time
- Interesting clients, who want to work with you – makes a real difference to people
- Rewarding to see the assessor incorporate a market factor or methodology we argued in one cycle into the model for the next cycle
- Opportunity to be a real part of the assessment community in SK



Questions??



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