

**Whatcom County
Assessor's Office**
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Rebecca M. Xczar
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Bellingham, WA
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The 2020 Change of Value Notices were mailed November 19, 2020. State law requires County Assessors to appraise every property annually, with an effective assessment date of January 1st for most properties, and July 31st for new construction. Change of Value Notices are not tax bills, and an increase in value does not mean a proportional increase in property tax.

The Assessor must value all property in Whatcom County at full market value. Sales from 2019 were analyzed to develop an assessed value as of January 1, 2020. The market continued to appreciate through 2019 for most locations and types of properties, which is reflected in the January 1, 2020 assessed values. Total Assessed Value in the county increased approximately \$2.87 billion, which includes \$448,999,987 in new construction value.

Every year, 1/6th of properties in Whatcom County are physically inspected and reassessed. In 2020, the Assessor's Office inspected Downtown Bellingham, Columbia, Lettered Streets, Roosevelt, Geneva, and Sudden Valley. These properties were brought to market, with a wide range of percentage changes.

The remaining 5/6th of the county properties are adjusted based on a statistical update, from analysis of sales of similar properties. Double digit increases were seen in multifamily properties throughout the county, single family homes on lots in Ferndale, and homes on acreage in several areas including Meridian, north Lynden, and greater Acme. Residential single family in Lynden, Blaine and Birch Bay saw increases, while Sumas, Nooksack, and Everson saw no change. Condo units increased in most areas. Some commercial properties, primarily in and around Bellingham, saw increases as well. BP, Whatcom County's largest property tax payer, slightly increased to \$1,003,000,000 for its facility at Cherry Point and surrounding land.

A number of properties saw no change in value, and will receive no Change of Value Notice.

The Assessor understands that COVID-19 has created economic challenges for many, and the Assessor's Office has been monitoring the economic impacts of the pandemic. Current values are effective January 1, which was prior to the COVID-19 outbreak. Since January 2020, residential housing values have typically remained stable or increased in Whatcom County, though some commercial property types have seen a negative impact. Any changes in value caused by COVID-19 will be reflected next year, in the 2021 assessment, for taxes payable in 2022.

Due to COVID-19, and for the safety of the public and our staff, the Assessor's office remains closed to all in-person visits except by appointment. "Please know that we are still here to assist you, and that

most questions can be answered by phone or email”, said Assessor Rebecca Xczar. Additionally, there is information online with recently updated web pages that include new interactive map search features. In-person appointments available, please call or email to schedule.

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