



Frederick A. Laskey, Commissioner
Joseph J. Chessey, Jr., Deputy Commissioner

CITY & TOWN

A Publication of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services

FY2000 Automated Tax Rate Recapitulation

written by James Podolak

The Division of Local Services (DLS) has substantially updated its automated Tax Rate Recapitulation program for FY2000. In July, DLS mailed booklets of forms and instructions with the new diskette to every community. The new program is an Excel-based diskette, which makes the process of calculating the tax rate more efficient by reducing the amount of data entry required and allowing the user to move quickly between worksheets and data entry cells. More importantly, using the program can expedite the tax rate review process if a copy of the completed diskette is mailed to DLS along with the signed originals.

Completing the four page Tax Rate Recapitulation sheet manually is a laborious and time-consuming process, as there are numerous forms to provide supporting documentation. Since the forms tie together, changing a number in one place requires follow-through to prevent errors. DLS previously had provided an automated recap, but it was not as easy to use. The new program provides a more user-friendly method of accurately completing the recap.

The new Excel workbook allows the inclusion of many features previously unavailable in the DOS-based versions. In order to run the program, a community must have access to a personal computer running Microsoft Windows 3.1 or greater, Microsoft Excel version 5 or greater, a 3.5" diskette drive, a recommended minimum of 16MB RAM, approximately 1 MB of hard disk space and any Windows-compatible printer. The program performs best when transferred to a hard drive. Officials should use the special Print Menu to ensure proper formatting of the forms.

The form worksheets appear in approximately the same order found in the printed booklet. The program transfers figures automatically between forms and performs all calculations. When a community's name is entered in the START worksheet, it automatically appears in all of the worksheets, and community specific information on the prior year's valuations is transferred to the LA-13/New Growth worksheet. Historical information automatically appears on the LEVY LIMIT worksheets as does

Using the new diskette expedites setting the tax rate.

total tax levy growth from the LA-13. DLS-generated utility values are also included. The new program includes six A-2 worksheets to accommodate communities with more than one enterprise fund. If a community has completed a Pro Forma, the program transfers information to the RECAP worksheets and adjusts the levy/overlay automatically.

A newly added OPTIONS TABLE worksheet has been designed specifically for development of "what if" scenarios. This worksheet is completely independent of the other data on the Recap diskette. The table allows local officials to see the resulting tax rates given different assessed values, tax levies, and classification options. The user is able to see the impact on the tax rates of shifts to the commercial/industrial and personal property classes ranging from 101 percent to 175 percent, at 1-percent increments. The advantage of this table is twofold. First, it allows local officials to estimate the impact of tax policy decisions throughout the budget process.

Second, assessors can use the data in preparation for the annual classification hearing where information on the impact of various options is presented to the selectmen/council and the public so that informed decisions can be made.

For local officials who do not have access to Excel, the Bureau of Accounts (BOA) field representative can provide assistance using BOA laptop computers, or officials may go to one of the regional offices. Contact your community's BOA representative with questions about the forms or the tax rate setting process. Questions about the Automated Recap workbook should be referred to Arnold Kanter at (617) 626-2303.

The Division is hoping that this enhanced recap program will eliminate many fax submissions since they are often unreadable. Submitting the recap on a diskette along with the signed paper copies will expedite the review process and ensure timely approval. The new automated recap will be a welcome improvement for DLS as well as for local officials. ■

Inside This Issue

Legal

Fair Cash Value of
Affordable Housing 2

Focus

Single Family Tax Bills &
Property Value 3

DLS Update

Y2K Outreach Program 7
Tax Seminar 7
Purchasing Course Update 7

Municipal Fiscal Calendar 8
Opportunities for Training 8

LEGAL

in Our Opinion

Fair Cash Value of Affordable Housing

In April 1999 the Appellate Tax Board (ATB) made an important ruling concerning the proper assessment of residential properties which are subject to state affordable housing restrictions. The case is *Truehart v. Board of Assessors of Montague*.¹

Three plaintiffs owned single family homes in the Town of Montague. The properties were under the Housing Opportunity Program (HOP) created by the Legislature in 1987 to promote homeownership opportunities for moderate income families. Under the program qualified first-time homebuyers can acquire a house at a discounted price and also receive a reduced rate mortgage from the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency (MHFA). A qualified applicant's income must be sufficient to pay all costs associated with home ownership but not exceed 80 percent of the particular region's median income.

To increase the stock of affordable housing, officials at MHFA have negotiated agreements with developers to set aside a certain number of houses in new subdivisions as HOP units. By the mid-1990s, there were approximately 2,000 HOP units in 60 Massachusetts cities and towns. In this case, the developer had agreed to sell designated HOP units in Montague for no more than \$95,000, although other identical homes in the development were selling for \$125,000. The sale price and the actual appraised value are important factors. When a new owner acquires a HOP unit, a deed restriction is executed giving MHFA the right of first refusal, permitting MHFA to maintain the homes as HOP units for lower income homebuyers. The restriction establishes the maximum amount of the proceeds a HOP owner may re-

alize upon selling a unit. When a HOP owner sells the property, his right to proceeds is limited by the same discount he received when he acquired the property. For example, if the HOP unit had an appraised value of \$125,000 but was sold to the HOP buyer for \$94,000, the owner received a discount of 24 percent. The same 24 percent discount must be applied to a future sale. Thus, although a home may appreciate to a fair market value of \$200,000, the owner can realize no more than \$152,000 from the sale.

In the ATB case, the new owners of the HOP properties in Montague received fiscal year 1992 tax bills which were the same as those received by owners of non-HOP homes. After their abatement applications were denied, the owners appealed to the ATB, claiming that their assessments should have been lower due to the existence of the resale restrictions.

In its opinion, the ATB recognized that actual arm's-length sales are the best evidence of full and fair cash value. In the Montague appeals, there had been sales of properties with HOP restrictions in 1990 and 1991 at sale prices significantly less than the assessors' fiscal year 1992 values. Although they clearly had an impact on the value of the HOP properties, the assessors had failed to consider the deed restrictions in valuing the parcels.

Courts in Massachusetts have held that the assessors should ignore impediments to value which are not permanent when they assess real property. The Supreme Judicial Court upheld an assessment which did not reflect an uneconomic lease. In *Donovan*, the court decided that assessors must assess the owner as if he were receiving market rent, even though the below market lease was for a long term, because the lease was not a permanent restriction.² On the other hand, how-

ever, the assessors must take into consideration an encumbrance that affects the use and enjoyment of a parcel permanently. In *Parkinson v. Board of Assessors of Medfield*, the Supreme Judicial Court ruled that a conservation restriction does affect a parcel's assessed value since it limits development of the land.³

In the ATB's view, the HOP resale restriction was a governmental restriction akin to a federal regulation that limits the income derived by the owner of a low-income housing project. The Supreme Judicial Court ruled that, unlike a disadvantageous lease which would have a temporary impact on the value of the property, such a restriction does affect the parcel's value because it is permanent.⁴ In another important case, the New Jersey court ruled that resale restrictions established by its State's affordable housing program must be considered by the assessors in valuing the residential property.⁵

Accordingly, a governmental restriction which restricts resale affects the parcel's market value and must be considered by assessors in Massachusetts when valuing the property. In its *Truehart* decision, the ATB took into account the governmental restrictions when granting abatements to the three property owners in Montague. The ATB did not decide what the value would be if MHFA had not regularly exercised its right of first refusal. In such a scenario, whether and to what extent, the restriction should be considered was not decided.

written by James Crowley

1. Docket ## 198055, 198056, 198057, 1999.

2. *Donovan v. Haverhill*, 247 Mass. 69,71 (1923).

3. 398 Mass. 112 (1986).

4. *Community Development Company of Gardner v. Board of Assessors of Gardner*, 377 Mass. 351 (1979).

5. *Prowitz v. Ridgefield Park Village*, 568 A.2d 114 (1984), affirmed 584 A.2d 782 (1991).

FOCUS

on Municipal Finance

FY1999 Single Family Tax Bills and Property Values

One of the most requested articles to appear in *City & Town* is the annual review of average single family tax bills and average assessed values in each of Massachusetts' cities and towns. From FY1998 to FY1999, the average single family tax bill statewide went up 3.8 percent, less than the 4.4 percent change occurring between FY1997 and FY1998, but more than the Consumer Price Index which increased by only 1.7 percent during the same period. The average assessed value increased by 5.2 percent between FY1998 and FY1999, more than the 3.7 percent change in the previous year. The average statewide tax rate declined for the first time since FY1990, from \$14.92 in FY1998 to \$14.73 in FY1999.

Statewide Trends

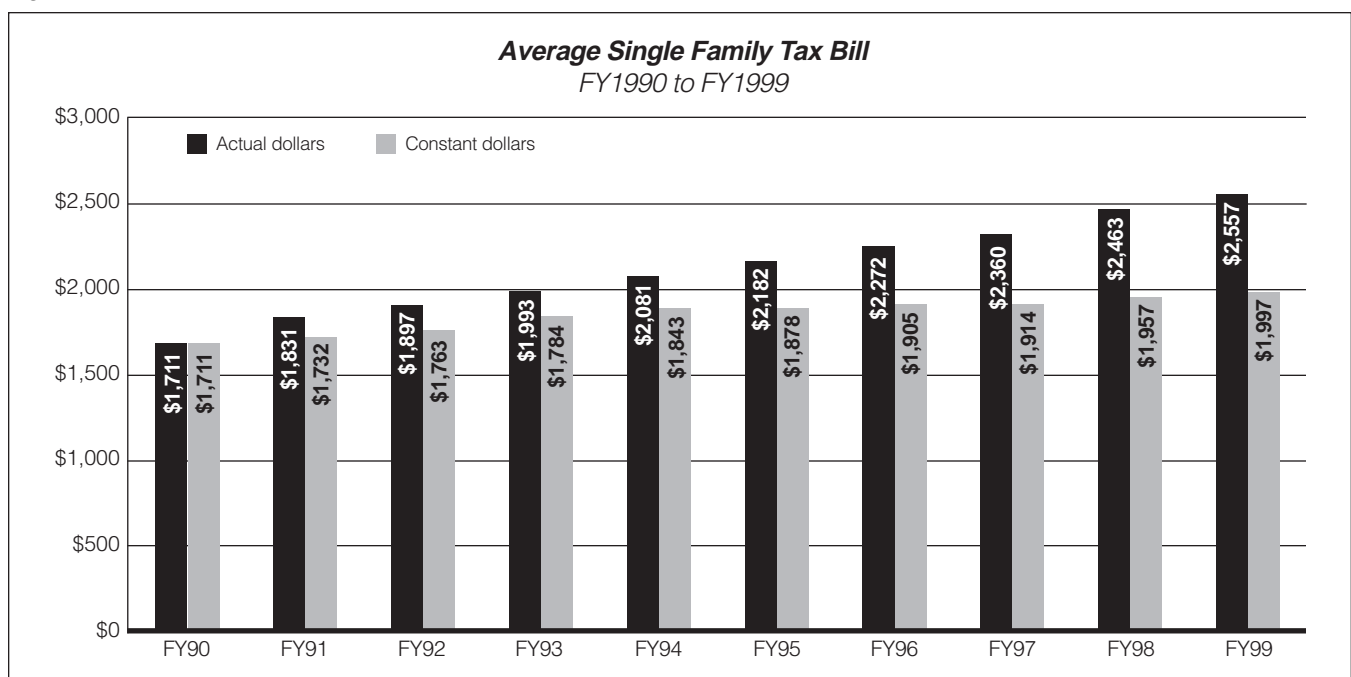
Figure 1 looks at the trend in average single family tax bills for the whole state since FY1990. Looking at actual dollars, there is a constant increase from \$1,711 to \$2,557 (49.4 percent). When translated into constant dollars, however, there has been much less change (16.7 percent). Constant dollars have been calculated by taking FY1990 dollars and applying the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, Boston. Eleven cities and towns with residential exemptions have been excluded from this analysis because their data are not reported in sufficient detail to calculate an average single family tax bill accurately. The communities excluded are Boston, Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Marlborough, Nantucket, Somerset, Somerville, Tisbury, Waltham and Watertown.

Figure 2 shows that the statewide average assessed value in FY1999 is less than the average assessed value in FY1990 in both actual and constant dollars. In actual dollars, the average increased from \$174,817 in FY1990 to \$175,917 in FY1991, then decreased by 13 percent to \$153,133 in FY1994. Between FY1994 and FY1999, the average value increased to \$173,576 (13 percent), slightly less than the FY1990 average value. In adjusted dollars, the current average assessed value is \$135,591; it was \$174,817 in FY1990.

The actual tax rates increased steadily from \$9.79 in FY1990 to \$14.92 in FY1998, but declined by 1.3 percent for FY1999 to \$14.73. Table 2 shows the average single family tax rate, the average assessed value and the average tax bill statewide, in actual and constant dollars, for FY1990 through FY1999.

continued on page six ➡

Figure 1



Municipality	FY98				FY99				FY00				FY01				FY02				FY03				FY04				FY05				FY06				FY07				FY08				FY09				FY10				FY11				FY12				FY13				FY14				FY15				FY16				FY17				FY18				FY19				FY20				FY21				FY22				FY23				FY24				FY25				FY26				FY27				FY28				FY29				FY30				FY31				FY32				FY33				FY34				FY35				FY36				FY37				FY38				FY39				FY40				FY41				FY42				FY43				FY44				FY45				FY46				FY47				FY48				FY49				FY50				FY51				FY52				FY53				FY54				FY55				FY56				FY57				FY58				FY59				FY60				FY61				FY62				FY63				FY64				FY65				FY66				FY67				FY68				FY69				FY70				FY71				FY72				FY73				FY74				FY75				FY76				FY77				FY78				FY79				FY80				FY81				FY82				FY83				FY84				FY85				FY86				FY87				FY88				FY89				FY90				FY91				FY92				FY93				FY94				FY95				FY96				FY97				FY98				FY99				FY00				FY01				FY02				FY03				FY04				FY05				FY06				FY07				FY08				FY09				FY10				FY11				FY12				FY13				FY14				FY15				FY16				FY17				FY18				FY19				FY20				FY21				FY22				FY23				FY24				FY25				FY26				FY27				FY28				FY29				FY30				FY31				FY32				FY33				FY34				FY35				FY36				FY37				FY38				FY39				FY40				FY41				FY42				FY43				FY44				FY45				FY46				FY47				FY48				FY49				FY50				FY51				FY52				FY53				FY54				FY55				FY56				FY57				FY58				FY59				FY60				FY61				FY62				FY63				FY64				FY65				FY66				FY67				FY68				FY69				FY70				FY71				FY72				FY73				FY74				FY75				FY76				FY77				FY78				FY79				FY80				FY81				FY82				FY83				FY84				FY85				FY86				FY87				FY88				FY89				FY90				FY91				FY92				FY93				FY94				FY95				FY96				FY97				FY98				FY99				FY00				FY01				FY02				FY03				FY04				FY05				FY06				FY07				FY08				FY09				FY10				FY11				FY12				FY13				FY14				FY15				FY16				FY17				FY18				FY19				FY20				FY21				FY22				FY23				FY24				FY25				FY26				FY27				FY28				FY29				FY30				FY31				FY32				FY33				FY34				FY35				FY36				FY37				FY38				FY39				FY40				FY41				FY42				FY43				FY44				FY45				FY46				FY47				FY48				FY49				FY50				FY51				FY52				FY53				FY54				FY55				FY56				FY57				FY58				FY59				FY60				FY61				FY62				FY63				FY64				FY65				FY66				FY67				FY68				FY69				FY70				FY71				FY72				FY73				FY74				FY75				FY76				FY77				FY78				FY79				FY80				FY81				FY82				FY83				FY84				FY85				FY86				FY87				FY88				FY89				FY90				FY91				FY92				FY93				FY94				FY95				FY96				FY97				FY98				FY99				FY00				FY01				FY02				FY03				FY04				FY05				FY06				FY07				FY08				FY09				FY10				FY11				FY12				FY13				FY14				FY15				FY16				FY17				FY18				FY19				FY20				FY21				FY22				FY23				FY24				FY25				FY26				FY27				FY28				FY29				FY30				FY31				FY32				FY33				FY34				FY35				FY36				FY37				FY38				FY39				FY40				FY41				FY42				FY43				FY44				FY45				FY46				FY47				FY48				FY49				FY50				FY51				FY52				FY53				FY54				FY55				FY56				FY57				FY58				FY59				FY60				FY61				FY62				FY63				FY64				FY65				FY66				FY67				FY68			
--------------	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--	------	--	--	--

Single Family Tax Bills & Property Values

→ continued from page three

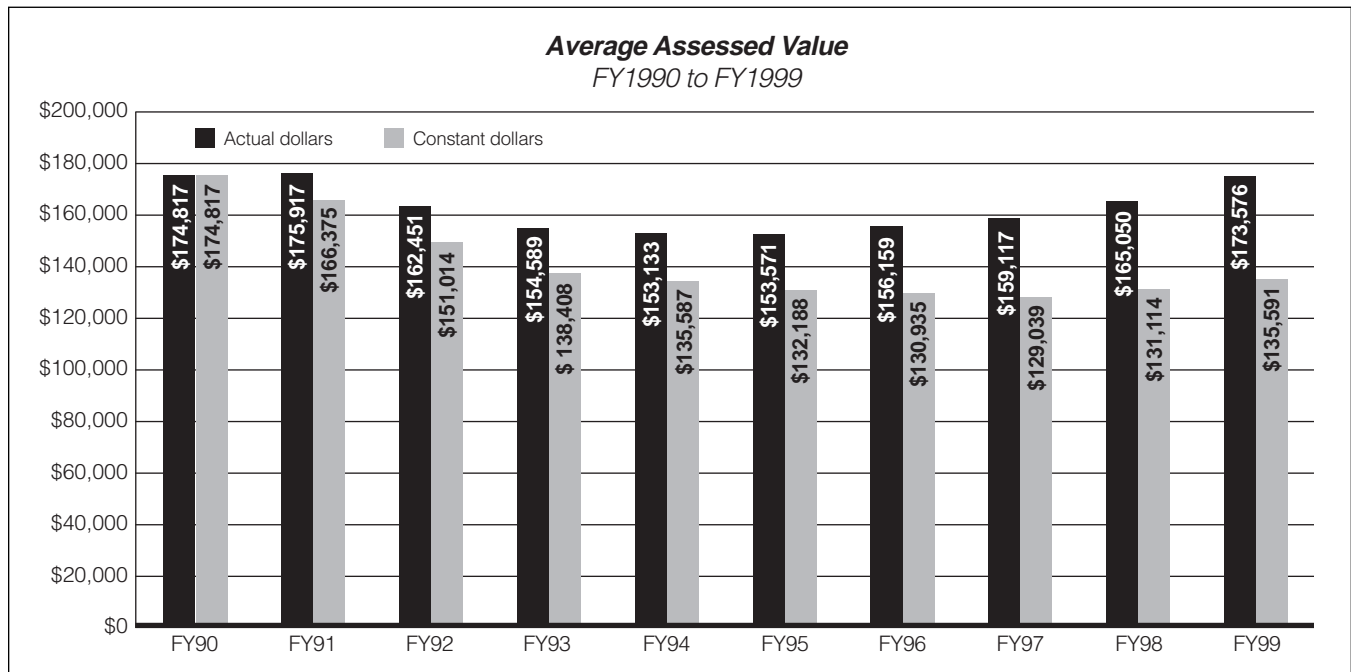


Figure 2

Community trends

Table 1 shows the average single family assessed value and tax bill for FY1998 and FY1999, ranks communities from high to low for the FY1999 average tax bill, and shows percent change in average value and in the average tax bill. Generally, communities with higher assessed values have higher average tax bills. The five communities with the highest average tax bills are Weston (\$7,753), Lincoln (\$7,127), Sherborn (\$6,587), Carlisle (\$6,034) and Wayland (\$5,800). When ranked on average assessed value, Weston and Lincoln rank 1st and 2nd respectively, Sherborn ranks 8th, Carlisle ranks 11th and Wayland ranks 20th. There also appears to be a strong correlation between high average tax bills and per capita income. Weston (1), Sherborn (2), Carlisle (4), Lincoln (5) and Wayland (6) are at the top of the list when arrayed by per capita income.¹ Communities on the Cape and Islands tend to have high assessed values but lower tax bills due to a large number of seasonal properties whose residents have a lower de-

mand for services. Four of the communities in the top 25 for average assessed value are located on Martha's Vineyard and the Elizabeth Islands. Chilmark has the 3rd highest average assessed value, but ranks 240th for average tax bill. Aquinnah is 10th in value, but 147th for tax bill. West Tisbury is 17th for value but 101st for tax bills and Gosnold is 12th for value but 335th for average tax bill.

The relationship between average tax bills and average assessed value is not as strong at the other end of the spectrum. The communities with the lowest average tax bills are Rowe (\$580), Tolland (\$667), New Ashford (\$725), Monroe (\$750), and Hancock (\$807). These communities, all small towns in western Massachusetts, rank 235th, 192nd,

continued on page seven →

Table 2. FY90–FY99 Average Tax Rates and Tax Bills

Fiscal year	Average single family tax rate	Actual dollars		Constant FY90 dollars	
		Average assessed value	Average tax bill	Average assessed value	Average tax bill
1990	9.79	174,817	1,711	174,817	1,711
1991	10.41	175,917	1,831	166,375	1,732
1992	11.68	162,451	1,897	151,014	1,763
1993	12.89	154,589	1,993	138,408	1,784
1994	13.59	153,133	2,081	135,587	1,843
1995	14.21	153,571	2,182	132,188	1,878
1996	14.59	156,159	2,272	130,935	1,905
1997	14.83	159,117	2,360	129,039	1,914
1998	14.92	165,050	2,463	131,114	1,957
1999	14.73	173,576	2,557	135,591	1,997

Note: Constant FY90 dollars calculated using the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, Boston.

DLS UPDATE

Y2K Outreach Project

During FY1999, the Division of Local Services (DLS) has provided a special service to local communities, in conjunction with the Governor's task force on Y2K. DLS has offered assistance to small towns with less than 20,000 population, by preparing an inventory of their computer equipment and programs, identifying potential Y2K problems and assisting in contingency planning. To date 176 communities have requested assistance. In addition, DLS has a website for local officials to query about which vendors are Y2K compliant and for the public to determine their community's Year 2000 readiness. The DLS website is constantly being updated, as new information becomes available. The address is www.dls.state.ma.us/y2kinfo.htm.

One-Day Tax Seminar

The Department of Revenue (DOR) will sponsor a one-day informational seminar on Massachusetts' state sales, property and corporate taxes at the Boston Marriott in Newton on October 21, 1999. The seminar will be co-hosted by DOR and the Institute of Professionals in Taxation. The seminar is geared toward practitioners, attorneys, business owners and other professionals in the sales and use, property and corporate tax fields. DOR is finalizing the agenda and selecting speakers. Sample topics include an overview of the audit process, Departmental initiatives, and recent court decisions. Commissioner of Revenue Frederick A. Laskey and other key personnel from DOR will be making presentations.

Contact DOR's Office of the Taxpayer Advocate at (617) 626-2201, or visit DOR's website at www.state.ma.us/dor for further details and registration information. The projected cost for the seminar is \$125 and continuing education credits are available to attendees.

Purchasing Course Update

Participation in the Inspector General's Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Program (MCPPO) has been outstanding. Authorized by the legislature in 1996 to establish a training program to promote professionalism in public contracting, the office of the Inspector General has awarded over 1100 course completion certificates and over 100 MCPPO Designations have been approved for award.

Seminars currently being offered include: Public Contracting Overview; Suppliers and Services; and Design and Construction Contracting. Each three-day seminar provides a comprehensive overview of purchasing principles and legal requirements for public contracting, as well as workshops that apply contracting knowledge to practical problems faced by procurement officials. Anyone with responsibility for procurements, contract management or oversight, or auditing will benefit from these seminars. Participants can earn continuing education credits, professional development points, or work toward an undergraduate or graduate college degree by completing MCPPO seminars.

For more information, please contact Anne Tierney or Genesi Dorsey at (617) 523-1205 or visit the web site at www.state.ma.us/ig/ighome. ■

Single Family Tax Bills ➡ continued from page six

274th, 340th and 248th on average assessed value. The relationship between average tax bill and per capita income is not as strong either. Tolland, which has the second lowest tax bill, ranks 67th for per capita income. Hancock is also above the median income, ranking 153rd. Rowe, New Ashford and Monroe rank 231st, 314th and 336th respectively.

From FY1998 to FY1999 the average tax bill decreased in 41 communities. The percentage decrease ranged from as little as -0.1 percent in Easton, Peru, Richmond and Sandisfield, to 17.9 percent in Leyden. The largest increases occurred in Topsfield (18.7 percent), Ayer (18.5 percent), Webster (17.1 percent), Southborough (14.9 percent), and Williamstown (14.5 percent). The average assessed value declined in 19 communities. The decline was less than one percent in most communities, but Leyden experienced a decline in the average assessed value of 8.6 percent. On the other hand, 42 communities had increases of more than 10 percent in average assessed value. The top five increases were West Tisbury (24.2 percent), Provincetown (20.9 percent), Bedford (20.4 percent), Revere (20.4 percent) and Gloucester (19.7 percent).

Tax bill, assessed value and tax rate data come from the FY1999 property tax information that local assessors submit to the Division of Local Services. The average tax bill for each community is calculated by dividing the total tax levy for all single family parcels by the total number of single family parcels. The same is done with state totals to get the statewide average. Average assessed value is calculated by dividing the total assessed value by the total number of parcels. The statewide average tax rate is calculated by dividing the statewide total tax levy by the total assessed value. ■

written by Jean McCarthy
data provided by Debbie DePerri & Stanley Nyberg

1. US Census, 1989.

Municipal Fiscal Calendar

October 1

Collector: Mail first semi-annual tax bills.

Taxpayer: Last date to file application to have land valued and taxed as agricultural/horticultural land or recreational land, M.G.L. ch. 61A and ch. 61B.

October 15

DOE: Notify communities of any prior-year school spending deficiencies.

Superintendent: Submit school foundation enrollment report to DOE.

October 31

Accountant: Submit Schedule A for prior fiscal year.

Selectmen: Begin establishing next fiscal year budget guidelines and request department budgets.

Assessors: Begin work on tax rate recapitulation sheet (to set tax rate for semi-annual bills).

Opportunities for Training

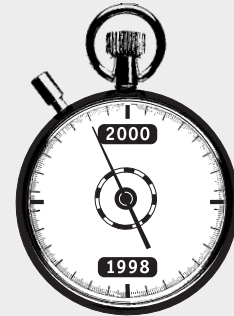
Assessment Administration: Law, Procedures, Valuation will be offered at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Bourne on eight Wednesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. beginning September 22.

Classification Training Workshop at the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Bourne on Wednesday, October 20, at 7:00 p.m.

"What's New in Municipal Law" will be offered at the Sheraton Framingham Hotel in Framingham on Friday, October 15, 1999; and at the Best Western Sovereign Hotel in West Springfield on Friday, October 22, 1999, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

For more information, contact Barbara LaVertue, Coordinator of Training, at (617) 626-2340. ■

Countdown to Y2K



City & Town



City & Town is published by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue's Division of Local Services (DLS) and is designed to address matters of interest to local officials. DLS offers numerous publications on municipal law and finance, available by calling (617) 626-2300, or through the DLS website at www.state.ma.us/dls or by writing to PO Box 9490, Boston, MA 02205-9490.

Marilyn H. Browne, Managing Editor

Jean M. McCarthy, Editor

7M 9/99 GC00C02

CITY&TOWN

Division of Local Services
PO Box 9490
Boston, MA 02205-9490

Return service requested

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COMMONWEALTH OF
MASSACHUSETTS