

Q. How is my property assessed each year?

All property is valued every year and is based on calendar year market sales in Marblehead. Fiscal Year 2024 began July 1, 2023, and is based on what existed January 1, 2023, so the preceding calendar year 2022 primarily is used for the basis of valuations.

Assessed values are based on fair market value using arm's length sales in 2022. Our analysis does not use any foreclosures, short sales, family, estate, or private sales.

Components of an arm's length transaction are a willing buyer and seller, who are unrelated, acting in their own best interest, neither under undue influence, the property is for sale in the open marketplace and the price represents the nominal consideration for the property sold unaffected by special or creative financing or sales concessions granted by anyone associated with the sale.

Every sale is reviewed to ensure that it is an arm's length transaction by reviewing deeds, speaking with realtors and brokers knowledgeable about the sale, reviewing Multiple Listing Service (MLS), sale questionnaires and site inspections. Every year the Town Assessor is out in the field to observe changes in neighborhood conditions, trends and property characteristics.

The DOR criteria states that valuations must be between 90%-110% of fair market value. The Board of Assessors values close to 100% of fair market value depending on what is happening in the marketplace.

Additionally, appraising and assessing are based on the same principles and procedures of valuation with 2 distinct differences: number of homes viewed and market timeframe.

For example, if you hired an appraiser to value your home on July 1, 2023, they will compare your home to 3 to 6 properties that ideally sold on your street, if not in your neighborhood, if not in a similar neighborhood in town using current market sales. The comparable homes will be adjusted (grade, square footage, etc.) to arrive at an opinion of value for your home.

In assessment, we are looking at all the single-family homes (condo's, etc.) that sold in a past market, which in FY2024 is calendar year 2022. A statistical analysis of this data is performed by breaking it into sub-groups (gross living area, neighborhood, sales price, etc.) and then applied to market sales using the DOR criteria mentioned above.

Q. Are their different districts in town and do they have different values attributed to them?

Location is one of the biggest factors that impacts market value. Neighborhood codes are based on where your property is in town and take into consideration attributes such as style, age, etc. According to the Dictionary of Real Estate Appraisal, a neighborhood is, "A group of complementary land uses; a congruous grouping of inhabitants, buildings, or business enterprises." Adjustments are made to the neighborhoods and properties as the marketplace dictates.

Q. Why has my assessment gone up so much while others have seen smaller increases?

Assessments are based on where arm's length market sales occurred in town and what the buyer was willing to pay for the property to close the sale.

In 2022, according to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) 194 single family homes were sold in Marblehead of which 67% (130 sales) sold above listing price. Of those that sold above listing price, 45% (58 sales) sold between \$100,000-\$655,000 over list price.

Q. Which areas of town saw the largest increases and why?  
Which areas saw the smallest increases and why?

Atlantic and Humphrey areas saw smaller increases while waterfront properties and those in close proximity to them as well as Naugus Avenue area saw larger increases.

Whether the increase was large or small, both are due to market derived data.

Q. How many abatements were approved in FY2023?

For Fiscal Year 2023 (calendar year 2021 sales), there were 19 abatements approved out of 56 abatement applications filed. With that said, every year is different and is based on what transpired in the marketplace.

Q. What is the process if I disagree with my valuation?

It is the same process whether we are in an appreciating or depreciating market. You have the right to file an abatement application with the Board of Assessors.

It takes approximately 6 months to value the town and receive certification from the Department of Revenue. Because of that and the way the law is written, valuations are deemed to be valid. So, the burden of proof is on the taxpayer to provide a compelling argument and ideally supporting documentation as to why they believe they are overvalued.

The information and application are available on the Assessors home page on the town's website at [www.marblehead.org/assessors](http://www.marblehead.org/assessors). The deadline to file is February 1, 2024, time-stamped in the office, or post-marked by the U.S. Postal Service.

Q. Who reviews applications for abatements? Is it the Assessor's Office or an outside body?

All applications are reviewed by the Town Assessor and Board of Assessors. Each application is read and discussed before the Board of Assessors renders a decision.

Q. How long does it take for an abatement application to be reviewed?

The Board of Assessors has 90 days from the date the application was time-stamped in the office to review and render a decision. That period can be extended if it is agreed to by both parties in writing. If you disagree with the Board's decision, you can file an appeal with the Massachusetts

Appellate Tax Board. You can find that information on the back of the abatement slip or denial notice that you will receive in the mail after the board renders their decision.

Q. Is there any indication where assessments will be in Fiscal Year 2025?

Fiscal Year 2025 will be based on market sales in calendar year 2023. The review of market sales detailed above will begin in the spring once all decisions have been made for Fiscal Year 2024 abatement applications.