



2023 Assessor Report

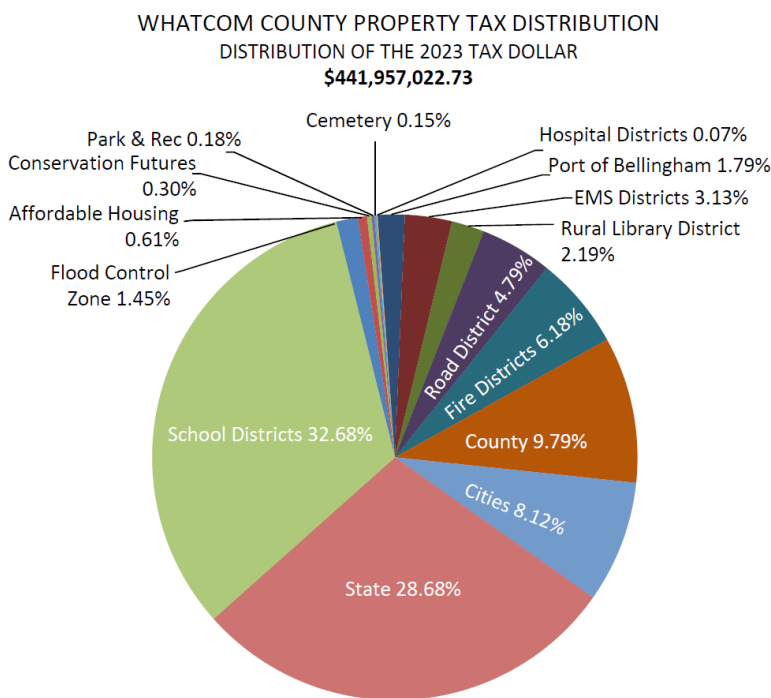
Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities Exemption: Income Levels Increasing for 2024

The State Legislature passed SHB 1355 this year which will increase the qualifying income levels for the property tax exemptions for senior citizens and people with disabilities. **Beginning in 2024**, the qualifying income level in Whatcom County will increase from \$42,043 to \$52,000. You may qualify for a property tax reduction for 2024 if you are at least 61 years old or retired because of a disability, own and live in your home, and have gross annual income of \$52,000 or less for 2023.

See more details on our website at: whatcomcounty.us/265/Property-Tax-Exemption

How does Assessed Value Impact Property Tax?

Each taxing district sets their own budget and most have statutory limitations on increases. Rising taxes primarily result from voter-approved measures.



For 2023 taxes, voters county-wide approved:

- Children’s Initiative
- EMS

District voters approved these funding measures:

- Bellingham School District (bond)
- Ferndale School District (levy)

This chart shows how total 2023 property tax is apportioned between each district based on that district’s budget, plus voter-approved measures.

See more information on our website at: whatcomcounty.us/178/Annual-Tax-Book

Tax Exemptions = Tax Shifts

When one property receives a tax exemption, the tax is shifted to other properties. Due to historical inconsistencies in how homesites were valued, some properties in Open Space and Designated Forest Land programs have received larger exemptions than others in the same program. This is now being corrected and roughly 600 properties will see a more significant increase in their taxable value this year.

Though real estate markets fluctuated with changing interest rates, most property values continued to increase across Whatcom County from Jan 2022 to Jan 2023.

By law, the Assessor is required to value properties at 100% of market value.

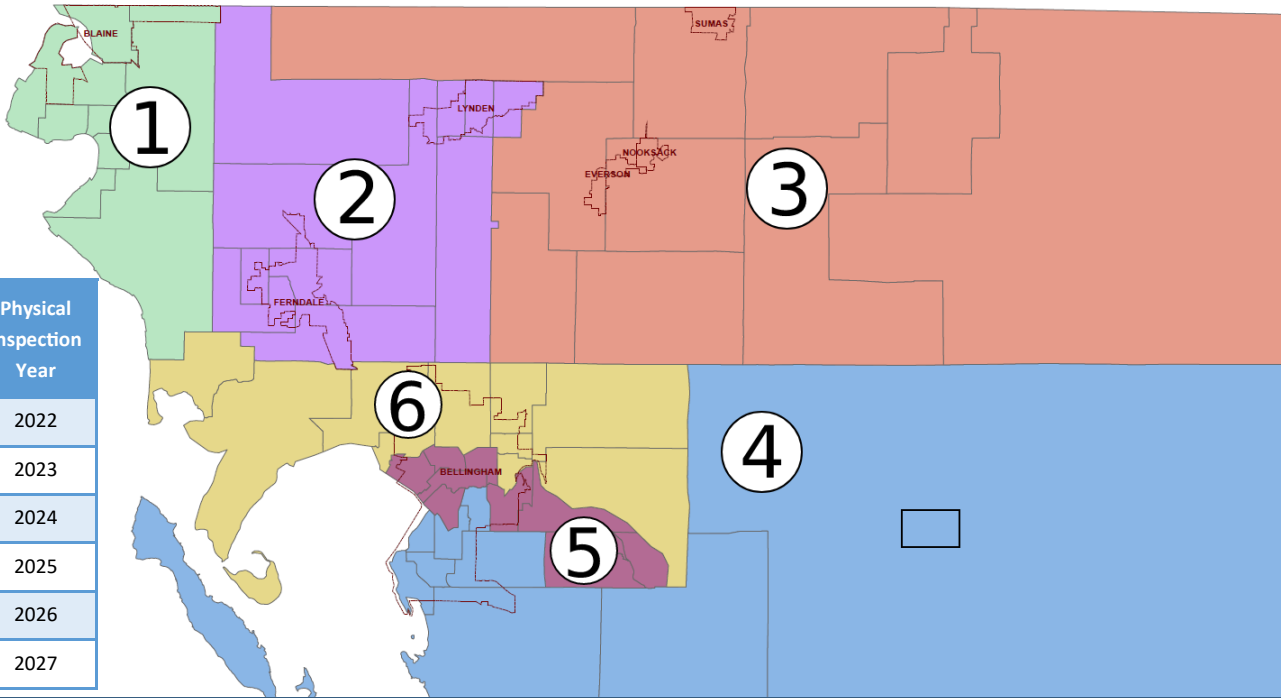
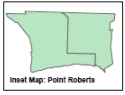
WA Department of Revenue (DOR) notified the Whatcom County Assessor that ratios of sales to assessed value have historically been too low.

DOR studies market sales and compares them to assessed values to ensure each county is meeting statutory sale ratio requirements. To improve our ratios, most assessed values have increased again in 2023, bringing them closer to full market value levels and into compliance with state law.

Residential statistical value updates throughout the county ranged from 9-25%, with some outliers. Some increases were greater in this year’s inspection area, which included Ferndale, Lynden and the areas between, up to the USA/Canada border.

Early next year after tax districts certify their annual budgets, these 2023 assessed values will be used to calculate taxes to be collected during 2024.

- Rebecca Xczar, Whatcom County Assessor



Inspection Area	Physical Inspection Year
Area 1	2022
Area 2	2023
Area 3	2024
Area 4	2025
Area 5	2026
Area 6	2027

Visit our website for a larger map at: [whatcomcounty.us/3792/Revaluation Inspection Areas](http://whatcomcounty.us/3792/Revaluation%20Inspection%20Areas)

Inspections

Every year 1/6th of the properties in Whatcom County are physically inspected and reassessed. The remaining 5/6th of the county's properties are adjusted based on a statistical update from analysis of sales of similar properties.

In 2023, staff worked in area 2, as shown above. In 2024, staff will physically inspect properties in area 3, which includes the cities of Everson, Nooksack and Sumas, Maple Falls, and the areas east to Glacier. Properties with new construction are physically inspected in any area in the County.

Appraisers will be driving clearly marked white county vehicles, will be wearing their county

badge, and will knock on the door to introduce themselves if they step foot on the property. If no one answers, they will leave a door hanger to alert that they have visited the property. Appraisers will measure and photograph the exterior of structures, including buildings and decks as required. After the inspection, some time is required to update information about your property. You may see staff working in their vehicle.

Valuation is based on the condition of the property on January 1, 2024 or July 31, 2024 for new construction and will be used to calculate the property taxes due in 2025.



Contact Information

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