

Aurora property values are on the rise ? but just below average: MPAC

By Brock Weir

Property values in Aurora are on the rise, but fall just below average across the Region of York, according to MPAC, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation.

Over the past week or so, it is likely you have received notices in the mail that the assessment value of your home or property is once again on the rise.

“The overall residential change in the Region of York is 10.1 per cent,” said Natasha Dawood, a delegate to Council outlining steps MPAC is taking to make themselves available to Aurora residents who might have questions on how their properties have been assessed and, as a consequence, how much their property taxes might be going up down the road, as municipal property values are calculated on MPAC's assessment value. “Aurora is just below that at 9.5 per cent. For a single family residential home in York Region, this is a 10.5 per cent change and, for the Town of Aurora, it is 9.7 per cent. For condominiums, the Region is 3.9 per cent and for the Town of Aurora, it is six per cent.

“In looking at some typical assessed values in the Town of Aurora from 2012 to 2016, for a single family residential home, the change of value has increased by \$218,000 to \$770,000 for the 2016 tax year and, for condominiums, it has increased from \$82,000 to a typical assessed value of \$387,000.”

According to MPAC, this year's assessments have been long in the works, with notices going out earlier than ever before. Normally being mailed out in the fall, this year the distribution is being staggered over a 21 week period across the province.

Aurora notices went out in the mail on June 13 and there will be a 120 day extension of the deadline for property owners to appeal.

“When you receive your property assessment notice, the first question you should ask yourself is, “could I have sold my property for the assessed value as of January 1, 2016? If the answer is yes, we have done our job,” said Ms. Dawood. “If the answer is no, we are here to work with you to ensure accuracy in your assessment.”

Information for a review is included in the mailer, and can also be found online at aboutmyproperty.ca. There is no fee for the reconsideration, but an appeal of the reconsideration runs \$75.

Property assessments are conducted by MPAC through various means and measures. Ms. Dawood told Council that in reviewing Aurora's situation, they looked at 13,137 pieces of data from building permits to sales reviews.

Following the delegation to Council, local lawmakers had several questions for the delegation, including transparency in the process.

“When I was researching MPAC, there were a lot of similarities between MPAC and [the Ontario Municipal Board] in the way they are reflective of the institution and many of those in the public have some issues with both organizations,” said Councillor Harold Kim. “One of the complaints about the Board is it is not elected, but appointed and I think it was about 10 years ago when the Ombudsman said there were so many complaints in such a period that the issues of the day were insufficient information, lack of timeliness and it was essentially a David and Goliath situation where the onus was on the homeowner to prove his valuation versus MPAC's valuation.”

A similar view was offered by Councillor Tom Mrakas: “One of the comments I generally hear is: why should a property owner be paying a tax rate based on assessment for a value they have never seen a profit for? They bought a house at \$80,000 over 40 years ago and they are being assessed on a value they have never seen. They are curious why it is that way.”