

# City Values Hold Steady

## ‘Burg Official Says Real Estate Market ‘Starting To Stabilize’

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By PRESTON KNIGHT

A new house is under construction on Smith Avenue in the Parkhill subdivision of Harrisonburg on Tuesday. The total assessed value for single-family homes in the city for 2014 is down slightly from this year. (Photo by Michael Reilly / DN-R)

**HARRISONBURG** — Property values in Harrisonburg won't change much in 2014, according to the latest real estate assessment.

The Commissioner of the Revenue's Office mailed out about 6,700 assessment notices to property owners this month, notifying them that their land values for 2014 will change. Only those owners whose assessments are slated to change will receive notices.

For Harrisonburg's 12,405 taxable parcels in 2014, the total value was \$3.91 billion, less than a half percent lower than the current year. The new figures take effect Jan. 1 and will be the basis for taxes owed in December 2014.

“It's starting to stabilize a little bit, the real estate market, which is good news,” said Lisa Neunlist, the city's real estate director.

The total assessed value for single-family homes for 2014 is \$794 million, down slightly from \$805 million this year. The average assessed value of a house dropped slightly, too: It's \$231,900 in the new assessment versus the current \$235,000.

As of Tuesday, 194 single-family homes, at an average of \$210,000, have sold in the city this year, said Scott Rogers, a broker with Funkhouser Real Estate Group. The average assessed value of a home is higher than the average sales price because lower-priced homes are the ones selling, he said.

The average selling price is still 3 percent higher from the same time last year, Rogers added, and 43 more homes have sold to date than in 2012.

“When I get concerned ... in some years you see assessments go up 3 percent and sale prices are down 4 percent, and something's awry [then],” he said.

Neunlist said: “We're starting to notice a little bit more of a difference; the asking price is more than the assessed value. ... Overall, it looks good. We've been very fortunate that we have not seen the extremes in the real estate market.”

Multifamily homes, or apartments, increased in overall value from \$577 million to \$587 million in the reassessment, she said.

In the townhouse category, the total assessed value declined slightly, from \$384 million to \$382 million, while condominiums stayed about the same — from the current \$48.5 million down to \$48.1 million.

Retail and office totals went up \$1 million and nearly \$2 million, respectively. For retail, the total assessed value went from \$71.2 million to \$73.2 million, while office values jumped from \$176.7 million to \$178.5 million.

“We’re starting to see places fill up,” Neunlist said.

An assessment notice is not a tax bill and does not set the tax rate. It simply assigns a value to a property.

Those who want to appeal their assessment must contact Neunlist’s office at 432-7795. Appeals will be heard next week — the final day will be Dec. 6 — in the real estate office, Room 101 in the Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

If an owner further disputes the city’s assessment after the appeal, he or she can go to the Board of Equalization, which meets early next year. Harrisonburg City Council appoints members to the three-person board, which functions to balance the assessments to ensure the real estate tax is spread fairly among all taxpayers.

Average Assessed Value\* Of Single-Family Homes in Harrisonburg:

2011	\$242,100
2012	\$235,700
2013	\$235,000
2014	\$231,900

\*Values are effective Jan. 1 for year mentioned

Contact Preston Knight at 574-6272 or [pknight@dnronline.com](mailto:pknight@dnronline.com)