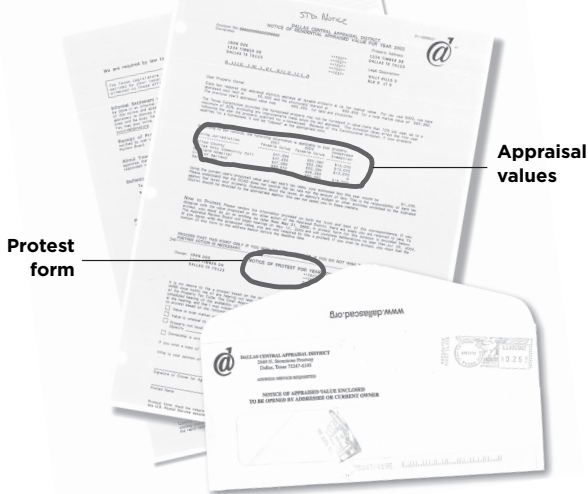


PROPERTY VALUE: EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

The process:

To determine value, county appraisal districts consider the size of the property, its condition, location, any income it may produce and comparable sales in the surrounding area. Appraisers may drive by the property and inspect the exterior, but they don't go inside the structure. They spend most of their day in the field taking notes. Information is fed into a computer program and an appraisal is created. All properties on the tax roll must be reappraised every three years, although counties may reassess values more often if the market changes.



Key times

Late April	Reappraisal notices are mailed.
Mid-May	Hearings begin for property owners to protest their appraisals. A preliminary tax roll is released to cities and school districts for revenue projections.
Late July	Appeal hearings end, and tax rolls are certified as final.
October	Taxing jurisdictions mail tax bills to property owners.
Jan. 31	Taxes are due.
Feb. 1	Taxes become delinquent, and penalties and interest begin accruing.

Suiting up for battle

The informal protest

- The first step is to gather evidence for your case and present it to an appraiser, who will meet with you at appraisal district offices.
- Get photographs or expert statements that document structural defects — foundation or plumbing problems, for example — the appraiser missed.
- Get “comps.” Contact a Realtor familiar with your neighborhood to get recent sales information about properties comparable to your own. Check the appraisal district’s Web site for information about values in your

neighborhood. Neighbors can provide recent sales information or sworn statements about their own property.

- An independent appraisal could bolster your case. Show it to the county appraiser and ask how the higher value was determined.
- Remember, professional standards govern an appraiser’s work. It’s not personal. Be factual, not emotional.

The formal protest

- If the appraiser rejects your case, you can request a formal hearing with the Appraisal Review Board by mailing the protest form attached to your appraisal notice.
- The deadline for filing an

appeal is May 31, or 30 days after you get a new appraisal.

- Appear in person or send a representative or attorney to plead your case. You have the right to review the appraiser’s records before the hearing. An estimated 50-60 percent of protested appraisals get reduced, according to county appraisal chiefs.
- If you appear in person, don’t be hostile or antagonistic.

Judicial appeals

If a formal protest fails, you have 45 days to file an appeal in state district court or ask for binding arbitration. Before taking this step, calculate the cost of an appeal vs. potential tax savings.