

Information about your Fiscal Year 2015 Real Estate Tax Bill

This insert is intended to provide you with some information about your enclosed tax bill. The following questions are most commonly asked by residents about their tax bills.

Did overall property value in Westwood change from FY14 to FY15?

Yes. The value of all real estate in Town increased by 5.1%, with residential value increasing 5.84% and commercial value experiencing a slight increase of .3%.

Did my individual home value change?

Yes. Approximately 95% of the residential homes in Town had a change in value for FY15. Values are required to be updated to reflect market conditions and sales activity. As always, values also change due to home renovation or improvements.

Approximately 65% of homes had a value change in the range of -1% to +6% increases, with the average experiencing a 3% increase in value.

A report listing all home values for FY14 and FY15 can be found on the Town's web site at www.townhall.westwood.ma.us (left side of home page under "Quick Links") or in printed form at Town Hall. For more detail, you may also access the Assessors' on-line database, which is also located on the Town's website under "Quick Links". It is important to remember that state tax law dictates that your FY15 tax bill is based on assessed home value as of **January 1, 2014** and home sales during calendar year **2013**.

If you notice any data errors when viewing the on-line Assessors' database, please contact the Assessors' Office. The Board of Assessors is committed to ensuring that each property is fairly and accurately assessed.

Did the University Station property increase in value for FY15?

Yes. The University Station property saw an overall increase in value of approximately \$25 million. It is important to remember that State law looks at the value as of June 30, 2014. The new construction that has occurred at University Station since June 30, 2014 (see below) will be included in the FY16 tax bill calculation.



University Station June, 2014



University Station November, 2014

Was there any significant change or shifting in tax burden between residential and commercial properties?

No. The Board of Selectmen, in consultation with the Board of Assessors, voted to increase the FY15 shift factor to 1.7 from the current 1.65. As residential value increased more than commercial, the higher shift rate was necessary to keep equity among the property classes.

In FY15, commercial property, while only representing 12.5% of the Town's value, will pay 21% of the total taxes, a similar percentage of the tax levy as FY14. Without this split rate, the average tax bill would increase an additional 11% or \$926.

What is the change in real estate tax rates for FY15?

The Town’s overall value increased by 5.1%, with residential value increasing 5.8% and commercial value remaining relatively flat at .3% change. The FY15 tax rates must adjust accordingly to meet the budgets as approved by Town Meeting per the Proposition 2 ½ levy.

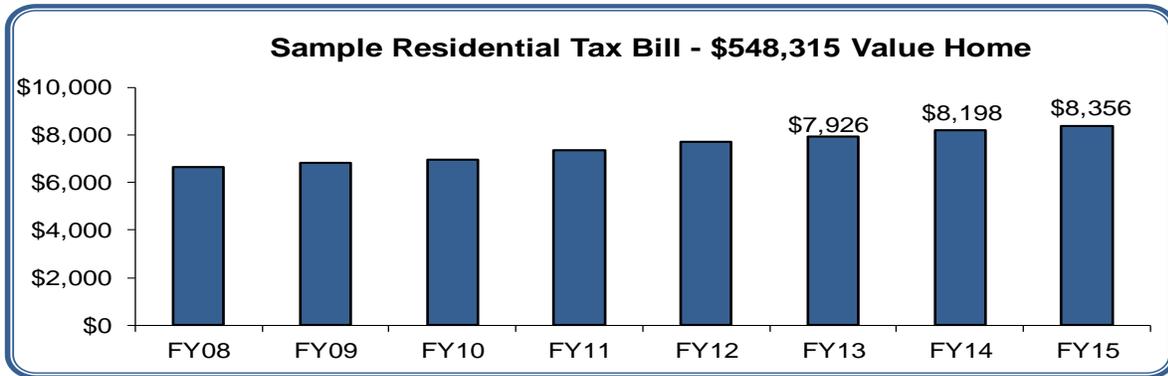
The FY15 tax rates per \$1,000 of valuation are as follows:

Tax Rate	FY14	FY15	Rate Increase FY14 to FY15	% Increase in Rate FY14 to FY15
Residential	\$15.40	\$15.24	\$-.16	-1%
Commercial	\$28.18	\$28.79	\$.61	+2%

What happened to my individual tax bill?

The tax rate on your bill is based upon the value of the residential and commercial property in the Town and the amount of money that was voted to be spent at the 2013 fall town meeting and the annual town meeting in May, 2014. It also includes debt outside of Proposition 2 ½ described below. This tax rate is then multiplied by the value of your house to arrive at your new tax amount.

Proposition 2 ½ places limits on the total amount of taxes that can be raised by a city or town. It does not apply to an individual tax bill. While the total taxes collected by the Town increased by 4%, each individual tax bill is determined by the change in the tax rate and the change in valuation for that particular parcel.



This sample home has a tax increase of \$158, or 2% from FY14 to FY15 and has a 3% increase in assessed value from FY14 to FY15.

What debt outside Proposition 2 ½ is included in this bill?

There are two components to the total taxes collected by the Town: 1) the general tax levy, and 2) the exempt debt, which is the principal and interest costs for the debt approved outside the limits of Proposition 2 ½.

The FY15 tax levy includes principal and interest payments that the Town will be making for the Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion projects listed below. All other debt projects approved outside of Proposition 2 ½ have been completed, meaning the bond has been fully repaid and the cost removed from the tax levy.

Project/Bond Issued	Fiscal Year Debt Will Be Completed	FY15 Debt Payments	Net Amount of Debt in FY15 Levy
High School Construction - \$39,262,300	2023	12 th of 20	\$1,108,943
Library Construction - \$9,300,000	2031	4 th of 20	\$741,105

Other Town debt is being funded within Proposition 2 ½.