

Williamson Central Appraisal District presents: Property Inspection.

The following presentation is intended to illustrate activities appraisers are typically performing during the Property Inspection phase of the appraisal cycle.

The most common are measuring new or existing structures and translating the measurements into sketches. Additionally, an appraiser identifies and records relevant characteristics of new properties, inspects and updates information on existing properties, and takes new or updated photos of properties.

Property inspection typically takes place from August through February and involves activities for appraising new homes and businesses, and reappraising existing ones.

Appraisers from the district may visit and inspect properties for various reasons, but the most common are to: measure recently constructed homes and buildings, measure structural additions to existing homes and buildings, or confirm or correct any relevant data the district has about the property, such as quality, depreciation, or land characteristics.

While on-site inspections are employed for many properties, appraisers also utilize yearly aerial photographs along with existing property sketch information and GIS technology to check for changes in a structure's size or characteristics. Since the size or square footage of a structure is an important element in the value, and physical measuring of improvements is the most common activity performed during property inspection, it is necessary to elaborate on the standards and techniques WCAD appraisers use when measuring and recording the dimensions of a structure.

The appraiser is required to measure and sketch to scale the major structures or improvements he or she observes on a property. The sketch will later be uploaded from a field data collecting device to the appraisal district's CAMA, or Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal software. The CAMA is discussed in another presentation, but is essentially a database that holds all relative information gathered about the property, and assists in the final value calculations.

The measurements and sketch are performed in a way that takes what is seen at the ground level and translates that into a top down, or birds-eye view. Since construction takes place year-round and property inspection mainly occurs from August through February, the stage of construction on new residences and other buildings that an appraiser visits may vary from initial site prep to one hundred percent complete and occupied. Due to many homes or businesses being complete and occupied when the appraiser visits the property, it is the standard practice of the district to take all measurements from the outside of the structure in order to maintain a uniform standard. The appraiser will typically begin at one of the front corners of the structure and measure all the way across the front. As he or she proceeds across the front, sections of the building that extend out or in, commonly referred to as "cuts", are noted so they may be correctly drawn in the sketch. All measurements are rounded to the nearest foot. Once the total width, to the nearest foot, and the appropriate cuts and locations are identified, the appraiser goes back and measures the

lengths of the identified cuts. He or she is then ready to sketch the front portion of the structure. Next, the appraiser will repeat the same process for the sides and back.

If the structure has more than one floor and is occupied, the appraiser will make note of upper rooflines and windows throughout the process, in an effort to depict an accurate sketch of the upper floors. If the interior of a two or more floor structure is accessible, he or she will enter the property to ensure vaulted ceiling areas are not counted as measured square footage.

After the appraiser has finished the sketch, he or she identifies and labels each of the various segments or portions so they will be appropriately coded during entry into the CAMA system for valuation. Main Area is the term given to the living space, or heated and cooled area of a residence or commercial building, and is what is commonly used when considering sales price per square foot. If a structure has more than one floor the first is labeled Main Area, the second Main Area 2, and so on. Other common segments that are labeled are: garages, open porches, patios, decks, balconies, and many more. The square footage of these segments is also calculated during the valuation of the improvement to account for the additive value they contribute to the total structure.

Prior to leaving the property the appraiser will take a photo and note various characteristics to be entered in the CAMA system. Roof and foundation style, overall quality of the structure, and fireplaces are a few examples. If the appraiser is inspecting a property that already has improvements on it, he or she verifies that all the segments listed on the property record are actually there and confirms the indicated measurements. Anything that is new or not identified on the property record card will be measured and sketched so it can be added to the property in the district's CAMA system. Similarly, anything that is no longer there will be noted and removed from the property record.

We hope this was an informative insight into the property inspection phase of the appraisal process and provided an understanding of some of the activities appraisers are typically performing during that time.

Thank you.