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STATE OF MINNESOTA

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

PROPERTY EQUALIZATION DIVISION

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED ADOPTION OF A NEW RULE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE RELATING TO CERTIFICATES OF REAL ESTATE VALUE (Minnesota Rules, Parts 8110.0100. 8110.0200, 8110.0300, 8110.0400, 8110.0500)

STATEMENT OF NEED AND REASONABLENESS

This document has been prepared as a verbatim affirmative presentation of the facts necessary to establish the statutory authority, need for and reasonableness of the proposed new rule. It is submitted pursuant to Minnesota Rules, Part 1400.0500 requiring a Statement of Need and Reasonableness. This entire statement is one document; however, there are three parts to this statement. The first part is the background, the second part is the necessary data elements, and the third part is the conclusion.

The Commissioner's authority to adopt these rules is found in Minn. Stat., 1983 Supp., Sec. 272.115, subd. 1.

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BACKGROUND

Laws 1983, Chapter 342, Article II, section 4, amended Minn. Stat. Sec. 272.115, subd. 1, to require the certificate of real estate value be revised to include "financing terms and conditions of sale which are necessary to determine the actual, present value of the sale price for purposes of the sales ratio study." Further, section 4 requires the commissioner of revenue to promulgate rules specifying the data elements to be included on a revised certificate of real estate value. Chapter 342 was approved on June 14, 1983. A copy of the existing certificate is attached for reference.

While the concept of adjusting for financing had been discussed by Revenue staff, the actual particulars had not been developed. To aid the Department in developing a revised certificate of real estate value and the methodology of determining present values based on financing details, the Department contracted with Dr. George Karvel. Dr. Karvel is a professor and holder of the Minnesota Chair in Real Estate at St. Cloud State University and authored the attached article entitled "Creative Real Estate Financing: Assessors Dilemma and Threat to Tax Equalization" which appeared in the December, 1982, edition of "Equal Eyes" published by the Minnesota Chapter of the International Association of Assessing Officers and the Minnesota Association of Assessing Officers.

Dr. Karvel and his research associates worked with the Department staff through the summer and fall of 1983 to develop proposed rules. In addition, the Department received the attached letter from Louise Leoni which was considered.

A Notice of Intent to Solicit Outside Opinion was published October 24, 1983 in the State Register (8 S.R.971). A copy of the working draft of the proposed rule is attached. It was made available to everyone that requested a copy.

In response, by December 7, 1983, the Department received thirty-five letters commenting on the rule. These letters were reviewed carefully by the staff. By letter of December 7, 1983, the Department acknowledged receipt of all comments received by that date (see letter to Mr. William J. Keefer and list of names and addresses attached to that letter). After that date, we received letters from Douglas W. Cann, Franklin Michaels, and J. B. Clarkson (all attached). To repeat, the Department carefully considered each and every comment in drafting the rules as now proposed.

In reviewing the comments submitted, especially regarding the unavailability of some data at closing and increased costs of attorneys services, the Department decided to meet directly with persons involved in closing real estate transactions. We needed to know what data was readily available and the problems with completing and filing the certificates of real estate value.

We contacted Hank Fischer representing Twin City Federal Savings and Loan Association and Conrad Sheets, President of North Star Abstract and Title. We found that North Star does virtually all the real estate closings for TCF. On December 14, 1983, four representatives from Revenue met with Mr. Sheets, Mr. Fischer, others from TCF, including N. Thomas Mattiuz, Senior Vice President of TCF Mortgage Corporation, and several closers from North Star.

A major stumbling block was the requirement in the draft rules that only the buyer could complete and sign the certificate. Since financing is the buyer's problem and can be obtained from so many sources, only the buyer could provide the financing data elements required by the 1983 changes in the law. While agreeing with our conclusion, the "experts" pointed out that a buyer is not always present at the closing

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and even if present, is not always the most knowledgeable source. It is necessary and reasonable to require that the certificate be completed by the buyer, the buyer's attorney, or the buyer's agent. Based on our meetings, compliance with this requirement is feasible.

The draft rules were revised based on the concerns expressed in the response to our Notice and our discussions with those people involved on a day-to-day basis with real estate transactions.

NECESSARY DATA ELEMENTS

A prime requisite for effective equalization in property taxation is the existence of a dependable mechanism for comparing the assessor's estimates of market values to the actual market value for each parcel in the jurisdiction. For Minnesota, as for most states, the mechanism used in making this comparison is the real estate assessment/sales ratio study, conducted annually by the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

Determining the estimated market value/actual market value relationship presents some practical problems for taxpayers and tax administrators alike, since "market value" is purely an abstraction which can only be estimated for any parcel which does not sell, and merely approximated for parcels which do sell. As a result, tax administrators are forced to rely on statistical studies which use sale prices as surrogates for market value, and a sample of actual sales to represent the population of parcels. The statistical methodology of assessment/sales ratio analysis is quite well defined in the professional literature of the field, and the practice of using assessment/sales ratios in place of assessment/market ratios in equalization studies is universally accepted.

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A fundamental element of sales ratio study preparation is the need for comparing like properties by eliminating extraneous positive and negative factors that affect price but which do not reflect accurately the influence of physical value factors such as location, utility and condition of the real property involved in the assessment.

Factors such as inflation (or deflation) and personal property are examples of these factors, as well as financial arrangements which impact the "cash equivalent" market value of the property.

Professional societies of appraisers, realtors and tax administrators have long acknowledged the significance of financing in setting the sale price for a parcel of real estate, and standard appraisal theory accommodates the need for financial analysis in situations of non-market financing. Articles outlining the techniques of financial adjustment regularly appear in professional and technical journals.

In recent years, the emergence of "creative" or non-traditional financing has introduced a complicating factor into sales analysis. When conventional mortgage financing was the norm, there was little variance in the interest rates for various types of financing, and the minor differences that did exist were subsumed into the general overhead of the statistical study methodology. Now, however, significant differences in the cash-equivalent sale price of identical parcels can be introduced because of the differences in interest rates and payment schedules that relate to the financing and are not indicative of the physical characteristics of the purchased properties. Inappropriate use of unadjusted sale prices can lead to significant misstatement of assessment/sales ratios.

Minnesota relies on the assessment/sales ratio studies conducted by the Department of Revenue for state school aids and local government aid distribution programs, county equalization administration and in tax court litigation. Errors in

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establishing sale prices can have substantial impact on literally hundreds of millions of dollars in state aids and property tax dollars.

While the mathematics of cash-equivalence adjustment is not complex, adjustment requires certain facts about the terms and conditions of the specific financing arrangements of the sales used in the study, and about the prevailing types of financing alternatives available on the open market. This information can be gathered through interviews with the parties to the sale, by mail questionnaire or on documents completed at the time of sale. The latter method is the most economical method of obtaining accurate and complete data. At the same time it entails the least amount of inconvenience to the concerned parties, since all of the required information is normally available at the time of closing. Using the Certificate of Real Estate Value as the vehicle for capturing the required data is the most efficient method available; alternatives would be significantly more intrusive, costly and time-consuming.

Without accurate assessment/sales ratio studies, many millions of dollars of state property tax relief may be misdirected, resulting in unequal property tax burdens and distortion of the property tax equalization process. The requisite accuracy is obtainable only if the required data is available to the department.

Data obtained through the Certificate of Real Estate Value falls into three broad classifications: Mandatory information required for identification of the parties to the transaction or the property transferred and clarifying the nature of the transaction; conditionally required information detailing the characteristics of the property for use in the study sample selection and stratification process; and conditionally required financial information needed to provide the basis for cash-equivalency computations and for comparison to the assessor's estimated market value.

A. IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION DATA

- Buyer's name and address
- 2. Seller's name and address

These items identify the parties in the sale. This information is required to fully identify the transaction, to make accurate verification, audit, and post-audit processing possible, and to allow identification of old sales, relative sales, exempt sales and similar categories of sales which are invalid for study purposes.

- 3. Legal Description of property transferred
- 4. Address of property transferred

These items identify the property transferred. They are used to assure that accurate information about the assessor's values, property location and use class can be collected, and to enable field verification of complex or questionable sales to be handled efficiently. It is also necessary for allocation of sales to the proper jurisdiction for determining individual and aggregate assessment/sales ratio statistics and equalized value allocation in state aid formula.

5. Type of acquisition

This question requires the seller to identify attributes of the sale which may render it unacceptable for study purposes according to generally accepted assessment/sales ratio study standards. The sale may be excluded from the sales ratio study on the basis of this question. If any of the items in this question apply, the Department will allow filing of the form without completing the financial information and stratification questions which follow. This will minimize the impact on persons

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filling out the form for non-sale transfers, and also allow expeditious processing of a large number of items which are not valid for study purposes, but which are required by law to be filed. The categories identified in this item are consistent with the screening procedures identified by the International Association of Assessing Officers and other professional organizations.

B. STRATIFICATION

For those certificates which are potentially valid study sample items (based on the response to question A.5, above), two questions must be answered to enable the Department to accurately categorize and stratify the sales for assessment equalization, state aids, and tax court study purposes. These are:

Type of property transferred.

This allows for comparison of data from the sale with assessor's records, to insure that the sale price of the property reflects the same property valued by the assessor, and that new construction, ground leases or partial transfers can be properly identified, classified and analyzed.

Planned use of property.

This question is used to stratify property types (required by both standard study procedures, statistical theory and state aid programs). It also allows us to identify intended changes in use, new development or speculative purchases which need further research before inclusion in the study. It also allows determination of whether particular items can be used for one year or two years in the study,

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or used at all. Further, this is a check on the accuracy of assessment records and sale price data.

C. FINANCING INFORMATION

The remaining data elements, required for any certificates not excluded under 5(b), are needed for cash-equivalence analysis and adjustment.

1. Total Purchase Price.

This is the total price of all real, personal or intangible property being transferred or conveyed as part of the original agreement. This serves as the base price, the amount to which all adjustments for time, financing and non-real property will be made.

Total Amount of Personal Property.

The personal and intangible property value, as established by the sales agreement or separate appraisal or verification, must be subtracted from the total purchase price since this property is not subject to the property tax nor included in the assessor's valuation of real property. Itemization is required for verification of value and to allow proper classification of the portion of value as real or non-real property. This is necessary because of differences between the popular and legal definition of "personal" property. The "nominal" sales price is the total purchase price less any personal property.

3. Date Purchase Price Agreement Signed.

This date is necessary to determine if the sale falls within the study period, to allow accurate adjustments for time, and to serve as further identification of individual transactions in a series of transactions.

Total Down Payment.

This is necessary for determining the cash equivalent value of the real property sold; since this amount is normally paid immediately and is not part of the financing arrangements, no adjustments are generally needed to this portion of the sale price. This item is also used to identify sales with unusually low or high equity arrangements, which require further study.

5. Points or Prepaid Interest Paid by Buyer or Seller.

Under certain circumstances, the amount of any points or prepaid interest paid by the buyer must be subtracted from or added to the nominal sale price reported. This item allows the Department to identify these instances and adjust them accordingly.

Amount Paid for Points or Prepaid Interest.

This amount is necessary if the Department will be required to make any adjustment to the nominal sale price for points or prepaid interest.

For each mortgage agreement and contract for deed included in the transaction, whether new or assumed, certain data elements must be provided to allow for accurate price adjustments to bring the nominal sale price to a cash equivalent value. These include:

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Amount of Mortgage or C/D balance remaining.

This is necessary for computation of the cash equivalent value and for verification of the reported sale price and payment stream for calculations.

8. Identification of assumed mortgages or C/D.

This is necessary to avoid errors in performing discount calculations, and for verification of payment stream information.

9. Interest Rate in Effect Now.

This is necessary for computing present value.

Total number of installments remaining.

This is necessary for computing present value.

Date of any lump sum payments.

This is necessary for computing the discounted value of any "balloon" or lump sum payments due at some future date.

Schedule of Payments if not monthly.

This is necessary to identify transactions which must be handled according to a different discounting method because the payment schedule is not monthly.

The computation of present value is more complex and must be completed separately.

13. Scheduled payment level changes.

If the amount of the monthly principal and interest payment is <u>scheduled</u> to change (as opposed to an unspecified but variable rate), the dates of change and the new payment amounts must be stated to allow for accurate computation of the cash equivalent value of the payment stream.

The Department will require the person completing the certificate to sign a declaration that the information contained on the form is correct and complete to the best of his/her knowledge, and to provide a telephone number to allow verification or clarification of data elements in question.

CONCLUSION

The Department has considered the implications of these proposed rules on small business. The rules have been modified significantly in response to concerns raised in the letters and our meeting with real estate closers. In our opinion, the rules as proposed cannot be further modified to accommodate small business. Small businesses should not be adversely impacted. In theory, the new data on the certificate will allow the Department to produce a better sales ratio study which will cause better administration of the property tax. In the long run, the benefit to small business owners could be significant from the improvement in the study.

Based on requirements established by the legislature and our research in the area, the proposed rules are reasonable and necessary to allow us to determine the actual, present value of the sales price of real property in this state.

29477

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY

LGAA-20 (REV. 12-79) RV-01931-02

MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF REAL ESTATE VALUE

SOCIAL SECURITY NO. OR MINN. IDENTIFICATION NO.		2. SELLER'S NAME AND ADDRESS SOCIAL SECURITY NO. OR				
						MINN. IDENTIF
		3. LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF ALL PARCE PLAT NAME OR:	CELS (Fill in legal description belo		gel description from in OT NO.	strument of conv
LOCATION OF PROPERTY TRANSFERRED			7. DATE OF SALE PRICE AGREEMENT (If purchase woon contract for deed, give contract beginning date.)			
4. Number & Street or R.R.						
5. Town or City	6. County		MONTH:	YE	AR: 19	
8. Means of transfer (check one) War	ranty Deed Contract for Dee	od Other (explain)				
9. Total sale price including personal prop	erty, assumed mortgage or contrac	ct for deed, taxes or specia	assessments	50.00 KG VOCK		
0. Total amount of personal property, cro	ps, etc., included in price (list on t	the back of the Dept. of Re	evenue Copy)	******		
Sale price of real estate only (subtract li	ine 10 from line 9)					
2. Total amount of assumed old mortgage	or contract for deed, assumed spe	cial assessments or taxes.		NOTE MODERATE OF THE STATE OF		
3. Amount subject to deed stamp tax (sub						
47 354 12						
4. Deed stamp tax (to determine tax, read 5. KIND OF PROPERTY SOLD:	instructions on the back of this fo	orm)	_	The second discountry		
(check one)	d only Land with pre	viously used building	Land with new build	ding (give year of	completion	
6. PRINCIPAL INTENDED USE: Resi	or more units)					
	veen relatives or related firms	Industrial				
(check one)	A gift	A trade An inheritance				
8. If in your opinion this was not a sale be	To or from a government or		A partial interest tra	ensfer Non	e of the above	
9. I (we) declare under penalty of law, th knowledge and belief is true, correct, an rint name here	at this certificate (including supp	lemental legal description	has been examined b DAT Telephone num person signing	TE	the best of my (our	
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NAME OF CITY/TOWN						

Creative Real Estate Financing



Assessors
Dilemma and
Jhreat to Jax
Equalization

By DR. GEORGE R. KARVEL



Dr. George R. Karvel, Professor and holder of the Minnesota Chair in Real Estate at St. Cloud State University is responsible for development of Minnesota's only Bachelor of Science in Real Estate. The program permits students to specialize in real estate appraisal, brokerage, finance, sales or property management. Dr. Karvel's articles have appeared in the Appraisal Journal, Real Estate Review and Journal of Property Management. He also is co-author of the book Real Estate Principles and Practices.

INTRODUCTION

A home's estimated market value traditionally reflects housing differences such as size, location, age, quality and condition. The effect of financing is normally not considered in determining an estimated market value.

Consideration of the impact of interest rates and mortgage term (amortization period, balloon dates, etc.) is unnecessary when all homes are financed at the same interest rate for the same period of time. Today "creative financing" has introduced previously unknown variations to the financing of real estate.

Many assessors understand that it is easier to sell, or better to buy, a property which has favorable financing Many understand that a home with favorable financing may even sell at a premium over an identical property which must be financed at the market rate of interest.

Consumers, REALTORS and assessors have all had to learn the new language of real estate finance. What each has not learned is "why" and "by how much" variations in the mortgage interest rate and term affects the price and estimated market value of a residential property.

THE ASSESSORS DILEMMA

Assume an assessor has knowledge of the recent sale of two homes located next to one another. The certificates of value reveal that one home sold for \$85,000 and the other sold for \$72,275. In each case, purchase and sale was conducted at "arms length" between unrelated parties.

Examination of the property appraisal card reveals that the homes were built the same year, of similar materials by the same builder and have identical amenities and square footage. In fact everything about the homes is identical except one floor plan is the reverse of the other.

Personal inspection of the properties confirm that the present physical condition, landscaping and land characteristics are also identical. The single physical



209 E. Chapman St. Ely, Minnesota 55731

June 30, 1983

Dorothy McCluns c/o Commissioner of Revenue 2nd Floor Centennial Bldg. St. Paul, MN 55145

Dear Dorothy:

I understand you are working revisions to the Certificate of Real Estate Value on which so much of our sales ratio studies depend.

It is good to see the state recognize the need for some changes that take into consideration financing of real estate sales. It would also improve the quality of sales ratio studies if other changes were made as well.

Commercial sales often include monies for things other than land and buildings. And, although there is a place to note personal property, there is no place to list the cost of a franchise, or a liquor license, or any other intangible than frequently gets thrown into the total sale price. (see enclosed article)

You would be a great benefit to the process of utilizing certificates of Real Estate Value by reviewing the problems inherent in using them in Commercial Sales.

Thanks for your consideration.

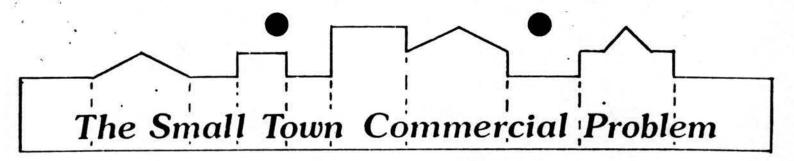
Sincerely,

Louise Leoni

Assessor, City of Ely/Fall Lake Township

LL/pw

Enclosure



By LOUISE LEONI Assessor Fall Lake/Ely

For the past few years I've heard the phrase "Small town commercials are a problem" in the northeastern part of the state. Earl Ramstead of the Dept. of Revenue has had a fine presentation at the annual Assessor's Short Course in Hibbing 3 years running on the Problems of Small Town Commercial Properties. Everywhere I go, with whomever I discuss this, it is agreed that we do indeed have a problem with sales ratio studies on Small Town Commercial properties.

It is now time to get past that aspect of the problem . . . recognition that it exists . . . and get to some answers for solving the problem.

In an attempt to do just that for the City of Ely, I undertook a study of commercial sales for the past three years and have made a bar-graph of that study so that I could more easily visualize the results and implications of what was found.

The bar-graph shows on a per square-foot basis the differences among: 1) sale value of structures (sale minus land EMV); 2) Assessors value of structures; 3) Marshall/Swift value of structures (less depreciation) and 4) sale value of structures if the land values had been increased to the 1983 level.

The significant finding in this bar-graph study is that, although there are fluctuations of relative value of several commercial properties, there is a consistency of very low sales ratios with specific types of properties: i.e. liquor establishments, gas stations and seasonal-recreational commercial parcels.

Another indicator shows up in bare land sales (and also is seen in this bar-graph study in one sale involving Continental Telephone Co.) that commercial interests based throughout the state, or regionally, have a heavy impact on property values in smaller communities. Their willingness to pay prices higher than what the normal local market sales indicate values should be, tends to pull down sales ratios, which creates pressure to increase values. The sale itself often tends to create an upward trend in sale prices of other properties within the community as well.

In researching commercial sales of the past 3 years in Ely, it has become apparent that the Certificates of Real Estate Value filed at the time of the sale are wholly inadequate for use in commercial sales. After talking to buyers, sellers, brokers, and attorneys it is evident that in many commercial property sales "Net Sale Price" is a figure totally unrelated to simple land and structure value. For a multitude of reasons, deductions for personal property, etc. are not used or are used only in part.

Reasons given for this have been that lending institutions do not loan money for intangibles such as business opportunity ("blue sky") clientele, an established "name" in business, and/or one cannot depreciate such items at income tax time. Therefore, all the intangibles, plus licensing fees and franchise costs are lumped into the Net Sale Price on the certificate. This makes an objective analysis of these sales certificates virtually impossible, yet the State Revenue Department insists on using them as a basis for sales ratio studies.

If this practice continues, there are some fundamental changes that need to be made. A thorough study needs to be done to identify business categories which consistently show extra-ordinary gaps between local real estate values and "sale price", and CONSISTENTLY REMOVE THEM FROM SALES RATIO STUDIES (as the bar-graph study has pointed out).

An alternative is to make some basic changes in the design, use and/or penalties for mis-use of the sales certificate. Categories specifically listing items such as "business opportunity", licenses, land and structures and requiring a dollar figure for each would greatly enhance the effectiveness of this document. It may also be beneficial to attach an appropriate...and enforceable... penalty for not complying with proper use of the document.

Not every part-time assessor has the time or resources to do an in-depth study every year to prove that a Department sales ratio study is inaccurate or inappropriate. It would seem the most sensible approach is to look at the problem logically, revise the certificate and reform its use in Department sales ratio studies. The state cannot with good conscience expect local assessors to do what it will not do.

Until the Department of Revenue makes these changes, local Assessors need to initiate open dialogue between themselves and their local realtors and attorneys, explaining the affects of Certificates of Real Estate Value on commercial property values in their area. This might also be an important point of discussion and/or course material for the Assessor's Short Course in the fall.

The problem of small town commercials will never be resolved until we look at those points mentioned, and make some changes in our approach to sales ratio studies. It should not be an on-going cliche in this state: "Oh, yes... the small town commercial problem...". We have recognized it as a problem, now let's get the problem solved!