

Orangeville taxes highest, Mono's lowest in Dufferin County

According to Benjamin Franklin the only two things certain in life are death and taxes. How one lives may have some influence over the rate at which the former approaches and where you live may influence your rate of taxation.

In Canada, Vancouver, infamous for high property values, has some of the lowest property tax rates, whereas surprisingly, the Saskatchewan has some of the highest. It may seem like a forgone conclusion that Toronto would be among the highest property tax rates, but per \$1,000 of home assessment it falls below major cities both east and west of Ontario, according to the 2014 Real Property Association of Canada (REALpac) report, which pegs Toronto's municipal property taxes at \$7.23 per \$1,000 of assessment. vs. Regina at a lofty \$13.69 or Halifax at \$12.11, while property-rich Vancouver sits at \$3.68 per \$1,000 assessed value.

And that means a hypothetical home assessed at \$300,000 faces a property tax bill of just \$2,169 in Toronto, \$4,107 in Regina, \$3,633 in Halifax and only \$1,104 in Vancouver (where homes for under \$1 million are hard to find).

Tax rates are based on much more than the value of your home. Ontario municipal politicians must determine the required rate based on the budget necessary to run their jurisdiction for that tax year. Education property taxes are added to the municipal rate across the board.

?So, what about right here at home?? asked our Editor Tom Claridge. How does one municipality compare to another within Dufferin County?

County taxes and school board taxes are the same across Dufferin County; for the sake of comparison, property taxes for a hypothetical home assessed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) at \$300,000 this year range from a high of \$4,232.70 in Orangeville to a low of \$2,969.61 in neighbouring Mono.

Connie Brown, Orangeville's Financial Analyst, says the 2015 property tax bill for a home assessed at \$300,000 would be \$4,232.70. Property owners in the largest urban area in the County pay \$2,483.27 for the Town's portion, \$1,164.43 to the County and a standard \$585 for Education taxes.

Next highest is in Shelburne, where Treasurer Carol Sweeney reports the Town share of the property tax bill is \$2,194.26. With the County and Education portions added, the total property tax is \$3,943.69 on a home valued at \$300,000.

The Town of Grand Valley follows, where CAO Jane Wilson reports that the municipal property tax would be \$2,157.59, the total bill being \$3931.01.

Susan Stone the CAO of Amaranth and East Garafraxa, says the breakdown for a \$300,000 assessed home is \$1,471.17 for the Township portion, County portion \$1,164.43, Education \$585.00 for a total of \$3,220.60.

Melancthon property taxes on a residential property assessed at \$300,000, based on the 2015 rate would be \$3,101.16 according to Treasurer Wendy Atkinson, with \$1,351.73 going to the Township.

Kerstin Shillum, Deputy Clerk Treasurer for Mulmur, says the Township has a tax rate of .458276%, which means a home assessed at \$300,000 in Mulmur would pay \$1,374.83 to the Township, for a total bill of \$3,124.26.

And as for the Town of Mono, ?on a house assessed at \$300,000 in Mono, the residents would pay \$1,220.18 on the Town's portion of the total tax bill,? says Treasurer Les Halucha. The total bill for Mono ratepayers, including County and education taxes, would be \$2,969.61.

The property tax is a major source of revenue for municipalities across Ontario, generating over \$16 billion every year.

Although, the rate is fairly consistent among Dufferin's townships, the current difference of \$1,263.09 between the highest and lowest property rates in the towns can add up over a long-term residency of 20, 30 or even 50 years.

The unanswered question then becomes: ?How does one municipality compare to another, in terms of the services they provide for every tax dollar collected??