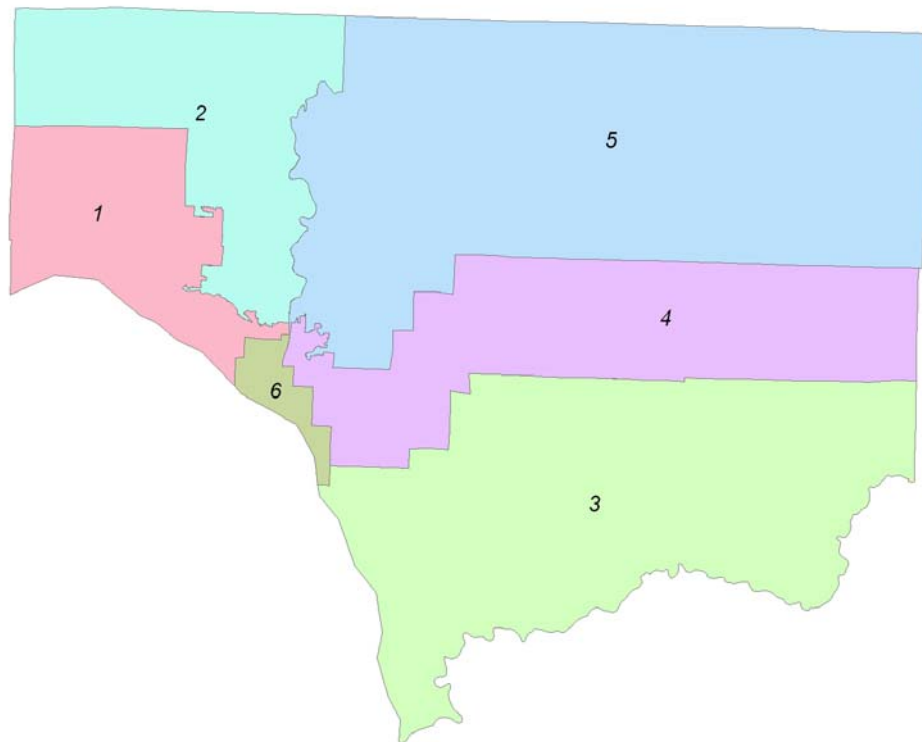


Cowlitz County Interactive Sales Map

Revaluation and Annual Update

Every year the Cowlitz County Assessor's Office values the property in Cowlitz County. Washington State law requires that the value be at 100% of the true and fair market value. This valuation is done each year in two ways:

The first way is known as "reval", short for revaluation. Cowlitz County is broken down into 6 revaluation areas. The Assessor's Office is required to physically inspect the properties in one of these six revaluation areas each year. This means that every parcel of land is physically inspected and revalued this way at least once every six years. The 2009 assessment reval area for taxes payable in 2010 was area #3. Note that by statute the valuation date is January 1. See map below for general reval geographic areas:



The second way is known as "annual update". For those properties not in the current revaluation area, sales data are gathered and analyzed. Similar properties are grouped by "neighborhoods", and valuation updates are done every year on certain parcels based on sales of similar properties.

Cowlitz County Sales Map

Once you have found a parcel using the Assessor's Parcel Search screen, click on the Map Data link to bring up the interactive sales map. This map shows the residential sales activity in Cowlitz County from 2005 through 2008 (including invalidated sales). The map also identifies those valid sales that the Assessor's Office used in its statistical update adjustments to 2009 assessed values for taxes payable in 2010. These sales have a heavy green border. The 2008 sales were given the most consideration. No 2009 sales were used in the statistical update as the assessment date for taxes payable in 2010 is January 1, 2009.

Residential sales are colored by year:

- Green – 2008 Sales
- Yellow – 2007 Sales
- Red – 2006 Sales
- Purple – 2005 Sales

When you zoom in on the map, percentage numbers will appear in the sales parcels. These numbers represent the "sales ratio". This ratio is the assessed value at the time of the sale divided by the sale price. This percentage is color-coded to match the year of the sale. In some instances, there are multiple ratios in a single parcel indicating more than one sale on that parcel in multiple years. Where a property has sold more than one time in a single year, only the latest sale information is provided. The subject neighborhood is colored and annotated to define the boundary of the area of sales used for annually updating a particular property.

Assessor's Parcel Search

Getting to the Parcel Search Screen

- Open up your internet browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape, etc.).
- In the internet address bar, enter www.co.cowlitz.wa.us/assessor.
- On the Assessor's webpage, select the *Assessor Parcel Search*.
- After reading the terms and conditions, click on the dark green box labeled *Click Here to Accept Terms and Conditions*.

Searching for Parcel Information

There are several different ways to search for parcel information:

- Enter the parcel number into the field labeled *Parcel ID*. This field is case sensitive. You must use capital letters if your parcel number is alphanumeric; or
- Enter the treasurer's account number into the field labeled *Account*. The account number will start with either an "R" or "M"; or
- Enter the street number (the number on the mailbox or on the house) into the field labeled *Street #*; Then enter the street name into the field labeled *Street Name*. **It is best to limit the amount of information you enter. For example, if the street name is 9th Avenue, enter just the 9 in the *Street Name* field. If the street name is *Parkview Drive* enter *Par* into the *Street Name* field.**

After you have entered the necessary information, click on the button labeled *Search For Property*.

The screenshot shows the Cowlitz County Parcel Search interface. The search criteria section includes fields for Parcel ID, Account, Street # (2942), Street Name (par), Street Suffix Abbr, Property Description, City, and Zip Code. Below these fields are two buttons: "Search For Property" and "Reset Search Fields". The search results table shows a single result with the following details:

Account	Street #	Street Name	Suffix	Unit	City	Zip	Parcel
Select R027225	2942	PARKVIEW	DR		LONGVIEW	98632	05360858

Below the search results, there is a box titled "Tips for a Successful Search" with the following content:

- It is not necessary to fill in all the Search Criteria boxes - in fact, sometimes less information will give better search results.
- "Street #" means the physical address of the residence or business (in other words, the numbers on the mail box).
- Enter "Street Name" without any additional information (i.e.: just enter "Castleman" instead of "W Castleman St").
- Street Names are spelled according to US Postal Service records. Try just entering the first few letters if you are unsure of the correct spelling.
- Click "Select" next to the right of the Account Number to display detailed information about the property.

At the bottom of the page, there is a copyright notice: "Copyright © 2006 Cowlitz County. All Rights Reserved."

- A list of parcels matching the information you entered will appear on the right hand side of the screen. Click on the *Select* link that is next to the parcel or account you are looking for.
- A new screen will appear showing the parcel information.

The screenshot shows the Cowlitz County Parcel Search website in Microsoft Internet Explorer. The page displays detailed information for a specific parcel and account. The account number is 8026470, and the parcel number is 05245. The owner is WALLIS DAVID L/MARVALICE L. The mailing address is 1217 SYCAMORE PL, LONGVIEW, WA 98632. The property reference is SUB:HILLSIDE TER 3 BLK:1 LOT:9 DESC: HILLSIDE TER 3 LOT 9 BLK 1 SECT, T1N, 28W-17-08-2W PARCEL: 05245. The status is 1217 SYCAMORE PL, LONGVIEW 98632, and the tax district is 400 Leaning. The neighborhood is 44 - HILLSIDE. The levy rate is 11.626673. The current assessment information shows a current year levy rate of 11.626673. The current transaction information shows a tax bill for 2006 for \$1,022.17.

Assessment Year	Tax Year	Total Charges	Paid 1st Half	Paid 2nd Half	Unpaid Amount	Tax Bill**
2006	2007	\$1,044.34	\$1,022.17		\$1,022.17	8026470.pdf

Features on the Parcel Information Page

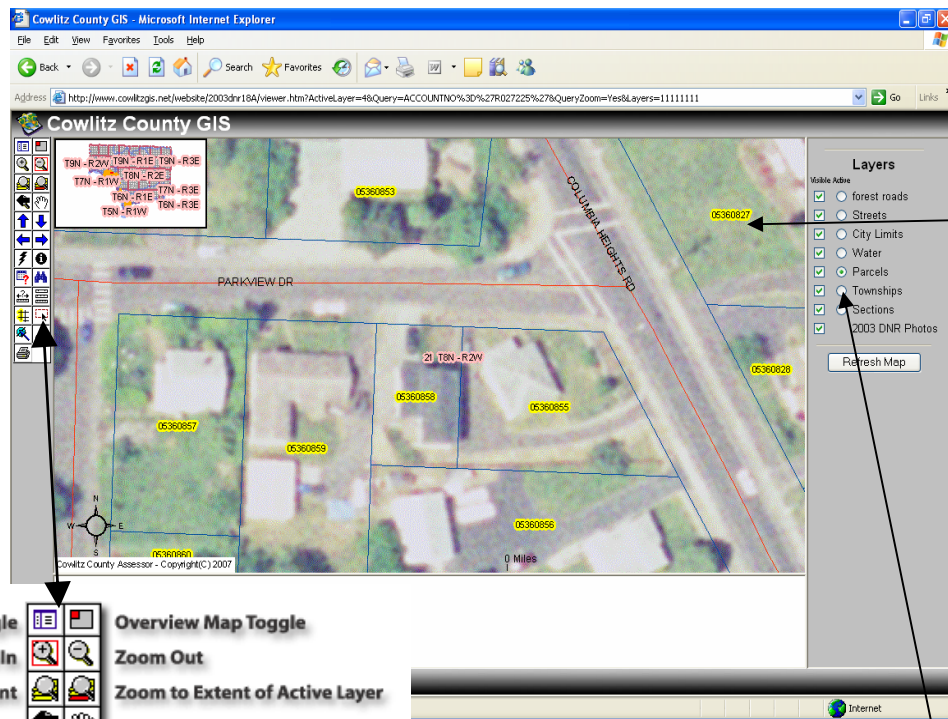
- Click on the link next to the *Tax District* heading to find information about the levy rate for the parcel's taxing districts. A new window will open that shows a brief summary of the different categories that make up the levy rate for the 1987 to 2006 assessment years. If you want a more in-depth list, click on the link labeled *Click here to view individual tax authorities*.
- Click on the *Sales Data* link next to the *Neighborhood* heading to open an Excel file with sales transactions that have taken place within the parcel's neighborhood. An interactive sales map is available by clicking the *Map Data* link. A general valuation explanation and instructions for using the interactive map toolbar are available by clicking the *Click Here For Interactive Map Instructions* link.
- Click on the link labeled *Click Here to View Historical Values* next to the *Current Assessment Information* heading to view historical assessed values for the parcel.

There are two types of values shown: a value for the land, and a value for improvements. Improvements include a home, outbuildings, and home site developments.


- Click on the link labeled *Click Here to View Historical Taxes* next to the heading *Current Transaction Information* to see historical tax bill amounts. To view the current property tax bill, click on the link to the right of the current year's tax amount.
- Click on the link labeled *Click here to view historical property details* next to the heading *Property Details* to view historical property details.
- Click on the account number link next to the heading *Account Information* to open a new window containing an interactive parcel map with an aerial photo view.

How to Navigate through the Aerial View Screen

On the left side of the window is a toolbar that can be used to navigate around the map. Here is an explanation of each toolbar button (Note: not all buttons are active):



- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Layer/Legend Toggle | Overview Map Toggle |
| Zoom In | Zoom Out |
| Zoom to Full Extent | Zoom to Extent of Active Layer |
| Return to Previous Extent | Pan |
| Pan Up | Pan Down |
| Pan Left | Pan Right |
| Identify Feature Attributes | Query Feature Attributes |
| Find Text String Tool | Measure Tool |
| Set Units | Buffer Tool (if active) |
| Select an Area | Select by Line/Polygon |
| Clear all Selections | Creates Map Layout for Printing |

❖ If you want to know the parcel information of another parcel you can select the  icon and then click on a parcel number. The parcel information will appear in the white box at the bottom of the window. **Make sure *Parcels* is the active layer.** If you have questions or need

assistance call the Cowlitz County Assessor's Office at (360) 577-3010.