



Office of the County Assessor
Kevin Klaybor, Chief Deputy
Reassessment Division
Robin Ackerson, Chief Deputy
Inheritance Tax Division
Terri Wilber-Mendoza, Chief Deputy
Property Tax Assessment Board of Appeals
Sue Tranberg, Deputy

Office of the St. Joseph County Assessor

David E. Wesolowski 227 W. Jefferson Blvd. Room 307 County-City Bldg. South Bend, IN 46601 ph: 574-235-9523 fax: 574-235-5554

International Association of Assessing Officials
Indiana County Assessors Association
Indiana Township Assessors Association
Association of Indiana Counties



June 1, 2009

Ms. Julie Waddell, Assessor-Auditor
Indiana Department of Local Government Finance
100 North Senate Avenue, IGCN 1058
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: St. Joseph County Ratio Study
2008 pay 2009

Dear Ms. Waddell,

St. Joseph County is comprised of 13 townships divided into approximately 124,000 real estate parcels. Portage Township, the largest, contains over 43,000 of these parcels and is predominantly urban, while Madison Township, the smallest, is predominantly farmland with fewer than 1200 parcels. Penn and Clay Townships have the most variety in property use with their mix of Residential, Commercial, Industrial, and Agricultural parcels, with about 28,000 and 15,000 parcels, respectively. Due to the implementation of HB1001 in 2008, only Portage and Penn Townships retained their township assessors beyond July 1st, and they have contributed the ratio studies for their townships. The eleven other townships transferred their assessment duties to the County Assessor and his staff.

The 2006 and 2007 Sales have been reviewed, corrected, stratified and analyzed by township, neighborhood, and class codes. Many sales have been found to be Invalid for the Ratio Study due to errors, omissions, and use changes such as splits and combinations. These sales are accounted for in the attached "Sales Not Used" spreadsheet. Adjustments and corrections have been made to the Parcel Database, and Trending Factors have been applied to the Worksheet AV's.

The 2008 St. Joseph County Ratio Study reflects several changes and trends in the county. Sales of condos in Centre, Clay, Portage, and Penn Townships reflect an increase in market value. Residential development continues in Warren Township's new subdivisions of Augustine Lakes and Boulder Bay, while commercial development continues more slowly in German Township. Harris Township's new development of Toscana Park and Heritage Square, although not significant to this year's trending, have created a number of new parcels. The high foreclosure rate in some neighborhoods of Portage Township reflect a high decline in Rental Property ownership, while more rural townships were less affected and their residential markets remained stagnant.

Specific items to note in this study:

- Improved Residential – Clay, Penn, and Portage Township have parcels with Land Values of \$0.00. These are for Improvements that sit on leased land, such as condominium unit garages. The sales in Portage Rental neighborhoods have been reviewed and analyzed using both the Cost and Income Approach; it was determined that these parcels be valued using the GRM, and thus are shown in the “Sales not Used” spreadsheet.
- Vacant Residential – There were no sales in Madison Township, only 4 in Liberty Township and 3 in Lincoln Township. Liberty and Lincoln, due to their adjacent location and similar characteristics, were combined for this study.
- Improved Commercial – The re-development of the Scottsdale area of Centre Township resulted in an increase to the primarily retail Commercial property. Clay Township was stratified by District, due to the diversity of the Commercial areas. One sale in German Township was used for trending purposes, but determined to be Invalid due to a discrepancy between the Parcel ID number on the Sales Disclosure (71-03-22-378-001.000-009) and the Parcel ID (71-03-22-378-003.000-009) on the deed, which matched in the legal descriptions. Harris Township is in the midst of an Annexation/Split for Toscana Park and Heritage Square. Due to the shortage of available sales in Liberty, Lincoln, Olive, Union, and Warren Townships, these were combined into one Improved Commercial study category with a total of 13 sales. Both Penn and Portage Townships had little impact due to the market values.
- Vacant Commercial – Only Penn and Portage Townships had sufficient sales for their analysis in this category. Combining available sales from Clay, Harris, and Lincoln townships resulted in only 2 valid sales; therefore, the Marshall & Swift cost tables were used in setting values.
- Improved Industrial – German, Penn, and Portage Townships were affected by market trending, while combined sales from Centre, Harris, and Lincoln resulted in only 4 sales. A review of 2005 sales did not materially change this category; therefore, Marshall & Swift cost tables were used in setting values.
- Vacant Industrial – Only 4 sales in the county met the Ratio Study criteria of arms-length transactions. Three of these were in Portage Township, which also evaluated 2005 and 2008 sales to discover that a trending factor was unnecessary. The remaining sale was in Lincoln Township.

Please review the attached ratio study and workbook, and notify me of the results at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Robin E. Ackerson
Chief Deputy, Reassessment
St. Joseph County
Office of the Assessor
(574) 245-6642
rackerso@co.st-joseph.in.us

cc: Dave Wesolowski, St. Joseph County Assessor
Rosemary Mandrici, Director of Assessments