



Committee: Directly to Council
Committee Review: N/A
Staff: Gene Smith, Legislative Analyst
Purpose: To receive testimony – no vote expected
Keywords: Budget, Taxes

AGENDA ITEM #16
April 21, 2020
Public Hearing

SUBJECT

Public Hearing on the Council's intent to consider increasing FY21 General Fund tax rate that exceeds the Constant Yield Tax Rate (CYTR)

EXPECTED ATTENDEES

None

COUNCIL DECISION POINTS & COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

- The Council received significant public comment for its advertisement regarding its intent to consider setting the General Fund tax rate that exceeds the CYTR in FY21. All public testimony requested that the Council not increase taxes in FY21.
- The Council will set the General Fund tax rate with all property tax rates when it approves the FY21 operating budget.

DESCRIPTION/ISSUE

State law requires the Council to advertise if it plans to impose a real property tax rate that exceeds the CYTR each year. The CYTR is the General Fund real property tax rate for the coming fiscal year that would generate the same amount of revenue that was generated during the current fiscal year. The CYTR fluctuates based on the County's assessable base each year; the CYTR decreases when assessments increase and increases when assessments decrease.

SUMMARY OF KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

- The State Department of Assessments and Taxation calculates the CYTR annually for each taxing authority in the State (see ©1-5).
- State law requires a Maryland taxing authority (i.e. the Council) to advertise if it plans to exceed the CYTR for the next fiscal year.
- The notice and public hearing requirements established in State law are very specific. These requirements include word for word language, font size, appearance requirements, and specific timing requirements for the public hearing (see ©6-7).
- The Council's notice to set a rate that exceeds CYTR does not restrict its decision when setting the actual real property tax rate during the budget. The notice provides flexibility because a

taxing authority may not set a rate that exceeds the CYTR or the advertised rate unless it follows the State law exactly.

- Attached is a calculation sheet for the County’s CYTR in FY21 and previous history of the CYTR (see ©8-9). The Council advertised at the General Fund tax rate in the Executive’s recommended FY21 operating budget.

This report contains:

Memorandum from the State	©1
Advertisement	©6
Calculation sheet	©8
History of the County’s CYTR	©9

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DEPARTMENT OF
ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION

Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Michael L. Higgs, Jr., Director

Date: February 14, 2020
To: All County Taxing Authorities
From: Michael Higgs, Director
RE: 2020/21 Constant Yield Tax Rate – Instructions

The Department of Assessments and Taxation is charged with administering the Constant Yield Tax Rate law. The law is found in two separate sections of the Tax-Property Article, §§ 2-205 and 6-308. The latter section contains the provisions that must be followed by taxing authorities. We are here to answer your questions and assist you in complying with this law.

Although personal property is no longer a part of the Constant Yield Tax Rate calculations, the tax rate on personal property shall be no more than 2.5 times the rate for real property. Failure to comply with the Constant Yield Tax Rate law could have serious consequences for your jurisdiction.

Concept

The Constant Yield Tax Rate is calculated by the Department for each taxing authority in Maryland. It represents the Real Property Tax Rate for the coming tax year that will generate the same amount of revenue that was generated during the current tax year. As assessments increase, the Constant Yield Tax Rate decreases. Implicit in this concept is the idea that *a tax rate at or below the existing tax rate is a tax increase if it is higher than the constant yield tax rate*. When a taxing authority plans to impose a Real Property Tax Rate that is higher than the Constant Yield Tax Rate, it must advertise the tax increase and hold a public hearing. If the taxing authority plans to maintain its Real Property Tax Rate at the current level, but above the Constant Yield Tax Rate, it must be advertised and a hearing must be held.

For the upcoming tax year, the assessable base of some taxing authorities has decreased. Therefore, the Constant Yield Tax Rate for those jurisdictions will actually be higher than the Real Property Tax Rate for the current year. However, the legal requirements for adopting a tax rate above the Constant Yield Tax Rate remain the same. Accordingly, any taxing authority that is proposing a tax rate above the Constant Yield Tax Rate must comply with the enclosed instructions.

If the taxing authority plans to set a Real Property Tax Rate that is *equal to or less than* the Constant Yield Tax Rate, then the Constant Yield Tax Rate statute **does not** require a notice or a hearing.

Real Property Division

300 W. Preston St., Room 605, Baltimore, MD 21201

www.dat.maryland.gov

410-767-1199 (phone)

1-800-552-7724 (MD Relay)

410-333-7275 (fax)

1-888-246-5941 (toll free)



DEPARTMENT OF
ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION

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Procedures

The law establishes very strict procedures governing advertisement and public hearing for tax rate increases above the constant yield tax rate. Further, the law requires that the Department of Assessments and Taxation monitor the advertising and hearing process and report to the Attorney General any apparent violations. In the past, violations have resulted in jurisdictions being ordered to reduce the tax rate after tax bills had been issued. To avoid violating the law, you must comply with the following procedures:

- 1. Notice or Advertisement (2 options):** (1) Mail the proper notice to each property taxpayer who resides in your jurisdiction; or (2) place an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation in your jurisdiction. If you want to mail the notice to each resident, please contact the Department for prior approval and guidance.
- 2. Form of the Notice or Advertisement:** The language is specified word-for-word in the statute. An ad that deviates from the statutory requirements does not meet the requirements of the law and will be referred to the Attorney General for action. A sample notice and instructions for the arithmetic (Form CYTR#3) are included in this package. The wording in the statute is required and may not be modified. No part of this notice may be omitted. Additional language consistent with the intent of the law will be permitted (e.g. information regarding access to the hearing for the disabled). *Additional language designed to recast a tax rate in excess of the Constant Yield Tax Rate as anything other than a tax increase is contrary to the intent of the Constant Yield Tax Rate law and is not acceptable. It does not matter whether the additional language is within or outside the border of the required notice.* In order to minimize your advertising costs and avoid needless litigation, please use only the language required by law. If you have any questions about the acceptability of additional language, contact Zachary Grisard at the address on the following page.

If you are using the same tax rate as last year, please note that the percentage change in Section 1 and Section 2 of the advertisement will be the same but may be different than Section 4. Even though the calculations for the new real property tax revenues generated in Section 2 and Section 4 will vary due to rounding, please use the figure from Section 2 in both sections. Please use whole dollars in the advertisement and round to one decimal place in the percent changes.

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We will gladly review any advertisement prior to publication. The advertisement will be checked for any errors in the text and calculations, and any additional language will be reviewed. If you wish, we will write your advertisement for you if you furnish us with your proposed tax rate(s). We will attempt to get the advertisement back to you by the next work day. Whenever possible, you will receive a response from us the same day we receive it. Please contact Zachary Grisard for additional information.

3. Style and Placement of the Advertisement: The ad must be at least 1/4 of a page in size and use 18 point type. The notice must not be placed on pages with legal notices or classified advertisements. The headline must be in bold face with all capital letters. The text of the advertisement must be in regular face with mixed case letters. Be sure to emphasize these requirements with the newspaper. The sample notice enclosed shows the correct form for the advertisement.

4. Timing of the Advertisement and Hearing: The hearing must be held on or after the 7th day and on or before the 21st day after the notice is published. Do not count the day of the notice or advertisement, but count the day of the hearing and all intervening calendar days, including Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. This means that the advertisement must appear between one and three weeks before the hearing. The hearing must be held on or before June 17th, which is the date required by law for imposition of the property tax. This means that the absolute latest the advertisement can be published is June 10th for a June 17th hearing.

5. Reporting to the Department: The taxing authority must provide the *entire actual page* of the physically published edition of the newspaper that carried the notice or evidence that the notice was mailed to each property taxpayer. Photocopies of the newspaper page or just the advertisement itself are not acceptable. Please return the enclosed memo (Form CYTR #2). This must be sent to the Department within 15 days of the date of the advertisement. We strongly recommend that you send the Department a copy of the notice as soon as it is published, especially if the Department has not reviewed the advertisement prior to publication. We review all advertisements as soon as they are received so that if the advertisement does not conform to the law you may have time to republish it and hold a new hearing before the June 17th deadline. Failure to properly report to the Department is noncompliance that must be referred to the Attorney General.

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6. Setting the Rate: The Real Property Tax Rate must be set at the Constant Yield Tax Rate hearing or at a later time if the day, time, and location that the tax rate will be set are announced at the hearing. The property tax rate applicable to personal property shall be no more than 2.5 times the rate for real property. Enclosed is the Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification (Form CYTR #1) which shows the Constant Yield Tax Rate and the associated steps in its calculation for your jurisdiction. Personal property is not part of the Constant Yield Tax Rate calculation.

Please remember that the constant yield tax rate uses an estimate of assessable real property made in February, several months before tax rates are typically set. Every effort is made to provide reliable estimates of revenue for the upcoming year. However, these estimates may be affected by subsequent reductions in assessments by the local Property Tax Assessment Appeal Board or the Maryland Tax Court for certain properties. The Department issues revised estimates on a county basis in late March which may be obtained by contacting this office or from our web site at: www.dat.maryland.gov.

Questions or problems:

Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation
Attn: Zachary Grisard, Special Assistant
300 West Preston Street, Room 605
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
Phone: (410) 767-6259
E-mail: zachary.grisard@maryland.gov

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2020 Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification

Taxing authority: **Montgomery County**

1	1-Jul-2019	Gross assessable real property base	\$	194,517,284,262
2	1-Jul-2019	Homestead Tax Credit	-	67,386,897
3	1-Jul-2019	Net assessable real property base		194,449,897,365
4	1-Jul-2019	Actual local tax rate (per \$100)	x	0.7166
5	1-Jul-2019	Potential revenue	\$	1,393,427,965
6	1-Jul-2020	Estimated assessable base	\$	200,314,900,873
7	1-Jan-2020	Half year new construction	-	707,026,014
8	1-Jul-2020	Estimated full year new construction*	-	1,122,500,000
9	1-Jul-2020	Estimated abatements and deletions**	-	1,676,230,394
10	1-Jul-2020	Net assessable real property base	\$	196,809,144,465

11	1-Jul-2019	Potential revenue	\$	1,393,427,965
12	1-Jul-2020	Net assessable real property base	+	196,809,144,465
13	1-Jul-2020	Constant yield tax rate	\$	0.7080

Certified by



Director

* Includes one-quarter year new construction where applicable.

**Actual + estimated as of July 1, 2020, including Homestead Tax Credit.

COUNTY NEWSPAPER NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

Headline must be all capital letters and bold type.
Remainder must be both upper and lower case characters.
Notices must be 18 point. County advertisements must be
a minimum of 1/4 page in size and
must not be placed with legal notices or classified ads.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The County Council of Montgomery County proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2020, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 1.2%, from \$194,449,897,365 to \$196,809,144,465.
2. If Montgomery County maintains the current tax rate of \$0.7166 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 1.2% resulting in \$16,906,365 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be decreased to \$0.7080, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The County is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The County proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.7400 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 4.5% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$62,978,926 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 1:30 PM on April 21, 2020 at 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland in the Council Office Building in the 3rd floor hearing room. The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged. Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 240-777-7900 for further information.

During the state of emergency related to COVID-19 and to abide by the Governor's executive orders relating to the emergency, the public will not be physically present in the hearing room. The public is encouraged to participate by sending comments to the Council by mail at 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850; by email at county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov; or by using the drop off box at the entrance next to the fish pond (near the parking garage).

**Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation February 2020
Constant Yield Tax Rate Certification for Montgomery County For 2020/FY21**

3	01-Jul-2019 Net assessable real property base	194,449,897,365
4	01-Jul-2019 Actual local tax rate	0.7166
5	01-Jul-2019 Potential revenue	1,393,427,965
6	01-Jul-2020 Estimated assessable real property base	200,314,900,873
7	01-Jan-2020 Half year new construction	(707,026,014)
8	01-Jul-2020 Estimated full year new construction*	(1,122,500,000)
9	01-Jul-2020 Estimated abatements and deletions**	(1,676,230,394)
10	01-Jul-2020 Net assessable real property base	196,809,144,465
11	01-Jul-2019 Potential revenue (from #5 above)	1,393,427,965
12	01-Jul-2020 Net assessable real property base (from #10 above)	196,809,144,465
13	01-Jul-2020 Constant yield tax rate (rounded to 4 decimal places)	0.7080
	CYTR is this much above (below) the current tax rate	(0.0086)

* Includes one-quarter year new construction where applicable.

**Actual + estimated as of July 1, 2019, including Homestead Tax Credit.

Line 3	Assessable base, current year	194,449,897,365
Line 4	Tax rate, current year	0.7166
Line 10	Assessable base, next year	196,809,144,465
Line 11	CYTR	0.7080
NLN1	CE rate	0.7400
NLN2	Proposed rate to advertise	0.7400
NLN3	Proposed rate exceeds CYTR by	0.0320
NLN4	CE rate exceeds (is less than) CYTR by	0.0320

Circle 1	% change in assessable base	1.2%
Circle 2	Assessable base, current year	194,449,897,365
Circle 3	Assessable base, next year	196,809,144,465
Circle 4	Tax rate, current year	0.7166
Circle 5	% change in tax at current rate	1.2%
Circle 6	\$ change in tax at current rate	16,906,365
Circle 7	% change from CYTR to proposed rate	4.5%

For circle 8, use circle 6 if proposed rate = current rate. Otherwise, use number on row below.

Circle 8	Additional revenue from proposed rate, compared to CYTR	62,978,926
	Revenue, CE rate	1,456,387,669
	Revenue, proposed rate	1,456,387,669
	Difference	0

FY13-FY21 Constant Yield Tax Rate, CE Rec. Rates, Council Advertised Rates, and Council Approved Rates

A	B Council Approved Previous Year General Fund Tax Rate May	C State Constant Yield Tax Rate (CYTR) February	D County Executive Recommended Rate March	E Council Advertised Rate (CYTR) April	F Council Approved General Fund Tax Rate May
1 FY13	0.7130	0.7440	0.7260	0.7510	0.7240
2 FY14	0.7240	0.7260	0.7590	0.7740	0.7590
3 FY15	0.7590	0.7475	0.7360	0.7775	0.7320
4 FY16	0.7320	0.7098	0.7230	0.7630	0.7230
5 FY17	0.7230	0.7004	0.7754	0.7754	0.7734
6 FY18	0.7734	0.7541	0.7488	0.7734	0.7484
7 FY19	0.7484	0.7404	0.7386	0.7704	0.7414
8 FY20	0.7414	0.7346	0.7202	0.7702	0.7166
9 FY21	0.7166	0.7080	0.7400	0.7400	