



# County of Los Angeles Office of the Assessor

Transition Team Report

March 10, 2015



## The Assessor's 100-Day Transition Team

March 10, 2015

Assessor Jeffrey Prang  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

### Re.: Transition Team Report

The Honorable Assessor Jeffrey Prang:

On behalf of the members of the Transition Team, we are pleased to submit this "Transition Team Report" for the Office of the Assessor.

As part of this process, we reviewed a number of initiatives underway or contemplated. In preparing this "Transition Team Report", the Transition Team met numerous times. We reviewed many documents, such as the 2012-2015 Strategic Plan, prior audits, and Assessor studies and reports. Staff shared background information on the Office's progress and future plans, and actively listened to our suggestions. We commend you and your staff for their openness about your Office's operations – both what works well and what requires improvement.

As you know, your Transition Team includes a variety of civic leaders from both the public and private sectors. We join unanimously in endorsing the programs you have embarked on. We have also offered a series of additional suggestions, which are detailed in the accompanying report.

#### Chairs

The Honorable Ron Galperin, Controller, City of Los Angeles  
The Honorable John A. Pérez, Speaker Emeritus, California State Assembly  
Connie Rice, Esq., Civil Rights Attorney, Advancement Project 15

#### Taxpayer Access & Responsiveness

The Honorable Rick Auerbach, Retired County Assessor, County of Los Angeles  
Mr. Jim Clarke, Executive Vice-President, Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles  
Ms. Sandra Davis, Former Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, County of Los Angeles  
Mr. Leron Gubler, President & Chief Executive Officer, Hollywood Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. James Huang, Chief Executive Officer, Consulting and Real Estate  
Ms. Alisa Katz, Retired Chief of Staff, Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky

#### Open Data & Systems

Mr. Paul Arevalo, City Manager, City of West Hollywood, CA  
Mr. Richard Green, Director and Chair, University of Southern California (USC), Lusk Center of Real Estate  
The Honorable Chris Lancaster, Former Councilmember, West Covina, CA  
Mr. James Litz, Government Affairs Director, Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Association of Realtors  
Mr. Noel Massie, Chair, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Blaine Meek, Esq., Counsel, California Association of Professional Employees  
Dr. William Yu, Ph.D., Economist, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), UCLA Anderson Forecast

#### Ethics

Connie Rice, Esq., Civil Rights Attorney, Advancement Project  
David Fleming, Esq., Counsel, Latham & Watkins, LLP  
Mr. Dennis Hernandez, Commissioner, Los Angeles Convention and Exhibition Center Authority  
The Honorable Robert Philibosian, Esq., Counsel, Sheppard Mullin

#### Taxpayer Outreach, Education, & Partnerships

The Honorable Ruth Galanter, Former Councilmember, City of Los Angeles  
Mr. Ruben Gonzalez, Senior Vice President for Public Policy & Political Affairs, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Ms. Linda Griego, President & Chief Executive Officer, Griego Enterprises, Inc.  
The Honorable Jerome Horton, Chair, California State Board of Equalization (BOE)  
Mr. Justin Kim, TMG Realty Advisors  
Ms. Theresa Martinez, Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Latino Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Sam Olivito, Executive Director, California Contract Cities Association  
Ms. Melissa Patack, Manager, Motion Picture Association America  
The Honorable Jan Perry, Councilmember (Retired), City of Los Angeles; currently General Manager, City of Los Angeles, Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD)  
Ms. Claudia Queen, Vice President, Chicago Title  
Ms. Valerie Shaw, Former Commissioner, Los Angeles Public Works  
Mr. Gary Toebben, President & Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce  
Mr. Mel Wong, Broker Associate, RE/MAX Elite Realty  
Mr. Charlie Woo, Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Megatoys  
Sam Yebri, Esq., Attorney, Merino Yebri, LLP

#### Committee at Large

Ms. LaPhonza Butler, President, SEIU ULTCW  
Mr. Adnan Khan, President, Council of Pakistan American Affairs (COPAA)  
Mr. Ron Miller, Secretary/Treasurer, Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Department (B.C.T.C.)  
Mr. William Rouse, General Manager, Yellow Cab  
Ms. Carol Schatz, President/CEO, Central City Association (CCA), Downtown Los Angeles  
Mr. Bob Schoonover, President, SEIU Local 721  
Mr. Don St. Clair, Co-Chair, Los Angeles County Business Federation (BizFed)



## The Assessor's 100-Day Transition Team

We understand that these initiatives are ambitious and far-reaching. We believe you are on the right path. The men and women of the Office have demonstrated that they are smart, capable, and ready to make these initiatives a reality. Considerable substantive work has been completed during the past 100 days.

We thank you for your leadership and for inviting us to join you in this new era at the Office of the Assessor. We congratulate you on your efforts to make your Office's operations more accessible by property owners and others engaged in real estate transactions.

We look forward to a vibrant and trustworthy Office of the Assessor under your leadership.

Respectfully Submitted,

Transition Committee Co-Chairs

Ron Galperin  
City Controller  
City of Los Angeles

John A. Pérez  
Speaker Emeritus  
California State  
Assembly

Connie Rice  
Civil Rights Attorney  
Chair, The  
Advancement Project

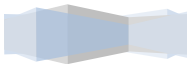
cc: Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors  
Sachi Hamai, Interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
Mark J. Saladino, County Counsel  
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller  
Joseph Kelly, Treasurer and Tax Collector  
Dean C. Logan, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk  
Lisa M. Garrett, Director, Department of Human Resources



# Contents

## Co-Chair Transmittal Letter

<b>I – Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Transition Team’s Role.....	2
Assessor Initiatives Reviewed .....	2
Conclusions .....	3
<b>II – Assessor’s Initiatives .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Open Data & Systems Modernization .....	5
Taxpayer Access & Responsiveness .....	11
Integrity & Ethics.....	18
Taxpayer Outreach, Education, and Community Partnerships .....	20
 <b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A – Transition Team Members, by Committee .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Appendix B – Assessor Office Overview.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix C – Transition Team’s Work Program .....</b>	<b>31</b>





# I – Executive Summary





## I – Executive Summary

---

The Honorable Jeffrey Prang, upon being sworn in as County Assessor on December 1, 2014, embarked on a program to improve the transparency, clarity, and responsiveness of the Office of Assessor<sup>1</sup>. His efforts build on the reforms started by the Board of Supervisors' appointment of Mr. Santos Kreimann over the Office in 2012 and Ms. Sharon Moller who took over when Mr. Kreimann was appointed to a position in the Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in 2013.

### Transition Team's Role

During his first 100 days in office, Assessor Prang created a Transition Team to take a fresh look and offer advice regarding initiatives to date and planned initiatives.

### Representation

The Transition Team includes representatives of organizations which make use of the information collected by the Office of the Assessor and members of the public with experience in public service. The 42 Transition Team members are listed in Appendix A and exemplify a cross-section of leaders and stakeholders representing business, law, academia, government, nonprofit, and community groups.

### Objectives

This report is to give the Assessor a road map to ensure that the Office's work is efficient and thorough, that all taxable property is assessed fairly and accurately, and that all taxpayers can monitor the flow of tax money to provision of public services. The Assessor established two objectives for the Transition Team, namely, to:

- Provide the Assessor with independent and objective feedback regarding the Office's accomplishments to date, current operations, and planned initiatives
- Suggest ways to make the Office more responsive and customer service oriented

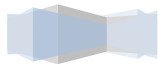
Appendix C outlines the Transition Team's work efforts and documents reviewed.

### Assessor Initiatives Reviewed

After reviewing various Assessor initiatives, we focused on ten high-priority initiatives in four areas of review:

---

<sup>1</sup> The Office sets the assessed values in the Annual Assessment Roll, which is then used to calculate property taxes.





### Open Data & Systems Modernization

- Initiative 1. Modernize the existing legacy systems and digitize resources for universal and secure access
- Initiative 2. Make data regularly available and easy to access through an “open data” portal
- Initiative 3. Redesign the Assessor’s website so it is more customer-friendly

### Taxpayer Access & Responsiveness

- Initiative 4. Explore the viability of increased collaboration among the three property tax departments to provide better customer service through a one-stop approach
- Initiative 5. Work with the Executive Office and Assessment Appeals Board (AAB) to improve the assessment appeals process and reduce delays
- Initiative 6. Explore adjusting the low-value assessment threshold for business personal property and possessory interest assessments

### Integrity & Ethics

- Initiative 7. Continue to reinforce the importance of ethical conduct throughout the Office

### Taxpayer Outreach, Education, & Community Partnerships

- Initiative 8. Conduct more outreach to increase the public’s understanding of who the Assessor is, what the Office of the Assessor does, and how to access services
- Initiative 9. Produce reports about real estate market trends for the public
- Initiative 10. Partner with elected officials to advocate for taxpayer-friendly and fair legislation

### Transition Team’s Conclusions

We commend the Assessor on the initiatives he has instituted and urge County support for needed funding, particularly in upgrading outdated computer systems and technology (Initiative 1). We support the Assessor’s goal to improve open-data capabilities in coordination with other County departments (Initiative 2). A user-friendly and updated website is an important vehicle for providing access to needed information about the Office of the Assessor (Initiative 3).

We also support his efforts to become more customer-service oriented. The one-stop (or tax resource center) will improve coordination with the Offices of the Treasurer & Tax



Collector, Auditor-Controller, and Assessor to provide simpler and faster resolution of questions and disputes (Initiative 4). Similarly, streamlining the AAB will serve the public better and improve Assessor's efficiency and effectiveness (Initiative 5). The Office is aware of the importance of focusing on work efforts that result in a worthwhile return on investment for taxpayers, as well as the government and educational enterprises that benefit from those taxes (Initiative 6).

Communication and interaction with the public will improve with the updated Assessor's website (Initiative 3) and proactive outreach to increase the public's understanding of the Office and its services (Initiative 8). We believe the creation of a field deputy position in each regional office is vital for offering direct interaction with individuals and organizations. We encourage that all written materials be revised to reflect language that can be easily understood by people unfamiliar with real estate transactions. An ongoing speaker-training program for staff members will enable them to act as ambassadors for the Assessor to community groups.

All of the initiatives focus on public accountability. The Assessor must constantly reinforce the Office's and employees' commitment to ethical operations (Initiative 7). Sharing Assessor reports on real estate trends (Initiative 9) and advocating for well-conceived and fair legislation (Initiative 10) will ensure such accountability through increased transparency.



The Transition Team thanks Assessor Prang for the opportunity to assist in his efforts to ensure fairness, transparency, and public accountability in his Office's operations and stands, individually and collectively, ready to provide any further assistance he may need.







## **II – Assessor’s Initiatives**





## II – Assessor’s Initiatives

The Transition Team provided input to the Assessor’s initiatives in four areas:

- Open Data & Systems Modernization
- Taxpayer Access & Responsiveness
- Integrity & Ethics
- Taxpayer Outreach, Education, & Community Partnerships

For each initiative, this section outlines the following information:

- **Assessor’s goals and background information** – The Assessor shared his goals for improving operations at the December 2014 kick-off with the Transition Team. These goals are highlighted in boxes. Each initiative also presents information provided by Assessor staff to the Transition Team so that the public may have a context for the initiative.
- **Transition Team feedback** – The Transition Team’s guidance is set forth for the Assessor to consider when moving forward on each initiative.

### Open Data & Systems Modernization

#### Initiative 1. Modernize the existing legacy systems and digitize resources for universal and secure access

##### *Background*

Three core computer systems, built in the 1970s and 1980s, manage the Assessment Roll of \$1.3 trillion in local properties and assets:

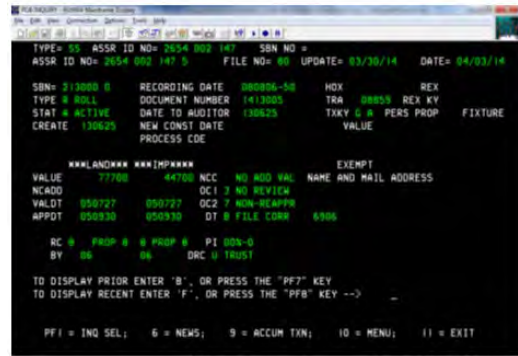
- Property Data Base (PDB), which handles secured properties (land, buildings, and fixtures (e.g., pipelines)) and is housed on a dated mainframe
- Cross-Reference Roll for specialized properties, which runs on an old mainframe
- AS400, which is a mid-range, older computer that processes the unsecured property system (i.e., non-real estate assets such as boats, planes, and business property)

##### **Assessor’s Goal**

To improve our Office’s customer service model through better computer systems that are user-focused and user-friendly and can increase productivity and efficiency.



Today, these legacy systems are inflexible and antiquated; they operate on old technology platforms, use Cobol programming language, appear on old-fashion “green” screens”, and are hard to sustain. Compounding the situation, many of the programmers who have kept the systems running are now retiring. No new talent is in the pipeline of individuals who want to or should learn such old technology. The Office is also losing talent to other employers who offer the next generation of IT programmers the opportunity to work on the latest technology.



To date, the Office’s IT staff members have identified more than 9,000 business rules and requirements used to create any and all types of assessments within Los Angeles County.

As a result:

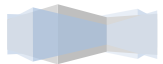
- Assessor employees are less productive because they must go through inefficient steps to update or obtain needed information. Other departments that must use the same information when working with the public (e.g., Assessment Appeals Board (AAB) and public counters) also find it hard to be as responsive as they would like to be because of the technology.
- Assessor operations are overly reliant on manual, paper-based processes.
- Taxpayers have limited access to information. The public today, however, is technologically savvy, expecting more advanced capabilities and features, such as touch screens and intuitive menus.

To achieve the Assessor’s goal requires replacing the existing legacy software, which currently poses undesirable business risks to the Office because of: a) the outmoded technology and b) the diminishing IT expertise need for this technology.

*Transition Team’s Feedback*

Overall, we endorse the Assessor’s technology modernization initiative as being on the right track. We are pleased to learn the Office is tackling this top-priority issue that directly affects every property and, thus, indirectly impacts the tax base for every local governmental jurisdiction and educational district in Los Angeles County.

We caution the Assessor, however, about prior large IT endeavors in government that have sometimes failed because of their magnitude. The Assessor’s IT staff members appear to be keenly aware of the need to run the business while making software upgrades. We are impressed that the Assessor’s IT staff members have made greater progress in addressing





the issues with the legacy systems than we had expected. Their focus on solutions is also an important one for bringing about lasting changes that work.

## Initiative 2. Make data regularly available and easy to access through an “open data” portal

### Background

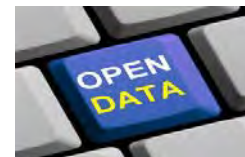
The County of Los Angeles, as well as the Office of the Assessor, maintains vast databases and public records.

In January 2015, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an “Open Data Initiative: Transparency and Innovation,” proposed by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. The purpose of the initiative is to “...create the first one-stop-shop website for anyone seeking information or data from county departments.”<sup>2</sup> This initiative will make it easier for the public to obtain “...information from 37 departments including the annual budget, crime statistics, elections data, and geographic information systems...”<sup>3</sup> via a new, user-friendly website ([www.data.lacounty.gov](http://www.data.lacounty.gov)).

Preparing reports today often entails ad-hoc efforts, which involve multiple Assessor staff members. The Office charges for producing standard and customized reports, which generate approximately \$140,000 in revenue annually. Custom data requests are more prevalent than the Assessor’s standard reports. The most expensive requested data are the parcel reports, which cost upwards of \$13,000 to produce and are rarely purchased.

The Office will be part of the Phase I release of the County’s open data portal. The website will have Socrata Open Data Portals and dashboards to facilitate:

- Research and permit the downloading of the Assessor’s archived and indexed information, enabling users to produce their own reports
- Development of new apps for better use of the information



The Assessor is aware that increased access and use of open data will likely result in decreased revenues for purchasing reports. Despite the revenue loss, the Office believes that the benefits of increased transparency, openness, and communications make it

<sup>2</sup> <http://ridley-thomas.lacounty.gov/index.php/category/top-stories/page/3/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://ridley-thomas.lacounty.gov/index.php/category/top-stories/page/3/>



worthwhile to do. We are also pleased to see this initiative is part of the County’s open data initiative.

### *Transition Team’s Feedback*

We concur. We urge the Assessor to explore further how best to provide data so that the public can easily and efficiently find answers to whatever questions they may have.

## **Initiative 3. Redesign the Assessor’s website so it is more customer-friendly**

### *Background*

The County has two web portals that provide tax-related information:

- The Property Tax Portal provides access to information pertaining to the Assessor, Auditor-Controller, Treasurer & Tax Collector, and Assessment Appeals Board (AAB).
- The Office of the Assessor has its own portal with more specific information.

***Both of these portals have high traffic, making them important information conduits for the public.*** In December 2014, 269,513 users visited the Los Angeles County Property Tax Portal. The Office of the Assessor had 56% more visitors (420,037 visitors) in the same month.

- ***Property Tax Portal.*** The Property Tax Portal’s most downloaded file was the “Message to Homeowners from the Office of the Assessor” (116 users).<sup>4</sup>
- ***Office of the Assessor Portal.*** The Assessor’s most popular page was the Property Assessment Information System with 132,715 visitors, up from 72,098 visitors in June 2012 – an increase of 84% over a 30-month period. The Assessor’s most downloaded file was its 2014 Annual Report (35,966 users), followed by its 2013 Annual Report. The third most downloaded file was a “Value Disagreements” video in Chinese (5,902 users), which reflects the multi-language diversity and increasing interest in online video presentations in Los Angeles County.

### **Assessor’s Goal**

To update the look and ease of navigating our Office’s website.

<sup>4</sup> The Assessor receives considerable email traffic through this portal. Of the 596 emails received in December 2014 through the Property Tax Portal, 199 (33%) were for the Assessor and 19 (3%) were for the Assessment Appeals Board. The Treasurer & Tax Collector received the most emails (332 or 56% of all emails). The remaining emails (46 or 8%) were directed to the Auditor-Controller.

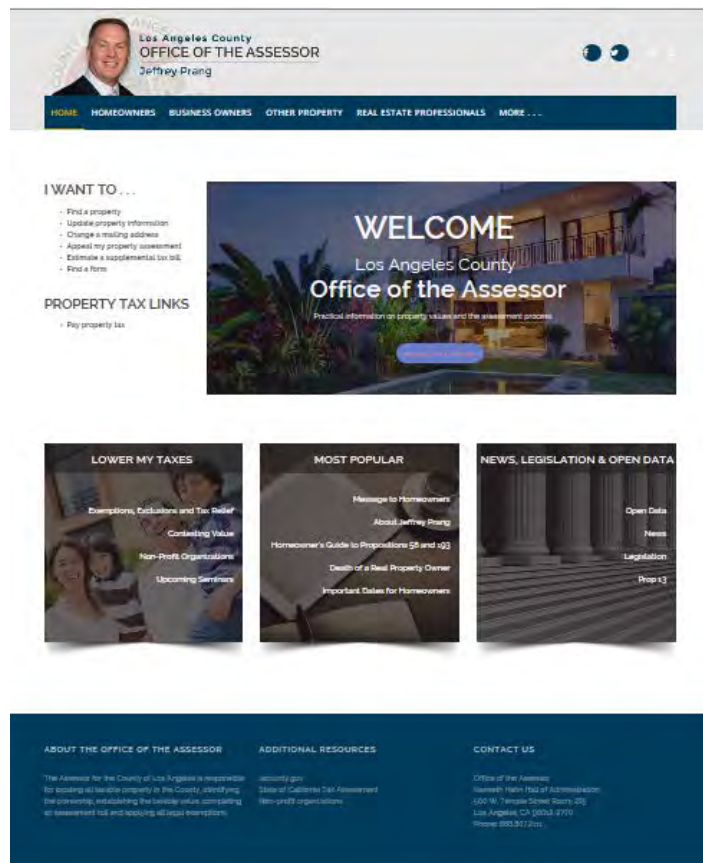


The current, decade-old website for the Office of the Assessor is busy with a dated look. The text-heavy format makes it hard for users to access desired information. Because of the heavy text, users must at times scroll down in search of important information. Such reliance on text is no longer a best practice in web design.

### Office of the Assessor: Existing Website Portal



The new portal (displayed next) will be launched in March 2015. The Assessor staff members have worked to address the short-comings of the existing website and want to build on best practices experienced by other Los Angeles County and other user-friendly websites, such as short informational videos to engage and inform visitors.





### *Transition Team's Feedback*

We feel updating the website is an important first step because of its visibility to the public. We are also pleased to see the Assessor staff members' focus on making the website more customer-friendly.

The Assessor's current website could be made easier to navigate by:

- Providing a series of links to information not on the home page and striving to limit the number of clicks that users have to make to obtain needed information
- Using graphics to supplement the text
- Thinking about how to make the information easily usable by all individuals, including:
  - Individuals who may need larger font sizes for ease in reading
  - Individuals with handicapping conditions and special American Disabilities Act (ADA) needs (e.g., reverse colors make it easier for partially-sighted individuals to read websites)
- Making the information adaptable to mobile devices
- Working closely with the County's "live chat" capabilities
- Reviewing all materials, both printed and on the website, to present the information in language as straightforward as possible, and explaining in laypeople's language any technical terms that are unavoidable
  - Note: This effort will take time<sup>5</sup>, would benefit from being "field-tested" with various audiences, and will ultimately facilitate translation into multiple languages.

---

<sup>5</sup> The website contains more than 100-pages of text.





## Taxpayer Access & Responsiveness

### Initiative 4. Explore the viability of increased collaboration among the three property tax departments to provide better customer service through a one-stop approach

#### *Background*

The Office of the Assessor is interested in partnering with the Treasurer & Tax Collector and Auditor-Controller to establish a one-stop facility to promote closer working relationships. Such a facility would house all three property tax departments, could handle property tax resolutions, and could provide property tax assistance and resources.

Other County departments, such as the Departments of Public Works, Regional Planning, Fire, and others, have established one-stop sites, which have improved customer service in unincorporated areas.

#### *Transition Team's Feedback*

The Assessor alone cannot create a one-stop property tax office. Therefore, the Transition Team's guidance is also offered to the Treasurer & Tax Collector and the Auditor-Controller.

Our review began with an inventory of the key success factors:

- 1) Collaboration and commitment to the one-stop model
- 2) Commitment to cross-training
- 3) Adequate staffing for the one-stop

We then outlined the “pros and cons” for each key success factor to evaluate whether the results would be worth the time and expense of creating a one-stop. On balance, the pros outweigh the cons.

#### **Assessor's Goal**

To improve customer service for better resolution of tax-related questions and provide improved assistance regarding property assessments.





### One-Stop Considerations

Pros	Cons
<b>Key Success Factor 1:</b> Collaboration and commitment to the one-stop model	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitates better in-person customer service by co-locating the public-interfacing functions</li> <li>Increases collaboration and enables staff to know the inter-workings of each department so they can better handle the more complicated tax questions</li> <li>Reduces staff time to communicate with outside departmental staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will not be as effective if only two departments participate</li> </ul>
<b>Key Success Factor 2:</b> Commitment to cross-training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permits cross-training of staff to assist taxpayers with minimal referrals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May take more resources to cross-train staff, given the complex legal and technical requirements of the property tax departments</li> </ul>
<b>Key Success Factor 3:</b> Adequate staffing for the one-stop	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a more “personal touch”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be more costly if additional staff or space are needed</li> </ul>

**The Transition Team encourages the Office to participate in a pilot one-stop center with Treasurer & Tax Collector and Auditor-Controller staff** in an integrated property and tax resolution center. The timing is good in the County with a new Assessor and a new Treasurer & Tax Collector, who are receptive to trying new ideas. To be effective, this new collaboration would benefit from a name that makes its role clear to the public; some suggested titles are:

- Taxpayer Assistance Center
- Taxpayer Support Center
- Taxpayer Resource Center

The pilot project requires the commitment of its participants. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may need to be developed, outlining how the three departments will work together and ensure adequate staffing coverage.

**The Transition Team also feels all three departments could make better use of available technology.** Approximately 90% of the inquiries are by phone or the Internet. The current phone system is problematic and frustrates taxpayers when they have to go through a “phone tree” to reach the person who can answer their question. (Note: The current





phone system is outdated and slated to be replaced.) Other technology suggestions involved:

- Build a virtual one-stop model
- Build on the trend of more people resolving their tax issues online
- Revise the collaborative tax portal
- Explore the use of the County’s new “live chat” function

### **Initiative 5. Work with the Executive Office and Assessment Appeals Board (AAB) to improve the assessment appeals process and reduce delays**

#### *Background*

The Office of the Assessor is just one piece of a multi-departmental process engaging with the Assessment Appeals Board (AAB).

***The AAB has experienced a significant increase in workload in the past few years.*** Decline-in-Value (DIV) reviews account for a significant amount of the Office’s work, particularly since the real estate decline starting in 2007. In 2007, the number of AAB cases filed was just over 9,000. The number of cases increased to approximately 42,000 in 2008 and 2009 – an increase of 366% over a two-year period. The number of new cases to date has remained high – 38,000 cases, involving 51,000 parcels in 2012.

***The current case workload is 50,000 cases, including applications being received and a backlog of approximately 23,000 cases.*** The AAB has two years to render a decision on a case. The cases range from residential appeals to complex developments, such as Staples Center. Delays and backlogs pose financial burdens on individual homeowners, small businesses, and even large corporations – time is money.

***The number of AAB Hearing Officers and Board members may be too few to address the backlog.*** They work part-time and earn a minimal daily stipend.

***The Office is focusing on clearing backlogs and expediting cases.*** The greatest bottlenecks appear to be with commercial properties and problems caused when parties to a case are not prepared for the hearing. If the taxpayers or their agents do not provide the Assessor with such information as income and expense data, the appraisers cannot complete an opinion of value. Each continuance may add between 90 and 180 days to a case because the parties require more time to prepare for more complex cases; some may be placed

#### **Assessor’s Goal**

To improve customer service throughout the assessment appeal process.



immediately back on the calendar. If 5 to 6 continuances occur, a one- to two-year delay can result.

The Auditor-Controller commissioned a firm to conduct a management audit of the Office of the Assessor in November 2012.<sup>6</sup> The management audit outlines a number of recommendations related to AAB, which the Assessor staff members are addressing to improve productivity and reduce the number of no-shows and continuances.

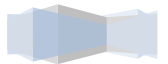
### *Transition Team's Feedback*

We support the Office's initiative and have outlined additional suggestions that cluster into specific areas in need of improvement.

- **Assessor-Executive Office collaboration.** The Assessor and Executive Officer could meet annually to discuss and identify initiatives to improve AAB efficiencies. Moreover, the Assessor could work with AAB to avoid excessive due process, as described in the management audit.
- **AAB space constraints.** The County has 5 AABs but only 4 AABs can be run at a time.
  - The County might add a fifth hearing room.
  - The County might designate a permanent room for the Hearing Officer.
  - The County might explore having hearing rooms in off-site locations from the Hall of Administration.
- **Expanded Hearing Officer program.** The Assessor could explore with County officials the possibility of expanding the Hearing Officer program by allowing properties with values up to \$5 million to be heard by Hearing Officers. Hearing Officers could benefit from ongoing refresher training.
- **Case resolutions prior to hearings.** In Los Angeles County, 40% of the cases go to a hearing versus 22% in other counties. Assessor staff members could work with taxpayers and agents to try to resolve cases so they do not have to go before the AAB unless absolutely necessary. AAB receives complaints from taxpayers, saying they were never contacted by the appraiser prior to the day of the hearings and believe their issues could have been resolved without hearings. The Office might reach out to other counties to see how they mitigate cases, whether through stipulations or other means.
- **AAB cases heard and stipulations.** The Assessor could explore with the Board of Supervisors and Executive Office other potential modifications regarding what is

---

<sup>6</sup> "Los Angeles Auditor-Controller Management Audit of the Los Angeles Assessor" (November 15, 2012), [http://file.lacounty.gov/Auditor/audit\\_reports/Assessor/cms1\\_188657.pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/Auditor/audit_reports/Assessor/cms1_188657.pdf)





heard at the AAB level. For example, Los Angeles County has a 1% stipulations rate versus the overall California county average of 17%. Our neighbor Orange County has established 19%; some California counties are as high as 50%.

- **Adequate AAB coverage.** The Assessor could explore options with the Board of Supervisors and Executive Officer to help expedite cases and reduce backlogs. Some of the ideas proposed are:

Increase number of Assessor representatives. The Assessor could analyze the need and budget for more Assessor representatives – most likely at least three more Assessor representatives to handle the volume of hearings.

Fill AAB vacancies and potentially add an AAB position. The Board of Supervisors is the appointing power to the AAB. The Executive Office and Assessor could encourage the filling of all AAB vacancies and explore the potential increase in the number of AAB appointments. In the 1990s, there were daily hearings by five AABs; now there are typically three or four AABs holding hearings each day because of space constraints.

- The County might consider making one AAB member a full-time position.<sup>7</sup> If the County adds this position, it might also add one permanent room for a fifth AAB.
- The County might also assess the difficulties in filling the part-time AAB positions, given the qualifications required.<sup>8</sup> The Hearing Officers and Board members must meet specific qualifications as an attorney, certified public accountant (CPA), or licensed real estate broker with five years' experience.

Increase hearing times. The AABs could consider holding evening and Saturday hearings until the backlog is caught up.

- **Reduced number of “no shows.”** “No shows” represent 7% to 13% of the scheduled cases<sup>9</sup>. The Executive Office might identify ways to minimize the number of no shows; one suggestion was the possibility of emailing or mailing confirmation cards before the AAB hearing dates.
- **AAB technology.** A number of technological upgrades can also help with improving AAB efficiencies and operations.

---

<sup>7</sup> A full-time position may require legislative changes.

<sup>8</sup> The Transition Team is not in a position to determine if AAB salaries are competitive.

<sup>9</sup> In FY 2013, 15,492 (33.8%) of 45,790 cases were withdrawn; another 5,977 (13.1%) were “no shows”. In FY 2013, 7,687 (37.0%) of the 20,747 cases, as of December 1, 2014, were withdrawn; another 1,461 (7.0%) were “no shows.”



Increased online filings. The Executive Office started to offer online filings as an option in 2010. In 2014, the Executive Office experienced a significant increase in online filings – approximately 60% of the cases were filed online. The Assessor staff members might encourage more online filing.

CRM updates. The County is currently enhancing the CRM system, which should help address scheduling problems of the past. A system that consolidates the parcels for hearings with CRM updates might help to:

- Support hearing all cases to a particular parcel on the same day
- Reduce duplicate filings

Technology in hearing rooms. The Executive Office, working with the Assessor, could explore the viability of installing Wi-Fi and other technology in the hearing rooms to improve the efficiency and quality of the case presentations.

**Initiative 6. Explore adjusting the low-value assessment threshold for business personal property and possessory interest assessments**

*Background*

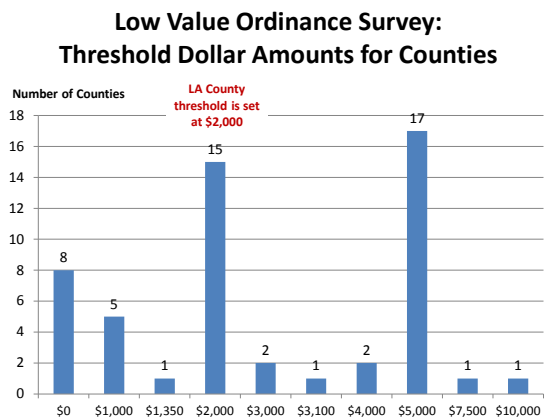
The low value assessment threshold for business personal property is currently \$2,000. The Revenue and Tax (R&T) code currently allows the Board of Supervisors to approve up to \$10,000 to be eligible for exemption if the combined costs of assessing and collecting outweighs the revenue realized.

Since 2012, Assessor staff members have conducted six studies analyzing the cost to assess business personal property and the estimated return on that investment (ROI).

In a 2014 Assessor “Low Value Ordinance Survey” of 53 California counties, the staff found that 15 (28%) of the counties had thresholds of \$2,000 – similar to Los Angeles County. Overall, 45% of the counties had higher thresholds than \$2,000 with most having \$5,000 (17 counties); however, 8 (15%) counties had no thresholds.

**Assessor’s Goal**

To ensure our Office’s efforts have a compelling return on investment.





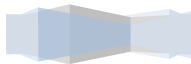
Marine craft is part of the business personal property listings. The California Assessors' Association (CAA) has previously proposed reassigning boats to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

#### *Transition Team's Feedback*

Prevailing practices may support a higher threshold. The Transition Team cautions the Assessor to consider the impact on cities, school districts, and other tax recipients if the thresholds are increased.

Moreover, once the value is determined (and the sunk cost is made to determine the valuation), the tax revenue on the property begins to exceed the costs in two to five years. After reviewing the cost-benefit analysis on the business property thresholds prepared by Assessor staff in recent years, the Assessor can determine if this area warrants further study.

In addition, it is worthwhile for the Assessor to explore with the Board of Supervisors and its Executive Office the possibility of reassignment of marine vehicles to DMV, as proposed by the California Assessors' Association.





## Integrity & Ethics

### Initiative 7. Continue to reinforce the importance of ethical conduct throughout the Office

#### Background

The public is often suspicious of any government agency which makes decisions affecting private property, and the people who must make the decisions are subjected to temptation by outside interests looking for special treatment. Therefore, it is especially important for those government agencies to be vigilant in maintaining the fairness of their operations and the high ethical standards of their staff members.

#### Transition Team's Feedback

We reviewed the steps taken in response to the ethics-related action plans in the Strategic Plan (2012-2015). Among these steps already taken are:

- The creation of an Ethics Officer role (held by Mr. Steven Hernandez, Administrative Deputy in the Office of the Assessor)
- The update of the Assessor's Code of Conduct
- The adoption of an external gift policy
- The development of an ethics hearing process

The Transition Team fully supports the Office's actions to date and urges the following additional actions:

- **Implement the remaining actions outlined in the Strategic Plan related to ethics.** As the former project manager of the strategic-planning process, the new Assessor is intimately familiar with its content, particularly regarding ethics. He must take a strong stand voicing his solid commitment to such ethical practices – something we know he believes and wants to reinforce every day and in every way that he can.
- **Revisit and refresh the Code of Conduct at least annually.** The Code of Conduct is an important foundation for the Assessor. It should be a living document and annually reviewed and updated. For example, the Code should contain language about “no solicitations”; solicitations are a crime.

#### Assessor's Goal

To ensure accountability, accuracy, and integrity in our assessments as the best means to earn and keep the public's trust.



- **Design and launch interactive and ongoing training on ethics.** The Office could design and launch interactive (face-to-face), annual training on ethics, using real-life situations and case studies. The Transition Team members believe that the best individuals to conduct such training are appraiser-to-appraiser, led by the senior appraisers and senior management.
- **Design, launch, and instill an awareness culture.** The Office could instill an awareness culture – “see something, say something” – with a clearly delineated internal reporting structure for raising and resolving ethics-related issues.

The Office could put additional protocols in place that reinforce ethical practices; for example, the Office currently forbids lunches paid by third parties. The Assessor could print the Office’s values and ethics information (including the Ethics Officer’s contact information) on posters or even the reverse side of the staff’s business cards.

- **Ensure all Assessor employees know of the availability and role of the Ethics Officer so they know where to report if they see or experience wrongdoing.** Not all Assessor employees know of the Ethics Officer. The Ethics Officer could “market” his role and availability within the organization so no employee is ever confronted with a potential ethical situation and does not know to whom to turn. The Office benefits as well if issues are raised while they are still minor and can be addressed immediately. All new hires should be informed of the due process and availability of the Ethics Officer as part of the Office’s orientation materials.
- **Explore how best to report and monitor appraisers who have been disciplined for illegal actions.** Currently an appraiser who commits a crime in one county can seek employment in another county. The other county has no means of knowing if the appraiser is in good standing without doing their own research and reference checks.

County assessors, Board of Equalization, California Assessors’ Association, and Office of Real Estate Appraisers (OREA) do not share information about individuals who were terminated for illegal actions. The Office could explore with these organizations how best to post or share the names of individuals who have committed illegal acts in their professions. This process would be similar to the state American Bar Association (ABA) posting of attorneys who have been disbarred.





## Taxpayer Outreach, Education, and Community Partnerships

The new website design (Initiative 3 discussed earlier) is a good step for improving public access to Assessor information; however, additional types of outreach are also needed.

### **Initiative 8. Increase the public’s understanding of who the Assessor is, what the Office of the Assessor does, and how to access services**

#### *Background*

The Office of the Assessor has for years provided printed materials and speakers to assist the public in understanding the role of the Office and how to address tax-related issues concerning their own properties. Typically staff members or the Assessor would speak to civic organizations, primarily in response to invitations.

Involvement in outreach and education in the community was stalled because of the gap between elected Assessors. As a result, organizations have not routinely been inviting the Assessor to community events, job fairs, etc.

The Office of the Assessor must always maintain objectivity in making assessments but can be more informative and customer service-oriented regarding how decisions are made.

#### *Transition Team’s Feedback*

The Transition Team wholeheartedly endorses modernizing and increasing the Office's efforts to interact with the public.

Overall, we urge preparation of materials that “cut to the chase” and are tailored to specific types of audiences. For example, real estate professionals are more familiar than individual homeowners with the tax implications of transfer of ownership. They are more likely to have heard of the Assessment Appeals Board.

The Transition Team believes the Office could make use of other organizations’ communication networks, such as providing an article or a column, which local officials or civic organizations can distribute through their own networks.

To achieve this extended outreach, the Transition Team identified an array of Assessor’s audiences and potential partners for expanding the Office’s outreach.

#### **Assessor’s Goals**

To invigorate our Office’s public education function to make it more proactive and ensure taxpayers know what services are available to them.

To continue to be open, transparent, and engaged in the community – all fundamental, not collateral, work of this Office.





### Examples of the Assessor’s Diverse Stakeholders

Government Agencies and Associations	Public and Nonprofit Organizations	Businesses and Professional Services Firms
Board of Equalization (BOE)	Residents	Professional services firms (e.g., CPAs, auditors, banks, trusts, and attorneys)
California Assessors’ Association	Community-based groups (e.g., Neighborhood Councils, Town Halls, faith-based groups, homeowner associations, and senior centers)	Developers, contractors, and architects
Office of Real Estate Appraisers (OREA)	Business associations (e.g., chambers of commerce, VICA, GoBiz, BizFed, and Urban League)	Real estate boards and housing services, including affordable housing entities
500+ elected officials in Los Angeles County with its 88 cities	Colleges and universities	Utilities (e.g., Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP), Southern California Edison, SoCal Gas, etc.)
Government agencies (e.g., planning departments in city government, contract cities)	Adult education programs	
U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)	Tax groups (e.g., State and Local Tax (SALT) group)	
Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)	Bar associations	
Government associations (e.g., League of Cities, Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG))		
School districts		
Special districts		

The Transition Team encourages the Assessor to undertake the following steps:

- **Identify the Office’s primary stakeholders and the best means for communicating with them.** Making the Office’s outreach efforts more effective will require some thought in identifying the key stakeholders: what do they want to know, what information does the Office currently provide, where are there gaps, and what are the best means of communicating with them (e.g., workshops, presentations, newsletters, email and electronic updates, etc.)?



- **Build a database of the Office's primary stakeholders.** The Office currently does not have a database of organizations to reach out to and provide information or updates on new policies and procedures. Such an outreach database could include associations, agencies, city officials, and others to routinely communicate with via online newsletters, columns, and other means. These organizations can serve as the conduit for sharing Assessor information with their constituents.
- **Simplify forms and processes to make it easier for the public to understand what is required.** In addition, the Office can work with the Treasurer & Tax Collector to clarify property tax bills
- **Provide needed information for the public.** The Office can remind the taxpayers what their tax money buys and improve the visibility of its direct services to taxpayers, including:
  - Provide information about exemptions and tax-savings programs
  - Offer AAB assistance regarding needed information, referrals to the right governmental entity to have questions answered, etc.
  - Provide maps
  - Assist with ownership changes, parent/child property transfers, transfers of base values to replacement properties, completion of Decline-in-Value (DIV) applications, and other Office functions
  - Educate about new construction requirements
  - Reinforce the Office's neutral and objective position
- **Target the messages to meet specific stakeholders' needs and interests.** The Office can customize communications to meet the needs of the communities or stakeholders served, focusing on their questions and problems. For example, the Office could conduct a staff survey, asking for the most frequently asked questions and develop "Q/A" around these questions to share with the public and Assessor staff who interface with the public.
- **Issue quarterly newsletters or updates.** The Office could issue quarterly newsletters with items of interest to stakeholders.
  - If the Office provides short articles, briefings, or updates, outside organizations and governmental agencies are more apt to include them in their newsletters.
  - Such outreach efforts are most effective in Los Angeles County when issued in multiple languages.





- The Office can take advantage of its social media assets.
- The Office can partner with other regional initiatives, such as Mayor Garcetti’s initiative for seismic or solar upgrades, to share information on tax exemptions and related implications on property assessments.
- **Field-test presentations and workshops before rolling them out to broader audiences.** The Office’s outreach staff should consider field-testing any presentations with a sample of realtor associations, chambers of commerce, and community organizations to obtain their feedback before developing or rolling out a full-scale outreach plan.
- **Provide contact information of Assessor staff.** The Office of the Assessor can “humanize” the Office by providing names, phone numbers, and photos of people to contact. The Office might hire field deputies to be housed at the District Offices as part of its outreach efforts and to be closer to the communities served.

By the end of Year 1, the Assessor might put in place a method of evaluating how well the various components of the outreach program are working and make whatever changes seem appropriate. The Office’s focus is on awareness, image, and responsiveness – all areas where the Office could develop metrics for measuring and monitoring performance. In this way, the Office can make modifications to its approach to be more responsive.

### Initiative 9. Produce reports about real estate market trends for the public

This initiative is consistent with and supportive of increased open data, discussed earlier in Initiative 2.

#### Background

Although the Office of the Assessor has extensive data, it is not readily available for use by the real estate industry, news media, or the general public. The Assessor is interested in producing routine presentations and reports on real estate market trends for the public. Such reports are important in educating and informing the public, sharing information more widely, and reinforcing the Office’s role and commitment to transparency and service.

#### Transition Team’s Feedback

We support the publication of real estate market trend reports. We also developed some specific suggestions for the Office:

#### Assessor’s Goal

To publish data and reports to educate the public and our partners about real estate market trends.



- Seek opportunities to appear before industry or civic organization to share these data, available exemptions, and trends
- Develop presentations for use in such appearances by the Assessor or staff members
- Vary the presentations with different degrees of complexity, tailored to the specific audiences
- Develop a speakers' calendar with dates for reaching out to specific stakeholders and audiences on a quarterly or semi-annual basis

### **Initiative 10. Partner with elected officials to advocate for taxpayer-friendly and fair legislation**

#### *Background*

The Assessor and his staff have identified a number of opportunities for improving and clarifying the tax laws (e.g., the assessment of embedded software or the potential to take advantage of community garden exemptions). Some of the ideas to achieve the Assessor's goal involve:

- Coordinate initiatives with the Board of Supervisors and involved departments and offices
- Partner with legislators to ensure fair and equitable proposed property tax legislation
- Increase participation in the California Assessors' Association (CAA)

#### *Transition Team's Feedback*

We believe the Assessor has an important responsibility to partner with the Board of Supervisors and State lawmakers to offer advice regarding legislation that affects property taxes, exemptions, or assessment appeals.

#### **Assessor's Goal**

To support strategic advocacy for tax legislation that is fair, equitable, and well-conceived in Los Angeles County and California.





# Appendices





## Appendix A – Transition Team Members, by Committee

---

### Chairs

- The Honorable Ron Galperin, Controller, City of Los Angeles
- The Honorable John A. Pérez, Speaker Emeritus, California State Assembly
- Connie Rice, Esq., Civil Rights Attorney, Advancement Project 15

### Taxpayer Access & Responsiveness

Assigned Lead Assessor Staff: Sharon Moller and Stacy Mungo

- The Honorable Rick Auerbach, Retired County Assessor, County of Los Angeles
- Mr. Jim Clarke, Executive Vice-President, Apartment Association of Greater Los Angeles
- Ms. Sandra Davis, Former Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), County of Los Angeles
- Mr. Leron Gubler, President & Chief Executive Officer, Hollywood Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. James Huang, Chief Executive Officer, Consulting and Real Estate
- Ms. Alisa Katz, Retired Chief of Staff, Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky

### Open Data & Systems

Assigned Lead Assessor Staff: Scott Thornberry and Stacy Mungo

- Mr. Paul Arevalo, City Manager, City of West Hollywood, CA
- Mr. Richard Green, Director and Chair, University of Southern California (USC), Lusk Center of Real Estate
- The Honorable Chris Lancaster, Former Councilmember, West Covina, CA
- Mr. James Litz, Government Affairs Director, Beverly Hills/Greater Los Angeles Association of Realtors
- Mr. Noel Massie, Chair, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Blaine Meek, Esq., Counsel, California Association of Professional Employees
- Dr. William Yu, Ph.D., Economist, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), UCLA Anderson Forecast



## Ethics

Assigned Lead Assessor Staff: Steve Hernandez, Esq., and Scott Svonkin

- Connie Rice, Esq., Civil Rights Attorney, Advancement Project
- David Fleming, Esq., Counsel, Latham & Watkins, LLP
- Mr. Dennis Hernandez, Commissioner, Los Angeles Convention and Exhibition Center Authority
- The Honorable Robert Philibosian, Esq., Counsel, Sheppard Mullin

## Outreach, Education, & Partnerships

Assigned Lead Assessor Staff: Scott Svonkin and Carol Quan

- The Honorable Ruth Galanter, Former Councilmember, City of Los Angeles
- Mr. Ruben Gonzalez, Senior Vice President for Public Policy & Political Affairs, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Ms. Linda Griego, President & Chief Executive Officer, Griego Enterprises, Inc.
- The Honorable Jerome Horton, Chair, California State Board of Equalization (BOE)
- Mr. Justin Kim, TMG Realty Advisors
- Ms. Theresa Martinez, Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Latino Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Sam Olivito, Executive Director, California Contract Cities Association
- Ms. Melissa Patack, Manager, Motion Picture Association America
- The Honorable Jan Perry, Councilmember (Retired), City of Los Angeles; currently General Manager, City of Los Angeles, Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD)
- Ms. Claudia Queen, Vice President, Chicago Title
- Ms. Valerie Shaw, Former Commissioner, Los Angeles Public Works
- Mr. Gary Toebben, President & Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mr. Mel Wong, Broker Associate, RE/MAX Elite Realty
- Mr. Charlie Woo, Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer, Megatoys
- Sam Yebri, Esq., Attorney, Merino Yebri, LLP

## Committee at Large

- Ms. LaPhonza Butler, President, SEIU ULTCW
- Mr. Adnan Khan, President, Council of Pakistan American Affairs (COPAA)
- Mr. Ron Miller, Secretary/Treasurer, Los Angeles/Orange Counties Building and Construction Trades Department (B.C.T.C.)







- Mr. William Rouse, General Manager, Yellow Cab
- Ms. Carol Schatz, President & Chief Executive Officer, Central City Association (CCA), Downtown Los Angeles, CA
- Mr. Bob Schoonover, President, SEIU Local 721
- Mr. Don St. Clair, Chair, Los Angeles County Business Federation

### **Office of the Assessor Executive Staff**

- Santos H. Kreimann, Chief Deputy Assessor
- Sharon Moller, Assistant Assessor, Operations
- George Renkei, Assistant Assessor, Administration
- Frederick Chisholm, Director, Roll Services
- Brian Donnelly, Director, Major Appraisals
- Kurt Gensicke, Director, District Appraisals
- Steven Hernandez, Administrative Deputy
- Scott Thornberry, Chief Appraiser, Business Solutions
- Scott Svonkin, Chief, Public Affairs
- Stacy Mungo, Administrative Manager, Operations
- Carol Quan, Senior Deputy, Public Affairs
- El Cid De Ramus, Senior Deputy, Public Affairs





## Appendix B – Assessor Office Overview

---

### Mission

The mission of the Office of the Assessor is:

*“We value people and property by creating an accurate and timely assessment roll while delivering exceptional and professional public service with integrity.”*

### Size and Scope

Sworn in on December 1, 2014, Assessor Jeffrey Prang is the 27<sup>th</sup> Assessor of Los Angeles County. As Assessor, he manages the largest local public assessment agency in the nation, with more than 1,400 employees and an annual budget of \$160 million.

The Office of the Assessor is the foundation for the County’s property tax system and responsible for establishing the value for more than 2.4 million taxable parcels, including nearly 308,000 unsecured properties and 278,000 business assessments in Los Angeles County, with a total roll value of \$1.3 trillion.

The Office establishes fair market values and makes every effort to ensure equalization.

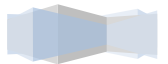
### Organizational Structure

Assessor Prang’s Executive Team consists of Mr. Kreimann, recently appointed as the Office’s Chief Deputy; Ms. Moller, Assistant Assessor, Operations; Mr. George Renkei, Assistant Assessor, Administration; Frederick Chisholm, Director, Roll Services; Brian Donnelly, Director, Major Appraisals; Kurt Gensicke, Director, District Appraisals; Steve Hernandez, Administrative Deputy; and Scott Svonkin, Public Affairs.

### Annual Assessment Roll

The Office of the Assessor locates all taxable property in the County, identifies the ownership of the property, establishes a taxable value subject to property taxation, completes an Annual Assessment Roll showing the assessed values of all property, and applies all legal exemptions.

The Office sets the assessed values in the Annual Assessment Roll, which is then used to calculate property revenues for 88 cities, unincorporated areas, 102 school districts, hundreds of special districts, and County government.





## The Assessor's Role in the Taxation Process

The Assessor, Treasurer & Tax Collector, and Auditor-Controller are all involved in the taxation process. The Assessor does not set property tax rates, compute property taxes, prepare or distribute original tax bills, collect taxes or issue refunds, or create special districts or benefit assessment districts.

### Producing the Tax Roll

The tax roll consists of a comprehensive listing of all properties within the County, the permitted uses of each property, any special conditions such as easements, and a valuation of the worth of each property. To compile the tax roll, the Office of the Assessor collects copies of all:

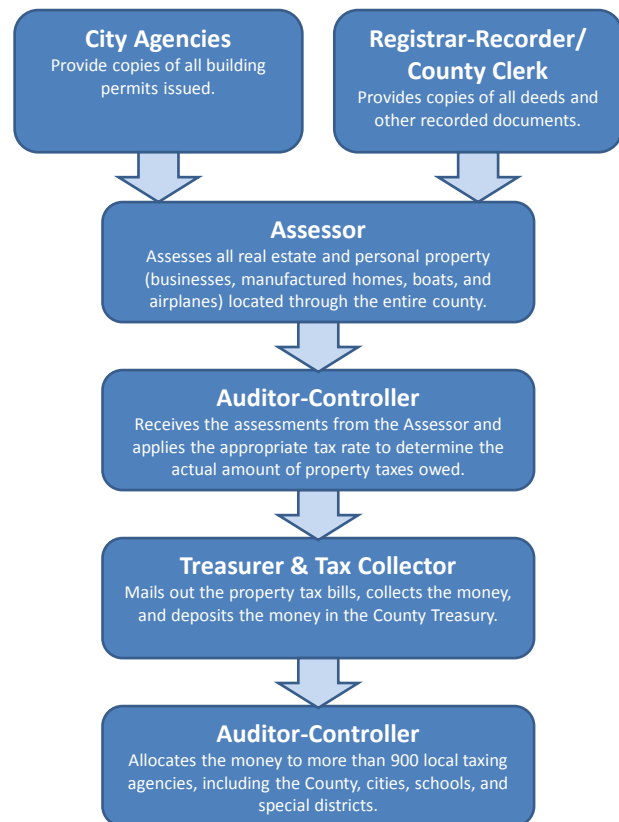
- Building permits issued from all local governments (i.e., County, cities, school districts, and school districts)
- Deeds and other recorded documents, such as transfer of ownership or easements that restrict use of the property, from the County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

At this juncture, the Assessor can assess all real estate and personal property in Los Angeles County and prepare the Annual Assessment Roll. Licensed professional appraisers use comparable-sales and other data to assign a monetary value to each property.

### From Tax Roll to Tax Collection

Once the Assessor has compiled the Annual Assessment Roll, he transmits it to the County Auditor-Controller, who applies the current tax rate to determine the amount of tax owed for each property, taking into consideration State laws (e.g., Proposition 13).

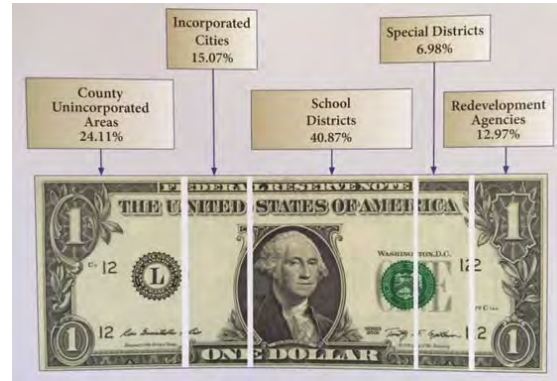
Once the amount owed has been calculated, the Treasurer & Tax Collector mails the property tax bills, collects the money, and deposits the money in the County Treasury.





### From Tax Collection to Public Services

Each property tax bill specifies how much the property-owner owes in taxes and how much of that sum will go to each government entity to provide services. These agencies include 900 local taxing agencies – cities, school districts, special districts, and any voter-approved special assessments. The Auditor-Controller issues the money collected by the Treasurer & Tax Collector to these various identified agencies.



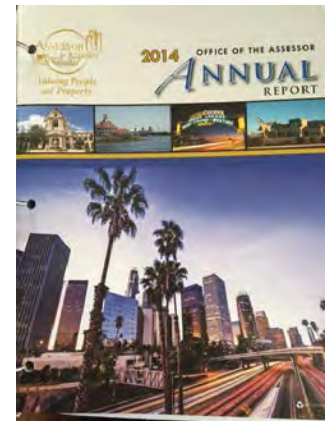


## Appendix C – Transition Team’s Work Program

### Documents Reviewed

Assessor Prang asked the Transition Team to build on the work begun in 2012, including the recommendations and objectives outlined in:

- “100-Day Report to the Chief Executive Officer (2012) on Assessor Operations” (October 4, 2012), prepared by Mr. Kreimann
- “2013-2015 Office of the Assessor Strategic Plan”, designed to assist the Office of Assessor to address the issues raised in the 100-Day Report over a two-year period
- “Los Angeles Auditor-Controller Management Audit of the Los Angeles Assessor” (November 15, 2012)<sup>10</sup> and other focused audits performed between 2012 and 2013 that were issued by the Office of the Auditor-Controller
- “2014 Office of the Assessor Annual Report,” prepared under the interim leadership of Ms. Moller



### Tasks

To accomplish these objectives, the Transition Team:

- Reviewed background documents and materials, including reports listed above and the Code of Ethics, various policies, brochures, operations overviews, and audits
- Met as a full Transition Team on December 18, 2014, as part of an orientation to the Office of the Assessor, the Assessor’s goals, and his request for their involvement
- Held approximately 10 committee meetings with Assessor management as subject matter experts who openly shared the directions they are planning on embarking on
- Reviewed the draft Transition Team Report and issued the final Transition Team Report (this report) to the Assessor at a large group meeting on March 10, 2015

<sup>10</sup> [http://file.lacounty.gov/Auditor/audit\\_reports/Assessor/cms1\\_188657.pdf](http://file.lacounty.gov/Auditor/audit_reports/Assessor/cms1_188657.pdf)