

# Campaign afoot to kick-start property assessments

By JAMES MATTHEWS

Numbers. They're all around us.

That's according to an advertisement I recently watched from the province's Municipal Property Assessment Corporation. That's the crowd that assesses what properties throughout Ontario are worth. Your home's monetary worth. Not its sentimental worth as the place where a family's memories, good and bad, have been made.

Images in the ad show numbers on a mailbox. The digits that make up a street address. A keypad as part of an alarm system presumably for a house. There are numbers on a sports jersey for some reason. The point is they're all around us, numbers.

Street address numbers don't change. And some athletes have been known, for superstitious and other reasons, to wear the same jersey number even though the jersey's colours and team logo change.

And that's fitting, given that MPAC's commercial and residential property assessments have been frozen for the last decade. Municipalities have been left to maintain and improve infrastructure and balance budgets according to numbers from assessments last done in 2016.

And in that time, the costs to live have increased, as have prices for much of the materials used to keep towns, townships, and cities in good repair.

Letters have been sent to Ontario municipal councils by a tax policy group called Ryan Canada ULC as part of a campaign to ?unfreeze Ontario.? Unfreeze Ontario is a lobby effort to get the province to reinstate regular property assessments, beginning with a province-wide reassessment in 2027. That would be handy next year. The opening year of the new term of municipal and county councils.

Part of the campaign is that letters be sent by municipal councils to Premier Doug Ford and Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy calling on them to restore regular property assessments.

The letter has been sent to Mono's elected officials and a number of Ontario municipal councils. Mono council decided to look further into the tax company before hitching their wagon to the effort. But the letter campaign generated discussion amongst that Dufferin County town's councillors when they met Sept. 22.

In the decade since the last assessments, property values and economic conditions have changed significantly, yet those changes are not being reflected in the distribution of the property tax burden, Ryan Canada states in its letter.

?For municipalities, this is fundamentally an issue of fairness, predictability, and sound fiscal planning. Reassessment does not automatically mean higher property taxes. It simply ensures property values reflect today's market so the tax burden can be shared more fairly.?

One of the trusses of Unfreeze Ontario is that this is fundamentally an issue of fairness, predictability, and sound fiscal planning, as reassessment ensures property values reflect today's market so the tax burden can be shared more fairly.

The freeze also makes it harder for municipalities to plan for growth, infrastructure, housing, and development using a tax base that no longer reflects their communities' reality.

MPAC had a presence at the 2026 Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference in August, as you'd expect. According to

Ryan Canada, the need for reassessments of Ontario's properties was a concern.

Municipal and county councils are not asking for reassessments to continue because they're trying to collect more property tax at a time when money is for all kinds of reasons tight for taxpayers. Rather, reassessments could make it financially easier for some property owners to live when money is tight today.

From Ryan Canada's website: ?When assessments no longer reflect relative market values, some property owners can shoulder more than their fair share of the tax burden while others pay less. The longer assessments remain frozen, the greater those distortions may become.?

Numbers are all around us. And some of them are incorrect numbers.