

## **560-11-10-.09 Real Property Appraisal.**

**(1) Real property - Introduction.** The appraisal staff shall follow the provisions of this Rule when performing their appraisals of real property. Irrespective of the valuation approach used, the result of any appraisal of real property by the appraisal staff shall conform to the definition of fair market value.

**(a) General valuation procedures.** The appraisal staff shall consider the sales comparison, cost, and income approaches in the appraisal of real property. The degree of dependence on any one approach will change with the availability of reliable data and type of property being appraised. The appraisal staff may express the final fair market value estimate to the board of tax assessors in numbers that are rounded to the nearest hundred dollars.

**(b) Real property identification.** The appraisal staff shall identify real property, determine its taxability, and classify it for addition to the county ad valorem tax digest in accordance with this subparagraph.

**1. Distinguishing real property.** The appraiser shall be required to correctly identify real property and distinguish it from personal property where the proper valuation procedures, as set forth in this Rule, may be followed.

**(i) Real property examples.** As used in this Rule, real property shall be that property defined in Rule 560-11-10-.02(1)(w). This Rule shall provide illustrations to assist the appraiser in the proper interpretation of the definition. However, these illustrations should not be construed in a manner that conflicts with the definition. Examples of real property are tangible items such as land, all improvements attached to land, real fixtures, and leasehold interests in real property.

**(ii) Identification of real fixtures.** When property the appraiser believes to be a real fixture has not been returned by the landlord, the appraiser shall require the landlord to produce their lease agreement and shall carefully review the agreement before making their recommendation to the board of tax assessors regarding the classification and taxability of the property in question. The appraiser shall inform the landlord that they may redact, at their option, any information relating to the payments that are required by the lease agreement.

**2. Assessment date.** Code section 48-5-10 provides that each return by a property owner shall be for property held and subject to taxation on January 1 of the tax year. The appraisal staff shall base their decisions regarding the taxability, uniform assessment, and valuation of real property on the circumstances of such property on January 1 of the tax year for which the assessment is being prepared. When real property is transferred to a new owner or converted to a new use, the circumstances of such property on January 1 shall nevertheless be considered as controlling.

**3. Classification.** The appraisal staff shall classify real property as provided in Rule 560-11-2-.21 for inclusion in the county tax digest. Real property may be further stratified and categorized as appropriate for aggregating comparable properties for an appraisal.

**(2) Return of real property.** In accordance with Code section 48-5-299(a), the appraisal staff, on behalf of the board of tax assessors, shall investigate diligently and inquire into the property owned in the county, for the purpose of ascertaining what real and tangible personal property is subject to taxation in the county and to require the proper return of the property for taxation. The appraisal staff shall make such investigation as may be necessary to determine the value of any property upon which for any reason all taxes due the state or the county have not been paid in full as required by law. In all cases where taxes are assessed against the owner of property, the appraisal staff shall prepare a proposed assessment on the property according to the best information obtainable.

**(a) Information sources.** The appraisal staff should develop and maintain information sources for the discovery of unreturned real property.

**(b) Returns.** The county appraisal staff shall review the returns in accordance with policies and procedures set by the county board of tax assessors consistent with Georgia law and this Rule. Each year, after the deadline for filing returns, the appraisal staff shall secure the returns from the official responsible for receiving returns on or before the tenth day following such deadline.

**1. New returns.** Department of Revenue form PT-50R is authorized for use by property owners when returning real property. No other form shall be provided for this purpose to property owners by the county official responsible for receiving returns unless previously approved in writing by the Revenue Commissioner.

**2. Automatic returns.** In accordance with Code section 48-5-20, the appraisal staff shall deem any property owner that does not file a return by the deadline as returning for taxation the same property as was returned or deemed to have been returned in the preceding tax year at the same valuation as the property was finally determined to be subject to taxation in the preceding year.

**3. Real estate transfer declaration forms.** The Department of Revenue has established Form PT-61 for owners to declare the real estate transfer tax due when property is transferred from one owner to another. The appraisal staff shall review all PT-61 forms filed with the clerk of superior court to discover new owners of property and to ascertain if their property has been returned for taxation. When a property owner acquires real property by transfer in the preceding tax year and does not file a return on such property for the current tax year, the appraisal staff shall follow the procedures of this subparagraph to determine if the newly acquired property has been properly returned for taxation.

**(i) When real estate transfer tax declaration form properly completed.** For the purposes of subparagraph (2)(b)3. of this Rule, the PT-61 form shall be deemed properly

completed when all applicable information required by the instructions on the form has been entered on the form, it has been signed by the new owner and filed in quadruplicate with the clerk of superior court. A PT-61 form shall not be deemed properly completed when the appraisal staff determines any of the required information on the form is omitted, false, or misleading.

**(ii) When transferred property deemed returned.** When a property owner acquires by transfer real property that has not been subdivided from the preceding tax year, and such owner properly completes a real estate transfer tax PT-61 form and pays any real estate transfer tax that may be due as provided in Article 1 of Chapter 6 of Title 48 of the Code, the appraisal staff shall deem the owner as having returned the property acquired by transfer at the same value finally determined to be applicable to such property for the preceding year.

**(iii) When transferred property deemed unreturned.** The appraisal staff shall not deem as returned any property:

(I) That is an improvement made since January 1 of the preceding tax year to property that has been transferred;

(II) That has been transferred and for which the real estate transfer tax PT-61 form has not been properly completed;

(III) That has been transferred and for which the real estate transfer tax PT-61 form has not been filed with the clerk of superior court on or before the deadline for returning property in the year following the year the property is transferred; and

(IV) That has been transferred and for which the real estate transfer tax has not been paid.

**(c) Reassessments.** The appraisal staff may not recommend to the board of tax assessors a reassessment of the same real property for which a final assessment has already been made by the board. For the purposes of this subsection, the appraisal staff shall presume that a final assessment on real property includes both the land and any improvements to the land.

**1. Recently appealed real property.** The appraisal staff shall observe the provisions of Code section 48-5-299(c) and this subparagraph before recommending a change to the assessment of real property that was the subject of an appeal on either the immediately preceding tax digest or the next immediately preceding tax digest. Such property shall be designated in the appraisal staff's records as recently appealed property for the two tax years following the year of the appeal. This subparagraph shall not apply when such property has been returned by the taxpayer at a value different from the appeal-established value.

**(i) Changing assessment of recently appealed real property.** In the two tax years following an appeal, the appraisal staff may not recommend a change of assessment for

the sole purpose of changing the valuation established or decision rendered in an appeal to the board of equalization or superior court. Rather a new appraisal must be accompanied by an on-site inspection to determine the occurrence of any changes to the property, errors in the appraisal staff's records or changes in the market forces affecting the value of the property since the appeal was heard that established the value of the property. The appraisal staff may recommend, consistent with the provisions of this subparagraph, to the board of tax assessors a change of assessment on the property that was the subject of the appeal when an appraisal based on current market conditions indicates the value has changed substantially from the value established by the recent appeal. Such appraisal shall be accompanied by a written statement attesting to the fact that an appraiser has conducted the required on-site inspection of the subject property and setting forth the reasons why the appraiser believes that a change of assessment is authorized under Code section 48-5-299(c) and this subparagraph. The written statement shall attest to at least one of the following: construction or renovation of the subject property has occurred since January 1 of the appeal year; an error has been discovered in the property records regarding the description or characteristics of the subject property; or extrinsic physical factors relative to the subject property have changed since January 1 of the appeal year that have substantially affected the appeal established value of such real property. Such extrinsic physical factors may include, but are not limited to, construction of highways or other public improvements in close proximity to the subject property; development, subdivision or improvement of adjacent property, or natural or man-made changes to surrounding properties by disaster or otherwise.

**(d) Collecting and maintaining property information.** The appraisal staff shall keep a record of information relevant to the ownership and valuation of all real property in the county and shall follow the procedures in this subparagraph when collecting and maintaining such real property data.

**1. Description of property information.** The type of information the appraisal staff shall maintain includes, but is not limited to, property ownership, location, size, use, physical characteristics, sales prices, construction costs, rents, and operating expenses to the extent such information is available. The appraisal staff shall, consistent with this subparagraph, recommend to the board of tax assessors a uniform policy regarding the information to be included in their records.

**(i) Geographic information.** Cadastral maps or computerized geographic information systems are to be maintained by the appraisal staff for all real property located in the county. In the event the county governing authority has established a separate mapping office and the maps maintained by such office conform with the requirements of this subparagraph, the appraisal staff may provide relevant information to such mapping office and still be in compliance with this subparagraph. Minimum mapping specifications shall include the following: all streets and roads plotted and identified; property lines delineated for each real property parcel; unique parcel identifier for each parcel; and physical dimensions or acreage estimate for each parcel. The appraisal staff shall use the parcel identifiers to link the real property records to the maps. The appraisal

staff shall notify the Revenue Commissioner of all proposed changes to existing parcel-numbering systems before implementing such changes.

**(ii) Sales information.** The appraisal staff shall maintain a record of all sales of real property that are available and occur within the county. The appraisal staff should also familiarize themselves with overall market trends within their immediate geographical area of the state. They should collect and analyze sales data from other jurisdictions having market and usage conditions similar to their county for consideration when insufficient sales exist in the county to evaluate a property type, especially large acreage tracts. The Real Estate Transfer Tax document, Department of Revenue Form PT-61, shall be a primary record source. However, the appraisal staff may also review deeds of transfer and security deeds recorded in the Office of the Superior Court Clerk, and probated wills recorded in the Office of the Probate Judge to maintain a record of relevant information relating to the sale or transfer of real property. Records required to be maintained shall include at a minimum the following information: map and parcel identifier; sale date; sale price; buyer's name; seller's name; deed book and page number; vacant or improved; number of acres or other measure of the land; representativeness of sale using the confirming criteria provided in Rule 560-11-2-.56 (1)(d); any income and expense information reasonably available from public records; property classification as provided in Rule 560-11-2-.21, and; when available, the appraised value for the tax year immediately following the year in which the sale occurred.

**(iii) Property characteristics.** The appraisal staff shall maintain a record of real property characteristics. This record shall include, but not be limited to, sufficient property characteristics to classify and value the property. In addition, the following criteria may be considered when determining which characteristics should be gathered and maintained: factors that influence the market in the location being considered; requirements of the valuation approach being employed; digest classification and stratification; requirements of other governmental and private users; and marginal benefits and costs of collecting and maintaining each property characteristic.

**(iv) Land and location characteristics.** The appraisal staff shall maintain a record of the land and location characteristics. The record should include, but not be limited to, zoning, use, legal or deed restrictions on use, covenants, parcel shape and size, neighborhood and other locational characteristics such as view, topography, corner influence, proximity to recreational bodies of water, nuisances and similar external influences.

**(v) Improvement characteristics.** The appraisal staff shall maintain a record of the characteristics of the improvements to land. The record shall include, but not be limited to, the size, actual use, design, construction quality, construction materials, age and observed condition.

**2. Collecting property information.** The appraisal staff shall, consistent with the policies of the board of tax assessors and this subparagraph, physically inspect properties when necessary to gather the information required by Rule 560-11-10-.09(2)(d).

**(i) Field inspections.** The appraisal staff shall develop and present to the board of tax assessors for approval procedures that provide for periodic field inspections to identify properties and ensure that property characteristics information is complete and accurate. The procedures shall include guidelines for the physical inspection of the property by either appraisers or specially trained data collectors. The format should be designed for standardization, consistency, objectivity, completeness, easy use in the field, and should facilitate later entry into a computer assisted mass appraisal system, when one is used. When interior information is required, the procedures shall include guidelines on how and when to seek access to the property along with alternative procedures when such access is not permitted or feasible.

**3. Maintaining property characteristics information.** The appraisal staff shall systematically update the property characteristics information in response to changes brought about by new construction, new parcels, remodeling, demolition, and destruction. The appraisal staff shall physically measure and update their records to reflect all such changes to real properties in the county.

**4. Records retention schedules.** The appraisal staff shall develop, in accordance with the provisions of Code section 50-18-99, records retention schedules for each series of documents maintained in their office and have such schedules approved by the board of tax assessors before submitting the schedules to the State Records Committee for official approval pursuant to Code section 50-18-92.

**(i) Building permits.** In counties that issue building permits, no appraisal shall be based solely on declarations of proposed construction cost made by the person obtaining such building permits.

**(ii) Aerial photographs.** New aerial photographs should be compared to previous aerial photographs, if such photographs exist, to discover new or previously unrecorded construction.

**(iii) Field review frequency.** All real property parcels should be physically reviewed at least once every three years to ascertain that property information records are current.

**(3) Land valuation.** The appraisal staff shall estimate land values by use of the sales comparison or income approach to value as provided in this subparagraph giving preference to the sales comparison approach when adequate land sales are available. The appraisal staff shall identify and describe the property, collect site-specific information, make a study of trends and factors influencing value and obtain a physical measurement of the site. Once the subject is analyzed, the appraisal staff shall classify the land for valuation. Once land values have been estimated, such appraisals should be regularly reviewed and updated.

**(a) Land analysis and stratification.** The appraisal staff shall appraise land separately from the improvements both to consider the trends and factors affecting each and to arrive at a separate assessment for the digest. In no event, however, may the separate

appraisals of the land and improvements exceed the fair market value of the land and improvements when considered as a whole. For appraisal purposes, land shall be separated into different categories based on its use and sales within the market.

**1. Site analysis.** The appraisal staff shall utilize the trends and factors affecting the value of the subject property, such as its accessibility and desirability. The existing zoning, existing use, existing covenants and use restrictions in the deed and in law shall be considered. The other factors the appraiser may consider include, but are not limited to, environmental, economic, governmental, and social factors. Site-specific information that may be considered includes, but is not limited to, location, frontage, width, depth, shape, size, topography, landscaping, slope, drainage, hydrology, off-site improvements, soil condition, soil productivity, and the quality of access.

**2. Market research and verification.** The appraisal staff shall build and maintain an up-to-date file system of qualified sales as provided in Rule 560-11-10-.09(2)(d)1.(ii). Other preferred information to be considered is the motivations of the buyer and seller, as obtained from actual interviews of the parties to the sales. Adjustments to the sales to be considered by the appraiser include, but are not limited to, time of sale; location; physical characteristics; partial interest not conveyed; trades or exchanges included; personal property included; leases assumed; incomplete or unbuilt community property; atypical financing; existing covenants; deed restrictions; environmental, economic, governmental and social factors affecting the sale property and the subject parcel. These adjusted qualified sales may then be used to appraise the subject property.

**(b) Acreage tract valuation.** The appraisal staff shall determine the small acreage break point to differentiate between small acreage tracts and large acreage tracts and develop or acquire schedules for the valuation of each. When this small acreage break point cannot easily be determined, the appraisal staff shall recommend to the board of tax assessors a reasonable break point of not less than five acres nor more than twenty-five acres. The base land schedules should be applicable to all land types in a county. The documentation prepared by the appraisal staff should clearly demonstrate how the land schedule is applied and explain its limitations.

**1. Small acreage tract valuation schedule.** After the appraisal staff has performed the site analysis, as provided in Rule 560-11-10-.09(3)(a)1., they shall analyze the market to identify groups of comparable properties that may be combined in the valuation process, as provided in Rule 560-11-10-.09(4)(b)3. The appraisal staff shall then analyze the sales to establish a representative base price per acre, and adjustment factors for reflecting value added by the characteristics discovered in the site analysis. Using such base value and the adjustment factors, the appraisal staff shall develop the small acreage schedule for all acreage levels through the small acreage break point.

**2. Large acreage tract valuation schedule.** After the appraisal staff has performed the site analysis, as provided in Rule 560-11-10-.09(3)(a)1., they shall analyze the market to identify groups of comparable properties that may be combined in the valuation process, as provided in Rule 560-11-10-.09(4)(b)3. The appraisal staff shall then analyze the sales

to establish a representative benchmark price per acre, and adjustment values for reflecting incremental value associated with different productivity levels, sizes, and locations, as discovered in the site analysis. Using such benchmark values and adjustment values, the appraisal staff shall develop the large acreage schedule for all acreage levels above the small acreage break point.

**(i) Land productivity values.** The appraisal staff should analyze sales of large acreage tracts to extract the value of all improvements, crop allotments, standing timber, and any other factors that influence the value above the base land value. The appraisal staff should then stratify the sales into two categories of open land and woodland. The base land values should be further stratified into up to nine productivity grades for each category of land, with grade one being the best, using the productivity classifications of the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, where available. Where soil productivity information is not available, the appraisal staff may consult with the local United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Supervisor. Alternately, the appraisal staff may use any acceptable means by which to determine soil productivity grades including, but not limited to, aerial and infrared photography, historical soil productivity information, and present use. The appraisal staff should analyze sales within the strata and determine benchmark values for as many productivity grades as possible. The missing strata values are then determined by extrapolating between grades. In the absence of sufficient benchmark values, a system of productivity factors may be developed from crop or timber production based on ratings provided by the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**(ii) Pond values.** The appraisal staff should analyze sales of large acreage tracts containing ponds to extract the value of ponds. The appraisal staff should develop up to three grades of ponds based upon the quality of construction with regard to the dam, the amount of tree clearing within the pond body, and the nature of the waterline around the pond.

**(iii) Location and size adjustments.** The appraisal staff should plot sales on an index map of the county where trends in sales prices based on size and location may be analyzed. From this analysis, the appraisal staff should develop adjustments for each homogeneous market area, which are based on a tract's location within the county. Within each identified homogeneous market area, sales should also be analyzed to develop adjustment factors for ranges of tract sizes where the market reflects a relationship between the value per acre and the number of acres in a tract. Such factors should be calculated to the fourth decimal place and should extend from the small acreage break point to the tract acreage point where size no longer appears to have a significant impact on the price paid per acre. The appraiser should select an acreage point between these two points that represents a typical agricultural use tract size and assign it an index factor value of 1.0000. Such adjustments should be supported by clearly identifiable changes in selling prices per acre. Finally, large acreage tracts that have sold within the most recent 24 months, unless no such sale has occurred in which case the look back period should be 48 months, should be appraised using the schedule of adjustment factors and a sales ratio

study performed to test for uniformity and conformity of the schedule to Rule 560-11-2-.56, and if the schedule thus conforms, the adjustments shall then be applied to all other large acreage tracts that are within the scope of the schedule being tested.

**(iv) Adjustments for absorption.** When insufficient large tract sales are available to create a reliable schedule of factors, the appraisal staff may use comparable sales to develop values for the size tracts for which comparables exist, and then adjust these values for larger tracts by (1) estimating a rate of absorption for the smaller tracts for which data exists, (2) dividing the large tract into smaller, marketable sections, (3) developing a sales schedule with estimated income by year reflecting the absorption rate and the value characteristics of each of the smaller tracts, (4) discounting the income schedule to the present using an appropriate discount rate, and (5) summing the resulting values to arrive at an estimated value for the property.

**(v) Standing Timber Value Extraction.** When determining the market value of land underlying standing timber, where such standing timber is taxed in accordance with Code section 48-5-7.5, the appraiser shall not rely exclusively on the sales prices of such land that has recently had the timber harvested. Rather he or she shall also consider sales of land with standing timber after the value of such standing timber has been determined in accordance with this subparagraph and deducted from the selling price.

**(I) Determine timber value from buyer and seller.** For all types of timber, the value of the standing timber on recently sold land should be determined from reliable information from the buyer and seller clearly segregating the value of the standing timber from the underlying land. In the absence of such information, the appraiser may use one of the following methods to determine the value of the standing timber if in his or her judgment the results are reasonably consistent with other sales where buyer and seller information is known:

**I. Calculate value of merchantable timber.** For all types of merchantable timber, the value of the standing timber may be determined by multiplying estimated volumes by product class, such as softwood and hardwood pulpwood, chip and saw logs, saw timber, poles, posts, and fuel wood, of timber on the property by prices for each product class as obtained from the table of weighted average prices paid for harvested timber applicable to the year during which the sale occurred and prepared by the Commissioner pursuant to paragraph (g) of Code section 48-5-7.5. For the purposes of this subparagraph, merchantable timber shall include stands that have been in production for more than fifteen years. Estimated volumes by product class may be obtained by one of the following methods: reliable information from the buyer or seller or from specially trained data collectors who have estimated volumes from a visual on-site inspection or from an aerial survey.

**II. Calculate value of pre-merchantable planted pine timber.** For pre-merchantable planted pine timber, the value of the standing timber may be determined by estimating the value of the timber at the age of merchantability and then prorating this value to the

actual age of the pre-merchantable stand. The appraiser may arrive at this estimate using the following steps:

A. For each applicable timber product class, multiply the estimated tons of timber volume yield per acre for each product class at the age of merchantability times the locally prevailing timber price per ton of such product classes. Sum the individual results of the timber product class calculations into a single result.

(A) In the absence of reliable locally prevailing timber price per ton information, the appraiser may use timber price per ton from the table of weighted average prices paid for harvested timber prepared by the Commissioner pursuant to paragraph (g) of Code section 48-5-7.5.

(B) In the absence of specific yield information to the contrary, the appraiser may estimate timber volume yields at an average yield of 52.2 tons per acre or preferably by using the land productivity classifications established by Rule 560-11-10-.09(3)(b)(2)(i) and the following tables of estimated yields of fully stocked planted timber stands at age fifteen, and then adjusting the yields according to the actual stocking density of the timber stand.

Loblolly Pine – Lower Coastal Plain

Georgia Tax Productivity Rating	Georgia Tax Adjusted Site Index Range	Site Index Used For Growth Projections	Tons/Acre @ Age 15	Pulpwood	Chip-n-Saw
1	90 – 101	96	139	125	14
2	85 – 89	87	110	99	11
3	81 – 84	83	98	88	10
4	80	80	90	81	9
5	75 – 79	77	81	73	8
6	70 – 74	72	69	66	3
7	60 – 69	65	53	51	2
8	10 – 59	45	19	19	0
9	0 - 9	0	0	-	-

Loblolly Pine – Upper Coastal Plain

Georgia Tax Productivity Rating	Georgia Tax Adjusted Site Index Range	Site Index Used For Growth Projections	Tons/Acre @ Age 15	Pulpwood	Chip-n-Saw
1	90 – 101	96	129	116	13
2	85 – 89	87	103	93	10

3	81 – 84	83	93	84	9
4	80	80	85	77	8
5	75 – 79	77	78	70	8
6	70 – 74	72	67	63	4
7	60 – 69	65	52	49	3
8	10 – 59	45	18	18	0
9	0 – 9	0	0	-	-

Loblolly Pine – Piedmont

Georgia Tax Productivity Rating	Georgia Tax Adjusted Site Index Range	Site Index Used For Growth Projections	Tons/Acre @ Age 15	Pulpwood	Chip-n-Saw
1	90 – 101	96	123	111	12
2	85 – 89	87	98	88	10
3	81 – 84	83	88	79	9
4	80	80	81	73	8
5	75 – 79	77	74	66	8
6	70 – 74	72	62	59	3
7	60 – 69	65	48	46	2
8	10 – 59	45	17	17	0
9	0 – 9	0	0	-	-

Slash Pine – Lower Coastal Plain

Georgia Tax Productivity Rating	Georgia Tax Adjusted Site Index Range	Site Index Used For Growth Projections	Tons/Acre @ Age 15	Pulpwood	Chip-n-Saw
1	90 – 101	96	155	139	16
2	85 – 89	87	114	103	11
3	81 – 84	83	98	88	10
4	80	80	87	78	9
5	75 – 79	77	77	69	8
6	70 – 74	72	61	58	3
7	60 – 69	65	42	40	2
8	10 – 59	45	11	11	0
9	0 – 9	0	0	-	-

Slash Pine – Upper Coastal Plain

Georgia Tax Productivity Rating	Georgia Tax Adjusted Site Index Range	Site Index Used For Growth Projections	Tons/Acre @ Age 15	Pulpwood	Chip-n-Saw
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	Site Index Range				
1	90 – 101	96	150	135	15
2	85 – 89	87	113	102	11
3	81 – 84	83	99	89	10
4	80	80	87	78	9
5	75 – 79	77	77	69	8
6	70 – 74	72	62	59	3
7	60 – 69	65	43	41	2
8	10 – 59	45	12	12	0
9	0 - 9	0	0	-	-

(C) In the absence of reliable local information on typical timber product class volume yields at the age of merchantability, the appraiser may assume that ninety percent of the timber will be pulpwood and ten percent will be chip-n-saw.

B. Multiply the result in subparagraph A. by the number of acres of pre-merchantable timberland.

C. Deduct from the result in subparagraph B. the normal cost to establish a timber stand on cut over woodland, which shall be known as the base value. Normal cost may be determined from planters, local site preparation and planning contractors and other reliable sources.

D. Divide the result in subparagraph C. by the age of merchantability to determine the average annual timber growth value. In the absence of reliable local information to the contrary, the age of merchantability shall be fifteen years.

E. Multiply the result in subparagraph D. by the actual age of the standing timber to arrive at the value of the accumulated timber growth.

F. Add back the base value deducted in subparagraph C. to the result in subparagraph E. to yield the total value of the pre-merchantable standing timber.

III. Determine value of other pre-merchantable timber.

For types of pre-merchantable timber other than planted pine, the value of the standing timber may be determined from the best information available. In the absence of local reliable information to the contrary, the value of other pre-merchantable timber may be estimated as follows:

A. Natural stands less than five years of age should be assigned no value.

B. Natural pre-merchantable stands five years of age and older should be valued in the same manner as planted pine timber is valued, except the appraiser should make no

adjustments for the base cost of establishing the timber stand; yields for natural pine stands should be estimated at fifty percent of the volume determined for a planted pine stand; and yields for hardwood stands should be estimated at forty percent of the value determined for a planted pine stand.

**(c) Site valuation.** The appraisal staff may use the valuation methods in this subparagraph to appraise sites that have been developed for residential, commercial or industrial use.

**1. Valuation methods with sufficient sales.** The appraisal staff shall use one, or a combination of more than one, of the valuation methods in this subparagraph when sufficient sales are available to reliably support the appraisal. These methods may be used to value the land directly.

**(i) Comparative unit method.** To use the comparative unit method, the appraisal staff shall stratify the land sales into a stratum comparable in market area or use type to the subject parcel. The appraiser then determines a land comparison unit by which the subject parcel is normally bought and sold in the market place and converts the sales price of the comparable properties to a typical per comparison unit value, using the median measure of central tendency. Per-measurement-unit, lump sum, and percentage adjustments are then made as needed to reflect the value of subject land features that differ from the base land features. The appraiser may use one of the following five basic comparison units: front foot, square foot, acre, site or lot, and units buildable. The appraisal staff may rely upon the comparative unit method for areas where parcels vary in size but are fairly homogeneous in other aspects, as opposed to areas where the sites are similar in size but vary substantially in site characteristics. The reliability of the analysis should be verified by a calculation of the coefficient of dispersion and the price related differential. These statistical indicators should fall within the standards of Rule 560-11-2-.56 before the appraiser relies upon the selected sales to appraise the subject parcel.

**(ii) Base lot method.** To use the base lot method, the appraisal staff shall appraise the base parcel in each stratum using the comparative unit method, with the base lot serving as the subject parcel. Once the base-lot's appraised value is established, it is used as a benchmark to appraise other individual parcels. The appraiser may use the base-lot method when the site characteristics are generally similar for most of the lots and the major factors causing variations in site values are such things as size, view, and traffic. Adjustments for these and other factors shall be developed using paired-sales analysis or other forms of market research. Then, the appraiser shall adjust the comparables to the base lot, calculate the measure of central tendency, and select a representative base-lot appraised value. The reliability of the analysis may be verified by a calculation of the coefficient of dispersion and the price related differential. These statistical indicators should fall within the standards of Rule 560-11-2-.56 before the appraiser relies upon the selected sales to select a base-lot appraised value.

**(iii) Cost-of-development method.** To use the cost-of-development method, the appraisal staff shall estimate the total development costs and subtract these costs from the

projected sales prices of the developed lots to indicate the appraised value for the raw land. The projected improvements must represent the most probable use of the land. Estimated costs should include the direct costs of site preparation, utility hookups, all indirect costs, and a reasonable allowance for owner profit. The appraiser may use this method to directly value land in transition from agricultural use to residential or commercial use when there are insufficient sales to apply the comparative unit or base lot methods.

**2. Valuation methods with insufficient sales.** When vacant land sales are limited, the appraisal staff may use alternative methods to determine residual land values. These residual land values may be used in the same way as vacant land sales in order to establish comparative unit or base lot values. The appraisal staff shall not use these methods to establish land values directly. The alternative methods that may be used are allocation, abstraction, capitalization of ground rent, and land residual capitalization.

**(i) Allocation method.** Using this method, the appraisal staff estimates the typical percentage of combined land and improvement value attributable to the land alone. This land percentage estimate should be based on knowledge of the market for properties of the class being appraised and the appraiser should take into consideration the site value in previous years before being improved, the land-to-improvement ratios in similar neighborhoods, and an analysis of new construction on similarly classified sites.

**(ii) Abstraction method.** Using this method, the appraisal staff estimates the land residual value by subtracting the depreciated replacement cost of improvements from the sale price of an improved property.

**(iii) Capitalization of ground rents method.** Using this method, the appraisal staff determines the market rent of the subject site, computes a net income, selects a capitalization rate, and computes the present worth of the future benefits of the subject parcel. The appraiser should not use this method when there is insufficient market information available to estimate the income potential of the subject parcel.

**(iv) Land residual capitalization method.** Using this method, the appraisal staff develops the annual net operating income attributable to the property and develops capitalization rates for both the land and the improvements to the land. The estimated improvement value is multiplied by the improvement capitalization rate and the result is deducted from the forecasted annual net operating annual income. The remaining income, the residual amount attributable to the land, is then capitalized, using the land capitalization rate, into a value indicator for the land. The appraiser should only use the land residual capitalization method on new income-producing improved properties either when the improvement has little or no observed depreciation of any kind and a well-supported improvement value can be developed or when an improvement can be hypothesized and its cost and net operating income reliably estimated.

**3. Special procedures.** The appraisal staff shall observe the special procedures contained in this subparagraph when appraising the described property types.

**(i) Transitional land.** The appraisal staff shall analyze any unusual sale amount for a single parcel of land that seems to indicate a transition from one type land use to another type land use, such as from agricultural to residential or from residential to commercial and conversely. The appraisal staff should consider that a single sale might not necessarily indicate a changing market. The appraisal staff should analyze such sales to ensure that the new use is clearly indicated by a pattern of sales before qualifying and adjusting such sales for use as comparables for appraising the remaining comparable land.

**(ii) Absorption rates.** When appraising a new subdivision, the appraisal staff shall use discounted cash-flow analysis in conjunction with the cost-of-development method to appraise the unsold parcels when it is anticipated that the parcels will require several more years of exposure to the market to sell. The appraisal staff may consider typical holding periods, marketing, and management practices when estimating anticipated revenues and allowable expenses.

**(4) Improvement valuation.** Except as provided in subparagraph (a) of this subparagraph, the appraisal staff will use the following three approaches when appraising real property: the direct sales comparison approach, the cost approach, and the income approach. In determining the reliability and representativeness of each approach or combination of approaches, the appraisal staff shall consider those factors most likely to influence buyers and sellers when those buyers and sellers are determining exchange prices in the market place, and the sufficiency of available sales, cost, income and expense information to reliably quantify those factors. However, irrespective of the valuation approach used, the final results of any appraisal of real property by the appraisal staff shall in all instances comply with the definition of fair market value in Code section 48-5-2.

**(a) Cost approach.** The appraisal staff shall use the following three steps when applying the cost approach: Estimate the cost new of the improvements, subtract accrued depreciation, and add the value of the land.

**1. Estimating cost new.** In estimating the cost new of any buildings, structures, or other improvements to land, the appraisal staff shall consider the following:

**(i) Types of costs.** The appraisal staff shall include both direct and indirect costs that would be incurred to build and market the property, including normal overhead and profit. The approach would normally produce the replacement cost. The appraisal staff may consider the reproduction cost, and adjust for depreciation accordingly, when appraising an unusual or special-purpose property.

**(I) Comparative unit method.** Unless otherwise provided under Rule 560-11-10-.09(4)(a)1.(i), the appraisal staff shall determine benchmark per-square-foot, per-cubic-foot, or other per-measurement-unit costs for base structures using cost guides or local cost information. Such benchmark per-measurement-unit costs may then be applied to the subject improvements to determine typical replacement cost new. Per-measurement-unit,

lump sum, and percentage adjustments are then made as needed to reflect the value of subject improvements features that differ from the base structures. All forms of depreciation are then applied as a lump sum factor based on the age and useful life of the subject improvements.

**(II) Unit-in-place method.** The appraisal staff may use the unit-in-place method when making adjustments in the comparative unit method. This method determines costs of individual construction components on a per-measurement-unit, in-place basis. The total cost of each component of the subject improvement is then found by multiplying the various per-measurement-unit costs by the number of actual measurement units installed in the subject improvement. The appraisal staff may also use this method when estimating costs for unusual or special-purpose improvements, in which case the component costs would be summed and combined with applicable indirect costs to obtain an estimate of the total replacement cost new of the subject improvements. All forms of depreciation are then applied as a lump sum factor based on the age and useful life of the subject improvements.

**(III) Quantity survey method.** The appraisal staff may separately itemize all various labor, material, and indirect costs when it is desirable to produce the reproduction cost new. All forms of depreciation are then applied separately based on the physical deterioration, functional obsolescence, and economic obsolescence observed by the appraiser. The appraisal staff may use this method in the development and trending of comparative unit and unit-in-place costs.

**(IV) Trended original cost method.** When determining the cost of structures where the comparative unit or unit-in-place methods are inapplicable, the appraisal staff may trend the original costs over time by factors obtained from a construction cost index guide. The appraisal staff shall not use this method when the original cost figures are not accurate or complete.

**(ii) Sources of cost information.** The appraisal staff may obtain cost information by directly collecting information from contractors, builders, developers, property owners, and other market place participants. Cost information may be obtained from firms that compile and publish construction information, with the appraisal staff supplementing or modifying such information with locally gathered cost information. The appraisal staff may obtain cost manuals specifically developed for the county by construction cost services and mass appraisal firms.

**(iii) Updating costs.** Cost information shall be updated by the appraisal staff as necessary to reasonably reflect current construction costs for the various construction classes. Indexing may be used in the short term to update cost information, but in no event shall the appraisal staff rely on indexing alone for more than three years.

**(iv) Location modifiers.** The appraisal staff shall develop base construction cost tables. Modifiers, in the form of factors to be applied to the cost tables, may then be developed

for areas to reflect local market conditions. Different sets of modifiers may be necessary to reflect the market for different property types within a county.

**(v) Cost models.** The appraisal staff shall develop or acquire representative cost models that contain the manual or automated cost factor tables used in the cost approach. The models should be applicable to all building types in a county and be based on actual updated costs as defined in Rule 560-11-10-.09(4)(a)1.(iii). The models should clearly identify included indirect costs, contain depreciation estimation guidelines, and provide for systematic cost estimation on manual or automated forms. The documentation prepared by the appraisal staff should clearly demonstrate how the cost model is applied and explain its limitations.

**2. Estimating accrued depreciation.** The appraisal staff shall estimate the accrued depreciation by determining the difference between replacement or reproduction cost new and the current market value of an improvement. This determination shall require an analysis by the appraiser of physical deterioration, functional obsolescence and economic obsolescence present, keeping in mind that physical deterioration and functional obsolescence may include curable and incurable components. The appraiser may estimate accrued depreciation as a total amount or as a percentage of replacement or reproduction cost new. Improvements with special circumstances may be treated on an exception basis. The appraisal staff shall use the effective age of improvements, when different from the actual age, when estimating accrued depreciation. The methods the appraisal staff may use to estimate accrued depreciation include, but are not limited to, the following four methods:

**(i) Sales comparison method.** To apply the sales comparison method, the appraisal staff develops estimates of total depreciation from market-derived schedules. To develop such schedules, the appraiser stratifies the sales information by type of construction and other relevant features. The appraiser then computes building residuals by deducting estimated land values from the sales prices and expressing the building residuals as a percentage of replacement cost new. The resulting “percent good” factors are then plotted against the effective ages of the properties to develop the depreciation tables. This method may be used when current representative and adequate sales information is readily available.

**(ii) Age/Life method.** To apply the age/life method, the appraisal staff develops estimates of physical deterioration and normal functional obsolescence using a simple sliding scale or straight-line calculation and then applies any necessary adjustments for additional functional or economic obsolescence. This method may be used when current representative and adequate sales information is not readily available.

**(I) Capitalization of income method.** To apply the capitalization of income method, the appraisal staff uses income-based appraisals in place of sales and applies these appraisals to the sales comparison method to develop estimates of total depreciation.

**(II) Observed condition method.** To apply the observed condition method, the appraisal staff breaks down depreciation into all its various component parts. This method requires

detailed analysis of all forms of depreciation and is generally reserved for “model building”, special use properties or when raised by a property owner during the course of an appeal.

**(b) Sales comparison approach.** When using the sales comparison approach, the appraisal staff shall estimate value by comparing the subject property to similar properties that have recently sold. The appraisal staff shall use the following four steps when applying the sales comparison approach market research and verification, selecting appropriate units of comparison, making reasonable adjustments based on the market, and applying the adjusted comparison units to the subject of the appraisal.

**1. General considerations.** The appraisal staff shall consider the following when applying the sales comparison approach:

**(i) Bona fide sales preferred.** A bona fide sale of a subject property should be carefully analyzed by the appraisal staff to determine if it is an accurate indicator of such subject property’s fair market value. When such a sale is supported by sufficient other sales of similar property to reasonably estimate the market, the appraisal staff shall consider the sale as the best evidence of fair market value. In the absence of such a sale of the subject, sales prices of comparable properties shall be considered the best evidence of fair market value.

**(ii) Economic principles affecting approach.** When applying the sales comparison approach, the appraisal staff shall rely upon the economic principles of supply and demand, substitution, and contribution. The interaction of supply and demand factors determines property prices. The principle of substitution states that a prudent buyer will pay no more for a property than for a comparable property with similar utility. The principle of contribution as applied to the sales comparison approach means the value of a property component is measured by its contribution to the whole rather than by its cost.

**2. Market research and verification.** The appraisal staff shall build and maintain an up-to-date file system of qualified sales as provided in Rule 560-11-10-.09(2)(d)1.(ii). Other preferred information to be considered is the motivations of the buyer and seller, as obtained from actual interviews of the parties to the sales. Adjustments to the sales to be considered by the appraiser include, but are not limited to, time of sale; location; physical characteristics; partial interest not conveyed; trades or exchanges included; personal property included; leases included; incomplete or unbuilt community property; atypical financing; existing covenants; deed restrictions; environmental, economic, governmental and social factors affecting the sale property and the subject parcel. These adjusted qualified sales may then be used to appraise the subject parcel.

**3. Market analysis and stratification.** The appraisal staff shall analyze the market to identify groups of comparable properties that may be combined in the valuation process. Properties may be combined and classified to reflect use, location, neighborhood, or other comparison criteria that have been shown to reflect the interest of buyers and sellers.

**4. Comparable sales analysis.** When applying the analysis, the appraisal staff should identify a representative number of comparable properties that have recently sold, apply the adjustments indicated by the market research and verification process to such comparables, and then adjust such comparables for physical differences from the subject property. The appraiser may then develop an estimated value of the subject property from the adjusted sales prices of the comparable properties. This process may be computer assisted in a mass appraisal environment.

**5. Sales ratio applications.** The appraisal staff shall conduct sales ratio studies to periodically measure the quality of their appraisals relative to the market. Such studies should be designed to measure whether appraisals meet the overall legal standards provided in Rule 560-11-2-.56 and provide more precise analysis of the quality of appraisals within and between market strata used by the appraisal staff to compare properties. When sales ratio studies reveal excessive inequities within a stratum, the appraisal staff should consider reappraising the properties in the stratum. When such studies reveal excessive inequities between strata, and there is acceptable uniformity within the strata, the appraisal staff should consider trending to correct this uniformity problem.

**(i) Trending.** The appraisal staff shall use the procedures in this subparagraph when applying trend factors to improve uniformity. Stratify properties by property type and neighborhood. Determine the measure of central tendency by computing the median assessment ratio, substituting the aggregate ratio when the properties in the stratum tend to be heterogeneous. Then divide the legal assessment ratio by the calculated measure of central tendency to calculate the trend factor. The appraisal staff should not apply trending factors in excess of 1.15. In such instances, the appraisal staff should correct intra-strata differences by reappraising the properties within the affected strata. Before finalizing the application of trending factors, the appraisal staff should calculate the coefficient of dispersion to verify that uniformity among assessments will be improved by trending.

**(c) Income approach.** When using the income approach, the appraisal staff shall estimate value by determining the present value of the projected income stream from the use of the subject property in the future.

**1. Income and expense analysis.** The appraisal staff shall analyze the income stream and project a future income stream that reflects typical management and current market conditions.

**(i) Components of income and expense analysis.** The appraisal staff may consider the following components when performing the income and expense analysis: typical unit rent, potential gross income, miscellaneous income, effective gross income, vacancy and collection loss, typical expenses, replacement reserves, and net operating income. Expenses such as depreciation charges, debt service, ad valorem taxes, income taxes, and business expenses not associated with the property should not be considered. While complete information is not required on each individual property, the appraisal staff

should secure sufficient information to develop typical unit rents, typical vacancy and collection loss ratios, and typical expense ratios for various type properties before applying the income approach.

**(ii) Analyzing reported data.** The appraisal staff may use actual income and expense information when they reflect typical management and current market conditions; otherwise, typical figures should be used. The appraiser may stratify properties and develop typical unit rents, vacancy and collection loss ratios, and expense ratios to evaluate the reasonableness of reported figures for individual properties and to substitute for unreported figures. The appraiser may also use multiple regression analysis to estimate typical rents as a function of such variables as construction quality, age, location, size of building, and other relevant factors. Multiple regression analysis may also be used to estimate typical expense ratios, and other income and expense components. The appraiser should not consider outdated or non-market leases. Percentage leases should be expressed in actual dollar amounts and averaged over a period of years. Periodic expenditures for replacements should be pro-rated over their economic lives.

**2. Capitalization methods.** The appraisal staff shall use the procedures in this subparagraph to capitalize the income into an estimate of value. The appraisal staff may utilize the following rates while using the income approach and its various methods and techniques. The discount rate is the annual return on the investment in the property. It is a component of a total capitalization rate. The interest rate is the rate of return on borrowed funds. It is a component of the discount rate. The equity yield rate is the annual return on the equity portion of the investment in the property. It is a component of the total capitalization rate in the mortgage equity technique.

**(i) Direct capitalization.** The appraisal staff shall, when applying this method, use either overall rates or income multipliers. Both require adequate sales data and accurate estimates of potential annual gross income, effective annual gross income, or annual net operating income.

**(I) Overall rates.** Using the most common version of this method, the appraisal staff develops the annual net operating income of a sample of properties that have sold. The individual annual net operating incomes are divided by the individual sale prices resulting in the individual overall rates. A representative overall rate is then selected from the sample and applied to the subject property by dividing its annual net operating income by the selected overall rate resulting in an estimate of value for the property. The appraisal staff may also employ other techniques to develop an overall rate, such as the weighted land to improvement ratio method; the net income ratio method, and the debt coverage ratio method.

**(II) Income multipliers.** Using this method, the appraisal staff may use potential gross income, effective gross income, or annual net operating income from a sample of properties that have sold. Individual sale prices are divided by the selected level of income resulting in individual multipliers. A representative multiplier is then selected

from the sample and applied to the subject property by multiplying the selected level of income by the multiplier appropriate to the level of income selected resulting in an estimate of value for the property.

**(ii) Annuity capitalization.** Annuity capitalization may be used to apply the income approach when the subject property is under a long-term lease. The appraisal staff develops capitalization rates for both land and improvements to the land. The appropriate residual technique is selected based on the known value of either land or improvement. The land or improvement value is multiplied by the appropriate capitalization rate, and the result is deducted from the annual net operating income. The remaining residual income to either land or improvement is then capitalized by the appropriate rate resulting in an estimate of value for either land or improvement.

**(iii) Sinking fund capitalization.** Sinking fund capitalization may be used to apply the income approach when periodic reserves for replacement are set aside in equal amounts, at a safe rate, in order to restore or rebuild the improvements in the future. It is applied in the same manner as annuity or straight-line capitalization.

**(iv) Straight-line capitalization.** Straight-line capitalization may be used to apply the income approach when the appraisal staff uses straight-line depreciation schedules. It is applied in the same manner as annuity capitalization and sinking fund capitalization.

**(v) Discounted cash flow analysis.** Discounted cash flow analysis may be used to apply the income approach when the appraisal staff is valuing a lease and the residual value of the property at the end of the lease term. Each year's income stream is discounted by applying a present-value factor to the cash flow expected for each year. The estimated property value at the end of the lease term is also discounted. The discounted amounts are summed resulting in an estimate of value for the property.

**(vi) Mortgage equity analysis.** Mortgage equity analysis may be used when the appraisal staff can reliably determine mortgage terms and cash flow and reliably estimate the holding period and the percentage by which the property will appreciate or depreciate over the holding period. The appraisal staff computes a constant annual payment from the interest rate and amortization term and selects an appropriate equity yield rate. The estimated cash flow over the holding period is discounted at the equity yield rate, as is the anticipated selling price of the property. The two discounted amounts are added to the present mortgage balance resulting in an estimate of the value for the property.

**(vii) Residual capitalization techniques.** The appraisal staff may use a residual technique to apply the income approach when either the improvement or land component of the property value can be reliably estimated or documented by sales.

**(viii) Building residual technique.** The appraisal staff may use a building residual technique when the land value of the subject property is known and documented by comparable sales. The appraisal staff develops the total annual net operating income attributable to the property and develops capitalization rates for land and improvements

to the land. The land value is multiplied by the land capitalization rate and the result is deducted from the total annual net operating income. The remaining residual income to the improvement is capitalized using the improvement capitalization rate into an indicator of value for the improvement. This is added to the land value resulting in an estimate of value for the property.

**(ix) Land residual technique.** The appraisal staff may use this technique when the improvement value is known and documented by current cost figures. It is applied in the same manner as the building residual technique except a residual land income is capitalized into an indication of land value and added to the improvement value resulting in an estimate of value for the property.

**(d) Special procedures.** The appraisal staff shall observe the special procedures contained in this subparagraph when appraising the described property types.

**1. Valuation of common areas.** The appraisal staff may take into account the extent that the fair market value of individually owned units in a residential subdivision, planned commercial development, or condominium also represents the fair market value of any ownership interest in any common area that is conveyed with the individually owned units. When the appraisal staff determines that the fair market value of the common area is included in the fair market value of the individually owned units, the appraisal staff may recommend a nominal assessment of the common area parcel. When the appraisal staff makes such a determination, the fair market value of residual interests not conveyed to the owners of the individually owned units shall be appraised and an assessment recommended to the board of tax assessors.

**2. Construction in progress.** Construction in progress shall be appraised in the same manner as other similar real property taking into account that there may be little or no physical deterioration on such property and that the fair market value may be diminished due to the incomplete state of construction. The appraisal staff should attempt to value construction in progress by forecasting the future cash flow a project would generate and discounting at a rate that reflects the risk and uncertainty of that cash flow. If the construction in progress is being financed by a lending institution that has established an account from which funds may be drawn by the builder as construction progresses, the appraisal staff may consider the percentage of such funds expended as of January 1 as a possible indication of percentage completion of construction in progress. In the absence of sufficient information to perform such an analysis, the appraisal staff should estimate the percentage of completion of all construction in progress as of January 1 of the tax year using the best information available. The appraisal staff should then estimate the fair market value of the improvement upon completion. The appraisal staff should then estimate the fair market value as of January 1 as being the estimated fair market value upon completion multiplied by the percentage of completion on January 1. If comparable sales information of real property under construction is generally not available and there is no other specific evidence to measure the probable loss of value if the property is sold in an incomplete state of construction, the appraisal staff may multiply the identified total cost of construction by a uniform market risk factor of .75.

**(5) Final estimate of fair market value.** After completing all calculations, considering the information supplied by the property owner, and considering the reliability of sales, cost, income and expense information, the appraisal staff will correlate any values indicated by those approaches to value that are deemed to have been appropriate for the subject property and form their opinion of the fair market value. The appraisal staff shall present the resulting proposed assessment, along with all supporting documentation, to the board of tax assessors for an assessment to be made by that board.

Authority O.C.G.A. Secs. 48-2-12, 48-5-2, 48-5-10, 48-5-11, 48-5-12, 48-5-15, 48-5-18, 48-5-20, 48-5-105, 48-5-263, 48-5-264, 48-5-269, 48-5-269.1, 48-5-292, 48-5-295, 48-5-299, 48-5-300, 48-6-1 through 48-6-10. **History.** Original Rule entitled "Real Property Appraisal" adopted. F. Sept. 20, 1999; eff. Oct. 10, 1999. **Amended:** F. Apr. 14, 2004; eff. May 4, 2004. **Amended:** ER. 560-11-10-0.2-.09 adopted. F. Jan. 19, 2011; eff. Jan. 20, 2011, as specified by the Agency.