

# Impact of Wind Turbine Proximity on Sale Price

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## Background

Concern has been expressed that being in proximity to wind turbines negatively affects the sale prices of homes. To determine if this is the case, MPAC sought to determine if any difference in the market value of these residential homes was evident from its analysis for the 2008 base year reassessment.

## Methodology

MPAC does not have a data element that identifies if a property abuts or is in proximity to a wind turbine. Therefore it was necessary to create an inventory of these properties. To do this, MPAC's database was reviewed and every property in the Province with a wind turbine or turbines was flagged. Wind turbines have a unique structure code. Therefore, an extract of every roll number with one or more occurrence of this structure code was completed. Also, the department responsible for valuing wind farms was contacted and a list of all wind farms valued by this group was provided. Using these two sources the inventory was created. It should be noted that if a wind turbine has been recently built and not yet inspected and added to MPAC's database, it would not be included in this inventory.

Next, using MPAC's internal definitions of abuts and proximity (included at the end of this report), we identified any residential property (excluding farms) that met each definition and sold between 2005/01 and 2008/04. The number of wind turbines on the site that abutted or was in proximity was also recorded along with their total wattage. Farm sales were not included in this study because the Assessment Act dictates that they be valued based on their productive value using only farmer-to-farmer sales (Section 19.5). This is different from residential properties that are assessed based on their most probable selling price on the open market (Section 19.1). As a result, assessed values of farms can differ from their sale prices and would skew the results of this study.

Sale prices were time adjusted to reflect the January 1, 2008 valuation date used for MPAC's latest reassessment. These time adjustments were developed by market model area using all valid residential sales that occurred over the time period mentioned above. There are 131 market model areas in the Province. Once identified MPAC can compare its assessed values to the time adjusted sale prices to see if the results indicate any pattern of overassessment or underassessment.

## Results

Because MPAC did not make an adjustment for proximity to wind turbines when developing its assessed values, if wind turbines did not affect value, one would expect to see assessment to sales ratios (the assessed value divided by the time adjusted sale price) near 1. If wind turbines had a negative affect, one would expect to see an average assessment to sale ratio (ASR) above 1.

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Province-wide there were 17 sales that met the specified criteria. Six sales abutted wind turbines. Eleven sales were in proximity to wind turbines (Using MPAC's internal definitions). The median assessment to sales ratio was 88% for the abutting properties and 92% for properties in proximity to wind turbines (see attached spreadsheet for full results). Also, there was no apparent relationship with the amount of power generated at the nearby site and the ASR. Given the limited number of sales, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions. However, at this time it appears that there is not adequate evidence to warrant a negative adjustment to residential properties that abut or are in proximity to wind turbines.

## Assessment Act Sections

**19.1** The assessment of land shall be based on its Current Value. "Current Value" as defined in the Act means, in relation to land, the amount of money the fee simple, if unencumbered, would realize if sold at arm's length by a willing seller to a willing buyer

**19.5** For the purposes of determining the current value of farm lands used only for farm purposes by the owner or used only for farm purposes by a tenant of the owner and buildings thereon used solely for farm purposes, including the residence of the owner or tenant and of the owner's or tenant's employees and their families on the farm lands,

- (a) consideration shall be given to the current value of the lands and buildings for farm purposes only;
- (b) consideration shall not be given to sales of lands and buildings to persons whose principal occupation is other than farming; and
- (c) the Minister may, by regulation, define "farm lands" and "farm purposes".

## MPAC's Internal Definitions of Abuts and Proximity

**ABUTS:** Property is directly and immediately contiguous, physically touching, or sharing a common boundary line with another property or a site characteristic.

**PROXIMITY:** Property is directly across or diagonally across from the feature or attribute being described. It also includes properties within an economic neighbourhood that are positively or negatively affected by an economic influence, which affects the value within that neighbourhood. This may affect a few houses on a street, the entire street or a larger area. The positive or negative effect of economic influences may be different in some extreme situations and therefore may change the boundaries of what is normally considered 'proximity'. Exceptions to the standard definition of proximity require appraisal judgement, common sense and consistency. *See Illustration for standard examples of abuts and proximity properties.*

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## ILLUSTRATIONS FOR ABUTS and PROXIMITY

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