Suburban Commuter Belt Property Tax Equalization (2026): Fractional Assessments in Nassau/Suffolk (RAR), Westchester, Bergen County, and Fairfield County

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & ASSESSMENT EQUALIZATION:
Suburban property tax assessments across the New York metropolitan commuter belt are characterized by severe statutory opacity. Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island operate under fractional assessment systems governed by the Residential Assessment Ratio (RAR) under NY RPTL § 738, where residential properties are assessed at tiny fractions (e.g., 0.16% in Nassau Class 1) of full market value. In New Jersey (Bergen, Essex, Morris), Chapter 123 ratios dictate whether assessments fall within a statutorily protected ±15% corridor. In Connecticut (Fairfield County), a uniform statutory 70% fractional assessment ratio is applied across Greenwich, Darien, and Westport under C.G.S. § 12-62a. This paper models total carrying costs (equalized property tax + rail commute friction + state income tax drag) across 25 premier commuter municipalities. Models available at https://eastcorpcapital.com/westchester-bergen-fairfield-town-tax/.

1. Fractional Assessment Mechanics: NY RAR vs. NJ Chapter 123 vs. CT 70%

To determine whether a home is overassessed, property owners cannot compare nominal mill rates. Instead, the statutory full market value is derived through the equalized assessment fraction:

- **Nassau County NY (RAR):** Equalized Value = Assessed Valuation / RAR. On a home assessed at $2,500 with a Class 1 RAR of 0.0016 (0.16%), the equalized assessment is $2,500 / 0.0016 = $1,562,500. If current market value is $1,300,000, the property is overassessed by $262,500, entitling the owner to a SCARP grievance refund.
- **New Jersey (Chapter 123):** If the ratio of assessed value to true value falls outside the statutory corridor of [0.85 × Average Ratio, 1.15 × Average Ratio], the county tax board reduces the assessment to the exact average ratio.
- **Connecticut (70% Rule):** C.G.S. § 12-62a mandates that every parcel is assessed at exactly 70% of fair market value as of the town's decennial revaluation.

Commuter Town & County	Median Home Price	Assessment Formula	Effective Tax Rate	Annual Tax on $1.5M Home	Transit to NYC
Scarsdale (Westchester NY)	$1,750,000	100% Full Value	2.16%	$32,400	32 min (Metro-North)
Great Neck (Nassau NY)	$1,550,000	0.16% RAR	2.05%	$30,750	26 min (LIRR)
Ridgewood (Bergen NJ)	$1,150,000	88.5% Ch. 123	2.46%	$36,900	48 min (NJ Transit)
Short Hills (Essex NJ)	$1,850,000	82.0% Ch. 123	1.92%	$28,800	36 min (Midtown Direct)
Greenwich (Fairfield CT)	$2,350,000	70.0% Uniform	**0.81%**	**$12,150**	46 min (Metro-North)
Darien (Fairfield CT)	$2,050,000	70.0% Uniform	**1.20%**	**$18,000**	53 min (Metro-North)

2. The Fairfield County Tax Arbitrage Paradox

On an identical $1,500,000 single-family residence, a Greenwich, CT homeowner pays $12,150 in annual municipal real property tax, compared to $36,900 in Ridgewood, NJ and $32,400 in Scarsdale, NY. Over a 10-year holding period, this differential represents **over $200,000 in compounded cash carrying savings**, offsetting Connecticut's lack of transit reciprocity with New York.

3. Interactive Suburban Calculators & Grievance Simulators

- Westchester vs. Bergen vs. Fairfield Town Tax Matrix: https://eastcorpcapital.com/westchester-bergen-fairfield-town-tax/
- Nassau & Suffolk RAR Grievance & SCARP Simulator: https://eastcorpcapital.com/nassau-suffolk-property-tax-grievance/
- East Coast Property Tax & Mill Rate Hub: https://eastcorpcapital.com/property-tax-homestead-exemption-hub/
- Mortgage PITI & Suburban Tax Calculator: https://eastcorpcapital.com/mortgage-piti/

Statutory Precedents: NY Real Property Tax Law §§ 738, 730; NJ Chapter 123 (N.J.S.A. 54:51A-6); Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 12-62, 12-62a; Hellerstein v. Assessor of Town of Islip, 37 N.Y.2d 1.