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# Fairfax creates more jobs, has lower taxes than Montgomery

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Fairfax County is creating more jobs, its workers earn on average \$7,000 more a year, most of its taxes are lower, and far fewer serious crimes are committed than in Montgomery County, according to a new report commissioned by the Montgomery County Council.

Montgomery County has more than twice as much open space and parks, provides more access to public transportation, and has a lower homeless rate, the report also shows.

Fairfax and Montgomery often are considered rival counties and are virtually identical in many areas, including having roughly 1 million residents of similar demographic backgrounds.

Montgomery Councilman George Leventhal, D-at large, said the report highlights Fairfax's advantages in attracting investments and jobs, including its lower personal income tax rates and shorter average commute time.

Leventhal said he commissioned the side-by-side comparison so that the county would have the data to do an "in-depth analysis" of how it can improve.

"We should not be afraid to assess where we stand," Leventhal said.

Job creation has been a common refrain among Montgomery County's elected leaders recently. The county is trying to reverse a string of high-profile corporate losses to Virginia by luring the corporate headquarters of Northrop Grumman.

The report looked back 30 years and found that Montgomery County had more jobs than Fairfax until the mid-1980s. Since then, Fairfax has outpaced Montgomery in job growth and now has 200,000 more jobs.

Business leaders have consistently said the lower corporate tax rate in Virginia has been a major factor in relocation decisions. Maryland's corporate tax rate is 8.25 percent, while Virginia's is 6 percent.

Montgomery County Economic Development Director Steve Silverman said the report shows that the county needs "to move aggressively to support job creation" and abandon past debates about the need for growth.

"Virginia's rhetoric has been clearly pro-business," Silverman said.

Fairfax County Supervisor Pat Herrity, R-Springfield, said he is not surprised to hear that his county is creating more jobs than Montgomery County and said having Washington Dulles International Airport gives his county a natural advantage over its competitors.

Montgomery County Council members were quick to point to parts of the report that cast the county in a positive light, namely that the county has preserved 38 percent of its land from development compared with 15 percent in Fairfax.

"The grass literally is greener here," said Councilman Phil Andrews, D-Gaithersburg/Rockville. "And there's more of it."