

REAL ESTATE				QUALITY OF LIFE					NOTES	
AVERAGE ASKING RENT, CLASS A OFFICE SPACE*	OFFICE VACANCY RATE	AVERAGE ASKING RENT, INDUSTRIAL/FLEX SPACE	AVERAGE ASKING RENT, RETAIL SPACE	MEDIAN HOME PRICE	HOME PRICE CHANGE OVER 2003	STATE, LOCAL PERSONAL INCOME TAX TOP MARGINAL RATE	AVERAGE SAT SCORE	AVERAGE TRAVEL TO WORK, IN MINUTES (2000)		
\$42.42	8.8%	\$10.15	\$26.54	\$366,000	+18%	9.3%	814	29.7	D.C.	Job growth, 2000-2003: Reflects average payroll employment throughout 2003 compared with average employment throughout 2000, according to state employment agencies. Does not reflect surging local employment in 2004.
<p>1. Economic development agency/web address: Washington DC Marketing center, dcmarketingcenter.com; Office of Deputy mayor; www.dcbiz.dc.gov</p> <p>2. Economic development overview: The District is increasingly viewed as a good place to do business, after decades of being the hole in the region's economic doughnut. City officials aim to capitalize on good buzz in the corporate world to spread growth downtown and in wealthy neighborhoods to more downtrodden parts of the city.</p> <p>3. Business recruitment incentives (select list): Tax increment financing and industrial revenue bonds to ease financing of real estate are available to spur development.</p> <p>4. Advantages and disadvantages: City government is more responsive than in the not-too-distant past, is generally perceived as supportive of business. But business licenses, while less arduous than a decade ago, still takes longer than in the suburbs, according to some businessmen. Rent and taxes generally are more expensive in the city than the suburbs.</p>										
\$32.27	11.3%	\$16.97	\$27.75	\$427,800	21%	5.75%	1,085	27.3	ARLINGTON	Percentage of adults with bachelor's degree or higher: In 2000, according to Census Bureau.
<p>1: Arlington Economic Development: www.arlingtonvirginiausa.com</p> <p>2: Arlington pitches itself as having the advantages of both the city-with its urbane neighborhoods in the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, and the suburbs, with its lower taxes and more affordable real estate.</p> <p>3: Reduced business taxes for high-tech firms that locate in Technology Zones, tax abatements for real estate investment in revitalization districts.</p> <p>4: An efficient county government and proximity to Reagan National Airport, downtown Washington and key government agencies, like the Defense Department and CIA. However development in Arlington is sufficiently dense that it can be hard to find large contiguous blocks of space; a lack of expansion space in Rosslyn, for example, helped drive the headquarters of Gannett into Fairfax County.</p>										
\$27.56	13.4%	\$9.93	\$25.76	\$351,350	3.3%	5.75%	957	29.7	ALEXANDRIA	Driving time to downtown D.C.: Times as calculated by Mapquest.com as average driving time using quickest route from the center of each county seat to downtown D.C. and airports.
<p>1: Alexandria Economic Development Partnership Inc.: www.alexecon.org</p> <p>2: Alexandria has used its inside-the-Beltway location and Old Town's charm to attract many trade associations, and the Patent and Trademark Office, which is currently moving in.</p> <p>3: In select enterprise zones, state and local cash is available for capital improvements, crime prevention and small business financing. Low-interest industrial revenue bonds are available for nonprofits.</p> <p>4: Best asset: Location. It's near Reagan National airport and with lots of shopping and restaurants. The tradeoff is that as a small and relatively dense jurisdiction, big open spaces for building new facilities are scarce.</p>										
\$24.18	16.2%	\$9.94	\$23.43	\$397,000	22.2%	5.75%	1105	30.7	FAIRFAX	Average wage (2002). Wage change 2002 over 2001: Average wage per job. Fairfax, for purposes of these data, also includes Fairfax City and Falls Church. Prince William also includes Manassas and Manassas Park. Spotsylvania also includes Fredericksburg.
<p>1: Fairfax County Economic Development Authority: www.fairfaxcountyeda.org</p> <p>2: Fairfax has had the strongest job growth in the region in the last 20 years by emphasizing its low tax environment, proximity to Dulles and Reagan National airports, government agencies and high tech workers. Fairfax has the largest concentration of information technology companies in the region.</p> <p>3: Generally limited to providing money for road and utility upgrades around a new business, along with state incentives that can be more generous</p> <p>4: Traffic is problem most often cited by businesses that complain, as well as rising prices and lack of massive wide open spaces.</p>										
\$20.82	9.8%	\$11.83	\$15.50	\$299,900	29%	5.75%	1016	36.9	PRINCE WILLIAM	Business taxes: In addition to taxes listed here, most Virginia counties levy a business and professional license tax, which is a percentage of gross revenue. This tax, typically around 20 cents per \$100 of revenue for businesses over a certain income threshold, has a different level in each county and for each industry within that county. A complete list of BPOL taxes is at http://yesvirginia.org/pdf/guides/local_taxes_2.pdf .
<p>1: Prince William County Department of Economic Development: www.pwcecondev.org</p> <p>2: Prince William is changing its reputation as a bedroom community for Fairfax by aggressively pursuing employers of its own, including a planned pharmaceutical plant for Eli Lilly & Co.</p> <p>3: County will pay for infrastructure improvements, workforce training and capital equipment purchases in some cases. Fast-track, 30 day permitting process available and reduced site plan fees for favored employers.</p> <p>4: Executives grouse about traffic. They love the good schools, presence of affordable housing for their workforce and efficient zoning and permitting process.</p>										
\$20.72	16.5%	\$10.71	\$22	\$389,450	29%	5.75%	1059	30.8	LOUDOUN	Commercial property tax rate (Fiscal year 2004 for Virginia; Fiscal 2005 for Maryland): Additional charge in some cities and special taxing districts within each county. Tax per \$100 in assessed value.
<p>1: Loudoun County Department of Economic Development: www.loudoun.gov/business</p> <p>2: With its proximity to Dulles International Airport and Fairfax County (the high tech center of northern Virginia), Loudoun has been able to attract big high-tech employers, most notably America Online and MCI.</p> <p>3: Loudoun has lowered its business and professional license fee for industries it is trying to attract, including in aviation-related fields and online businesses like AOL. It pays for roads and other new infrastructure for potential big employers.</p> <p>4: Space in Loudoun is cheaper than in neighboring Fairfax. Traffic is a problem. Development restrictions could limit future growth.</p>										
\$42.42	8.8%	\$10.15	\$26.54	\$334,500	18.8%	5.75%	NA	36.8	FAUQUIER	Commercial property tax rate (Fiscal year 2004 for Virginia; Fiscal 2005 for Maryland): Additional charge in some cities and special taxing districts within each county. Tax per \$100 in assessed value.
<p>1: Fauquier County Department of Economic Development: www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments/econdev</p> <p>2: The county has been generally less gung-ho about rapid development than some of its neighbors. It has focused on nurturing mainly small companies that are clean and fast-growing.</p> <p>3: No tax breaks, cheap loans or discounted land here, according to economic development director R. Talmage Reeves. County doesn't want to get into bidding wars.</p> <p>4: Businessmen say they love the beautiful landscapes and affordable housing. Some say, however, that Fauquier's emphasis on preserving its agricultural heritage can slow the zoning and permitted process, making it difficult for businesses to expand.</p>										
NA	NA	NA	NA	\$293,800	13%	5.75%	1,034	37.7	STAFFORD	Commercial property tax rate (Fiscal year 2004 for Virginia; Fiscal 2005 for Maryland): Additional charge in some cities and special taxing districts within each county. Tax per \$100 in assessed value.
<p>1: Stafford County Economic Development: www.co.stafford.va.us/econdev</p> <p>2: Stafford has positioned itself as a business friendly alternative to Prince William, Fairfax and other close in suburbs. It is spending \$60,000 this year on radio ads, noting that it is 25 miles south of the Capital Beltway.</p> <p>3: Stafford is reluctant to use direct subsidies of new businesses much, emphasizing instead its low tax environment; unlike most counties in Virginia, it has no business and professional license tax on corporate revenue.</p> <p>4: Executives like the accommodating tax and regulatory environment. Traffic is often cited as the largest problem.</p>										
NA	NA	NA	NA	\$245,000	19.5%	5.75%	NA	37.1	SPOTSYLVANIA	Commercial property tax rate (Fiscal year 2004 for Virginia; Fiscal 2005 for Maryland): Additional charge in some cities and special taxing districts within each county. Tax per \$100 in assessed value.
<p>1: Spotsylvania County Department of Economic Development: www.spotsylvania.org</p> <p>2: Positioned on the southern fringe of the Washington metropolitan area, Spotsylvania, along with the independent city of Fredericksburg, offer easy access to both Washington and Richmond and low land prices and accommodating county government. Employers include a GM Powertrain plant and call center facilities.</p> <p>3: Besides state incentives, Spotsylvania comes through with infrastructure improvements and other help for companies locating in the county.</p> <p>4: Businesses like its location, about midpoint between Washington and Richmond, as well as the plentiful supply of inexpensive land. Traffic is a growing problem here too.</p>										
\$20.73	10.8%	\$7.09	\$13.05	\$235,000	25.7%	7.95%	881	35.9	PRINCE GEORGE'S	Average asking rent for office space, (full service, per square foot per year); Average asking rent, Industrial/flex space (triple net, per square foot per year); Average asking rent, retail space (triple net, per square foot per year); Average asking rents for each property type as reported by CoStar Group Inc. in most jurisdictions, for the following counties, which CoStar does not track, data is based on Washington Post reporting on prevailing rents for each property type: Fauquier, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's.
<p>1: Prince George's County Economic Development Corp.: www.pgcedc.com</p> <p>2: Prince George's officials are working to improve the quality of life to lure high tech and other professional businesses. They are working to increase executive housing, upscale retail and white table cloth restaurants, and to improve schools and lower crime rates.</p> <p>3: The county offers quicker permitting, tax abatement, and other financial incentives to companies in favored sectors, with particularly generous incentives in designated Enterprise Zones.</p> <p>4: Proximity to both the District and BWI airport is a plus. So is the presence of affordable housing. Schools have lower standardized test scores than other Maryland suburbs.</p>										
\$27.47	13.2%	\$13.39	\$20.96	\$366,250	16.3%	7.95%	1,102	32.8	MONTGOMERY	Average asking rent, Industrial/flex space (triple net, per square foot per year); Average asking rent, retail space (triple net, per square foot per year); Average asking rents for each property type as reported by CoStar Group Inc. in most jurisdictions, for the following counties, which CoStar does not track, data is based on Washington Post reporting on prevailing rents for each property type: Fauquier, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's.
<p>1: Montgomery County Department of Economic Development: www.theideallocation.com</p> <p>2: Montgomery emphasizes its good schools, low crime and green space. It has fashioned itself as the center of the region's biotechnology sector, with the National Institutes of Health and FDA located there.</p> <p>3: For biotech and other companies it considers highly desirable, Montgomery has fast-track permitting and, in special cases, financial incentives; it put together a \$31.7 million package of state and local incentives to keep the headquarters of Marriott International.</p> <p>4: Businesses love the highly skilled workers and pleasant quality of life. But some say zoning and permitting can be more onerous than some other counties. Although it has lost its anti-business reputation of a decade ago, the county still regularly considers or passes laws that irk businesspeople, such as bans on smoking in restaurants and reimporting Canadian drugs for county employees.</p>										
\$22.18	15%	\$6.93	\$20.52	\$327,100	19%	7.95%	1,097	30.2	HOWARD	Average asking rent, Industrial/flex space (triple net, per square foot per year); Average asking rents for each property type as reported by CoStar Group Inc. in most jurisdictions, for the following counties, which CoStar does not track, data is based on Washington Post reporting on prevailing rents for each property type: Fauquier, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's.
<p>1: Howard County Economic Development Authority: www.hceda.org</p> <p>2: Howard is right between Washington and Baltimore, and aims to take advantage of its proximity to two major cities, BWI airport and Interstate 95. The National Security Agency, which is located next door and its contractors are major employers.</p> <p>3: Fast track zoning in only 30 days for favored projects, tax exempt industrial revenue bonds for manufacturing and nonprofits. Property tax credits for companies that make substantial investment in the county.</p> <p>4: Executives like Howard's combination of low rents, low cost of living, and highly educated workers. Being located around one of the busiest stretches of highway on the East Coast, though, can make for bad traffic.</p>										
\$23.70	9.1%	\$5.58	\$13.36	\$275,000	20.2%	7.31%	1,059	28.9	ANNE ARUNDEL	Average asking rent, Industrial/flex space (triple net, per square foot per year); Average asking rents for each property type as reported by CoStar Group Inc. in most jurisdictions, for the following counties, which CoStar does not track, data is based on Washington Post reporting on prevailing rents for each property type: Fauquier, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's.
<p>1: Anne Arundel County Economic Development Corp.: www.aedc.org</p> <p>2: Anne Arundel has attracted many government contractors, including Northrop Grumman's electronics division and contractors to the National Security Agency. It emphasizes a highly varied economy, with light industrial facilities near BWI airport, Maryland's state capitol and the Naval Academy in Annapolis, scores of expensive mansions along the Chesapeake and lots of middle-class suburban neighborhoods, too.</p> <p>3: County provides a 10 percent match to state incentive packages. Also has a pot of money to help growing companies train workers.</p> <p>4: Executives praise the natural surroundings, proximity to the airport and a relatively easy drive to Washington or Baltimore. They are less fond of the zoning process, which some describe as time consuming and complicated, especially if it involves property near the water.</p>										
NA	NA	NA	NA	\$255,000	23.2%	7.65%	1,047	39.3	CHARLES	Median home price, Median home price change, 2004 over 2003: Median value of home sales in July 2004, compared with July 2003, according to Metropolitan Regional Information Systems.
<p>1: Charles County Economic Development Commission: www.ccbiz.org</p> <p>2: Charles has a relatively small base of businesses. It pushes its quality of life and affordable land as good reasons to locate there. It is targeting fast-growing companies with good-paying jobs that don't pollute, such as in information technology and engineering services.</p> <p>3: State tax breaks, land sales at favorable rates, and installation of water and sewer lines for new office buildings.</p> <p>4: Business likes the good schools and well-trained workforce.</p>										
NA	NA	NA	NA	\$278,000	23.6%	7.55%	1,053	39.8	CALVERT	Average travel time to work, in minutes (2000): Mean travel time to work among workers 16 years old or over, who did not work at home, according to 2000 Census.
<p>1: Calvert County Department of Economic Development: www.ECalvert.com</p> <p>2: Calvert stresses its quality of life and scenic Chesapeake beaches as it tries to get more of an employment base.</p> <p>3: Low-interest and no-interest loans available for businesses, county can sell land at favorable rates or make grants.</p> <p>4: Businesses like Calvert's pastoral setting with development clustered in a handful of town centers, good public schools and affordable land. Some say there is poor broadband Internet access and a long drive to major population centers.</p>										
NA	NA	NA	NA	\$240,000	26.3%	7.85%	1,026	29.2	ST. MARY'S	SOURCES: Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics, County economic development agencies, Mapquest, local tax authorities, CoStar, Metropolitan Regional Information Systems.
<p>1: St. Mary's County Department of Economic and Community Development: www.co.saint-marys.md.us/deccd/index.asp</p> <p>2: Dozens of tech companies that serve the Patuxent Naval Air Station is St. Mary's economic claim to fame.</p> <p>3: St. Mary's is trying to diversify its county by luring businesses not tied to the naval base. It uses Maryland state tax credits available to businesses.</p> <p>4: Proximity to the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay and affordable land are key selling points. But St. Mary's is far from airports and major cities.</p>										
\$23.90	8.8%	\$8.13	\$17.35	\$261,950	23%	7.71%	1,055	31.9	FREDERICK	REPORTING BY NEIL BRVIN, MIKE FLAGG, ANNYS SHIN, DINA FERGUSON AND SANDY SUGAWARA; GRAPHIC BY BILL WEBSTER—THE WASHINGTON POST
<p>1: Frederick County Office of Economic Development: www.discoverfrederickmd.com</p> <p>2: Industrial companies love the affordable land and access to Interstates 70 and 270. There is still a strong agricultural base. And increasingly it is a site for back-office and manufacturing operations of companies located closer to Washington, like MedImmune and Fannie Mae, and even operating headquarters for units of engineering firm Bechtel.</p> <p>3: Fast Track permitting for favored businesses, small business loans.</p> <p>4: Frederick offers low land prices and lovely mountain views—but its attractive qualities have brought the strains of rapid growth, including traffic clogs.</p>										