

PEER COUNTY SERVICE COMPARISON

| County | Police | Fire | EMS | Roads | Libraries | Zoning | Water | Sewer | Stormwater | Garbage | Parks/ Rec | Code Enforcement | Transit | Airport | Health and Human Services | Education |
|------------------|--------|------|-----|-------|-----------|--------|-------|-------|------------|---------|---------------|---------------------|---------|---------|------------------------------|-----------|
| Anne Arundel, MD | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | x | x |
| Cobb, GA | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | x | x | x | x | - |
| San Mateo, CA | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | x | - | x | x | x |
| Contra Costa, CA | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | - | x | - | x | x | - | x | x | x |
| Montgomery, MD | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Fairfax, VA | x | x | x | - | x | x | - | x | x | x | x | x | x | - | x | x |

Chart Key

- x unincorporated only
- x unincorporated and some cities/districts
- x county-wide services
- x service jurisdiction unknown
- other agency

PEER COUNTY MATRIX REVIEW NOTES

Anne Arundel County, MD

Education

- County provides some funding for local Jr. College
- Appropriates funding from general fund to Board of Education

Health and Human Services

- Department of Aging provides service for elderly which includes free pick-up and transport to doctor's appointments, shopping, etc
- Department of Recreation and Parks administers School Age Child Care program

Cobb County, GA

- County does not provide collection service for solid waste, but does provide disposal
- Service area for roads and stormwater is unknown

San Mateo County, CA

Only 10% of residents live in unincorporated area of County

Public Utilities

- Water and sewer services provided to 11 service districts

Health and Human Services

- County maintained clinic system and two hospitals

Education

- Provides some funding for education

Contra Costa County, CA

(Most information obtained from website and CAFR)

- Water and sewer service is maintained and governed by W&S districts
- Transit it provided through a joint powers agency

Health and Human Services

- Child care program
- Hospital

Montgomery County, MD

Health and Human Services

- Health insurance for low income residents

Education

- Appropriates funding from general fund to Board of Education—more than half budget goes to BOE
- Provides some funding to local community college

Fairfax County, VA

Public Utilities

- Basically all roads in County are maintained by state agency

Health and Human Services

- Day care facility

Education

- Appropriates funding to public school system, which is a component unit of the county's governmental function

How have the comparison counties dealt with the current economic environment?

Anne Arundel County, MD

Taxes: The Board made a commitment not to raise taxes and has so far been able to keep it.

Employees: They are in the 4th year of a hiring freeze including replacement positions and enterprise funds. So far, they have avoided layoffs and have chosen not to implement furlough days. However, there will be a 5% pay cut across the board next fiscal year.

Other measures: The County has a very conservative outlook and fiscal policies. They have taken several measures to cut costs including:

- Took all county vehicles away from county employees
- Combined purchasing departments with local school system and local college
- Eliminated a small county department

Cobb County, GA

Taxes: No tax increase.

Employees: They have a hiring freeze in place and have cut non-essential overtime. This will be the second year of no pay increases for staff. Further, travel and training budgets have been cut significantly.

Other measures: The County has increased its focus on economic development. Specifically, they have focused on the use of Recovery Zone Bonds as a method of encouraging capital investment. Further, they have passed a “Commercial Rehabilitation Ordinance” which allows them to abate the taxes on new capital investment in pre-designated redevelopment areas. Lastly, the county has also put a freeze on new capital spending.

San Mateo, CA

Taxes: Proposition 13 caps the property tax rate in the state. The county has a structural budget deficit but has developed a 5-year plan to eliminate it. During those 5 years fund balance will be used to make up the difference.

Employees: County departments were directed by the Board to hold 5% of positions vacant in order to generate salary savings and to make positions available to reduce layoffs. The county has maintained a 10 percent position vacancy rate. They have eliminated 19 positions in one department, but added 9 in another to offset overtime costs.

Other measures: The County has developed an interesting method for encouraging savings by departments. Specifically, if a department under-spends their budget, a portion of the savings remains in the general fund, however, they get to keep a significant portion of the savings in a department “rainy day” fund. This fund can build up over multiple years and how a department head chooses to spend that money is up to them. The policy has served to give some autonomy to department heads, allowed them to run their “business”, and has encouraged fiscal responsibility.

Contra Costa, CA

(We were unable to get anyone from Contra Costa to return our calls. The information provided here is from other sources.)

Taxes: Proposition 13 caps the property tax rate in the state.

Employees: Mandatory furlough days for all county staff – total of 6 days so far.

Other measures: The County has lost substantial funding from the state which has required substantial across the board cuts, including police, probation, and social services.

Montgomery County, MD

Taxes: Raised taxes 13% in 2009.

Employees: They are beginning their 3rd year of a hiring freeze. They have eliminated their COLA but currently maintain their merit increases. So far, there have been no changes in the benefit plans. The county gave departments aggressive position reduction targets and they eliminated several positions, although most of them were vacant. However, more recently they have laid some people off to reach those targets.

Other measures: The County forced departments to develop mid-year savings plans and each was given a “savings target” to hit. Non-public safety departments had higher targets. In the short-term, they have deferred OPEB payments and have looked at shifting some capital money to cover “capital-related” operating expenses. So far, they have not changed their business model. However, for the coming year, they are going to have to re-evaluate the services they provide. They also created a “county statistical unit” that does performance analysis across all county departments. They believe the results from this unit have cut costs, especially in the over-time area.

Fairfax County, VA

Taxes: Prior to raising taxes, they held 20 community meetings to get input and buy-in from the community. Initially, residents were opposed to raising taxes. However, after the education and community input process, the Board had the support of the community. Specifically, the level and quality of service is what attracted people to Fairfax, and the residents wanted to maintain those services.

Employees: Last year they have cut more than 300 positions, however all but a few of those were vacant. They are expecting another 10% decline in residential and 20% decline in commercial values in the coming year. As such, they will need to re-visit consolidations, reorganizations, and possibly layoffs.

Other measures: The county forced departments to conduct a “line of business” review to establish what services/lines of business were mandated/required and which were not. Departments were required to cut budgets 15% and eliminate or reduce lines of business. The county has also reduced library hours and closed some facilities. They have also developed an Economic Advisory Committee made up of local business leaders and economists to provide advice and recommendations to county leadership.