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Report: Tax classes are drag on growth

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CMAP, the regional planning agency, has produced a report concluding that the property tax classification scheme in Cook County penalizes economic development across the county, including in Evanston.

A new [interactive chart](#) prepared by the agency presents data indicating that a business owner deciding whether to purchase a property in Cook or Lake county could face a 40 percent higher property tax bill by choosing Cook County – just because of the tax classification scheme.

In Cook County residential properties are assessed at 10 percent of their market value, while commercial and industrial properties are assessed at 25 percent.

In the collar counties all properties are assessed at 33 percent of value.

Either way, a state equalization factor is applied to the result – which tends to be much higher for Cook County, because its assessments are so far below the state-mandated norm.

Because switching to a model under which residential, commercial and industrial properties were all assessed at the same rate would mean higher tax bills for homeowners in Cook County – something you probably don't want to hear as you write your 2nd half property tax check this month – CMAP suggests that the change should be phased in over a number of years.

And it argues that the impact on residential tax bills would be mitigated over time, assuming the business property tax base grows as a result of increased economic development in the county driven by elimination of the tax rate disparity.

Eliminating that disparity has long been a goal of business groups in Cook County, but it has not proved attractive to the political decisionmakers.