

Consolidation of Space

For nearly a decade, Alachua County has followed a downtown space needs plan which was designed to measure and allocate space in a rational manner, provide for future space needs, and to consolidate functions such as plan review and development into a centralized single location service area. Another goal was to move from leased space into County-owned facilities. The reality of long-term revenue limitations and the reduction of positions over the last several years had allowed us to eliminate some of our leased property in the downtown area. Consistent with these goals, Guardian Ad Litem was relocated to the DOCS building resulting in a lease cost savings of \$59,408. The Environmental Protection Department reduced its office space in downtown by moving its office to a smaller, less expensive space in the downtown area in the Seagle Building annex. This move resulted in savings of \$67,983.

In FY12, County Facilities consolidated their operations and moved their administrative functions from Star Garage to a renovated County owned location adjacent to Fire Rescue Headquarter saving \$33,887 in annual lease costs. The realignment of staffing housed in the Public Works Administration Building enabled the County to continue reducing lease space by relocating the Waste Management Division from the Star Garage to space at Hague.

In FY15, As a result of the intended purchase of 515 North Main building, the Supervisor of Elections will be able to consolidate their operations under one roof in July 2015, saving \$147,439 in annual lease space costs. The Property Appraiser's office will also relocate from the County Administration Building to 515 North Main this summer. These changes not only improve our service delivery, but open an opportunity to implement additional savings.

The latest iteration of the Space Needs Plan will look at opportunities for savings in several County Departments and will provide adequate space for Driver's License functions under the Tax Collector and additional needed space for the Civil Sheriff's functions. The plan will involve moving the Office of Budget and Management, and the Equal Opportunity office from leased space to the County Administration Building, saving \$77,189 annually in leased space costs. With these changes and in order to make space fully functional, there will need to be some renovation and relocation of functions on the second floor of the Administration Building.

As a result of the completion of several new public facilities over the past several year and next couple of years, Alachua County is or will be holding real property in various areas of the County including downtown. Currently, several old fire station sites and the current Public Defender's office can be designated as surplus, offered for sale and returned to the tax roll. The first of the sites for consideration include the Public Defender Office Building, former Fire Station 17 in Jonesville, former Fire Station 25 in Hawthorne, and the Half Moon Fire Station. While these are one time positive impacts to the budget, the funding does offset the cost of some one time priorities and costs of moves to new facilities. Over the next six to twelve months you will see staff return with the recommendations to surplus the property, market the property and realize the financial benefits.