

On November 2, 2004, Orange County voters approved an amendment to the Orange County Charter thereby creating an Orange County/City of Orlando Consolidation of Services Study Commission. The Study Commission was “empowered to conduct a comprehensive study of the consolidation of City/County government services” and was “specifically charged with providing a report to the City and County with specific findings and recommendations regarding efficiencies in service delivery, economies of scale, opportunities for enhanced intergovernmental cooperation between the two local governments, and other related issues.” By charter amendment also provided that the Study Commission consist of 11 appointed members (5 by Orange County, 4 by the City of Orlando, and 2 by the Orange County Legislative Delegation). All of the above is in the Report introduction. I recommend you delete the part in green; the rest makes good lead in for the rest of the letter

In the course of the Commission’s work, several universal conclusions regarding the process became abundantly clear. First, some issues require more further study and analysis than allowed by that the time and resources ~~what was~~ allotted to the Study Commission. However, given the short time frame and limited resources by which the Study Commission operated, the Commission members and its staff are to be commended for their diligent efforts to prepare and compile this report, and its recommendations. Secondly, both the City of Orlando’s and the Orange County’s representatives were generally cooperative, responsive and professional, and sent many hours researching and providing information and data to the Commission. Thirdly, it appeared that a good amount of cooperation already exists in the various areas that the Commission studied and that neither entity operates in a vacuum without the consent of the other.

The Commission studied six substantive service areas for possible consolidation. Those government services included Fire and Emergency services Rescue, Parks and Recreation, Planning, Purchasing, Transportation and Water and Utilities. While on the whole, it is clear that there currently exists cooperation and communication between the City of Orlando and Orangethe County, the Study Commission found several recommendations that were repeated in the reports regardless of the service provided. Those repetitive themes included:

- ***Greater coordination in the purchase of technological systems.*** Specifically, the purchase of software and hardware should be coordinated to insure that future consolidation between the City and the County’s can take place. A pervasive deterrent to consolidation in most of the committees were the tremendous costs to consolidate the data or technological systems between the two entities.
- ***Greater emphasis on identifying direct or specific funding sources.*** For some of these services, funding sources exist but at different levels

between the City and the County. For others, specific funding sources have been or should be identified but have not been used.

- **Greater emphasis on joint planning.** In almost all areas that required capital acquisition the concept of joint planning was reiterated. While currently there is communication taking place between the city and county representatives, communication between the decision makers in the city and county staffs should be more formalized and joint planning meetings should take place with greater frequency.
- **Greater use of combined websites.** In several of the committees, it was recommended that the departments create joint, one-stop websites where the average citizen can learn about both city and county services in one easy location. This concept may also be one that could be incorporated in other areas not studied by this Commission.

The Study Commission and its Committees met regularly and diligently. The Commission met 25 times and the various Committees met a total of 56 times. ~~and~~ The Commission concluded its deliberations on time and well within its projected budget. It is our expectation that this report will serve as the reference guide for further recommendations or studies and for the continued improvement of the services delivered to both the City's and the County's residents.