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Calculating Square Footages for General Office Space A General Guideline

Space Planners/ Architects are often the ones, calculating the Square Footage requirements for Office space needs, warehouse space, and technology space needs This is also true when dealing with School Districts and Government Facilities.

There are, however, some GENERAL GUIDELINES that are used in the Commercial Real Estate Industry, that are often followed for a General Office Space Requirement. I have seen the current district offices at the Shores Property, and it appears this new Requirement falls under what can be determined as General Office Space needs.

So, if the Board of Trustees has determined that the need should house 17 Employees, this is often the place to start. If the Goal is also to save as MUCH MONEY AS POSSIBLE AS IT RELATES TO THE OFFICE SPACE COSTS, THEN THIS IS ALSO A GOOD PLACE TO START WHEN PLANNING FOR THE NEW FACILITY

Some "terminology" used in the space planning process is important to understand first.

1. Usable Square Footage- this the actual " usable" area that includes all offices, conference rooms, shared meeting rooms, copy room(s), restroom & kitchen/breakrooms if they are located exclusively used by District Offices & not shared with other uses, lobby area, exclusive workout area (if applicable).
2. Rentable Square Footage- this is the Usable Square Footage PLUS areas such as common area hallways, walkways, elevators, stairwells, common area lobbies, building overhangs as occurs often in a typical Office Building. This "add on" factor as it is referred to can add on as much as 12-20% more square footage to the usable area. In the case of the District Office Requirement, if the requirement is housed in one of the schools, the Rentable area will most likely be quite a bit lower, in the neighborhood of 3-7%.

Rule of Thumb to calculate office space:

Generally, an Office Build Out for a General Office Space using hard wall construction within an existing building is 350- 500 square feet per person, on the Usable Square Footage. So, for example:

17 District Employees X 350 Square Feet Usable = 5,950 square feet

17 District Employees X 500 Square Feet Usable = 8,500 square feet

The differences in the square footages are generally based on the choices to

- a. Build Out offices with drywall/hard wall construction VS. Modular System Furniture(Modular furniture systems can trim the needed office requirement by a lot, possibly as much as 250-300 square feet per person on the Usable square feet)
- b. Include Numerous Conference rooms/work areas
- c. Build Large Sized offices for many employees (square footage can increase dramatically)
- d. Include extra build outs such as work out rooms, large kitchen areas

Rule of Thumb to Keep Office Costs Efficient/Effective:

- 1. First set a Goal of the Budget “ price per Square Foot per person” you would like to achieve. This helps the space planner tremendously. No pie in the sky figures!
Determine what other district office space Square footage per person is. This is a good benchmark***
- 2. Consider using modular systems furniture in the interior Tenant Improvements with exception of senior Employees that require privacy, etc., and Private conference rooms***
- 3. Design in Multi purpose rooms....ie conference rooms,***
- 4. keep lobby sizes to a minimum***
- 5. Do not relocate permanent or structural walls, if possible.***
- 6. keep Technology Dept. as is***
- 7. use existing buildings/facilities to house the warehouse requirement. New construction may not be necessary. If there is a need for “ high bay/high ceilings in a portion of the warehouse requirement, then a modular aluminum facility can be purchased instead of new construction, at significantly lower costs .***

Thank you,

Sincerely, Ellen Thomas

Del Mar Hills Parent & Commercial Real Estate Broker

John