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MEMORANDUM FOR REGIONAL COMMISSIONERS, PBS
REGIONAL LEASING DIRECTORS
REGIONAL LEASING SERVICES OFFICERS

FROM: JAMES C. WISNER 
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR OFFICE OF LEASING - PR

SUBJECT: LEASING ALERT – Incorporating Principles of Sustainability,
Economic Development and Efficiency into GSA Business
Practices and Location Decision-making

1. Purpose. This Leasing Alert explains the lease policy for promoting efficiency, economic development, and sustainability in location planning decisions.

2. Background.

a. Executive Order 13693, "Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade" ("E.O. 13693"), signed on March 19, 2015, requires agencies to increase efficiency and improve their environmental performance. E.O. 13693 continues the role of Federal leadership in "energy, environmental water, fleet, buildings and acquisition management" in order to "drive national greenhouse gas reductions and support preparations for the impact of climate change," and acknowledges the many Government resources that can be impacted by incorporating sustainability into decision-making. E.O. 13693 incorporates the principles previously laid out in the Implementing Instructions — Sustainable Locations for Federal Facilities, which called for Federal agencies to consider locating resources in sustainable locations in order to strengthen the vitality and livability of the communities in which they exist.

b. In particular, E.O. 13693 requires the development of policies to "promote" sustainable commuting and work-related travel practices for Federal employees that foster workplace vehicle charging, encourage telecommuting, teleconferencing, and reward carpooling and the use of public transportation where consistent with agency authority and Federal appropriations law" as well as the implementation of "cost effective strategies to optimize sustainable space usage and consideration of existing community transportation planning and infrastructure including access to public transit."

c. These principles have been long-standing goals of the Federal Government, and have been acknowledged both in the Rural Development Act and Executive Order 12072, "Federal Space Management" ("E.O. 12072"). Since 1978, E.O. 12072 requires consideration of the following factors when meeting Federal space needs in urban areas: "compatibility with State, regional or local development, redevelopment, or conservation objectives... impact on economic development and employment opportunities in the urban area, including the utilization of human, natural, cultural and community resources... availability of adequate low and moderate income housing for Federal employees and their families on a nondiscriminatory basis and availability of adequate public transportation and parking and accessibility to the public." E.O. 13693 re-emphasizes the importance of these goals. This Leasing Alert provides an implementation framework for GSA concerning location decisions.

d. On September 1, 2015, GSA issued GSA Order ADM 1097.1, entitled "Incorporating Principles of Sustainability, Economic Development and Efficiency into GSA Business Practices and Location Decision-making," to provide guidance for promoting efficiency, economic development, and sustainability in location planning decisions.

3. Effective Date. This Leasing Alert is effective as of the date of issuance unless modified, canceled, or reissued.

4. Cancellation. None.

5. Applicability. This Leasing Alert is mandatory and applies to all General Services Administration (GSA) real property leasing activities and to activities delegated by GSA to other Federal agencies.

6. Guidelines. In order to meet the goals laid out in these Executive Orders, when determining where to cost-effectively locate Federal facilities, GSA will analyze, among other things, the following factors:

a. Local and regional planning and economic development goals.

(1) Consistent with E.O. 12072, for meeting Federal space needs in urban areas, GSA will continue to give first consideration to the central business area.

(2) In keeping with the Rural Development Act and the policy of E.O. 13693 to increase efficiency and improve environmental performance in rural areas, GSA will prioritize locations in existing and planned rural town centers.

(3) GSA will consult with local officials to determine if there are any locality specific initiatives that should be given consideration when making Federal facility location decisions. At the same time, because of the size and complexity of large urban areas, including the number of Federal facilities located in these areas, some locality decisions will consider the availability of multiple competing location factors.

(4) GSA will also consider the impacts of investments by other Federal, State and local agencies when planning for the location of Federal facilities. This consideration may include consultation with, among others, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Transportation, and Environmental Protection Agency.

b. Sustainability and transportation infrastructure and plans.

(1) GSA will consider and seek locations that are compatible with existing and planned public transit and other transportation infrastructure, with an emphasis on locating in areas that would allow for multiple commuter options that promote transportation choice, and help reduce road congestion and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

(2) GSA's location planning and actions to identify sites for Federal facilities will consider and, where feasible be compatible with, sustainability priorities of states, local governments, and tribal communities.

(3) GSA will consider locations that allow employees to have easy access to multiple commuter options and to businesses and services so that employees can better balance work and personal obligations, are accessible to affordable housing, and consider where existing employees reside.

c. New and existing infrastructure and resources.

(1) GSA's location and planning actions will prioritize localities that have sufficient public infrastructure; including power, water, sewer, telecommunications (including access to broadband) to efficiently deliver services to meet all Federal needs.

(2) Locations that require new infrastructure to support Federal needs will only be considered if the new infrastructure is consistent with State and local infrastructure plans.

(3) GSA will prioritize the use of previously developed but currently unused or underused locations and seek to avoid development, through agency action, of "greenfields" (undeveloped land).

(4) GSA will continue to emphasize the potential of reusing historic assets and locating appropriate new facilities in historic districts.

d. Protection of the natural environment.

(1) GSA will comply with statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders, and consider regional and local climate preparedness priorities and adaptation plans.

(2) GSA will consider locations that optimize climate-resilient design and management elements.

7. Implementation.

a. Based on GSA's knowledge of local real estate markets and its analysis of the factors described above, GSA will develop program delineated areas for localities with a significant Federal space presence and share them with Federal agencies having new or continuing space needs in such localities.

b. Program delineated areas will not take into consideration agency mission specific location needs. Thus, when an agency submits to GSA a request for space, the agency will be instructed to develop its proposed delineated area based on GSA's program delineated area (to the extent one exists for the geographic area where the space is needed) as well as the agency's mission-specific location needs.

c. Where Program delineated areas do not exist, GSA must apply additional scrutiny to customers' location related requirements, particularly for projects whose delineated areas are outside the Central Business Area (CBA) or which are not well served by public transit. This should occur during the requirements development phase and be documented in the acquisition plan. Delineated areas, minimum requirements, and where applicable, relevant non-price factors, should reflect consideration of the factors identified in GSA Order ADM 1097.1. The Office of Leasing and the Urban Development Program are available to assist, including participating in conversations with our customer agencies and in consultations with local officials.

d. In compliance with all applicable laws, regulations Executive Orders and the guidance set forth in this Order, GSA will have final approval of delineated areas for space procurements where GSA is the procuring agency.

e. In the upcoming months, GSA will provide the following:

- Updated Leasing Desk Guide, Chapter 1: Requirements Development;
- Updated Request for Lease Proposal and Lease language, in order to improve our ability to seek locations that are compatible with existing and planned public transit and other transportation infrastructure;
- Updated Project Management And Acquisition Plan, in order to document the necessary factors that are considered in defining the delineated area; and
- Schedule for establishing the program delineated areas set forth in GSA Order ADM 1097.1.