

Public Buildings Reform Board - Public Meeting January 13, 2020, 9:00am - 11:00am 1800 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20405 -GSA Auditorium

AGENDA:

- 1. Overview of Federal Assets Sales Transfer Act (FASTA)
- 2. Board Approach / General Themes
- 3. Current Status Timeline
- 4. High Value Assets (HVA) List
- 5. Going Forward
 - a. Current HVA Round
 - **b.** Future Rounds
 - i. Time Frames
 - ii. Board Approach
- 6. Q & A

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

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PUBLIC BUILDINGS REFORM BOARD

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PUBLIC MEETING

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Monday, January 13, 2020

The meeting convened at 9:00 a.m., in the GSA Auditorium, 1800 F Street NW, Washington, DC, Angela Styles presiding.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

ANGELA STYLES

ADAM BODNER

TALMAGE HOCKER

MARY PHILLIPS

NICK RAHALL

DAVID WINSTEAD

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

9:04 a.m.

MS. STYLES: Thank you, everyone, for being here today. This is actually our fifth public meeting.

I'm Angela Styles. I'm one of the Board members.

You might notice that we're looking a little more relaxed than we have at our previous public meetings. We've made extraordinary progress since we were first stood up in May of 2019. We actually have an Executive Director, which you will find down here, Adam Bodner. Adam has brought on some terrific people to really help us get through what we're supposed to do as a Board and enjoy it, and I think make really good progress with what our mission and our goals are.

Just to point them out -- I can't actually see from here -- but we have Adam over here and Nancy, Kelly over there. I can see hands waving. Let's see, Courtney right here,

and Deborah over there. Deborah over there. So we have really terrific people onboard that are helping us out.

We actually have a website. It's www.pbrb.gov. You will find on the website the agenda for this. You will find the slides for this. But, more importantly, you will actually find the list of properties that we sent to OMB as well as a fairly extensive report that we prepared about our high-value asset list -- there we go; you can hear me now -- about the high-value assets that we recommended to OMB.

So, we are in a very different position than we were before, but I have to say we couldn't have gotten here without the tremendous help of GSA and Emily Murphy; the Public Buildings Commission, Dan Matthews. Let's see, Flavio. Flavio is over there. John and Ralph. These guys were critical to us really getting started, to us being able to hold our first public meetings, for us to be able to discover, look at, and understand the properties.

And obviously, they're going to be critical when we move forward with the disposal of the properties as well.

So, let's start. This is what we're going to talk about an overview of the process, our approach to what we have recommended in terms of the high-value assets to the Office of Management and Budget. General fees, and you will find these in our report as well; current status; what the actual properties are. You're going to hear Talmage and David talk through the properties in a little bit more flavor than maybe you would find in the report.

Talking about our next tranches, how we're going to approach our next tranches.

Contracting, because we're actually going to need some people to help us get there, help us assess different metropolitan areas, and things like that. And then, we'll open it up for questions and answers.

Next slide.

So, we've been through this a lot. I think the people in this audience probably know FASTA fairly well, but there are some themes here. We're trying to decrease the deficit by consolidating and selling federal buildings and other civilian real property.

We're actually looking at maximizing utilization rates, which is a lot harder, as we have come to find, than you would believe.

Actually understanding the utilization in a building like this or a building in Denver, or somewhere else, is actually a lot harder to do than you would believe. And the numbers, which we'll talk about some of this, the numbers that we get in on utilization aren't always very easy to use or compare from one agency or one building to another.

Selling and redeveloping high-value assets, it's really been critical to our approach, but that's actually what the purpose of FASTA is about, to get the best value -- and we'll keep talking about this -- best value for

the taxpayer and maximum return for the taxpayer.

We're trying to create incentives for the federal agencies where there may not have been incentives before, and really changing the approach, if you will, to facilitating and expediting the disposal of unneeded properties. That's the purpose of FASTA.

But I'm going to turn it over to Nick to kind of walk through some of the highlights.

MR. RAHALL: Thank you, Angela.

As we all know, the status quo prior to the enactment of FASTA was not working. A lot of people were working very hard, especially at GSA. All the stakeholders were trying to get the job done of reducing the cost to the federal taxpayer, but it just wasn't working.

Therefore, FASTA was created in a bipartisan fashion, drafted by a Republican Congress, a Republican Chair of the appropriate committee in the House Transportation and Infrastructure, and signed into law by President Obama prior to his departure. So, it is

bipartisan.

This Board is bipartisan. We love what we're doing. When you have a Wildcat and a hillbilly working with big city lawyers, when they can mix it up and work together as well as we have, then you know we love our work.

(Laughter.)

And we have had a tremendous outreach effort on Capitol Hill and we hope with all stakeholders. And that's why we appreciate each of you being here at this public meeting as well.

Our license is something that's rather broad in nature. We do consider properties and disposal methods other than those commonly used. What was used prior to FASTA had too many hurdles to overcome, too many laws to meet before properties went to disposal. So, one of the purposes of FASTA was to expedite that status prior to its enactment.

For example, FASTA enables us to allow properties to go straight to sale, skipping some of the typical disposal process steps.

Primarily, the PBC in all rounds is high-stepped or skirted-over. And in the high-value asset round, the McKinney-Vento Homelessness Act is also bypassed. So, this allows these assets, especially in an HBA list, to go to sale in a more expedited fashion.

The proceeds from the sale are then put into an asset fund, as we all know, to help pay for agency relocations, due diligence, and the planning processes to bring the properties to market. A great deal of flexibility is involved in this process as well. The proceeds ultimately go to the agencies to support their mission and maximize the return to the taxpayer.

So, this entire process has been one that has sought to secure not only more information from the federal agencies, but more accurate information than perhaps had been gathered in the past as well. And that's something that I feel we've been succeeding on. We have a great deal of talent on this Board, and you'll hear that during the course of the

property presentations this morning.

Thank you, Angela.

MS. STYLES: Mary?

MS. PHILLIPS: Oh, well, thank you, and welcome, everyone.

Just to talk about some of the themes and how we went about our work, we had, as many of you appreciate, a lot to accomplish in a very short amount of time. And so, our general approach was really to try to gather as much information from as many sources as possible as quickly as possible. And some of that was to help identify the properties, but we were also seeking to understand how agencies are managing their portfolios today and what the current disposal process is.

There was certainly a lot of
analytical work, trying to work with the FRPP, or
Federal Real Property Profile, which provided
some real challenges, which I'll talk about a
little bit more. But we also had a number of
meetings with the GSA which were extremely

helpful to us, and we had individual meetings
with a number of other agencies, as well as
holding four public meetings and having, as Nick
mentioned, a lot of meetings on Capitol Hill.
Also, at least one Board member visited every
single property.

From all of those touchpoints, we learned a lot. In fact, a number of properties that were candidates came off the list as a result of various conversations and learning more about the properties as it went along.

If we want to leave with one overall message, it's certainly reform. And reform is what FASTA is all about. Because FASTA really emphasizes the need to maximize the return to the taxpayer, one of the things we support reforming is how these particular properties are sold. We want to make sure that they are sold at their highest value, and in order to do that, we're recommending that each of the properties have its own marketing plan; that each property involves working with developers, and working with the

local communities, so that there is more certainty going forward for developers about what is going to be permissible by the community and what the community will support.

And we're all agnostic about how the properties are redeveloped, but we think, by doing some of this upfront work, the value of the properties won't be discounted because the developers are taking on so much risk. And so, the Board plans to participate in and remain involved in working alongside of GSA in the disposition of these properties.

There are other opportunities for reform as well. Transferring the FRPP from just a list of inventory of every single fence and building and structure that is on the federal government to more of a property management system would be extremely helpful in terms of trying to manage the portfolio.

As Angela alluded to for one example, there's no consistency about utilization rates.

But part of that has to do with the lack of

technology in most of the federal buildings. So, you're not tracking who's there at any given time. But there's just a lot of opportunity and there's inconsistency and inaccuracy in the data; it's not complete. Different agencies report information differently, and particularly when offices are shared, agencies will often use an average to come up with a number needed for a particular data element, rather than having really good actual information.

We want to work, particularly in our next round, by developing an integrated property management process across the federal government, and we think that the Board under FASTA has a real opportunity to do that.

And providing the right incentives for agencies, we certainly support allowing agencies to share in the proceeds from the sales of these properties. But, right now, the way our program is set up, the use of the proceeds is subject to the approval of the appropriators. So, we have a few constraints in that regard.

1 We faced a number of challenges.

Again, it was a very short timeframe. For the first four months, we had no staff. So, the five of us were trying to put a game plan together and trying to get set up as an independent agency, and Angela did a lot in terms of helping us do that. Again, we want to thank our staff and the staff of GSA.

I don't want to speak for my fellow
Board members, but, to me, this process is a
whole lot harder than I had expected. You know,
we had all heard anecdotes about the Cotton
Exchange and the Post Office, and different
properties. But those properties had all been
disposed of by the time FASTA was passed. And
so, our job was, I think, a lot harder.

There are serious limitations in trying to use the federal property profile to identify properties. We tried. It is very difficult. Properties that are unutilized or underutilized we thought would be a starting point, but those tend to be small. They tend to

be properties that the agencies planned to dispose of anyway; tend to not be high-value assets.

And then, we had properties such as Auburn, Washington, which is on our list, which includes eight warehouses, seven of which are vacant, which are all listed in the database as utilized. So, it just was very difficult to try to use the database to identify candidates.

The other thing is that GSA had asked the agencies each year for the past three years to submit projects that would be good projects to carry out under FASTA. And the agencies made a number of recommendations, but it wasn't a terribly robust list. And we really in the next round will be trying to do much more of a deeper dive with the federal agencies to cull through in a lot more detail potential sales, consolidations, et cetera.

Finally, I think we just want to continue to do more outreach in the next round, so that we can identify more properties.

Thank you.

MS. STYLES: Adam?

MR. BODNER: At this time, we've submitted our final recommendations to OMB and were awaiting their approval or disapproval. As you see on the chart, we're in that 30-day window before the last two yellow boxes there.

There's basically three key points at OMB on that, that we try to ensure form the basis of our recommendations. One, of course, is that the properties are sellable and they can be sold within the statutory timeframe. The second is that we've appropriately and accurately estimated all the costs to the government. And then, lastly, of course, that each property, the sale of which is in the best financial interest of the government. We think we did that, and that's what OMB is now evaluating.

So, assuming approval by May, the clock would start to tick on that 60 days that agency staff to provide their Reports of Excess to GSA, and then, all the various due diligence

aspects and other sales-related activities would commence upon that time.

So, I'm going to turn it over to David and Talmage to talk through the individual properties.

MR. WINSTEAD: Great. Great, Adam.
Thank you.

It's nice to be back in the GSA auditorium. I think it's had a little upgrade since the last time I was here.

But, as Mary mentioned, and Angela, we did this at all these sites, not all of us, we tried to be prudent and cost-effective, but we did go to all of them. And we're just going to talk in brief, and I think the charts give you a pretty good idea. So, I won't go into too much detail.

But the first asset is the Auburn

Complex, which is a GSA campus, basically. And

10 years ago when I was here at GSA, we were

looking at certain authorities in the Public

Buildings Act that would allow for the objective

that we are now recommending as the FASTA Board.

And this is 129-acre site in a prime industrial warehouse area. As Mary mentioned, it's got eight large warehouses, including a major administration building.

The campus has been for over 10 years or more underutilized and it's otherwise substantially where other substantial funding would be needed to repurpose. It's clear that there's about \$100 million in deferred maintenance and future CapX requirements. So, GSA has been all over this asset for a long time in terms of looking at it and trying to figure out what to do. The building sizes vary from a 1944 to 1985 year vintage. So, it's a fairly old complex. But that's the first asset.

And the second one is the Sacramento
Job Corps Center at 3100 Meadowview Road in
Sacramento, California. And this is one of the
Department of Labor Job Corps Centers. It's
interesting, there are a lot of these situations
around the country. And I suspect the Board in

future rounds will be dealing with others like this.

But this is located in South
Sacramento and is 170 acres, on which
approximately 80 to 85 acres are vacant,
underutilized property, providing an opportunity
for sale and redevelopment. And obviously, with
some of these assets, you can clearly see from
the zoning and sort of master plan standpoint
there are going to be uses in this one, from our
studies of it to date. Who knows, but it would
be probably a residential housing.

Why is it on the list? It's excess unutilized land and residential area. Clearly, it has much greater economic value, and redevelopment generates local taxes for the jurisdiction of Sacramento. And so, that's why we've put that on the list.

The next asset is the Southwestern

Fisheries Science Center in Pacific Grove,

California. And this is a 4-acre site with about

an 11,000-square-foot building on it that was

actually built to withstand even the greatest hurricane. I think it was both earthquakes and hurricanes, but the thing could withstand anything.

It's vacant. There happens to be a NOAA research person there that is sort of utilizing one little office in this complex. But it's an extremely valuable piece of property, and the views from the site are extraordinary. I don't know how else to describe it. But it's in a very, very valuable submarket, so that it's really justified to go on the list.

And as Mary mentioned, and Angela, we all went to these sites and the community is very supportive. Obviously, the congressional people are very supportive.

The next asset is the Information

Operations and Research Center. It's called the Shelley/New Sweden Park-n-Ride Lot in Idaho

Falls, Idaho. And this was a data center and part of the Department of Energy's larger Idaho

National Lab, or I guess they called it INL.

It's well-located and currently totally vacant. So, it has substantial cost savings in terms of moving it to sale, and looking at redevelopment would, obviously, reduce operations and maintenance as well.

The next asset is the Edison Job Corps

Center in Edison, New Jersey. It is a 27-acre

campus in Edison, New Jersey. And the parcel in

question, the surplus portion of this campus is

about 7 acres on Plainfield Avenue.

This Job Corps Center is actually quite active. They're still providing a lot of training. The Congressman, who's been in Congress for quite a number of years, the Board talked to about this. He wanted to ensure that it doesn't impact on the mission of the Department of Labor and the Job Corps training going on. And obviously, as you know, that part of New Jersey is really getting a lot of the outsourcing of operations from New York City, a lot of the banks and data centers in that regard. So, it does have value and I think we're on the

right track with carving off that 7 acres that's underutilized. And it could, obviously, be both high-value residential and industrial.

The next site is here close to home, and there are not too many close to home here in the Washington area. But it's a former Nike missile site in Gaithersburg, Maryland. You all are probably not aware of that, that there was a Nike missile site out there. But it is 13.7 acres of land in the heart of Montgomery County, surrounded by mostly residential, but some commercial development.

I think Adam and I were on this tour with a couple of staff. But it has some buildings on it that have some former activity in terms of looking at robot performance, and not necessarily technical, but, basically, driving these robots around a plywood course. So, it's kind of an interesting thing. Extremely underutilized. And NIST is the one that relates to this function, and the intent here is to move that activity, what remains of it, over to the

NIST Campus. So, this is, again, a highly underutilized, high-value asset and will provide the functions, that the NIST Campus will allow this to be sold.

I know a lot of people in this room know Montgomery County well, but it's not easy to do anything in Montgomery County in terms of redevelopment. But the residential character around it and Gaithersburg -- Gaithersburg is a separate municipality, has its own authority. So, whoever purchases this will obviously look to high-end residential, but they'll have to deal with Gaithersburg and Montgomery County.

And then, I'll turn it over to Talmage.

MR. HOCKER: Thank you, David.

Our next property is the USGS Campus in Menlo Park, California. This is the United States Geological Survey property. It's on 17 acres, and I believe it encompasses 17 buildings. It's a terrific location. It's probably one of the top five locations in the country. You are

within 3 miles of Google and Facebook and right in the middle of all of it.

It's unneeded property right now, and it's extremely high-valued. And we're selling this so that we can reduce the operating costs, and we're going to expedite the sale of the property.

The next property is in Harrisburg,
Pennsylvania. It's the Ronald Reagan Federal
Building. It's a 250,000-square-foot office
building. It's located in downtown, a couple of
blocks from the Capital. It's being vacated in
conjunction with the construction of a new
federal courthouse that's 1 mile away. And it's
an unneeded property, and it's going to reduce
the excess base that we have.

The next building is in Seattle. It's the Federal Archive and Record Center. It's another property that we visited. It's actually amazing to see the stacks of archives that we do have. The building is 73 years old. It is a warehouse facility, and it's surrounded by very

desirable residential neighborhoods. We're going to be reducing the redundancy and the overlap by selling this underutilized, high-valued asset.

The next property is in Laguna Niguel, California, the Chet Holifield Federal Building. This property has a large, but obsolete office building. It sits on 92 acres. I believe it's about a million square feet. It is huge and it is very obsolete and extremely expensive to operate. We're selling this -- it's just totally underutilized, and this should be a very, very good property for us, as we are going to maximize taxpayer return.

The next property is the VA hospital in Denver. This property is on 13 acres. Eight are going to be offered for sale. It's heavily built-up in a very, very valuable developing area of Denver. It's right outside Cherry Hills, and everything surrounding us is absolutely booming. The hospital, if it's not 100 percent vacant right now, it will be shortly.

Next is the WestEd Los Alamitos,

California, Department of Education. The property, it's in Orange County just south of Los Angeles, 20 miles south of Los Angeles. And their current tenant's lease is expiring. So, the property will be vacated and it's really unutilized property, excess space that we're going to be selling.

MS. STYLES: All right. Adam, are you going to talk about -- oh, I'm sorry, Talmage.

MR. HOCKER: Yes, I was just going to say that's the 12 properties.

MS. STYLES: All right. Adam?

MR. BODNER: Going forward and implementing the recommendations, obviously, GSA is the disposal agent for most of the federal government, and specifically for us and for these properties. They will be marketed under the PBRB brand and our logo. So, we will be partnering with GSA, participating in the various contract evaluations and handling external communications and stakeholder engagement, if you will, while GSA manages the transactions themselves.

I want to also draw a parallel in aspects about selling the properties. We think it will be similar to how GSA utilizes its

National Broker Contracts to run these procurements, where GSA intends to hire brokers by competing task orders among its Real Property Solutions BPA. And so, those firms with our oversight and GSA oversight will represent the government and run the different projects.

On the other side of the table, for those seeking to purchase the properties, GSA will have info on its website. We will have links to that on our website. And there will be a single point of contact at GSA for all the properties.

That individual is John Dugan. And if he can raise his hand for us? He's in the back right there. Thank you very much.

So, that's the initial plan for disposal of these high-value asset projects.

I want to go to future rounds. We owe a second report, which in the law is called "the

first report," to OMB not later than two years from now, with not more than \$2.5 billion in total transaction value. And there's a third report three years after that, a cap of \$4.75 billion in total transaction value.

We've got our work cut out for us.

Our approach to this, of course, we're hoping for the success in the high-value asset round to truly generate more projects and more proceeds to do more projects. And so, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, if you will.

The approach to this, to these subsequent rounds in terms of generating properties and projects, there's a couple of key things we want to talk about.

One is contract support for the Board also using GSA's Real Property Solutions BPA.

And so, there will be a task order coming out within those firms, hopefully, by the end of this month, or if not, then early February, to support us.

And then, in terms of generating

recommendations, we're looking for the private sector, for agencies. We really want to see a lot of recommendations and a lot of options to consider.

You'll see our website and our emails.

So, there's a lot of ways to get through to us

now, get in touch with us.

We will consider holding roundtables, panels, information sessions over the next couple of years to generate other ideas and talk through some strategies.

We expect to work extensively with the agencies. I know the agencies have done a lot of work in recent years on strategic planning and consolidation planning. And we want to leverage those efforts. Really, I think we can, with our authorities and money in our proceeds fund, we can really help agencies do some of the things that they want to do, but have been stymied to date by lack of resources. So, I think that's a real area where we're going to generate some projects from.

And then, we'll be doing data analysis as well, looking at FRPP data, seeing what we can generate in terms of owned properties in high-value markets. And maybe there's some targets there that we can dig into.

So, with that, that's our presentation. Like I say, we have a website; we have an email address. Please use them, get in touch with us.

We'll post this presentation on our website, and, yes, we're here for questions. Q&A now.

So, thank you very much.

MR. WINSTEAD: I might, just as a Board, I might just mention Adam covered the issue of roundtable panel information sessions. I really think, going beyond action and these assets, that reaching out to the commercial real estate community and investors broadly is an objective of the Board to get as many people involved.

Adam mentioned it, but just in the

last six months, Talmage was very active with a lot of commercial retail groups. I actually had a panel with ULI this last fall, and the No. 2 at OMB. And Adam -- no, no, no, Dan Matthews was on that panel. We reached out to BOMA and had a presentation for their National Advisory Council.

So, I just think it's a part of what we need to do as a Board, is continue to get interest in these assets and generate, hopefully, sales.

MS. STYLES: And I think, too, David,
I think what is really different about this is
our outreach. We met our deadlines and we worked
really hard to do that, but we also made sure
that we were reaching out to the Members of
Congress and we were reaching out to the
communities, the mayors. We oftentimes did that
through the Members of Congress.

So, we could better understand what it really meant for the communities here. Whether it's Menlo Park or whether it's the Auburn

Complex, or whether it's our discussions with

Frank Pallone about Edison, New Jersey, we are trying to come up with approaches that our not just maximizing money, if you will, or value for the taxpayer, but are really good things for the community. And that has been very different.

That's also what we intend to keep doing through the disposal process. Because we will find in a place like Auburn, as an example, that changes occurred to zoning, and if you work to get more certainty, as Mary was talking about, for a potential purchaser of the property as to what the zoning will be, by working with the local community, you really can increase the value.

or a place like Menlo Park, if you work through some of the issues, if you just have the discussion about affordable housing, right, you know, is it in our mission to work for affordable housing? Maybe. I mean, it's something that we're going to continue to talk about as a Board as we move forward, both with the disposal of these properties and, also, with

our next two sets of recommendations.

What is it that this Board can do to make that a different process, to make the federal government, working with these underutilized properties, to make it better for the communities where they're located?

And so, we've been working really hard on kind of having, both in the identification of properties and also the disposal or redevelopment of properties, a much more significant role than the federal government has had in the past. You can kind of agree or disagree with that, but we certainly think that it leads to a better result at the end of the day.

MR. BODNER: I think we have some microphones.

MS. STYLES: There are microphones over there. There we go.

PARTICIPANT: Good morning. Thanks for taking the time to provide the overview. It was very helpful.

Could you talk a little bit more about

the specifics of the schedule as it relates to OMB review and, after that, when you will see some of these properties come to market?

MS. STYLES: So, Adam, you're probably the best one for that.

MR. BODNER: So, OMB has until Sure. January 26th, which is 30 days from our submission. Our final submission was December So, OMB has to issue an approval or 27th. disapproval by January 26th, and that would start There's a 60-day period provided for the clock. in the law for agencies to, then, to submit their Reports of Excess to GSA. There's an undefined period after that for the GSA to accept the Report of Excess. So, that could be a month, three months, depending on the quality of the information provided to GSA, and maybe if there is any other data necessary to complete that due diligence package.

And then, at that point, the one-year clock starts, whereby all the properties have to be sold within one year, unless we ask OMB for a

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two-year, a second year extensive. And quite frankly, several of the properties, we already are planning to utilize the full two years to dispose of.

MS. STYLES: I will add that we fully expect OMB to approve our list of properties. I will say, however, that it is in whole, right?

So, if there's something that OMB does not like about our list and they disapprove it, this tranche of properties, high-value assets, is over, and we just move to the next one.

And so, this is a very important time period for us in terms of all of the work that we have done over the past several months to have our list. Certainly, we have worked fairly extensively with OMB and we're very, I think, positive that the list will be approved. But you do need to know that there is a possibility OMB can just say no, and then, it's over; the high-value property tranche is over.

MR. BODNER: As Angela mentioned, an earlier round, OMB could approve or disapprove in

whole or in part, but that "in part" is no longer a factor. So, even if they hate one of the properties that we proposed, they would have to disapprove the entire list.

MR. HOCKER: I would like to add I was on a site visit with Ralph and Nick Rahall in Lexington, Kentucky. And we went to a VA. Now the information that we had prior to our trip was a little bit outdated. We were under the assumption that we were going to have about 25 acres to deal with.

It's a nice location. You're about a mile away from where the best basketball in the country is played, Nick, the University of Kentucky Wildcats Rupp arena.

(Laughter.)

But, to that end, I expected to see a very old -- I had passed this VA for many years -- and I expected to see an old, dilapidated, falling-down VA that we were going to potentially scrape and sell all the land and relocate a VA and get them a new building, and let somebody

develop 100 acres in a great location.

When I got there, I found that there was a new Administrator that had been on the job for four or five years, and he's actively been opening parts and renovating parts of the VA that have been closed. We found that part of the back property that we thought we were going to be selling is under construction, about ready to open for low-income housing for veterans. We had another piece of property that we thought we could use, and it's being expanded for veteran housing as well.

And then, on the front portion of the property, they have the VA's version of a Ronald McDonald House, and it's fully funded and it should be under construction by now.

My point is, we have some fabulous people out there that work for the government, that work for the VA, that work for GSA. The properties are always well-maintained.

And I was glad to be on the visit. I was glad to see what we're doing, what we're

doing well. And kudos to the guys in Lexington.

But because we have visited all of these sites, we do have somewhat of a connection to them. And we passed on a number of sites, and we believe that the list that we've come up with is a very, very good, solid list of properties that need to be redeveloped, need to be sold. And it's been a great experience.

MS. STYLES: Question over there?

PARTICIPANT: Ms. Styles, you mentioned in your remarks that you're going to be focused on reducing the risk of these properties by working with the local community on maybe enhancing some of the entitlement processes or getting some more definition around that. Can you speak more about that? I think some more information on how the Board will do that?

MS. STYLES: Sure. I mean, there's a number of approaches and it's probably going to be different for each property. Some of it has already started with our initial outreach to the local communities. Some of it has started with

more detailed understanding of the zoning in places like where the Auburn Complex is in Washington.

There are also some unique transactional aspects that we haven't really tried very often, if at all, in the federal government in terms of payment after entitlement occurs. So, you know, an initial purchase of the property, but more money would come to the federal government once certain entitlements were reached, if you will. And so, we are looking at how to do that, which properties would be appropriate for that.

I guess Laguna, you might even want to talk about Laguna a little bit. I mean, Laguna, we've been working fairly extensively with Laguna Niguel, with the local government, understanding how they want to approach it, how they want to develop it.

At the end of the day -- and this opinion may vary for different Board members -- at the end of the day, it's not our job to get

the zoning, for example, changed, if you will, but it is our job, we think, to give greater certainty, if you will, to developers in terms of what that zoning will be. And so, we're going to have to work through what's that engagement; what kind of transactions can we have where the federal government will benefit from additional proceeds when entitlement hurdles are actually reached.

PARTICIPANT: Good morning.

I saw the December 27th submission online. I was really impressed. It has some fantastic information. It was on my way here that I saw it and I haven't been able to digest the whole thing. I was just wondering, I noticed there wasn't an estimated value for the properties. I just was wondering if you could comment on that. I imagine you have, must have an estimate to know that these properties will add up to the value.

(Laughter.)

MS. STYLES: Right. We were careful

to make sure that the group of properties fit within our statutory constraints of 500 to 750. And frankly, part of the problem here is this entitlement issue, right? And so, if you're closer to being entitled, if you've gotten a zoning change, if you have more certainty on environmental issues, the value is higher. And we're not there yet. And so, there's a lot of --it is a very difficult thing, and we didn't want to put a marker on any of the properties, but we were very cautious to make sure that we were fitting within what the statute asked us to do.

PARTICIPANT: All right. Thank you.

MS. STYLES: Sure.

And I did want to add, we were just talking about this actually. A big piece of this for a city like Laguna Niguel is the ad valorem, right? So, they're getting nothing right now from the federal government versus actually having residential/commercial development. It's a huge benefit for the local communities, which is part of the reason that they want to work with

us through this, because they have Laguna Niguel, a really ugly building sitting there, I mean on a very large piece of property that they would love to be able to use the property for something else and, also, benefit from the tax base as well.

PARTICIPANT: Hi. A couple of observations and recommendations, I guess.

Being a long-time observer of this process and, in fact, a somewhat frustrated participant in it over the years, I want to applaud the Board for what I would characterize as a newfound sensitivity to what "underutilized" means. Okay. I know over the years we had a clear understanding of what "unutilized" was -it was empty; let's go dispose of it -- as opposed to "underutilized"; somebody is working there. So, really, kudos to the Board on having fleshed-out what I think has been a hurdle over the years to achieving some real meaningful profitability on these dispositions of underutilized assets.

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underutilized, I would hope in the tranches going forward, two and three, that you are able to work with OMB beyond what might be just a list, for the sake of proceeding, but work with OMB on what the metrics of an underutilized asset look like. Okay? There are a number of ways of getting there. And metrics, of course, that would tie into the probability of achieving entitlements or not achieving entitlements. A way to objectively look at that, as opposed to subjectively, I think is an area that you might stand to realize some progress with the OMB folks.

But, really, this has all been pretty positive. I know when I first read the legislation, to me, the "aha word" was "underutilized". And I think you're on the trail.

MS. PHILLIPS: So, OMB, and I think with GSA's input, is doing some work on utilization rates and was required to. So, some of that work is being done in terms of particularly for office buildings, what the appropriate measure should be for utilization.

And some other work was done on warehouses, which is a little more difficult because the warehouse inventory can ebb and flow and different warehouses have different types of inventory. And so, that's a little more difficult. But if it's empty, it's empty, right?

So, some of that is being done. I think, even when we have the measures, it's still going to be difficult because we don't have the technology in place to actually be able to measure the utilization, like GSA has here, where GSA knows what the occupancy rate is at any given time, how many of the desks are being used. And because it had such good information, it would consolidate its personnel from another building here. And if we had that across the government, I think we would find tremendous opportunities for consolidation.

MS. STYLES: I would even say where agencies like have the information, they tend to be a little reluctant to turn it over as well.

My favorite one was this government call center

that we walked into that I think they told us they had 500 FTEs there, and there might have been five cars in the parking lot.

(Laughter.)

And there might have been 15 people working that day, right, in the middle of the week. And they also had the technology that they were logging people in and out. And so, there is something.

I mean, it was the nicest call center
I've ever seen; public, private, doesn't matter,
it was a really nice call center that they had
built. And they obviously didn't want to move
out of it, right? So, they weren't going to
change that. If they were going to have to move,
they wanted a nice space.

And so, there are a lot of reasons that agencies are fairly reluctant, even where they have the technology. And a lot of places, frankly, don't have the technology. But there's definitely some push and pull on this utilization issue and how much space the agencies want and

what they want to save it to use it for in the future, and what they think their mission is.

MR. RAHALL: I might just comment in a general way about our relationship with OMB.

In the beginning, we had trouble even getting into their offices. But now, we not only get in their office, but they come to our office for briefings.

So, in the beginning, I was beginning to wonder if we were even on their radar screen.

But, today, my feeling is, my trust between our relationship has been built up a great deal to where I feel we're not only -- I mean, at least we're on their radar screen, maybe not at the top.

And I suspect they've been hearing from both sides of the aisle on Capitol Hill that Congress wants this Board to succeed. OMB and we now I think are on the same page and really want to see our work succeed.

PARTICIPANT: I have a question also.

So, one of the things I found fascinating was

your story about how you went out to the site and you had been briefed or you had been given information about what was going on at the site, and it turned out to be totally wrong. And I know that one of the facets that I think is exciting to all of us was the greater attention on improving the federal real property profile. Clearly, this was an example where it was out of line with what the reality was.

I'm wondering if that is a common thing that you found. And I'm also wondering whether or not you've seen any serious efforts on the part of GSA and the agencies to improve the quality of the data in that federal profile, not only the quality of the data in it, but the ease of assessing the data. Because I've gone out to it several times and I've tried to look up underutilized property or put in just indicators to make things pop up, and I've just been frustrated when I do that.

MS. STYLES: Yes, it's hard. The database is a little hard from outside the wall,

you know, for the public. It's just a big, chunky, clunky, if you will, database.

But I'll tell you that the folks at GSA have been working really hard to at least improve the mechanics of it, but it's still, you know, junk in is going to be junk out in terms of the data that's going in.

I think it was interesting to us like walking into federal agencies initially to talk to them about the Board and the properties. They had been all excited when the legislation was enacted in 2016, and then, it took us -- what? -- three years to really walk in their door. So, I do think it will start to improve and we'll also have recommendations for greater improvement to make it really a portfolio management system.

But you're not going to start seeing that yet.

I mean, we were just so focused on the high-value assets. We saw a lot of the problems. We talked about some of them in our report. But, hopefully, that's where we can really make improvements going forward.

And I do think you see a lot of the agencies really willingly participating with us. I mean, they want to find ways to redevelop, better use, dispose of a lot of the assets that they have. And so, once we show some successes with a couple of agencies, I also think it will breed more participation from the other agencies as well.

MS. PHILLIPS: And the database for us was sort of a starting point, but, then, there was no substitute for taking a deeper dive into each of those properties to find out what was really going on. And there was no substitute for actually, as Talmage's example showed, going out and seeing them.

MR. HOCKER: I know you're done. Go ahead.

(Laughter.)

PARTICIPANT: Just a "by the way."

Underutilization report, and that is the whole area of functional visibility, economic obsolescence. The Nike site is a key example of

that. The building, I'm sure, is not represented as fully utilized. The property is totally underutilized.

MR. WINSTEAD: And functions.

PARTICIPANT: Yes, right. Right.

MR. WINSTEAD: All right. I just want to mention the Congressman mentioned the relationship with OMB and all of our effort. I mean, obviously, the staff has been very engaged. I think we've gained a lot of cooperation, but it is high up the stream at OMB and it's at the usual GSA budget analyst level as well.

But, to your point, I think we're going to continue to work a lot, as we generate reports, as we help them understand candidly markets and value that can be obtained, all of which goes into our fund and, ultimately, goes back appropriated to the federal agencies whose property was surplused.

I was here for three years, and it really wasn't incentivized. There was no way really to get people to stand up and say, "Let's

get rid of that old lab because it's barely utilized," because they wouldn't get the money back. It went into the Treasury to balance the budget.

So, I think the Board's fund will be very helpful in continuing to get attention, both at the agency level, which would feedback to OMB, as well as the Board.

And that matrix issue is something we've talked about a lot. I think it's fair to say, Angela, at least -- we started out wanting to get that matrix back, right? But we're still a work-in-progress, I think.

MR. HOCKER: I think we're trying to develop some credibility within all of the agencies, but not just within the agencies, but with the development and acquisitions communities from coast to coast. A big question we get a lot is, are you guys going to operate like the RTC? So, we've spent a lot of time trying to figure out how the RTC operated and what we can do to become really credible, because we're going to be

coming out. Right now, we have 12 properties coming out. That's not a lot. But we've been led to believe that OMB would like to see us come out with a whole lot more properties in our next tranche.

So, when that happens, the community, the purchasing community, is going have to have confidence that we're going to be able to deliver what we're saying we're going to deliver. And we're building up that credibility right now. And everything we are doing is to benefit the taxpayer. We're really trying to get these properties that are excellent locations and underutilized and get those in the hands of the people that really need to have them.

MR. WINSTEAD: One comment that I just want to be clear on. I think, as we move forward, obviously, there's a lot of work here with these assets that we're reporting. But I think a lot of it is going to come from the private sector, you know, people who are doing commercial/residential development around the

country that happen to know that adjacent to them, through their surveys or their zoning council, or whatever, there's a chunk of federal property next to their development.

If they look carefully over a period of time or make inquiries and find out that there is really no function there, they're locating to another campus, it's going to take five years, I think that the Board is going to end up hearing a lot from the commercial real estate community around it. It will be, will they on their own identify assets that are underutilized that they'll tell the Board staff? But we wait to see that, but I think that's really where potentially a lot of future action will come from.

participant: For the last question, just recognizing the complexity of some of these 12 properties in a simplified, sort of fee simple kind of process where the government gets out of it completely, has there been some thought of or can you share the Board's sentiment on the next iteration and maybe making some of these sales to

maximize value more complex, maybe adding a public-private partnership component to it where the government stays in the deal longer, or a ground lease component, or some of the other agency -- DoD, for example, has an enhanced-use lease program where they'll aggressively pursue additional property through alternative methods. So, I would be curious to hear what the Board's sentiment is on that.

MS. STYLES: So, yes, the problem with the first tranche of assets, the high-value assets, is it does have to be sold. And so, if you look at our statute, our first tranche really does have to involve the sale. That doesn't mean we're not looking at unique ways to do that and how we approach that in the next two tranches of properties.

MR. BODNER: Thanks, everybody.

MS. STYLES: All right. That's it?

All right. Thank you so much.

(Whereupon, at 10:02 a.m., the meeting

was adjourned.)

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In the matter of: Public Buildings Reform Board

Before: US GSA

Date: 01-13-20

Place: Washington, DC

was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

Court Reporter

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