



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Planning Directors Technical Advisory Committee (PDTAC)
Members, Chief Administrative Officers Committee (CAOs)

FROM: Paul DesJardin, Director of Community Planning and Services

SUBJECT: Defining “Central Business Areas (CBAs) to Support GSA Federal Facilities Location Decisions

DATE: September 7, 2016

BACKGROUND

In October 2015, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) adopted ADM 1097.1 “Incorporating Principles of Sustainability, Economic Development and Efficiency into GSA Business Practices and Location Decision-making.” The directive builds on Executive Order 13693, “Planning for Federal Sustainability in the Next Decade” (“E.O. 13693”), which requires federal agencies to increase efficiency and improve their environmental performance.

ADM 1097.1 outlines GSA’s policy for promoting efficiency, economic development, and sustainability in location decisions for Federal facilities, specifically by requiring that those decisions:

- Support local and regional planning and economic development goals
- Support local sustainability and transportation infrastructure and plans
- Prioritize location decisions in areas that will be well-served by new and existing infrastructure
- Include areas which ensure the protection of the natural environment

LOCAL CBA DESIGNATION PROCESS

With this new national policy, GSA has proposed working with local governments across the country to identify priority places for locating federal facilities: “CBAs.” As defined by GSA in the May 2000 Urban Policy Update publication, “CBAs” (“*Central Business Areas*” or “*Centralized Community Business Areas*”) are:

“...the general areas in which Federal agencies must give first consideration to locating. Both terms refer to specific geographic areas in cities and towns that the local government designates as main business districts. “Central business district” is another term for these areas. The Federal government does not direct the designation of a central business area.”

Metropolitan Washington is a particularly complex federal ‘market’: GSA’s National Capital Region (NCR) portfolio consists of 93 million square feet of owned and leased space in more than 880 government-owned and leased facilities in the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Suburban Maryland.

GSA staff has met frequently with COG senior management, and has briefed COG's Planning Directors and Chief Administrative Officers committees on the details of ADM 1097.1. The initial focus for designating local CBAs has been COG's adopted Activity Centers because they are based upon priority places designated by local governments for existing development and future growth in local comprehensive plans.

COG staff performed a preliminary analysis of the GSA portfolio database and determined that more than 90 percent of the square footage of owned and leased GSA space is currently located within Activity Centers located throughout the region. This analysis is based on the COG/TPB Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) which most-closely approximate the Activity Centers.

GSA staff also briefed members of the Greater Washington Board of Trade's Council of Economic Development Officials (CEDO) at their May 2016 meeting, as well as at a joint Planning Directors and CEDO work session in July, during which members of both committees discussed the CBA/Activity Centers relationship in greater detail.

To complete designation of proposed CBAs in metropolitan Washington:

- Based upon local comprehensive plans and zoning, and leveraging the adopted Activity Centers as a framework, local planning directors and their staff will designate boundaries for their proposed CBAs.
- Planning departments are strongly encouraged to coordinate this work with their local economic development staff to focus on identifying Centers that are the most appropriate for primarily siting federal office facilities.
- The proposed deadline for completing these draft boundary delineations is fall of 2016.
- Local planning departments are requested to share maps (electronic GIS files are preferred) of their proposed CBAs with COG staff to promote consistency. COG's Planning Directors will review a composite map of the proposed local CBAs.
- COG's Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) Committee will concur on the draft composite regional map of locally-defined CBAs.
- Local governments will be permitted to make annual updates to their designated CBAs by submitting those changes to GSA for review prior to the end of the calendar year.

Attachments: ADM 1097.1
Activity Centers map