

FEDERAL REAL PROPERTY ASSOCIATION

Event Summary: Panel Discussion with the General Services Administration

December 4, 2018 – Gensler, Washington, D.C.

The Federal Real Property Association (FRPA) held a panel discussion with General Services Administration (GSA) leadership on December 4, 2019 at Gensler in Washington, D.C. GSA is the nation's largest public real estate organization and provides workspace for more than 1.2 million federal workers through its Public Buildings Service (PBS) (GSA.gov).



From left: Stuart Burns, Allison Azevedo, Joanna Rosato, and Laura Stagner.

The panelists discussed how the GSA is engaging industry stakeholders to enhance all aspects of its public buildings function including portfolio management, leasing, design and construction, and facilities management. Panelists included **Allison Azevedo** (Assistant Commissioner for Leasing), **Joanna Rosato** (Regional Commissioner of Mid-Atlantic Region 3), and **Laura Stagner** (Assistant Commissioner for Project Delivery). The event was moderated by **Stuart Burns** (Assistant Commissioner, Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement). Panelist bios can be found on the [FRPA website](#). Event highlights are below.

Leasing Focus

The GSA's leased inventory recently surpassed the federally owned inventory. Allison Azevedo discussed GSA's "lease cost avoidance" strategy for expiring leases. In FY 2018, the GSA developed a strategy based on the existing inventory and how it would be executed in FY 2019 and beyond. There is 100 million rentable square feet of GSA's leased portfolio which is expiring over the next five years. GSA evaluated existing opportunities for cost savings by focusing on the highest value leases, which make up 77% of all lease value. One challenge is access to capital and lump sum funding. Policies were written when capital was not available to landlords. New policies and Request for Lease Proposal (RLP) language takes advantage of available market incentives. The goal is to save the taxpayer money in real estate transactions by focusing on high-value transactions.

Joanna Rosato described two examples that demonstrate the lease cost avoidance strategy:

- **Department of Health and Human Services:** The GSA implemented a total workplace solution for the Department's 12 unique agencies. The lease process took just 5 months for a Department with over 80,000 square feet of space. The deal resulted in a 20% reduction in space and significant cost savings.
- **Department of Labor:** The GSA was able to transition this prospectus-level lease to a total workplace solution. While the lease was awarded in May 2018, lease requirements are evolving. Eighteen agencies are now housed under this lease.

Opportunities

Laura Stagner discussed upcoming opportunities and trends in federal real property. Federal agencies will soon require new design standards to meet current state needs and accommodate potential future needs. Modifications to existing buildings are a way to increase space usability. Another is to increase furniture flexibility. Agencies seek smaller pieces that can be reconfigured. The goal is to meet mission needs now and in the future.

SPEAKER SPOTLIGHT

Stuart Burns (moderator) became the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Portfolio Management and Customer Engagement (PT) for the United States Public Buildings Service (PBS) in July 2015. As Assistant Commissioner, Mr. Burns is responsible for managing a real estate portfolio of 371 million square feet, which includes 8,700 owned or leased assets and 564 historic properties.

Allison H. Azevedo serves as the Assistant Commissioner over the National Office of Leasing for GSA PBS. In July 2016, she relocated to Washington D.C. to lead the Office of Portfolio Management and Office of Leasing in the National Capital Region (NCR).

Joanna Rosato is the PBS Regional Commissioner serving the Mid-Atlantic Region of the GSA. As Regional Commissioner in the Mid-Atlantic Region, Joanna manages PBS operations for the state of Delaware, Maryland and Virginia (excluding the metropolitan DC area counties), New Jersey (southern), Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

Laura Stagner is the Assistant Commissioner in the Office of Project Delivery at GSA. In this position, Laura oversees the successful execution, implementation, and continual improvement of the capital and small project delivery programs for the PBS, including related performance metrics necessary to support timely, cost effective, and satisfactory project completion.