

Good Neighbor Program

april 2005
issue 20

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The smallest patch of green to arrest the monotony of asphalt and concrete is as important to the value of real estate as streets, sewers and convenient shopping.

James Felt, Former Chairman, NYC Planning Commission

●●●●● REGIONAL NEWS

SITES & DESIGNS

GSA Holds Public Space Workshop in Sioux Falls

On February 8th, GSA's Rocky Mountain regional office convened a public workshop to discuss the design of public spaces around a planned building for the U.S. Attorneys office in Sioux Falls. The new build-to-suit lease building will be adjacent to a beautiful Richardsonian Romanesque federal courthouse built in 1895, just a half block off the busy Phillips Street restaurant district. The street between the two buildings will be vacated for security setbacks, so the workshop focused on how the street can be designed to create an attractive, active public space that supports city improvement plans, creates an outstanding workplace for the U.S. Attorneys, and bolsters long-term marketability for the developer. Project for Public Spaces (<http://www.pps.org/>) facilitated the discussion, with the U.S. Attorneys, the federal district and bankruptcy courts, the U.S. Marshals Service, city planners, Main Street Sioux Falls (<http://www.dtsf.com/>), local arts organizations, and project designer Koch-Hazard-Baltzer all participating. Contact: Janet Preisser (303) 236-8000 x5248.

Collaboration on the Border in San Ysidro

On March 3rd and November 9th in San Diego CA, GSA's Pacific Rim region convened key project meetings for the design of a \$100 million expansion project at the San Ysidro border station. Both meetings included the project's "community representative committee" that is providing community input to the project team. Located between downtown San Diego and Tijuana, the San Ysidro border station is the busiest in the world. Since it bisects an established and growing residential and business community, GSA's project team is seeking ways to develop the project to meet the Department of Homeland Security's needs while also supporting community goals to improve downtown cohesiveness. GSA created the committee to allow the community to 'see into' the design process; provide input to the project; and help disseminate project information back to committee members' respective organizations. Members include city planning, transportation, business, and community development organizations. Although many challenges lay ahead, this ap-

Urban Development/
Good Neighbor Program
Office of the Chief Architect
US General Services Administration
1800 F Street, NW Room 3341
Washington, DC 20405
Tel: 202-501-1856
Fax: 202-501-3393
<http://www.gsa.gov/goodneighbor>

proach is serving as a model for ways to get meaningful public input on complex federal projects. Additional information about the project and the area can be found at the project's website (<http://www.gsa.gov/sanysidro>). Contact: Steve Baker, (619) 557-7133.

U.S. Courthouse in Wheeling Captures *Buildings Magazine* Award

In its October issue, *Buildings* magazine highlighted the Wheeling, WV Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse Annex as the winner of the 2004 New Construction Award in the 'Addition to Existing Facility' category. The New Construction Award honor projects with excellence in aesthetics, functionality, originality, use of materials, sensitivity to site, construction program, and considerations of life safety. The new annex is a sensitive \$29 million addition to a historic Beaux Arts courthouse. Now managed by GSA's Mid-Atlantic region, the building was designed by the architectural firm of Goody Clancy and shows how creative solutions can preserve the past while providing for modern federal needs (<http://www.buildings.com/Articles/detailbuildings.asp?articleID=2131>). Contact: Kyle Assed, (215) 446-4772.



Courtesy GSA. Frank Ooms, Photographer.

GSA Dedicates New U.S. Courthouse in Seattle

In September, GSA's Northwest/Arctic Region hosted the official dedication of the new U.S. Courthouse in downtown Seattle. Over 400 people attended the public ceremony, at which GSA Administrator Stephen Perry gave the keynote address. The building provides a beautiful one-acre public plaza that is framed between the building's high and low-rise components (<http://www.djc.com/news/co/11161364.html>). Designed by landscape architect Peter Walker (http://www.pwpla.com/prj_project.php?prjid=17), the plaza provides a valuable oasis for the Denny Triangle neighborhood, with seating at the site's sunniest locations and generous greenery that softens perimeter security features. At the building's base, a publicly accessible café provides an amenity for building occupants and the neighborhood alike. The \$170 million building was designed by NBBJ and will earn the LEED 'Silver' rating. Contact: Stan Catchpole at (253) 931-7865 or Story Swett at (253) 931-7796.

National Park Service Opens on Omaha Riverfront

GSA's Heartland Region, the National Park Service, members of Nebraska's congressional delegation and the City of Omaha celebrated the grand opening of the Park Service's newly constructed Midwest Regional Headquarters this past summer. The leased building serves as an initial anchor to the riverfront's burgeoning redevelopment. As reported here previously, GSA's regional office convened a public waterfront development workshop, facilitated by Project for Public Spaces, and used input from more than 100 participants to help shape its request for proposals (<http://www.pps.org/omaha/>). Among other key criteria, prospective developers were evaluated on how their proposals supported the city's larger waterfront goals. As built, the building helps to further these goals and provides the Park Service with an outstanding venue for its interpretive programs, along the Lewis and Clark Trail (<http://www.ci.omaha.ne.us/departments/mayor/EconDev/NPS.htm>). Built on a brownfield, the building also is slated to receive the coveted LEED *Gold* rating from the U.S. Green Buildings Council. Contact: Jim Ogden, (816) 926-7217.

EPA Plans Move to Mixed Use Development in Arlington

Last Spring, GSA's National Capital Region signed two leases totaling 405,177 square feet for the Environmental Protection Agency at One and Two Potomac Yard, in Arlington, Virginia. One and Two Potomac Yard will be part of a mixed-use development that will include 2.8 million square feet of office space, a 625-room hotel, 100,000 square feet of neighborhood retail, and approximately 1,000 residential units. EPA requires that its office locations feature sustainable design and green building concepts. Both buildings will earn the LEED *Silver* rating and should be complete early next year. More information about the development and its urban design guidelines can be found at <http://www.crescent-resources.com/potomacyard/devplan.asp>. Contact: Mike McGill, (202) 205-1624.



Courtesy GSA. M. Thomas, Photographer.

Have You Seen the New Courthouse in Erie?

GSA's Mid-Atlantic regional office was honored with a 2004 Construction Award by the Erie County Historical Society (ECHS) for the new federal courthouse complex in Erie, Pennsylvania. The award recognizes GSA's outstanding contributions to historic preservation and the community of Erie. The recently opened complex includes renovation of a historic Federal Building and Courthouse (1937); adaptive reuse of the historic Erie County Library Building (1899); preservation of the front portion of the Isaac Baker & Sons clothing store (1946); and construction of a new annex and glass connector to link the buildings into a cohesive modern complex (2004). Designed by Philadelphia-based DPK&A (<http://www.dpka.com/works-details.php?id=9>), the complex is the fruit of many years of hard work by the project team. It establishes a high-water mark for creative project development, meeting modern needs through clever reuse of existing resources. Contact: Gina Waring, (215) 446-2895

●●●●● REGIONAL NEWS COLLABORATION WITH CLIENTS & COMMUNITIES

GSA "Meets and Greets" in Tacoma

In January, GSA's Northwest/Arctic Region began informal discussions with local stakeholders in Tacoma, Washington. Although no specific project is in the works, the group met to get to know one another, share ideas and future plans, and establish a foundation for future collaboration. The meeting grew out of a discussion between GSA and the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce. Both simply decided that it would be helpful to sit down with a range of downtown stakeholders to share information and see how they might support one another's goals. Already home to GSA's successful Union Station redevelopment project (http://www.vrseattle.com/html/vrlist.php?cat_id=201), Tacoma has much to build on, and this type of brainstorming session can help ensure future success. Contact: Stan Catchpole, (253) 931-7865.

GSA Opens on Broadway, in San Diego

On November 22nd, GSA's San Diego Office and the U.S. District Court celebrated an important joint effort that has emerged as a best practice in GSA's efforts to be a "Good Neighbor." GSA's Pacific Rim Regional Administrator Peter G. Stamison cut a block long ribbon opening the Broadway Storefront Improvement project, a project spearheaded by GSA Senior Property Manager Pete Watson and U.S. District Court Chief Judge Marilyn Huff, with the assistance of Peter Hall, President of the Center City Development Corporation. This project transformed a blank brick wall at the federal courthouse into an active 'storefront' art display that showcases the universal ideals of "freedom, liberty, justice, and equality." The project was one of several public space improvement ideas that emerged at an August 2001 community workshop and have been implemented at the federal complex. Similarly, for an adjacent planned new building, GSA is now completing design work with a Mayor-appointed advisory committee that helped to ensure unprecedented community input into the design of a project that was initially controversial. Contact: Pete Watson, (619) 557-5337.



Courtesy GSA

Transit Expansion Opens Door to Mixed-Use at Denver Federal Center

On November 2nd, GSA was given a unique opportunity to transform the Denver Federal Center (DFC) into a thriving area of new mixed-use development, as Denver voters approved a referendum to fund expansion of the Regional Transportation District (RTD) with the addition of six new rail lines and an improved bus system. The RTD Fastracks plan (http://www.rtd-denver.com/fastracks/west_corridor.html) includes a west corridor light rail line with a stop at the DFC, the largest concentration of federal workers outside of Washington, DC. The rail station would be located at the center of the DFC, and would integrate existing bus lines currently isolated on the perimeter of the complex. GSA has worked cooperatively with the RTD and the city of Lakewood to create a conceptual master plan of the

proposed transit stop that envisions nearly three million square feet of office space, 574,000 square feet of retail and restaurants, and 1,600 homes that could one day fill the 235 acre site. In addition to presenting an opportunity for redevelopment and drastically enhancing transit choice for federal workers, this project will lead to the cleanup of contaminated former industrial sites. It represents an important opportunity for GSA to partner with the private sector to benefit federal clients and their community. Contact: Lisa Morpurgo, (303) 236-8000 x5039.

GSA Teams Up With BID in Norfolk, Virginia

Last year, GSA's Mid-Atlantic Region signed a new services contract with the Downtown Norfolk Council (<http://www.downtownnorfolk.org/>). The contract provides cleaning services to the area around three federal buildings, which are in Norfolk's newly revitalized Granby Street corridor. The Council has played a leading role in the area's improvement. GSA's property manager, Tim Hile, found that the contract would provide services that improve the working environment for his client agencies at a price that is fair and reasonable to the government. Moreover, the contract discussions between the Council and GSA also led to enhanced coordination on broader downtown issues. As the Council's Executive Director, Cathy Coleman, notes, "Federal building security officers and our own security personnel are working together much better now, sharing information. As valuable as our contract with GSA is, this type of coordination is just as important for keeping the neighborhood a great place to do business." Contact: Tim Hile, (757) 641-6914.



REGIONAL NEWS

ACTIVE PUBLIC BUILDINGS

We Ought to Be in Pictures

What do *Ferris Buehler*, *Traffic*, *Ghostbusters II*, and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* have in common (Hint: it's not Kevin Bacon)? They are among dozens of movies that were filmed on location at a GSA historic building. GSA's Center for Historic Buildings has developed a nationwide program to encourage the use of its historic buildings in film and television productions. The intent of the program is to support the stewardship of these valuable historic resources. The program creates opportunities for the public to experience the buildings through film and the revenue earned through the program is reinvested in the historic inventory. If you want to find out how to film at a GSA building, or if you are a film buff just curious to see the complete list of locations, you can get more information at this link: <http://www.gsa.gov/filmlocations>.

U.S. Courthouse Glows Pink for Good Reason

For the fourth October in a row, the Alfonse M. D'Amato U.S. Courthouse in Central Islip, New York, was awash in a pink glow to observe the beginning of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Northeast and Caribbean Region Property Manager Tom Fernandez successfully coordinated this year's participation in the Estee Lauder Companies' Global Landmarks Illumination Initiative that helps focus public attention on breast cancer awareness and research. The courthouse joined a number of internationally renowned landmarks that were enlisted in the cause, including the Empire State Building; Niagara Falls; Constantine's Arch, in Rome; Japan's Tokyo Tower; the Auckland Skytower in New Zealand; The Grand Hotel, Karl Johansgt in Oslo, Norway; La Fortaleza in San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Table Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa. The courthouse was lit in pink at sundown on October 1 and remained illuminated until daybreak, October 2. Contact: Renee Miscione, (212) 264-0424.

A Great Downtown Idea

In a recently published story about the value of sharing institutional facilities for after-hours public use, the *Downtown Idea Exchange* (<http://www.downtowndevelopment.com/dix.php>) asked readers what type of institution they would most like to see "play a more prominent partnership role in downtown." Partnering with govern-

ment buildings was high on the list, right after the opportunities presented by bank and university facilities. Like these facilities, federal buildings in many communities have public plazas, monumental atriums, auditoriums, or conference facilities that can be used to host public programs. Making public use of federal facilities can be a tremendous resource for an organization and a great amenity for GSA's client agencies, in keeping with the Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act. Contact: Frank Giblin, (202) 501-1856.

Federal Building Showcases Exhibit on Desegregation

From August 16th through October 15th, GSA's Southeast Sunbelt region partnered with the National Archives and Records Administration, the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History, and the Atlanta Public School system to present an exhibition on the legal landmarks leading to school desegregation. The exhibit, entitled "Evidence of the Journey: The Legacy of Brown v. Board of Education in the Southeast," was hosted at the Richard B. Russell Federal Building and Courthouse in Atlanta. The display coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision in the Brown case, and focused on the role that Southeast District Court cases played before and after the decision. Among the historic objects on display were landmark legal documents prepared by Civil Rights proponents, including Thurgood Marshall. "Evidence of the Journey" was free and open to the public, and is a great example of how federal spaces can be used for displays that address important public issues and their connection to the mission of our federal agency clients. Contact: Teressia Blair, (404) 331-7775.

Reagan Building Continues, Builds on, Exciting Public Programs

For the fifth consecutive summer, the Woodrow Wilson Plaza at the Ronald Reagan Building/International Trade Center became a lively center for lunchtime entertainment each weekday. Daytime programming for the "Live! On Woodrow Wilson Plaza" series included modern dance, a talent search competition, standup comedy, and reptile shows, building on past success that last year won the agency a Downtown D.C. Business Improvement District Momentum Award for attracting visitors to the downtown area. Each Friday and Saturday evening the "Live" series hosted the Capitol Steps, after which the plaza was transformed into "Air," a nightclub under the stars that kept the plaza buzzing into the early morning. This past summer also marked the opening of Aria, a contemporary Italian trattoria that is located on Wilson Plaza, with seating both inside and outside. These many activities make the Reagan Building an excellent model for other public buildings, as it successfully encourages street life and public uses while maintaining security and functionality. Contact: Thomas Otto, (202) 205-3054.



Courtesy Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center

●●●●● NATIONAL NEWS

GSA, Main Street Study Released

In December, GSA and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center released '*Measuring the Economic Impact of Federal Facilities on Central Business Districts*', a study that examines the financial impact of federal building operations in downtown areas. In looking at three test sites in Athens, GA, Baltimore, MD, and Springfield, IL, the study found that federal workers spend an average of \$5,041 each year in the central business districts where they work. The study further suggests that the presence of federal agencies in downtown areas provides considerable economic benefit for the downtown in the form of purchases by visitors, as well as agency rent payments, purchases and service procurements. Those agencies with the highest visitor populations brought the largest economic benefit. As noted by F. Joseph Moravec, Commissioner of GSA's Public Buildings Service, "This research is not only confirmation of the importance of existing buildings, it will also serve as an important foundation document in our attempt to be a good neighbor for future projects." Contact: Frank Giblin, (202) 501-1856.

New Contracts with BIDs

GSA continues to contract for services provided by business improvement districts at nearly thirty locations nationwide, including two new locations: Norfolk, VA and Denver, CO. Unlike private property owners that typically are assessed (or 'taxed') to cover the costs of enhanced district services (including sidewalk cleaning, security patrols, marketing, etc.), as a federal agency GSA may only contract for those services that it finds are necessary and beneficial to the federal agencies at the GSA buildings in these districts. Where appropriate, each contract is negotiated on a case-by-case basis, typically for one or more of the services that the BID offers within the district. In various locations, GSA has contracted for security patrols, streetscape maintenance, or a combination of these and other services. GSA has found that the services provided by BIDs offer an effective way to improve working environments and the surrounding neighborhood for thousands of federal workers and visitors at GSA facilities. Contact: Frank Giblin (202) 501-1856.

Open Park, Serve Public

As you might have noticed, discussions in Philadelphia about providing free citywide WiFi service have been making national news. You may not know, however, that here in Washington a lesser-known effort has already brought free public WiFi to portions of the National Mall. The effort is lead by the all-volunteer *Open Park Project*, a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charity. Funded entirely by public contributions, Open Park has already installed free, publicly accessible outdoor hot spots on Capitol Hill, in front of the Supreme Court and at the site of the new Capitol Visitor's Center. They have plans to extend the service westward—the length of the Mall—and are in discussions with the Smithsonian about mounting equipment on top of some Mall museums. For those of us who believe that a sunny day outside is among the most desirable of work places, the Open Park project sets an example for the type of amenity that might someday be provided at public buildings around the country. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.openpark.net/index.html>.

Do You Want to Find Out More? Do You Have Ideas to Share?

We file each enews on our website at <http://www.gsa.gov/goodneighbor>. While you're there, you can check out other publications and policies, find the partners that can help GSA to be a good neighbor in your community, and get contact information for your local GSA representatives.

Please email questions, comments, & contributions—as well as mailing list additions and deletions—to Frank Giblin at frank.giblin@gsa.gov or Brian Goldstein at brian.goldstein@gsa.gov.

The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.

Albert Einstein