

## LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

In August 2011, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) joined 15 Departments and Agencies in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Environmental Justice. GSA is an active member of the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (IWG). GSA published its first-ever Environmental Justice Strategy in February 2012, identifying key areas that GSA would focus on in subsequent years.

I am pleased to publish the attached progress report, which is divided into two sections. The first section describes the continued interagency collaboration on environmental justice issues, and the second section summarizes selected accomplishments at GSA.

GSA continues its long-term commitment to the principles of environmental justice in the work that we do for the American people. As you will see in this year's progress report, our work in support of environmental justice is broad-sweeping—from governmentwide policies that support the principles of environmental justice in electronics stewardship and goods movement, to the planning, design, and construction of Federal buildings.

GSA looks forward to continued interagency collaboration as we further our own efforts in support of environmental justice. This progress report will be published on GSA's [Environmental Justice Web page](#) for public review and comment.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dan Tangherlini', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Dan Tangherlini  
Administrator

## **Interagency Working Group Accomplishments**

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) is a member of the Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG). This group is working to facilitate the involvement of all Federal agencies in the implementation of Executive Order 12898 by minimizing the negative environmental impacts of government policies. At the same time, this order is designed to foster environmental, public health, and economic benefits for overburdened communities. Federal agencies have made significant progress towards fulfilling the promise of this Executive Order through the leadership of EPA and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Beginning with a cabinet-level meeting and the first-ever White House Forum on Environmental Justice in 2010, Federal agencies reinvigorated this working group as a method of serving those communities. In 2011, seventeen cabinet members and White House offices signed the [Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898](#) (EJ MOU). In keeping with a commitment to hear from communities, the EJ IWG conducted eighteen community listening sessions across the country in 2011-2012. In August 2011, the working group identified the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Goods Movement, and Climate Change as priority issues, and has begun working to address them. In 2013, fifteen Federal agencies issued final agency Environmental Justice (EJ) strategies, implementation plans, and/or progress reports.

The working group will continue to focus its efforts on the four areas identified in the EJ MOU, and continue to conduct listening sessions. The four focus areas are: (1) NEPA, (2) Goods Movement, (3) Title VI, and (4) Climate Change. In addition, the EJ IWG established a committee on regional activities.

The EJ IWG will also support President Obama's Climate Action Plan. Specific activities include:

### **Community Engagement**

Federal agencies will hold at least two (2) listening sessions with communities to, among other goals, evaluate the effectiveness of agency environmental justice strategies and seek recommendations on how agency efforts can be improved.

## **NEPA Committee**

The NEPA committee is improving the effectiveness, efficiency and consistency of the NEPA process to enhance consideration of EJ through the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, training, and other tools. Since its inception in May 2012, the NEPA committee has taken several steps toward achieving its mission. Initially, an electronic compendium of publicly-available NEPA and EJ-related documents from almost 20 Federal agencies is provided on the IWG website, with key references from this compendium included on EPA's NEPA Webpage. In addition, a cross-agency training series has been conducted on existing tools, methods, and agency-specific focal areas. The Community of Practice Subcommittee is compiling a best practices approach that efficiently and effectively considers EJ in NEPA reviews. The Education Subcommittee has conducted a review of existing Federal agency training materials on EJ and NEPA, and is using this assessment to produce a national training module with the focus on effective EJ analysis in the NEPA process.

Moving forward, the Committee will continue to work with agencies throughout the government to advance EJ through an increased understanding of challenges and opportunities, articulation of effective best practices, training on general and specific NEPA and EJ topics, and other measures.

## **Climate Change**

Federal agencies will support President Obama's Climate Action Plan by reporting, through their annual EJ implementation progress reports, innovative actions they have taken to help overburdened communities prepare for, and recover from, the impacts of climate change. See section on individual agency climate adaptation efforts.

## **Goods Movement Committee**

In 2013, the Goods Movement Committee focused on identifying Federal programs, policies and activities that are related to goods movement, which impact overburdened communities; developing better partnerships with community groups; and identifying issues that most concern impacted communities. Moving forward, the committee will continue developing partnerships with communities and begin supporting the integration of EJ into specific agency efforts.

## **Title VI Committee (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended)**

The Title VI committee acts as a resource to help agencies connect their civil rights enforcement responsibilities with their efforts to achieve EJ. In 2013, the committee

surveyed agencies to determine the extent to which Title VI complaints have included EJ issues; and evaluated the relationship between Title VI and EJ. Moving forward, the committee plans on posting a webpage on the EJ IWG website that articulates the interrelationship between Title VI and EJ and will identify opportunities for interagency collaboration.

### **Regional IWG Committee**

The Regional IWG committee (RIWG) responds to communities at the local and regional level. In 2013, the RIWG committee finalized its concept to include its vision, goals, membership, organization, and key principles. This internal concept is designed to help guide the RIWG in the process of forming regional workgroups (designed around the EPA regional structure). The committee's goal, in part, is to help respond to EJ concerns identified at the local and regional levels in a more timely and unified manner, help build community capacity, and leverage resources of Federal agencies and other public and private resources throughout the country. The committee is moving forward to identify and select cross-government collaborations to aid communities.

## **GSA's Key Accomplishments and Implementation Progress**

### **Community Engagement**

GSA has been engaged in environmental monitoring and evaluation of a prior Army depot site in the Kansas City area for more than 15 years. In September 2011, GSA transferred the site to a private entity, with GSA retaining responsibility for remediation of environmental contaminants in surface soils and below ground. During World War II, the site was used for storage of chemicals and fuel, and over time, some of these chemicals leached into the soil and underground aquifer.

Currently, a large part of GSA's work at this site is community engagement, providing critical information to local residents, and obtaining information about the locations of the contamination. The surrounding communities are minority, low education level, low income, and they include many who do not speak English as their native language.

In 2013, GSA conducted one-on-one interviews with community members and held two public meetings, one in June and one in December. Since many in the surrounding communities are limited English proficient, GSA ensured an interpreter was available for the June meeting, and one community interview was held in Spanish via telephone. As GSA learned more about the community's make up and needs, invitations and print materials for the December meeting were provided to the community in English,

Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali. Interpreters for Spanish and Vietnamese languages were present at the December meeting.

GSA's efforts to engage the EJ community have been commended by a community involvement specialist for the State of Missouri, and a member of the Vietnamese-American Community of Greater Kansas City who attended the December session and expressed his appreciation for our outreach.

## **Sustainability**

GSA unveiled an ambitious plan in 2013, to reduce the environmental impact of the Federal Government, and to work to eliminate GSA's carbon footprint. GSA's vision is to reduce the Federal Government's environmental and fiscal footprints by reducing energy and water use and waste generation in Federal buildings, increasing the efficiency of the Federal fleet, enhancing the lifecycle management of electronics, and making sustainable products and services readily available and affordable to customer agencies.

Sustainability is one of GSA's key priorities. GSA incorporates sustainability into its budget, planning, and performance management process. Several of GSA's key performance measures, including one of the agency's six priority goals, are sustainability measures, and GSA tracks goal progress quarterly as part of its Performance Management Process.

Buildings & Construction: GSA is committed to incorporating principles of sustainable design and energy efficiency into all of its building projects. The result is an optimal balance of cost, environmental, societal and human benefits while meeting the mission and function of the intended facility. It is GSA's intent that sustainable design will be integrated as seamlessly as possible into the existing design and construction process.

Electronics Stewardship: GSA is leading a task force with the White House Council on Environmental Quality and the Environmental Protection Agency to update the national strategy for electronics stewardship. GSA continues its work with stakeholders and partners to finalize a government-wide proposed rule, which addresses the proper and safe disposal of electronics, with the goal of making the best improvements allowable. The proposed rule should be published for public comment by March 31, 2014.

Pollution Prevention & Waste Reduction: GSA diverted 43 percent of non-hazardous solid waste generated in 374 facilities from landfills through its recycling programs, generating \$1.3 million in recycling revenues. The recycling revenues were distributed to Federal agencies participating in GSA's building recycling programs, and support the

Child Care Tuition Assistance Program and pollution prevention programs. GSA also expanded food waste organics composting to 29 buildings.

Federal Fleet Management: GSA Fleet maintains the second largest non-tactical Federal fleet in the Government; with currently over 200,000 vehicles and 55 Federal agency customers. GSA is not directly responsible for ensuring that its customer agencies meet their fleet energy and sustainability targets, but GSA Fleet works to ensure that it provides low-cost, high-efficiency vehicle options to its customer agencies in an effort to facilitate their meeting their missions in the most sustainable manner possible. To meet environmental standards, GSA offers customers new, more fuel-efficient vehicles that provide long-term environmental benefits and save taxpayers money. These vehicles include alternative fuel vehicles and biodiesel fuels.

Multi Asset Planning (MAP) Tool: GSA is seeking ways to make location decisions and other investment decisions regarding real estate by incorporating a broader array of measurable factors, such as distance from existing or potential GSA facilities to transit stations; predicted greenhouse gas emissions associated with commuting (also known as Scope 3 emissions) to existing or potential sites; and other factors that measure the environmental impact of GSA facilities. Locations' proximate to transit and locations that reduce overall Scope 3 emissions are beneficial to all communities, but especially those communities that suffer hardship due to a lack of transit access to jobs and services or outsized exposure to environmental pollution. Important in this analysis is presenting data in a visual form that is accessible to all GSA users and understandable by all decision-makers, rather than just subject matter experts. To that end, GSA's Urban Development Program completed the development and roll-out of web-based tool, called a flexviewer, now known as the Multi Asset Planning (MAP) tool. It is available through InSite (GSA's intranet) to internal agency users. Much like a Google Maps product, the flexviewer allows users to view a map of their chosen geography overlaid with GSA's owned and leased locations, transit locations, operating agreements, sustainability measures, census block per capita income and other factors. In addition, the Urban Development Program staff is currently working with EPA to develop data with more predictive capabilities regarding greenhouse gas emissions and is within months of publishing this data to internal users.

In addition to the MAP tool, GSA now has map-sharing capability through an organizational ArcGIS Online (AGOL) account, available to any user within GSA who signs up for access. This system allows users to create their own maps using existing data (such as Census data) and incorporating their own data. Users also are able to share editable maps with others.

Currently, use of the mapping tools across GSA's business lines, such as Leasing, Design and Construction, and Portfolio, is ad hoc, but the Urban Development Program is working to make their use a regular part of agency business practices. The way it currently is used is up to individual business lines to determine, but as an example, a proposed use includes comparing alternative locations to a Request for Lease

Proposals on factors like proximity to transportation or associated commuting-related greenhouse gases.

Sustainable Locations for Federal Facilities Guidance: In response to Executive Order 13514's call for Federal agencies to operate in ways that reduce the impact of Federal Government operations, the CEQ issued implementing instructions that required Federal agencies to review and revise internal policies that affect the decision-making regarding locations of Federal facilities (see Implementing Instructions - Sustainable Locations for Federal Facilities). GSA's Urban Development Program has been spearheading the effort within GSA to review and revise internal real estate procedures and policies to reflect smart location principles, including prioritizing central business districts and access to transit, urban infill and brownfield redevelopment, local and regional development goals, and access by a diverse range of employees and visitors, among other factors. Revising these practices and policies is a multi-pronged effort involving several business lines at GSA, which includes the revision of the Federal Management Regulations (FMR), the Leasing Desk Guide and Leasing documents, and the Real Property Guides. Revisions to the FMR, Leasing Desk Guide, and Leasing documents are in progress. Current drafts incorporate language and processes regarding sustainable locations, which includes the elements listed above. The Urban Development Program is exploring training opportunities on sustainable locations with Leasing staff upon the completion of the Leasing Desk Guide.

Outreach: The Urban Development Program works to make GSA's internal real estate practices sustainably-minded and community-oriented by collaborating with agency business lines to ensure that Federal facilities are located, designed, renovated, and managed in ways that support local community and economic development and sustainability principles. Part of that work includes collaborating externally with local governments and organizations to better understand their needs and plans for development, sustainability, environmental and social justice, and similar topics, and to introduce local officials to GSA's internal operations. The Urban Development Program has committed to a set of such outreach meetings in the agency's Strategic Sustainable and Performance Plan, signing on to undertake an additional 22 outreach meetings by June 2014. Eleven of these meetings will focus on leasing and incorporating sustainable location in leasing discussions with local stakeholders.

These are just a few examples of GSA's commitment to sustainability, all of which contribute to a cleaner environment for all communities.

## **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**

GSA developed and conducted EJ training during FY13 for the agency's NEPA practitioners, which included information about EJ. GSA continues to track NEPA studies involving EJ analyses, to ensure EJ principles are being effectively incorporated into such studies.

## **Title VI**

GSA's Office of Civil Rights is a member of the EJ IWG's Title VI Committee, whose efforts and accomplishments are provided elsewhere in this report. GSA continues to include environmental discussion principles in its training of recipients of Federal financial assistance.

## **Goods Movement**

Transportation Reporting: GSA's Office of Government-wide Policy (OGP) is in the pre-proposed rule phase of amending Subpart K (pertaining to transportation reporting) in the Federal Management Regulations (FMR). GSA is proposing to amend the FMR provisions pertaining to the reporting of transportation activities for freight and cargo, excluding household goods. The proposed rule recommends that agencies annually report their transportation activities for a governmentwide transportation collection effort that would result in the ability to analyze data, identify shared services and operational efficiencies.

Once the regulation is finalized, GSA will issue a bulletin describing the data elements to report and the procedures for annual reporting. One question that GSA plans to include in the bulletin is, "Do you incorporate your own agency's EJ policy when selecting transportation services?"

Accompanying the transportation reporting regulation is a system for data collection, named the Federal Interagency Transportation Summary or FITS. The system is being enhanced and will go through pilot testing later in FY14 and used to capture data in FY16.

GSA continues to update its web pages to, in part, state that our focus is:

"Transportation management policy seeks to improve management and enhance sustainable transportation operations with a focus on effective and efficient federal transportation operations for freight and cargo".



## **Climate Change Adaptation**

Across the United States, and the world, the impacts of climate change are already affecting communities, natural resources, ecosystems, economies, and public health. These impacts are often most significant for communities that already face economic or health-related challenges. The uneven nature of climate change impacts creates differing levels of vulnerability with important implications for adaptive actions. In addition, non-climatic stressors can interact with and exacerbate the impacts of climate stressors. Social and economic factors can also significantly affect people's exposure and sensitivity to climate change, as well as their ability to prepare and recover.

On November 1, 2013, President Obama signed an Executive Order 13653-Preparing the United States for the Impacts of Climate Change, which called for the Federal government to build on recent progress and pursue new strategies to improve the nation's preparedness and resilience. Executive Order 13653 states that "adaptation measures should focus on helping the most vulnerable people and places reduce their exposure and sensitivity to climate change and improve their capacity to predict, prepare for, and avoid adverse impacts."

**Agency Drivers:** Climate change threatens GSA's mission execution to secure the Federal investment in real property and supply chain and support mission continuity of our customers. Climate change adaptation is a risk management process which provides GSA an opportunity to engage new market sectors, and cross disciplinary jobs from multiple industry sectors. GSA is currently addressing how to consider plausible climate change impacts when undertaking long-term planning and making decisions affecting resources, programs, policies and operations into its existing agency processes. GSA has developed and implemented an agency-wide Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan since 2011 and is currently updating the plan in response to Executive Order 13653 and the President's Climate Action Plan.

**Incorporating actions to address impacts in low-income, minority, tribal and/or other vulnerable communities in strategies and implementation plans:** GSA's Climate Change Adaptation Plan identifies and prioritizes actions, and establishes a mechanism to evaluate progress to improve GSA's capacity to effectively adapt to current and future changes in the climate. In constructing the Plan, GSA reviews programs, operations, policies, and authorities to identify potential long term impacts of climate change and prioritize investments that will increase operational resiliency in the face of climate risks. In so doing, GSA is also incorporating considerations of EJ in its climate change adaptation efforts, as applicable, to secure the Federal investment and support mission continuity of our customers in real property and supply chain.

**Significant innovative actions and results:** In contrast to other agencies, such as EPA, GSA must respond to a “both/and” context- to our Federal customer and vulnerable communities. As vulnerable mission critical sites or supply chain components are identified, GSA will partner with our Federal customers to identify and mitigate mal-adaptation to vulnerable communities.. Planning methods may be anticipatory, adaptive, or reactive. Real property adaptation actions may vary across a spectrum of protection, accommodation or retreat. Supply chain adaptation actions may vary across a spectrum of planning for disruption, minimizing damage or damage control.

**Significant areas for future attention:** Implementing the steps above to identify and mitigate mal-adaptation to vulnerable communities will require developing criteria, guidance and implementation methods in subject matter primarily unfamiliar to agency staff - climate change and environmental justice. Preparing agency staff to have the capability, confidence and capacity to successfully implement this emergent aspect of risk management requires ongoing attention.

### Conclusion

As evidenced by this report, GSA’s day-to-day operations affect communities throughout the country. GSA recognizes its unique responsibility within the Federal Government, and is fully committed to providing Federal agencies with the policies, services, products, buildings and space, and vehicles that support the principles of environmental justice. This annual progress report will be posted on GSA’s EJ web page for public viewing and comment.