



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

**NICHOLAS DIMOS
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
FINANCE AND FACILITIES DIVISION
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**AT A HEARING ENTITLED
“ENSURING TRANSPARENCY IN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: AN EXAMINATION
OF GSA’S SITE SELECTION FOR THE FBI HEADQUARTERS”**

**PRESENTED
DECEMBER 12, 2023**

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Good morning, Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Titus, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify about the new Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) headquarters project.

The FBI has occupied the J. Edgar Hoover (JEH) building since 1974. Since that time, the mission of the FBI has evolved, particularly in complex national security investigations and cases requiring sophisticated technology tradecraft and tools – but the building and technical infrastructure of the facility have not kept pace. Moreover, the facility infrastructure of JEH has deteriorated to the point where hundreds of millions – if not billions – of dollars would be required to fully renovate and sustain it. Concrete on the exterior of the building is crumbling, and netting is attached around the building’s perimeter to catch concrete from falling onto pedestrians passing by on sidewalks below. There have also been instances where interior concrete has fallen into employee workspaces. Pipes routinely leak or burst, which has resulted in damage to FBI technology, records, and space.

The General Services Administration (GSA) has conducted several Building Evaluation Reports (in 2001, 2011, and 2019) that all reached the same conclusion – the building is in poor condition and action is required to address life safety issues and failing equipment. Given that JEH has been scheduled for replacement for over a decade, longer term facility infrastructure investments have been deferred, exacerbating the operations and maintenance challenges typically associated with a 50-year-old facility. Each year, the FBI and GSA are forced to

reprioritize limited funding to conduct emergency, stop-gap repairs to ensure the safety of personnel working in the building and to maintain continuity of operations.

The FBI must fight against 21st century threats, not those of 1974. The men and women of the FBI need access to modern, high-tech tools and spaces to seamlessly communicate and collaborate with FBI operators and partners located across the country and world. Due to the nature of the FBI's work, which requires access to classified and sensitive information and networks, personnel need to work in FBI office space to support day-to-day FBI operations. Deteriorating infrastructure and failing technology of the current headquarters building will continue to make it more and more difficult to rapidly address developing threats and collaborate across FBI divisions and programs.

As the FBI planned for the replacement of JEH, we reassessed what functions need to remain in the national capital region (NCR) versus those that can be re-located to other parts of the United States. Based on this multi-year reassessment of the facility footprint, FBI headquarters now consists of many different locations across the country. The FBI has moved and consolidated its data centers from costly leased locations in downtown areas to owned facilities with significantly lower costs of power and infrastructure. The FBI relocated certain mission areas and training functions to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama that were either originally housed in costly space in the NCR or were subject to space and capacity constraints at the FBI campus in Quantico, Virginia. The FBI also relocated its records management facilities, and we have expanded our operations in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Because of this realignment of workforce functions across the country over the past several years, the new facility that would replace JEH here in the NCR would include less total square footage than previous iterations of this project and will house those personnel and functions that must remain in the NCR.

The FBI is committed to ensuring that any new facility is a good deal for the taxpayer, and the new suburban FBI headquarters would allow the FBI to consolidate space and eliminate the need for multiple leased locations in the NCR, thereby saving tens of millions of dollars in annual lease payments. We have also worked to reduce costs in other ways, such as by consolidating case files and evidence storage to centralized locations in lower cost areas.

While the FBI has relocated thousands of headquarters personnel outside of the NCR, many functions need to remain in the NCR to fulfill the mission. The NCR houses many key members of the Intelligence Community, the Department of Justice (DOJ), and other law enforcement partners that the FBI works with each day to fulfill our law enforcement and national security responsibilities. Also, many FBI headquarters functions coordinate directly and frequently with operations in Quantico, to include the FBI Laboratory, Operational Technology Division, Critical Incident Response Group, and Training Division, which are not slated to consolidate into the new NCR headquarters facility.

The FBI has worked closely with our colleagues at GSA over the past decade on

potential solutions that meet the FBI's space needs while recognizing the considerable challenges of funding such a large and complex project. We were encouraged that the previous procurement process in 2017 resulted in considerable interest by the private sector to help secure a new headquarters facility. However, without full funding, the FBI and GSA determined that continuing to move forward with the 2017 procurement would have put the government at risk for project cost escalations, which was made more complicated by the exchange proposal for the JEH parcel of land. For these reasons, the FBI and GSA jointly made the decision to cancel the prior procurement.

From 2018 to 2021, the FBI and GSA advanced a proposal for the FBI headquarters to remain in downtown Washington, D.C., in a newly constructed facility. This new downtown facility would have been smaller than the proposed 2017 facility, but would have allowed for consolidated space in close proximity to DOJ and other mission partners, in a centralized location for the FBI workforce and other FBI mission locations like Quantico. Then, in March 2022, through the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022*, Congress directed GSA to choose one of the three sites identified through the prior 2017 procurement – Greenbelt, Maryland; Landover, Maryland; or Springfield, Virginia – to be the future home of the FBI's suburban campus in the NCR. As a result, through the spring and summer of 2022, the GSA and FBI worked together to develop a site selection plan and process by which the suburban site would be selected from these three locations, with a clear focus on what is best for the FBI workforce, the mission, and the American taxpayer. In September 2022, GSA publicly released the site selection plan that would be used to pick the site, which was closely coordinated with the FBI. This plan considered five criteria: FBI Mission Requirements, Transportation Access, Site Development Flexibility, Promoting Sustainable Siting and Advancing Equity, and Cost.

Following the release of the plan, in December 2022, Congress passed the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023*, which directed GSA to hold consultations with representatives for each of the three sites to discuss the site selection plan. Those consultations took place in March 2023. Following the consultations, GSA amended the site selection plan in July 2023 and then commenced the site selection process, which included convening a panel of three career GSA and FBI officials to make a consensus recommendation. After the panel submitted its recommendation of Springfield, Virginia, the GSA Site Selection Authority (SSA) conducted their own review and chose Greenbelt, Maryland as the suburban headquarters location.

Throughout the selection process, the FBI coordinated closely with GSA. Of paramount importance to the FBI has always been fairness and transparency in the process – irrespective of the specific site chosen. When GSA provided the FBI with its site selection decision, the FBI identified several areas of concern regarding the process, which we promptly expressed to GSA. In a September 2023 memorandum, FBI Associate Deputy Director (ADD) Brian Turner laid out the FBI's identified process concerns. Specifically, the FBI noted in this memorandum our view that the SSA did not follow the site selection plan regarding the weighting of specific subcriteria. The published site selection plan states, "subcriteria are of equal importance," whereas the FBI observed instances where we believe the SSA applied independent analysis indicating the relative importance of some subcriteria over others. The SSA also included

outside information when evaluating the three sites. The site selection plan allows for this, but the FBI felt obligated to raise its concern that outside information was included in a way that from FBI's perspective consistently benefited the Greenbelt site. This concern was intensified when the SSA did not accept the consensus recommendation of the panel. The FBI observed that with one immaterial exception, *each* of the SSA's deviations from the panel's recommendation either benefited the Greenbelt site or disfavored the panel's recommended site of Springfield, Virginia. Lastly, in this memorandum, the FBI expressed concern about the appearance of a lack of impartiality by the SSA, given the SSA's previous position as an executive with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), which owns the Greenbelt site.

GSA's response to ADD Turner's memorandum did not sufficiently address these concerns. Accordingly, Director Christopher Wray reiterated the FBI's concerns in a letter to the GSA Administrator on October 12, 2023. To address what FBI viewed as concerns with the process, and in an effort to move the project forward, the FBI requested GSA to re-run the final stage of the site selection decision process with a new SSA to ensure, from FBI's perspective, the appropriate level of impartiality for a decision of this magnitude. As the FBI has emphasized, including in this October 2023 letter expressing our views, "we are not suggesting a lack of integrity by the PBS Commissioner. However, for a project of this magnitude and significance where the unimpeachability of the selection process is of vital importance, the SSA simply should not have previous, direct affiliation with one of the parties of this procurement." The GSA did not agree to the FBI's request, and instead proceeded to publish the site selection decision on November 9, 2023. The FBI's process concerns remain unaddressed.

The site selection process was a significant undertaking, and the FBI is appreciative of the many men and women of the GSA who led and supported this monumental task. Through this process, the FBI has had the opportunity to work with many outstanding professionals at GSA – dedicated public servants who have strived to support the FBI in constructing a new headquarters that allows the FBI to do its work for the American people. These GSA professionals support the FBI and other government agencies tirelessly each day, and the FBI is grateful for their dedication on this project and hundreds of others across the country. To be clear, the FBI's concerns are specific to the site selection process itself, and in particular, the final phase of the selection process. For a project of this magnitude and significance, it is critically important that each step is above reproach. From FBI's perspective, the FBI's recommendation to select a new SSA – a real estate expert with no affiliation to any of the three sites and an individual independent from these past several months of site selection deliberations – would have ensured the appropriate level of independence and neutrality.

While the Congress and the GSA Office of the Inspector General conduct their reviews of this process, the FBI will continue to coordinate with GSA on the specific program of requirements for both the suburban facility and a 750-1,000 seat downtown facility in a pre-

existing federal building, which will allow the FBI to maintain close proximity to partners at DOJ and other law enforcement and governmental partners downtown.

While the process review and construction planning activities take place, the current J. Edgar Hoover building continues to deteriorate, does not meet the needs of today's FBI, and is an inefficient use of taxpayer resources. Our goal is to build a consolidated, modern, secure, resilient facility that is capable of meeting the increased demands of the nation's premier intelligence and law enforcement organization now and in the future – housing the hardworking men and women of the FBI for the next 50 or more years. In all of our efforts on this project, we must continue to ensure that fair and transparent processes are followed that leverage best practices in real estate, procurement, construction, and fiscal stewardship.

Chairman Perry, Ranking Member Titus, and Subcommittee Members, I thank you for this opportunity to testify on the new FBI Headquarters project. We appreciate your interest and support. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.