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BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
AND
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2011

Good morning Chairman Johnson, Chairman Denham, Ranking Members Becerra and Norton, and Members of the subcommittees. My name is David Foley and I am the Deputy Commissioner of the General Services Administration's (GSA) Public Buildings Service. I am pleased to have the opportunity today to discuss the considerable progress GSA has made, on behalf of the Social Security Administration (SSA), in the delivery of a new Social Security Administration National Support Center.

We have reached significant project milestones in the two critical paths of site selection and requirements development for a design/build construction solicitation. After an extensive due diligence process, we announced at the beginning of this month the site selection of the new support center site at Urbana in Frederick County, Maryland. Last month, GSA also issued the first phase of our design/build construction solicitation. GSA and SSA are working closely together to ensure we achieve our new project milestones, while remaining on budget and minimizing risks in order to deliver an efficient, modern, and secure data center to support SSA in meeting their mission goals and providing the best value to taxpayers.

Site Selection

GSA diligently sought a location that meets SSA's unique requirements for a National Support Center. We conducted an extensive evaluation of potential sites located within a 40 mile radius of Woodlawn. We reviewed Government-owned properties, contacted local economic development and planning groups, and requested expressions of interest from land owners and authorized agents through a Federal Business Opportunities[1] online notice. These efforts resulted in over 150 potential sites that were evaluated against project specific criteria. These factors included:

- Site characteristics;
- Location and accessibility;
- Energy and utilities;
- Security and operations;
- Environmental impacts;
- Local planning and development;
- Land and site development costs; and
- Schedule risks.

We followed a deliberative process of reviewing sites against the initial criteria, paring down the list, and then conducting further due diligence to select a final site.

In 2009, at the committees' request, GSA also conducted a study to examine the possibility of locating the new data center on the current campus. In April 2010, we delivered this study, which showed that building on the SSA campus would present

[1] www.fbo.gov

significant concerns and unacceptably high construction risk, including the possible disruption of the mission-critical operations at the existing National Computer Center.

Though GSA and SSA remain committed to the presence of SSA at the Woodlawn campus for current mission needs and future expansions, the study showed that the National Support Center would be better served at a new site, where risk and cost would be minimized and construction could be completed more quickly.

Upon the completion of this study and with the support of these committees, GSA continued to press forward with our review of new sites. This iterative process led to a short list of two sites, Johnnycake Road in Baltimore County and Urbana in Frederick County. Given the importance of this project and the potential impacts of a site selection decision, GSA initiated an Environmental Assessment in August 2010. During this recently completed process, GSA solicited public comment and assessed all environmental impacts, evaluating the benefits and potential drawbacks for each site.

After this thorough analysis, we announced the selection of Urbana as the site that will most effectively meet SSA's needs and best serve the interests of taxpayers. This site fully meets the technical requirements for this unique mission-critical data center facility; offers a variety of benefits including its physical site characteristics, available utility infrastructure, and favorable environmental conditions; and the site is the most favorable in terms of minimizing risks, costs, and schedule impacts. Now that we have announced the site, we are moving toward acquisition, which we anticipate in June 2011.

Requirements Development

Successfully moving forward with the next phase of this project, which is the construction portion, required that we develop the right Program of Requirements (POR) for a design/build solicitation to meet this mission. GSA and SSA worked collaboratively, consulting with leading experts in data center construction to develop this POR, completed on schedule in August 2010.

GSA has worked with SSA to ensure this facility serves the SSA's information technology needs, and the needs of taxpayers, for the long term. With the help of consultants, we developed a growth model for equipment requirements, which takes into account both SSA historical data, as well as industry trends for newer equipment technology. The project will be designed to meet the initial 10-year requirements, with expansion capabilities based on 20-year projections.

The project will also meet Interagency Security Committee Level IV standards and Tier III Certification by the Uptime Institute. A Tier III Certification ensures continued operations and redundancy of system facilities. Furthermore, GSA is committed to achieving a minimum of a Gold certification under the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design program of the U.S. Green Building Council, as well as achieving the goals outlined in the current Executive Orders for sustainability and energy.

Design/Build

The National Support Center project is based on an integrated delivery by a design/build team, including a design firm and a construction contractor. This is a two phase process which first evaluates the contractors' qualifications to establish a short list and then considers technical proposals and price in the second phase. GSA has begun the first phase of selecting a design/build contractor to construct this critical facility. A Request for Qualifications, inviting contractors into the bidding process, was posted on the Federal Business Opportunities website on January 26, 2011.

We anticipate award of the contract for design and construction by January 2012. Substantial construction completion is scheduled for September 2014, at which time the building will be turned over to begin commissioning and IT migration.

Budget and Schedule

The project remains on budget, though the due diligence conducted in our review of sites has pushed back the construction completion from October 2013 to September 2014.

We look forward to the next major milestones on this project, including Phase 2 of the design/build solicitation (April 2011), site acquisition (June 2011), award of the design/build contract (January 2012), and finally substantial completion of the project (September 2014), at which time commissioning and IT migration will begin. Commissioning will be completed in January 2015 and, we understand from SSA, IT migration will be completed by August 2016.

Risk Management

While we move forward on this critical project, we are taking a number of steps to minimize risks and ensure the budget and schedule stay on track.

GSA has developed bidding strategies that maximize competition and alternative design solutions. We are performing market research prior to award and developing independent government cost estimates. These techniques will increase the probability of receiving bids within budget. As with the site selection, we have adopted detailed criteria for the design/build contract and will consistently apply them to the evaluation of offers. This process will limit procurement schedule risks. We also will employ consultants and contractors with data center experience for quality assurance reviews during the design, construction management and inspection stages. Finally, GSA will continue to work closely with SSA to monitor and evaluate and minimize scope changes and ensure that they will be managed within the project budget and schedule.

Conclusion

GSA appreciates the opportunity to come here today to highlight the considerable progress we have achieved on this project. We look forward to continuing to work with you on the successful delivery of this data center.

Chairman Johnson, Chairman Denham, Ranking Members Becerra and Norton, and Members of the subcommittees, this concludes my statement. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.