

Suitland Federal Center - Mini-Technical Assistance Panel Executive Summary

Suitland Federal Center (SFC) is an opportunity for the federal government, Prince George's County, and the Washington Metro region. With 226 acres, four federal agencies, and outstanding multimodal access to the regional core, SFC has significant assets to offer federal government tenants, commercial tenants and the community. This document describes a few key recommendations GSA can take now to improve the workplace, maximize value, generate jobs, and improve interactions with the surrounding community.

Leverage Metro Access and Improve Connections to and through the Site

Public access improvements and connectivity through and around the SFC are high priorities for both WMATA and the Suitland community. The Metro property is a key opportunity for both improving access to the SFC and setting the stage for new development. Our key recommendations include:

- **Replace the perimeter fence with a public bike and pedestrian pathway.** Removing the perimeter fence and making transportation and access improvements is a much-requested amenity for SFC workers and Suitland residents alike.
- **Improve bike and pedestrian connections along the west side of Silver Hill Road** from the Metro Station to the intersection of Suitland Road. GSA can coordinate these improvements with the Maryland State Highway Administration's and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association current efforts to install dedicated bike lanes on Suitland Road from Silver Hill Road to Southern Avenue.
- **Consider relocating the Main SFC entrance from its current location**, which causes significant backups on Silver Hill Road. Although special care must be given with the planned complete street upgrades, it is believed that the main entrance would be better placed on Suitland Road.
- **Evaluate additional trails through the woodland areas** including a recreational trail around the perimeter of the SFC campus and a trail providing more direct access from the Metro station to the NMIC site.
- **Upgrade internal roadways on the SFC site with sidewalks on both sides and bike lanes or sharrows** where possible.
- **Cooperate with WMATA for new development on its site to catalyze future SFC growth.** Retail and residential development adjacent to the Metro station can take advantage of foot traffic at the station and provide services for SFC tenants.

Development Potential: Leverage the federal property to spur private sector development

There are three key elements to encouraging development at the SFC. The Metro station is a lynch pin for new multifamily residential and service retail development. The current campus tenants have significant information technology needs and there is an existing GSA prospectus for a 630,000 SF federal cyber-security campus. Such a technology focus could spur more private sector follow-on leasing and development from technology companies and business services companies that serve federal IT needs. Lastly, there are over 6,300 employees at SFC currently and that is expected to increase by 26% by 2023. This suggests the site can support service retail. In order to generate new development both on and off the Suitland Federal Campus, we recommend the following:

- **Cooperate with WMATA to bring new development and amenities to their site.**
- **Position the SFC property for a large federal office tenant such as the cyber-security campus**, building on the existing information technology needs already located on the campus including

Census, NOAA, and NIMC.

- **Require developers to provide amenities** as part of any solicitation for offers at SFC.
- **Brand the property and area as a “Tech District”** both to federal and local tenants.
- **Study opportunities for a hotel** under contract with federal and DOD tenants at Andrews AFB.

Financial incentives may be required in order to make the desired amenity base financially feasible. **GSA should work closely with Prince George’s Economic Development to develop an incentive package that would attract private sector technology companies and development.** Further, the GSA or a tenant could master lease a block of hotel rooms to provide credit support to a hotel development in an unproven hotel market.

Sustainability

The SFC campus has a number of sustainability related opportunities and existing assets. The existing tree canopy, stormwater management ponds, and central heating and cooling plant each provide opportunities for innovative new sustainability infrastructure. In order to attract tenants to the site and make a more open, inviting and economically sustainable campus, GSA should consider the following sustainability measures:

- **Integrate low impact development into open spaces** for stormwater management, urban heat island impacts and aesthetic values to create a more walkable and comfortable campus.
- **Ensure the use of low impact development features** such as rain gardens, bioswales, connected tree boxes and permeable paving along new pedestrian, bike trails, or new street infrastructure.
- **Remove the overflow parking lot at the corner of Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road** in the short term and create an open field recreation space based on existing Census employee needs/requests. In the long-term this site is better suited for redevelopment rather than permanent open space.
- **Complete a study of the capacity of the existing central heating/cooling plant for the Washington National Records Center (WNRC)** to examine the feasibility to reuse the existing plant and add additional buildings to plant’s capacity. Centralized/access to emergency/resilience utility providers can be a salable asset to secure office tenants or tenants in the innovation or tech space.

Campus Security: Balance Level IV Security with Openness

GSA should focus on incorporating security elements that respond to varying levels of threat and balance security with openness. New buildings along Suitland Road and Silver Hill Road may act as natural security buffers, as will the internal road adjacent to Census. Our recommendations include:

- **Consider removing the perimeter fence to integrate SFC with the surrounding community** and develop a sense of openness.
- **Plan for new buildings with ground floor retail along Silver Hill Road.**
- As an interim measure, **integrate a new publicly accessible open space along Suitland Road** that supports a range of activities such as recreational sports, performances and markets.