

What's Important and When



What's Important and When

Like Buying a Car

The project development process can be like buying a car.

First (in the Feasibility Study phase), you consider alternative modes of transportation, vehicle types, ownership options, and expenses. You may conclude that the best way to meet your family's needs is with a small wagon that can tow a trailer.

Next (in the PDS phase), you explore various makes and models, options packages, financing options, and dealers. You decide to lease a wagon from a specific dealer and waive the rust-proofing option, but choose the manual transmission. The success of both phases depends on the pre-planning phase, knowing your family's future needs.

Of course, GSA's Feasibility Study and PDS approaches entail very different options and issues. But as the car analogy suggests, each has a fundamental influence on the final product's affordability, reliability, and suitability for the task at hand.

This section discusses the key categories for successful GSA project development and delivery. It highlights the comparative roles of facility management operations (the pre-planning phase), the Feasibility Study, and the Program Development Study (PDS) in addressing each category. Refer to “Appendix C: Feasibility Study Checklist” and “Appendix D: PDS Checklist” for further comparisons.

The Pre-Planning phase represents the day-to-day facilities management and client services that lay the groundwork for project development. Knowledge gained and working relationships developed during this stage play a key role in the ultimate success of the Feasibility Study and the PDS.

The Feasibility Study evaluates the customer's goals and needs, the facility's requirements, and options to meet those needs, as well as their impact on GSA's inventory and business goals. Alternative scenarios are developed, evaluated, and refined to select a recommended direction. Don't be tempted to give the Feasibility Study less consideration than the PDS. The Feasibility Study process has the greatest impact on a project's success because it defines the project's basic parameters. It defines *what the project will be*.

The Feasibility Study must identify and address all of the project's fundamental issues. Delaying the consideration of any key issues until the PDS phase is far too late. Put plainly, once the Feasibility Study is complete, the project team has already committed to the “small wagon with the trailer” (see “Like Buying a Car” sidebar). The Feasibility Study focuses on the scope and basic parameters of the project. The PDS looks at the same topics, but at a more detailed level of analysis.

The PDS begins with the recommendation of the Feasibility Study; determines whether it is still the best course of action; and then develops the detailed implementation strategy, cost estimates, and design directives. These studies support the Construction Prospectus.

The comparison of the Pre-Planning, Feasibility Study, and PDS phases is organized into five categories; each has key comparison points:

1. Customer Considerations
2. Physical Plant and Structure
3. Legacy Activities
4. Project Implementation
5. Capital Program Support

Customer Considerations

PBS's approach to providing superior workplaces for federal workers must include a solid understanding of the customer's needs. These include the customer's strategic business goals, human capital issues, ability to respond to change, use of high-performance environments, and work processes and settings. Customer needs and project requirements must be addressed throughout the process, but the Feasibility Study and PDS address them differently.

Customer Moves and Phasing

The strategy for managing customer moves before, during, and after construction significantly impacts project cost, customer mission, and customer satisfaction. Alternatives examined during both the Feasibility Study and the PDS must consider these issues. Pay special attention to options that can execute projects efficiently in occupied space or constrained sites and minimize construction impact on operational activities.

Pre-Planning

- Lays groundwork to understand client needs and business cycles, as appropriate.

Feasibility Study

- Assesses alternative impacts on customer moves and phasing.
- Includes phasing and swing space plans for renovations in occupied buildings that take into account customer business cycles.
- Proposes the design and construction budget for the preferred alternative. The budget should reflect realistically the range of potential changes in project definition before construction begins (e.g., site acquisition and development, change in agency operation, cost increases).

Program Development Study

- Assesses micro-level alternatives, such as moves and planned buildouts within a building.

Housing Plans

Housing plans, which identify customer space needs, are an important underpinning for the site/design and the construction funding requests, as well as the facility design process. GSA Project and Portfolio Managers rely on the housing plans in the Feasibility Study and the PDS to answer OMB and congressional questions and to

Special Projects, Unique Processes

Border stations and courthouses are considered "non-standard" new construction projects. GSA and its customer agencies have developed specific tools to determine the programming, scope, and cost of these facilities, based on projected business loads.

These tools (e.g., traffic generation models, construction benchmarks, design standards) promote consistency nationwide and support the review by GSA's outside stakeholders. These analysis tools and results are required for any capital project proposal involving the courts or border agencies.

OAs Demonstrate Customer Commitment

As customer needs always outstrip the capital funds available in a given year, those projects that have customer commitments will have more favorable consideration for funding.

manage the project. The housing plan must meet the specific information requirements outlined in the applicable *Planning Call* for the project.

Pre-Planning

- Uses the Asset Business Team's knowledge of current customer needs and concerns; conducts master plan and programming studies, as needed.

Feasibility Study

- Creates housing plans for the considered alternatives, which support the alternatives' analysis and Site/Design Prospectus.
- Includes typical space layouts to ensure proper fit of the customer agency's requirements, based on professional programming analysis. Provides square-foot information for Occupancy Agreements (OAs) and pricing plans.

Program Development Study

- Refines the housing plans to support the Construction Prospectus and the initiation of the design phase.

Occupancy Agreements

GSA requires that Occupancy Agreements (OAs) be prepared for projects included in the Capital Investment and Leasing Program (with the exception of border station projects and projects that do not have tenant-specific components). The OA must lay out the financial terms, conditions, and schedule under which a customer occupies GSA-managed space. It records the choices that GSA and the customer make during project development, shows the monthly rent bill that would result from those choices, and memorializes the customer's commitment to the project. Please reference the applicable *Planning Call* for OA submission requirements.

Pre-Planning

- Maintains accurate occupancy and billing data in PBS systems to establish a true baseline.

Feasibility Study

- Creates a draft OA to demonstrate the customer agency's support for the Site/Design Prospectus.

Program Development Study

- Refines the occupancy schedule, terms, and costs associated with customer buildouts.
- Supports revisions to the final OA between GSA and the customer.

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Pricing Policy

PBS's pricing policy separately accounts for the costs of building shell, TI, and other amortized costs in rent (e.g., security, raised flooring). This process is modeled on the private sector's approach to real estate development. The shell, TI, and security budgets are initially set in the Feasibility Study. These budgets are refined during the PDS and design process. A boundary between building shell (including security improvements) and tenant work constitutes an impermeable barrier, or "firewall," across which funding cannot move. Shell and TI budgets are independent and may not be commingled. The best source for navigating this process during the Feasibility Study and PDS phases is the *GSA Pricing Desk Guide*.

Pre-Planning

- Maintains accurate occupancy and billing data in PBS systems to establish a true baseline.

Feasibility Study

- Establishes building shell, TI, and security budgets.
- Defines a firewall between GSA's budget responsibility (shell, including security improvements) and the customer's budget responsibility (TI).

Program Development Study

- Revalidates and refines the estimates for specific buildouts and systems that affect shell, TI, and security costs. However, the firewall set during the Feasibility Study should not change significantly.

Physical Plant and Structure

The requirements of a building's physical plant and structure must be addressed during program development. Valid project proposals for repair and alteration (R&A) must be based on updated and comprehensive Building Evaluation Reports (BERs). Requirements for renovation and new construction projects must be defined to meet *P-100* requirements.

Building Systems and Envelopes

Choices for building systems are considered throughout the project's development. Balance in performance, alternative energy sources, high-efficiency systems, life-cycle costs, and initial investment are key areas of analysis. It is important to recognize the significance of integrated building systems design in the overall efficiency of the design.

Pricing Guidance

Pricing documents and project-specific guidance are available from the Office of Real Property Asset Management and the Office of the Chief Architect's (OCA) Construction Excellence and Project Management Division (see "Appendix G").

GSA's Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service (P-100)

The *P-100* lays out the performance standards for new construction and major renovation projects. Updated regularly, it is the principal source for the systems and structural standards that must be met in GSA buildings.

Pre-Planning

- Conducts BERs to evaluate building systems.

Feasibility Study

- Defines the project's program goals and performance requirements, which influence systems decisions.
- Highlights special needs and alternative choices to meet those needs.

Program Development Study

- Makes general systems choices, based on performance and program requirements.

Fire Protection Engineering and Life Safety

It is the policy of GSA to provide a safe and healthful workplace for federal employees, contractors, and the visiting public; to protect federal real and personal property; to ensure continuity of the missions of occupant agencies; and to provide safeguards to allow emergency forces to accomplish their missions safely. To ensure that no aspect of a building's design or operation presents an unacceptable risk, a fire protection engineering and life safety assessment is required in the Pre-Planning phase prior to the Feasibility Study. Fire protection and life safety issues have some impact on all aspects of any project design, be it a ventilation system design, security enhancements, or historic preservation, to name a few.

Pre-Planning

- Completes a fire protection engineering and life safety assessment for all of the GSA facilities that may be affected.
- Identifies all potential exposures to risk of loss of life or property, or federal tenant mission interruption from the effects of fire.
- Recommends appropriate risk-reduction strategies.

Feasibility Study

- Establishes the project's direction and scope, based on the risk-reduction strategies identified in the fire protection engineering and life safety assessment.
- Develops a plan to implement the risk-reduction strategies.
- Establishes design budgets that are sufficient to incorporate the risk-reduction strategies.

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Program Development Study

- Evaluates the fire protection engineering and life safety assessment, based on the project's direction established in the Feasibility Study.
- Ensures that the proposed construction costs are sufficient to support the fire protection engineering and life safety goals for the project.
- Ensures that required fire protection and life safety mitigating measures that affect the construction budget or schedule are incorporated into the construction request.

Hazardous Materials

Asbestos, lead, and PCBs are the remnants of now-discarded building technologies with known potential for harm. An assessment of these materials and any other hazardous conditions is needed for all R&A projects of facilities constructed in the era when these materials were used. An accurate inventory that includes the locations of these materials in existing facilities can help the project team plan for encapsulation, mitigation, or removal and is important for preparing the project budget and schedule.

Pre-Planning

- Conducts an assessment of hazardous materials, prepares abatement strategies, and acquires abatement materials as appropriate.

Feasibility Study

- Defines the extent of any contamination due to hazardous materials.
- Identifies strategies for the treatment of hazardous materials.
- Highlights special needs, alternative choices, and costs.

Program Development Study

- Develops detailed costs and programs to address requirements regarding the treatment of hazardous materials.

Life-Cycle Costing

Project development always requires finding a balance among product performance, initial investment, operations and maintenance, environmental impact, and long-term replacement. This is especially true in selecting building systems, fixtures, and finishes. Life-cycle costing evaluates *all* ownership costs by comparing a product's initial investment costs to its future costs for operations, maintenance, repair, and replacement (refer to the *P-100*).

Setback or Isolation?

The standoff distance required for many federal facilities can have an unfortunate impact on the image and potential use of the site if they are not carefully planned and designed. Thoughtful planning should address the site design of public spaces and facility perimeters.

Pre-Planning

- Understands current facility operating costs compared to desired benchmarks.

Feasibility Study

- Compares the relative life-cycle costs of the alternatives.

Program Development Study

- Considers multiple micro-level alternatives and compares the life-cycle costs of various options (especially regarding building systems choices).

Security Requirements

Security requirements may consist of progressive collapse, blast mitigation, glass fragmentation, and standoff distances, among others. Security requirements differ significantly from one facility and customer agency to another, as do the key agencies responsible for providing security at a facility. The Federal Protective Service, U.S. Marshals, security specialists for law enforcement customers, and Building Security Committees play key roles. As detailed security requirements continue to evolve, consult these individuals and include them on the Feasibility Study and PDS teams.

During pre-planning or early in project development, a security/risk assessment process is performed to determine the protection level classification deemed necessary for the facility. The process includes a blast and progressive collapse analysis of the structure, based on the current Interagency Security Committee (ISC) security requirements, and a risk analysis per the procedures of the latest PBS guidance and the *P-100* design requirements. Security costs must be tracked separately and are reflected on the OA as Building-Specific Security.

Pre-Planning

- Works with Building Security Committees; conduct studies to identify threats and appropriate countermeasures.
- Assesses progressive collapse potential of existing buildings, using performance criteria set by ISC/GSA guidelines.

Feasibility Study

- Establishes security-level requirements for the customer agency and the facility and the performance requirements for glass fragmentation, perimeter security, and so forth.

What's Important and When

- Evaluates special requirements and costs associated with sensitive occupancy or facility types.
- Evaluates each alternative's ability to meet security needs.

Program Development Study

- Refines specific countermeasures and costs associated with the preferred alternative.
- Refines the project's design strategy and costs to meet performance requirements for progressive collapse.

Seismic Safety

Detailed solutions for seismic safety are developed during the project's design phase. Fundamental decisions about the mix of existing or new buildings that can meet the project's goals are developed during the Feasibility Study, whereas the PDS refines the solution and develops specific construction costs.

Pre-Planning

- Conducts seismic studies to evaluate building risk and requirements.

Feasibility Study

- Assesses the ability of existing buildings to meet seismic performance requirements for their construction type and seismic conditions set by ICSSC/Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Completes studies needed to make such assessments, estimates associated costs, and includes needed work in site/design funding proposal.

Program Development Study

- Refines the project's design strategy and costs to meet seismic performance requirements.

Telecommunications and IT

GSA provides infrastructure for distribution of telecommunications systems. Customer agencies are responsible for service distribution costs.

During project development, project teams gather telecommunications requirements from the tenant agency's representatives and GSA's Federal Technology Service (FTS). FTS is the source of the most current GSA Telecommunications Policy. Telecom issues affecting project development include impacts on schedule, design and construction coordination, facility support needs, and pricing.

Pre-Planning

- Tracks operation of current systems and stays aware of changing customer requirements.

Feasibility Study

- Highlights special telecommunications needs that impact project design strategy, phasing, or costs (e.g., 24-hour operations, allowable downtimes, sensitive equipment, and operations). These are also incorporated into the Project Management Plan's implementation strategy.

Program Development Study

- Develops budget and implementation strategies to support the Construction Prospectus.

Total Building Commissioning

Total Building Commissioning is the PBS process for quality assurance in new construction and facility modernization. It is the process for achieving, validating, and documenting that the performance of the total building and its systems meet the owner's design needs and requirements.

Pre-Planning

- Becomes familiar with building commissioning process.

Feasibility Study

- Determines appropriate building commissioning practice for the project and budgets for related costs.
- Identifies the process for quality assurance.

Program Development Study

- Establishes the team for building commissioning.
- Refines the process for quality assurance.
- Develops budget for building commissioning, based on Commissioning Practice Level.

Legacy Activities

Legacy activities go beyond basic customer needs and facility requirements to exemplify the long-term value that the federal facilities and programs contribute to the protection of national resources and improved quality of the built environment.

Art in Architecture

GSA's Art in Architecture program incorporates fine art into the design of new federal buildings and major renovation projects. The commissioning process includes public participation and is coordinated with the early stages of the design process. Project budgets must reserve a minimum of one-half of one percent of the estimated construction cost to commission original works by living artists. This minimum can be increased if the Regional Office and the Art in Architecture program staff believe that an increase is appropriate (e.g., the estimated construction cost is too small for an appropriate commission, or the project could make a significant public art contribution to the community). Documents and project-specific guidance are available from each Regional Fine Arts Officer and the OCA's Center for Design Excellence and the Arts (see "Appendix G").

Pre-Planning

- Conserves existing commissioned pieces and conducts studies as appropriate.

Feasibility Study

- Assesses the public nature of the building and the resulting public art opportunities.
- Determines the appropriate funding level of art.
- Includes a budget for Art in Architecture in the Site/Design Prospectus proposal.
- Includes a commissioning process in the submitted Project Management Plan.

Program Development Study

- Includes design directives for Art in Architecture.
- Proposes design directives and a budget to reflect unique opportunities that may warrant additional funding.

Money Matters

Like all project considerations, Design Excellence, urban development, historic preservation, and other legacy goals depend on budgets set years before design begins.

While the project teams must always manage the budget and make trade-offs, quality projects require that these legacy goals be planned for throughout the process.

Early Expectations Influence Later Abilities

The flexibility accorded to any design team is largely established years before design begins. The Feasibility Study must anticipate the impact of planning and site decisions on design possibilities and avoid problems based on inaccurate assumptions. Addressing customer expectations during the Feasibility Study and PDS processes is paramount.

Design Excellence

GSA's Design Excellence program seeks to bring the world's top design talent to GSA projects. The selection of the architect/engineer (A/E) is an early step in the process. Its success is dependent upon effective project development during the Feasibility Stage. Successful projects deliver buildings that support the customer and proudly represent the quality and stature of the federal government to both building users and the community.

Pre-Planning

- Develops basic understanding of the Design Excellence program.

Feasibility Study

- Establishes the fundamental project parameters and the scope for the project.
- Ensures adequate site acquisition and design budgets.
- Sets customer expectations to allow for a high-quality design effort later.
- Addresses community expectations.

Program Development Study

- Ensures adequate construction funding to cover “the right scope” with appropriate fixtures, finishes, and site development.

First Impressions

The First Impressions program seeks to enhance the public's perception of the federal government by improving the appearance and experience of working in and visiting GSA's public buildings. The program concentrates on renovations to existing properties: improving the quality of the asset by enhancing lobbies, streamlining security, and addressing other key features that make up the “first impression” of the building. The program offers a network of resources to assist Property Managers and project teams in addressing these issues.

Although many First Impressions projects are carried out below the Prospectus level, GSA's Capital Program offers an excellent opportunity to incorporate the First Impressions principles throughout the inventory. Buildings under consideration for capital R&A projects should be carefully analyzed to determine how they would benefit from these types of upgrades.

What's Important and When

Pre-Planning

- Examines the essential functions, overall appearance, and image of the building's public areas; initiates First Impressions activities at the property management level.

Feasibility Study

- Identifies First Impressions enhancements that should be included in the capital project.

Program Development Study

- Includes First Impressions projects in the overall project design and funding strategy.

Historic Resources

GSA is committed to successful stewardship of all resources under its control, whether recently constructed facilities or those of historic, archaeological, and cultural status. Early planning and frequent, informal consultation is the key to successful stewardship of historic resources under GSA's control or impact. GSA must complete the external compliance reviews prescribed by Section 106 of the NHPA before deciding on a specific project alternative. (See "Appendix H" for more information on NHPA Section 106).

Building Preservation Plans (BPPs) provide essential information for selection of the basic project approach. As prescribed in the *Planning Call*, BPPs are required for all projects where the proposed alternative involves historic buildings. These include both federal and lease construction projects that affect or reuse historic buildings. BPPs should be prepared either in advance or in concert with the Feasibility Study for all GSA properties that may be affected.

Project teams should consult their Regional Historic Preservation Officer (RHPO) at the earliest opportunity to identify potential preservation issues and create a plan to address any issues. The *GSA Preservation Desk Guide* provides detailed guidance to help develop scope and qualification standards for architect selection that will ensure GSA's stewardship of historic resources, bolster GSA's credibility with outside review groups, and minimize the risk of delay.

Don't Forget the Study Money

The cost for additional historic preservation studies and remediation may be relatively small, but studies may be difficult to fund because of tight operational budgets (BA61). Make sure to include the cost of the studies in the project funding in order to fully understand and plan for the project's design and construction requirements.

Pre-Planning

- Conducts BPPs.

Feasibility Study

- Sets customer expectations about the process and requirements of assessing, protecting, and renovating historic properties, archaeological sites, and cultural landscapes.
- Identifies historic districts and properties that may be affected.
- Develops a plan to implement the project in accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA.
- Uses BPPs to shape preferred alternatives and decisions about adaptive reuse.
- Establishes the project's direction, based on consideration of macro-level alternatives that affect the fundamental disposition of historic resources (e.g., demolition, new construction, disposal, or restoration).
- Suggests opportunities to further GSA's preservation goals.
- Establishes design budgets that are sufficient to meet NHPA Section 106 obligations.
- Ensures that project design/construction budgets include anticipated costs for archaeological resource identification, recovery, and construction as needed.
- Provides time and resources to identify, understand, and address community interests.

Program Development Study

- Conducts detailed investigations to guide the design effort and establish sufficient budgets in Construction Prospectus that can meet preservation goals.
- Evaluates micro-level alternatives, based on the project direction established in the Feasibility Study (e.g., incorporation of modern systems into a historic building).
- Uses BPPs to shape detailed proposals and cost estimates for projects that affect historic buildings and districts.

NEPA

As a federal agency, GSA must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This requires that GSA consider alternatives and relative impacts of its actions *during the decision process*. NEPA may be more relevant to new construction projects (in comparison to R&A), but it must always be considered. New projects may require more detailed actions, such as Environmental Assessments (EAs) or Environmental Impact Statements (EISs). Although some impacts cannot be addressed properly until the design phase, early evaluation of alternatives and the development of realistic customer expectations are key tasks. The GSA's *NEPA Desk Guide* provides detailed information on both the NEPA requirements and the evaluation process. Much of the NEPA activity occurs during site selection, when alternate sites are evaluated and the preferred sites are fully examined before acquisition.

Pre-Planning

- Becomes familiar with conditions in the assets and community that may be addressed on the NEPA Checklist.

Feasibility Study

- Considers the NEPA-related impacts of various alternatives.
- Begins informal consultations with local officials, stakeholders, and/or experts.
- Ensures that the customer understands the NEPA process and sets expectations accordingly.
- Includes a plan for the NEPA process in the Project Management Plan that supports the Site/Design Prospectus.
- Provides supporting information for GSA's Environmental Checklist, which is submitted with the Site/Design Prospectus.

Program Development Study

- Ensures that required NEPA mitigation measures that affect the construction budget or schedule are incorporated into the construction request.

Site Selection

The site is not selected until after a thorough site investigation, which occurs later in the process, typically two or more years after the Feasibility Study's completion. The Feasibility Study sets the parameters and direction that are crucial to the acquisition of a high-quality site that meets the project's needs. *The Site Selection Guide* is a valuable tool to consult throughout the process, from the feasibility phase through final site acquisition.

Pointed in the Right Direction?

The Feasibility Study investigates potential sites and constructability, estimates acquisition costs, and supports the site/design funding request.

During the authorization process, the project then “floats” forward on the quality of that initial work, along with the customer’s expectations, sometimes for several years before formal site selection and acquisition can begin. Then the site investigation process starts anew.

Like a boat that has temporarily cut its engines (for two years), problems will arise if the project has been drifting in the wrong direction.

The Feasibility Study establishes the budget for site selection, including the costs for the site, tenant and utility relocation, demolition, and hazardous materials abatement. The Site Selection Study “informs” the PDS in matters of site design and construction.

Pre-Planning

- Develops working relationships with local stakeholders.
- Shares long-range plans and becomes familiar with potential sites in the community.

Feasibility Study

- Proposes project size, scope, typical floor plate size, setbacks, and other requirements that drive the size, location requirements, and cost of the site and play a major role in building massing and design decisions.
- Evaluates both the market capacity and the acquisition cost to supply a sufficient site at the time of acquisition.
- Begins to set customer and community expectations about the future site selection.

Program Development Study

- Reviews the Site Selection Study and refines site preparation and construction costs. Construction costs for new courthouse projects are provided by the Center for Courthouse Programs.
- Uses the most up-to-date site information (including subsoil, contamination, urban design, expansion requirements, demolition, and relocation) to ensure that the project funding request is sufficient to build on a typical site in the delineated area.

Sustainable Design

Building performance can be optimized and impacts to the environment and health can be reduced when sustainability concerns are addressed at the beginning of a project. GSA has adopted the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system as a measure for sustainable design. All GSA projects for new and fully renovated buildings must achieve LEED Certification, and a Silver rating is encouraged.

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Choices made in the early stages of a project regarding siting, building footprint, use of resources, building systems, and fenestration will have lasting impacts on energy and water consumption and the indoor environmental quality for the occupants. Documents and project-specific guidance are available through the Regional Build Green Coordinator.

Pre-Planning

- Knows facility energy performance compared to benchmarks.

Feasibility Study

- Includes sufficient sustainable design strategies for the project.
- Proposes and evaluates alternatives and full life-cycle implications accordingly.
- Documents the discussion and decision process for the LEED Certification file.

Program Development Study

- Establishes sustainable design goals and refines architectural, systems, and operational choices in light of these goals.
- Uses the LEED Checklist to identify specific sustainable design strategies to meet the project's goals.
- Proposes a construction budget that can accomplish sustainable design goals.

Urban Development

GSA is committed by policy and law to consult with communities about how our projects can support local development efforts. Early project development is key to identifying opportunities and potential risks associated with community issues. These discussions and the relationships and knowledge they provide are fundamental to a project's success. Important topics include parking, urban design, transit planning, public spaces, site selection, and building operations and shared uses. The Feasibility Study and the PDS must proactively identify issues and opportunities and propose the scope, schedule, and funding that are responsive to local conditions.

Pre-Planning

- Develops working relationships with local stakeholders; shares long-range plans; and collaborates on client neighborhood needs and concerns.

Feasibility Study

- Proactively identifies community issues and opportunities to support goals.
- Begins informal consultations with local officials and stakeholders to create positive impacts and manage risks.

- Proposes responsive design scope and funding, including site/landscape development.
- Outlines a process for early community consultation and coordination in the Project Management Plan.
- Sets customer expectations.

Program Development Study

- Ensures that proposed construction costs are sufficient to support project's community coordination, urban design, and public space (First Impressions) goals.
- Ensures that project design/construction budgets include anticipated costs for archaeological resource identification and recovery, plus other activities as needed.

Project Implementation

Implementation strategies have a significant impact on a project's success. Diligent planning, inspired design, and adequate budget preparation can all come undone without adequate coordination and attention during the implementation phase.

Cost Estimates

The level of cost estimate required of the Feasibility Study and PDS is one of their most significant differences. Requirements and estimating techniques also vary, depending on the type of project. In all cases, the relevant *Planning Call* specifies the required cost estimating.

Pre-Planning Phase

- Maintains familiarity with the latest GSA *Pricing Desk Guide* and cost estimating policy.

Feasibility Study

- Develops cost estimates based on the most recent *General Construction Cost Review Guide (GCCRG)* or other standards, per the *Planning Call*.
- Provides cost estimates prepared by a third-party estimator who does not have a financial stake in the project's total cost (e.g., excludes the A/E of Record or Construction Manager, CM, at Risk).
- Applies applicable programming and pricing models to new courthouse and border station construction projects.

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- Derives cost estimates for existing buildings from prior-study cost information (e.g., BER, BPP, blast, seismic, hazardous materials), TI cost estimates, First Impressions program activities, charrettes, and detailed cost estimates where other cost information is not available. The Project Cost Estimate form (UNIFORMAT II) should be used for R&A estimates of existing buildings.
- Establishes shell, TI, and security budgets.
- Develops the site acquisition budget based on a short list of potential sites, test fits, projected costs, and likely future real estate market issues.

Program Development Study

- Provides Project Cost Estimate form in UNIFORMAT II, Level 3 or other documentation as required in the *Planning Call* (see “Appendix G”).
- Incorporates knowledge gained by destructive testing/investigations.
- Applies applicable programming and pricing models to new courthouse and border station construction projects. For projects proposing new courthouse construction, the OCA’s Center for Courthouse Programs develops benchmark construction costs.
- Revalidates and refines shell, TI, and security budgets.

Procurement Method

Selection of the procurement method is an important task within the project’s implementation (and is included in the PMP). There are procurement choices for both the design and the construction processes. Procurement methods depend on the needs and complexity of each project. Designers should be hired through the Design Excellence program, using either the two-stage or three-stage (design competition or charrette) process. Construction may be procured through various options. These include the traditional design-bid-build, CM at Risk, design/build, and bridging methods. Primary consideration is always to select the best option to deliver a high-quality project, on time, and under budget while managing risk and flexibility.

Pre-Planning

- Understands procurement methods and their strategies and weaknesses.

Feasibility Study

- Sets project delivery method.
- Confines delivery options based on parameters established in the Site/Design Prospectus.

New Courthouse Construction Budgets

These budgets are established via benchmark by the OCA’s Center for Courthouse Programs. If the site presents special needs or opportunities, the PDS and Site Selection Study must identify and address additional construction funding that is required. These additional site costs also must be approved by the OCA for incorporation into the project.

Traditional vs. New Thinking on Procurement

GSA no longer recommends a “traditional” design-bid-build method for every project.

Instead, GSA recommends tailoring the delivery method to the needs of the project. Non-traditional techniques, such as CM at Risk, design/build, and bridging, may provide significant gains in managing costs, improving quality, speeding delivery, and managing risk.

Call on the Construction Excellence and Project Management Division

Guidance for effective PMPs and project management practices is available through the Construction Excellence and Project Management Division (see “Appendix G”).

Program Development Study

- Evaluates and refines proposed delivery method, based on current and more detailed information.
- Informs choices about construction and construction management procurement methods.

Project Management Plan (PMP)

The PMP describes how the project is to be accomplished. Cost, quality, and schedule are key components of project implementation and critical factors of the PMP. Development of the management strategy begins during the Feasibility Study; continues through PDS development, the design process, and construction activities; and concludes with the project’s turnover to building management and customer occupancy—the point when the rent start is complete.

Its scope includes all aspects of program management—Work Plan, schedule, quality assurance, communications, and controls—to deliver maximum return in line with GSA’s business goals. Implementation strategies are evaluated in the Feasibility Study and PDS and then are presented and updated in the project’s PMP.

Pre-Planning

- Prepares to support the development of the PMP with knowledge gained from day-to-day operations.

Feasibility Study

- Evaluates alternatives for project phasing and procurement.
- Proposes the implementation strategy and incorporates the strategy into the PMP to support the Site/Design Prospectus.
- Initiates the long-term strategies for success, such as enlisting community participation and planning for sustainable design.

Program Development Study

- Validates or modifies, then refines the Feasibility Study’s recommended actions for implementation, procurement strategies, and delivery method.
- Refines implementation strategy in detail for project implementation and its PMP.

Capital Program Support

Asset Planning

GSA must shape its Capital Program and portfolio decisions with consideration to their context. The Local Portfolio Plan (LPP) and Asset Business Plan (ABP) are important tools and typically are required by the *Planning Call*. The LPP helps to make GSA portfolio decisions within the larger community, with respect to GSA's multi-asset needs in that community. The ABP helps to make asset-specific project decisions, with respect to each asset's holistic needs and GSA's long-term plans for the asset.

Pre-Planning

- Maintains up-to-date ABPs and forges effective asset team.

Feasibility Study

- Evaluates broad alternatives that may impact multiple GSA properties and the community.
- Relies on the LPP and relevant ABPs.

Program Development Study

- Evaluates more focused micro-level alternatives, often within a single GSA property.
- Relies most heavily on ABPs.

Budget Development

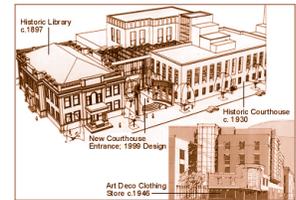
The Feasibility Study and the PDS must incorporate the required cost estimate types and sources, as outlined in the latest *Planning Call*. Both studies must clearly define the firewall that separates the budgets for shell and TI costs.

Pre-Planning

- Tracks budget development and performance in GSA projects.

Feasibility Study

- Ensures that the site budget for future site acquisition is sufficient, based on macro-level program test fits, likely availabilities, and supportable market data.
- Creates a budget that can accommodate potential changes in the project definition due to site acquisition issues, mission or operation changes at the customer agency, and increased costs.



Erie, PA

Visitors to the new Erie Courthouse complex see how GSA's Capital Program meets customer needs and contributes to our national built legacy, but they won't see all the planning that made it possible.

Early in the Feasibility Study, it was clear that the court's needs were growing faster than anticipated. The team needed a creative solution. After studying options, they recommended renovation of the endangered Beaux-Arts county library, an Art Deco men's store, and a Moderne federal building linked together with a new annex.

The complex testifies to the value of creative thinking and the positive impact of GSA's Capital Program for an entire community.

You'll Need a Site for That

Sites are the most obvious prerequisite for a good project, but planning for site costs can be tricky. Land costs can vary significantly, even within a submarket, and a site's availability and suitability can change. Although site acquisition occurs later, the Feasibility Study should identify the relevant site acquisition issues and potential volatility.

A skilled appraiser who knows the local market must look at potential sites and provide supportable *future* site costs for input into the analysis. This is necessary to develop a sufficient budget that is defensible to stakeholders.

The Site Selection Guide is a key resource to use when developing effective site acquisition strategies and budgets.

- Ensures that the design and management and inspection (M&I) budgets are sufficient.
- Provides a sound estimate for construction costs of the shell, TI, and GSA-provided security improvements.

Program Development Study

- Ensures that the construction funding request is sufficient.
- Refines construction or site prep costs, as needed, to provide a sound funding request for the shell, security improvements, and TIs.
- Complies with courthouse or border station program and Cost Benchmarks, where applicable.

Financial Analysis

Both Feasibility Study and PDS documents, as well as the Capital Program submission that they support, must meet *Planning Call* requirements for financial analysis. Typically, these include the pro forma, the return on investment (ROI) analysis, and The Automated Prospectus System (TAPS) analyses for both design and construction phase funding requests. Although professional services firms may develop the inputs to these analyses (especially for complex projects), Real Property Asset Management staff and the project teams must run the final models and thoroughly understand the inputs in order to support the project through the authorization process.

Pre-Planning

- Maintains skills to perform financial analysis.

Feasibility Study

- Refines all of the estimates for feasibility analysis, including estimates required to compare the preferred alternative to other viable alternatives.
- Provides inputs for financial analysis as specified in the *Planning Call*, including vacant space created during construction, and swing space costs.

Program Development Study

- Provides sound estimates for construction cost and implementation analysis, including sufficient estimates required to compare the preferred alternative to other viable alternatives.

What's Important and When

The Planning Call

The *Planning Call* is issued annually in advance of the Capital Program submissions. It describes the content for each Feasibility Study and PDS to be submitted that year. The specific format requirements of each *Planning Call* vary, but many of the same topics are included each year.

The Feasibility Study and the PDS play essential roles in developing the Capital Program. These studies shape the proposals, help explain them to stakeholders, and guide decision-making throughout the process. For these reasons, it is important that these studies meet the specific requirements of each Capital Program *Planning Call*.

Pre-Planning

- Provides background studies needed during feasibility and PDS phases.

Feasibility Study

- Provides analysis and a recommended alternative for the Site/Design Prospectus.
- Supports the recommendation of the delineated area cited in the Site/Design Prospectus.

Program Development Study

- Supports the Construction Prospectus.

Planning Call

The *Planning Call* provides the detailed submission requirements for each year's Capital Program. The regional Real Property Asset Management staff can provide the latest requirements of the *Planning Call*.