



GSA Public Buildings Service

National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act Program





Lighthouses, also known as light stations, are widely recognized as cultural landmarks throughout the United States. They represent the significant contributions that mariners have made to our country for industrial, territorial, and recreational purposes. Many states and communities around the country have adopted their local light station as a symbol of the creation and duration of their township.

Historically, lighthouses have provided a constant beacon for traveling mariners searching for safe coastal waters. With recent technological advances, light stations are no longer needed exclusively for this purpose but are being sought to provide a continued cultural resonance for future generations.

The National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act (NHLPA) program takes pride in its work with states, local communities, and the public to convey these historic properties to new stewards that will continue preserving their memories and historic significance.

introduction



NHLLPA conveyance process

The National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act outlines the two phase process that places priority on no-cost transfers to public bodies and non profit organizations. The competitive process allows eligible entities to submit an application to determine whether they are qualified for the no-cost transfer of an available light station.

Those eligible to express interest and apply for a historic light station under the NHLLPA include federal agencies, state and local governments, and nonprofit organizations. In the event no steward is identified through this application process, the program authorizes GSA to sell the historic light station through a public sale.

The major steps of the process are described below along with a NHLLPA flowchart.

Phase 1 – Identification of Excess Light Station The USCG identifies which historic light stations are excess to its needs. The USCG provides GSA with a complete Report of Excess (ROE) for repositioning the property through the NHLLPA process.

Phase 2 – Notice of Availability GSA issues a notice of availability (NOA) for each excess historic light station. The notice announces that the historic light station is available for conveyance through the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act Program. It provides 60 days for eligible entities to submit a letter expressing interest in applying for the light station.

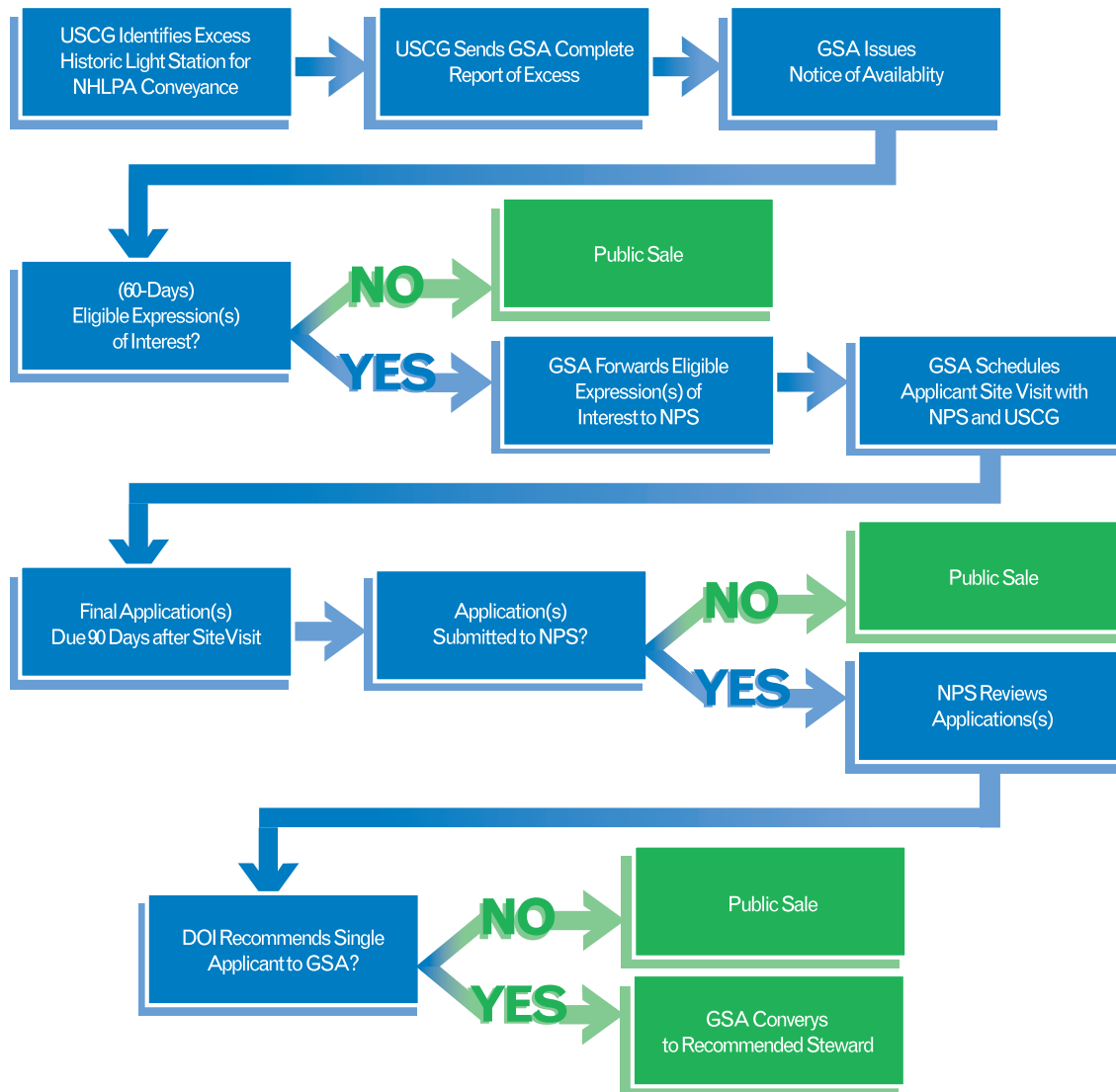
Phase 3 – Competitive Application Process and Conveyance (as applicable) GSA forwards the list of interested parties to the NPS and schedules a site visit for potential applicants in coordination with NPS and USCG. NPS provides applications to interested parties who must submit them within 90 days after the site visit.

The NPS evaluates and scores all completed applications. The Secretary of Interior either recommends a single suitable applicant to GSA or indicates that the NPS did not receive any suitable applications. GSA transfers the light station at no cost to the recommended steward.

Phase 4 – Public Sale (as necessary) If no one expresses interest, no application is submitted to the National Park Service, or no applicant is approved to receive the historic light station, GSA may convey the property though a public sale.

NHLPA Conveyance Process Flowchart

The flowchart below outlines the process of locating appropriate stewards for light stations in the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act Program:



Federal Government roles & responsibilities



The U.S. Coast Guard identifies and reports excess light stations to GSA.



GSA issues the notices of availability (NOAs). GSA is responsible for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for its conveyance action. GSA is also responsible for coordinating the necessary historic preservation measures with the appropriate SHPO.



The National Park Service issues NHLPA applications to qualified public entities and reviews and evaluates applicants to determine the

most eligible grantee for no-cost NHLPA properties. The Secretary of Interior recommends a single steward to GSA or informs GSA that there is no recommended applicant.

GSA conducts public sales when no steward is identified through the application process. GSA also develops and executes the legal documents for light stations conveyed via no-cost transfers and public sales.

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no-cost transfers under NHLPA

Who is Eligible. According to NHLPA, those eligible to apply for a historic light station include any federal department or agency; any department or agency of the state in which the historic light station is located; the local government of the community in which the historic light station is located and certified nonprofit corporations. In applying for the historic light station, applicants must describe a proposed use for the property and include necessary information for GSA's National Environmental Policy Act analysis. Applicants must also demonstrate financial ability to maintain the historic light station.

Applicants must also agree to comply with the statutory terms of conveyance and to have the conditions recorded with the deed of title to the historic light station.

Notices of Availability Eligible light stations are announced through a NOA that is sent directly to known interested parties, published in local newspapers, and posted online at <https://propertydisposal.gsa.gov> and <http://www.nps.gov/maritime/nhlpa/nhlpa.htm>.



Responding to a Notice of Availability Once the NOA is issued, potential applicants have 60 days to submit a letter of interest to GSA and a copy of the letter to the SHPO of the state in which the lighthouse is located.

All letters of interest must include:

- Name of the light station property;
- Name of the potential applicant(s);
- Point of contact, title, address, phone number(s) and e-mail;

Additionally, nonprofit organizations must provide a copy of their state-certified articles of incorporation.

GSA will provide the NPS with a list of eligible entities from information provided in these letters. NPS will mail applications to them.

NHLPA Application Process GSA coordinates with the USCG and the NPS to schedule a site visit for applicants to inspect the historic light station. Within 90 days of the site visit, interested parties must complete and submit an application to NPS for review.

The NPS assesses applications on the merits of the financial and management plan and the plan for historic preservation and use. The Secretary of Interior recommends a single applicant to GSA. Upon receipt of this recommendation, GSA prepares the conveyance

◀ *New London Harbor Light, CT*

documents. These include covenants in the deed for historic preservation and, as applicable, the Coast Guard's right of access for any light station conveyed with an active aid to navigation (ATON). The deed also references the grantee's covenant agreement with the NPS.

Public Sales If no one expresses interest, no application is submitted, or, as determined by the Secretary of Interior, no applicants are qualified, GSA is authorized to sell the historic light station. GSA usually conducts its sales through competitive online auctions. Available light stations for sale are posted at <https://realestatesales.gov/>.

Specific instructions for bidding, as well as any special terms of sale, are included in the Invitation for Bid (IFB) package. For more information on acquiring federal property by public sale, please see our brochure "A Guide to Buying Federal Real Estate" or visit GSA's website at <https://propertydisposal.gsa.gov>.

Ludington North Breakwater Light, MI ►►



frequently asked questions about the NHLPA Program

How does National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act Program define historic light stations? To be deemed as “historic,” light stations must be included, or eligible for inclusion, in the National Register of Historic Places. According to National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act, “light stations” include the light tower, lighthouse, keeper’s dwelling, garages, storage sheds, oil house, fog signal building, boat house, barn, pump house, tram house support structures, piers, walkways, underlying and attached land, and related real property and any associated improvements.

Why are so many light stations no longer being used by the federal government? Continuous advancements in navigational technology have reduced the Coast Guard’s need to operate light stations. While USCG currently maintains many ATONs for mariner navigation, the lighthouse structures may not be needed. In addition, implementation of NHLPA has demonstrated that there are many qualified stewards with the expertise and motivation to maintain these resources.

Which light stations will be conveyed through the NHLPA Program? USCG is responsible for determining which light stations are excess to its mission needs. Only excess historic light stations can be conveyed via NHLPA. Non-historic light stations that are excess are typically

conveyed through GSA’s authority under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949.

Are there any special provisions that light station stewards must adhere to in the NHLPA Program? If conveyed under GSA’s no-cost transfer process, the light station must be used for educational, park, recreational, cultural, or historic preservation uses that are accessible to the general public. The National Park Service is responsible for ensuring the new steward operates the light station appropriately. When a light station is sold through public auction, the new owner has fewer use restrictions. However, with both, new owners must adhere to applicable historic preservation requirements and provide USCG access to maintain any active aids to navigation.

What is an ATON and are light station stewards responsible for their maintenance? Light stations are historically recognized for their contributions to the U.S. Aids to Navigation System which assists mariners when traveling through waterway channels. Many of the ATONs have been automated to minimize ongoing maintenance requirements. However, several light station beacons still use the original lighting mechanism (such as a Fresnel lens), which tends to be more delicate and requires the use of special preservation and maintenance techniques. USCG reserves the right to continue maintaining active ATONs after transferring light stations to new stewards.



light station conveyance case studies

◀ Currituck Beach Light Station, NC

St. Augustine Lighthouse

Location: St. Augustine, FL

Conveyance Mechanism: Transferred to the nonprofit organization, Saint Augustine Light and Museum, Inc. in 2002



Summary: The site of the St. Augustine Lighthouse was originally home to a Spanish watchtower built in the late 1500s and later became Florida's first lighthouse in 1824. The current St. Augustine Lighthouse was built in 1874 to replace the original tower and stands at 165 feet. In July 2002, St. Augustine Lighthouse became the first light station conveyed through the NHLPA program. GSA transferred the property along with the original First Order fresnel lens to the St. Augustine Light and Museum, Inc. The organization welcomes an average of 200,000 visitors annually. The mission of the nonprofit steward is "to discover, preserve, present and keep alive the story of the nation's oldest port, as symbolized by the working St. Augustine Lighthouse." In keeping with its mission, the nonprofit hosts a number of unique exhibits and its educational department teaches the story of the lighthouse through tours, outreach programs, events, camps, and lectures. The St. Augustine Light and Museum staff members are recognized as national experts in restoration and museum operations. The successful preservation efforts at St. Augustine Lighthouse have made it a model for other lighthouse stewards across the country.

Fun Fact: The St. Augustine Lighthouse's First Order Fresnel lens, which is one of only 14 still in operation, consists of 370 hand-cut glass prisms arranged in a beehive shape measuring 12 feet tall and 6 feet in diameter.

Lubec Channel Light Station

Location: Lubec, ME

Conveyance Mechanism: Conveyed to a private citizen after a competitive public auction in 2006



Summary: Lubec Channel Light Station is located on nine acres of offshore submerged land near the town of Lubec, Maine. The 'sparkplug' style light was built in 1890 and consists of a white, conical 40 foot brick-lined cast iron tower with a 10-foot radius. The structure boasts 638 square feet of living space with a 360 degree water view and still serves as an active aid to navigation. In 2006, the lighthouse, deemed excess by the Coast Guard, was offered at no-cost to eligible entities under NHLPA. Since no qualified group applied for the lighthouse, it was sold by GSA via an online auction. The winning bid of \$46,000 was made by Gary Zarembo, President of the Artisan Restoration Group in New York, which specializes in the preservation and restoration of historically significant properties.

Fun Fact: : In 1989, Lubec Channel Lighthouse was slated for decommissioning, but residents launched a "Save the Sparkplug" campaign raising \$700,000. The resulting renovations included stabilization of the foundation which had begun to tilt. The lighthouse still has slight tilt but is considered stable.

Chicago Harbor Lighthouse

Location: Chicago, IL

Conveyance Mechanism: Transferred to the City of Chicago, IL



Summary: The Chicago Harbor Lighthouse is one of two surviving lighthouses in Illinois and was designated as a Chicago Landmark in 2003. The lighthouse was built in 1893 as part of a larger harbor improvement project in preparation for the Chicago World's Fair held later that year. With a renovation of the harbor's breakwater in 1917, Congress appropriated \$88,000 to move the lighthouse from its original location at the mouth of the Chicago River to its current location at the end of the breakwater. The Coast Guard determined the lighthouse to be excess to its mission needs in 2005. In response to GSA's NOA, the City of Chicago expressed interest in applying for the lighthouse. After the Secretary of Interior recommended the City of Chicago as the new steward, GSA transferred the lighthouse to the City in February 2009. The City of Chicago seeks to educate the public on the historical significance of the lighthouse and its role in the maritime history and growth of Chicago.

Fun Fact: The original Third Order Fresnel lens used in the Chicago Harbor Lighthouse was originally destined for installation at the New Point Loma Lighthouse in California. However, after the lens was awarded a first-prize award at a Paris glass exhibition in 1889, the lens' maker Henri LePaute obtained permission to exhibit it at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, where it won another prize. The lens was then installed in the Chicago Harbor Lighthouse where it remained in use through the early 1960s..

Grays Harbor Lighthouse

Location: Westport, WA

Conveyance Mechanism: Transferred to the Non-Profit
Westport-South Beach Historical Society



Summary: Grays Harbor Light is named after Captain Robery Gray, an American fur trader, who first explored the area in May of 1792. As the area developed into a leading lumber port, Congress appropriated funds to build the Grays Harbor Lighthouse. Construction was completed in 1898, and the tower was equipped with a Third Order Fresnel lens with a unique red and white clamshell design made in Paris by Henri LePaute and Sons. GSA conveyed the Lighthouse to the Westport-South Beach Historical Society in 2004 through the NHLPA program. After conveyance, the Historical Society enacted a five-year plan to restore the lighthouse. Since 2004, the Historical Society has removed all lead-based paint, repainted the tower, and installed new electrical service and heaters to combat moisture problems. The lighthouse is open to the public from February through November, and for a small fee visitors can climb the stairs to the top to see the original Third Order Fresnel lens. The Historical Society also plans to develop the surrounding grounds into visitor friendly space with parking facilities, bathrooms, public tables, and more.

Fun Fact: 135 stairs lead to the lantern room at the top of the 107 foot lighthouse, which is the tallest in Washington and the third tallest on the West Coast. At the time of construction the lighthouse was only 400 feet from high tide, but due to a natural process of accretion, the tower is now 3,000 feet from high tide.

St. James (Beaver Harbor) Light

Location: St. James, MI

Conveyance Mechanism: Transferred to St. James
Township, MI



Summary: The St. James Light is located on Whisky Point, which is situated at the mouth of St. James Harbor on the northeast of Beaver Island. A light tower was first built at this location in 1856, but was replaced by the current 41 foot tower in 1870. The original Fourth Order Fresnel lens was automated in 1927 and is still in use as an active aid to navigation. The keeper's quarters were demolished during World War II. In 2004, the light was conveyed to the St. James Township. The Township is being aided by the non-profit Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association (GLLKA), which is providing general consulting services and fundraising and grant writing assistance. After taking ownership of the light, the Township obtained a grant from the State of Michigan to hire an historic architect. The architect conducted a full study of the light and developed a recommended restoration plan, which was subsequently approved by the State Historic Preservation Office. The Township has convened a committee to help determine the best way to fund and implement the restoration plan, which includes work on structural stabilization, masonry, and the elimination of moisture problems. Once the tower's restoration and stabilization process is complete, the Township's long-term plans are to restore the property to its early twentieth century configuration and character by rebuilding a replica of the original keeper's quarters, barn, and picket fence. Currently, the light is only open to the public on special occasions, but the Township hopes that once the restoration plans are complete, the site will serve historical and educational uses for the community.

Fun Fact: After the death of her husband, Elizabeth Whitney became the official keeper of St. James Light from 1872 to 1884, making her the first female lighthouse keeper on Lake Michigan and a pioneer for other female lighthouse keepers that came after her.

DeTour Reef Light Station

Location: Municipality of DeTour Village, MI

Conveyance Mechanism: PBC to Non-Profit

Grantee: DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society



Summary: The DeTour Reef Lighthouse was constructed in 1930 and placed into service in 1931 by the United States Lighthouse Service. The USCG began operating the light station in 1939. The DeTour Reef Light Preservation Society (the Society) obtained a long-term lease from the Coast Guard to preserve and restore the lighthouse. GSA conveyed the light station to the Society in 2010. The Society has made extraordinary efforts to maintain historic consistency and aesthetic continuum of the property. Copies of the original 1929 architectural drawings were obtained from the National Archives and Records Administration to ensure an accurate restoration of the structure. The Society has spent over \$1.2 million on the continuing renovation project. In keeping with its mission, the Society preserves its legacy through their Lighthouse Tour Program and Weekend Lighthouse Keeper Program. The Society also plans to include a permanent exhibit that will showcase original machinery and equipment, as well as scaled-down models of the various parts of the lighthouse. In recognition of its efforts, the Society was designated as a Preserve America Steward in 2010, and has been the recipient of several other awards, including the 2005 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation, and the Historical Society of Michigan's 2006 Superior Award.

Fun Fact: Parts of the original deck cranes were salvaged and used to build new deck cranes during the remodeling. Paint chips from the exterior of the original structure were given to a paint manufacturer, and the structure was repainted in the original colors. The Society also interviewed the last surviving member of the construction crew that built the Light in 1930 to get more information about properly restoring the structure.



- GSA has conveyed over 75 lighthouses through the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act program since enacted in 2000. For a complete listing, please visit our Lighthouse Program webpage at https://extportal.pbs.gsa.gov/ResourceCenter/content/lighthouse_customer.do.
- <https://propertydisposal.gsa.gov>: This GSA website provides a portal to various services offered by GSA's Office of Real Property Utilization and Disposal, including information about the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act of 2000. Users can also sign up for e-mail notifications when light stations become available under the National Historic Lighthouse Preservation Act Program.
- <https://realestatesales.gov>: Light stations posted for public sale will be listed on this website, which allows users to view auction information and submit bids. The site provides information on upcoming lighthouse auctions along with other federal real property sales.
- <http://www.cr.nps.gov/maritime/nhlpa/nhlpa.htm>: This NPS website provides additional information about the history of the NHLPA Program, an electronic copy of the NHLPA application, and an archived listing of prior Notices of Availability.
- <http://library.doi.gov/internet/subject/historic.html>: The Department of Interior's Library on Historic Preservation provides an array of relevant publications, laws, and links on this website.

additional resources



GSA Real Property Utilization and Disposal Zones

New England Region

General Services
Administration
Office of Utilization
and Disposal-1PZ
O'Neill Federal
Building
10 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02222
Tel: 617-565-5700
Fax: 617-565-5720

Great Lakes Region

General Services
Administration
Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal Division-
1PZC-5
77 West Jackson Street
Chicago, IL 60604
Tel: 312-353-6045
Fax: 312-886-0901

Pacific Rim Region

General Services
Administration
Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal Division-9PZ
450 Golden Gate
Avenue
San Francisco, CA
94102
Tel: 888-472-5263
Fax: 415-522-3213

National Capital Region

General Services
Administration
Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal Division
(WP12PZ)
7th & D Street, SW
Washington, DC 20407
Tel: 202-205-2127
Fax: 202-205-5295

Southeast Sunbelt Region

General Services
Administration
Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal Division-4PZ
77 Forsyth Street, SW
Suite 130
Atlanta, GA 30303
Tel: 404-331-5133
Fax: 404-331-2727

Greater Southwest Region

General Services
Administration
Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal Division -7PZ
819 Taylor Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
Tel: 817-978-2331
Fax: 817-978-2063

Northwest Artic Region

General Services
Administration
Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal Division
(9P2PZF)
400 15th Street SW
Auburn, WA 98001
Tel: 253-931-7547
Fax: 253-931-7554

Central Office

General Services
Administration
Office of Real Property
Utilization and
Disposal (PTZ)
1800 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20405
Tel: 202-501-0084
Fax: 202-501-2520

Front cover

Tybee Island Lighthouse
Complex, GA

Photographer: **Tybee Island
Historical Society**

inside cover

Whaleback Ledge Light, ME

Photographer: **Jeremy
D'Entremont**

Pages 2

Straitsmouth Light, MA

Photographer: **Jeremy
D'Entremont**

Pages 7

New London Harbor Light, CT

Photographer: **Jeremy
D'Entremont**

Pages 8

Ludington North Breakwater
Light, MI

Photographer: **Terry Pepper**
www.terrypepper.com

Pages 10

Currituck Beach Light Station, NC

Photographer: **John Lambeth,
North Carolina Farm Bureau
Federation**

Pages 12

St. Augustine Lighthouse, FL

Photographer: **St. Augustine
Light and Museum, Inc.**

Pages 14

Lubec Channel Light, ME

Photographer: **Kraig Anderson**
www.lighthousefriends.com

Pages 16

Chicago Harbor Lighthouse, IL

Photographer: **Nelson Cheung**

Pages 18

Grays Harbor Lighthouse, WA

Photographer: **Kraig Anderson**
www.lighthousefriends.com

Pages 20

St. James (Beaver Harbor) Light, MI

Photographer: **Terry Pepper**
www.terrypepper.com

Pages 22

DeTour Reef Light, MI

Photographer: **Sunny Covell**
www.drlps.com

Pages 24

Newport News Middle Ground
Light, VA

Photographer: **Kraig Anderson**
www.lighthousefriends.com

Pages 26

Sentinel Island Light, AK

Photographer: **Kraig Anderson**
www.lighthousefriends.com

Inside back cover

Cape Decision Light, AK

Photographer: **Cape Decision
Lighthouse Society**

Back cover

Charlevoix South Pierhead Light, MI

Photographer: **Kraig Anderson**
www.lighthousefriends.com

photo credits

Cape Decision Light, AK ▶▶





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Office of Real Property Utilization and Disposal

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U.S. General Services Administration
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Washington, DC 20405
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