

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF OVERSEAS BUILDINGS OPERATIONS

2019

INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP

ANNUAL MEETING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

HELD ON

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019

FROM

2:00 P.M. - 3:58 P.M.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. DAVIS: My name is Tad Davis. I'm the Director of the Overseas Buildings Operations and it's a pleasure on behalf of Secretary Mike Pompeo to welcome all of you to our Industry Advisory Group session this afternoon. We're delighted to have so many of you with us today to share a little bit of the insights into the inner workings of the Industry Advisory Group, but we'll also share with you some of the strategic priorities that we've developed for the OBO organization.

But, again, first and foremost, welcome to each and every one of you. We're delighted to have you with us today. And I think we've got a very good schedule set up for you for this afternoon, which will include a couple of readouts from some of our Industry Advisory Group advisors that will talk about some of the reviews we've conducted this year for some of our upcoming projects. I'll then rejoin them up here on

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the podium and give you a little overview of the strategic priorities for the Overseas Buildings Operations Bureau that we just rolled out yesterday for the entire Bureau. And so it will be a good update, you know, for you all in terms of what the five things are that we're going to be working toward in the coming months, if you will. And then that will be followed by a moderated panel, where we'll talk about site reuse, intervention, and renovation.

And so I think we've got a good afternoon planned for you. And what we've attempted to do also is to make sure that we've added a little bit of time in there for input from the audience, and also, you know, questions and answers, and comments as well. So, again, thanks so much for being with us.

And at this point in time I'm going to ask Craig Schwitter and Sarah Whiting to lead us in the industry participation readouts. Over to you all.

MR. SCHWITTER: Thank you very much, Tad.

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I've been asked by OBO to do a recap, essentially, on several of the recent IAG, Industry Advisory Group meetings and reviews. I assume everybody in -- raise your hand if you've been involved in one of these reviews. Okay, so many of you don't know. I think it's unique in that the OBO has asked us as industry advisors to review buildings in their early stage in their development, also site plans, and really assist the design process along. So I'm going to do three and then I'm going to hand it over to Sarah, and she's going to do another three.

So the first one was the new U.S. Embassy in Podgorica, Montenegro. The A-team was Beyer Blinder Belle, with peer participants Carol Ross Barney, Mark Cavagnero, and Richard Wood. The planned award date is FY '19 design build and this is a 4.9-acre site.

Interesting, I think, as an industry reviewer, seeing that the sites are getting smaller and getting more packed into dense urban areas, which

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makes a lot of the constraints on the embassy and consulate design activities more difficult.

A few -- I'll hand this over to Carol for a few notes on that readout.

MS. ROSS BARNEY: So a readout was last -- I mean our review was last fall, the readout is right now, and it was a second review. So in a lot of cases the second review really can focus down on some really essential elements of the design concept.

For this particular embassy, two of the overriding form givers was that it had to be -- it has to be constructed in sections, in phases, and the other one that I found particularly in fact helpful was its proximity to a major park and a historic site.

So the review actually -- the thing that came out of the review that was I thought most amazing and most helpful to the design and the program was a re-visitation of how the proposal for the construction, the construction phases, and in the end

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we were able to suggest the elimination of a redundant stair, which sounds kind of nuts-and-bolts, almost housekeeping, but it really helped to improve the plan in its circulation.

Outside of that, we had really useful discussions about particular elements that give the building meaning, that tell the purpose of the building to the public about materials and about gateway forms. And this is the first time I'm seeing the new rendering and a lot of the suggestions that we made are in the new rendering.

MR. SCHWITTER: That's great. Thank you.

So to the next review. This the Consulate General Milan in Italy, the A-team SHoP Architects. There were two reviews done on this, November 6th, 2018; March 6th, 2019. Peer participants Marion Weis, Nat Oppenheimer, and Josh David, with a planned award date for FY '20 and design-bid-build. Nat was going to give some notes on this, but unfortunately he had

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to leave early. So he gave me a few insights into this, which I'll communicate to you.

The first was that, again, a very productive review 1 and review 2 dynamic between the team. A few things that the team and the advisor group wanted to help SHoP to emphasize within the designs. The first was the character of the historic grid and nature of the site, they wanted to orient the buildings in a north-south orientation, also to help in terms of some of the sun and light exposure to the buildings. So this was one of the first elements. The second was a security measure and looking at the overall security pieces, they came up with a -- and the IAG team endorsed a strategy for a sunken perimeter, essentially creating a ha-ha around the building site. And the third element that was communicated to me was a facade selection, I think this came in a series of back-and-forths, but ultimately a stone articulation for the facade which tries to balance a residential

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neighborhood with, you know, sort of the institutional character of the building, and also the historic character of the buildings on site.

So that was that for the consulate in Milan.

And the last one here is the U.S. Consulate General Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The design architect here, Richard+Bauer, Industry Advisory Review 1 was November 7th, the second was January 31st. The peer participants were Stephen Kieran, Chris Banks, and myself.

And this was, again, I think, looking back on the reviews that I've done, an interesting dialogue between the review and the second review. Similar issues to some of the projects that I've seen OBO having to deal with, which are dense urban sites, and how do you start to create not only the security and meet the security constraints, but also really ensure that these sites are well organized.

A few of the things coming out of that

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review, first off, was orienting to transit exposure. There were several different elements that were feeding the site from a transit perspective, but it was decided to look at the southeast corner and orient towards what was -- what is essentially a key metro stop. That was helpful because we had to move the S - - I'm sorry, the -- yeah, I think it was the main access point in that position. So that really freed up a corner of the site.

The second issue was the orientation essentially of the NOB in terms of the office participants and office components in that, trying to move towards north-south exposures, more efficient energy exposures for those building components.

And the third element ultimately was a roof structure, which you don't quite see here, this is the entry area, but the roof in the consular arrivals area was a really great concept, but the advisory group wanted it to be integrated as much as possible into

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the building experience. So, in other words, scaled back a bit, but integrated, so that it had a real functional response both exterior and interior to the design, because we don't want those types of elements to ultimately be value-engineered out of the final solution, because they are so important ultimately to the look and feel of the campus.

So, over to you, Sarah.

MS. WHITING: Thanks for going first, Craig.

All right, I am going to report on four projects that only had single advisory reviews and they were all done in February. So it was a busy month for the group.

And the first is the Consulate project in Merida, in Mexico, and that review took place on February 5th, and the participants were myself, Christian Agulles, and Debra Lehman Smith.

This project is -- the AE is Miller/Hull Partnership, and the discussion was quite interesting.

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I would say -- actually, one could step back and offer some general comments, and maybe I'll steal a little bit of Tad's thunder in terms of the Embassy After Next program, which has the tag line of "Lead the way, set the pace." Speaking earlier, Chuck Bohn made the comment of how these projects get a level of quality that you don't often find in the U.S., especially with these reviews, and I think that's a very interesting thing to bear in mind.

I think looking at this particular project, and I think actually almost all of the embassies and consulates, you have the problem of greater security and the need for legible circulation and procession, and that's often a problem that's at odds. On the discussion for this project, we were -- we spent a lot of time speaking about questions of landscape and how landscape could be used both as a security buffer, but also to improve the experience of this consulate, in terms of also open spaces in a climate that relies a

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lot on open space. So issues of light and air, and sort of light and air being used as design tools for the overall experience of this consulate.

A lot of attention was paid in our review to issues of circulation and sequence, and, frankly, editing of the building to create a lighter, more elegant and more, let's say, purposeful or sort of immediately apprehensible project. And so issues in terms of rendering procession and circulation more efficient, but also more open and the experience more elegant, let's say. So that was an interesting discussion, really a question of refining aspects of the concepts rather than a large redesign, but thinning members of even the fins that you can see on this rendering.

The next project is the U.S. Embassy for Windhoek, the AE is-SOM. This was also single advisory review done in February and the participants were Mark Cavagnero, Judith Nitsch, and Christian

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Bailey. And, having learned how to delegate, I have picked Judith to present this project.

MS. NITSCH: And, as a civil engineer, I love giving my opinions on what architects are doing.

(Laughter.)

MS. WHITING: Uh-oh. I may regret this choice.

(Laughter.)

MS. NITSCH: First of all, there was a single review, and it was generally among the group of us at the office building. It was very clear and straightforward, and most of our comments about the building were really directed to specific details on it and the overall -- we thought the overall site development and concept worked well.

One of the things, which you can't tell in this rendering, was just looking at the regularity of the official parking areas, that we learned one drives on the opposite side of the road there and

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understanding how you make turning movements and park.

It seemed a little awkward, so we just asked them to take a look at that again.

We were looking at the climate and looking at sun shading, and trying to understand how that would work on the building. We asked them to look at a little more detail in that in response to each of the separate facade's solar orientation.

The east office building elevation we didn't think was as welcoming as it might be. And so we said, you know, consider looking at that. And the ideas of the colors and so forth we thought were really stunning for this particular site, and we thought that if they used that same stone palette for the landscaping stone walls, as they have here, that it would be really interesting as one looked at the site if that was able to be done.

We noted that there were some interior spaces that didn't have exterior -- they didn't have

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windows. And so we said we really need to provide appropriate space for the people working in the building to have access to views and also just what's going on outside.

And there was some acute geometry at the northern end of the building that we thought looked fine in site plan, but may not actually appropriately work great.

So, again, very, very fine, minor details. It was really a beautiful building and nice selection of colors and orientation on the site.

MS. WHITING: Excellent. The next project is another consulate, also done by Miller Hull Partnership. This one is in Casablanca, Morocco, and this was also a single review done in February, and the advisory participants were Jonathan Marvel, Dan Sesil, and Rodrigo Abela. And Dan has kindly agreed to share the microphone.

MR. SESIL: Thanks. It was one review, so we didn't have the benefit of an earlier look at the

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project, but I will say that Miller Hull had put together a really thorough presentation that made our job pretty easy; they answered most of our questions.

We did focus when we looked at the project on this -- heavily on this relationship of perimeter building site, and then relationships of interior spaces to exterior spaces, because as the building is designed it creates enclosed spaces by way of screening. And so a lot of our -- a lot of what we commented on had to do with the way the interior spaces related to that circulation. In fact, Jonathan had a great comment about stepping the exterior courtyards as a way to improve that and make them more efficient, you didn't have to exit into every one of them from the lowest level.

We also had a few comments about the actual detailing of the screens. In fact, we spent quite a bit of energy on how they would build the screen, what kinds of levels of protection it would provide, what

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was behind it, relationships of distance between the front of it and behind the occupancies.

And, honestly, Miller Hull was fantastic. They were receptive to all our comments and it felt like a really collegial working environment.

MS. WHITING: Excellent. And then the final project that we're going to review today is the Consulate General in Chiang Mai in Thailand, and this is Ennead Architects and this was also a single review done in February with a fabulous group of advisory participants: Julie Snow, Carol Ross Barney, and Ann Beha. And, Ann, you have agreed to -- from back there to present.

While Ann is getting to the mike, the other point that I wanted to make about all of these projects is the interesting discussion that happens with anticipating growth of the facility, which I think is something that is a very important discussion in terms of again trying to balance outdoor space and

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the legibility of these facilities.

Ann, go ahead.

MS. BEHA: Well, thank you.

This project considered the post as a campus and that was an emphasis of the design review group, that when we're building multiple buildings we need to think about the relationship between the buildings, the spaces between the buildings, and how the social and functional aspects work, as well as the image and the presence of a mission. So we asked the design architects to consider campus; to consider landscape and relate it more seamlessly to the architecture; to prioritize circulation and landscape for both visitors to post and also for pedestrians.

And then we looked both at the office building and at the residential building, and tried to develop a stronger social aspect to the concept and work more with the sequencing, the circulation, the passage areas, and of course the architectural

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materials.

Hats off to Ennead for a great session, and their really positive attitude and the design quality of their work. It made our job easier and allowed us to get to more of the core of the design issues to have such an excellent team. So it was a fantastic experience.

MS. WHITING: Super. I mean, I think that we see these themes of circulation and landscape as you have these larger and larger sites, and the shift from compound to campus I think is an exciting change for all of these projects.

So, thank you, all of you, for helping make my job easier in giving the readouts.

MR. DAVIS: Okay, a round of applause for our review team, please.

(Applause.)

MR. DAVIS: Before we get further into our afternoon's discussions, I wanted to go around the

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horn here, we'll start with Barry, and just ask each of the members of our Industry Advisory Group to do just a short introduction. Please.

MR. SCRIBNER: So, I'm Barry Scribner from JLL, and I run our Government practice.

MR. FARRAR: Jay Farrar with Bechtel Corporation.

MR. AGULLES: I'm Christian Agulles with PAE Consulting Engineers.

MR. BOHN: I'm Chuck Bohn with BL Harbert International.

MR. NORTON: Good afternoon. My name is Mike Norton, I'm with JPMorgan Chase. I run Global Operations and Critical Systems.

MR. BURNETT: Good afternoon. My name is James Burnett, I'm with OJB Landscape Architecture.

MR. ROBBINS: I'm Mark Robbins; I'm president of the American Academy in Rome.

MR. KIENZL: Good afternoon. I'm Nico

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Kienzl with Atelier Ten.

MS. WHITING: Hi. I'm Sarah Whiting of WW Architects, leaving Rice Architecture as Dean to become Dean of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard.

MR. SESIL: And I'm Dan Sesil, a partner at LERA Consulting Structural Engineers.

MR. MARVEL: Jonathan Marvel, Marvel Architects.

MS. LEHMAN SMITH: Debra Lehman Smith, LSM.

MR. SVEDBERG: Rob Svedberg, TBS Design.

MS. WEISZ: Claire Weisz, WXY.

MS. ROSS BARNEY: Carol Ross Barney, Ross Barney Architects.

MS. DRAKE: Susannah Drake, DLANDstudio.

MR. BAILEY: Christian Bailey with ODA.

MR. SCHWITTER: Craig Schwitter with Buro Happold Engineering.

MS. EHRENBURG: Maureen Ehrenberg with

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WeWork.

MS. NITSCH: Judy Nitsch, Nitsch Engineering, from Boston.

MR. MULVA: Stephen Mulva, I'm the Director of the Construction Industry Institute at the University of Texas at Austin.

MR. CROSBY: Patrick Crosby, Crosby Group Structural Engineers.

MR. CHONKO: And Michael Chonko, SMRT Architects and Engineers.

MR. DAVIS: I would like to personally extend my thanks and appreciation, you know, to the group that we've got assembled here with you today. These are folks that stepped forward to volunteer to participate in this important effort. They give up quite a bit of their own time and effort to travel to Washington and the locations where we conduct our design reviews and other discussions that really add just tremendously to our overall efforts within the

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OBO organization. And so I do thank each and every one of you personally.

And please join me in a round of applause for the Industry Advisory Group.

(Applause.)

MR. DAVIS: And I would also like to pay a special recognition to Sarah, who's here with us today. And as she mentioned, but you may not have heard it, she's just been nominated to serve as the Dean of the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. And so let's give her a round of applause for that significant achievement.

(Applause.)

MR. DAVIS: So what I'd like to do at this point in time is just to give you just a quick overview, as I mentioned earlier, of our strategic priorities, you know, for the coming months, if you will. This is something that we rolled out yesterday for the team at OBO and I thought it would be

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important that we share this with each and every one of you, because, you know, even though you might not be a member of the OBO team directly, you may be one of our partners that's out there or a future partner, and we hope to meet many of those today as well, but also to our advisory group for the great work that they do. And so the intent here was to really, you know, focus our efforts moving forward as an organization.

And so I'm now about 237 days into this particular gig as the Director, it's been great so far and I hope to continue on for as long as they'll allow me to do so. Probably about two or three weeks into the job I ran across one of my friends here in DC and he asked me, hey, how's it going? What do you think of the State Department? Huh, you know, all that.

(Laughter.)

MR. DAVIS: And so I said it's fantastic, it's wonderful, and I enjoy coming to work every day.

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And they said, well, what -- you know, what really makes it so great, you know, why are you so pumped up about that? And I said, really, two reasons. First and foremost, you know, kind of up here, are the people. You know, the quality of the folks that we have working on the team at OBO are second to none. And probably the second important reason is because of the impact of our mission on our diplomats and others that are assigned at our diplomatic posts at over 291 countries, you know, worldwide. And so that's what keeps me going, the fact that we've got all those, you know, tens of thousands of diplomats and other members of the Federal Government that are out there performing their diplomatic missions on a day-to-day basis.

And so it's a humbling experience to have that responsibility, but I guarantee you that the team that we have is fully up to the effort and then some.

A week in the OBO organization for us, this

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week is a special week for us, because not only are we able to host our IAG members here in Washington for our annual meeting, but we are actually doing groundbreaking ceremonies at three separate consulates in Mexico. I'll actually be leaving here a little bit early this afternoon to travel to Matamoros, Mexico, just across from Brownsville, Texas, where we'll be doing a ribbon-cutting tomorrow morning for our new embassy there. And, simultaneously, we have three other embassies -- or actually two -- two other embassies in design -- correction, two other consulates in design in Mexico. And then, as many of you know, one of our largest projects in the entire world is in Mexico City and that's our new embassy compound that's going on there. And it's a couple years away from completion, but it's going to be a fantastic addition to the architecture of that portion of the town, but at the same time it will be a great facility for our diplomatic corps to operate and

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represent the United States in a very powerful way there in Mexico City.

What I thought I would do this afternoon very briefly is to kind of go over those priorities that I mentioned before and to give you a little, you know, kind of a sneak peek into what we're trying to do. But as I look out in the audience today, I see a lot of good friends, friends that I've known over the years, and I wanted to make sure that you understood that I didn't refer to you as old friends, okay? Good friends, not old friends. But, again, we've been around for a while, and I do appreciate your support and friendship over the years.

So, with that said, we're going to kind of launch into the presentation, go ahead.

I always start off with a quotation, and I've been doing this for a number of years now, and I use this one for really two purposes. And I think Geoff Prosch is out here in the audience somewhere

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from Johnson Controls, he's kind of been a mentor to me over the years, but he's heard this speech and seen this slide. And so I really do this for two purposes, first and foremost as an age check on the audience, okay?

(Laughter.)

MR. DAVIS: To see how many people out there remember Buffalo Springfield and this song in particular. But really more importantly, ladies and gentlemen, the reason it's kind of important, because it more or less portends, you know, the situation that we're in and have been in for many years in terms of, you know, something is going on out there in the world on a day-to-day basis, it's just hard for us to really define and determine precisely what it is.

And so, with that in mind, it hopefully keeps you on your toes a little bit more and it makes you really want to think through some of the challenges that are, you know, around the corner or

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over the next ridge line that we may be faced with on any given day. And in some cases, just like during hurricane season, it's not if it's going to happen, it's when it's going to happen, and we want to be, you know, as prepared as we can to be able to continue to operate these important facilities on a global basis.

Probably the other important thing about what we're trying to do in our efforts is to add a little bit of predictability to what we're doing. And through the good offices of our Industry Advisory Group we're able to look out and see both current and emerging industry best practices we can pull in to this effort. And so that's the other subliminal thing that we're trying to do through this effort. But, anyway, I hope you enjoy the slide.

Next, please?

So we start off traditionally with a mission vision. I'll let you read that, but one of the things I highlighted in the mission statement is something

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that I changed. When I came on board as the Director, it was important for me to go through and do sort of a mission analysis to really look at the mission of the organization, to see if it still fit, if it was still those sorts of things that we wanted to continue to focus our efforts on, you know, day in and day out. Obviously, safe and secure facilities is important, functional facilities is important. And so I've highlighted the word "resilient," because we've added that to the mission. And I think that coming over from DoD where we were basically transitioning from sustainability to resiliency, you know, for our platforms, I thought it was important to bring that notion into the fold in terms of what we're doing here on the State Department side of the house.

And we can probably start, you know, right here with Barry and go around the room and, just like with sustainability, we would -- and we ask everybody, hey, what's your personal definition of resiliency --

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I'm not going to do it, by the way, but --

(Laughter.)

MR. DAVIS: -- maybe I will later. But, anyway, you know, to kind of define what resiliency is to you, it's a little bit different, you know, it's got probably a little bit of a different flavor. But what we're trying to do through our efforts here is to ensure that our facilities and our operations are able to continue, you know, in the face of adversity, whether that's adversity as a result of a terrorist attack, whether that's adversity as a result of a natural disaster, whether it's continue operations in the face of the local power grid no longer functioning or wells drying up. And so all those basic needs that are supposed to be in place to allow our embassies and our consulates to function properly, whether it's the power, the water, the wastewater, how we manage the storm water, these are all important elements of that resiliency notion, to include from our diplomatic

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security perspective -- and we have a couple colleagues here that we work hand-in-hand with each and every day -- to make sure that we're applying safety and security in everything we do out there across the world.

And it's a dangerous place. And, you know, many of us travel extensively, but there are places that there are still challenges for us. And we recently, within the last probably 30 to 45 days, evacuated all of our personnel out of the embassy down in Caracas. Many of you have probably tracked that in the media. We have ordered departures right now in place of Port-au-Prince, Haiti; in Khartoum, in the Sudan. And we also have ordered departure going on in Colombo in Sri Lanka, and I think many of you probably are familiar with the recent terrorist attacks that occurred in Sri Lanka on Easter morning. Tragic as they were, they hit home in a very unique way for us, because we have a new embassy compound underway in

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Colombo as we speak and two of our Turkish engineers that were assigned to that project were both killed at the Shangri La Hotel that morning eating their, you know, Sunday morning brunch. There was a third member in their party who had excused himself to go to the men's room who actually survived the attack.

So, again, these things are real and, you know, they affect us in a very powerful way. And so it really, unfortunately, reinforces the important work that we have at hand here when we have these issues, you know, that occur out there at places, far-off places across the globe.

But that being said, I think we're on pretty solid ground with our mission statement and with the vision that we're trying to articulate as well that will guide us into the future.

Next slide, please?

And so what we've done on this particular chart is to highlight our five priorities, if you

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will. And so there -- number one, just for Sarah's benefit, there will not be an examination at the end of my presentation, so you don't have to worry about that, and we will have -- these slides will be posted on our website, so you'll have those to refer back to, you know, after today, if you will. And I hope you do, because, you know, we're on a journey here, ladies and gentlemen, and what I'm laying out for you today is just the start of the process, if you will. And as I told our team yesterday, you know, this is -- this frames what we're going to use to get out of the gate, but as we get out of that gate we're going to have to figure things out at every level within our organization, and we welcome your input and your thoughts as well moving forward, so that we can kind of shape each of these initiatives in the best way we possibly can to support the overall mission of the organization.

And so I'll talk first about our Embassy

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After Next program. And this is more or less our program that focuses on our planning, design, construction, and then as we begin to transition from construction to operations and maintenance of our facilities.

The second strategy -- or strategic priority focuses on our facilities maintenance and upkeep. And many of you know that we spend hundreds -- literally hundreds of millions of dollars to construct these world-class facilities all over the globe, but in my view we're still lagging behind in terms of how well we maintain these facilities. And, again, taxpayer dollars, we want to be good stewards of those dollars and to take care of these facilities, because we expect to be in many of these facilities for the next, you know, 40 or 50 years. And so while we want to put a lot of good effort into the planning, the design, and the security, we want to put an equally, if not greater effort into maintaining and operating these

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facilities properly, you know, in the years to come.

Right now -- and there's two schools of thought and somebody in the audience will probably correct me later, but we currently have over a billion-dollar backlog in our deferred maintenance and repair globally right now. Now, that pales in comparison to what we were dealing with at DoD where it was about 130 billion backlog in deferred maintenance, a billion dollars is still a lot of money. And so I will talk with you a little bit later on that one in particular and some of the things we're going to try to do to overcome some of those deficiencies.

The third one is our Diplomatic Residential Initiative. I think it goes without saying that we have a world-class program today that focuses on our Chief of Mission, our ambassadorial residences, our Deputy Chief of Mission residences, and the residences for our Consulate Generals. We do a great job, we're

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the envy of the entire, you know diplomatic community in terms of how well we do the vast majority of those buildings. There's always one or two out there and I'm dealing with a couple of those personally right now, but for the most part they're in very good shape. However, we're not at the same par with the residences for our diplomatic families and for our Foreign Service officers that are abroad. I think we've done a relatively good job, but I think we could do better, and part of this whole effort is that underlying need for a better quality of life, you know, for our diplomatic families abroad, and so we want to achieve that first and foremost, you know, through improving the quality of life and through the residential program.

You know, having lived overseas myself as a young boy and then moving my family around while being in the military, I have a unique appreciation for what it means to live in a, you know, World War II wood

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building in a tropical climate with no air conditioning and a leaky roof, and you can fill in the rest of the blanks on that one. So we really want to take care of our folks by putting them in facilities that are safe, you know, that meet our fire code requirements, that are seismically sound, that have good air quality, and things of that nature, because that's how we get our Foreign Service officers to sign up for some of the remote locations that we have all over the world and to take their families, you know, with them as well.

The fourth one is data management and data analytics. And, again, I think we do very, very good within the Bureau so far in terms of collecting all sorts of data, information. I mean, we're collecting it day in and day out. And it's coming in, it's great information, but we're not really doing much with it from a management perspective. And so that's where the data analytics, you know, come into play, and we

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really want to focus our efforts and retool how we come after that. And so our IRM organization, which was mostly a traditional IT entity, we're going through a transformation now kind of bringing it into this century of a CIO, a chief information officer organization, where they'll still do the all-important, you know, software, hardware, traditional IT functions, but we want to get into that data management arena, so we can better use this information for decision-making, so that we can better understand how our systems are operating over the long haul under arduous conditions, so that we can make hard choices, you know, from a resource management standpoint, you know, moving forward.

And so, again, this is something that we know we need to work on and I think we're moving in the right direction; we're not there and we still have a lot to learn.

And then the last one is probably, you know,

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one of the more important ones for us overall, is how do we -- you know, as the Secretary talks about the team, you know, in other words, in terms of, you know, manning the team, fielding the team, you know, getting them out there and engaged in our diplomatic mission abroad. And the same thing holds true for us in terms of, you know, focusing on getting the right people into our organization and for all the good, great fans out there, getting the right person with the right skills in the right seat on the bus, and making sure the bus is going in the right direction. So we want to do, you know, all of those things through talent management. And it's not just about, you know, warm bodies and taking a person to fill a slot, it's getting that right person with the skill sets that we need, and then also making sure that they're trained and prepared, you know, to go out and perform the duties that we would like them to do on our behalf.

Okay. Next, please?

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So on Embassy After Next, there's really five subordinate focus areas that we're going to address in terms of moving forward with this effort. And the first one, you know, gets at the heart of standardization, if you will. And, you know, I've kind of brought a saying over to the Department that I had in DoD, when you've seen one DoD installation, you've seen one DoD installation, because they're all a little bit different. And so, when you've seen one embassy, you've seen one embassy. And the reason I say that is because, while there's a set of core functions, you know, whether it's political, econ, diplomacy, public affairs, there's a core competency of functions that are performed at our embassies, but each one of them is unique. They're in a different country and a different geographic setting, different climatic conditions, there's a different, you know, group of either friendly or non-friendly folks right outside the campus itself. And so there's a lot of

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different things that you have to deal with on a case-by-case basis. And that is why the standardization piece of this is extremely important to us, because we believe we can, you know, really deliver on our projects in a very positive way through greater standardization in terms of how we design and how we plan out our projects, and how we execute them, but then equally, if not more important how we maintain these facilities over time and down the road, so that we don't have 15 different, you know, HVAC systems in Africa, for instance, which we do; we don't have 14 different generators in the Western Hemisphere.

So you kind of see where I'm going with the standardization effort. And it's not just about how we maximize, you know, office space through Office of the Future techniques, but it's how we look at all of the systems within these structures and figure out, you know, not only how do we put them together, but also how do we maintain them in a logical way over

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time.

The second one is the project performance, and that's extremely important to any project that you manage out there. And I'm not saying that we aren't doing a good job, but I do think we can do it a little bit better. And part of it is, you know, how we do it, part of it is getting the right people out there to manage these projects for us, and then the other thing is really establishing a notion of partnering. And we are going to be doing two pilot programs this year on construction partnering on two of our projects, and so we hope to learn a lot of good lessons, you know, from that effort moving forward and potentially expand that formal construction partnering as we go forward with additional projects down the road.

Life cycle asset management continues to be extremely important, you know, for us, and we want to take these projects all the way through that planning-

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design-construction on into how we transition through our commissioning process to the actual operations of the building on a day-to-day basis, and to do whatever we can do to make sure that the folks that assume responsibility are ready on day one, you know, to pick up the mantle and to manage these facilities to the best of their ability.

About ten days ago, I was in Harare, Zimbabwe for the ribbon-cutting there at our new embassy. It's hands-down a beautiful building, but it's also the most technologically advanced building in the entire country. And so that comes with its unique challenges as well in terms of us being able to maintain and operate these facilities, you know, many miles from home with folks that may or may not have the ability. Because, as many of you may or may not know, the majority of our staff at our embassies are local employees, some of whom are quite good, some of whom are -- you know, need help and education to be

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able to do their jobs better, but well-meaning, well-intentioned, to say the least. And so that's where it comes in to be a challenge in some cases with the technologies that we're putting out there.

And so I think we're working now to do a better job of how we do that handoff and it's working with our construction partners, you know, to better train up the local employees and the actual facility maintenance staff, so that they have the skill sets, you know, as soon as that handover takes place to the ambassador or to his country team.

Digital design review, extremely important for us. We've been doing it for a while on a smaller scale, but we're to the point now where I think we're almost doing it consistently across the board. But I know when I first got on board we still had reams of paper, you know, the traditional design drawings that we were using for some of our projects. So, again, moving forward to try to embrace, you know, the new

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technology that will make our projects better in the long term.

And then, finally, our building information management efforts, you know, looking at those technologies that are out there. I mean, we have some in place right now, but we're always looking for a better way to do it, especially when you take into consideration, you know, cyber security issues associated with these industrial control systems that we have within our buildings. Unlike some organizations, the majority of our network systems focused on our facilities themselves are closed circuit within the structure of our buildings themselves, which reduces, you know, some of the ability to affect their day-to-day operations, but it still doesn't preclude them from being hacked if we're not careful and we don't take the correct protective measures.

Next slide.

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Facilities maintenance, you know, covering number 2 here. As I mentioned before, a tremendous backlog, but there's really two areas that we want to focus on here; one is our personnel. We're going to begin the summer rotation this year short -- probably 30 to 40 facility managers at our posts worldwide. And so we're working on a mitigation strategy now through contract support and other means to backfill some of those positions until we can bring the right folks on board to perform those missions.

The second thing that we're doing is working on the 2021 budget to increase funding for the dollars that we put toward our operations and maintenance at our facilities. As most of you know, we're executing the 2019 budget, the 2020 budget is already over on the Hill, and so 2021 is the first budget that will allow us to really try to effect this program and help start addressing some of that backlog that we have, but also make sure that we're doing the things we need

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to do day in and day out.

Next?

Okay, the Diplomatic Residential Initiative, a very interesting one. And we're going to start off, and we actually have begun this process, to really look at each one of our posts on their own merit to determine if there's the right mix of property that we own versus what we lease. And in many cases the market may not provide what we need on the leasing side, and so in some cases we have to take ownership and then modify some of those homes so that they meet, you know, fire, the life, health and safety, seismic issues, and things like that. And so that's one of the things we're going to look at through this process is do we have the mix about right in terms of owned versus leased properties based on each of the geographic locations, you know, of our posts across the world.

The next thing we're going to look at is

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some of the properties that we own out there, many -- not many, but a number of which have increased in value significantly over the years. And so we may look at re-balancing our inventory such that we take the revenue from the sale of some of these very expensive properties that we own now and then rolling that back into, you know, taking care of many of our posts in some of the other portions of the world where we can take a lot of that money and stretch it a lot further to improve the quality of life.

We're also looking at partnership opportunities through joint ventures and public/private partnerships, and we've got a couple of these underway already in several of the states, and then also in Africa. And we've completed one in Port-au-Prince as well where we worked with the developer to make sure that the construction was done to our standards, you know, from a fire and safety standpoint, where it required seismic adaptations, you

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know, that was part of it as well. And then that allowed us to go in and lease -- you know, build-to-lease type scenario in some cases, but in other cases a build-to-lease with an option to purchase, you know, maybe down the road.

So, again, I think this is going to be a very beneficial program for our diplomats abroad and I think, if we do it right, improve their quality of life significantly.

And we're also expanding this effort out to really look at other recreational opportunities, whether it's, you know, pools, fitness centers, and things like that, that would enhance the quality of life at many of our locations around the world. And, you know, as I go around and travel, I've been to about 23 posts so far, but it's interesting because you go in to the Marine Security Guard detachments that are out there and there's about eight or nine Marines at most posts, a little bit more at others,

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and they've got like a Gold's Gym set up in there, you know, with all the weights and 42 different machines and stuff like that for these eight or nine Marines that are there. And then you go over to the chancery, the embassy building itself, and kind of like I did this past weekend, you go into the Holiday Inn Express-type fitness center with two treadmills, one of which doesn't work, an elliptical, and one of those balls that you sit on.

(Laughter.)

MR. DAVIS: You see where I'm going with this thing. And so especially in some of these remote countries where there is no -- they don't even know what a Gold's Gym is downtown -- not their fault -- but, again, we want to look at some of these quality-of-life things that we can either integrate into our new embassy campus constructions or figure out how in some of these residential developments, how we can integrate these quality-of-life measures into the

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things that we think that the families might need that they don't have access to right now.

Next slide.

I think I've pretty much touched on most of the data management and the analytic piece. It is important for us. We actually, you know, brought on board a new IRM director, who is kind of dual-headed as our Executive Director, but Melissa Johnson has joined us. We actually -- like Lloyd Caldwell left from the Corps, who's an ex officio member of this body, but she was the acting CIO for the Corps of Engineers, and so now she's the CIO for us. And so we're going to really use that as part of our effort with, you know, leadership at the top of that organization, retooling, you know, what we need internally within the organization itself.

Next slide.

And so talent management, extremely important for us and somewhat challenging for us in

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particular, because we're, what I would refer to as a non-homogeneous organization where we've got a large group of foreign service officers who are with us, a large group of civil servants that are with us, some personal services contractors, third party contractors, and so our workforce -- and then we have not only, you know, our American workforce, but we also have local employees that are out there at posts. And so it's really a diverse organization, which is tremendous, but with all those different sources of employment, each one of them comes with pretty much a separate HR process by which you, you know, recruit and hire and bring people on board.

And so that's one of the things that we're going to work on, you know, through our HR process is to make sure that we streamline as much as we can, shy of big HR here at the State Department, to do the things that we know we need to do to help reach out and identify the folks to come in and be part of our

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team.

Next slide.

And so there's really a couple of approaches that we are looking at taking and one is outreach to education, institutions of higher learning at the college and university level, and so we've started working on this. There had been some work in the past, but we've more or less formalized a program now, but you can see from this slide in the top left-hand corner, we struggled our way up to South Bend, Indiana -- how are you doing, Jason? -- but to be with the colleagues at Notre Dame. And this is actually the Tesla Lab up there. And then the top right and bottom right are down at Virginia Tech at the Engineering and at the School of Architecture and Design. And then up at Harvard at the Civil Engineering Department and at the Graduate School of Design, we had a subsequent visit to MIT.

And we've actually hit a number of other

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schools out there, but we're really focusing on, you know, a variety of schools that are out there to include both our, you know, Top Ten colleges and universities in each field, but I also want to go and to make sure that we are touching our historically black colleges and universities, who have a tremendous amount to bring to the equation of what we're trying to accomplish within OBO. And so that, again, is a work in progress and at some point in time at our next meeting we'll provide you a little bit more information in terms of how well that's going.

But this is kind of one of these situations, ladies and gentlemen, we're all in this together, okay? And we're using these visits to tell the State Department and the OBO story, we're trying to do some recruiting as well, but we need everybody's help, you know, to get the word out, because there may be folks, you know, in your family, you may not want to give up any of your coworkers, but we'd be more than happy to

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have them come over and try out for the team.

Next -- oh, go back, go back.

So that's entry level efforts that we've got kind of underway right now. And then the other very important thing for us to bring in folks with experience on the ground, in the field, managing projects. I'm talking now about people that are, you know, 12 to 15 years or more of experience, you know, managing construction projects, ideally overseas, that we really need. And we've identified that as, you know, one of those areas where we need some assistance, if you will.

And so what's interesting, though, with the foreign service is everybody that's in the foreign service -- and we've got a lot of foreign service officers in the room with us today -- they don't always just come in right out of college or whatever, many of them go into a professional career for ten or fifteen years or so and then, you know, come over to

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the foreign service and, you know, because of a public service desire or just because they're fascinated with the program, or whatever. So what we've done is we've expanded on our engagement with a whole host of professional organizations, whether it's the American Planning Association, Association of General Contractors, Green Business Council. I mean, a whole host of organizations out there that we want to engage and to be a part of, because it's a two-way street, you know, folks there can learn from us, we can learn from them, but we also want to use those engagements as platforms to once again tell our story, but at the same time, you know, use it as a recruiting opportunity to get out and to talk to folks that have the skill sets we're looking for and may be interested in joining the State Department team.

So, again, a work in progress, but we've gotten, you know, some very favorable feedback from a lot of folks already in what we're trying to do. And,

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again, those facility managers are a unique part of the organization. And they're not really, you know, like the super, if you will, who's in there turning wrenches, they're the ones that have the technical expertise and the ability to train those that work for them. And so, again, it takes a special person to be able to go out and to perform those missions on a day-to-day basis.

I've got one last quotation for you, again. I won't say it's an age check, but the important thing that I'm trying to infuse in our organization is we have a lot of great people, we've got a lot of great, you know, programs, processes, and procedures, you know, that we follow, but we can't get too narrowly locked in to the things that we do and have been doing, and I want to start branching out and really, you know, looking above and beyond the things that we're doing now to learn, you know, from the private sector in terms of things we can and should be doing

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to make our organization better at what we do each and every day.

And so I'm going to stop there and I think we've got time for a couple of questions, if you will, and then we're going to roll back in to the next phase of the afternoon.

So, any questions for me at all, or comments?

MR. HARD: Hi, hello.

MR. DAVIS: Hi.

MR. HARD: Stephan here from Southwire.

Great presentation. I loved the rock -- classic rock quotes that you have been mentioned, very good. My question is in regards to the recent re-appropriation of funding from the U.S. Government, more for the border control and also for MILCON, do you see any effects on the future OBO projects this year and the following? And what is your perspective from this year from last year growth of OBO projects?

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MR. DAVIS: Yeah, I think we're on a steady glide path. And I think, as I've shared with -- in a couple forums already this year with different industry groups, I think that folks that are interested in what we do and want to do business for us, there's going to be plenty of room at the end for decades to come. You know, we've done about 150 embassies, you know, in the last probably 16 or so years, but we've still got well over a hundred more to do, and that's not counting smaller renovation and restoration projects as well.

So I think that the future for us, working with us as an organization, is pretty bright. As far as the budget is concerned, we continue to be supported generously by the Congress in terms of providing the dollars that we need to complete our programs. I don't have any -- I don't have any real complaints there, but I do want to be able to make a case for maybe some additional money that would help

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us, you know, better maintain the facilities over time.

So, I don't know, does that answer your question?

MR. HARD: Yes, very well.

MR. DAVIS: Okay, thank you. Great question, by the way.

Other questions, please? Yes, ma'am.

MS. SEGERO: Good afternoon. Can you hear me? Good afternoon. My name is Rosemary Segero, I'm the President of Segero International Group. How does the U.S. work with the locals, small and medium businesses in those -- in countries where the embassy operates, is there a way they play role or how they can work with the U.S. companies on the ground in those countries, like in Africa, or in other countries around the world?

MR. DAVIS: That's a great question. And I think, just to rephrase it, you know, the question

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was, is how do small businesses that are out there in many of the countries in which we operate, how do they become part of the construction project or the team, if you will. And, you know, a lot of that is similar to how projects are done by many firms here in the United States through subcontractors. So when we put one of these projects together, whether it's a major embassy project or one of our smaller restoration projects, you know, we will award that contract to a prime contractor, who then has the responsibility to put together that workforce overseas. And each one of them does it a little bit differently based on the circumstances, but there's a heavy reliance on, you know, local workers, you know, from that host country, if you will. In some cases, expertise may come in from other countries.

And, as I mentioned, the project in Colombo in Sri Lanka right now has got a mixture of folks from both -- from Turkey, from India, and, you know, some

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from Sri Lanka itself. And a lot of it depends on the availability of the workers that have the skill sets, you know, to be able to come in and perform the work. In some cases on-the-job training is part of that effort to better enable the workers to come in and perform the jobs at hand -- and it's not actually on-the-job, it's actually the training that they're put through before they actually get out on the job site itself.

But that's the one of the ways in which firms that are out there on the ground in different countries are able to connect in many of our projects.

Did any of the IAG members want to elaborate on that at all? No, okay.

Thank you.

MR. KANGA: Tad, let me just add to that.

MR. DAVIS: Please, yeah.

MR. KANGA: I think she was talking about small businesses.

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MS. SEGERO: All businesses --

MR. KANGA: Small --

MS. SEGERO: -- all businesses.

MR. KANGA: All businesses, yeah. Well, let me just add --

MR. DAVIS: Please.

MR. KANGA: -- to what you just said is that -- you know, as Tad said, we have all categories. We have much larger projects where our big American contractors are competing and sometimes they will use small businesses as part of their project team as subcontractors to them, and in other cases we have much smaller projects like small facility upgrades, security upgrades, where, you know, when these are announced in Fed bids, ops and other places, these smaller contractors may directly bid on some of those projects or compete for those.

So if that helps a little more.

MR. DAVIS: Well, thanks, Adi. I appreciate

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that.

And, again, we do have -- as Adi said, for those of you who might not be able to hear it in the back, we do have, I mean, the whole range of projects, from one of these new embassy compound, slash, campuses -- and we're trying to convert to the campus terminology now where it's -- you know, these projects are anywhere from 900 million to a billion dollars, down to, you know, lease fit-out projects which may come in right at a million or \$2 million. So there's a wide variety of activity that's out there that companies both here and abroad can take -- can participate in, so the opportunities are there.

I also think through, you know, some of the mentorship programs that many companies have, that's another way I think for folks to get involved in business with the Federal Government. And a lot of times, you know, I know from having been in the private sector and municipal government previously,

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it's hard to kind of break into the Federal Government, you know, like for the very first time. And so in some cases where you can participate in a mentor-protégé program with a much larger firm or become a subcontractor for a larger firm, because they do the heavy lifting to get the contract with the Government, bring you along, and you kind of learn the ropes after one or two or three projects maybe, and then you can more successfully compete for many of these projects on your own. So I think that's another thing to think about moving forward.

Other questions?

Okay, great. Well, thanks so much, everybody. I really appreciate the opportunity to share this with you.

And we're going to transition into our panel, so if you want to stand up and probably not leave the room, but take a quick stretch break. Give us a couple minutes to reconvene here with the panel

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and then we'll kick that off here momentarily. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. FOUSHEE: While they're coming up, we'll just draw attention to two things in the book, in the agenda booklets. We have our FY '19 Project Awards that we've awarded this year, we also have the anticipated awards that are in there as well. We have a new section. This year we had a significant amount of industry recognition for the projects that many of you in this room collaborated on with us in various ways, so we're really proud of that recognition. You know, London has been getting a lot of awards both on the design side, engineering and construction, Islamabad and a few others are in there. So make sure you check out that page, it's a pretty significant list this year, so -- while we're pulling people up.

(Pause.)

MR. DIZON: All right, thanks, everybody.

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For those of you who don't know me, my name is Angel Dizon, I'm one of the managing directors at OBO. And for those of you that do know me, you are asking yourselves, why is he wearing a suit and tie?

(Laughter.)

MR. DIZON: I'm doing this for you. I only put this costume on for you guys and for this afternoon.

So what I wanted to share with you is a little bit about our program and then we'll get to the panelists here in a moment, but we've had this design and construction program since 1999. We've been doing this -- we're about a teenager, right? We've been doing this for about 20 years now, 19 years, and there's been some very consistent things throughout the life of this program.

The first is that our focus has always been on security; that's the reason why we get the money, it's the reason why we do all the things that we do.

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Security is very, very important. And you guys have been reading in the news the kinds of challenges that we're facing all over the world, that's what we're mitigating against in our embassies.

There's also we've had a strong focus on the performance of our buildings and the functionality of those buildings. They don't serve a purpose if they're not able to perform at a certain level and be functional for the people that use them.

And then we have also been driving towards reducing the cost and schedule of these buildings the entire time we've had this program.

A lot of things have changed, though, in that time since 1999 to now, and some of the things that have really changed is that, you know, our security standards are evolving, right? We're starting to see things a little bit differently. We are addressing security concerns now, especially at the technology side, that we didn't have to address in

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'99, you know.

Our design standards have been evolving. I think those of you that worked with us, you've seen how that's evolved over the years from the architecture, engineering design guidance to where we are with our design guidance.

And one of the other big things that have changed is just the world in which we live in. Just it isn't the same world from 1999. And what we're seeing is a phenomenon about urbanization, right? So, when we first kicked off the program back in 1999, our charter to buy sites was to buy ten acres and not spend more than \$10 million. That's really hard to do now. Fortunately, Jason Dallara that's sitting over there -- raise your hand, Jason -- his job is to buy all of these sites and it's just -- it's not the same. So, when we first kicked off the program, we were buying sites in Africa and we could find ten acres actually relatively easily, but where we are now is

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we're moving to these locations that are very urbanized and we're just not able to find the kind of acreage that we would want to do this work.

And so one of the big phenomenon's that's happening for us and in our program is that -- one of the things the Director talked about is we've completed about 150 of these missions, so we're about halfway through the program. But the part of the program that we're in now is we're getting to the point where we're hitting all these mega-cities. So, those of you guys that know, mega-cities are any city that's over ten million people, right? That's the population number. And so when we started the program we had about ten to fifteen cities around the world that were over ten million people, and now there's close to 50 cities with over ten million people, and we have to do work in every single one of them.

And for a frame of reference for you guys, DC -- well, DC proper is only about a little less than

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a million, but the metro area is about six. I commute with all six million people every single morning, it is absolutely brutal, but so you have to imagine what it's like in a place like Tokyo where they have 40 million people, and we still have to do something there.

And so what ends up happening is, when we have these mega-cities, it's just harder and harder for us to do our jobs, and that's the part of the program that we're in. And so what's happening is that we're having to address these solutions just differently.

So one of the things that you saw today was Rio. London I'm sure you guys are familiar with. But when we're in these really kind of urbanized environments, we're trying to -- we're buying sites that are quite a bit smaller than we're typically used to. Like I said, we were starting off with ten acres, London, which is a very large embassy, is less than

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four, it's like three and a half, something like that. Rio is in that same scale, really big mission, but on a really small piece of property.

The other thing that we're facing with is that we're actually having to do more assemblages. So what we'd love to do, I think what Jason would love to do is buy one site from one owner, but that's not the situation that we're in. We're buying five parcels to put together something that's usable for us and you're dealing with five different owners. That's really challenging. So we have a couple posts in Tegucigalpa, in Nassau, where that's the condition that we're in where we have to put these assemblages together.

The other thing that's happening in these mega-cities is that the price of land is very, very expensive. So, Jaime Salcedo -- raise your hand, Jaime -- he works in our Special Projects Group, one of the things that he's challenged with right now is

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he's having to build a new embassy, a new compound, on sites where the cost of this is \$3 billion an acre. I find that to be very high, right?

(Laughter.)

MR. DIZON: Three billion dollars is a lot of money. And one of the things that we were looking at, we said, well, where else can we go? Why don't we find someplace that's maybe closer to the airport or whatever? And there is, there's sites out there; they're not that big, but they're five to \$600 million an acre. That's not a solution for us, right?

So one of the things that we've done and the examples that we're going to share with you today is that we have opportunities to reuse existing sites, right? We have opportunities to rehabilitate existing buildings to meet all of our security standards, or re-purpose existing historic sites to provide the diplomatic platform that we need.

And so what I want to do is have each one of

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these guys introduce themselves and introduce the project that we'll use as a framework for the conversation. And one of the things I want to make sure that we do when we kick off the panel is you guys should feel free to ask as many questions as you'd like. I'm going to kick it off, I have a whole bunch of questions I can ask, but you guys should ask questions. This is really an industry event for us, we should be able to have that kind of conversation with these guys.

And then the other one is, you guys are allowed to smile. There's so many serious people in this room, but its okay to smile a little bit. I smile too big, I think, but you guys can do whatever the modest version is.

But let me turn it over to Ann and she can sort of walk you through our first project and just give a little sense of the effort.

MS. BEHA: Angel, thank you very much.

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Our project, Ann Beha Architects, and our team, which is an amazing group of people and talents, is working on the United States Embassy in Athens, Greece. This is a building that was constructed in the late 1960s. The designer was Walter Gropius, who preceded Sarah Whiting at Harvard, but certainly will not surpass her.

(Laughter.)

MS. BEHA: And this building has not seen a renovation since its construction. It's listed on the Secretary of State's Inventory of Cultural Resources. It is clad in Pentelic marble, which is the same as the Parthenon -- no pressure there.

(Laughter.)

MS. BEHA: And there's a campaign of renovation and rehabilitation and, I must say, preservation to that building. It has an iconic presence on a main street in Athens, on one of the busiest streets in downtown. It's also companioned on

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this tight site by a 2007 new embassy office building designed by Kallmann, McKinnell & Wood; they are not connected buildings. And of course surrounded on its site by other embassy and post functions, including entry points and -- points of entry for staff and for visitors.

We are renovating all of the building, save the Marine residence on the site. We're adding a new pavilion that actually connects the Gropius building to the Knox building. So it's an intervention that is substantial and it creates a central point of secure entrance to the complex.

We're also renovating the 2007 building, because OBO has moved and the State Department needs have moved quickly in countries like this, and their programming needs have changed. We're putting an addition on that Knox building, a substantial-sized addition, and we are building other buildings and other resources on the post campus, and a great deal

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of landscaping and site improvement.

So that's the summary of the project --

MR. DIZON: Thank you.

MS. BEHA: -- it's in construction now.

MS. BECKER: My name is Krista Becker with CGF and the Asuncion project is one of a collection of projects that we've done. I think the key component for this particular project was around the legacy landscape. The other component that was very interesting with this component was the size of the site, and not in terms of acreage, but in terms of the proportions; it was a long, narrow site. And so in terms of doing the initial analysis and evaluating the properties, we were looking at the procession and the legal landscapes, and how we could preserve as much of that as possible in order to still meet all of the campus requirements.

I also think one of the key components in doing the analysis of where the structure would go

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really ties into how to maintain that existing operation, because these are existing facilities and they're operating. And this is very important, because it's a diplomatic mission and you don't want to run bulldozers through the middle of that. So there is a lot of different components to maintaining the legacy landscape, the procession, while still maintaining operations.

MR. DIZON: Hey, Krista, the fun fact I think these guys would love to here is, what is the address for our mission there, do you know it?

MS. BECKER: 1776.

MR. DIZON: It's 1776 Lopez Avenue, which I think is -- it's hard to move from 1776.

Mark, go ahead.

MR. SEXTON: Thank you. I'm Mark Sexton, Krueck + Sexton Architects. And actually our -- this was an assignment, it was our first assignment after we were selected. We had teamed with KCCT in

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Washington as a partner. We knew nothing. As I had mentioned to Geoff at lunch, we had no idea of what a CAC was. Our first meeting was acronyms, we had no understanding of what anyone was talking about.

So we got thrown into an embassy in Papua, New Guinea. They had just discovered a huge gas reserve while the 16,000-square-foot original NOB was being constructed. And they realized that their whole mission had changed because of the growing of both energy and also the world events. So the new program on the same property grew by four times, it went up to about 68,000. So our task was to, even though the majority of the 16,000-square-foot building had been built, don't tear it down, add four times on the same property with the same setbacks, and, oh, add an MSGR and a cabana and increase the -- so it was quite an interesting project.

I think the issue was they had to demobilize the site. The notion of tearing down a building that

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hadn't even been -- the concrete hadn't completely cured was not a good thing for OBO to go back to Congress with. So, at the end of the day, we adjusted about 777 -- not 76 -- square feet of construction and really added a five-story building onto a one story, and made it work. The idea was that no one would care that there was existing construction on the site and that it had to work perfectly as if it were really built from the very beginning like that. So we worked very closely with KCCT, of course, and OBO.

But these are the sorts of assignments that you could never imagine that you would be getting into that OBO tasks you with, and it's quite interesting. Thirty two hours of continuous travel, that was our first assignment. So that's a great --

MR. DIZON: That's a lot of miles, though.
So --

MR. SEXTON: Yeah, a lot of miles -- yeah, a lot of center seats on the airplane too.

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(Laughter.)

MR. DIZON: Carl?

MR. KREBS: So I'm Carl Krebs of Davis Brody Bond Architects and we were working, I think in Jakarta for over ten years on various permutations of this project. And I think, as Angel said, Jakarta is your classic mega-city. I think it's the fourth-largest urban area in the world and it has over 30 million people, and it was virtually impossible to find an appropriate site. And in many of these countries also there are issues with title, so even when you found a site, it was something that was very difficult to acquire.

And we were faced with this sort of dilemma of not finding the right site, but also having the perfect site, because since 1945 the U.S. had occupied a central location in an Asian capital on what they call Merdeka Square, which is the equivalent of the national mall, and this sort of central square is

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surrounded by every major government building, including, you know, the vice president's house is next door, and the U.S. was the only foreign embassy on this site. It's a little bit analogous to the Canadian Embassy's presence on the Mall. So it was something very valuable to the country.

So we were able to look at the site, which had -- over the course of 50 years had become sort of a compound of very low, one to three-story buildings, most of which weren't terribly functional, none of which were historically distinct, as I said, with the exception of one. And sort of facilitate a very complicated dance or phasing plan where we could sort of build a new building, demolish probably three quarters or two thirds of the site, maintain enough operations on site to solve the challenges of both consular and CAA functions being preserved. And then doing a -- then a final phase, which is actually happening as we speak, to finish the demolition, and

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in the end result in a virtually entire new embassy compound with really nothing retained of the original embassy, but actually meet the -- both all the functional and technical requirements, but I think most importantly sort of maintain that symbolic presence in what is probably a very important strategic ally for the United States.

MR. DIZON: Joe? Milan first.

MR. HAND: Okay. Hi. I'm Joe Hand with SHoP Architects.

The challenge with Milan is that the building, the consulate sits on a site of the National Shooting Club of Italy. So it's --

(Laughter.)

MR. HAND: -- it has its own problems there, but it's a 19th century building complex with a head house, and this building you see in the rendering, the low building, is a 100-meter-long, 14-meter-wide shooting arcade where the embassy sits, and beyond was

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the target practice for the Italian Army and private citizens.

So the challenge here is to satisfy -- and the land was acquired with the promise to restore these buildings and a park in front of the head house. And part of the challenge is how to reuse these buildings productively and fit in a new embassy -- a new consulate compound with all its security functions, and to design a building that complements those without being derivative.

So the team worked closely to work that out with the local authorities. So this is a legacy now almost seven years in the making with OBO real estate, the project management team. It went dormant for a while, the building collapsed; it's in the process of being restored now. And when we came on scene we had to reinvigorate that relationship with the local historical authority and meet their expectations of how to incorporate security elements. This fountain

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is the perimeter wall of the building. There's a ha-ha or moat that drops three meters down and prevents that access issue, but yet relates the buildings one to another, which was the paramount goal of the historical authority. And then to have that compound fit together seamlessly, and I think we succeeded in that regard.

The other thing that's interesting from just sort of a resiliency point of view, this is one of the first OBO compounds to use ground-source heat pumping, and 3,000 other buildings in Milan use it. So we're drawing money out of the aquifer, taking the energy out of it, and cooling the buildings, heating the buildings, and re-injecting it into the soil. That saves us those noisy, horrible air cooled chillers that we suffer from on other projects.

So it is also being a responsible citizen in that regard and making the building stand the test of time.

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Next one. Bangkok is the mega-city problem where the existing compound -- if you ask a taxi driver to take you to the United States Embassy, they will take you to the consular building, which is a decrepit 1950s building, none of which meet any of the security requirements, and yet it is in the greenest street in all of Bangkok. In a city of mega-towers, this is the low-rise district, the real Rodeo Drive, Central Park zone of Bangkok, and the land here is valued at almost \$60 million an acre.

So the challenge for the design team was how to best use that space and cram in a 39-bed Marine barracks, new utility buildings. Initially, it was 30,000 square meters, now 40,000 square meters of office space. And part of that solution working with OBO was to include one of the first things they've ever tried, a shell space, so we have a vacant floor in the building to anticipate growth. We were able to have a three-story utility building stacking the

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generators, stacking the chillers, stacking the plant, and then to layer on we have a two-story consular section. So the typical embassy wants to be flat and spread out and here we're stacking and using a vertical solution, over 15 elevators in the whole complex.

So it's a vertical solution, yet trying to respect the local environs and the relationships to light and the natural environment that the local workforce uses. I mean, there's over a thousand desks in this really office building.

I think the last thing is about again resiliency. Bangkok is sinking and we have to - we're raising this building a meter above the flood stage, which is about nine feet above the current ground level. So dealing with that and keeping the public realm space without putting up a wall in front of people and adjusting the building into its context, and to give the embassy community its open space,

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which it's been so enamored with over the past hundred years being in Bangkok.

So those are the major challenges. Working closely with the landscape team to keep it green. That was some of the interesting parts of that.

MR. DIZON: All right. Remember, guys, you guys have an opportunity to ask questions. But, you know, I actually used to work in OBO's real estate side of the house and one of the things that -- actually, probably the only thing I really learned there was location, location, location, right? And so the Department expects us to buy sites in the right part of town so that we can do business. What we're fortunate with in the kinds of conversations we're going to have with these guys is that we're already in the right part of town and we have a presence there.

And I was going to turn it over to Ann and a couple of the other guys, and just talk about what does it mean for us to stay on those sites that have

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historically been the location for the U.S. Embassy?

MS. BEHA: Well, I'm glad you asked that, because the right location is a matter of discussion in real estate. Even though you want the right one, you know, what is the inherent risk or value of selecting one, making a final decision. And this postwar embassy built at a time when America and Greece were still working on the Marshall Plan and recovering from the Second World War and the German occupation, and then the civil war that followed the German occupation in Greece, in Athens, America placed its embassy in probably the most prime, other than the Acropolis, piece of real estate in the city. Highly visible, extremely accessible, with literally yards and yards of green space, open to the public all around it for picnics and sitting and observing parades. Not really the model of the way we have to right now secure and sustain ourselves in diplomatic facilities abroad. So it's like telling you they put

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it on Pennsylvania Avenue, it really is theirs.

So right away it had a very iconic value to Greeks, and it still does, as an exemplar not only of the Bauhaus, but also of this kind of sense of diplomatic presence, war recovery, confirmation of an investment in a relationship between the United States and Greece. None of this is what you learn in architecture school. All of this then is about how you react to a commission to sustain and preserve a building of that kind of iconic importance.

And I'm going to pass it to others, but I think that that overlay of perspective on where you are, why you are there, and as an architect and as a team, because Gensler was a superb partner for us in delivering this project, where you are and why you are and, therefore, what your obligations are as a designer. It can't help but frame the way you think about the duration of your work, the resilience of your work, the kind of detailing of your work, and the

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way in which, despite the fact that it now must be a site with a -- visible, but still a fence around it, not open to the public, how in the end it continues to represent those kinds of values. Those are the overlay around the design effort, in my view.

MR. DIZON: Carl, for you the same thing. I mean, you're at the sort of national mall Indonesia --

MR. KREBS: I actually agree with -- it's interesting, there's a lot of parallels even in Indonesia. I think for us one of the interesting questions was the prominence of the building being sort of right at the equivalent of their national mall, it makes the building as a component of public diplomacy very important. And people were very interested in the architecture, in the local architecture community, which we often dealt with through the approval process. It became very active and it really I think raised the bar for what this building had to say.

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And we had a lot of conversations, both at posts and with architects, and I think we sort of settled not on the one message, but I think an important message for us was questions of sustainability and resilience. Like Bangkok, Jakarta is an incredibly low-lying city, and not only is it -- it's low-lying, but it's actively sinking because of water being pumped out of the town -- I mean out of the aquifer. And we not only had to raise the building, but we decided can we make the story, one of the stories of this building about, you know, water retention, water reuse, water conservation, and in a sense try to make the building neutral in terms of what it was using. And we actually -- for most of the year, we actually generate almost all our own water from either rainwater recycling or condensate, and that became an important story. That's hard to visually see in the building, but it's very clear in the landscape, which is really about rain gardens and

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rills, but also even in the architecture we tried to make sure that the facade expression, sun screening was, you know, part of that message.

MR. DIZON: Joe?

MR. HAND: Yeah, I think, having started my career in the '80s doing glass skyscrapers, I think we've come full circle, Bangkok being, you know, a city that suffers from the glass -- mirrored glass skyscraper, to do a building, a high-rise building that is different, that talks about materiality, responsibility in terms of shading and energy efficiency. It sends the right message, I think, for our nation is that, you know, we did what we did, now we're trying to do better; you know, we manage the storm water responsibly, we manage the waste water responsibly, we pay attention to the cultural significance of trees and landscape. And I think it's a better message for our nation to get out there that there's other ways to do building and these are the

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perfect vehicles, like Gropius did in the '60s.

MR. DIZON: Krista, anything to share about that, the location for Asuncion?

MS. BECKER: Yeah, I think the location is key and we've done several where we're outside of the city. But in order for the mission to really do its job, it needs to be centrally located, so that they don't spend hours in the car to get from various locations, and I think your neighbors are really important.

I also think that -- I mean, we're seeing the trend in terms of this adaptive reuse of existing sites -- is really about the sort of institutional memory of that site. There's a lot of cultural heritage there and legacy heritage. In Asuncion, it was an informal arboretum that the public came and could walk the trees and experience the site or have picnics, as you said. That institutional memory means a lot to the people of the different countries. And

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so being able to stay on that site in that location and have that legacy I think is really key.

MR. DIZON: Yeah, you know, what's funny is that, you know, I think part of what we're hearing here is that this work is very, very hard. And one of the things that we've had conversations with the folks outside this room is, what is an American embassy supposed to look like? You know. How does a building represent our government and our values? It's just not an easy answer. In fact, these guys wrestle with it all the time. And one of the things I'll turn it over to Mark to talk about is, what does it mean for us to create a building that represents us? You know, what does that feel like, what does that look like? What's the kind of process that you guys think about in order to provide a building for us that is representative of our government and our people.

MR. SEXTON: Yeah, that perhaps is one of the biggest challenges, because buildings do represent

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both culture and civilizations. And I think we were really struck by going after this program because we thought we could improve the world with our architecture and this is one little spot in the world that might have a difference. It's certainly -- it's not Athens, it's not Milan, this is Papua, New Guinea, but the majority of people, the vast majority of people who live in Port Moresby will never come to the United States of America; they see it on TV, they read about it, but this embassy actually is the physical embodiment of our values, our democracy.

So we looked at it as something that was -- had to be a civic building, had to have an identifiable civic nature to it for someone who lived there, again, who would never see the White House, the Capitol, the Washington Monument. In our case, we looked at the same things that I think all architects are looking at, bringing light into the building, making the work space high performance and that

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certainly is naturally lit, but the control of that, and ultimately the symbol of the building. In our case it was a stone building, very similar to a travertine, we thought that was a very appropriate and identifiable type of material. So it's both form and material and expression. It went from a single-story building along the main road -- there's not really expressways in Port Moresby, but along the main road - - it went from a single-story building to a five-story building.

That's a significant impact and gives you a significant image of what the U.S. -- it's very prominent and it has a place in that part of the city that I think will embellish and support the democracy that is -- that we're trying to promote with our architecture.

MR. DIZON: Anybody else want to take a shot at that one?

MR. HAND: Yeah, I think part of that story

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is vacating where you are, because the consulate in Milan is inconveniently located, its security requirements block the side street. So it's the part about being good neighbors, know where you fit best, and having this site is an opportunity to provide all those functions and be a good neighbor and to give back to the community with the public realm spaces. The Liberty Building has room for a gallery, you know. Programming that space is going to be a challenge, but giving back is part of that equation. It does -- I'm sure we'll annoy a few people when we take away the traditional sidewalk parking that Italy is fond of, but otherwise getting out of the very center of town was very inconvenient and made the consulate function poorly, and now it has a better identity.

MR. DIZON: You know, one of the other things that we're dealing with too is we're -- you know, there's some buildings that we built back in 2000, 2001 that just require a recapitalization. So

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we're starting to see a lot of that where we have to modernize these existing buildings. And part of what I talked about with these guys is that, you know, when we're dealing with historic buildings, what are those other kinds of challenges? You know, I think about Athens with the building, I think about the landscape for Asuncion, I think about the shooting gallery in Milan. You guys are dealing with something different than just solving our own problems, but you're having to solve these other kinds of historic issues as well.

Ann?

MS. BEHA: Yeah, I was thinking about this and wanted to talk about two exemplars of this. The first is, of course, all of you who study the work of Walter Gropius know he wasn't a highly sociable kind of guy. So in his chancery, which is a monumental, heroic building, not a lot of places to get together. So I was very impressed when Tad Davis was talking about places in which the embassy community wants to

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be and can function as a community.

So, in Athens there are two discrete, unconnected structures, and finding spaces within those buildings for the community to come together, several hundred employees to eat together, be together, have a meeting together, those facilities were not present and we had to optimize the existing resources to find the kind of facilities that are comparable to programs, what we set now for new compounds and new embassies. So they just had a deficit of the kind of collaborative spaces that we all want and take for granted in our workplace.

So on the one hand you're trying to scoop and find and, you know, just optimize everything you can to put together a more balanced diet of resources for the working community and the visitors. Then there's the other side, which I just talked about for a minute on historic resources, and that is risk management. We knew that for the Gropius building,

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given its elevated status and importance in the international canon of architecture abroad, that we wouldn't have a very deep choice of contractors on our building, so we wanted to make sure that the kind of work we needed to do could be managed by the normative suppliers and contractors. And a great deal of the Gropius building, and even aspects of the Kallmann McKinnell building, are customized; very bespoke constructional systems.

So OBO, I will say, stands out in my mind as one of the most open-minded groups to have a conversation about risk management during construction, construction cost approaches, and the kind of unwrapping of the world of preservation and how you get preservation to be a mainstream construction effort.

And just quickly as an example of this. We have 40 columns that are 11 meters tall each clad in marble and none of them meet seismic or structural

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criteria required for an embassy compound; these are part of the original building fabric. This is just one of maybe a half dozen elements that Gropius designed that don't perform to current-day standards. And we knew that telling a construction manager, we want you to go to the field and take all the skin off these columns, wrap the columns structural concrete and the steel, wrap them so that they can perform to accredited standards and then reinstall the original marble, if you don't mind.

(Laughter.)

MS. BEHA: And the alternative to that is using all new marble, which is possible, but it's an aesthetic and also materiality change and, for a building of this value, you know, that's kind of plan B. And we wanted that and we told OBO that we wanted to test it, and we wanted to go to the field and do it and show that it could be done. OBO supported us. They spent \$90,000 sending us out there, retaining a

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local contractor and our associate architect in Athens. We did this with a structural engineer, we did it with a construction management design assist group, and we proved and demonstrated that it could be done, but we learned a hell of a lot too about how it would be done for those 40 columns. It went really well. We learned a lot, as I said, and we saved on the construction costs four and a half million dollars.

So this is not a mockup we did at the start of construction, this wasn't to do what we call construction-related mockups, this was in the design process. Not every client will do that and I think that this really paid off. And it helped us do things at a high level and also see a really strong benefit to reality checks on project specifications, project technologies, and blah, blah, blah.

So I commend OBO for being open to it and I think it shows that they're willing to push the

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normative design processes to make sure that they get a project they're really proud of, but also is keeping the resources in line.

MR. DIZON: Krista, can you talk about preserving the landscape there?

MS. BECKER: Sure, I can talk about the landscape. I think, as Ann has stated, these are very complex projects. I think one of the things about reusing the existing site is evaluating all of the existing structures and landscape. We've also seen a lot of legacy trees where you have diplomats and former Presidents have gone out and planted trees, so there's a lot of cultural significance around these events.

The key is really thinking about the site like a giant jigsaw puzzle, you have to look at all of the components, and simply moving one of the CACs, or the compound access controls or compound access pavilions, to a slightly different location might just

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be the piece of the puzzle that moves that then opens up a site opportunity, so that you can preserve the landscape and you can preserve the procession and the things that were of value about the view sheds into the site and from the site. Because one of the beautiful things about Asuncion is sort of the pockets of really wonderful landscape in between the buildings and how that creates and reminds us of what was there before and still creating a new, wonderful structure.

MR. DIZON: Go ahead, Joe.

MR. HAND: Yeah, I think with Milan the historical challenge was to know what not to preserve, and to realize that you couldn't stop half a football field of clay tile coming at you on a very bad -- from a blast-effect point of view, but to design the building so that it could survive it.

The other part was, you know, what period do you take that historically significant building back to. And, you know, right now it has beautiful London

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planetrees surrounding it, and we realized that preserving those trees at the end of their lives was probably not the right move. And we were able to take those trees down, allow the building to breathe as it originally did, and to restore the landscape to that which is best fitting to the building.

It's kind of -- a building that's a hundred years old has had different lives and choosing the right life to bring it back to is really part of the challenge. And, you know, working with OBO as a team player, we decided to keep a piece that we didn't at first think we needed to and it completes the story of the project. We have a wall that's about three stories high made of unreinforced brick that was designed to stop the bullets for target shooting. So we kept a piece of it because it helped complete that story of the site for posterity, yet we were able to mitigate other parts of the site to a different era to complete that story.

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MR. DIZON: Carl?

MR. KREBS: So we also had a small component on our site of historic resources that consisted of a much-altered villa that occupied a portion of the site that was essential for reconstruction of the new embassy and we worked locally to basically demolish-preserve, you know, keep pieces of the buildings and rebuild it on another site. But I think for us the interesting challenge we had was actually one of security, because, you know, we can rebuild this building, but working with DS, we were really sort of struggling -- we can't really use it and that was the real challenge. If you rebuild it in a historically - or reconstruct it in a historically accurate way, it won't comply with any of the occupation requirements even. So it sort of becomes a sort of open-air, slash, unconditioned pavilion and were not necessarily part of the next phase. And the post is very interested in using it as a sort of public display on

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a very limited access, because it's obviously within the compound.

MR. DIZON: Yeah, don't let DS know about that.

MR. KREBS: Yeah, but it is -- no, it's a challenge when you're dealing with, you know, historic structures. And as Ann even alluded to with the reinforcing of the columns, you know, you can -- the operation can be a success, the patient can die. So that's sort of our dilemma a lot with historic components on these sites.

MR. DIZON: You know, one of the things that's -- I think these guys are making it sound a lot easier than it really is; it's very hard. But one of the things that we have to do is we -- especially if you're working on some of these compounds that are already operating missions, we have to maintain a level of security for the people that already work there, we have to allow all these workers, like there

are going to be a thousand workers to come on the compound and do the work. So we still need to provide all of this sort of security while we're doing this kind of -- these projects or these kind of interventions.

Can you guys talk a little bit about, you know, the different ways that we solve it? Because in some cases if we do swing space, we're still having to provide that swing space at a level of security that is expected for the regular building, in other cases we're able to work around it.

Krista, can you start with, you know, what we've had to do in terms of Asuncion working around some of the existing facilities?

MS. BECKER: It all comes down to phasing, what is the appropriate phasing measures, because you don't want to continue to build the same space over and over again. So common is to look at the warehouse activities, the shop activities, some of those

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activities and see if you can swing those off site.

As I mentioned earlier, it's this jigsaw puzzle where you're looking for just the piece of the puzzle that needs to move that then allows you the opportunity to have a building site opportunity to maximize the -- and leverage the existing structures, and then figure out a way to phase the folks into the new facility and then you can demolish that facility. There's a whole layer of information that has to go in in terms of how you bring people off site and bring people back on site.

In Asuncion in particular, there was a whole series of investigations relative to the existing structures, the cultural significance, whether we needed to do an HSR, and it was determined that the existing residence was the piece of the puzzle that was removed from the site that then opened up this opportunity for the new chancery. And in that regard is when they found a new location for the residence

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and we also phased off the warehouse facilities. We were allowed a large site that was actually quite a distance from the existing facility and that we were able to create a boundary, a construction boundary where the new activity went on for the new chancery. And we also had leverage, the topography as well, there's a fair amount of topography in Asuncion, so we could actually do -- sort of tuck-under parking and shops on the other side. We really were looking at densifying the site as well and those strategies.

And then once -- it's currently under construction, but once the facility is complete then we can move the operation into the new chancery, and then to phase out the existing one and then put in the Marine house there.

So it's all about how you can leverage that so you don't have the existing operation move multiple times and that becomes very disruptive to operations.

MR. DIZON: And, Joe, can you talk about the

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situation that you have in Bangkok?

MR. HAND: Yeah, in Bangkok we have -- I think the most difficult swing condition is we're dealing with the Marines. The Marine house only -- a portion of the Marines are on site, the other portion are off site. So swinging them off site opened up our -- the south half of our site to be a construction site, yet we also displaced over 300 parking spaces that the local staff is accustomed to having. So getting those parking spaces leased off site allowed us to solve for the problem, freeing up that extra bit of wiggle room to allow things.

So, basically, during construction there are no cars on site for the staff, they have to walk from the neighboring buildings. And providing construction access on a busy Bangkok street is equally difficult to fit in between sacred trees, spirit temples, and gifts of the King that can't necessarily move unless everything is -- the Brahmin says so. So it's a

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little delicate in some regards where you can fit these things in a dense urban fabric.

MR. DIZON: I think we're close to our time. So I definitely want to thank our panel members for sharing their insights. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. DIZON: Any comments from the Industry Advisory Group that they want to share? Most of you guys have been actually on some of these reviews, so it's -- all right.

So, anybody from the public, any questions, any comments? You guys really want to get out of here.

(Laughter.)

MS. FOUSHEE: Okay, we have one quick -- so this afternoon Director Davis awarded Ann Beha with our inaugural OBO Industry Advisory Group Honor Award, and we just wanted to take a minute at the end here of the larger group session to acknowledge that.

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When we started, it was about six or seven years ago, we said we wanted to incorporate peer reviews. We really wanted to have more industry engagement and hear from the industry in a deeper way about our projects and our program. So we said, okay, we'll expand the group and we'll start doing peer reviews. And we turned to GSA, I think Renee -- Renee Pilone), we sat down with you guys, your office, okay, how do we do this? And we looked at your travel process and we were like, we're out, we can't do this, there's no way -- there's way too many forms to fill out.

(Laughter.)

MS. FOUSHEE: But we trudged through that process and we had our first inaugural group of 35, and we had our first peer review on the Mexico City new embassy. And through that process, without the guidance, leadership, and incredible insights from Ann Beha and her colleagues, we would not have had the

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confidence to continue through a process that we're now seven years into and have found incredibly valuable from all parts of the process. I mean, I remember initially the project manager was going, you have to fit these reviews into your schedule, and they're going, what? Okay, I can do it in this one day, you can find three people that can come to DC to review this in one day.

But I think we're now at a point where we all really value the collaboration and the conversation, but Ann in particular, I think you helped us see the opportunity and value in participating in shaping the way the world sees our country, and you really took that job very seriously and it really kind of reminded us about the importance of our work. And so we're really thankful and we just wanted to say, "Yay."

(Applause.)

MS. FOUSHEE: So I think, unless there are

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other comments from the public or anyone on any of the
stuff you heard today, or anything else about OBO, do
we have anyone? No one? All right, we're dismissed.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

(Whereupon, at 3:58 p.m., the above-entitled
meeting was concluded.)

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