

## FBI planning to widen real estate investigation

San Francisco Business Times - by [J.K. Dineen](#)

The FBI has expanded its search for a new Bay Area headquarters to include existing buildings, a move that makes the federal law enforcement agency a top target for tenant-hungry landlords.

On behalf of the FBI, the Government Services Administration launched a search a year ago for a site of seven to 10 acres for a 215,000-square-foot build-to-suit structure. With a weakening office market and a number of empty buildings to choose from, the GSA decided it makes sense to look at existing buildings as well, according to John Robbins of Carpenter/Robbins, the tenant advocacy firm representing GSA.

"This requirement is a bright spot for the San Francisco real estate market, if a suitable building can be found for the FBI," Robbins said.

An existing building would have to offer at least 215,000 rentable square feet, in a single tenant building with parking for 414 vehicles, including 379 secured spaces. It should be available by 2012 and provide a 100-foot setback from nearby structures and streets. Access to fiber optics, cable and major freeways is a plus. Existing seismic conditions will be of critical importance, and retrofitting may be required.

The area under consideration includes San Francisco and San Mateo County north of the San Francisco International Airport.

"Locating the FBI in an existing facility will have a positive impact on area absorption and vacancy rates, and the work required to construct a new building or retrofit an existing one will be sure to bring prevailing wage construction jobs to the market," said partner John Carpenter.

If the GSA is unable to identify an existing building, it remains open to a build-to-suit on an entitled site. Submissions of either land or buildings for GSA's consideration are due April 29.

The requirement follows an announcement by the Environmental Protection Agency that it is soliciting proposals for 290,000 square feet of contiguous space in downtown San Francisco.

Lynn Sedway of CB Richard Ellis Consulting, said government tenants become particularly important in times when private companies are giving up space, halting construction and laying off workers.

"There could be nothing better than having these large federal agencies seeking a home here," Sedway said. "It is exactly what the government should be doing right now. They get a better buy and they stimulate the economy."

One San Francisco building owner and developer interested in doing a deal with the FBI said the parking, setback and single-tenant requirements make it a stretch for most city landlords. The owner/developer requested anonymity because he is still talking to the GSA about the requirements. San Francisco buildings that could qualify include 500 Terry Francois Blvd. in Mission Bay, TMG Partner's 680 Folsom St. and Adco Group's 1355 Market St. in Mid-Market.

The FBI is now in the federally owned 450 Golden Gate Ave.