

**REPORT OF THE
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S
RESPONSE TO HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39**

Feasibility Of Developing and Staffing A Tourist Information Center In The Route 29 Corridor

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



House Document No. 15

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1989**

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THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING AND STAFFING A
TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER IN THE ROUTE 29 CORRIDOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

House Joint Resolution 39 (HJR39) directs the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and Division of Tourism (VDT) to study the feasibility of developing and establishing a welcome center in the Route 29 corridor as an adjunct to existing welcome centers. These centers include the 10 located on Virginia's interstate highway system and the 26 local/regional tourist information centers statewide that are recognized and supported by VDT. A task force comprised of VDOT and VDT staff was assembled to address this resolution from the standpoints of feasibility, desirability, and economics.

Based on the language contained in the resolution, the task force made several assumptions regarding the site. First, it was assumed that this arterial welcome center would be generally similar in design and configuration to those located on Virginia's interstate system. Second, it was assumed that the proposed center would be staffed and maintained jointly by VDOT and VDT. Third, it was assumed that the center would be constructed during the next six years and that the source of funding would be from Primary System Allocations. Finally, it was assumed that a sufficient tract of land could be located and purchased to accommodate the welcome center facility.

Based on past welcome center construction five acres were determined to be the minimum needed for center site development; however, once the site location is pinpointed, its topography could dictate the need for a tract in excess of five acres. Cost estimates and the feasibility of constructing parking and the means of ingress and egress and obtaining the necessary utilities were calculated; estimates of the staffing and annual maintenance costs of the center were projected; and the potential impact of the center on tourist activities in Virginia was assessed. To arrive at the latter, a one-day travel survey of out-of-state motorists traveling the routes adjacent to the center site was conducted in August 1988. Finally, information regarding welcome center site development underway in states bordering Virginia was also obtained.

Although land for the site does appear to be available, it is not known whether or not landowners exist who are willing to part with it. VDOT may, therefore, be faced with the need to exercise its power of eminent domain to acquire this land. Before this power could be exercised without challenge, the question would have to be resolved as to whether welcome centers are used for transportation information, and are thus incidental to public highways, or whether they are used for economic development within the state. This issue could be resolved by a legislative enactment authorizing VDOT to establish welcome centers as an incident to public highways.

The task force is aware of a tract of land in the Route 29/265 corridor, which is owned by the City of Danville, that may be suitable for the proposed center. Further study would be needed to determine the suitability of this site.

There is little question that welcome centers are desirable components of a highway system. The task force sought to determine whether or not the Route 29 center might prove desirable to the Commonwealth. Since the major purpose of such centers would be to serve the needs of tourists, the volume of tourist vehicles traversing the location was determined. Tourist vehicles were defined as those from out of state that were commuting in excess of 50 miles within the Commonwealth. A survey of vehicles revealed that 22% of the vehicles were from out of state and that 38% of those were tourist cars. Based on 1987 traffic data, this would mean that of the 9,730 total vehicles, 2,100 were out-of-state cars, and 798 of these were tourist cars. Using statistics from a 1987 study conducted for VDOT by The College of William and Mary, the financial contribution that would accrue to the Commonwealth as a result of this site was determined. Results showed that construction of the site could yield direct tax revenues, as a result of increased tourism, of \$40,606 annually, and by the year 2010, this figure could increase to \$56,339.

It is estimated that the welcome center would cost about \$2.5 million to construct. The high construction costs at this site are due chiefly to the cost of land and site development. Annual costs for maintaining and staffing the center would be \$218,000, of which VDOT and VDT would each bear roughly \$109,000. It is not anticipated that this project would entail any federal requirements, such as an environmental impact assessment or water quality permits, due to its location and potential sources of funding.

While options other than state funding should be thoroughly explored, it is useful to determine the impact on construction allocations, were VDOT to build the welcome center. Since construction allocation funds are allocated by district, these allocations would be affected in the Lynchburg District if the center was constructed. If the funds necessary for the construction of this center were drawn from the Primary Allocation for the Lynchburg district, certain programmed projects would likely have to be delayed. It is also estimated that to staff and maintain these centers adequately, an additional seven VDOT and four VDT employees would be necessary. Labor costs for these additional employees are included in the \$218,000 annual expenditure for staffing and maintenance. The cost of construction and operation could be reduced to the extent that the local jurisdictional entities were required to participate in these expenses.

Although the potential for such local participation as well as joint ventures between the VDOT, VDT, and local jurisdictional entities may exist and should be explored, such activities are thus far unprecedented in the Commonwealth.

In conclusion, the Route 29/265 welcome center site was evaluated along with 10 other candidate welcome center sites in the Commonwealth. The feasibility, financial impact, and desirability of constructing the 11 centers was assessed. Although no attempt was made to prioritize the candidate sites, the following criteria were presented as ones that should be considered by the General Assembly in making decisions about whether or not to build the center:

1. The cost of construction.
2. The impact of construction cost on district primary allocations.
3. The percentage of tourist traffic traversing the site.
4. The current and projected volume of tourist cars traversing the site (thus the number of tourists that may stop).
5. The projected revenue to be generated by the site.
6. The current and projected average daily traffic at the site.
7. The proximity of the site to existing welcome centers.

Using these criteria as guidelines, the Route 29/265 site, compared to the other 10 candidate sites, would likely fall somewhere near the midpoint of a prioritized ranking.

Although the report will enable the General Assembly to assess the advantages and disadvantages of constructing the candidate center, a more sophisticated analysis should be initiated before final determinations are made. Such an analysis would result in the development of a computer model that could ultimately be used to prioritize candidate sites accurately.

THE FEASIBILITY OF DEVELOPING AND STAFFING A TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER IN THE ROUTE 29 CORRIDOR

INTRODUCTION

On January 20, 1988, the General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution No. 39 (HJR39), which requests the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Division of Tourism (VDT) to study the feasibility of developing a welcome center in the Route 29 corridor (Appendix A). Specifically, the resolution requested that VDOT cooperate with VDT and local governments in the Danville area to study the feasibility of developing and staffing a tourist information center (welcome center) in the Route 29 corridor, including the identification of any Federal requirements to be met, necessary permits, right of way and construction cost, and the annual maintenance cost. It was requested that VDOT report its findings and recommendations to the 1989 Session of the General Assembly.

This report was prepared in response to HJR39. It presents a discussion of the findings of a task force that was assembled to address the resolution. Members of the task force included Ron L. Fink, Assistant Maintenance Division Administrator; Carl W. Fulwider, Right of Way Manager; Jim B. Robinson, Engineering Programs Supervisor; Leo H. Rutledge, Environmental Planner; Pat Suarez, Policy Analysis Division Administrator; Al J. Uzel, Transportation Engineer Senior (all from VDOT); Meriwether German, Welcome Centers Manager at VDT; and Michael A. Perfater, Research Scientist at VDOT's Research Council.

STUDY RATIONALE AND APPROACH

In requesting the study, the sponsors of HJR39 pointed out that Route 29 serves as a substitute for interstate tourist and commercial traffic and that plans are underway to upgrade Route 29 pursuant to the Route 29 corridor study. It was also noted that a welcome center is deemed important to local and state economic interests. This suggests that welcome centers currently located only on interstate routes may not be accessible to a substantial segment of tourists who enter Virginia daily via Route 29. Since studies have shown that one of the major benefits derived from welcome centers is that they lead to tourists spending time and money in Virginia, providing an additional welcome center on Route 29 for noninterstate tourists may be financially beneficial to the Commonwealth.

In order to address all aspects pertaining to establishing a noninterstate welcome center on Route 29, the task force obtained:

1. Fair market value estimates for, and the availability of, land and utility service connections.
2. Cost estimates for constructing buildings and providing other amenities usually found at welcome centers.
3. Cost estimates for constructing parking and the means of ingress and egress for the facility.
4. Estimates of the staffing and funding required to maintain such a facility.

5. A travel survey of out-of-state motorists traversing Routes 29 and 265.
6. The potential economic impact this facility might have on tourist activities in Virginia.

In developing these data, the task force drew heavily upon information concerning the nature, design, serviceability, and cost of operation of the existing welcome centers on Virginia's interstate system. Also examined was information about similar activities, either planned or underway, in the states that border Virginia. In addition, to ascertain the extent to which certain economic benefits might derive from tourists stopping at this location, a travel survey was conducted in August 1988 to determine what percentage of motorists normally traversing Routes 29 and 265 were tourists.

HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF VIRGINIA'S WELCOME CENTERS

Using guidelines established during the early 1960's by various federally promulgated highway actions and statutes, VDOT developed a master plan for the inclusion of rest areas in the design and construction of Virginia's interstate highway system. Working with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Virginia Fine Arts Committee, VDOT established sites and building designs for these facilities. All of the facilities were designed to contain parking areas as well as amenities such as picnic tables, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, and walkways around brick or stone buildings containing restrooms. At the state borders, these buildings were combined with welcome centers operated by VDT.

Nine of these centers are located on the interstates, and a tenth is located on Route 13 on the Eastern Shore of Virginia (Figure 1). The primary objectives of these centers are to provide hospitality and quick, accurate responses to travel questions and to promote longer visitor stays and, therefore, greater expenditures in Virginia. Welcome center staff are generally encouraged to direct visitors to all regions and attractions within the state and to assist in enhancing the visitor's travel experience in the hopes of encouraging return visits. Hundreds of free travel brochures and publications are available at each center. A manager and three travel counselors at each facility assist visitors with routing and vacation planning and answer inquiries regarding the state's attractions and accommodations.

Each center contains restroom facilities; parking for trucks, campers, and automobiles; and other amenities such as picnic tables, grills, water fountains, and walkways that are designed to add to the comfort of motorists. The welcome centers were constructed by VDOT and are generally maintained jointly by VDT and VDOT.

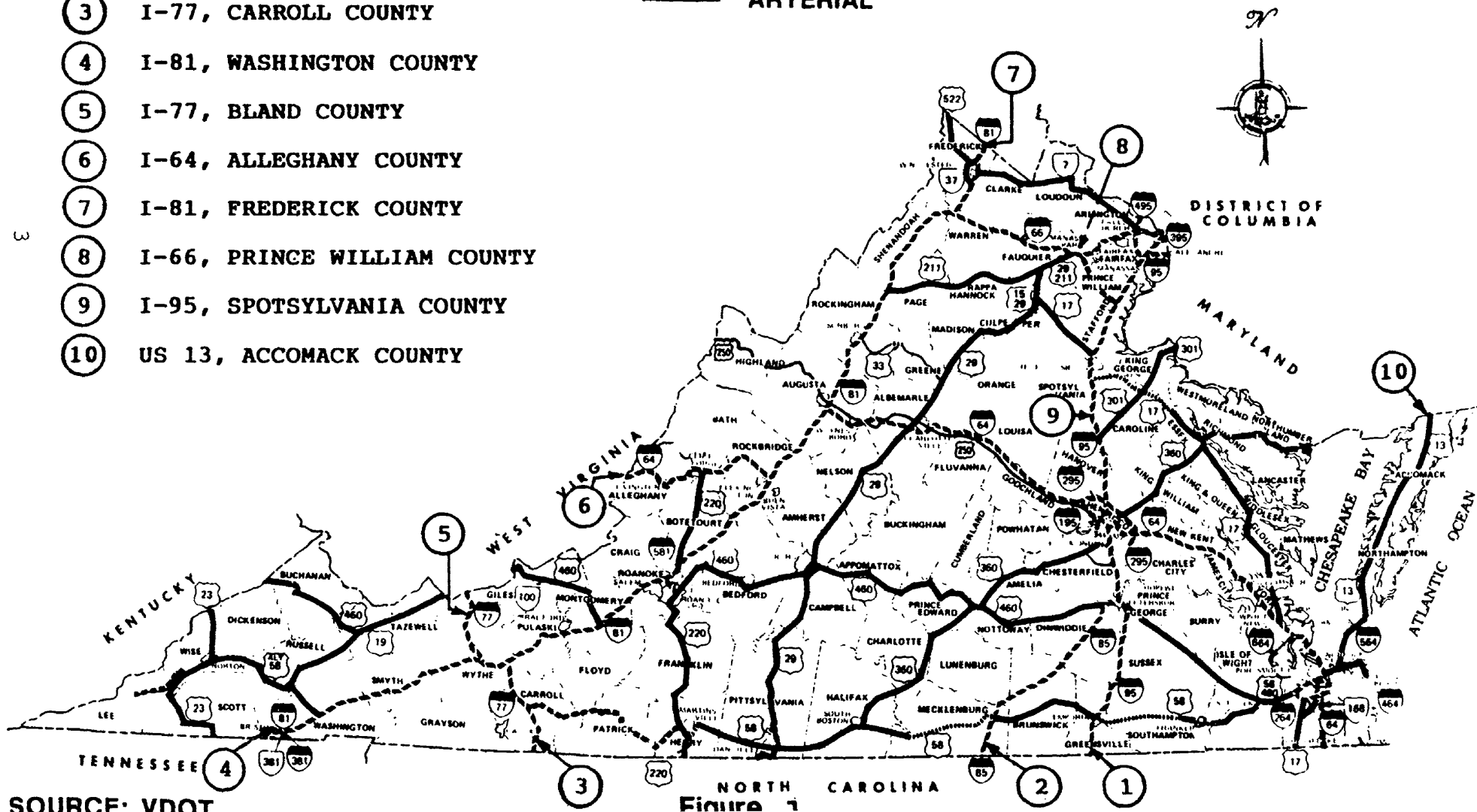
In addition to the 10 welcome centers, all of which provide statewide services to tourists, VDT also recognizes and supports 26 local/regional facilities throughout Virginia (Figure 2). Although a substantial portion of informational brochures of a statewide nature are distributed there, much information made available at these centers is oriented toward local and

EXISTING VIRGINIA WELCOME CENTERS

- ① I-95, GREENSVILLE COUNTY
- ② I-85, MECKLENBURG COUNTY
- ③ I-77, CARROLL COUNTY
- ④ I-81, WASHINGTON COUNTY
- ⑤ I-77, BLAND COUNTY
- ⑥ I-64, ALLEGHANY COUNTY
- ⑦ I-81, FREDERICK COUNTY
- ⑧ I-66, PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY
- ⑨ I-95, SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY
- ⑩ US 13, ACCOMACK COUNTY

LEGEND

- INTERSTATE
- ARTERIAL



SOURCE: VDOT

Figure 1

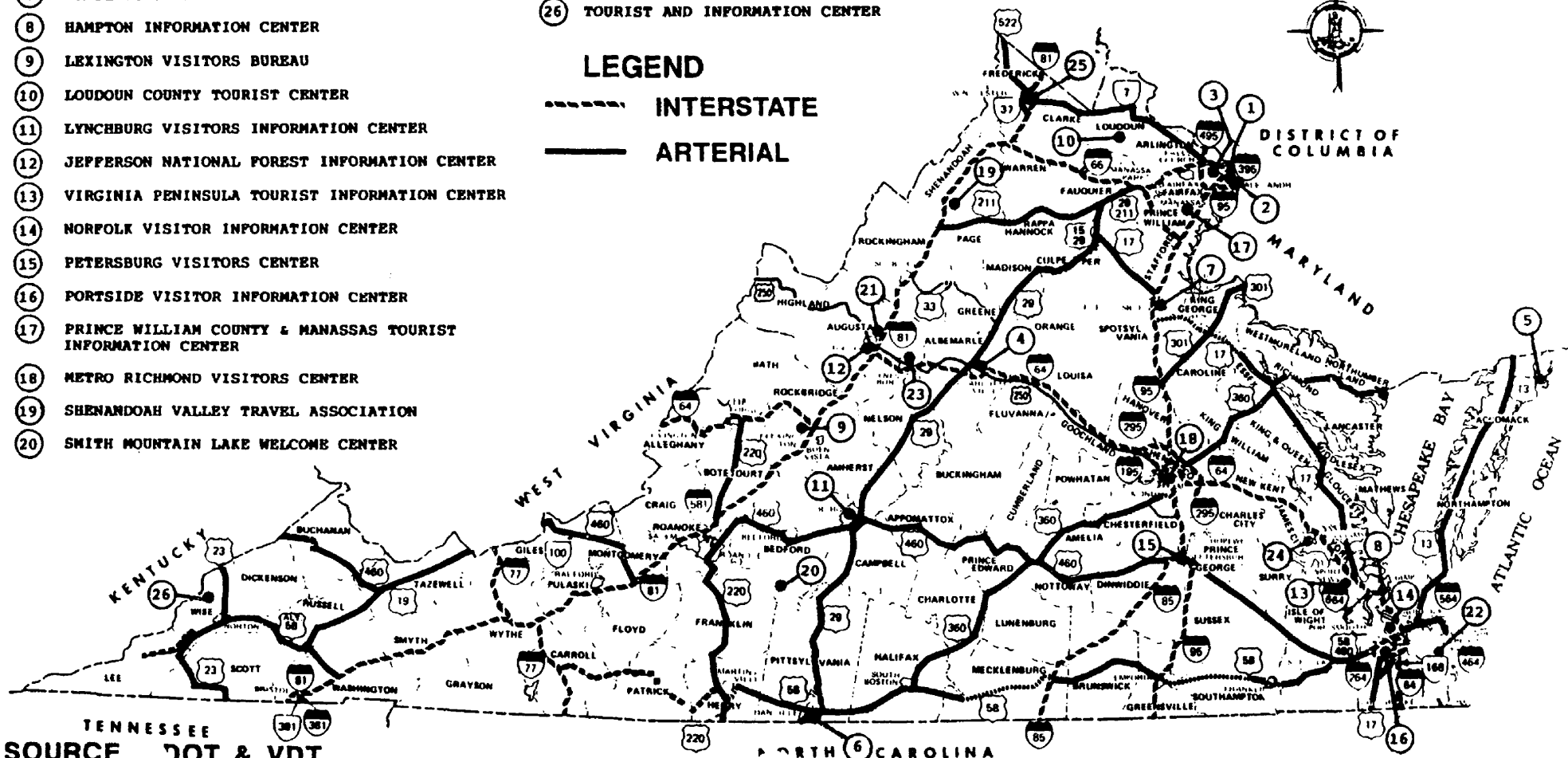
LOCAL/REGIONAL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTERS IN VIRGINIA

- ① ALEXANDRIA TOURIST COUNCIL
- ② THE LYCEUM
- ③ ARLINGTON COUNTY VISITORS CENTER
- ④ THOMAS JEFFERSON VISITORS BUREAU
- ⑤ CHINCOTEAGUE INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑥ DANVILLE VISITORS CENTER
- ⑦ FREDERICKSBURG VISITOR CENTER
- ⑧ HAMPTON INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑨ LEXINGTON VISITORS BUREAU
- ⑩ LOUDOUN COUNTY TOURIST CENTER
- ⑪ LYNCHBURG VISITORS INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑫ JEFFERSON NATIONAL FOREST INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑬ VIRGINIA PENINSULA TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑭ NORFOLK VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑮ PETERSBURG VISITORS CENTER
- ⑯ PORTSIDE VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑰ PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY & MANASSAS TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
- ⑱ METRO RICHMOND VISITORS CENTER
- ⑲ SHENANDOAH VALLEY TRAVEL ASSOCIATION
- ⑳ SMITH MOUNTAIN LAKE WELCOME CENTER

- ㉑ STAUNTON-AUGUSTA COUNTY TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER
- ㉒ VIRGINIA BEACH VISITORS INFORMATION CENTER
- ㉓ ROCKFISH GAP REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTER
- ㉔ VIRGINIA ATTRACTIONS DESK COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG VISITOR CENTER
- ㉕ WINCHESTER-FREDERICK COUNTY VISITORS CENTER
- ㉖ TOURIST AND INFORMATION CENTER

LEGEND

- INTERSTATE
- ARTERIAL



TENNESSEE
SOURCE DOT & VDT

Fig 2

regional attractions. Regional centers are operated by nonprofit groups such as local governmental units, chambers of commerce, or a designated tourism promotion organization. VDOT has only a minimal role in the operation of these centers, that being the fabrication and erection of signs containing information regarding their location. Specific information regarding the criteria for VDOT support of local/regional tourist information centers can be found in Appendix B.

ANALYSIS

In order to determine the feasibility of developing and staffing a welcome center on Route 29 (Figure 3), specific points for analysis were studied. This analysis was made from three basic perspectives: feasibility, financial impact, and desirability.

Feasibility

The most important consideration regarding feasibility was the availability of land and utility connections, or the need to develop utility systems, at the specified site. Historically welcome centers located at points of entry to the state have usually been located within two miles of the state's border. The 1987 average daily traffic counts near the candidate site were 9,730 vehicles and were projected to increase to 13,500 vehicles in 2010. Based on these counts, a facility built at this location would require at least five acres. It was determined that a five-acre tract of land would likely be available at this location. Although actual costs of utility service construction and maintenance will be discussed later, water, sewage, and electrical services also appear to be available at this location.

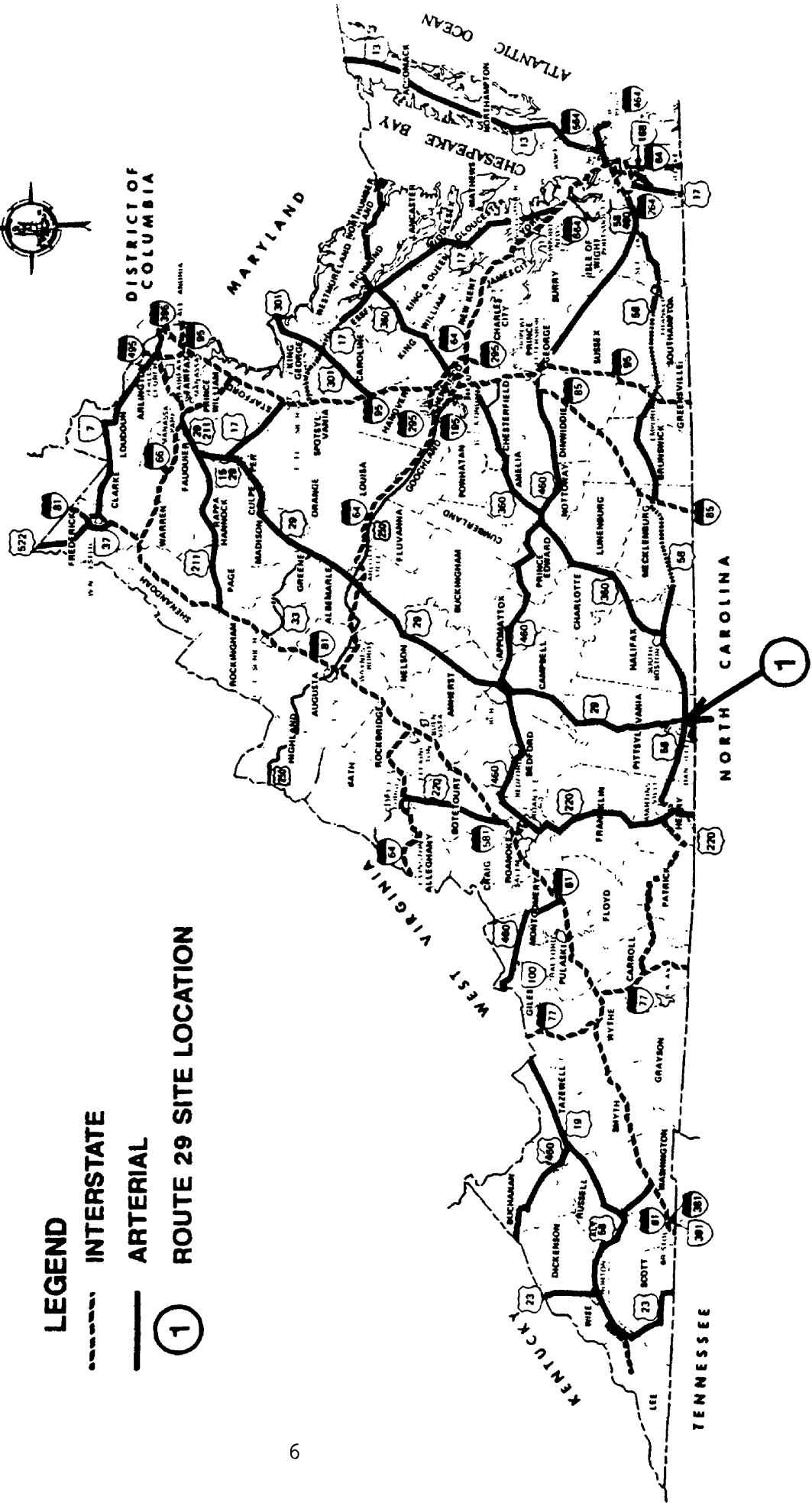
A five acre tract of land, owned by the City of Danville, does appear to be available. However, it is not known whether or not the City, or land owners of other potential sites, would be willing to sell the necessary parcel. There exists the possibility that VDOT might have to exercise its eminent domain power to acquire the property that would be required to construct the center. Although this power has never been used to acquire a capital outlay project site in Virginia, Section 33.1-89 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, states that "the State Highway and Transportation Commissioner is hereby vested with the power to acquire by . . . the power of eminent domain such lands . . . deemed to be necessary for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, maintenance and repair of the public highways of the State . . . and all purposes incidental thereto"

The Office of the Attorney General has issued an opinion (see Attachment A) regarding this issue that states:

The question that arises is whether welcome centers are "incidental" to public highways. To the extent these centers are used for transportation information and rest area functions . . . they will be considered incidental to public highways; to the extent that centers are used for . . . economic development within the state, . . . the centers

**PROPOSED LOCATION
OF WELCOME CENTER ON RTE. 29**

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SOURCE: H.J.R. 39 TASK FORCE

Figure 3

will be subject to challenge as not incidental to public highways If VDOT or the Board decides to condemn land for Welcome Centers, the transportation purpose for the land shall be clearly set out in the decision document. In addition, the eminent domain authority issue could be clearly resolved by a legislative enactment specifically authorizing VDOT to establish Welcome Centers as an incident to public highways. Such a determination by the legislature would resolve the difficulty of interpretation of Section 33.1-89.

Financial Considerations

In the foregoing, the feasibility of constructing a welcome center in the Route 29/265 corridor was discussed. The development of this center would require substantial funds for both construction and ongoing operations.

Right of Way and Construction Cost

Once the feasibility of developing a welcome center site has been determined, the next step is to project traffic in the site area. Based on that projection, a determination is then made of the number of parking spaces that will be needed at the site. After the topographical nature of the area is evaluated, a preliminary design of the site can be formulated, and a determination can be made regarding the acreage that will be required to accommodate the welcome center facility. During the analysis, consideration is also given to the availability, or development, of water and sewer systems as well as to the specific site amenities that are to be made available. Once the foregoing has been completed, the cost of constructing the welcome center can be estimated.

Traffic projections were used to determine the number of parking spaces that would be needed at the Route 29 site. Based on the guidelines developed by FHWA, this site would need parking for 39 cars, 10 trucks, and 4 campers. The amount of space for parking, coupled with the topography, dictates the amount of acreage that would be needed. This information is also used to determine the size and configuration of the restroom facilities, the size and capacities of the water and sewer systems, and other site amenities.

Right of way and construction costs have been estimated for the Route 29 site. Right of way estimates were based on current land values in the area, terrain, and land use in the vicinity of the candidate welcome center site. The availability of public utilities was also reflected in the estimated site value. To determine site development costs, a typical welcome center was used as a model, and current unit prices for grading and paving were applied. Adjustments were made for the Route 29 site based on its specific parking, water, sewer, and site amenity needs. The square footage of the welcome center building would be approximately the same as those on the interstate system. The estimated costs associated with the construction of the Route 29 welcome center are as follows:

Land (5 Acres)	\$ -400,000
Preliminary Engineering	190,300
Roadway, Parking, Lighting	1,135,000
Building	350,000
Water System*	120,000
Sewer System*	150,000
Site Amenities	<u>148,000</u>
Total	<u><u>\$2,493,300</u></u>

*Connection fees are not included in this cost figure.

It should be pointed out that these figures are only preliminary, based on 1988 dollars, and should not be construed as exact. In addition, since this site is located in the Lynchburg District, the center would be financed from this District's Primary Funds, unless other sources of funding were identified. The VDOT Six-Year Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 1988-89 through 1993-94 shows the following allocations for the Lynchburg District:

1989	\$ 22,419,000
1990	21,183,000
1991	20,667,000
1992	19,944,000
1993	20,180,000
1994	<u>19,520,000</u>
Total	\$123,913,000
Projected Welcome Center Cost	\$ 2,493,300

As can be seen, the cost of constructing the center would equal \$2,493,300, or two percent of the six-year allocation.

Maintenance and Staffing Costs

In addition to construction costs, there are recurrent maintenance and staffing expenses associated with the operation of a welcome center. Historically, VDOT and VDT have borne these costs. Presently, VDOT averages \$108,000 annually to maintain each welcome center on the interstate system and VDT presently averages \$110,000 annually to staff each of its centers. Thus, the total cost of staffing and maintaining a typical welcome center averages \$218,000 annually.

Assuming the traditional pattern of utilizing VDOT and VDT employees to maintain and provide services at the candidate welcome center this would also necessitate an increase in the allowable maximum employment level (MEL) for each agency. It is estimated that seven additional VDOT employees and four additional VDT employees would be necessary to provide a level of service equal to that being currently provided at the existing interstate welcome centers. Labor costs for these additional employees are included in the staffing cost projections discussed in the preceding paragraph.

Desirability

Few would dispute that welcome centers are desirable components of Virginia's interstate system. They afford a safe, convenient, pleasant opportunity for motorists to rest, relax, and obtain information about what there is to see in Virginia. Studies have shown that these centers enhance traveler safety, promote a positive public image, and can even influence visitors to extend their stay in Virginia. The question to be addressed here, however, is not whether welcome centers in and of themselves are desirable or whether those currently in operation on the interstate system are desirable but, rather, to what degree the establishment of an additional center in the Route 29 corridor would prove desirable.

To determine the desirability of providing a welcome center on Route 29 near Danville, the number of tourists traversing the Route 29/265 corridor was determined. To achieve this, an out-of-state vehicle survey was conducted (see Appendix C). The survey revealed the percentage of out-of-state vehicles that contained tourists (the VDT definition of tourist as one who commutes in excess of 50 miles within the Commonwealth was used). Based on a one day travel survey conducted during August, 1988, the out-of-state vehicle volume counts and tourist vehicle mix at this location were:

1987 ADT Total Vehicle	9,730
1987 ADT Total Cars*	7,200
1987 ADT Out-of-State Cars	2,100
Percentage of Out-of-State Cars	22
2010 ADT	13,500
2010 Out-of-State Cars	2,970
Percentage of Out-of-State Tourists**	38

*Includes passenger cars, RVs, and campers.

**Percentage based on the one-day travel survey conducted in August, 1988. The year round percentage could vary.

This information provides a basis for determining the financial benefits that can accrue to the Commonwealth as a result of increased tourism in Virginia brought about by welcome center visitation. A study conducted for VDT during the summer and fall of 1987 by The College of William and Mary's School of Business Administration revealed the following:

1. Vehicles stopping at existing welcome centers contain an average of 2.7 persons.
2. Eleven percent of visitors stopping at welcome centers extend their stay an average of 1.5 nights as a result of their visit to the welcome center.
3. Visitors stopping at welcome centers spend an average of \$48.03 per night per person.
4. The 1987 visitation to Virginia's ten interstate welcome centers was 900,727 travel parties. Based on mainline traffic at these ten sites, these travel parties represented 6.4% of the traffic.

The study further reported that these items "imply a total economic contribution to the state of \$19,487,300 and direct tax revenues of \$974,400. This, of

course, does not include the multiplier effects that are induced by an external stimulus to the Commonwealth's economy of \$19.5 million."

Based on the information in the William and Mary study and the traffic projections and volumes generated for the proposed site, the financial impact resulting from tourist visitation can be projected. If the Route 29/265 welcome center were built today, the projected visitation would be approximately 37,955 travel parties. This translates to a total annual economic contribution to the Commonwealth of \$812,126 and direct tax revenues of \$40,606. In the year 2010, visitation is projected to be 52,660 travel parties, yielding an annual economic contribution to the Commonwealth of \$1,126,785 and direct tax revenues of at least \$56,339. The formula used to determine these figures is:

$$(\underline{X \text{ TP/yr}}) = \frac{\underline{A \text{ ADT}} (\underline{I \text{ TP/yr}})}{\underline{I \text{ ADT}}}$$

where: $\underline{I \text{ ADT}}$ = interstate average daily traffic
 $\underline{I \text{ TP/yr}}$ = interstate travel parties/yr (900,727)
 $\underline{A \text{ ADT}}$ = proposed welcome center site average daily traffic
 $\underline{X \text{ TP/yr}}$ = \underline{X} travel parties/yr.

ACTIVITIES IN BORDER STATES

The study team examined the extent to which activities similar to those proposed in HJR39 were either planned or underway in the states that border Virginia. It was learned that in Maryland, non-interstate welcome centers have been opened at three locations and that three more are in the planning stages at the following locations: (1) Route 301 at the Virginia border (2) Interstate 83 in Baltimore and (3) Route 301 near Annapolis. All existing centers are full-service informational centers staffed with personnel from the state's Department of Economic Development with some support from local jurisdictional entities. In North Carolina, four non-interstate welcome centers are planned on the Virginia border at the following locations: (1) Route 17 (2) Route 29 (3) Route 220 and (4) Route 258. Other sites in North Carolina are also planned. At this writing, the task force was unaware of any similar activities in West Virginia, Kentucky, or Tennessee.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

House Joint Resolution No. 39

APPENDIX A

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39

Requesting the Department of Transportation to study the feasibility of developing and staffing a tourist information center in the Route 29 corridor.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 16, 1988
Agreed to by the Senate, March 9, 1988

WHEREAS, there is no interstate corridor serving the Danville area; and

WHEREAS, Route 29 serves as a substitute for interstate tourist and commercial traffic; and

WHEREAS, plans are underway to upgrade Route 29 pursuant to the Route 29 corridor study developed by the Department of Transportation; and

WHEREAS, a tourist information center is deemed important to local and state economic interests; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Division of Tourism and local governments in the Danville area, is requested to conduct a study of the feasibility of developing and staffing a tourist information center in the Route 29 corridor, including the identification of any federal requirements to be met; necessary permits; right-of-way and construction costs; and annual maintenance and staffing costs.

The Department of Transportation is requested to report its findings and recommendations to the 1989 Session of the General Assembly.

APPENDIX B

Criteria for VDT Support
of Local/Regional Tourist
Information Centers



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Economic Development

DIVISION OF TOURISM

202 North Ninth Street, Suite 500

Richmond, Virginia 23219

(801) 786-2051

CRITERIA FOR VDT SUPPORT OF LOCAL/REGIONAL TOURIST INFORMATION CENTERS

This criteria provides for the recognition and support of the Virginia Division of Tourism to local/regional facilities which provide easily accessible travel information and rest room facilities to travelers in Virginia.

A. Facility Requirements

1. Must be self-contained, free-standing structures with adequate rest rooms to meet "normal" visitor volumes.
2. Must be operated and staffed on a non-profit basis by one or a combination of the following:
 - a. One or more local governmental units
 - b. Chamber of Commerce
 - c. Designated non-profit local/regional tourism promotion organization
3. Must be open and staffed at least eight hours a day, seven days a week, closing only on major holidays.
4. Must maintain, display and provide to the visitor a representative variety of brochures on attractions, localities, events and accommodations on the entire state. A minimum of 50 different brochures must be displayed, including at least one brochure of each locality/region which has a "state designated" local/regional information facility.
5. Must be located in a convenient and accessible location for the ease of the traveler. Trail-blazing signs must lead to the facility, and the facility must have a clearly visible exterior sign identifying it.

6. Adequate staff is required to handle anticipated visitor traffic. This staff must participate in periodic training provided by the State on travel counseling services.
7. Adequate and designated parking areas must be provided directly adjacent to the facility.
8. Must have men's and women's rest rooms, which must be kept clean and well supplied at all times.

B. Virginia Division of Tourism Services

1. Contacts with appropriate organizations and persons instrumental in developing local/regional tourist information facilities now in operation.
2. Administrative information for construction and operation, including square feet of required storage space, size of brochure racks, visual displays, administration of personnel records, monthly reports, and visitor tabulation procedures.
3. Sample tourism brochures on attractions/cities/events, and guidance on developing a brochure ordering system for the continued supply of this material.
4. Staff training program. This program will include orientation to new staff and periodic training on travel counseling services for all staff.
5. Recommendations for various orientation tours for the travel counseling staff.
6. Virginia Division of Tourism Welcome Center Operations Manual reference copy.
7. List of contacts/addresses for statewide tourism brochures, including state highway maps.
8. The Virginia Division of Tourism will provide the following state publications, in limited bulk quantities each calendar year for display/distribution:

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
Civil War Battlefields	1,000
Golf	1,000
Historic Homes	1,000
Virginia (Quadlingual)	1,000
Virginia Travel Guide	2,000 (each edition)
"Virginia Is For Lovers" bumper stickers (and display stand) will also be provided on an as needed basis.	

* (Fall/Winter & Spring/Summer editions)

9. In cases where the information facility is located in close and convenient proximity of an interstate highway exit, the Virginia Division of Tourism will authorize appropriate highway signage for the exit to the Virginia Department of Transportation.

All facilities will be periodically visited and inspected by state personnel. If the criteria are not being met, the interstate signing and/or state information facility designation will be revoked.

G933

VDT 1/88

APPENDIX C

Welcome Center Study

Travel Survey

APPENDIX C

WELCOME CENTER STUDY
TRAVEL SURVEY

ROUTE:
LOCATION:
DATE:
TIME:

TOTAL OUT-OF-STATE VEHICLES:
TOUR BUSES:
TOTAL:
TOTAL VEHICLES INTERVIEWED:

VEHICLES COMMUTING OR TRIP LESS THAN 50 MILES:		PERCENTAGE:
TOURIST VEHICLES INTERVIEWED:		
PURPOSE OF TRIP:	BUSINESS:	PLEASURE:
	COMBINED:	OTHER:

TOTAL NIGHTS AWAY FROM HOME:	NONE: 7+:	1 TO 3:	4 TO 6:
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NIGHTS IN VA.: (ONLY IF TOTAL MORE THAN 0)	NONE: 7+:	1 TO 3:	4 TO 6:
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TYPE LODGING IN VA.:	HOTEL/ MOTEL:	CAMPGRND:	COTTAGE/ CABIN:
	FRIEND/ FAMILY:	OTHER	

FIRST VISIT VA.:	YES:	NO:
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PRIMARY DESTINATION VIRGINIA:	YES:	NO:
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PRIMARY RESIDENCE:	W. VA.:	TENN.:
	KENTUCKY:	N. CAR.:
	MARYLAND:	DELAWARE:
	PENNA.:	NEW JER..
	NEW YORK:	OHIO:
	D. C.:	FLORIDA:
	GEORGIA:	OTHER:

NUMBER IN PARTY:	1:	2:	3:
	4:		

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A

Condemnation for Welcome Centers



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Attorney General

Mary Sue Terry
Attorney GeneralH. Lane Kneedler
Chief Deputy Attorney GeneralR. Claire Guthrie
Deputy Attorney General
Human & Natural Resources DivisionGail Starling Marshall
Deputy Attorney General
Judicial Affairs DivisionWalter A. McFarlane
Deputy Attorney General
Finance & Transportation DivisionStephen D. Rosenthal
Deputy Attorney General
Criminal Law Enforcement DivisionMEMORANDUM

TO: S. A. Waymack
State Right of Way Engineer

FROM: James F. Hayes *JF Hayes*
Assistant Attorney General

DATE: September 8, 1988

RE: Condemnation for Welcome Centers

RIGHT OF WAY DIVISION			
RECEIVED			
SEP 12 1988			
SAW	ADV	NEGU	F1MT
WHS	UTIL	REMR	FILE
	APPR	RELOC	

Deborah C. Bryant
Executive Assistant

Pursuant to a Virginia Department of Transportation study being conducted for Senate Joint Resolution Number 38 and House Joint Resolution Number 39, I understand you are interested in the legality of VDOT using its eminent domain power to acquire land for Welcome Centers.

I believe this issue is controlled by § 33.1-89 of the Code of Virginia. The critical language is "the State Highway and Transportation Commissioner is hereby vested with the power to acquire by...power of eminent domain such lands...deemed to be necessary for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, maintenance and repair of the public highways of the State...and all of the purposes incidental thereto...as by the Commissioner may be deemed requisite and suitable...." The question that arises is whether the Welcome Centers are "incidental" to public highways. To the extent these Welcome Centers are used for transportation information and rest area functions, I believe they will be considered incidental to public highways. To the extent that Welcome Centers are used for commercial purposes or economic development within the state, I believe the centers will be subject to challenge as not incidental to public highways. This issue was raised in the City of Richmond case involving a welcome center and the City's condemnation authority. Judge Duling determined that the condemnation was beyond the authority of the city primarily for two reasons. First, public purpose could not be fully determined because the City had not decided

what specifically the condemned land was to be used for. Secondly, one of the purposes for which the City had decided upon was to sell gasoline. Inasmuch as this was a commercial enterprise and not necessary for the public good, the Court decided the City had exceeded its eminent domain powers. That decision is currently on appeal and the decision will probably be of interest on this issue.

If VDOT or the Board decides to condemn land for Welcome Centers, the transportation purpose for the land should be clearly set out in the decision document. In addition, the eminent domain authority issue could be clearly resolved by a legislative enactment specifically authorizing VDOT to establish Welcome Centers as an incident to public highways. Such a determination by the legislature would resolve the difficulty of interpretation of § 33.1-89.

If I can be of further assistance on this issue, please let me know.

526/157