



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

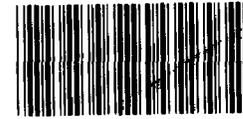
WAS/IA 117588

GENERAL GOVERNMENT
DIVISION

B-206425

FEBRUARY 26, 1982

The Honorable G. William Whitehurst
House of Representatives



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Dear Mr. Whitehurst:

Subject: Proposed Transfer of Postal Activities from
Seapines Station to Atlantic Station in
Virginia Beach, Virginia (GGD-82-49)

Your letters of July 13, and 27, 1981, asked us to review Postal Service plans to close Seapines Station in Virginia Beach, Virginia. You were specifically concerned about the justification for the proposed closing and its impact on postal patrons. Your office later asked that we find out if the Postal Service had considered any sites other than the Atlantic Station in Virginia Beach, Virginia to consolidate postal operations and services.

We reviewed Postal Service records and discussed the proposed consolidation with Postal Service officials in the Eastern Regional Office in Philadelphia, the Norfolk Management Sectional Center, the Main Virginia Beach Post Office, and the Seapines and Atlantic Stations. We also talked to city planning and traffic officials in Virginia Beach. Our findings have been orally reported to your office and, as agreed, summarized in this report.

THE PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION

The Postal Service plans to move postal operations from the Seapines Station, located on 32nd Street between Pacific Avenue and Arctic Avenue, to an expanded and renovated Atlantic Station located at 24th Street and Atlantic Avenue. Seapines Station, located in a leased building about eight blocks from the Atlantic Station, provides retail and lockbox services. It also houses the carriers who provide delivery services to Seapines and Atlantic areas. The Postal Service owns the Atlantic Station and also an adjacent parcel of land acquired from the Coast Guard in 1979 for the proposed consolidation. Retail and lockbox services are also provided at Atlantic.

According to Postal Service records, the consolidation of Seapines and Atlantic Stations was originally proposed primarily because the Seapines Station did not have (1) adequate parking

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facilities for customers and employees or (2) sufficient space for a workroom and additional lockboxes.

CONSOLIDATION PLANS
WERE DEFICIENT

Our review disclosed that the problems to be solved by closing Seapines either no longer existed or would have been made worse by the proposed closing. We found that workroom space at Seapines had been made adequate by a change in layout and that customer and employee parking would have continued to be short at Atlantic.

In response to our concerns about the adequacy of the planned customer and employee parking at the Atlantic Station, Eastern Region officials told us that in the event of consolidation

--the number of spaces for customer parking would be increased from 12 to 20 and customers would be allowed to park in reserved spaces (25) during the time the carriers are out delivering the mail, and

--consideration will be given to acquiring an adjacent lot or other suitable land in the vicinity of Atlantic Station to provide employee parking.

To lessen the impact that the consolidation will have on the availability of services, the Postal Service would

--provide lockboxes and at least a self-service facility in the Seapines area, and

--study customer waiting times at Atlantic to make sure that planned window service will be adequate during the tourist season.

These steps are responsive to our concerns and should greatly reduce the potential of the consolidation having adverse effects on postal customers. However, customer parking spaces at Atlantic would still be less than required by Service standards after 3 p.m. when the carriers return to the station. In addition, the consolidation may not result in the desired savings if additional land is acquired for employee parking and the data on customer waiting times does not justify reducing the number of window clerks.

ALTERNATIVE SITES

The option of closing both Seapines and Atlantic and acquiring a site for a new building had not been considered by the Postal Service. While we noticed available sites of comparable size and with features more desirable (i.e. better access and parking) than the Atlantic site, Service officials said that a much larger site would have to be acquired to meet new construction requirements. This probably would make the consolidation uneconomical.

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A draft of this report was reviewed by Postal Service officials. As agreed, copies are being sent to the Postmaster General and to officials directly responsible for planning and implementing the consolidation.

We would be pleased to meet with you should you have any questions on the report.

Sincerely yours,

W. J. Anderson

William J. Anderson
Director