2. INVENTORY AND DATA COLLECTION

In order to develop a comprehensive and accurate database for analysis, the study team conducted on-site interviews with airport sponsors. The study team determined that individual site visits and interviews would provide the most comprehensive inventory data collection. To accomplish this, Virginia's 68 public use airports were divided into three groups. The study team visited 42 airports. The Department of Aviation staff conducted site visits at 12 airports. Remaining airports were contacted through telephone interviews.

INV – Exhibit 1

INV – Exhibit 2

An airport inventory survey was designed to collect several types of information to be used in the study. Meetings were conducted with the study team and the Department of Aviation to determine which information would provide the best representation of the airport system in Virginia. Types of business users and types of aircraft operated were included on the survey in order to determine business usage. The needs of the airports were also highlighted with subjective questions for airport owners/sponsors, which approximated a mini SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities) analysis. An adequacy assessment of facilities in terms of both size and condition was included to assist in the facilities requirements of the plan. A copy of the inventory survey form is included in Appendix A. Information requested included:

- Â Airport Planning Characteristics (Service Level, Airport Reference Code, Critical Aircraft)
- Â Current Airport Usage (Major Airport Uses, Business Users, Airport Industries)
- Â Aviation Services
- Â Airport Facilities (Airside, Landside)
- Â Current Based Aircraft

- Current Operations
- Airport Trends over Last 5 Years and Trends Anticipated over Next 5 Years
- Airport Strengths and Weaknesses
- Adequacy of Airport Facilities

Inventory data surveys were distributed to all airport sponsors in April 2000. The study team and the Department of Aviation staff then contacted sponsors to set up site visits. From May to July 2000, 54 airports were visited. Interviews were conducted with the airport manager and/or a representative of the local governing body. During the course of the interviews, pertinent information about the facility was identified and recorded on the inventory form. The study team reviewed each survey for completeness and consistency and made follow-up contacts and visits with sponsors in order to obtain missing data and to clarify any ambiguities in the responses. In addition, the study team visually reviewed facilities and specific conditions that were difficult to adequately depict on the form. Current airport master plans and other planning documents on file at the Department of Aviation were also referenced to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. Inventory forms were copied and sent to project team members for review and comment.

The inventory forms did require some explanation in order to extract the desired information. Many times the interviewer acted as a facilitator to help prompt the airport respondent to search other records or contact other personnel in order to answer the survey questions.

During the course of the 56 visits, the study team and the Department of Aviation observed that airport management/owners know the conditions of their facilities, could identify trends with respect to needed capacity improvements or physical plant conditions, and had strong interest in how the inventory information would be used.

During this period, the study team also collected historical based aircraft and operations data from Department of Aviation records. These records included FAA 5010 forms and the annual Virginia Based Aircraft Survey forms from the past 20 years. The records in some instances included conflicting information. When a conflict was encountered, a closer review was completed and an assumption made as to which source provided the most reliable information.

All of the data collected was entered into a database designed for the VATSP. Once entered, the information was further reviewed for inconsistencies and airport sponsors contacted for clarification. Both the FAA and the Department of Aviation reviewed the historical based aircraft and operations numbers and resolved any data discrepancies that existed.

Results from the inventory task are summarized as part of the Facilities Requirements section.