



PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Options for the Indian Cultural Center Will Allow the Site to Meet its Cultural, Recreational, and Economic Development Intent

Summary

In June 2012, the Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee directed the Program Evaluation Division to evaluate options for the future disposition of the North Carolina Indian Cultural Center site located in Maxton, NC. The original concept for the Cultural Center was a theme park-like attraction dedicated to the history, culture, and heritage of North Carolina American Indians. The North Carolina Indian Cultural Center Inc. (NCICC Inc.) holds the lease on the property and is the nonprofit charged with implementing the concept.

The geography, condition, and size of the Cultural Center site hinder the development of the site as originally envisioned. The Cultural Center site is composed of four individual parcels of land totaling 528 acres. The capacity to develop the site is constrained by geography and accessibility. The existing facilities on the site are dilapidated. Because the site is thickly wooded and mostly unfenced, the Cultural Center is vulnerable to theft and vandalism.

The lease structure hinders accountability and state oversight. Over time, performance measures were removed from the property lease with NCICC Inc. Furthermore, the property lease is not an effective mechanism for overseeing the goal of creating a Cultural Center because the lease does not specify the variety, number, frequency, and quality of programs consistent with the mission.

Options for the future disposition of the Cultural Center site are limited to property allocation and sale. Weighing options for each of the parcels, rather than the site as a whole, is the most effective way to ensure the future disposition promotes North Carolina Indian culture and provides opportunities for public recreation and economic development.

The need to preserve and promote North Carolina Indian culture remains. The Cultural Center site is not the ideal place to preserve and promote North Carolina Indian culture. North Carolina's American Indians still desire a central location for the promotion of culture and statewide coordination of such efforts.

The General Assembly should terminate the property leases, direct the Department of Administration (DOA) on the disposition of the four parcels of land, and direct the Commission of Indian Affairs to develop a new strategic vision for the preservation and promotion of North Carolina American Indian culture. The leases should be terminated and DOA should be directed to allocate two parcels to the state parks and sell the remaining parcels. The commission should report to the General Assembly on the new strategic vision by April 1, 2014.