

logo not found or type unknown

V.I Housing Authority Announces \$116.7M Project Cost for Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion Preservation

Disaster Recovery / **Published On October 10, 2023 07:20 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **October 10, 2023**

Image not found or type unknown



Inside a newly renovated Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion unit. By. GOV'T HOUSE

The V.I Housing Authority and the contractor of the Walter I.M. Hodge Pavilion Preservation Project recently unveiled the total estimated cost for the entire endeavor at \$116.7 million. The ambitious project is set to overhaul 248 units, with 82 of these already having been rejuvenated as part of the project's recently concluded phase one.

The celebration for this notable completion was marked with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, symbolizing the culmination of significant efforts under the HUD's Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. The comprehensive renovation plan seeks to invigorate all 248 units and 21 buildings in the development by September 2024, ensuring residents enjoy modern

amenities, and the structures possess enhanced resilience to natural disasters.

Situated at the intersection of Centerline Road and Sandy Point Road in Frederiksted, the pavilion, originally built in 1971, had seen better days. The devastating effects of Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017 emphasized the need for urgent refurbishments. Leveraging the benefits of the RAD program, the renovations not only enhance the operational efficiency but also prioritize residents' quality of life.

Robert Graham, VIHA's executive director, highlighted their commitment, expressing pride in serving low-to-moderate families. Michael T. Rooney, founding principal of MDG Design + Construction, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the synergy of strong partnerships and innovative financing.

Among the upgrades in the 82 homes are new energy-efficient fixtures, modern appliances, and aesthetic enhancements. Significant structural enhancements include wind-resistant façade systems and site beautification, ensuring a safe and vibrant living environment. Resilience measures, from solar photovoltaics to backup generators, promise improved defense against potential storms.

The project has also been a boon for local employment, with J. Benton Construction taking the lead. Events like job fairs, health days, and art displays have further fostered community spirit.

The comprehensive financing for this project was sourced from multiple avenues, including FEMA, HUD, tax credits, and sizable loans.

As the next phases roll out, there's palpable excitement for the refurbishment of the additional units and community spaces, with the overarching goal to meet the National Green Building Standard Tropical Zone Certification.