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Cyril E. King Airport To Undergo Nightly Closures For Next Five Weeks As Various Runway, Taxiway Projects Converge

The V.I. Port Authority outlines extensive nighttime work at Cyril E. King Airport, including airfield marking and seal coat applications

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Aerial shot of the Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

From next week, the Cyril E. King airport on St. Thomas is set for approximately five weeks of nightly closures, according to V.I. Port Authority Director of Engineering Preston Beyer.

Mr. Beyer was addressing VIPA's Governing Board during Wednesday's board meeting, updating members on the various projects currently underway. Earlier in the meeting, the board approved an additional \$474,047.25 for a contract with Hi-Lite Airfield Services. The company was initially contracted in August 2023 to bring current runway markings into compliance with Federal Aviation Administration standards, and the extra funds are now to refresh airfield markings on the runway. According to Mr. Beyer, there has recently been a "noted degradation of the vibrancy of the airfield markings on the runway."

The initial scope of work was to fix "geometrical deficiencies and vibrancy deficiencies noted in compliance inspections," but with annual inspections once again coming up, the idea is to have the already-mobilized contractor refresh the rest of the runway markings "to ensure there are no deficiencies noted by the inspector related to airfield marking on the runway" when the time comes, Mr. Beyer said.

Apart from the marking work, the middle portion of the airport runway is scheduled to receive a new protective layer. "The...contractor has mobilized the site and is expected to begin the seal coat work on the keel section of the runway next week," Mr. Beyer told board members. "Taking approximately one week to complete this scope includes hard runway closures for the full duration of each night of that week." Combined with the runway pavement markings, "We're looking at approximately five weeks straight of hard closures every night," Mr. Beyer disclosed.

Fortunately, VIPA will be able to take advantage of the needed closures to perform additional work. An ongoing taxiway project can occur in tandem with the seal coat and pavement marking work, thus obviating the need for separate closures at another time. "We anticipate that the final marking associated with the taxiway job will happen in concurrence with these nightly closures and shutdowns," Mr. Beyer noted.?

Another topic of discussion during Wednesday's meeting was the barge ramp dredging project at Red Hook. According to Mr. Beyer, a final review conducted in March 2024 revealed "deficiencies to the completed work against contract and scope." He indicated that the contractor would remobilize sometime between late May and early June to rectify the flagged deficiencies.

"There was a portion of the work that wasn't dredged to the contracted depth," Mr. Beyer explained, estimating that approximately 30% of the specified project area was affected. Expressing confidence that "it's a relatively easy thing to complete," Mr. Beyer noted that VIPA would pay the partial invoice that was submitted, with the remaining sum to be remitted once the remediation work is completed. Meanwhile, "We've obviously continued to use the barge ramp; it hasn't impeded access," Mr. Beyer stated.