

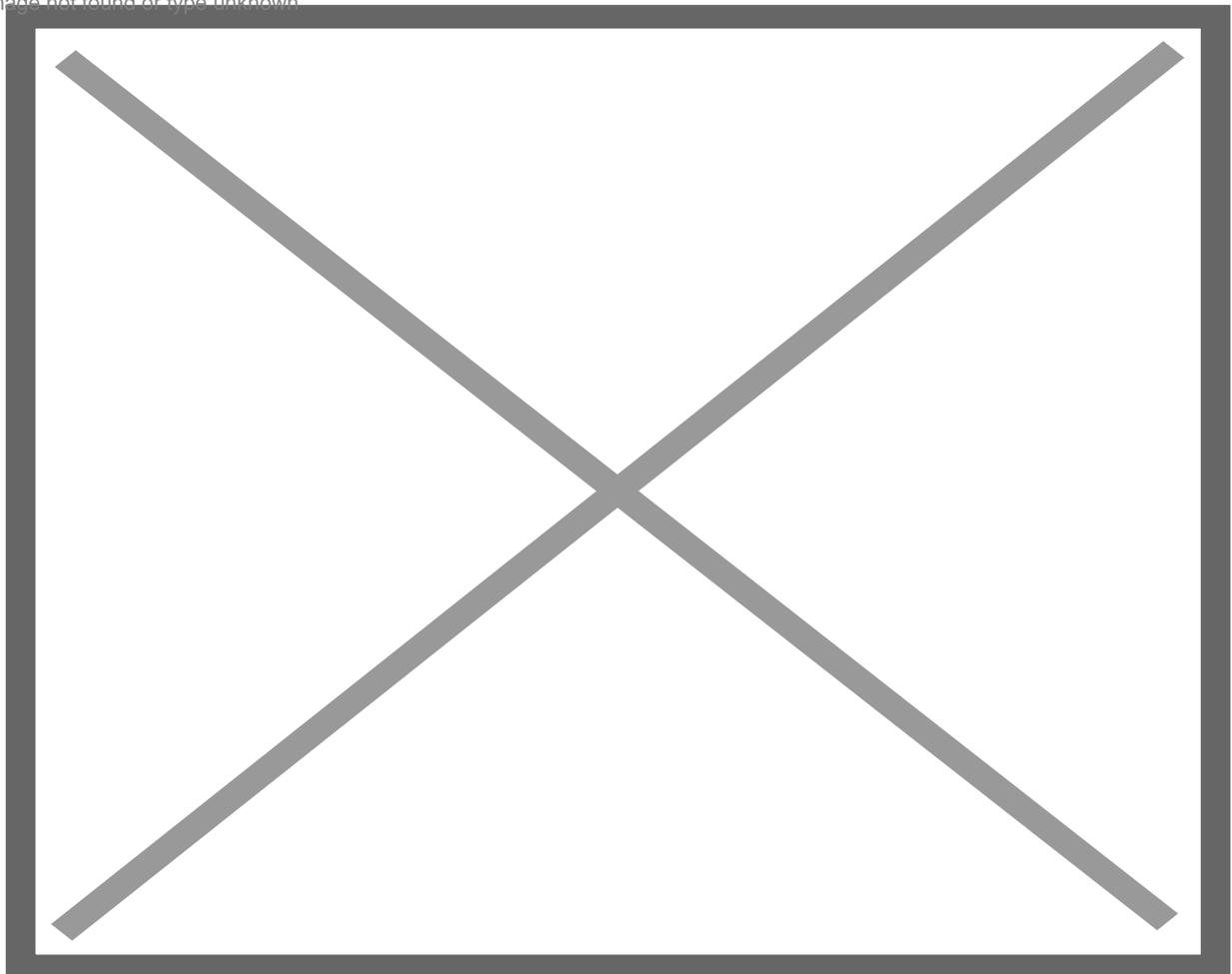
## Public Works Highlights Several Major Infrastructure Projects To Be Completed with FY2025 Budget Appropriation

Major projects include road reconstruction on St. Croix and St. Thomas, bridge constructions, and cemetery expansions; DPW to receive \$25.97 million budget allocation with significant focus on equipment maintenance and employee compensation

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The Department of Public Works (DPW) has outlined several major infrastructure projects set for completion with the FY2025 budget appropriation. Among the key projects is the Mt. Pleasant roads project on St. Croix, focused on road reconstruction and drainage mitigation, which is 20% complete and valued at \$1.6 million.

Another significant initiative is the Botany Bay, Perseverance Bay, and Red Hook Bay watershed project on St. Thomas, aimed at road reconstruction, drainage mitigation, and embankment replacement. This project is 65% complete with a total cost of \$2.5 million.

DPW Commissioner Derek Gabriel also highlighted the progress of the Clifton Hill Connector Road/Melvin Evans Highway-Container Port Intersection Phase I, currently 80% complete. This project involves major road reconstruction, asphalt paving, roadway widening, and utility pole relocation, handled by Grace Civil.

In addition to road projects, a series of bridges are either under construction or slated to begin soon. The Lagoon Bridge is earmarked for completion in July, and the Midland Road Bridge is expected to start in August. New road projects, including the Ethel Macintosh Memorial Drive, involve extensive roadway rehabilitation and drainage improvements, with an anticipated award by Summer 2024.

Addressing cemetery capacity, Mr. Gabriel mentioned private property owners willing to sell land for cemetery expansion, though funding is needed. On St. Croix, a veteran's crypt is 75% complete, costing \$468,820.50, while on St. Thomas, a similar project is 90% complete at \$666,838.

DPW will also reconstruct 43 bus shelters territory-wide, a project currently in procurement. Lawmakers expressed satisfaction with these initiatives, emphasizing their role in addressing the territory's infrastructure needs. "We hear every single day on the radio, 'What are these senators doing about the roads?' We provided the funding," noted Senator Novelle Francis.

The Office of Management and Budget has recommended a general fund allocation of \$23,246,320 for DPW for FY2025, supplemented by \$1,000,000 from the Tourism Advertising Revolving Fund, \$1,225,000 from the Anti-Litter and Beautification Fund, and \$500,000 from the St. John Capital Improvement Fund, totaling \$25,971,320.

DPW plans to utilize \$7,559,307 of the general fund for personnel services and \$3,727,235 for fringe benefits. Other significant allocations include \$4,875,778 for services and charges, \$898,000 for supplies, and \$886,000 for utility costs. Additionally, \$100,000 is set aside for capital outlays, \$200,000 for the Inter-Island Subsidy, and \$5,000,000 for the Transportation Fund.

The \$4.9 million designated for other services and charges will largely cover equipment repairs and maintenance at \$4,275,203. Communication costs will consume \$209,000 of this category. Beyond these funds, DPW manages over \$168 million in disaster and non-disaster recovery funding.

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