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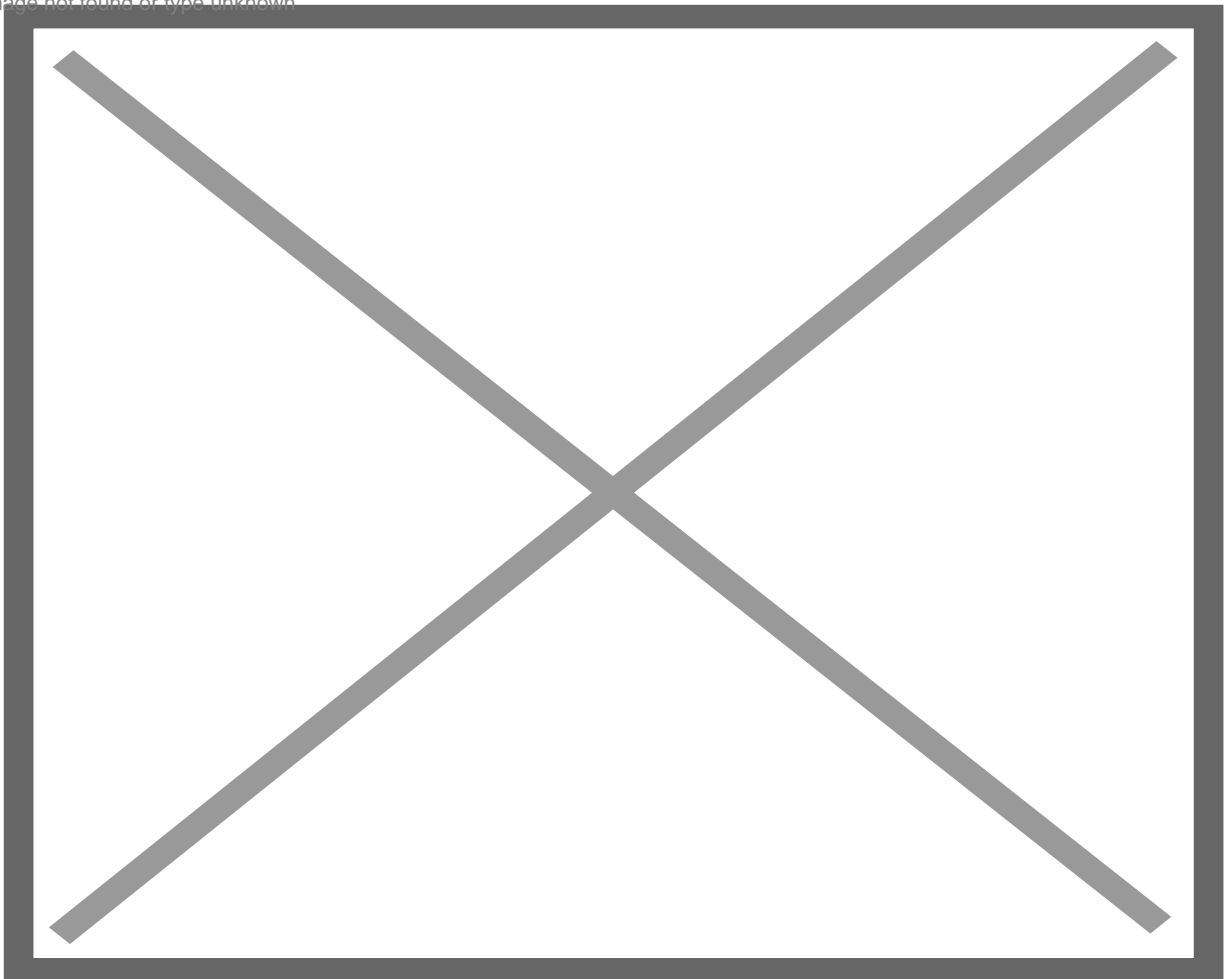
## New Details Emerge About Charlotte Amalie Dredging Project During VIPA's "Industry Day" Event

**Detailed plans for dredging the Charlotte Amalie Harbor, including depths, offloading sites, and environmental protections, were shared with contractors during VIPA's virtual event**

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Nelcia Charlemagne **August 14, 2024**

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**The Charlotte Amalie Harbor. By. V.I. CONSORTIUM**

On Tuesday, the V.I. Port Authority hosted a virtual meeting to discuss the Charlotte Amalie Harbor dredging project with interested contractors. “This is really an essential project that we’re looking forward to getting out and moving,” said Preston Beyer, VIPA’s director of engineering, noting that the end goal is to “facilitate larger cruise vessels” at the West Indian Company dock.

WICO CEO Anthony Ottley noted that “we need to be in a position to where we can accommodate” the larger ships that continue to be built by cruise lines, so that the industry continues to choose the Virgin Islands as a cruise destination. Meanwhile, Mark Sabino, WICO’s marine director, said that the issue is more pressing. “We’re actually losing the channel, and the existing traffic is threatened,” he explained. “That’s why it’s important that we get this dredging done.” Being able to accommodate larger ships is a welcome “byproduct” of the dredging exercise, but Mr. Sabino’s primary concern was ensuring that the existing channel is not completely lost to sediment accumulation.

Before turning the presentation over to Mr. Beyer, the consultants pointed out that the scope of the project went beyond the Charlotte Amalie harbor itself, extending to “some maintenance dredging around the Yacht Haven Grande Marina” as well.?

Kristen Ewart, a coastal engineer for infrastructure advisory firm Moffat & Nichol, advised that the dredging site and offload site, which will be on St. Croix, are approximately 55 nautical miles apart. She also noted that different sections of the harbor would be dredged to different depths - 40 feet for the main channel, 38 feet for the turning basin, and 35 feet for the berth pocket. In total, approximately 217,000 cubic yards of dredge material is expected to be removed.?

Some of that is considered “beach material”, and according to Ms. Ewart, will be stored on a secondary site on St. Thomas – the compound of the old Adelita Cancryn Jr. High School. “There’s about three and a half acres there that’s going to be available as a temporary dredge material stockpile site,” she noted. “This site is going to require some kind of considerable preparation,” she continued, mentioning that some of the existing buildings will have to be demolished to make room for the material removed from the harbor. Those buildings, Mr. Beyer confirmed, do contain hazardous material that will need to be abated once it is time for removal.?

“Non-beach quality material is going to take a cruise over to St. Croix and will be offloaded at the molasses dock” where there is an acre of available space, Ms. Ewart continued. That material will then be transported to a quarry site near the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport. “There is a kind of depressed, natural depression portion of that quarry site that we’re looking to fill,” she noted. Because this material will need to be trucked from the dock to the quarry site, “the contractor is responsible for the environmental protections and controls on those public roadways and maintaining safe traffic conditions,” she advised.?

After going over some of the more technical aspects of the harbor dredging project, including requirements for water quality monitoring, specialized equipment to mitigate turbidity, and permitting considerations, Ms. Ewart turned to the maintenance dredging portion of the project, sited at the Yacht Haven Grande Marina.

?Three areas will be dredged here as well, spanning from 16 to 25 feet. Approximately 33,000 cubic yards of material is expected to be removed from this site – primarily sand and silty material, Ms. Ewart noted.?

In response to a question from the audience, Mr. Beyer assured that the material being dredged will not need to be screened for artifacts, but said that “there are protections in place in the event that something is unearthed.”

Asked about the cost, Mr. Beyer advised that “this is a publicly procured project...that’s why we’re putting it out to bid, so that we can understand the market and we’ll respond and react accordingly.” It was previously announced that \$17 million for the project had been [appropriated by the Legislature](#) upon the request of Government House, along with just over \$1.4 million from

the [Community Facilities Trust Fund](#).

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