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Major Cruise Investment and Waterfront Upgrades Planned for Frederiksted Following Seatrade Talks

Senator Kurt Vialet and USVI officials met with Royal Caribbean at the Seatrade conference to discuss investment in Frederiksted. Planned upgrades include new signage, beach access, vendor spaces, and ADA improvements to boost tourism and local commerce.

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The Ann E. Abramson Marine Facility in Frederiksted, St. Croix. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM

A transformative plan to revitalize the Frederiksted waterfront is underway following strategic discussions between Virgin Islands officials and Royal Caribbean—the cruise line that currently brings over 80 percent of cruise visitors to St. Croix.

Senator Kurt Vialet, who led a delegation at the 2025 Seatrade Cruise Global Conference, confirmed that proposed upgrades to the area include sweeping improvements designed to enhance both the resident and visitor experience. Plans involve the construction of a pedestrian bridge connecting sidewalks to the beach behind Fort Frederik, sidewalk repairs, revamped signage, and safety upgrades. The vision also includes landscaping enhancements, beach sand replenishment, shoreline restoration, and the installation of benches, umbrellas, and shaded seating areas. ADA-compliant access to the water is part of the design, ensuring accessibility for all.

Additionally, the plan incorporates the development of beach bars and local food stands, part of a broader effort to stimulate local business activity while creating a vibrant and welcoming waterfront destination.

“This isn’t just a facelift, it’s a full transformation that will support local businesses, elevate the visitor experience, and bring sustained economic growth to the Frederiksted area,” Vialet stated during a press release issued Friday?.

Vialet and his team engaged directly with Royal Caribbean executives in the days leading up to and during the Seatrade conference to discuss the company’s potential investment in the Ann E. Abramson Marine Facility and its surrounding area. Talks were described as productive, with optimism expressed on both sides for a long-term tourism development strategy that centers on Frederiksted.

The discussions were coordinated in collaboration with the V.I. Port Authority and included VIPA Executive Director Carlton Dowe, Assistant Executive Director Bill Rawlins, and Chief Financial Officer Ava Penn. Senators Novelle E. Francis Jr., Kenneth L. Gittens, Franklin D. Johnson, Dwayne M. DeGraffe, Marise C. James, and Hubert L. Fredricks also took part, lending unified legislative support to the initiative.

“We are seizing the moment and building the kind of cruise experience that invites travelers to fall in love with St. Croix from the minute they dock,” said Vialet. “Our unified approach sends a powerful message—we are ready to grow, invest, and welcome the world to our shores.”

With the next cruise season fast approaching, legislators have already identified preliminary funding sources to initiate the infrastructure improvements. Though timelines have not yet been detailed, Vialet’s office said the planning phase is active and the public will be kept informed as progress is made.