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Territory-Wide Street Addressing Initiative Nears Completion as 60 Percent of Names Submitted

Over 4,000 new addresses have been created and 60% of streets now have names as the territory moves toward full adoption of fixed street addresses, paving the way for better emergency response, mail delivery, and economic development.

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Lieutenant Governor Tregenza Roach, center left, reviews a map with Street Addressing Initiative team members at the Guy Benjamin Campus in Coral Bay, St. John. By. OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR.

Names have been submitted for 60 percent of streets across the territory, as the Office of the Lieutenant Governor presses ahead with the Street Addressing Initiative (SAI). That update was

part of a comprehensive report presented by Chris George, administrator of the GIS Division, before the Committee on Disaster Recovery, Planning, and Infrastructure on Monday.

With its inception in 2012, the SAI team has completed both the pilot and bridge phases and has accomplished several goals. Among them was the development of the territory's first Master Address Repository System (MARS). According to Mr. George, "over 4,000 new addresses were created and all urban areas of the territory are now formally addressed. The SAI is "currently executing the final territory-wide phase."

Mr. George described the effort as the "largest infrastructure project in modern Virgin Islands history."

Street addressing is expected to offer a host of benefits to the community, including simplifying emergency response and opening opportunities for delivery services, utilities, postal mail, curbside trash pickup, carrier services, senior and disability Services. Due to a lack of comprehensive street addressing, the territory has been foregoing the economic impact "via businesses based specifically in these sectors." According to Mr. George, a lack of formal addressing has also inhibited the collection of detailed demographic data for informed decision making.

As community participation on street addressing continues, Mr. George assured lawmakers and listeners that due consideration is being paid to "irremovable aspects like our estate culture...as well as our street types that retain non-English languages." It's something that made committee chair Senator Marise James elated. "I am happy you fought for that and you won that fight."

With over 90% of the streets on St. John now named, that island is expected to set the stage for the installation of signage across the territory. Per Mr. George, the contract for residential street signs is being executed, and "barring any unforeseen circumstances, groundbreaking should be commenced in August." These signs will complement already installed illuminated highway signs on major intersections in St. Thomas. Similar installations will be visible in St. Croix and St. John soon.

"St. John is now the first island in the Caribbean to have a fully functioning address system from end to end," said Mr. George. The GIS Division will soon conduct 911 testing on St. John to ensure that aspect of the addressing project works seamlessly. "They would make the call saying, I'm at 4339 Soursop Lane, and click and not say anything else. No parcels, no descriptions, no nothing, and let the system do the work," he noted.

The entire addressing project is expected to come to a close in January 2026, with manufacturing and installation of signage continuing for several more months. The Legislature will also be required to "formalize and create laws that state that the territory now has a fully functioning addressing system," Mr. George said.

"It is understood that a period of transition is unavoidable for a project that changes how we as a people navigate our islands," the GIS administrator acknowledged. When the project is completed, the advent of fixed addresses will make it easier to find one's destination, he insisted. Residents will no longer need to rely on physical indicators that could easily be changed; the mango tree on the route to someone's home could blow down during a storm, for example.

Lawmakers were reminded of the project cost, with Mr. George breaking it down into phases. Creation of an implementation plan cost almost \$64,000 in grant funding. The Office of the Lieutenant Governor then shelled out a collective \$418,000 for the pilot and bridge phases. The

technology for the Master Address Repository System was purchased for over \$347,000. However, the initiative has won a Community Development Block Grant valued at \$5.3 million.

Lawmakers were largely impressed with the SAI's progress. "I think you've done a yeoman's job. This is an incredible feat," remarked Senator Hubert Frederick. Senator Carla Joseph, meanwhile, was pleased to learn that street names given by the Legislature will be retained.

"It shows that once you stick to an initiative it is possible to complete it, and at the same time, make sure that you're spending federal funds," said a satisfied Senator Kurt Violet. "Hopefully, when this is finished, we'll have really, really good directions."

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