

The Virgin Islands Consortium

PFA Commits \$240K to Fast-Track FIFA Soccer Fields and Ballpark Lighting in USVI

The Public Finance Authority approved \$240,000 for groundwork on two FIFA-funded soccer fields and new lighting at Ezra Fredericks Ballpark, with Governor Bryan stressing swift action to bypass federal delays and deliver facilities for youth sports.,

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The Public Finance Authority has agreed to spend up to \$240,000 on building two new soccer fields in partnership with FIFA, as well as installing lighting at the Ezra Fredericks Ballpark.

During Friday's PFA board meeting, Governor Albert Bryan Jr. explained that the local FIFA chapter had alerted the agency to a project being undertaken by their parent organization. In 2024, FIFA President Gianni Infantino [announced FIFA Arena](#) projects, an initiative to install 1,000 mini-pitches in disadvantaged urban and rural areas worldwide.

Two fields will be built in the territory, Governor Bryan said: one at the Career and Technical High School on St. Croix, and the other at the Ezra Fredericks park on St. Thomas. While FIFA will be funding the construction of the fields, "there is groundwork and preparation that must be done and you have to be ready to get this done before October," the governor noted. PFA directors approved a sum of \$80,000 for the preliminary works.

Governor Bryan then pressed for an additional allocation of \$160,000 to install lighting at the ballpark. "Originally, I was only asking for this \$80,000 and I had the money to light the park under the federal grants," the governor noted. "But if we use federal money, we have to go through the NEPA certification and all kinds of other things, and it would take too long beyond the grant period I have for this," he explained. The National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, is a federal law that requires government agencies to assess the environmental impact of major projects before they are approved. This process often includes detailed studies, public input, and permitting steps, which can significantly delay construction timelines.

Board members unanimously agreed to pony up the additional cash, prompting an expression of pleasure from Governor Bryan. "I'm so happy for that; these public private partnerships really work." He noted that playgrounds in Frederiksted and on St. John have been built using this method, as was the skate park in the Ezra Fredericks facility.