

Cyril E. King Airport Runway to Close Nightly as VIPA Launches First Major Rehabilitation Since 2012

VIPA will shut the runway from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. starting Dec. 1 for geotechnical testing ahead of a \$27M resurfacing project funded by the FAA and Passenger Facility Charges. The Authority expects minimal travel disruptions as work continues into 2026.

Travel / **Published On November 21, 2025 11:45 AM /**

Staff Consortium **November 21, 2025**

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The Cyril E. King Airport in St. Thomas, USVI. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

ST. THOMAS — The V.I. Port Authority will begin nightly closures of the Cyril E. King Airport runway on December 1 as part of a major, multi-phase infrastructure upgrade designed to improve safety, reliability, and long-term operability of the island's only runway. The work, which will continue through 2026, marks the first major rehabilitation of the 7,002-foot runway since 2012.

VIPA announced that the runway will close each night from 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., allowing crews uninterrupted access while ensuring regular airport operations are not affected. The agency emphasized that it does not anticipate significant disruptions to air travel, and apologized for any inconvenience caused by the temporary schedule.

The first phase begins December 1 with a pavement boring project, a geotechnical investigation designed to evaluate subsurface conditions and support future enhancements. Conducted entirely at night, the work aims to strengthen the runway's condition and performance without impacting daytime flight activity.

The second phase, set to begin in January 2026, will focus on resurfacing the runway, a \$27 million effort awarded to Island Roads Corporation. Funding comes primarily from a federal FAA grant and Passenger Facility Charges. According to VIPA, the project is intended to reduce the risk of unexpected pavement failures, reinforce operational dependability, and safeguard uninterrupted aviation services for travelers.

VIPA stated that planning for the resurfacing effort began in 2018, developed in collaboration with the Federal Aviation Administration, airport users, and other stakeholders to ensure the runway continues to meet safety and performance requirements.

The Port Authority said it will continue updating the public about the exact duration of nightly closures and any changes to the construction schedule.