

Street Addressing Initiative Nears Completion as Officials Detail Territory-wide Progress and Community Role

Officials say the Street Addressing Initiative is nearing milestones on St. John, St. Thomas, and St. Croix, improving navigation, emergency response, deliveries, and access while relying on community input to decide how streets and estates are named

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The Street Addressing Initiative, a multi-year effort to modernize the territory's addressing system and integrate the U.S. Virgin Islands into national and global mapping platforms, is approaching major completion milestones across all three islands. Chris George, administrator of the GIS Division in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, outlined the project's progress and community impact during a live interview with The Consortium on Wednesday.

George said the initiative, which dates back to 2012, became an urgent priority after the hurricanes, when responders and partner agencies struggled to find residents in need of assistance. He noted that although the project had existed before the storms, “the storms really put the emphasis on why we need to finish it.” The territory secured \$5.3 million in grant funding through HFA, which he said was “free and clear, hundreds percent, no match for the Virgin Islands government,” covering signage manufacturing, addressing work, project management, and federal coordination. “We’re not paying any cent at all for the territory,” he added.

A central benefit of the initiative, George said, is usability for both visitors and residents. Tourists will be able to rely on “your Google Maps or your Apple Maps” to navigate to Airbnbs, restaurants, beaches, and hotels. For locals, the project is designed to enhance economic activity and improve essential services, including emergency response, utility operations, delivery and carrier services, and broader directional efficiency. He contrasted the new system with the longstanding reliance on giving directions based on landmarks, noting changes caused by storms or landscape shifts. “It opens up utilities, emergency services, delivery services, carrier services, economic lanes for our youth coming up,” he said, calling the initiative a “large scale critical infrastructure project.”

George reported that street addressing work has advanced significantly on all three islands. St. John is 97 percent complete and scheduled to begin installing its first residential signs on December 2. Once finished, he said, “Saint John will be the first Caribbean island to have a fully functioning addressing system from end to end,” complete with data and digital components integrated into platforms like Google and Apple Maps.

St. Thomas is at 87 percent of named and addressed roads, while St. Croix stands at 81 percent. George explained that St. Croix’s size makes progress more time-intensive but emphasized strong community participation. The project’s naming component involves residents, culture bearers, and elders. “These are... community members,” he said, noting that people from across the territory—not only staff from the Lieutenant Governor’s Office—play key roles.

All phases of the project are underway simultaneously, including signage installation and addressing work. George pointed out the new backlit highway signs illuminating major intersections at night, which are part of the initiative. Every residential street, he said, will also receive its own sign.

Community involvement, he stressed, is fundamental. “We like to say the project is like 80% community activism,” he remarked. He emphasized the need for residents to participate in naming streets, especially for roads without names or for homeowners associations requiring official addressing. “We try to make things easy,” George said, encouraging residents to contact district managers Pedro Nieves on St. Croix, John Gumbs on St. Thomas and St. John, or others in the office, including Chief of Staff Nadja Harrigan.

He described the naming process as significant for families across the territory, noting that many residents appreciate the opportunity to memorialize relatives who contributed to their communities. “You get your sign,” he said. “So you have your family name,” which he described as meaningful for many households.

Residents can interact with the project through multiple channels. The direct project phone line is 340-693-6191, and the email address is sai@lgo.vi.gov. Street addressing kiosks are available in King Street on St. Croix and Nisky Center on St. Thomas, where residents can obtain road name forms, fact sheets, or project assistance.

George also pointed to coordination with external agencies, including the Department of Transportation, the U.S. Census Bureau, Google, and Apple Maps. He said these partners “are excited,” emphasizing the importance of the work for functions such as mail delivery. “Who doesn’t want to get mail at their house?” he began, before noting that postal officials have expressed enthusiasm as well.

With more outreach planned—including additional V.I. Consortium town halls, Carnival season coverage, and continued project updates—George said the team is pushing toward completion. “We just want to get this done as soon as possible,” he noted. He added that the initiative is nearing its final target of reaching “that 97 98% mark in the territory” so the system can be fully transferred to federal and national mapping partners.

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