

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Concordia West Convenience Center Breaks Ground as WMA Pledges Timely Delivery

Officials say the Concordia West Convenience Center will improve environmental health and public safety in Frederiksted, as WMA pledges timely delivery and Governor Bryan urges residents to rethink consumption habits and reduce household waste.

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Development of the Waste Management Authority's Concordia West Convenience Center is officially underway, following a groundbreaking ceremony on Thursday. The contract was awarded to Continental Construction & Engineering, and is expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

According to WMA Executive Director Hannibal “Mike” Ware, the project is the beginning of a new Waste Management Authority, one “where projects like this would be a lot more commonplace, where projects won’t delay, projects will be started and completed.” Touting his reputation for ensuring that work is delivered on time and under budget, he declared that his goal is to ensure that the agency follows those edicts. “We’re going to be a customer-focused agency of urgency,” Mr. Ware quipped. “This is the beginning of that.”

Office of Disaster Recovery Executive Director Adrienne Williams-Octalien noted that the convenience center was of paramount importance to the people of Frederiksted. “We want to make sure that we invest these federal dollars to improve the quality of life for people of the Virgin Islands,” she declared, arguing that the convenience center project “does just that” with its focus on improving environmental health and public safety in these areas. Thanking the V.I. Housing Finance Authority, who administers the grant that provided funding for the project, Ms. Williams-Octalien vowed to “push to make sure that the funding is expended for this project on time so we can keep moving.”

Senator Kenneth Gittens, representing the 36th Legislature, agreed with Ms. Williams-Octalien that, while ground breaking ceremonies were good, they preferred ribbon-cuttings. In that vein, “I am going to be optimistic that it will be done on time and under budget,” Mr. Gittens said, before pausing for a moment of silence to honor the memories of the three men [killed in a triple homicide](#) at the location earlier this year.

Noting the historic significance of the site as the former home of the Department of Public Works, Gittens expressed hope that “this site will once again be fully utilized to serve the public good.” He suggested that the entire site be transferred into the control of the WMA to allow for additional capacity to serve the residents of Frederiksted and St. Croix as a whole.

In his remarks, Governor Bryan spoke on how the waste disposal needs of the communities across the Virgin Islands have grown over the decades. He hearkened back to his childhood neighborhood, which had a total of four 55-gallon barrels to collect trash. “We have less people today in the Virgin Islands than we had in 1980,” he noted, yet those four barrels were sufficient to meet the neighborhood’s needs at the time, with garbage collection only twice weekly. “Poor people don’t throw away stuff,” he noted, remarking on the penchant of community members to repurpose empty containers and bags for other uses. “Glad plastic, we didn’t have none of that. Paper towels was unheard of,” Governor Bryan declared, noting that if found in a home, they were likely there only to indicate status rather than serve their intended purpose as a disposable cleaning tool. “My mom used to make us wash them red cup,” he mused, urging Virgin Islanders to revisit some of the thrifty ways of their parents and grandparents, so as to reduce the amount of trash produced in each household.

“We live on an island. We cannot live like that and expect to be able to manage our waste,” said Governor Bryan, referring to the disposable culture that has arisen in modern times. He said that it was time to consider policy tailored towards discouraging large vehicles, the wholesale adoption of electric vehicles, and the reduction of the amount of plastic coming into the territory.

“Yes, we stand in Frederiksted and we bring this first convenience center, but we must start to rethink how we’re using stuff and how we handle our waste,” Governor Bryan

declared.

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