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St. Croix-St. Thomas Ferry Project Advances With ADA Features, Propulsion Planning, and Potential Port Upgrades

International design firm Incat Crowther conducted on-site evaluations in both districts as the Bryan administration advances ADA-compliant vessel design, propulsion planning, and port integration for the long-awaited interisland ferry.

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Ferries docked in Cruz Bay, St. John USVI. By. GETTY IMAGES.

Governor Albert Bryan Jr. has announced that design work on the long-anticipated St. Croix–St. Thomas passenger and vehicle ferry is now approximately 30 percent complete, following a week of technical site evaluations conducted by an international ferry design firm.

In a February 19 release from Government House, the governor said the administration recently held a status meeting with Department of Public Works Commissioner Derek Gabriel and welcomed ferry design firm Incat Crowther to the territory for on-site inspections. The update follows coordinated visits and assessments conducted during the week of February 9.

According to Government House, the administration is advancing carefully through the design phase to ensure that both the vessel and supporting port operations are aligned with Virgin Islands travel patterns, sea conditions, and daily service demands. The governor stressed that the project continues to move forward with attention to safety, reliability, accessibility, and long-term performance.

“This is about doing it right the first time,” he said. “We are designing a passenger and vehicle ferry that fits our routes, our ports, and the conditions our operators and passengers deal with every day. These site visits put the right experts on the ground so we make sound technical decisions now, not expensive corrections later.”

Incat Crowther — the firm responsible for design work on other Government of the Virgin Islands-owned vessels, including the Spirit of 1733, the territory’s newest 300-passenger ferry — conducted inspections and coordination meetings at ports in both the St. Croix and St. Thomas–St. John districts.

During the site visits, the firm met with V.I. Port Authority marine officials in both districts to evaluate operating conditions and assess whether upland and waterside improvements may be required to support future passenger and vehicle operations as the project advances.

The governor noted that on-site assessments are critical to ensuring reliable vessel performance in local waters and efficient integration with existing marine facilities. Government House said coordination among DPW, VIPA, and the design team is helping align vessel specifications with port infrastructure, including docking requirements, traffic flow, passenger circulation, navigational considerations, and safety protocols.

Key design elements currently under development include ADA-compliant access and accommodations, as well as an advanced propulsion system intended to promote more efficient and dependable service.

Mr. Gabriel briefed the governor on ongoing progress and coordination efforts, confirming that design work remains on schedule and that data gathered during the site visits will inform final technical decisions in the months ahead.

Government House said the design phase of the St. Croix–St. Thomas passenger and vehicle ferry is expected to be finalized in the coming months. Updates will continue as the project transitions from design into procurement and implementation.

“This ferry is about connecting our people, strengthening commerce between districts, and making interisland travel more dependable,” Governor Bryan said. “We are keeping the work moving, and we will keep the public informed every step of the way.”