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VIPA Says Public-Private Airport Redevelopment Deal With SkyCity Remains in Talks as Airline Input Continues

VIPA said the airport redevelopment plan was developed with airlines, TSA, CBP, airport tenants and SkyCity, and that public workshops will be held as negotiations move toward conclusion.

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Spirit Airlines at the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix. By. ERNICE GILBERT, V.I. CONSORTIUM.

The V.I. Port Authority says its airport public-private partnership remains in active procurement, with negotiations continuing with SkyCity and consultations ongoing with airlines serving the territory.

VIPA Interim Executive Director Ava Penn released a statement Sunday addressing the authority's airport development effort, saying the agency understands that residents have a vested interest in the future of the territory's airports.

"VIPA understands that our community has a vested interest in the Territory's airports. VIPA has worked diligently to create this plan in collaboration with our partners and stakeholders at the airports, including the airlines, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), airport tenants, and VIPA's P3 partner, SkyCity, which was selected through a competitive procurement process," Ms. Penn said.

The statement comes after [recent Consortium reporting](#) on concerns raised by airlines regarding VIPA's proposed airport modernization structure. The airlines are key stakeholders in any redevelopment of the Cyril E. King Airport on St. Thomas and the Henry E. Rohlsen Airport on St. Croix, given the impact that terminal costs, rates and operating agreements could have on air service and airport competitiveness.

Ms. Penn said the project is still in the active procurement phase as VIPA works to finalize related agreements with SkyCity.

"Currently, the project is still in the active procurement process to finalize related agreements with SkyCity. In addition, coordination and consultation with the airlines serving the U.S. Virgin Islands, who are key stakeholders in this process, are ongoing," she said.

According to VIPA, the authority has been in communication with the airlines about terminal modernization for years. Ms. Penn said those discussions date back to the 2018 planning and design charrettes for the Cyril E. King Airport and the Phase 1 expansion of the hold room at Henry E. Rohlsen Airport, which was completed in December 2021.

Since December 2022, VIPA has also held numerous discussions with the airlines regarding the P3 initiative, Ms. Penn said.

"Since December 2022, VIPA has engaged in numerous ongoing discussions with the airlines regarding the Authority's P3 initiative, and we highly value their participation and input. We encourage all parties involved in the process to take part in the final stages of planning and the delivery of this transformative project," she said.

The airport P3 is intended to modernize the territory's airports through a partnership with SkyCity, the private partner selected by VIPA through a competitive procurement process. The statement did not provide new financial terms or a final agreement date, but said negotiations are expected to conclude in the coming months.

VIPA said it will join SkyCity in hosting a series of workshops to share its plans with the community in the near future.

"We look forward to sharing more information regarding the improvements to our airports with the public as negotiations conclude in the coming months, and we are excited about what the future holds for the gateways to our islands," Ms. Penn said.