

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Quality Of Life Tops List As Reason For Long Bay Project Suspension

Business / **Published On March 12, 2015 01:25 PM /**

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Sky view of St. Thomas' Waterfront

Citing a "potential negative impact on the quality of life of Virgin Islanders," the board of the West Indian Company Ltd. (WICO) announced Wednesday it has suspended its plans for a new cruise ship pier in downtown St. Thomas.

According to information received from Government House, Chairman of the WICO board, Randolph Knight, said the body had "contemplated this decision intensely and at the heart of our decision to suspend the Long Bay Landing Project is the potential

negative impact this project could have on the quality of life of Virgin Islanders as well as the visitor experience, given the proposed location."

The board admitted it had limited information on the full environmental impact of the project and saw problems that could likely result from the added congestion on a main strip of the downtown area.

Board members say there were also concerns about the potential adverse impact on the natural make up of the Charlotte Amalie Harbor, as well as the fact that the Long Bay Landing project was not aligned with the \$150-plus million Charlotte Amalie Revitalization and Veterans Drive Design projects already in place.

[In addressing business persons](#) attending the St. Croix Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting at the Palms at Pelican Cove, Governor Kenneth Mapp said WICO had planned on developing a \$70 million project on the Charlotte Amalie harbor; however, the governor said his administration does not support the project in its Long Bay location because he is against putting 10 acres of concrete in the Charlotte Amalie harbor, as it would only lead to more congestion.

"The last thing we need to do is destroy the product that exists there in our attempt to improve the quality of our project, so we will not be doing that," the Mapp said.

Knight, who is Mapp's chief of staff, said board members and WICO's executive staff "will work diligently and expeditiously with the Virgin Islands Port Authority, members of the legislature, our community and our cruise partners to identify a more feasible location for this much-needed new pier."

"We recognize that the visitor demand for St. Thomas continues to grow and we want to remain the major player in the cruise market that we are," he added. "However, while this growth opportunity is critical, we must minimize the impact on our environment while enhancing the overall destination experience."