

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Launches Initial Steering Committee Meeting To Develop USVI Tourism Master Plan

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ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp on Tuesday convened the first meeting with tourism experts and stakeholders to begin the formulation of the US Virgin Islands Tourism Master Plan, with the aim to map out a comprehensive strategy to build the territory into a world-class tourism and leisure destination, Government House announced Wednesday.

"We have a great deal of work to do in how we really view a significant improvement in the visitor experience in the USVI. We do not want to be complacent and slip behind," Mr. Mapp said. According to the release, the governor and his team began mapping the initial planning process last fall, which culminated in Tuesday's meeting.

"A successful master plan requires a collaborative and participatory effort by the private sector, government and residents," said Bureau of Economic Research Director Bernadette Melendez in her opening remarks. "Although the public sector's involvement is critical, the private sector is the driving force in fostering the development of the plan."

A steering group of industry experts will continue to explore the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the hospitality, marine, retail, sports and gaming, education and training, historical and cultural amenities, and tourism infrastructure, according to the release. The intended outcome of the Tourism Master Plan includes a raised profile of the USVI as a tourist and meeting destination, increased high-value visitors, job creation, increased business and government revenues, attraction of new business, and industry preservation of the territory's cultural and natural assets.

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