

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Nearly Four Years And Two Ground Breaking Ceremonies Later, Construction On Paul E. Joseph Stadium Has Yet To Restart (Update)

Business / **Published On June 18, 2018 10:52 AM /**

Ernice Gilbert **June 18, 2018**



Update: Coastal Systems USVI, which is representing the government in the development of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium that has been contracted to GEC, LLC, late Monday contacted The Consortium stating that the pile of dirt currently sitting on the construction site is part of the project. More on that in a story Tuesday morning.

Original Story: ST. CROIX -- [On July 6, 2017](#), Governor Kenneth Mapp and members of his administration, along with members of the 32nd Legislature and even supportive community members, gathered under a tent erected in the open field where the new Paul

E. Joseph Stadium is supposed to be built. They had assembled there on the request of the governor, who, after years of delay, said the project would finally start and would help usher in the revitalization of Frederiksted, as the stadium, according to the governor, would represent the first of a multi-pronged effort for the town.

It was not the first groundbreaking ceremony to recognize the commencement of work for the stadium. The first was held on [December 16, 2014](#) -- about a month before Mr. Mapp took office, and work had actually started on what was then a \$20 million job. "The reconstruction of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium will have a lasting effect on St. Croix and particularly Frederiksted. I believe that the sports complex will have a major economic impact on the island, as it is estimated that the new facility could attract up to 80 sanctioned events each year. I am so pleased that this project is finally going forward and it has been an initiative high on my agenda for several years now," said former Governor John P. de Jongh when the \$20 million contract was signed.

But upon taking office, one of Governor Mapp's early actions [was to halt the project](#). His reason for stopping the work? The governor said the project was put together in "haste," and without a "single concept or design." "The contract allows the vendor to design a stadium and surrounding areas, bill the government at the cost of 10 percent, put it together, and they give us a \$10 million project, the contract says the contractor and the government will split the savings, so the contractor will end up with a \$5 million bonus. We could have a stadium worth \$10 million, and you, the people of the Virgin Islands, would be out \$20 million," Mr. Mapp said on February 12, 2015.

Workers who were already on the job at the stadium had to be sent home, and the administration did not give any indication as to when the project was restart.

Since then, the development of the Paul E. Joseph stadium has been mired in a delay spiral, and had even turned into a political football, with lawmakers on a number of occasions pressing the governor for restart details.

The timeline of events for the stadium has changed so often that it is difficult to keep track. But here are a few announcements made by the Mapp administration since construction was halted early 2015:

[March 5, 2015: Mapp tells Chamber of Commerce audience he has big plans for Paul E. Joseph Stadium.](#)

[October 18, 2015: Mapp administration issues press release announcing restart of work on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium on October 19, 2015.](#)

[February 10, 2016: Mapp announces the expansion of the Paul E. Joseph Stadium and reveals that the cost of development swelled from the original \\$20 million to \\$35 million.](#)

[June 6, 2016: The stadium's stalled progress is discussed at the Legislature.](#)

[June 15, 2016: Mapp says stadium project not delayed, but struggles to give timeline.](#)

[August 18, 2016: Gustav James, former Dept. of Public Works commissioner, tells senators construction on Paul E. Joseph Stadium set to begin January 2017.](#)

January 23, 2017: Mapp issues formal notice to Mr. James for the commencement of work on the Paul E. Joseph Stadium.

February 8, 2017: Gustav James says commencement of work on stadium pushed back to March, 2017.

March 20, 2017: Work on stadium has yet to start.

March 23, 2017: Mapp contradicts himself on reason for delay of Paul E. Joseph Stadium construction.

May 18, 2017: Public Works commissioner says there's not enough funds to complete Paul E. Joseph Stadium.

June 1, 2017: Stadium finally expected to move forward as senators approve acquisition of additional land.

July 6, 2017: Second Paul E. Joseph Stadium groundbreaking event is held in Frederiksted.

July 20, 2017: Mapp approves bill providing for funding for Paul E. Joseph Stadium.

August 18, 2017: Mapp requests additional \$9 million for Paul E. Joseph Stadium and related projects in Frederiksted.

The August 18 request -- coming over a month following the second groundbreaking -- was the last official word on the development status of the stadium. Weeks later -- On September 5, 2017 -- Category 5 Hurricane Irma devastated St. Thomas and St. John, with Hurricane Maria, another Category 5 storm, exacting the same to St. Croix on September 19.