

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Port Authority Gives Detailed Update On Projects Following 2017 Storms

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The reconstruction and renovation of the U.S. Virgin Islands' airports and seaports is steadily progressing, the Virgin Islands Port Authority announced in a press release issued Friday afternoon. V.I.P.A. said it documented \$87 million in damages after the territory's ports, which include over 120 properties, were struck by two Category 5 hurricanes in September 2017.

Aviation

V.I.P.A. said its contractor, [Lemartec, Inc.](#), has completed 70 percent of the Cyril E. King Airport (CEKA) terminal roof replacement. The entire 240,000-square-foot roof is being

upgraded to a stronger metal and two-ply membrane roof. The project should be finished by November 2018, the authority said. As the terminal's roof repairs are completed, travelers will begin to see significant aesthetic improvements made to the terminal's interior areas – including the ceiling, gate areas and the restrooms.

The CEKA terminal's public-address system is being expanded and upgraded so that airline employees can communicate with their passengers throughout the terminal, according to the authority. It said that its air conditioning contractor will begin repairs to the terminal's air handling system next week.

V.I.P.A.'s board also recently approved several task orders to repair the terminal's exhaust fans, air conditioning system and the roof skylights. Additionally, the authority is soliciting proposals for the reconstruction of the airport's apron at Gate 5. Bids are due by Sept. 17 and the project is expected to begin shortly after a contractor is selected.

The Henry E. Rohlsen Airport Terminal's (HERA) roof repairs are expected to begin in September, according to V.I.P.A. The hurricane-damaged roof at the new Airport Rescue Fire Fighter facility at HERA was completely reconstructed and V.I.P.A.'s firefighters on St. Croix now have a state-of-the-art fire station.

While repairs are ongoing, both airport terminals are being redesigned to accommodate an increase in air traffic to the territory and to provide a first-rate travel experience for visitors and residents, the authority said. V.I.P.A. hosted a design charrette on St. Thomas in June to unveil its plans to expand and modernize the CEKA Terminal including: expanded parking and ground transportation facilities; utilizing the second floor of the terminal and adding jet bridges; and a new transportation facility to facilitate travel from the airport to the British Virgin Islands.

A charrette was also held on St. Croix on Aug. 21 at HERA to present V.I.P.A.'s vision to upgrade the airport's terminal. V.I.P.A. said received positive and constructive feedback from the attendees and will continue to accept suggestions to be included in the final design until September 21, 2018. Comments can be sent to info@viport.com<<mailto:info@viport.com>>.

Repairs to V.I.P.A.'s administrative office near the airport on St. Thomas will begin in September. During the repair and construction process, V.I.P.A.'s administrative, legal and executive offices will temporarily be relocated to Crown Bay Center, the authority said. The purchasing building adjacent to the administrative office will also be demolished and rebuilt on the foundation of the existing building.

Marine

V.I.P.A. completed construction of a temporary U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) checkpoint at the Urman Fredericks Marine Terminal in Red Hook. Passenger ferries arriving from foreign ports can now clear Customs in Red Hook instead of traveling to downtown Charlotte Amalie at the Edward Blyden Terminal, according to the release. The time-saving amenity has improved the travelers' experience between the U.S.V.I. and the British Virgin Islands. C.B.P. is also providing Customs services for private pleasure boats at the Victor Sewer Facility (The Creek) in St. John to accommodate the charter industry that has become an integral component of St. John's

economy.

The completion of the two-level parking garage at the Urman Fredericks Terminal in Red Hook has been extended due to design upgrades, according to the authority. V.I.P.A. said anticipates that the delay will be the last and the new parking facility will be open early next year.

Other ongoing VIPA port improvement projects include:

- Designs for a new air cargo facility at HERA and a new marine terminal for the Containerport on St. Croix are being reviewed by VIPA's engineering department. A final design for these facilities will be ready before the end of the year.
- VIPA continues to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to finalize the dredging permit for the Schooner Bay Channel. This dredging will allow mini-cruise and other luxury vessels to berth at Gallows Bay in Christiansted, St. Croix.

The Port Authority has applied to the Department of Planning and Natural Resources' Coastal Zone Management Commission to dredge approximately 232,000 cubic yards of material from the Charlotte Amalie Harbor, according to the release. This dredging project will be funded by federal monies from a Community Development Block Grant issued by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grant was applied for by the Government of the Virgin Islands and will allow Oasis-class vessels to berth at the West Indian Company Dock in Havensight, St. Thomas, V.I.P.A.

For more information on V.I.P.A.'s recovery and rebuilding progress, contact the Port Authority's public information officer, Monifa Brathwaite, at (340) 774-1629 or info@viport.com<<mailto:info@viport.com>>.

Feature Image: Cyril E. King Airport after Hurricane Irma. (Credit: [Reemy-Reemz Photography](#))