

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Contract Signed For New Phase Of Melvin Evans Highway Repairs; 20 Road Projects Now Underway

VIC News / **Published On September 20, 2018 11:23 PM /**

Staff **September 20, 2018**



ST. CROIX -- Governor Kenneth Mapp has announced his approval of a contract for more major improvements to St. Croix's Melvin Evans Highway, Government House announced Thursday. The work -- which includes paving, repairs and safety provisions -- will take place from Hannah's Rest to the Good Hope Intersection, according to the release.

V.I. Paving has been contracted to complete the \$2.2 million project, fully funded by Federal Highway Administration GARVEE Bonds. The contract calls for the work to be completed within 90 days. The \$15 million Melvin Evans Highway overhaul has been divided into multiple phases and is approximately half way complete, Government House

said.

In April, the governor announced that all the territory's primary roads would be entirely rebuilt to U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway standards. In addition to this remarkable undertaking, the Mapp-Potter Administration is restoring some of the more damaged roads that require immediate repair and working to complete longstanding abandoned projects such as Turpentine Run (Bridge to Nowhere) and the waterfront expansion on St. Thomas.

Earlier this year, a sweeping assessment of the territory's 1,273-mile public road system was conducted to determine conditions after the storms and the estimated cost of a comprehensive rebuilding and repair program. After completion of the assessment, the Department of Public Works (D.P.W.), with the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, concluded it will cost \$1.2 billion to complete the modernization of all the territory's roads, according to Government House.

According to the release, D.P.W. reported this week that 940 miles of Virgin Islands roadway have thus far been identified to be rebuilt to Federal Highway standards. The new roads will be upgraded with proper foundations, drainage and outfitted with American with Disabilities Act compliant sidewalks, reflectors, traffic signals, and crosswalks. They will also accommodate water, sewage, power lines and fiber optic cables.

In addition to reconstructing the road systems, funds will be set aside to remove dumpsters from the roadsides. In their place, refuse and recycling centers will be constructed throughout the territory to support modernization and beautification. Some roads will receive temporary fixes until they can be fully reconstructed. There will also be many areas where Public Works will authorize asphalt overlays until permanent construction can begin.

There are currently 20 active road repair projects underway throughout the territory, Government House said. Mr. Mapp indicated that more than \$530 million has already been identified for the first phase of overhauling the majority of the Territory's roads.

"In three to five years the Virgin Islands road system will be virtually unrecognizable," the governor said.