

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Mapp Said To Be Encouraged By Feedback From Private Sector On Port Development Plans

Tourism / **Published On September 29, 2018 11:11 AM /**

Staff **September 29, 2018**



ST. THOMAS -- Governor Kenneth Mapp is said to be heartened by the feedback received from the St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce on his administration's plans to stimulate economic activity across the district, according to a Department of Tourism (D.O.T.) release issued Friday.

According to a release, following a recent meeting of a subcommittee of the St. Thomas-St. John Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Mapp observed plans for infrastructure upgrades and additional berthing capacity to accommodate larger vessels at Crown Bay and The West Indian Company (WICO) docks were well received by chamber members.

"The trend for larger cruise ships is a reality and working together we can find solutions which allow St. Thomas to remain competitive and provide growth opportunities," the governor said.

Mr. Mapp and members of the Ports of the Virgin Islands team outlined ongoing dredging projects, funded through the first phase of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) after last year's storms. The dredging will permit Quantum Class vessels to dock on the north side at Crown Bay and Oasis Class vessels to berth at the West Indian Company facility, the release said.

Enhancing the visitor experience was also a topic of discussion at the meeting. Governor Mapp is said to have shared that D.O.T. is in the process of securing additional entertainment and greeters to showcase the creativity of Virgin Islanders throughout the ports and downtown areas. Also discussed was the desire to increase collaboration with merchants on the Main Street Revitalization project to help minimize the impact on commerce without further delaying the project, according to the release.

The territory's chief executive also shared ongoing efforts to improve transportation and increase the number of U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents in the USVI as a means to expedite the inspection process and provide a smoother transit experience as the Virgin Islands prepares for more flights and visitors during the upcoming winter season.

According to the release, the group heard a presentation from the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) on a potential development at Crown Bay that features activities such as a biking/hiking trail from the port to Lindbergh Bay. WICO presented concepts to expand berthing capacity, while Public Works Commissioner Nelson Petty updated the group on the Veteran's Drive improvement project, which is said to be on schedule.

Mr. Mapp also noted the tourism product and experience in the district was improving thanks to strong public-private sector collaboration. He praised the contributions of the Carnival Corporation brands -- Princess Cruises and Carnival Cruise Line -- which have committed \$800,000 towards the funding of various projects, including the Children's Museum, the Little Libraries program, the building of a Children's Playground (Carnival Fun Park) at Emile Griffith Park as well as \$20,000 in supplies and equipment for the Charlotte Amalie High School Gymnasium. Funding for these projects is being administered by the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands.

In addition, Carnival Corporation has committed to a music program that provides instruments to the Department of Education and a program which will engage students on board its ships. Plans are also in the works to have officials from the cruise lines lecture in schools, according to the release.

The territory's leader said these types of partnerships are crucial to bridging the gaps where funding is either limited or not available under federal programs: "We look forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership with the cruise industry," he said.

Meanwhile, the Ports of the Virgin Islands -- an alliance which includes the Department of Tourism, VIPA and WICO -- remains committed to solidifying its partnership with the

Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association (FCCA) and the recently formed Eastern Caribbean cruise group, according to the release.

Attending the meeting were Chamber of Commerce representatives Richard Berry, Vivek Daswani, Michael Creque, Filippo Cassinelli and John Woods; VIPA's Executive Director David Mapp and Property Manager Deborah Washington; WICO's CEO Clifford Graham; Commissioner Petty; and Commissioner of Tourism Beverly Nicholson-Doty along with Department of Tourism team members Angela Payne, Director of Visitor's Experience, and Tanya Duran, who serves as Director of Office Operations.

© Viconsortium 2026