

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. EDA Is Considering An Additional Award To Territory's Airports Of \$27 Million

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In what was described by a Friday Government House release as a major boost to the Mapp administration's plan to expand and modernize the territory's airports, Governor Kenneth Mapp announced today that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (-- USED A) has notified the Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) that -- USED A is considering awarding \$27 million in additional disaster recovery funding for major economic development projects at Cyril E. King on St. Thomas and Henry E. Rohlsen on St. Croix.

The grants, to be administered by VIPA if approved, include \$20 million for the construction of a new parking and transportation center on St. Thomas and \$7 million for

the rehabilitation and expansion of the airport terminal on St. Croix, Government House said.

“We plan major overhauls at both of our airports, and these projects are critical to this endeavor,” the Governor said. “This is a very significant sum, and I thank our federal partners for understanding the importance of repairing and upgrading our airport terminals,” Mr. Mapp said.

Government House said both projects were preliminarily selected by -- USEDPA for funding as a result of a lengthy and highly competitive application review process. In that review process, the Mr. Mapp worked with the Virgin Islands Port Authority to demonstrate that the infrastructure projects will not only support the territory’s recovery from the destruction caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria, but will also foster job creation, promote private investment, enhance tourism, and generate long-term economic growth and resilience. Final approval of the grants is subject to additional information which VIPA must provide by November 13, Government House said.

According to the release, projects will improve the layouts of the airports to more efficiently use the available space, enhance the travel experience, and generate additional revenue for VIPA. On St. Croix, the airport project will include enclosing the walkway to expand the passenger lounge space, refurbishing the existing passenger lounge, providing additional concession areas, and upgrading the air conditioning and other mechanical systems. On St. Thomas, a new parking and transportation center will be built. That center will provide approximately 700 parking spaces for public parking, employees and rental cars.

Government House said Mr. Mapp has spearheaded improvement plans at both the territory’s airports. Prior to the hurricanes, [he worked to form a partnership with the Denver International Airport](#) to assist in local redevelopment plans. Denver is home to the nation’s sixth busiest airport and has successfully dealt with challenges such as proximity to a landfill. Governor Mapp has said he looks forward to moving Virgin Islands airports to the next level by improving the user experience through major renovations and new amenities.