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Governor Bryan, EDA CEO Wayne Biggs Announce Vision 2040, Which Seeks to Create Foundation for Future Economic Prosperity in USVI

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Governor Albert Bryan and EDA CEO Wayne Biggs announce Vision 2040 plan during a press conference at Gov't House Tuesday , Oct. 20, 2020.

During a press conference held Tuesday, Governor Albert Bryan and Virgin Islands Economic Development Authority CEO Wayne Biggs announced a USVI community-based economic development initiative called Vision 2040.

Last year during Mr. Bryan's state of the territory address, he designated the USVI EDA to lead the Vision 2040 comprehensive territorial initiative. According to Mr. Biggs, the initiative will include four parts: A 20-year transformative economic plan and a target competitive industry

analysis, energy sector analysis, equity capital formation plan, and global marketing campaign.

"Vision 2040 will tackle systematic and deeply rooted issues that stymie economic development," Mr. Biggs said. He added that the initiative would also incorporate plans that cover shorter periods of time such as the comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) and a tourism master plan, which are currently underway. Vision 2040 is geared toward addressing the various sectors in the territory known as STEAM. These sectors include services, technology, energy, agriculture and manufacturing, said Mr. Biggs.

During the press conference, Mr. Biggs highlighted that through the U.S Economic Development Authority and the VI Housing Finance Authority CDBG-DR, the EDA was granted \$1.6 million in funding for the initiative.

The plan will employ both traditional and technological tools to gather as much participation as possible, said Mr. Biggs. An official website for Vision 2040 was launched, and the community has been asked to participate in a survey by visiting the website. Mr. Biggs said there will be many ways for community members to get involved in Vision 2040. Over the course of the project, there will be public presentations, virtual interactive open-house events, surveys, and more. The public's first virtual session will be held on October 22 at 6 p.m via ZOOM. For further information about the program and upcoming events, visit the website [here](#).

Mr. Bryan encouraged Virgin Islanders to participate in the upcoming surveys, stating, "Enough of us have to be committed to creating the type of Virgin Islands we want to see. My vision for the Virgin Islands is not enough; it includes every single Virgin Islander. It is your chance to participate in what the vision for the Virgin Islands will be for the next 20 years."

Mr. Biggs said the surveys "will also be helpful if you encourage your family, your friends, and other associates to participate. Remember, this is an exercise to determine our future and create a vision of economic prosperity for us and future generations. It is very important that your voices be heard."

The EDA governing board chose Camoin Associates 310 to create the master plan. Based out of New York and Virginia, among other states, Camoin is a national economic development firm that has completed over 1,000 projects in 32 states, according to a description on the company's About Us page. The firm also states on its website that it has a reputation for producing strategic plans to support efforts to create economic opportunities that will allow communities to prosper. "The Camoin team will also collaborate with volunteers from the International Economic Development Council during the assessment phase of this project," said Mr. Biggs.

When questioned about the [Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan](#), and how that affects the Vision 2040 initiative, Mr. Biggs said, "We do have a task force that's looking at all the plans, and it is our intention to integrate the plans. He said the plans will include CEDS, the Tourism Master Plan, and plans the VI Port Authority has available.

Governor Bryan said his administration has been working on the Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, which will establish rules for development, setting out needs for roads, water, sewer, power, recreational areas, health care, housing, and public transportation. However, funding has always been an issue, Mr. Bryan stated.