

Image not found or type unknown

## Dept. of Public Works Secures \$25 Million to Fund Phase 2 of Veterans Drive Project

Government / **Published On August 09, 2022 07:17 PM /**

Staff Consortium **August 09, 2022**

Image not found or type unknown



**Rendering of Phase 2 of the Veterans Drive Project in Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas. By. V.I. DEPT. OF PUBLIC WORKS**

The V.I. Department of Public Works announced Tuesday that it successfully secured a competitive \$25 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.

DPW said the award will be used to fund phase two of the Veterans Drive Improvement Project, which will see Veterans Drive rerouted around the perimeter of the Legislature Building and widened heading west toward the Blyden ferry terminal. Phase two will also feature "pocket parks" and an improved Vendor's Plaza.

According to the release, like phase one—which saw its ribbon cutting in December 2021—the scope of work for the next segment will include roadway widening, pavement reconstruction, seawall construction, drainage improvements, lighting, installation of a new expanded promenade and landscaping. It will also include on-street parking.

“This is a huge win for the department and the entire territory,” said DPW Commissioner Derek Gabriel. “Being awarded the RAISE grant by the U.S. Department of Transportation signifies the national recognition and support Veterans Drive continues to garner.”

He added, “This project embodies the true essence of the RAISE grant program – modernizing and transforming transportation infrastructure, addressing climate change challenges, and creating economic opportunities for underserved communities. As a team, we are extremely excited to bring this home for our residents.”

According to DPW Federal Highway Program Manager Jomo McClean, securing the grant was the result of consistent efforts by the department.

“This award shows that hard work and persistence pays off,” said McClean. “We have applied several times for this discretionary funding, but each time we were deemed either recommended or highly recommended. Now, this specific project speaks to the intent of this funding, and we are elated to finally be successful.”

According to the release, the RAISE grant, previously known as the BUILD or TIGER grant, is a highly competitive federal grant for which thousands of entities across the country apply each year. The 2022 RAISE Discretionary Grants program received \$1.5 billion through the bipartisan infrastructure law passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden earlier this year.

Delegate to Congress Stacy Plaskett said she remains committed to ensuring the territory is eligible for these competitive grants.

“My office worked hard to ensure that the legislation, as it worked its way through the House, would allow the Virgin Islands to capture as much funding as possible for transformative infrastructure projects. There are still opportunities for the Virgin Islands Government to partner with large corporations and developers to compete for funding that creates new jobs in the clean energy sector to advance environmental justice in underserved communities,” Ms. Plaskett said. She also thanked U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg and his team for the support in getting this funding to the USVI.

Governor Albert Bryan praised the Department of Public Works for securing a competitive federal grant of \$25 million – the maximum amount awarded – for Phase 2 of the Veterans Drive Improvement Project on St. Thomas.

“I want to congratulate Commissioner Derek Gabriel, Federal Highway Project Manager Jomo McClean and the entire department for securing these funds, which allows us to move forward on this project sooner rather later,” he said. “Not only is this a boon for the Territory in receiving the funding for the project, it allows the Bryan-Roach Administration to continue its momentum of recovery and rebuilding by using money earmarked for Veterans Drive for other vital projects.”

Similarly, Mr. Gabriel expressed his gratitude to both Delegate Plaskett and Gov. Bryan.

“I want to thank the Bryan-Roach Administration and Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett for their unwavering support for infrastructure development and transformation in the Territory,” Gabriel said. “This award took a huge team effort from all involved and we all share in the moment.

Finally, special thanks to Mr. Jomo McClean and his team, as well as our design consultant, WSP, for their hard work in putting our application together. As always, DPW remains On the Move."

© Viconsortium 2024