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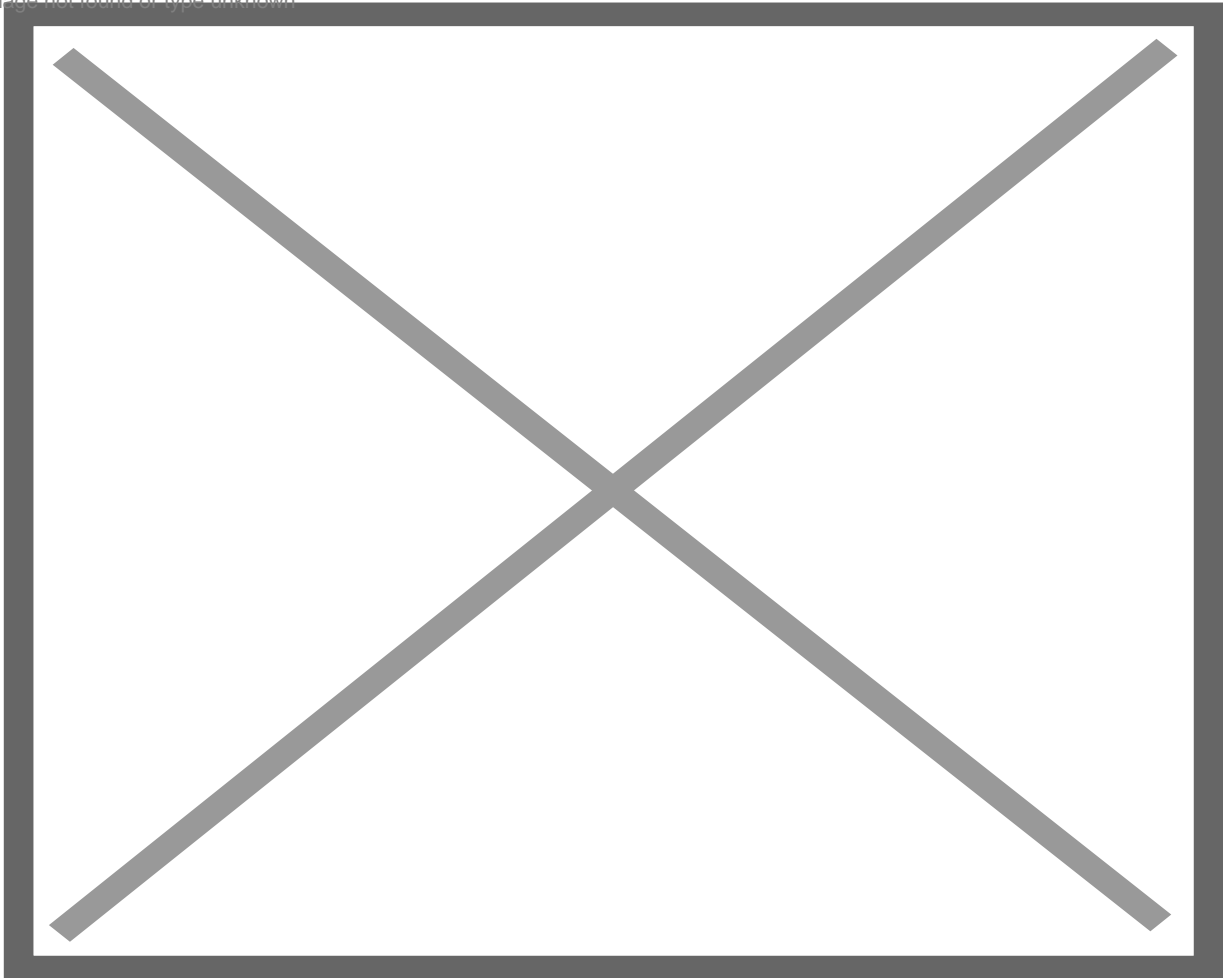
Veterans Drive Project Clears Final Federal Permit, Moving Toward Procurement Phase

The Department of Public Works says a Department of the Army permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completes federal permitting for the Veterans Drive project, allowing solicitation to move forward through FHWA within 30 to 45 days.

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A portion of Veterans Drive in St. Thomas, USVI. By. DPW.

The V.I. Department of Public Works has secured the final federal permit required for the Veterans Drive Improvement Project, clearing the way for the long-planned St. Thomas roadway and waterfront infrastructure project to move toward solicitation within the next 30 to 45 days.

DPW announced Tuesday that the U.S. Department of the Army permit issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers represents the final regulatory approval needed for the project to achieve full federal environmental and permitting compliance.

With the major permits and authorizations now in place, DPW said the project is expected to be released for solicitation through the Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration, which will oversee procurement and construction administration.

“This milestone reflects years of coordination, technical review, and persistence to move a project of this magnitude forward,” said Governor Albert Bryan Jr. “For too long, this project has been discussed as a concept. Today, we are demonstrating that it is moving toward reality. This administration has remained committed to pushing through every regulatory, environmental, and right-of-way challenge necessary to finally deliver this critical investment to the people of the Virgin Islands.”

The Veterans Drive Improvement Project includes roadway widening and reconstruction, drainage improvements, pedestrian enhancements, utility coordination, waterfront infrastructure upgrades and multimodal transportation improvements. DPW said the work is intended to improve traffic flow, public safety, resiliency and accessibility throughout the downtown Charlotte Amalie corridor.

During the upcoming solicitation period, DPW said it will continue final coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard to address remaining right-of-way matters tied to the project alignment. According to the department, those activities are being advanced at the same time as procurement efforts in order to maintain the project’s schedule.

“This has been an extraordinarily complex effort involving multiple federal agencies, waterfront permitting requirements, environmental coordination, utility considerations, and right-of-way negotiations,” said DPW Commissioner Derek Gabriel.

Mr. Gabriel said the Bryan administration has also assembled the funding framework needed to move the project forward. He cited a \$25 million RAISE grant, the 2025 GARVEE issuance and a \$125 million CDBG-MIT award.

“In addition to securing the necessary approvals, the Bryan-Roach Administration successfully assembled the funding framework needed to move this project forward, including a \$25 million RAISE grant, the 2025 GARVEE issuance, and the historic \$125 million CDBG-MIT award. Reaching this point reflects years of persistence and coordination and positions the project to move from long-term planning into implementation.”

DPW also said the Veterans Drive project is strategically important in relation to planned harbor dredging efforts in Charlotte Amalie. The department said coordinating the two efforts is intended to support long-term operational and economic benefits for the territory’s primary waterfront and port district.

Additional procurement and scheduling details are expected to be released as the solicitation process advances.