

# **PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

## **PROPOSED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION AND WIDENING OF:**

**Long Bay Road, Frenchman's Bay Road, Centerline Road and Lover's Lane  
intersection with Veterans Drive**

**Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas  
Virgin Islands of the United States**

**June 9, 2006**

**Meeting Held  
in  
Main Chamber of the Virgin Islands Legislature Building**

**Government of the Virgin Islands  
Department of Public Works**

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Government of the Virgin Islands of the United States, Public Works Department (PWD), is developing plans and specifications to construct Phase I of the Christiansted By-Pass around the south side of Christiansted. Phase I of the By-Pass is proposed to run from existing Contentment Road (Route 70) in the area of Contentment, east to a terminus at the intersection of Hospital Street/East End Road (Route 75) and Mt. Welcome Road (Route 753). The length of the Phase I work is approximately 1.95 km (1.21 mi). This work has been identified as Project VI NH-66(008).

A Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was prepared for this project in 1976. Authorization for acquisition of right-of-way was granted in 1985. Right-of-way acquisition, a re-evaluation of the FEIS, and final design activities have been ongoing between 1985 and the present. Approximately 85% of the right-of-way has been obtained. Phase I of the By-Pass is on a new location and includes construction of two 3.6 m (12 ft) wide lanes, paved shoulders, and a sidewalk and curb along the north side. An additional passing lane is proposed for one uphill section at the east end of the road. Necessary drainage structures and access points are proposed at numerous locations.

## **BACKGROUND**

An initial public information meeting was held on October 14, 1999 at the American Legion Post #85 in Christiansted. This meeting was held to give the public an opportunity to review the proposed project and to see if significant changes have occurred since the 1995 re-evaluation. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to review and provide comment on the alignment and access points, as well as, possible temporary impacts associated with construction. Design plans and general information regarding the proposed project were made available to the public. Several comments about specific aspects of the project were received. Many questions were answered at the meeting, particularly regarding project schedule, alignment, and construction operations. Issues and concerns were expressed in regard to storm drain run-off downstream of the proposed By-Pass. These concerns were for both the existing condition (prior to construction of the By-Pass) and for possible impacts the proposed road and its construction activities may have on downstream properties.

The original FEIS and 1995 re-evaluation did not propose runoff discharge attenuation or water quality mitigation because the proposed road's impact on existing drainage conditions is not significant. The significance of the runoff flow and runoff quality generated by this project have not changed since the completion of the FEIS and re-evaluation. However, due to concerns expressed at the October 1999 public meeting, the PWD and FHWA are proposing to implement additional storm runoff measures with this undertaking. Proposed construction will comply with current Federal Emergency Management Agency regulations.

The original plans for this project indicated that a sediment and erosion control plan would be implemented to control movement of sediments from the construction site to adjacent properties and surface waters. The proposed plans will address storm water concerns in a four-step process. The foursteps include addressing not only the temporary impacts of soil disturbance

activities during construction, but also the permanent impacts of increased peak discharges and water quality.

1. *Step one* will be to implement and enforce sediment control requirements during construction operations. An erosion and sediment control plan with accompanying best management practices for minimizing land disturbance, and specifications for vegetative stabilization of disturbed areas will be part of the construction contract documents. Erosion and sediment control measures are intended to address movement of water borne sediments during the time the land is disturbed for construction activities.
2. *Step two* will be to address increased peak discharges. Adding impervious area to a watershed generates additional runoff volume. This road project, located immediately adjacent to a densely developed, urbanized watershed, and as a narrow linear, paved element crossing numerous drainage courses and watersheds, has an insignificant impact on these individual drainage courses which becomes more insignificant as one progresses further down the drainage courses into the urban area. As stated earlier, the FEIS and 1995 re-evaluation did not propose peak discharge attenuation or water quality mitigation because the impact was not significant. This has not changed since the FEIS and re-evaluation.

Despite this determination, and in response to comments and concerns expressed by the public, it is proposed that certain peak discharge attenuation measures be incorporated into this project's design. These measures include construction of a storm water detention basin adjacent to the upstream side of the road at station 74+00. This detention basin will reduce peak discharge rates by approximately 15% during smaller storms and by 10% during larger storms.

The PWD recognizes that many existing storm drainage systems in Christiansted are inadequate to handle routine storm event runoff. This inadequacy is the result of centuries of urbanization and land development, which occurred without regard for storm water management or storm drain capacity. In recognition of this situation, the PWD has committed to study the storm drain capacity problems in downtown Christiansted, identify and prioritize the drainage systems which are most problematic, and initiate a program to address high priority deficiencies.

3. *Step three* of the process is to address storm runoff water quality issues. Use of an open-section roadway (no curbs), generally along the south side of the road, will facilitate the discharge of runoff from the southern sloping side of the roadway by sheet flow into vegetated roadside slopes and drainage ways. This method of conveying runoff through vegetative filters and allowing infiltration of runoff into roadsides allows roadside vegetation to retain and absorb impurities washed from the roadway during rain events, thus improving roadway water quality.

On the north side of the roadway, a curb is proposed in order to accommodate the need for a pedestrian sidewalk. Along this side of the road, the runoff will generally be collected by inlets and discharged into adjacent natural drainage ways. To address runoff quality on the north side of the road, the proposed design will incorporate filtration devices/collectors in the proposed storm drain inlets. These devices will intercept impurities washed from the roadway during storm events. The filter devices can then be periodically cleaned and the material disposed in a landfill. The proposed culvert outlets for this project will utilize energy dissipaters to control discharge velocities and protect outlet channels.

4. *Step four* of the process addresses permanent vegetative stabilization. The PWD and FHWA have consulted with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Extension Service associated with the University of the Virgin Islands. Issues relating to vegetative stabilization of disturbed areas were discussed. The Extension Service has conducted demonstration projects and test installations of seeding and mulching applications for disturbed sites within of Virgin Islands. This project will utilize the information and techniques developed by the Extension Service to facilitate early and successful vegetative stabilization of disturbed areas. It is anticipated this project will have extensive application of turf stabilization matting as well as mulch and fiber mats. Seeding specifications will be prepared to comply with recommendations which account for the unique climatic and soil conditions of the Virgin Islands. Installation of wind-rows of vetiver grass, across fill slopes, is proposed as an integrated vegetative stabilization technique. Temporary irrigation during the plant establishment period is proposed to minimize the period of time disturbed areas are exposed and to enhance vegetative cover. Encourage natural succession for establishment of woody vegetation to serve as screening and increase to variety of vegetative cover on disturbed areas.