



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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March 16, 2026

Honorable Milton E. Potter
President
36th Legislature of the United States Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

Re: Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. SCZ-20, Application No. CCZP0038-25

Good day, Senate President Milton E. Potter, members of the 36th Legislature, legislative staff, and members of the public. My name is Leia LaPlace-Matthew, Territorial Planner with the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning (CCZP) within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR). I am here to present the department's recommendation on Zoning Map Amendment Application No. CCZP0038-25.

This application was submitted by Highest Potential Design, LLC on behalf of Centerline Car Rental, LLC, seeking to amend the zoning designation of Plot Nos. 31-B, 32-B, 34-CA, 34-CAA, and 34-CB Strand Street, Christiansted Town, St. Croix from R-3 (Residential-Medium Density) to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood). The site is located within the Historic Christiansted Town district and surrounded by non-residential uses to the north, east, and part of the south, with undeveloped land to the west and remaining southern portion. The purpose of this request is to allow a car rental agency to operate as a matter of right, rather than being restricted to serving only Hotel Caravelle patrons.

DPNR has conducted a thorough review of the application, including an analysis of the requested B-2 zone versus the nearby B-1 (Business-Central Business District) zone, the intent of the two zoning districts, surrounding land use, zoning trends, infrastructure availability, and public input. The surrounding area includes a mix of R-3 and B-1 zones, with nearby rezonings approved under Act Nos. 5549 and 5408.

The Department notes the following key findings:

Infrastructure needs will be met by public water and sewer lines. The Historic Preservation Commission will be required to review any permit amendments.

At the DPNR-CCZP public hearing held on September 15, 2025, there was no opposition to the proposal. A question was raised regarding property tax implications, which was clarified as determined by a property's use because all of our 18 zoning districts are multi-use (residential and non-residential uses allowed).

Although both B-1 and B-2 zones would allow the intended use, the B-1 zone is more appropriate given its alignment to represent and maintain the historical and commercial character of the business center of Christiansted Town. The B-2 zone is intended more for major shopping centers outside of the primary B-1 business areas, such as the Golden Rock Shopping Center. Development provisions between the B-1 and B-2 zones are similar, but the B-1 better supports the district's planning goals.

After reviewing the applicant's request, the Department finds rezoning to the B-1 zoning district will be more consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and appropriate for the intended use. The department recommends approval of the zoning map amendment request from R-3 (Residential-Medium Density to B-1 (Business-Central Business District).

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, the report of the Planning Office regarding this proposal, including the reasons for our recommendation, is incorporated into the records submitted prior to this Committee of the Whole Hearing. We respectfully request that the PowerPoint presentation for CCZP0038-25 now be displayed.

This concludes the testimony on behalf of the Department, and we are available to answer any questions.