



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. CCZP0066-25

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. CCZP0066-25.

This application was submitted by Ana Cresencia Tavares Payamps, seeking to amend the zoning designation of Plot No. 4 of 12 Estate Richmond, Company Quarter, St. Croix from R-3 (Residential-Medium Density) to B-1 (Business-Central Business District). The purpose of the request is to develop a mixed-use building with a family-run bar and restaurant on the bottom floor and three efficiency apartments on the top floor.

DPNR has conducted a thorough review of the application, including an analysis of surrounding land use, zoning trends, infrastructure availability, public input, and comparative analysis of the property's characteristics against the requested B-1 zone and the B-2 zone. The surrounding area includes R-3 zoning with nearby rezonings to B-3 and use variances granted for mixed-use activities.

A comparative analysis of the proposed development against B-1 and B-2 zoning districts found that while both zones allow mixed-use development, the B-2 zone is most appropriate for this site. The property is only 5,000 square feet and the B-1 zone requires a minimum lot size of 5,000 sf for residential use. The B-2 zone supports neighborhood-scale commercial activity and provides flexibility for redevelopment in town areas.

The Department notes the following key findings:

Infrastructure needs will be met by public water and sewer lines. The site is located within the Historic Christiansted Town district; therefore, the Historic Preservation Commission will be required to review any permits.

At the DPNR-CCZP public hearing held on September 16, 2025, opposition was expressed regarding the current condition and lack of maintenance of the property. However, no post-hearing comments were received.

After reviewing the applicant's request, the Department finds rezoning to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood) will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and appropriate for the intended use given the proposed building size, residential density, and lot characteristics. The department recommends approval of this zoning map amendment request to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood).

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 CCZP0066-25 now be displayed.

This concludes the testimony on behalf of the Department, and we are available to answer any questions. Thank you for your time and consideration.