



GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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May 11, 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-15, Application No. CCZP0108-25

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. CCZP0108-25.

This application, submitted by Ms. Andrea L. Christian-Michel, seeks a use variance to the R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family) zoning designation for Plot No. 395 Estate Whim, Westend Quarter, St. Croix. The purpose of the request is to construct and operate a senior citizen assisted-living home and adult daycare facility. The 0.376-acre parcel consists of vacant land and is surrounded by a mixture of vacant land, residences, a church, and undeveloped land near the highway.

The proposed project includes construction of a single-story, 2,700-sq-ft, five-bedroom residence to accommodate six to eight live-in seniors and four to five daytime participants. The daycare would operate from 7 am to 7 pm. The applicant proposes five employees, including three nursing staff on shifts, and off-street parking for three or more vehicles. Construction is anticipated to occur in a single phase lasting 6-9 months. Water will be supplied by both cistern and public water line, and wastewater will be handled by a septic tank.

At the DPNR-CCZP public hearing conducted on February 20, 2026, one adjacent property owner expressed support with concerns, submitting written comments. Key concerns included:

- Existing sewage odor problems in the area and the project's impact on sewer capacity;
- Construction dust and the need for mitigation measures;
- Whether the sewage system will be designed for commercial-level use;
- Responsibility in the event of system failure;
- Procedures for handling medical and biohazardous waste;
- Agency oversight and facility inspections;
- Management of noise and nighttime activity;
- Communication to neighbors through educational outreach.

The applicant responded to each concern, including adopting Best Management Practices for dust, clarifying medical waste disposal procedures, and committing to a neighborhood outreach program.

The 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan emphasizes improving access to healthy and appropriate housing options, including specialized housing for seniors and vulnerable populations. One of the stated land-use strategies is to identify appropriate zoning districts for assisted living and senior care facilities, ensuring access to services, health care, and supportive environments.

While the Zoning Code does permit assisted-living and nursing-type facilities in the R-2 zone, such uses are only permitted when they meet the following conditions:

1. Minimum lot size of one acre;
2. Maximum building coverage of 30% of lot area;
3. 25-foot minimum side and rear yards and 50-foot setbacks from residential properties; and
4. Off-street parking compliant with Section 230 of the Zoning Code.

The petitioned property cannot meet these conditions, making the proposed use ineligible under R-2 without a variance. Additionally, the Zoning Code does not recognize adult day care as a listed use, which strengthens the need for a use variance.

The Department acknowledges that this proposal provides a needed community service for seniors on St. Croix and that an assisted-living facility with day care services would contribute positively to the island's caregiving infrastructure. Based on these considerations, the Department supports approval of the requested use variance.

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, the report of the Planning Office regarding this proposal, including the detailed 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 CCZP0108-25 now be displayed

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