



Goal 1: Land and water use decisions will be based on sound planning

Policy: Strengthen the capacity of government agencies to create strategic, actionable plans.

Strategy: Create, fund, and execute a staffing plan for government agencies that will provide the level of expertise and workforce needed to achieve the Plan's vision. Consider options such as:

- Create hybrid work opportunities including remote positions to provide services that do not require a full-time presence.
- Offer term-limited individual assignments/contract jobs to achieve specific goals/objectives.
- Create a Caribbean-based specialized work-sharing and relevant trade capacity building program through vocational school and University of the Virgin Islands.

Policy: Create a framework for implementing, maintaining, and updating the Plan that stays in place from one administration to the next.

Strategy: Institute a mandatory process that engages the community to periodically review the Plan and update at 5- to 10-year intervals. Place this in the DPNR Implementation Program.

Strategy: Reform the procedures for zoning changes and variances to ensure decisions are consistent with the Plan.

Goal 2: Government agencies will have the capacity to perform all duties related to land and water use, including enforcing laws effectively, consistently, and transparently.

Policy: Build capacity so Divisions/Departments can operate effectively.

Strategy: Adopt government budgets and procedures that ensure wages are suitable to skills and capacities as well as living costs on the different islands.

Strategy: Provide funding for training, facilities, and equipment needed to have adequate enforcement capacity on each of the three major islands for all regulatory Divisions. Prioritize establishing a strong presence for DPNR and all enforcement agencies on each of the three major islands. This would include accessible office space, permanent staff, boats and vehicles, equipment, and storage facilities.

Strategy: Create continuous education and certification plan for all enforcement staff, with an emphasis on functions related to interfacing with the public, educating, reviewing, and processing permits, and compliance/enforcement.

Strategy: Develop and adopt transparency and customer service protocols, process timelines, and resources, to better serve the public. For example:

- Regularly review and update Territory web pages to ensure the most needed information is prominently displayed.
- Map out the permitting process and opportunities for the public to comment on proposals. Train staff to guide people through these processes.
- Provide resources and establish community outreach protocols to proactively reach out to populations that do not tend to participate in the process to make it welcoming and transparent for everyone.



Making Better Land and Water Use Decisions

Policy: Ensure fees and violations are commensurate with current economic conditions, the complexity of projects, and the severity of violations.

Strategy: Design a permit fee structure that supports the administrative infrastructure to manage, enforce, and revise policies to bring lasting change. Provide resources for departments to periodically review and amend fees.

Strategy: Revise the penalty structure associated with violations to ensure penalties are fair, but also severe enough to provide incentive for compliance.

Strategy: Implement an administrative penalty process that keeps violation processing within regulatory agencies and limits court proceedings to criminal prosecution.

Goal 3: The USVI will have an open, transparent, and coordinated regulatory process that allows for more effective local input/representation.

Policy: Adopt a system of regulatory review and decision-making that operates locally on each of the major islands, transferring many of the current land and water use responsibilities of the Legislature to local authority.

Strategy: Establish local planning and/or zoning boards (or a similar structure) empowered to review (approve or deny) development applications, review (approve or deny) applications for zone changes or variances, and other responsibilities related to permitting consistent with the Plan.

Strategy: Ensure equitable representation on local boards by residents of the three main islands and provide training and education to members that foster objective and streamlined permit application review.

Strategy: Establish a consistent process and clear criteria for approving zoning amendments and variances in order to hold local boards accountable by developing a system for transparency, consistency, and predictability in Plan implementation and zoning enforcement.

Strategy: Maintain a clear process of appeals, especially where the structure of permit review may be shifted to a local authority.

Strategy: Expand and/or better advertise the avenues for residents to engage directly in the process. Develop a public education campaign to inform the public on how and when to participate in public hearings, how to report on non-compliance or violations, etc.

Goal 4: Perform a comprehensive, multi-year reform of land regulations related to land and water use.

Policy: Ensure that existing USVI Law is consistent with the goals and policies of this Plan.

Strategy: Conduct an analysis of existing USVI law to see where the law already supports or furthers the proposed strategies in this Plan and where there may be conflicts.



Policy: Create a more consistent and complementary permitting approach for land development and marine area use from ridge to reef that takes into account the ecological connectivity across each island, minimizes environmental impacts, and improves environmental conditions whenever possible.

Strategy: Eliminate or significantly reform the two-tier permitting system and adopt a system that provides the appropriate level of permit scrutiny regardless of which Tier applies.

Strategy: Review regulatory reform proposals to ensure there are no undue burdens on projects that—by virtue of location, size, or description—will have minimal environmental or neighborhood impact or that are proactively designed to improve environmental conditions.

Policy: Reform the Zoning Code to meet the goals of the Plan and provide a durable yet flexible place-based framework that minimizes the need for variances and zoning amendments.

Strategy: Develop a Future Land and Water Use Map that will help guide decisions related to rezoning and the application of contemporary regulatory tools. The map will generally identify areas suitable for different types of development and uses, areas most in need of conservation, and areas that should be targeted for restoration and regeneration, both on land and water.

Strategy: Develop criteria and/or performance outcomes, as objective as possible, that must be considered when reviewing applications for variances and zone changes.

Strategy: Reform existing processes to streamline complex permitting situations. For example:

- Remove loopholes in the regulations that allow applicants to segment projects over time in order to have development reviewed at a lower level scrutiny and leverage prior approvals for future approvals.
- Strengthen the review of marina applications to ensure a coordinated review of the land side and water side elements across multiple agencies.
- Projects that straddle more than one zoning district or permit tier should have clear guidance on which standards apply.
- Identify where permits for subdivision, zoning, earth change, and other jurisdictions can be consolidated.

Goal 5: Establish a state-of-the art data system to support decision-making and communication regarding land and water use.

Policy: Provide resources for consistent and detailed data collection on land development activities.

Strategy: Add a Data Division to DPNR that will oversee the development, maintenance, and sharing of data in an accessible and transparent manner across all government departments.

Strategy: Establish a Territory-wide GIS mapping system and regularly update data layers for zoning, natural resources, historic resources, infrastructure, and other important key data with local and federal entities, so users can compare layers for broader understanding of the trends and dynamics that exist in any given area.

Strategy: Finalize the implementation of the Territory's e-permitting system, making public data more easily available online.

Strategy: Expand or supplement the Territory's e-permitting system to provide easily accessed information on enforcement actions.



Making Better Land and Water Use Decisions

Policy: Invest in data development and collection related to cultural and historical resources.

Strategy: Digitize and catalogue historical documentation including, but not limited to, oral histories, photographs, maps, and hard copy primary sources.

Strategy: Support UVI and civic institutions as they actively engage in the development of new data. Integrate these data into shared platforms as they become available. Support can include redundant data storage, staff support, project collaboration, and grant partnerships.



Goal 1: Manage and regulate land use to protect and improve watershed health and the natural water cycle.

Policy: Evaluate development proposals from a watershed management perspective to account for the connection between upstream development and downstream adverse impacts.

Strategy: Complete and continue to update the DPNR Watershed Management Plans for the entirety of the three main islands. The efforts related to the most recent multi-island study (eight watersheds) can be used as a model for a consistent approach, yielding management plans tailored to each watershed. Coordinate the findings of Watershed Management Plans with the development of management plans for Areas of Particular Concern (APCs).

Strategy: Adopt and continually update standards for site design that steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas or places susceptible to adverse impacts and proactively enhance environmental conditions when possible.

Strategy: Formalize a comprehensive set of development performance standards to make sure new development has minimal impact on the surrounding environment and account for potential impacts to resources downhill and downstream, including into coastal and marine environments.

Policy: Protect and become better stewards of groundwater resources through data collection and development policy.

Strategy: Invest in ongoing baseline study of groundwater aquifer characteristics throughout the Territory.

Strategy: Develop and fund a system for ongoing monitoring of groundwater levels (i.e., elevation) and water quality.

Strategy: Develop a water use plan for each aquifer and provide tools and resources for staff to effectively monitor and preserve the islands' groundwater resources.

Strategy: Continue to update regulations related to both stormwater management and wastewater disposal that are practical for USVI conditions and protective/ restorative to groundwater supplies.

Strategy: Through GIS mapping and conversations with stakeholders with local knowledge, identify former and current pond sites and assess the feasibility and environmental impacts of re-establishing them.

Policy: Require best practices in site development and landscaping techniques to manage pollution from roadways, stormwater runoff, septic waste, and wastewater effluent.

Strategy: Continue to update and apply the US Virgin Islands Environmental Protection Handbook to new development applications for the purposes of stormwater management and erosion control.

Strategy: Develop comprehensive guidelines for new driveway construction in different conditions, with an emphasis on steep slopes, to minimize water and pollutants leaving the property and entering the driveway and public roadway.

Strategy: Implement the OSDS related recommendations from the Coral Bay study and replicate/ expand the testing of innovative OSDS on St. Thomas and St. Croix.



Strategy: Provide training and guidance to designers and contractors on the techniques needed to meet development standards and the maintenance needs for different practices. Consider the development of formal credentials for training as an incentive, which would give preference on public contracts.

Strategy: Require a clear path forward for contaminated sites that includes detailed plans for remediation developed and executed by licensed remediation professionals in compliance with EPA regulations. Ensure regular communication of risks and progress to surrounding neighborhoods.

Goal 2: Manage and regulate coastal and marine water use in a way that protects and improves public health, ecological systems, and economic well-being.

Policy: Build capacity to enforce and improve regulations that protect against environmental degradation, sedimentation, and illegal boating, anchoring, mooring, and fishing, and other behaviors harmful to marine resources, while also encouraging the restoration of the environment through responsible boating and fishing.

Strategy: Ensure adequate and sustainable funding for staff, boats, and equipment to effectively and consistently enforce existing regulations in bays and coastal marine areas within USVI jurisdiction.

Strategy: Improve and implement existing plans for marine protected areas and identify other potential locations for protection, with an eye toward habitat regeneration.

Strategy: Develop management plans for all Areas of Particular Concern.

Strategy: Clarify the role of different protection areas (e.g., APC, Marine Parks, Marine Management Plans, Wildlife and Marine Sanctuaries) and potentially consolidate some of those.

Strategy: Develop clear maps and signage for all bays and coastal marine areas that identify allowable activities and intensities of use in those areas. Use the STXEEMP zoning as a reference and the pilot bay assessment study from DPNR as a starting point.

Policy: Pursue the preservation of land that will provide greater protection of critical natural resources.

Strategy: Develop a formal system to evaluate, rank, and prioritize parcels of high conservation value for inclusion in the VI Territorial Park system. Utilize data-driven metrics, including the most recent iteration of SECAS Blueprint GIS data for the Territory.

Strategy: Prioritize lands for conservation and remediation that are adjacent to existing vulnerable coastal natural resource areas to allow for inland migration of wetlands, shorelines and beaches as sea level rise occurs.

Strategy: Revisit and revise development and setback standards to better protect /enhance public access and public spaces like shorelines and beaches, which are threatened with shrinkage, loss of connectivity, or total loss due to coastal erosion.



Goal 3: Adopt a comprehensive, practical system of guidance and regulation that protects sensitive terrain and specific natural features.

Policy: Develop a more effective system of regulations and enforcement for the cays.

Strategy: Provide funding for adequate staff and boats to patrol, inspect, and enforce regulations on and around the cays.

Policy: Develop clear standards and guidance for protecting and restoring guts, wetlands, and mangroves.

Strategy: Adopt protective buffers to these resources and specific development standards within those buffer zones.

Policy: Develop clear standards and guidance for landscape protection and installation.

Strategy: Prohibit the installation of any invasive species in landscaped areas.

Strategy: Develop a comprehensive landscaping handbook and training, certification, and licensing program for choosing and installing appropriate plant species considering drought-resilient, flood-tolerant, recharge-supporting, native, habitat-building, non-invasive species.

Policy: Develop clear standards and guidance for protecting beaches and other coastal features.

Strategy: Identify coastal areas vulnerable to erosion and inundation using the *Hazard Mitigation and Resilience Plan* and the *Coastal Vulnerability Index*, and make this information easily accessible to the public.

Strategy: Set standards for these areas that include considerations for buffers and accommodations for inundation and beach, shoreline, and mangrove migration inland in response to sea level rise to maintain beach accessibility and connectivity.

Strategy: Explore mechanisms for adopting formal conservation areas for the coral reef restoration sites identified in the *U.S. Virgin Islands Coral Reef Restoration Plan*. Integrate this information with management planning for APCs.



Goal 1: Develop and maintain infrastructure that is reliable, resilient, and sustainable.

Policy: Strengthen the Territory's infrastructure against current and projected climate impacts, including hurricanes, flooding, sea level rise, heat, and others.

Strategy: Continue to implement resilient infrastructure approaches identified in previous planning efforts, such as the USVI Hurricane Recovery and Resilience Task Force Report 2018 and other post-disaster recovery efforts. Continue to refine long-term planning for increasing electric energy independence for residences, commercial, and public facilities.

Strategy: Invest aggressively and continue to rebuild a more reliable power grid using on-site power sources, microgrids, battery storage, burying utilities where possible, installing composite utility poles, etc.

Strategy: For all public projects (e.g., school, parks, other facilities) identify any potential options for integrating energy infrastructure that serves the broader goal of resiliency. For example, identify whether there are areas for battery storage or solar power.

Strategy: Require that all infrastructure planning and construction focus on hurricane and storm damage reduction, prevention of saltwater intrusion, preservation of fish and wildlife, and prevention of erosion.

Policy: Reduce reliance on fossil fuels by encouraging energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy sources.

Strategy: Modernize the grid to enable the uptake of additional renewable power and build several microgrids that can operate independently in the event of power outages.

Strategy: Review and update zoning and other regulations to ensure that renewable energy is not hindered but also is not developed at the expense of existing undeveloped areas or other environmentally sensitive areas. For example, prioritize solar panel installation on rooftops, carport canopies, and agrivoltaics for small crops that require shade, over ground mounted solar

Policy: Develop a Territory-wide waste program to reduce litter and landfill deposits, salvage valuable materials, and improve the health of the islands.

Strategy: Develop an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan to improve efficiency and effectiveness all around, including better recycling and composting, green waste management, and hazardous waste. Include an analysis of current WMA operations with an eye toward increasing revenue without burdening local residents and small businesses.

Strategy: Study options from other island communities to reduce waste and expand the types of materials that are recycled and reused.

Strategy: Develop a more accessible and environmentally friendly network of waste disposal sites on all islands. Expedite planning and implementation of convenience centers and other more formalized, environmentally protected trash disposal and recycling sites on all three islands, ideally with at least some capacity to pre-process some of the refuse flows.

Strategy: Provide incentives to reduce waste and expand the types of materials that are recycled and reused, including recycling, green waste, and composting facilities.

- Provide incentives or require that commercial food waste be composted and reused on-island. Provide free food waste drop off sites for residential customers. Turn food waste into compost that can be sold or given away to local farmers and residents.



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- Stop sending green waste (yard trimmings, tree branches, leaves, etc.) to the landfills. Expand existing mulch production programs to accept more green waste for mulch production, which can be given away or sold.
- Explore options for incineration and give serious consideration to systems that burn waste while trapping or reusing harmful exhaust and ash.
- Provide hazardous waste drop off sites to accept household hazardous waste and waste from small businesses, including tires, gasoline, paints, batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, motor oil, cleaning products, cooking grease, etc.
- Institute a tipping fee to accept hazardous waste from larger businesses.
- Explore options for producer responsibility standards, so that manufacturers and/or sellers of products such as paint, mattresses, tires, etc. are responsible for collection, recycling, and reuse of their products sold in the Territory.

Strategy: Identify new waste disposal capacity, so that existing landfills may be closed and remediated to reduce contamination, avoid future fires, and potentially be tapped for methane capture.

Strategy: Identify USVI government owned property on each major island appropriate for the sorting and temporary storage of storm debris. These areas could serve as construction staging areas when not needed for storm debris.

Policy: Continue to improve and expand the Territory's public sewer network in a way that will best serve the public, protect the environment, and be secure against climate change.

Strategy: Oversee the complete sewer network replacement on St. Croix and ensure that funding and permitting is secured for St. Thomas and St. John as well. Continue to work with DPW and other partners to ensure that the timing of this project is coordinated to the greatest extent possible with other utility needs.

Strategy: Develop a Future Sewer Service Plan, mapping priority areas for expansion based on high demand from current or future expected development, high need to protect water quality, or identified community needs.

Strategy: Identify USVI government owned property on each major island appropriate for staging areas for utility construction. These areas could serve as temporary storage for storm debris as needed.

Goal 2: Build capacity for greater sovereignty related to food and water supply systems with appropriate land and water use strategies.

Policy: Adopt development standards and design infrastructure to treat, store, distribute, and conserve water supplies.

Strategy: Fund and implement a multi-year project to upgrade the public drinking water supply distribution system, including maintenance and testing of onsite water storage and filtration systems.

Strategy: Adopt inexpensive development standards to facilitate lower water use (e.g., drought tolerant landscaping) and encourage on-site water treatment, storage, and conservation strategies, including separating rain, gray, and sewage water streams for processing.

Strategy: Explore opportunities for more water reuse, including capturing more rainwater and stormwater runoff and wastewater reuse, from smaller scale cisterns on residential lots to larger scale retention ponds. Identify where opportunities might exist for reuse, such as for groundwater replenishment, irrigation, agriculture, and drinking water.



Strategy: Set standards for establishing new wells and allowable withdrawal volumes based on projected groundwater capacities and establish fines for violations.

Strategy: Provide funding and government staff/contractors for monitoring and testing private wells.

Strategy: Use scientific study to identify areas where structural diversions may be used to create emergency water access and/or supplies for agricultural operations.

Strategy: Identify land that is favorable for future desalination facilities. Preserve these parcels and perform feasibility studies for future distribution systems.

Strategy: Provide support for terracing and slope stabilization for agricultural operations.

Policy: Use land and water use policies to create greater food sovereignty across the USVI.

Strategy: Revise zoning regulations to ensure all elements of a self-contained food system can be established in appropriate areas. This includes growing, processing, storing, distributing, sales, food service, and waste management. The Ag Plan provides a detailed list of regulatory recommendations that should be used as the foundation for a multi-year reform project.

Strategy: Revise zoning regulations to enable 21st century agricultural practices in both indoor and outdoor environments, and also at scales as small as single residential properties.

Strategy: Evaluate government-owned land to identify parcels that may be strategically located and suitable for growing, food processing, and long-term food storage facilities.

Strategy: Consider the use of agricultural overlay zones that provide strong incentives for using lands suitable for agricultural use as active farming operations.

Strategy: Invest in the development of a data system, including staffing, that tracks agricultural use and production in a manner that can address the benchmarks identified in the Ag Plan.

Strategy: Engage with the local farming community to identify accessory business uses that will add income to the farming operations and are appropriate in the context of the surrounding neighborhoods.

Strategy: Implement and continue to refine Additional Recommendation I from the Ag Plan, related to developing a comprehensive irrigation system and water supply. Develop detailed guidance on identifying lands for agricultural ponds, storage tanks, and wells, as well as for permitting and maintaining these facilities.

Goal 3: Adopt land and water use policies and regulations that anticipate the impacts of the changing climate and strengthen the USVI's ability to meet these challenges.

Policy: Use the best available data for sea-level rise, ocean temperature change, and other climate change related impacts in decisions about land and marine area use.

Strategy: Work with federal agencies, UVI, and regional partners to create and maintain up-to-date data related to climate change for purposes of risk management, coastal planning, and development review.

Strategy: Work with academic, territorial, and federal partners to identify appropriate coastal hazard and climate models that account for the USVI's unique geographic and bathymetric characteristics. In particular, identify hazard modeling approaches that incorporate wave impacts and wave runup in addition to storm surge and sea level rise.

Strategy: Consider establishing standardized climate change and hazard projections across multiple planning horizons for use by Territorial agencies when making land use decisions (e.g., plan for X-foot of rise by 2050).



Policy: Adopt new or improved development regulations that anticipate more frequent and more severe storms, sea-level rise, and coastal erosion, among other climate impacts.

Strategy: Require the inclusion of relevant data related to natural hazards in development applications and any proposed zone change.

Strategy: Increase DPNR capacity to adequately enforce the current building code, which is intended to reflect the stressors of Category 5 hurricanes.

Strategy: Consider establishing a fixed, mapped shoreline for regulatory purposes, which could be used as a baseline for regulatory setbacks. Options include using the mean high water mark and revising this line at regular intervals (e.g., every five years).

Strategy: Establish criteria that can be used to guide redevelopment of structures that were severely damaged by flooding or slope destabilization. For example, criteria could help determine where structures may be built back to their original footprint or whether a site has become too dangerous, and rebuilding is therefore not an option.

Strategy: Develop freeboard requirements within the regulatory floodplain that are based on the most recent modeling for flood elevation.

Strategy: Evaluate options for introducing managed retreat strategies into land and water use planning. For example:

- Some communities have implemented rolling easements, which “roll” inland in response to sea level rise and coastal erosion. States and communities have included various restrictions on building or repairing hard armoring within the rolling easement zone.
- Identify areas where protection, accommodation, retreat, and preservation strategies would be most appropriate given the current siting of critical infrastructure, population centers, and the natural environment. For example, hard armoring may be permitted in “protection zones” but not permitted in “retreat zones.”
- Identify opportunities for buy-back programs to encourage relocation out of high-hazard areas. Such incentives should have income limits to prioritize support for lower-income property owners.

Strategy: Revisit the current setback and construction standards for shoreline reflecting site-specific considerations for safety, infrastructure protection, and future access to public spaces including beaches and shorelines. Options include applying an erosion-based setback standard, which assumes specific increases in sea level rise and erosion rates over the lifetime of the structure.

Policy: Pursue nature-based solutions, including habitat conservation and restoration, that increase the long-term resilience of natural systems and provide hazard mitigation benefits to people and property.

Strategy: Invest in research to identify coral-friendly engineered solutions that may be successful in different marine conditions in the USVI. Consider public/private partnerships as an incentive for pilot implementation projects.

Strategy: Identify future areas for inland migration of wetland and beach habitat and establish best practices in site design for moving or removing restrictive structures that may prevent inland migration.

Strategy: Identify and continue to develop assessment methodology, data, and tools to aid site prioritization for conservation and restoration projects that consider multiple potential social and environmental benefits.

Strategy: Research and implement a drought and fire prevention policy, including policies for rain forest and general tree canopy protection.



Policy: Incorporate sea level rise projections into the development of public coastal structures as well as approval processes for private development.

Strategy: Develop criteria to evaluate proposed projects or policies and address assets already in high-risk areas.

Strategy: Update the criteria for designating sites as Areas of Particular Concern for the purposes of coastal zone management to account for future climate projections.

Strategy: Consider changes to floodplain requirements to reduce overall flood damage potential and encourage resilient retrofits by amending the substantial improvement regulations. For example:

- Some communities base their substantial improvements regulations on the cumulative value of improvements over a specified time period.
- Some communities base their substantial improvements regulations on a lower threshold than the 50% floor established by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

Policy: Expand Urban and Community Forestry Programs to increase native tree planting, maintenance, and preservation practices to help provide shade and access to fruit trees.

Strategy: Conduct a comprehensive public tree inventory, which could include data about tree species, tree diameter, planting site characteristics, heritage trees, and empty tree planting sites. Inventory data should be mapped and publicly accessible.

Strategy: Develop a long-range urban forestry management plan that considers future climate stressors and identifies a list of preferred trees and priority areas for public tree planting based on underserved or urban heat island characteristics, including along pedestrian corridors linking shopping and schools with neighborhoods.

Strategy: Identify funding sources to support tree planting on private properties and promote opportunities to the community. Require tree planting in new commercial and mixed-use developments and redevelopment, and in parking lots above a certain size.



Goal 1: Provide access to good and healthy homes for all Virgin Islanders.

Policy: Reform zoning to encourage a broader range of housing choice at different price points, style preferences, and life stages.

Strategy: Consider allowing the conversion of existing single-family and two-family dwellings to up to four-family dwellings, including accessory dwelling units, if a property is able to meet performance standards related to parking, infrastructure capacity, etc.

Strategy: Identify appropriate districts for assisted living and other senior housing types, including multigenerational communities, along a continuum of care as seniors age. Districts where these are allowed should provide residents with easier access to shops, services, and health care.

Strategy: Define smaller-scale multi-family dwellings, such as three- and four-unit dwellings, townhouses, cottages clustered on a single lot, and small-scale apartment buildings, and permit them in zoning districts that serve as a transition from single-family and two-family dwelling neighborhoods to denser neighborhoods and downtown areas.

Strategy: Develop performance standards to help determine where taller (more than three stories) residential or mixed-use buildings may be appropriate in terms of visual and physical impacts. Performance standards may include driveway design, roadway connectivity and capacity, transit access, walkability/bikeability, parking availability, topography that helps limit the perceived massing of a building, access to public water and sewer, etc.

Policy: Reform the probate system to enable families to continue ownership and investment in their properties.

Strategy: Dedicate funding to engage the services of attorneys and other experts to assist individuals and families to maintain their properties and unblock pending probate cases. Build on the existing services currently provided by organizations such as the VI Economic Development Authority and the VI Housing Finance Authority.

Strategy: Strive to make the probate system easier for individuals to navigate without a lawyer or legal fees. Amend probate laws to make it more difficult for families to succumb to forced sales of properties.

Strategy: Dedicate grants, forgivable loans, and/or low-interest loans to individuals or families so they can maintain and renovate their properties during and after the probate process. Make sure such funds are made available up front, rather than on a reimbursement basis, so that individuals and families with limited financial resources may utilize them.

Policy: Build and redevelop well-designed public housing that encourages a sense of community and provides important amenities.

Strategy: Over time, redevelop larger VI Housing Authority properties with climate-resilient design and amenities that provide residents with the support systems they need, such as outdoor play space for children and youth, communal kitchens and gathering spaces, community gardens, day care, and more.

Strategy: Continue to look for opportunities to purchase and renovate existing homes and apartments to add to the inventory of VI Housing Authority properties.

Strategy: Consider making larger VI Housing Authority properties available to a broader range of household incomes as the inventory of VIHA homes increases.

Policy: Build capacity to permit and develop homes that are efficient, resilient to storms, and use vernacular building design.

Strategy: Coordinate with UVI and local trade associations to train and certify more building inspectors, and budget for hiring adequate building inspection staff.



Strategy: Develop a vernacular handbook to guide property owners and architects on traditional building design for the USVI, including the use of local and sustainable materials, passive cooling, water collection, etc.

Strategy: Pair building inspection and code enforcement with concurrent offers of grants, forgivable loans, and/or low-interest loans to property owners so they can maintain and renovate their properties up to these resiliency standards.

Strategy: Develop educational material that helps remove the cultural stigma associated with “modular homes.”

Strategy: Develop island-specific pre-reviewed/pre-approved building plans (including modular homes) and offer streamlined approval for construction. Include site standards needed for the pre-approved building plan to get faster review and approval.

Strategy: Convene EDA, VITEMA, and DPNR with modular home companies to discuss how to remove barriers to installation and establish local manufacturing operations.

Policy: Explore innovative programs and funding mechanisms for increased levels of affordable home *production*

Strategy: Form and/or expand existing Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) in the USVI with the goal of expanding economic opportunity in low-income communities by providing access to products and services for local residents and businesses. A CDFI could fill important financing gaps for affordable housing development, home repairs, small business development, and more. (See *Support a Strong Economy that Serves the Residents of the USVI with Appropriate Land and Water Use Strategies* for more on CDFIs.)

Strategy: Support the establishment of at least one Community Development Corporation (CDC) in the USVI, and ideally one each on St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas.

Strategy: Consider establishing an Affordable Housing Trust on each of the major islands through existing and/or expanded real estate transfer taxes and/or other funding mechanisms to provide dedicated funding for construction or renovation of affordable housing. Establish advisory committees on each of the three major islands to advise the VIHFA on needed investments.

Strategy: Dedicate funding to provide forgivable loans and/or tax incentives to owners of rental properties for renovation and maintenance, in exchange for rent control of the property.

Policy: Explore innovative funding and financing mechanisms for affordable home *ownership*.

Strategy: Explore options for developing community land trusts on each of the major islands including, but not limited to trusts managed by a government agency or quasi-governmental agency such as the VIHFA or by local non-profit organizations such as a community development corporation (CDC).

Strategy: Consider property tax reductions or rebates for properties where the improvements (i.e. the homes but not the land) are valued below a certain threshold and/or for properties that have been owned by family members for a minimum threshold of time.

Goal 2: Support Strong Local Economies with Land and Water Use Strategies.

Policy: Pursue the creation of economies of place, creating neighborhoods and destinations with strong, local economic systems.

Strategy: Remove barriers and create incentives and support programs for the development/revitalization of vibrant mixed-use centers.

Strategy: Create form based design standards to shape development in historic and new mixed-use centers. These can be adopted as part of new form based zoning districts, such as the one drafted for Charlotte Amalie.



Strategy: Develop “Maker Spaces” (low-cost or free facilities) for small local craftspeople/manufacturers to allow individuals to produce goods to earn a living and that help incubate and grow potential businesses. These may be run by the government, or the government may provide grants or low-interest loans to non-profit organizations to run such spaces.

Policy: Tailor government initiatives to help maintain local ownership of property.

Strategy: Form and/or expand existing Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) to increase innovative lending options.

Strategy: Prioritize financial incentives and lending at all levels (from start-ups to mature firms) to locally owned businesses and businesses that guarantee living wage job opportunities for residents.

Policy: Target market-based initiatives to build on USVI’s competitive and cultural strengths.

Strategy: Continue to pursue, assess, and revise initiatives related to the industry focus areas identified in *Vision 2040*.

Strategy: Continue the pursuit of greater food sovereignty. See Goal 2 under *Preparing for a Sustainable Future*.

Goal 3: Elevate cultural resources and institutions across the USVI with appropriate land and water use strategies.

Policy: Cultivate place-based tourism initiatives, in partnership with the USVI Department of Tourism and others, as part of a sustained economic development strategy.

Strategy: Support the VI State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in its efforts to increase territorial awareness and appreciation of historic preservation and encourage appropriate treatment of cultural resources.

Strategy: Partner with, provide resources to, and empower local civic groups to secure funding, provide technical assistance to communities, and manage projects that will bolster place-based tourism.

Policy: Ensure proposals for land development account for and enhance cultural resources, including using traditional and culturally recognized building and site design.

Strategy: Build historic and cultural performance standards into the development review process, with considerations not only for historic structures on a site, but archaeological resources, traditional cultural uses of a property, important old growth heritage trees, etc. Where preservation is not possible, find ways to visually promote and celebrate the history and heritage of the site.

Strategy: Improve interdepartmental review to ensure that SHPO determinations are recognized and enforced.

Policy: Develop incentives and resources, including funding and financing, for preservation and rehabilitation of privately-owned historically significant structures.

Strategy: Explore the creation of special revolving funds for private archaeological and historic preservation restoration projects.

Strategy: Lobby financial institutions and businesses to provide their dedicated community service grants to non-profit historic preservation organizations.

Strategy: Lobby financial institutions to provide low-interest loans to owners of historic buildings used for commercial and residential purposes.



Policy: Target land preservation to culturally significant sites that are not protected.

Strategy: Increase the capacity of the SHPO (e.g. funding, technology, staff, etc.) to identify significant archaeological and historic properties within the Territory through an ongoing systematic survey and identification program and work in partnership with the Division of Territorial Parks & Protected Areas to prioritize investments in the preservation of these resources.

Strategy: Identify, map, and inventory burial sites/graves and ensure these are flagged and respected through the development review process.

Policy: Provide resources for clearly documenting and mapping historical and cultural resources, with the ability to overlay natural resources and infrastructure.

Strategy: Develop a collections management plan for the archaeological and scientific collections that are maintained by the SHPO, including the designation of secure archive buildings on all three islands. (SHPP)

Strategy: Use technology (GIS, computer-based curation system, digital records, etc.) to facilitate research, preservation initiatives, and information exchange.

Strategy: Explore policies and agreements that foster continued or renewed culturally significant daily activities like gathering food, gathering materials for crafts, or fishing in traditionally accessible areas.

Policy: Provide incentives and resources to preserve historic sites open to the public and develop museums and educational activities for adults, youth, and future generations alike.

Strategy: Seek funding and legislative support for the development of a curation and museum facility to permanently and safely store and highlight the archaeological and scientific collections maintained by SHPO.

Goal 4: Connect people to everyday needs in a safe, accessible way strategies.

Policy: Increase walking and biking safety and opportunities prioritizing commercial and mixed-use areas and town centers.

Strategy: Develop a sidewalk expansion and maintenance plan in priority areas with a schedule to address new sidewalks, maintenance needs, safety features (e.g., crosswalks), gaps, and accessibility.

Strategy: Explore and plan a comprehensive network of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, that connects these priority areas with trails and other path networks. Coordinate implementation through the Territory's Complete Streets policy and engage with VITAL and other key stakeholders.

Policy: Invest in VITRAN to support regular, reliable, and affordable service that better connects jobs, commercial centers, schools, and residential areas, including service between islands.

Strategy: Evaluate VITRAN routes and consider ways to create shorter loops to service localized areas during peak times.

Strategy: Formalize more permanent bus routes that can be used by locals or tourists alike, with regular schedules that run every day, including evenings and weekends, and can be tracked in real time online or on an app. Work with cruise ship companies to fund additional bus runs when ships are in port.

Strategy: Evaluate opportunities for VITRAN efficiency improvements, such as dedicated bus lanes and real-time schedule updates.



Strategy: Review potential for enhanced inter-island transportation, including for USVI residents, commuters, tourists, businesses, and others.

Strategy: Consider opportunities to coordinate the VITRAN network with other transportation modes, such as water transport, Safari Taxis, electric bikes, and other rideshares.

Policy: Ensure that transportation and roadway planning, construction, and maintenance policies respond to the specific needs and conditions of each island.

Strategy: Continue to implement island-specific transportation approaches identified in other previous planning efforts, such as the 2014 *United States Virgin Islands 2040 Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan* and the *USVI Hurricane Recovery and Resilience Task Force Report 2018*.

Strategy: Update analyses and proposals from the 2014 *United States Virgin Islands 2040 Comprehensive Transportation Master Plan* to respond to current conditions and needs.

Strategy: Explore opportunities to develop stricter road hierarchies and designate routes for specific types of vehicle traffic to keep regular truck traffic out of residential areas and other sensitive zones. Roads in areas with high truck traffic should be constructed and maintained to industrial road standards.

Policy: Clarify the responsibility for designing, building, and maintaining both public and private roads, streamline the process for repair, and coordinate with utility improvements.

Strategy: Integrate planned road construction, utility improvements, and other infrastructure plans into a comprehensive capital improvement plan or other document to improve coordination.

Strategy: Continue to develop and refine coordination policies and procedures across agencies for road repair and infrastructure planning.

Strategy: Explore options for joining the national 811 call-before-you-dig system. Anyone who plans to dig could call 811 before digging to request that the approximate location of buried utilities be marked with paint or flags so that no one unintentionally digs into an underground utility line.

Strategy: Ensure DPW is fully staffed and trained to understand all relevant roadway and driveway standards and can review plans and conduct inspections during construction to ensure compliance.

Strategy: Issue a solicitation for a team of certified third-party peer reviewers who are trained to supplement plan review and inspection services for DPW and other agencies.

Strategy: Invest in an analysis and catalogue of all public rights of way and public and private streets in the Territory and then digitize the information. Build on the street address project currently underway through the Lt. Governor's Office.

Policy: Explore options for parking reform and enforcement specific to each island, to ensure adequate parking where needed and avoid excessive parking requirements.

Strategy: Continue to require and enforce adequate parking for residential development based on the size and type of the homes. Develop a policy for reducing these requirements with performance standards related to reuse of historic buildings, access to transit, availability of sidewalks and bikeways, proximity to mixed-use town centers and shopping areas, etc.

Strategy: Develop and continually update a parking strategy for historic town centers that provides for and manages a shared public parking supply to support walkability and access to commercial services.



Strategy: Explore opportunities for multi-purpose parking areas that can also provide benefits such as spaces for community events, water storage, solar panel canopies, etc.

Strategy: Explore opportunities for shared parking lots or garages for commercial areas, connected to businesses by clear walking and biking paths and/or shuttle service.

Strategy: Explore options for installing parking metering infrastructure in high demand areas.

Goal 5: Create a sustainable system of public recreation and open space that fosters opportunities for fun, physical activity, and enjoyment of natural resources.

Policy: Continue to develop and maintain an accessible, ecologically healthy, and biologically diverse Territorial Park system based on data driven decisions and concrete needs assessment.

Strategy: Continue to bolster the capacity and clarify the role of the Division of Territorial Parks and Protected Areas (TPPA).

Strategy: Complete and obtain approval of the Territorial Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan to become eligible for federal funding to acquire land for conservation or recreation, develop new recreation facilities, and maintain existing facilities.

Strategy: Use the needs assessment of the Territorial Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as a baseline to address recreation needs of the community, including for those with disabilities, and develop benchmarks to measure progress.

Strategy: Identify parcels with potential to create parks for neighborhoods that need them.

Strategy: Identify and conserve parcels with high value for environmental protection or preservation of cultural/historic resources.

Strategy: Build capacity of the Department of Sports, Parks, and Recreation to keep parks, beaches, recreation areas, playgrounds, and other facilities clean, safe, and welcoming for all users.

Policy: Preserve and improve public access to the shoreline in areas not designated for strict conservation due to environmental sensitivity.

Strategy: Ensure that proposed development or infrastructure projects enhance shoreline access.

Strategy: Find opportunities for new public access ways from inland to the shoreline and, where possible, along the shoreline to protect and connect existing access ways, beaches, parks, boardwalks, and other public spaces.



Cruz Bay

- Execute the initiatives and strategies identified in Plan Cruz Bay.
- Prioritize an assessment of government owned property to identify where government funds can be used to help achieve the community vision.
- Develop formal architectural controls for the Cruz Bay Town Historic District that protect landmarks and elevate awareness of the Post-Transfer Neo-Vernacular style. Revisit the boundary for the district to ensure it adequately protects existing resources.
- Revisit the Commercial Zone program legislation with a focus on using Cruz Bay as a testing ground for making the program more effective.

Coral Bay

- Continue active partnerships with Coral Bay Community Council and partner where it is helpful to continue their work on OSDS research or other initiatives.
- Actively engage with property owners, particularly ancestral property owners to identify their needs and create pathways to investment and maintaining ownership.
- Create a comprehensive, long-term vision for Coral Bay that includes a strategic plan for investment in infrastructure that will guide future development that is both resilient and appropriately scaled.

Susannberg/Centerline Road

- Reform zoning to allow for and encourage a new “mixed-use mid-island center” with improved pedestrian access.

The National Park

- Provide St. Johnian families with the financial and legal resources needed to resolve property disputes.
- Identify a venue for regular updates and discussion between the community and the National Park leadership. Consider using regular meetings with newly established local permit review authority (e.g., Planning Board).

Basic Services

- Provide incentives for locally sourced food to meet local demand for culturally appropriate cuisine and improve/introduce more agriculture production and distribution at a variety of scales.
- Ensure future development of the Sprauve School site includes government services that will reduce the need for residents to travel to St. Thomas.
- Develop a plan for and implement real time person-to-person virtual access from St. John to all agencies of government, particularly those providing the following services: education, health and welfare, public safety, housing, real property records, paternity and child support, judicial, sanitation, licensing and consumer affair, coastal zone and building applications and permits, including enforcement of permits and violations of applicable laws, rules and regulations. Once successful, consider expanding these services to St. Thomas and St. Croix.



Housing

- Reform zoning standards to expand the diversity of housing offerings in appropriate areas of the island with a focus on serving the housing needs of St. Johnians, including more dense, low-height dwelling units that better match the local vernacular.
- Where residential use is included, prioritize any government financial assistance for properties where long-term rental options (non-transient) will be provided exclusively.

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Food Sovereignty

- Secure all necessary resources and develop the Tech Park.
- Inventory and digitally map all potentially productive agricultural soils and groundwater recharge areas with the best available information.
- Identify the specific tract(s) of land needed to implement the USVI Agricultural Plan's Strategic Orchard Development Initiative and also to meet the needs for large equipment storage/leasing.
- Coordinate with VIPA to ensure the establishment of new port facilities on the south shore include the potential for facilities that can process and store food in a way that bolsters a local food system.

National Heritage Designation Area

- Establish a more formal connection between SHPO (as the coordinating entity) and local cultural civic leaders. Identify and fund cultural resource projects that will advance community needs and empower civic groups to perform the work.

St. Croix East End Marine Park (STXEEMP)

- Amend and revise the current mapping, regulation, enforcement, and management structure to clarify and, if beneficial to the resources, consolidate the roles of government agencies.
- Formalize/adopt STXEEMP infractions into a fine schedule that hold violators accountable to the law and regulations.

Christiansted and Frederiksted

- Establish a direct, dedicated assistance program that is place-based and includes a paid coordinator with experience in community development, grant writing, and project management.
- Using the studies already performed for these towns (described above), identify individual revitalization and infrastructure projects, and develop partnerships for funding and implementation.
- Partner with, provide resources to, and empower local civic groups to secure funding, provide technical assistance to communities, and manage projects.

Sunny Isles and Five Corners

- Create public improvement plans with cost estimates and preliminary designs as preparation for future funding opportunities.
- Identify EDA incentives that may be applicable to these areas and provide direct outreach to property owners on these opportunities.
- Establish form based design standards for new mixed-use centers that meet community needs and vision for improved walkability, connectivity, a range of housing types, resilient infrastructure, and usable open spaces.



The Refinery

- Support the full clean up and remediation of the land and water in and around the former oil refinery as the highest priority for the revitalization of the site.
- Invest in the creation of a detailed vision for the site that explores alternative uses, flexible programming, infrastructure needs, and community safeguards.
- Ensure zoning allows for a wide range of industrial, warehouse, and energy uses consistent with 21st century clean port models.
- Protect and adapt to climate change and hazards: sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, intense storms, earthquake, tsunami so to protect against future spills and contamination.

South Shore Trade Zone

- Achieve the development goals for the St. Croix Renaissance Park and 361 Estate Betty's Hope property set in Vision 2040.
- Consider having the USVI government perform preliminary designs for coastal resiliency that can be presented to future developers.
- Consider innovative regulatory tools, such as pre-permitting, that provide a faster and clearer permit approval process conditional on meeting high standards for environmental protection and resilient design.

Maroon Sanctuary Park

- Continue to purchase property in Maroon Ridge and develop detailed implementation plans regarding the design and management of the Sanctuary Park.

Kingshill Aquifer

- Develop a fully updated scientific investigation of the Kingshill Aquifer that includes, but is not limited to:
 - Water quality investigations
 - Assessment of impacts to aquifer volume and quality from existing development and well withdrawals
 - Identification of restorative actions that can be performed by public infrastructure investment and development practices on privately owned land.
- Adopt/enforce regulatory measures to protect and restore the aquifer to the extent practicable with requirements for pretreating stormwater runoff and recharging to the aquifer. Consider the use of a zoning overlay district.



Limited Land Area

- Perform a detailed inventory of both public and private land that can help meet community needs and facilitate construction practices on St. Thomas. For private lands, identify incentives and agreements that will produce revenue for the owners.

Tutu Park Mall

- Work directly with property owners to develop a vision for future development which clarifies the extent to which any government incentives are required to achieve the vision.
- Apply stormwater management standards that recognize the watershed context, protecting the headwaters area of Turpentine Run gut and the marine resources in STEER.
- Establish form-based design standards to support a new mixed-use center that includes improved walkability, connectivity, a range of housing types, resilient infrastructure, and usable open spaces.

Red Hook

- Perform an intensive study of the public realm to identify where improvements should be made for walkability and signage/wayfinding.
- Identify a site for additional structured parking, develop conceptual designs and cost estimates.

Charlotte Amalie

- Establish a direct, dedicated assistance program that is placed-based and includes a paid coordinator with experience in community development, grant writing, and project management.
- Review, revise as needed, and adopt the Charlotte Amalie Form Based Code (FBC) District.
- Establish a government program that funds qualified attorneys for on-call, client based probate related services.
- Provide incentives for overnight or extended stays for cruises or other organized group vacations.
- Continue extensions and improvements to the Veteran's Drive walkway park, including climate resilience and adaptation to sea level rise.
- Develop a long-term, targeted flood management study that models flooding under various storm scenarios (factoring climate change) and establishes a long-term management plan.

STEER

- Establish STEER as a Marine Park through an act of the Legislature.
- For the newly established Marine Park, clarify the role and jurisdiction of different agencies. Consider consolidating some of these roles where it creates clarity, strengthens administration, integrates with near-shore permitting, and facilitates enforcement.

Smith Bay

- Continue implementation of the Smith Bay Watershed Management Plan.
- Prioritize acquisition of land that can be integral to mitigating drainage problems.
- Look for opportunities to build upon planned drainage improvements by including enhanced walkability elements (sidewalks, street trees) and walkable design standards for new buildings along the Emile Milo Francis Memorial Drive corridor.



Bordeaux Farming Community

- Continue direct engagement with the farming community to determine whether there is interest in providing more infrastructure to the area.
- If there is interest:
 - Clarify the vision of how this area would function relative to farming, housing, and infrastructure.
 - Identify how this vision would leverage greater watershed health and better water quality in the bays.
 - Coordinate the installation of roads, drainage, and utilities (including agrivoltaics for small crops that may require shade) across all applicable agencies and develop a roadway management plan tailored to the use of the land and water quality goals of the watershed.

Northside Community

- Use a watershed framework to implement an organized and strategic improvement initiative related to roadway improvements, flood reduction, solid waste management, wastewater upgrades, and regulatory reform.
- Identify and pursue grant opportunities for the implementation of infrastructure improvements in this community.