



GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

4611 Tutu Park Mall
Suite 300, 2nd Floor
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 774-3320

45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted
St. Croix, VI 00840
(340) 773-1082
dpnr.vi.gov



Office of the Commissioner

**Report by the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning on
the Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10, Application No.
CCZP0014-26**

Petition of the Department of Property and Procurement to amend Parcel No. 9A-6 Estate Nazareth, No. 1 Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas, from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density). The purpose of the request is to bring a Children's Home into zoning compliance.



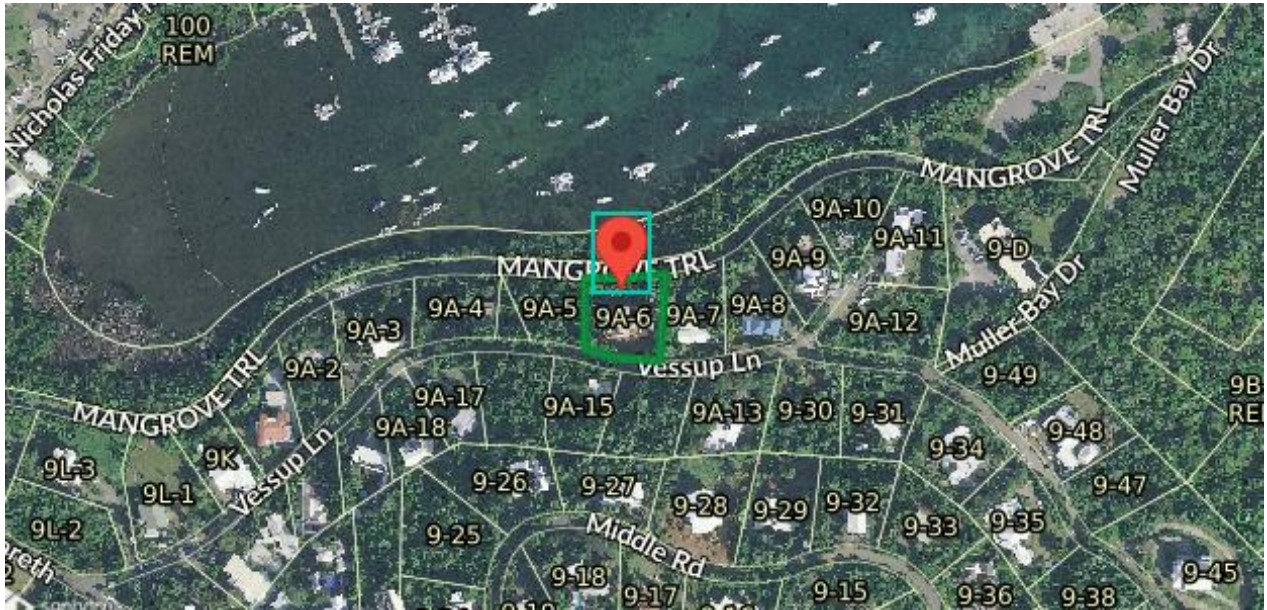
MapGeo aerial photo of site (outlined in yellow)

Property Owner(s): Government of the Virgin Islands as per Warranty Deed dated July 18, 2025, recorded as Document No. 2025004702.

Applicant Representative(s): Vincent Richards, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Property and Procurement.

Acreage: 0.40 acres as shown in survey drawing No. D9-293-T62.

Surrounding Uses and Zones: North- road and ocean. East, South, and West- vacant and residential land.



MapGeo aerial view of property (with red marker)

The surrounding area is zoned R-1 and W-1 (Waterfront-Pleasure) and Estate Nazareth has had six zoning map amendments.

Parcel No.	Year Rezoned	Original Zone	Rezoned To	Act. No.
C	2022	R-2	P	8606
1	1982	R-2	P	4772
N-1 REM TRACT 1	2024	R-2	P	8964
6L-23, -24, & -30	2001	R-1	W-1	6407
6L-25 & 6L REMAINDER	2016	R-1	W-1	7973
9M-1	2015	R-1	Bed & Breakfast Use Variance	7733



Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10 (property's location indicated by red arrow)

Infrastructure: Water- Cistern; Sewer- Independent sewage disposal system.

Other needed DPNR Division reviews: None. There will be no change to the building's existing footprint. Planned improvements would be limited to resiliency upgrades and security enhancements.

Project Summary: At DPNR-CCZP's public hearing, Mr. Vincent Richards testified the existing residential building on the property was used as a short-term rental and has been converted into a 24-hour emergency group home for infants and children. Continued use as a children's group home/emergency children's home is proposed and operating in partnership with a non-profit organization. Care is provided for a maximum of 12 children aged newborn to 12-years-old, on an emergency/variable-occupancy basis.

The two-story building totals 12,000 square feet and eight bedrooms. The 24-hour operation occurs with approximately three staff on site at one time (five full-time employees total; two living on property, plus two part-time staff). The property can accommodate eight vehicle parking spaces, but daily traffic is expected to be low. The property currently has fencing and foliage surrounding it.

The nearest residence is approximately 50 ft away.

Public Response at DPNR-CCZP Public Hearing held on April 20, 2026:

There was no opposition or concern expressed with the proposal during the hearing. No post-hearing comments were received.

Analysis of Request/Reason for Recommendation: The Zoning Code's adoption on October 1, 1972, placed Children's Homes in only four zoning districts: R-3, R-4 (Residential-Medium Density), R-5 (Residential-High Density), and S (Special). The property's nonconforming or "grandfather" status limits the site's future redevelopment.

As the territory tackles its housing crisis, alternative living arrangements have gathered national planning attention (e.g. Community Residences which function and perform similarly to dwellings, with family-like settings). One housing type that has been looked at is group homes which would be "Children's Homes" and "Convalescent, Rest, Nursing, & Retirement Homes & Sanitariums" in our Zoning Code. Group Homes are generally any communal housing arrangement for a group of unrelated individuals. Another type of housing is transitional housing which is not addressed in our Code but has been allowed in the R-3, R-4, R-5, B-1, B-2, and B-3 zones because it is a residential activity closely resembling multiple-family housing.

The USVI Zoning Code defines a family as "One (1) person or group of two (2) or more persons living together and inter-related by bonds of kinship, marriage, mutual consent, or legal adoption, occupying the whole or part of a dwelling as a separate housekeeping unit with a common set of cooking facilities. The persons thus constituting a family may also include foster children, gratuitous guests and domestic servants." Unlike more restrictive family definitions of other jurisdictions (family being only related by blood, adoption and/or marriage and if unrelated, a limited number of individuals), the USVI Zoning Code allows for group housing wherever dwellings are allowed. The exception, however, is the USVI Zoning Code separates "Children's Homes" and "Convalescent, Rest, Nursing, & Retirement Homes & Sanitariums", relegating these group housing types to a total of six zones while dwellings are allowed in 12 of our 18 zones.

Zoning reform is being encouraged at the national level to address the housing shortfall. The department has processed seven applications in the last decade requesting approval for transitional and group housing in zones they have been excluded from. Zoning Reform is needed to address the number of zoning map amendment requests being received so that the territory can effectively address the housing needs of all VI residents.

The Department finds that a zoning map amendment is consistent with the goals, policies, and intent of the Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan. The request to rezone corrects an existing inconsistency between current institutional residential use and its zoning designation, thereby advancing the Comp Plan's

objective of promoting sound, rational land use decisions. The continued use of the property as a children's emergency/group home supports the Comp Plan's emphasis on providing housing and supportive services for vulnerable populations within community-scaled, residential environments. The proposal does not introduce new development intensity or expand the existing building footprint, and it maintains compatibility with surrounding residential uses through limited occupancy, 24-hour supervision, and minimal traffic and infrastructure demand. Additionally, the proposal poses no identified adverse impacts to environmental resources, public infrastructure, or neighborhood character. Accordingly, the Department concludes that a rezoning aligns with the Comp Plan's policies promoting regulatory consistency, social equity, adaptive reuse of existing development, and neighborhood compatibility, and therefore finds the application consistent with the USVI Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan.

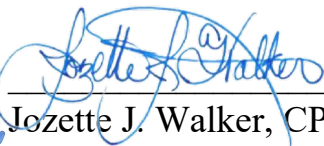
Although the department supports the intention to rezone, a modification in the request is warranted due to the property being owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands. All real property owned by the Government of the Virgin Islands should be zoned P-Public, regardless of any prior zoning designation shown on the official zoning maps, consistent with Section 229(q) of the Zoning Code. In the absence of a comprehensive clarification of zoning classifications of all government-owned properties, individual applications are being received. To ensure accountability and neighborhood compatibility, uses proposed are subject to the zoning map amendment process of appropriate public notice, public hearing, and environmental review, preserving transparency and procedural fairness. No opposition or concern expressed with the proposal lends support to the continued use and a use variance to the P-Public Zone is needed for "Children's Homes." The use variance is needed due to the lack of flexible, modern language providing that any use shall be permitted in the P-Public District but with the condition that uses require appropriate public notice, public hearings, and environmental review; to ensure accountability, neighborhood compatibility, preserve transparency and procedural fairness.

Recommendation

The Department of Planning and Natural Resources recommends the following:

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238, Official Zoning Map No. STZ-10 for the island of St. Thomas be amended by changing the zoning designation of Parcel No. 9A-6 Estate Nazareth, No. 1 Red Hook Quarter, St. Thomas, consisting of 0.40 acres as described on survey Drawing No. D9-293-T62, from R-1 (Residential-Low Density) to P (Public).

Pursuant to Title 29 Virgin Islands Code, Chapter 3, Section 238a, a use variance be granted to allow for ““Children’s Homes.”



Jozette J. Walker, CPM
Assistant Commissioner

5.12.2026

Date

Cc: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol, Commissioner