

The St. Thomas Reformed Church

St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands

October 1, 2026

Leia LaPlace
Territorial Planner
Dept of Planning & Natural Resources
St Thomas, Virgin Islands

Dear Ms. LaPlace,
I am writing on behalf of the St. Thomas Reformed Church. The Church owns a parsonage located in the residential neighborhood that would be directly affected by the proposed rezoning of 32A Hospital Lane, and I am writing to express the Church's concerns regarding Application No. CCZP0101-26.

We understand Cornerstone Holdings, LLC is requesting that the property be rezoned from R-3 (Residential-Medium Density) to B-2 (Business-Secondary/Neighborhood). The Church is not opposed to responsible development or to businesses that can appropriately serve the community. Our concern is whether this particular zoning change is appropriate for the location and we ask that you consider the effects on the surrounding residential neighborhood.

Traffic and Safety
One of our concerns is the potential increase in traffic and congestion in an already congested neighborhood. The area right now is residential/medium density. Introducing a commercial destination in this location will substantially increase the number of vehicles entering and leaving the area, including customer vehicles, safari vehicles, delivery vehicles, and other commercial traffic.

Because the Phase I concept is intended to attract visitors as well as local customers for food, beverages, and souvenirs, we are particularly concerned about the volume of traffic that could be generated. Multiple vehicles arriving and departing at the same time could create congestion at the property's entrance and along the surrounding roadway, potentially affecting access to residences and nearby facilities.

We understand that, to date, there has not been documented consultation with the Department of Public Works or the Virgin Islands Police Department regarding the effect that the proposed commercial use may have on traffic flow and safety in this area. Before a permanent change from residential to business zoning is approved, we believe these traffic and safety issues should be evaluated.

Parking and Access
We are also concerned about whether the property can adequately accommodate the parking and loading demands associated with the proposed uses. The parcel lacks the physical capacity to provide adequate off-street parking for proposed businesses' customers, staff, and delivery vehicles. Overflow parking will inevitably block narrow residential streets, choke access routes, and obstruct private driveways. This concern is particularly significant given the possibility of tourist and safari traffic. Even when vehicles are not parked for extended periods, frequent drop-offs, pick-ups, and deliveries can create congestion and obstruct normal traffic flow.

Noise and Quality of Life
The Church is also concerned about the potential impact on the quality of life of the residents who live in this neighborhood. Commercial activity does not have to occur late at night to affect a residential community. Increased vehicle traffic, customer activity, outdoor seating, deliveries, equipment, and other activities associated with food and retail operations can introduce noise and activity that would be substantially different from the existing residential character of the area. The residents of the neighborhood, including those who occupy the Church's parsonage, should be able to reasonably enjoy their homes without an unnecessary and disproportionate increase in commercial activity immediately around them.

Water and Infrastructure
We also ask that DPNR carefully consider whether the existing infrastructure can adequately support the proposed development. The proposed uses could place additional demands on water, wastewater, electricity, drainage, parking, and other infrastructure. Given the infrastructure limitations that can affect development in the Virgin Islands, we believe these issues should be evaluated before the property's zoning designation is permanently changed.

The Long-Term Impact of the Rezoning
Perhaps our greatest concern is the long-term consequence of changing the property's zoning designation. We understand the current application is being presented in connection with the uses proposed by Cornerstone Holdings, LLC. However, the zoning designation would remain with the property rather than with the current owner or this particular development proposal. We must consider not only the specific businesses currently proposed, but also the broader range of uses that could potentially be established on the property under B-2 zoning in the future. If the property were sold or the proposed project changed, the surrounding residential community could ultimately be affected by a commercial use very different from the health, wellness, food, and retail concept currently being presented. For that reason, we believe the decision should consider the long-term land-use implications of the rezoning, not simply the immediate proposal.

Request for Careful Consideration
As the owner of a residential property in the affected neighborhood, St. Thomas Reformed Church respectfully asks DPNR to please consider the cumulative impact of the proposed rezoning on the surrounding community. Is the proposed commercial intensity compatible with this particular location and with the surrounding residential community?

Again, St. Thomas Reformed Church supports responsible development that can coexist with and contribute positively to the community. At the same time, the Church has a responsibility to consider the well-being of those who occupy and use the property it owns. The residents of the parsonage and the surrounding neighborhood should not bear an unreasonable burden from a land-use change that could fundamentally alter the character, traffic patterns, and quality of life of the area.

We respectfully request that this letter be included in the public record for Application No. CCZP0101-26 and that the concerns expressed herein be considered as DPNR evaluates the proposed zoning amendment.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chantal Richards Figueroa
Vice President, St Thomas Reformed Church Consistory