



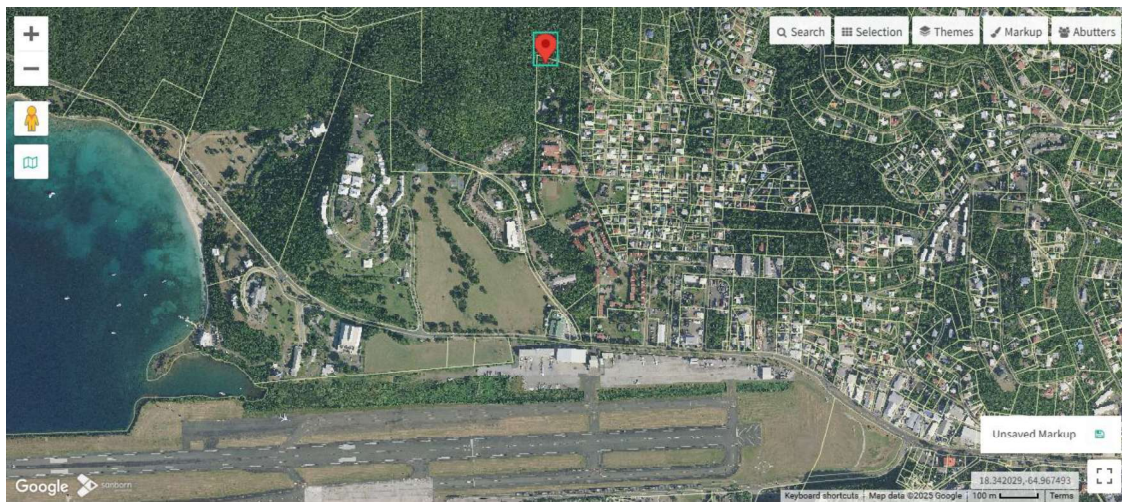
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
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DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES
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Office of the Commissioner

**Report by the Division of Comprehensive and Coastal Zone Planning on
the Petition to Amend Official Zoning Map No. STZ-4, Application No.
CCZP0024-25**

Petition of applicant, The Benoit Group/Virgin Islands Port Authority, to amend Parcel No. 68A Estate Lindbergh Bay, No. 4A Southside Quarter, St. Thomas from P (Public) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density). The purpose of the request is to develop multi-family housing for long-term rentals.



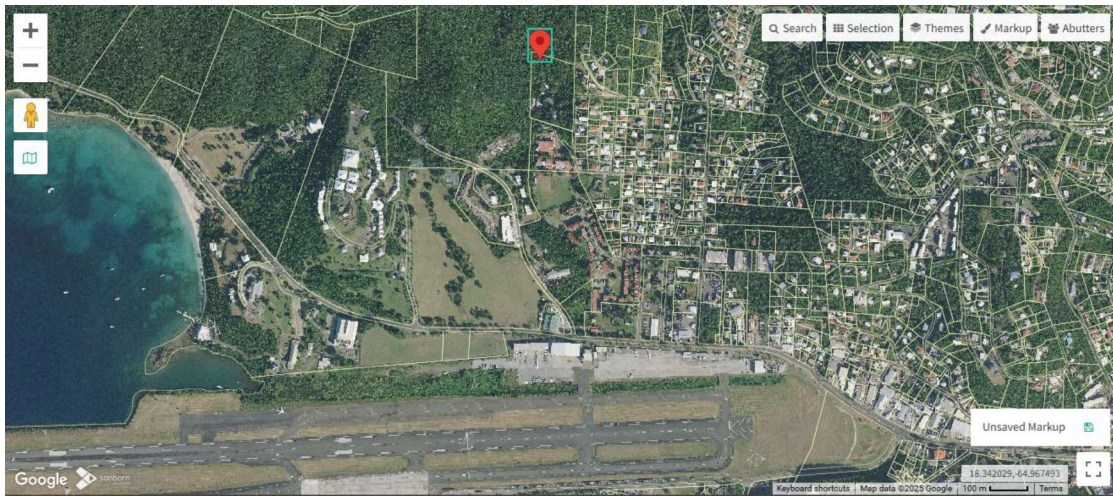
MapGeo aerial view of property (marked in red)

Property Owner(s): Virgin Islands Port Authority, Document No. 4508/1970 dated May 27, 1970.

Applicant Representative(s): Torian Priestly, Chief Development Officer for the Benoit Group.

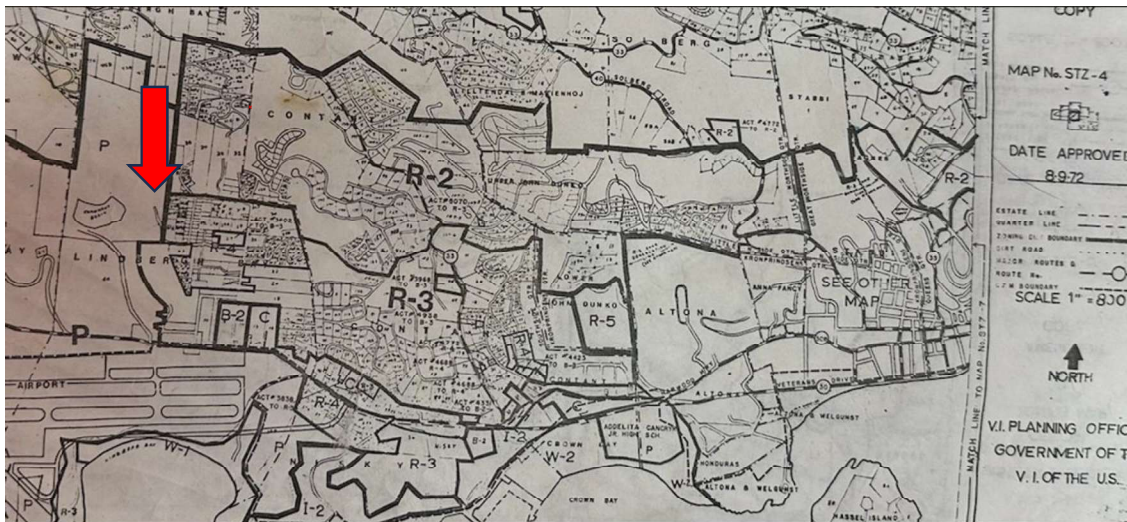
Acreage: 4.798 acres as described on survey drawing D9-775-T68.

Surrounding Uses and Zones: To the north and west is undeveloped land. To the east and south is residential development.



MapGeo aerial view of property (marked in red)

The surrounding area is zoned R-2 (Residential-Low Density-One and Two Family), R-3, and P-Public.

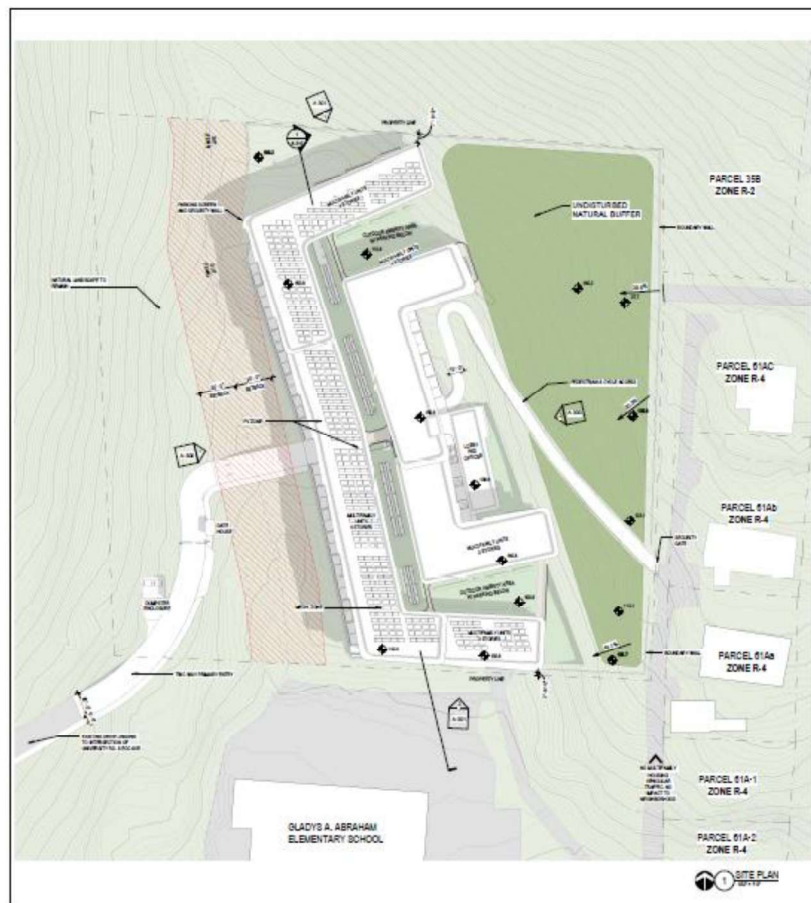


Official Zoning Map No. STZ-4 (property location indicated by red arrow)

Infrastructure: Water needs will be supplied by the public water line and possibly backup cisterns. Sewage is proposed to be handled by an onsite wastewater management system that does not put further strain on the existing sewer system. Vehicular and pedestrian access will be to the west of the site via the public road adjacent to UVI's simulation center, to minimize vehicular traffic impact on the neighborhoods to the east of site.

Other needed DPNR Division reviews: A Flora and Fauna Study and Phase I Cultural Resources Survey will need to be conducted and reviewed by the Divisions of Fish and Wildlife and Virgin Islands State Historic Preservation Office, respectively. Development of the property will require a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) from the Division of Environmental Protection. The SWPPP will require an on-site retention pond and maintenance agreement for the pond's maintenance after major rain events.

Project Summary: At DPNR-CCZP's public hearing, CDO Torian Priestly testified the intent is to develop a residential multi-family development consisting of 126 long-term rental units. One to two buildings, three to four stories tall, are proposed. The entire development is proposed to be a single phase, taking approximately two years. The residential units will consist of approximately 78 one-bedroom units (625 square feet) and 48 two-bedroom units (860 sq ft) with the intent to pursue CDBG-MIT funding through VIHFA for the \$66 million development. If funding is received, 51% of the units will be for 80% Area Medium Income (AMI) and the remaining 49% of units will be for 100-120% AMI.



Conceptual Site Plan Layout revised 6/11/2025

Public Response at DPNR-CCZP Public Hearing held May 20, 2025: There were four adjacent property owners who expressed concerns and three stated opposition at the public hearing. Questions, comments, concerns, and opposition posed by attendees (and post hearing letters received) were summarized and the applicant's responses attached as an appendix to this report (File Item 19B. Applicant response to public comments). They were generally of the nature of:

1. Safety Concerns
2. Misuse of Public Funds
3. Health and Environmental Concerns
4. Lack of Transparency
5. Flood Risk
6. Suggested Alternatives
7. Infrastructure Limitations
8. Conflict with Community and Hazard Mitigation Plans

Analysis of Request/Reason for Recommendation: The 2024 adopted Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan notes: "The last 50+ years have seen a gradual intensifying of problems related to...the rising cost of housing...." "Regulatory reform measures are identified throughout the (Comprehensive Land and Water Use) plan addressing issues related to housing...." In the Living and Thriving Together chapter of the Plan, "...throughout the planning process, the people of the USVI shared their hopes and frustrations about a wide range of issues that impact their daily lives.... The USVI is experiencing a housing crisis in which the typical price of a home...is not affordable when compared with the typical incomes of residents. This mismatch between what people earn and what housing costs is a common story across the U.S., but it is particularly severe in the USVI. The need for more affordable housing options and housing types that better meet the needs of Virgin Islanders of all ages and incomes, such as lower income residents, middle-income residents, young adults, families, and seniors, has reached levels that are severely stressing communities, depleting the workforce, and generally stressing the islands' economy. Housing affordability is a significant challenge in the USVI. The main drivers of the lack of affordable housing are the comparably low incomes of USVI residents, high costs of construction, limited availability of developable land, demand pressures from non-residents, and high costs of homeowner's insurance and other financing challenges.... Regarding housing choice, the available supply of housing is currently not large enough, nor diverse enough, to meet the needs of current residents...."

Limited Land Area is the first listed in the Issues & Opportunities for the St. Thomas chapter of the Plan. "...with the highest density of population, high demand for services, and the prevalence of severely steep terrain, St. Thomas experiences this problem perhaps more acutely than the other major islands."

The location, 68A Lindbergh, is at the base of highly steep slopes, with the flow path of a major gut and road infrastructure. The 2024 Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan, Protecting Our Natural Resources Goal 3., Policy 2., Strategy 1. "Adopt protective buffers to these resources and specific development standards within those buffer zones" would be addressed by the implementation of the 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan, Ridge to Reef Project STT 6 which states "Construct Lindbergh Estates, Phase IV Drainage Project north through Kirwan Terrace Public Housing Units." Coordination between the applicant and the Department of Public Works is paramount to ensuring the least amount of impact on the neighborhoods to the east of the site. Also, the required SWPPP would address flooding concerns to properties below the subject property.

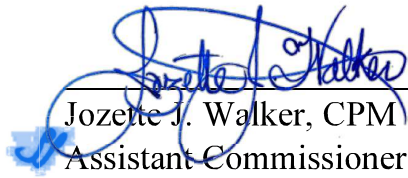
Changing stormwater flow is restricted by the Clean Water Act, specifically Section 404 (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permits) and Section 402 (National/Territorial Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits). The USACE is responsible for administering Section 404 permits and ensuring that any proposed changes to the flow of stormwater do not cause significant harm to the quality of the nation's waters, including guts, streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands.

The revised conceptual drawings, after preliminary building review, appear feasible and clustering of the development into as few buildings as possible will lessen the environmental impact. It is the department's position that due to the properties' topography they are best suited for a clustered development with the requirement that the building meet or exceed the flood elevation requirement for the site.

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-4 for the island of St. Thomas be amended by changing the zoning designation of Parcel No. 68A Estate Lindbergh Bay, No. 4A Southside Quarter, St. Thomas, consisting of 4.798 U.S. acres as described on survey drawing D9-775-T68 from P (Public) to R-3 (Residential-Medium Density).



Jozette J. Walker, CPM
Assistant Commissioner

7/2/2025
Date

Cc: Jean-Pierre L. Oriol, Commissioner