

# SECTION TWO PLANNING PROCESS

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This section is presented in the following four subsections:

- 2.1 IFR Requirement for Planning Process,
- 2.2 Description of the Planning Process,
- 2.3 Coordination among Government Agencies, and
- 2.4 Integration with other Planning Efforts

## 2.1 IFR REQUIREMENT FOR PLANNING PROCESS

IFR §201.4(b) states that “[a]n effective planning process is essential in developing and maintaining a good plan.” The IFR goes on to include three specific requirements for the process of developing Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plans:

- **Documentation of the Planning Process** per **Requirement §201.4(c)(1)**: “[The State plan must include a] description of the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how other agencies participated.”
- **Coordination Among Agencies** per **Requirement §201.4(b)**: “The [State] mitigation planning process should include coordination with other State agencies, appropriate Federal agencies, interested groups,…”
- **Program Integration** per **Requirement §201.4(b)**: “[The State mitigation planning process should] be integrated to the extent possible with other ongoing State planning efforts as well as other FEMA mitigation programs and initiatives.”

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## 2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

### 2.2.1 ANALYSIS OF PLAN

For the purposes of the Plan Update, the newly established Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee (Refer to Section 2.3.2 below) led the Plan Update effort. The 2008 Plan indicated that the Plan would undergo annual evaluations and that VITEMA, and then established Hazard Mitigation and Evaluation Committee (HMEC) would initiate the evaluations by contacting agencies identified as responsible parties for the implementation of Mitigation Action Plans. No annual meetings has taken place between 2005 and 2011 to review and update the Plan as outlined in the Plan Maintenance Section of the 2005 Plan and 2008 Plan Update.

Justification as to reasons why there were no annual meetings was not made available at the time of this Plan Update; however, new personnel involved VITEMA have been engaged in this process. This is observed by a special meeting that was called by VITEMA in December, 2010 for the specific purpose of initiating the Plan Update process. The outcomes of this special meeting and refined during subsequent meetings of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee are reflected in the following summary of recommended changes for this 2011 Plan Update.

#### **Section One – Introduction and Adoption**

- Add a table or statement of what has changed in the update of Plan
- Ensure that Territorial assurances are in the adoption letter, particularly related to the Plan maintenance process

#### **Section Two – Planning Process**

- Explain Plan Update process, invitations, community meetings (include announcements; specify dates, place, and attendees of meetings).
- Summarize findings of meetings
- Update participants and key stakeholders that were involved in the planning process, meeting information, coordination among government agencies, and integration with other planning efforts.
- Description and assessment of the proposed Comprehensive Land and Water Use Plan should be removed. This Plan was discussed in the Capability Assessment, and consultant concerns were highlighted in a letter to DPNR (Appendix E in 2008 Plan)..

#### **Section Three - Capability Assessment**

- Update Virgin Islands policies, programs and capabilities related to pre- and post-disaster hazard mitigation, particular emphasis should be placed on new subdivision and zoning regulations that are being proposed at DPNR, as well as other planning initiatives.
- Update Mitigation Project Status, cite only recent project data that is available on FEMA's website
- Clarify Administration of Mitigation grant funds
- Update Federal Funding Sources, particularly Severe Repetitive Loss Program
- Update VI funding and responsibilities matrix as appropriate
- Update Regulatory Compliance Table update as appropriate
- Update Recommendations Table update as appropriate

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## **Section Four – Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**

- Explain how the HIRA was reviewed, and explain if process has changed
- Update Hazard Identification by explaining how it was reviewed, and explain why hazards were added or removed.
- Note the addition and integration of four recommended hazards: coastal erosion (integrated with coastal flooding), wildfire, drought and rain-induced landslides

### Coastal Flooding and Erosion

- Update hazard Identification and profile to include discussion on coastal erosions and effects in the USVI.

### Earthquake

- Update history based on information from the Puerto Rico Seismic Network
- Conduct research on probability studies for USVI, if any.

### Tsunami

- Update probability based on most current research conducted by USGS
- Update maps, if information would allow a probabilistic Tsunami map.

### Wildfire

- Update Hazard Identification and Profile
- Develop Hazard Susceptibility Map to provide an understanding of spatial extent of hazard
- Describe and/or list historic events to understand frequency of the hazard in the USVI
- Update Vulnerability Assessment
- Conduct loss estimates for future events.

### Drought

- Update Hazard Identification and Profile
- Develop Hazard Susceptibility Map to provide an understanding of spatial extent of hazard
- Describe and/or list historic events to understand frequency of the hazard in the USVI
- Update Vulnerability Assessment
- Conduct loss estimates for future events.

### Rain-Induced Landslide

- Update Hazard Identification and Profile
- Develop Hazard Susceptibility Map to provide an understanding of spatial extent of hazard
- Describe and/or list historic events to understand frequency of the hazard in the USVI
- Update Vulnerability Assessment
- Conduct loss estimates for future events.

### Inventory of Assets

- Describe if the 10 model building types have changed for this Plan Update.
- Update building and Critical Facility values based on rate of inflation, construction price index and compounded inflation factor.
- Update Population figures based on Annual Growth Rate, projected; as the 2010 census information for the USVI is not available.

### Vulnerability Assessment

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- Based the above, update population data and update social impacts table
- Based on the above, update exposure and vulnerability tables.
- Conduct spatial overlay and queries and update social impacts sections for wildfire, drought and rain-induced landslides
- Conduct spatial overlays and queries and update exposure and vulnerability tables for wildfire, drought and rain-induced landslides

### **Section Five - Mitigation Strategy**

- Review goals / objectives, explain how they were reviewed, and explain any changes to goals or objectives
- Review previous mitigation strategy and explain progress made on each action, if any
- When prioritizing Actions for the Plan Update, explain if STAPLEE review came before or after the actions were put into the mitigation strategy

### **Section Six - Plan Maintenance**

- Describe if any monitoring was actually done since last Plan Update
- Explain if the approach has been successful, and whether, it should be used in this Plan Update.
- Explain why a new approach was chosen
- Explain that there were no annual evaluations of the existing Plan;
- Explain changes to membership of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee, and how it differs from the Hazard Mitigation Monitoring and Evaluation Committee; justify or explain changes that occurred
- Explain the Public Notification Process that was used to initiate the plan update; explain when and how notices were issued
- Describe Annual Meetings and Reports
- Explain or describe process for monitoring project closeouts, add to whom quarterly reports are sent
- Describe findings of 3-year evaluations and updates to the plan;
  - In the update, add a schedule for evaluation activities, explain responsible parties
  - In the update, provide a schedule showing how the next update process will be implemented
- Describe the Steering Committee<sup>1</sup>; explain who is on this committee, if it is an effective approach, and if the approach will continue to be used or will be modified

The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee reviewed all of the above listed comments with the CIPA consultant team. Each section of the Plan was reviewed utilizing a completed FEMA crosswalk.

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<sup>1</sup> In Plan Update, referred to as the Hazard Mitigation Monitoring and Evaluation Committee.

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## 2.2.2 PLAN UPDATE

As noted, the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) provides a strong incentive for the development of a Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plan. The planning process began in 2004 and led to adoption of the Virgin Islands Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan by the Governor and approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region II on April 28, 2005.

The law stipulates that the Plan will be updated and re-submitted to FEMA for re-approval every three (3) years, as required by law. The law also allows the state to update the Plan at other times. VITEMA has chosen to update its Plan in accordance to the standard three year cycle.

The process used to update this Plan in accordance with the IFR requirement was formally initiated by VITEMA during a special meeting in November, 2007, and again December 2010. The work undertaken consisted of updating all sections of the 2008 Plan Update. This was done by using the best available data and methodologies for a target of April 2011 for FEMA approval.

The process of planning and review of the Plan Update is detailed in this section. The method utilized includes the appraisal and expansion of the 2008 Plan. In accomplishing the objective of the Plan Update, several areas of importance were addressed. The following summary identifies the process used to revise and update each section of the Plan.

- **Introduction:** The introduction presents a summary of the purpose of the Plan Update. It also acknowledges the primary contributors to the Plan Update. It provides information as to the changes made from the 2008 Plan Update. It also includes a list of acronyms.
- **Section One – Adoption:** This section of the Plan Update includes an adoption letter for signature by the Governor of the US Virgin Islands which includes agreement with the Plan Update and assurances that the Plan Update will be implemented by the various agencies of the government.
- **Section Two – Planning Process:** This section has been updated to reflect the participants involved in this Plan Update. The planning process for the Plan Update was similar to that employed for the 2005 and 2008 Plan Update. Meetings of the newly formed committees, Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee and the island specific Hazard Mitigation Committees, are documented as well as other key stakeholders involved.
- **Section Three – Capability Assessment:** The assessment of the capability of the US Virgin Islands Government, all programs and policies relating to hazard mitigation were reviewed. Recommendations in regard to an analysis of mitigation actions were updated. Progress since the adoption of the 2008 Plan Update has been noted. Physical and development planning remain the most crucial area of concern. Fiscal uncertainty, adequate staffing and the availability of necessary resources remain as hindrances to the full implementation of hazard mitigation in the Territory, especially in VITEMA. Assistance through federal funding sources and the territorial responsibilities were updated.
- **Section Four – Risk Assessment:** The Plan Update utilizes data furnished by the Office of the Lieutenant Governor to VITEMA in 2005. It has been updated in this Plan Update to determine and the inventory of structures and their present replacement cost. The inventory developed is more

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reliable than that previously available as it utilized compounded inflation rates, to the most current year 2010. The Plan Update reflects general increase in the number of buildings and increase in overall total value since the 2008 Plan Update. Using this data, an island specific vulnerability assessment was updated for each of the identified hazards. New hazards were identified, profiled and assessed. These hazards included, in addition to, hurricane winds, riverine flooding, coastal flooding, earthquake and tsunami, the new hazards of wildfire, drought and rain-induced landslide. It is necessary to note that the profile for coastal flooding has been updated to include coastal erosion.

- **Section Five – Mitigation Strategy:** This section of the Plan Update presents the goals, objectives and mitigation actions necessary to implement the Territorial Hazard Mitigation Strategy. The goals and objectives in the 2011 Plan Update have not changed from those highlighted in the 2008 Plan; however, The Island Hazard Mitigation Committees approved postponing any mitigation actions associated with Goal 2 : Integrate Hazard Mitigation and Sustainable Development principles into ongoing Government operations and long term Planning because of human resources and operational budget constraints at VITEMA, DPNR and DPW. The strategies contained in the 2008 Plan Update were reviewed and mitigation actions undertaken since the 2008 Plan Update was formally approved. Viable strategies were prioritized according to urgency and evaluated according to economic and social impact. This ranking is detailed in Appendix L (STAPLEE). A comparison between the mitigation actions contained in the 2008 Plan and this Plan Update revealed a dramatic decrease in number of programmatic actions, again reflected limited capacity at VITEMA, especially for those actions that require extensive interagency coordination. The strategies developed by the various hazard mitigation committees show a congruency with the Risk Assessment.
- **Section Six – Plan Maintenance:** The maintenance process is detailed in this section of the Plan Update. It explains the changes made to maintenance and implementation of mitigation strategies when compared to those in the 2008 Plan. . Even though the membership of the committees has changed, the present membership demonstrates a high degree of dedication and commitment to implement and accomplish a more realistic hazard mitigation strategy.
- **Section Seven – Bibliography:** The bibliography of the Plan Update provides an inventory of resource material, sources of pertinent information and new references that were used in the Plan Update.

The Plan Update represents the efforts and contributions of several governmental agencies and other stakeholders. The 2008 Plan Update was reviewed and analyzed resulting in pertinent modifications. With the incorporation of information concerning newly identified hazards, the territory's profile and understanding of natural hazards is more complete. Mitigation strategies were developed and prioritized to address present day concerns, especially flooding and landslides. The 2008 Plan along with the recent data formed the foundation for this Plan Update. The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee and the island specific Hazard Mitigation Committees have been newly formulated and have expressed a commitment to implementing an effective hazard mitigation program in the USVI, particularly those priority mitigation actions included in this Plan Update.

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## 2.2.3 PLANNING TEAM

During the development of the 2011 Plan Update, VITEMA established a Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee with the charge of the Plan Update. However, for this Plan Update, this new committee was comprised only of VITEMA staff members. Similar to the previous plan update, this Committee had oversight of the Plan Update consultancy, and consequently remained intact for the plan maintenance and monitoring process outlined in Section 6.0 of this Plan. This Committee is responsible for the implementation of actions identified in the Plan Update. FEMA, which played an advisory role on the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee, emphasized the importance of monitoring and evaluation, and the importance of capturing historic information for the approval of hazard mitigation projects, especially flood drainage construction projects.

The Virgin Islands Territorial Hazard Mitigation Officer, Ms. Jonetta Darden, has organized the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee, and will chair the Committee. The members of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee are noted below in Table 2.1.

**TABLE 2.1 Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee**

Name	Agency/ Department
Jonetta Darden**	VITEMA
Clement Magras	VITEMA
Joanne White	VITEMA
Malinda Vigilant	VITEMA

\*\*Chairperson

VITEMA feels that the development of an effective state-level Hazard Mitigation Plan requires inclusion in the planning process of representatives from a wide-range of public, private, and non-profit sectors. Clear lines of communication with the active participants and the general public are necessary. For the 2011 Plan Update, VITEMA also re-established three Committees: the St. Thomas Mitigation Committee (covering St. Thomas and Water Island), the St. John Mitigation Committee and the St. Croix Mitigation Committee.

The purpose of the Hazard Mitigation Committees was three-fold:

- (1) to provide oversight to the VITEMA contractor during the Plan Update;
- (2) to contribute to the development of a revised mitigation strategy; and
- (3) to identify and prioritize mitigation actions that were specific to each island.

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The members of each Island Hazard Mitigation Committee members are outlined in the tables below:

**TABLE 2.2 Hazard Mitigation Committee, St. Thomas**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Contact No.</u>	<u>E-mail Address</u>
Nicole Turner	<b>Department of Public Works</b> 8224 Sub Base St. Thomas, VI 00802	Territorial District Engineer	776-4844 715-8110 - Fax	<a href="mailto:nicole.turner@dpw.vi.gov">nicole.turner@dpw.vi.gov</a>
Bliss Bully	<b>VI WAPA</b> P.O. Box 1450 St. Thomas, VI 00804-1450	Grant Manager	774-3552 ext. 2106 643-5282 776-7607 - Fax	<a href="mailto:bliss.bully@viwapa.vi">bliss.bully@viwapa.vi</a>
Alcenta DeWindt	<b>Dept. of Parks &amp; Recreation</b> 8201 Sub Base, Suite 206 St. Thomas, VI 00802	Director, Financial Mgmt	774-0255 / 998-3602 774-4600 - Fax	<a href="mailto:allievil978@yahoo.com">allievil978@yahoo.com</a> / <a href="mailto:alvi55@hotmail.com">alvi55@hotmail.com</a>
Darryl George	<b>Virgin Islands Fire Service</b> #15 Crown Bay Fill St. Thomas, VI 00802	Assistant Director	774-7610 / 226-1163 774-4630 - Fax	<a href="mailto:firemouse1@msn.com">firemouse1@msn.com</a> / <a href="mailto:darryl.george@vifs.vi">darryl.george@vifs.vi</a>
Vance Pinney	<b>Department of Education</b> 1834 Kongens Gade St. Thomas, VI 00802	Director of Facilities	201-0604 774-8168 - Fax	<a href="mailto:vpinney@doe.vi">vpinney@doe.vi</a> / <a href="mailto:vepinney@hotmail.com">vepinney@hotmail.com</a>
Stacy George	<b>Department of Education</b> 1834 Kongens Gade St. Thomas, VI 00802	Project Manager	774-0100 ext 8068	<a href="mailto:smgeorge@doe.vi">smgeorge@doe.vi</a>
Moleto A. Smith, Jr.	<b>Department of Human Services</b> Kund Hanson Complex, Bldg. A 1303 Hospital Ground St. Thomas, VI 00802	Deputy Commissioner of Planning & Evaluation	774-0930 ext. 4116 690-7538 777-1028 - Fax	<a href="mailto:masmith@dhs.gov.vi">masmith@dhs.gov.vi</a> / <a href="mailto:moletosmith@yahoo.com">moletosmith@yahoo.com</a>
Byron A. Todman	<b>VI Port Authority</b> P.O. Box 301707 St. Thomas, VI 00803-1707	Senior Engineer	774-1629 ext. 6630 776-3491 - Fax	<a href="mailto:btodman@viport.com">btodman@viport.com</a> / <a href="mailto:btodman@msn.com">btodman@msn.com</a>
Halvor E. Hart, III	<b>Department of Property &amp; Procurement</b> Sub Base, Bldg. 1, 3rd Floor St. Thomas, VI 00802	Deputy Commissioner	774-0828 / 626-2760 777-8362 - Fax	<a href="mailto:hehart@pnpvi.org">hehart@pnpvi.org</a> / <a href="mailto:halvorhart@gmail.com">halvorhart@gmail.com</a>
Alexander Williams	<b>Department of Health - EMS</b> 9048 Sugar Estate St. Thomas, VI 00802	EMS District Coordinator	776-8311 ext. 2219 690-9860 774-7037 - Fax	<a href="mailto:ginq2095@yahoo.com">ginq2095@yahoo.com</a>

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**TABLE 2.4 Hazard Mitigation Committee, St. Croix**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Contact No.</u>	<u>E-mail Address</u>
Harold Brown	<b>Governor Juan F. Luis Hospital &amp; Medical Center</b> 4007 Estate Diamond Ruby St. Croix, VI 00820-4421	Director of Hospital Plant Maintenance	778-6311 ext. 2730 <b>772-7430 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:hbrown@jflusvi.org">hbrown@jflusvi.org</a>
Amos King	<b>Tropical Shipping</b> P.O. Box 3003 - Kings Hill St. Croix, VI 00851	Operations Manager	778-8767 / 690-0397 <b>778-9002 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:aking@tropical.com">aking@tropical.com</a>
Ben Mitchell	<b>Hovenssa</b> #1 Estate Hope - C'sted St. Croix, VI 00820	Manager of Health & Safety	692-7990 / 643-7339 <b>692-3321 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:bmitchell@hovensa.com">bmitchell@hovensa.com</a> <a href="mailto:r2rcafe@hotmail.com">/ r2rcafe@hotmail.com</a>
Clarice Blake	<b>American Red Cross of the Virgin Islands</b> 6035 Castle Coakley - C'sted St. Croix, VI 00820	Territorial Disaster Chair	778-5104 / 690-1409 <b>778-5115 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:blakec@usvi-redcross.org">blakec@usvi-redcross.org</a> <a href="mailto:youngatheartvi@yahoo.com">youngatheartvi@yahoo.com</a>
Claude Steele	<b>University of the Virgin Islands</b> RR 1 Box 10,000 - Kings Hill St. Croix, VI 00850-9781	Campus Executive Administrator	692-4001 / 226-5528 <b>692-4005 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:csteele@uvi.edu">csteele@uvi.edu</a>
Arthur Burton	<b>VI WAPA</b> P.O. Box 1009 - Richmond St. Croix, VI 00821-1009	Electrical Engineer II	773-2250 ext. 3106 626-4598 <b>773-0800 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:arthur.burton@viwapa.vi">arthur.burton@viwapa.vi</a> <a href="mailto:burton.arthur@gmail.com">/ burton.arthur@gmail.com</a>
Emanuel Liburd	<b>DPNR</b> 45 Mars Hill - Fredericksted St. Croix, VI 00840	Environmental Engineer	773-1082 ext. 2397 642-9064 <b>692-9794 / 773-9310* Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:foualfa@yahoo.com">foualfa@yahoo.com</a> / <a href="mailto:emanuel.liburd@dpnr.gov.vi">emanuel.liburd@dpnr.gov.vi</a>
Robert Burke	<b>Department of Education</b> Office of Plant Operations & Maintenance #2133 Hopsital Street - C'sted St. Croix, VI 00820-4665	Plant Facilities Coordinator	718-4056 / 642-0558 <b>718-6158 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:rburke@stx.k12.vi">rburke@stx.k12.vi</a>
Dennis Vanterpool	<b>VI Police Department</b> 45 Mars Hill - Federicksted St. Croix, VI 00840	Sergeant	778-2211 / 690-2436 <b>772-3566 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:dvanterpool2@hotmail.com">dvanterpool2@hotmail.com</a>
Steve Brow	<b>VI Fire Service</b> 6002 Estate Diamond, Suite 7 St. Croix, VI 00820	St. Croix Chief	773-8050 / 226-1085 <b>773-8032 / 778-8346 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:sbrow.fire@yahoo.com">sbrow.fire@yahoo.com</a>
David Sweeney	<b>Department of Health - EMS</b> Charles Harwood Complex #3500 Estate Richmond St. Croix, VI 00820	EMS Coordinator	718-1311 ext. 3052 690-6213 <b>718-8309 - Fax</b>	<a href="mailto:dasweeney@gmail.com">dasweeney@gmail.com</a> / <a href="mailto:david.sweeney@usvi-doh.org">david.sweeney@usvi-doh.org</a>

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**TABLE 2.3 Hazard Mitigation Committee, St. John**

Name	Agency	Position	Contact No.	E-mail Address
Rupert Browne	Caneel Bay Hotel P.O. Box 720 St. John, VI 00831	Security Director	776-6111 / 514-4154 693-8280 - Fax	<a href="mailto:rbrowne@rosewoodhotels.com">rbrowne@rosewoodhotels.com</a>
Dustin Prudhomme	Westin Resort & Villas St. John 300a Chocolate Hole St. John, VI 00830	Director of Security	693-8000 / 344-3825 693-8888 - Fax	<a href="mailto:dustin.prudhomme@westin.com">dustin.prudhomme@westin.com</a> / <a href="mailto:dustin.prudhomme@starwoodhotels.com">dustin.prudhomme@starwoodhotels.com</a>
Morvel Vanterpool	Schneider Regional Medical Ctr Financial Department P.O. Box 8312 St. John, VI 00831	Hospital Account Financial Manager	693-8900 ext. 6612 227-5768 693-9506 - Fax	<a href="mailto:mbrooks@rlshospital.org">mbrooks@rlshospital.org</a> / <a href="mailto:icann05@hotmail.com">icann05@hotmail.com</a>
Ira Wade	Department of Public Works 6506 Susannberg St. John, VI 00830	Deputy Commissioner	776-6346 / 690-7428 693-8001 - Fax	<a href="mailto:lotsmae@pennswoods.net">lotsmae@pennswoods.net</a>
Ronnie Jones	Department of Health P.O. Box 8312 St. John, VI 00831	Program Administrator	776-6400 / 514-4798 779-4195 - Fax	<a href="mailto:ronnie.jones@usvi.doh.org">ronnie.jones@usvi.doh.org</a> / <a href="mailto:ronnie.jones2012@gmail.com">ronnie.jones2012@gmail.com</a>
Leona Smith	Government House P.O. Box 488 St. John, VI 00831	St. John Administrator	776-6484 776-6992 - Fax	<a href="mailto:leonasmith69@hotmail.com">leonasmith69@hotmail.com</a>

## 2.2.4 MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee and Islands Hazard Mitigation Committees met on eight (8) separate occasions for the Plan Update. The purpose and outcomes of the meetings are included in the matrix provided in Sections 2.2.3.1 and 2.2.3.2.

### 2.2.4.1 Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee Meetings

The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee met on six (6) separate occasions while developing the 2011 Plan Update.

**TABLE 2.5 Hazard Mitigation Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Meetings**

#	Date/Place	Attendance	Purpose/Outcomes
1	1/11/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, CIPA	Provided overview of planning process related to the update of the Territory's Hazard Mitigation Plan according to DMA 2000  Consultant discussed key points: timing for plan update, mitigation strategy simplification based on realistic capabilities, and hazards of concern.
2	1/13/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, DHS-FEMA, CIPA	Plan Update discussed with FEMA.  Planning process and scheduled public workshop meetings; mitigation strategy updates

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#	Date/Place	Attendance	Purpose/Outcomes
			needed for goals, objectives and actions; plan maintenance was deemed to be non-existent and needs major improvement by VITEMA.
3	1/18/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, DHS-FEMA, CIPA, UVI	<p>University Staff were invited to express concerns about hazards and risk assessment; clarification was sought on existing FEMA grant related to the update of exposure databases in the Territory as per requirements for HAZUS software application.</p> <p>Contract has not been initiated; therefore, exposure database is not available for use in the update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan.</p>
4	2/14/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, DHS-FEMA, CIPA, UVI	<p>Mitigation Projects that have been identified during the previous disasters. FEMA introduced the need for VITEMA to collect and keep track of damage history. It was explained that this was required for the formal Benefit Cost Analysis. Technical assistance is required for the Territorial government to comply with program requirements.</p>
5	3/18/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, CIPA	<p>Discussed the general timing for Plan Submittal and procedure for submittal of drafts section to FEMA CAD. Submittal of Drafts to VITEMA and FEMA will be in digital format.</p> <p>Several areas of concerns were highlighted by VITEMA. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of Concern – update hazard profile on Tsunami</li> <li>• Area of Concern - update hazard profile on wildfire to include months of most activity</li> </ul> <p>Schedule for final hazard mitigation committee meeting was established for 3/28/2011. The meeting will focus on Findings of HIRA and Ranking of mitigation strategies.</p>
6	3/24/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, CIPA	<p>Discussed finding of the HIRA and outcome of mapping that was performed for newly identified hazards: drought, wildfire, and rain-induced landslides.</p> <p>Hazard models, specifically GIS factor models, were discussed with VITEMA. The consultant noted that the mapping conducted for drought, wildfire and rain-induced landslide, must be considered preliminary, as per data availability, especially data concerning historical events and losses.</p>

Sign-in sheets from these workshops are available in Appendix B of this Plan.

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## 2.2.4.2 Hazard Mitigation Committee Meetings

In this Plan Update, VITEMA utilized its state of the art teleconference facility at the VITEMA headquarters building in St. Thomas. Each of the Island Hazard Mitigation Committees was teleconferenced in to the meeting on two (2) separate occasions to contribute to the current update of the Plan (2011):

**TABLE 2.6 Hazard Mitigation Committee Meetings**

#	Date/Place	Attendance	Purpose/Outcomes
1	2/14/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, Hazard Mitigation Committees (St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John), CIPA and FEMA	Provided overview of planning process related to the update of the Territory's Hazard Mitigation Plan according to DMA 2000.  Consultant discussed key points taken from community meetings, especially community concerns related to hazard mitigation, emergency management and infrastructure.
2	3/30/2011 VITEMA Headquarters	VITEMA Mitigation Staff, Hazard Mitigation Committees (St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John), CIPA and FEMA	Review and evaluation of new island specific mitigation actions.  Outcomes included: an agreement on new mitigation actions, an evaluation and prioritization of hazard mitigation actions

Sign-in sheets from these workshops are available in Appendix B of this Plan.

## 2.2.3.3 Public Involvement and Outreach

### 2.2.4.3.1 Public Notification

For the Plan Update, VITEMA's public notification campaign was led by Ms. Christina Lett, VITEMA Public Relations Officer. The public was notified through the media and press releases. Specific information about the project, including mitigation action descriptions were also disseminated to the public through the three Island Hazard Mitigation Committees.

Notification of the VITEMA community meetings were published in the major newspapers (VI Daily News and St. Croix Avis). Committee members were emailed and kept posted of project progress, including the completion of major milestones. Draft sections of the plan were mailed to the committee members for review and comment.

Public Notices were also prepared following the preparation of the draft Plan encouraging the public to review and comment on the document which was made available by VITEMA on its website. See Appendix B for documentation of public notification and examples of press releases used in the Plan Update process.

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### 2.2.4.3.2 Public Workshops

For the Plan Update, a total of three (3) public information workshops were held in the Territory. These workshops were held on St. John on February 02, 2011, St. Croix on February 03, 2011 and on St. Thomas on February 04, 2011. Sign-in sheets from these workshops are available in Appendix A of this Plan. The public informational workshops were held at 6:30 pm.

For this Plan Update, only one (1) public workshop was held on each island. This differed from the Plan Update in 2008, in which two public informational meetings were held: first meeting was to identify hazards and list concerns and the second meeting was to review mitigation strategy.

One (1) public informational meeting was deemed to be sufficient as it provided the public with an overview of the planning process and an overview of the DMA 2000 criteria. Similar to the meetings held during the last Plan Update (2008), the consultant team provides a brief PowerPoint presentation explaining the Plan Update Approach. Then each workshop was open to participants to express any and all concerns regarding the planning process, natural hazards and hazard mitigation. Emphasis was placed on recent experiences with natural hazards, especially two flooding events in late 2010.

These meetings, as in the previous Plan Update, proved to be valuable and provided insight into the desires and concerns of the community related to hazard mitigation actions. The discussions and recommendations of the community meeting provided insight for the identification of Hazard Mitigation Actions included in this Plan Update. A “Cardstorming” session was held, where participants were encouraged to list three personal concerns related to hazard mitigation. This facilitated an interactive consensus-building exercise that provided important feedback from individuals who have been directly affected by recent disasters.

These public information workshops allowed all participants the opportunity to express their issues, concerns and recommendations with regard to disaster recovery, natural hazards and reoccurring damages in their communities. This met the criteria of providing the public an opportunity to comment during drafting.

During the meeting, VITEMA agreed to make the draft Plan available to the public before final approval. This will be done by email notification and via a global press release which will indicate its location on the World Wide Web via a URL. Again, this is consistent that states that public input does not require formal hearing and can be harvested in numerous ways including website participation.

### ***St. Thomas Public Information Workshop***

The St. Thomas Public Information Workshop was held at the Charlotte Amalie High School on February 04, 2011. There were ten (10) participants in the workshop, including residents, representatives of community associations and governmental representatives on the St. Thomas Mitigation Committee. Following are specific concerns identified by participants during this community workshop:

#### **Infrastructure**

- An alternate route from West end of St. Thomas (Bordeaux) should be considered.

#### **Emergency Management**

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- Review emergency response sites to ensure that the proper tele-communication infrastructure is in place.
- Design and construct a storage facility for emergency response supplies.
- Develop a tsunami plan for highly susceptible coastal areas, such as Frenchtown.
- Perform a study to determine the impact of coastal flooding on high density coastal areas
- Design and construct a pet shelter

### **Administrative**

- Implement a gut and drainage cleaning program so that guts and drainage infrastructure can be cleaned periodically, especially prior to the advent of hurricane season.
- Perform an inventory of structures in Downtown Charlotte Amalie that are vulnerable to seismic hazards, particularly earthquake.

### **Guts and Stormwater Management**

- Drainage infrastructure needed to east of Charlotte Amalie High School to alleviate flooding by Department of Education Skill Center (north of Lockhart Elementary School)
- Drainage and/or retaining wall infrastructure needed at Ivanna Eudora Kean High School to alleviate flooding of classrooms (i.e. seepage of water from walls during heavy rain events)
- Improve the capacity of the storm water drainage system on Brookman Road to alleviate localized flooding.
- Improve the capacity of, and clean, the storm water drainage system on lower Garden Street (main street).
- Improve the capacity of the storm the water drainage system by Yvonne Bowsky Elementary School (Peace Corp) to alleviate localized flooding.
- Improve the capacity of the storm water drainage capacity between Metro Motors and Gomez to alleviate localized flooding.
- Improve the capacity, and clean, the storm water drainage system in Frydenhoj (next to and across from ball field) to alleviate localized flooding and damage of property.
- Improve the capacity of the storm water drainage infrastructure in Bournefield north through Kirwin Terrace Public Housing Units.
- Improve the capacity of the storm water drainage infrastructure on Bolongo Bay Road from intersection hill going up to Sea view Home to Hotel.
- Clean guts in west Caret Bay to facilitate the flow of storm water.

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- Implement new, and improve the capacity of, existing storm water drainage infrastructure systems on highway from Pueblo to Addelita Cancryn School (sub base).
- Implement new, and improve the capacity of, existing storm water drainage infrastructure system from Crown Bay Port Facility to Pueblo (sub base).
- Implement drainage improvements to resolve the flooding problems at Tutu Fire Station
- Improve the capacity of the stormwater drainage Infrastructure on Rosendahl Road.

### **Landslide & Soil Erosion**

- Removal of loose rocks and boulders from steep cut slopes along hillside roads (especially on Northside) to minimize the potential for landslides following intense rainfall events.
- Implement stormwater drainage infrastructure on Hull Bay Road between Drake Seat and St. Peter to alleviate soil erosion and “wash outs” and flooding in lower lying areas on the road.
- Implement stabilization program on Crown Mountain Road to mitigation against rock falls and slippage.

### **Critical Facility**

- Relocate Addelita Cancryn School from its current location as it is susceptible to damage from an earthquake and coastal flood events.
- Relocate Veteran’s Drive Fire Station from its current location as it is susceptible to damage from multiple hazards (flooding, hurricane, earthquake/tsunami).
- Design and construct a new Fire Station Facility on recently acquired land
- Reinstate the storm water catchment system to alleviate costs of water in times of drought

### **Earthquake**

- Reinforce/ and retrofit the Water and Power Authority’s main power plant for seismic hazards. It is especially prone to Tsunami hazards.

### **Electrical Outage**

- Implement a long term program for the placement of electrical feeders underground to mitigate damages from hurricanes
- Implement a tree trimming program to reduce debris and disruption of power

### ***St. Croix Public Information Workshop***

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The St. Croix Public Workshop was conducted at Department of Education Curriculum Center on February 03, 2011. There were thirteen (13) participants in the workshop, including residents, representatives of community associations and governmental representatives on the St. Croix Mitigation Committee. The outcomes from this community workshop include the following specific concerns identified by participants:

### **Emergency Management**

- Develop a tsunami plan for highly susceptible coastal areas, especially populated towns.

### **Infrastructure**

- Reinstate the storm water catchment system to alleviate costs of water in times of drought.

### **Guts and Storm water Management**

- Implement a drainage cleaning maintenance program for “guts. Guts need to be periodically cleaned and maintained, especially prior to the advent of hurricane season.
- Improve the capacity of the storm water drainage system to alleviate localized flooding in the following areas:
  - Vicinity of Paul E. Joseph
  - the Grove at La Raine
  - Frederiksted Lagoon Area
  - Spring Gut from the By-pass to Gallows Bay
  - Prince Street (Christiansted).
  - King Cross Street (Christiansted)
  - Fort Federick Beach
  - East Golden Rock on Rt. 75 (North Shore Road)
  - La Grange Gut and associated drainage systems
- Implement retention ponds/basins to relieve downstream flooding in low-lying areas, particularly in Frederiksted
- Implement drainage improvements to resolve the flooding problems at Bureau of Corrections
- Implement drainage improvements to resolve the flooding problems at Alfredo Andrews School (i.e. low lying area)
- Implement drainage improvements to resolve the flooding problems at Pearl B. Larsen School
- Implement drainage improvements to resolve the flooding problems at Cheese Burgers in Paradise Area
- Access damages to and repair the Creque Dam

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### Landslide and Soil Erosion

- Implement slope stabilization on La Grange Road

### Earthquake

- Reinforce/ and retrofit the Water and Power Authority's main power plant (Richmond) for seismic hazards. It is especially prone to Tsunami hazards.

### Administrative

- Identify all storm water drainage infrastructure that receive run-off water from the Christiansted By-Pass to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place to handle increase water flow.
- Implement a program to address and acquire repetitive loss residential structures flooding in several St. Croix communities including Williams Delight, Carlton Frangie Panie, Enfield Green, Mon Bijou.
- Implement a mitigation task force for natural disasters that will include the following agencies: Labor Department, Public Work Department, Agriculture Department, Waste Management Authority and DPNR.
- Implement a storm water drainage plan that identifies all existing storm water drainage infrastructure, recommends improvement for existing infrastructure and identifies areas where new infrastructure is needed to reduce flooding problems. The watersheds should be used as the planning unit. Critical area include: Creque dam, La Grange, prosperity, Bethlehem and Salt River.

### Electrical Outage

- Implement a tree trimming program to reduce debris and disruption of power

### ***St. John Public Information Workshop***

The St. John community workshop was conducted at the Julius Sprauve School on February 02, 2011. There were fourteen (14) participants in the workshop, including residents, representatives of community associations, press and governmental representatives on the St. John Hazard Mitigation Committee. Following are specific concerns identified by participants during this public information workshop:

### Administrative

- Conduct hydrological study of all major watersheds on the island to improve and determine the proper types of storm water drainage infrastructure that is required to alleviate flooding in low lying areas. An area of particular concern is Coral Bay.

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- Implement a gut and drainage cleaning program so that guts and drainage infrastructure can be cleaned periodically, especially prior to the advent of hurricane season.
- Implement hazard mitigation concepts and concerns in development planning review, especially as it relates to site orientation and drainage infrastructure.
- Implement planning restrictions for developments to ensure that proper roads and drainage infrastructure are put in place during the construction of residential homes.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive development plan for Coral Bay that will be based on the watershed and get it adopted by the Virgin Islands Government.
- Implement more public workshops as part of VITEMA's ongoing community outreach efforts and involve DPNR so that general planning and development concerns are understood and incorporated into mitigation projects and development plans.

### **Infrastructure**

- An alternate route from Cruz Bay to Coral Bay should be considered.
- Widen centerline road and other roads and implement proper slope stabilization infrastructure.

### **Guts/Storm water Management/Flooding**

- Implement new, and improve the capacity of, existing storm water drainage infrastructure on Centerline Road.
- Implement new, and improve the capacity of, existing storm water drainage infrastructure to alleviate localized flooding at the Guy Benjamin School in Coral Bay.
- Improve storm water drainage system at Guinea (Westin) Gut
- Implement drainage improvements to resolve the flooding problems at the WAPA building and treatment plant (Enighed Gut)
- Improve storm water system on Route 105 (Enighed Pond)
- Implement appropriate storm water drainage infrastructure on Bordeaux Mt. Road (Rt. 10) to alleviate soil erosion and "wash outs" and flooding of houses on Rt. 108
- Implement appropriate storm water drainage infrastructure in Upper Carolina to alleviate localized flooding
- Improve storm water drainage infrastructure system on Route 102 and Route 104 by the Tennis Court

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### Coastal Flooding

- Conduct study that assesses the impact of storm surge, tsunami and climate change on the built environment in coastal areas.

## 2.3 COORDINATION AMONG GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

For a State Hazard Mitigation Plan to become an effective tool in implementing hazard mitigation it cannot remain the sole province of VITEMA. Coordination among government agencies that have a role in implementing hazard mitigation is essential. Coordination with government agencies was very similar to the process utilized during the 2008 Plan development. There were some changes in this process during this Plan Update; these include:

- Establishment of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee. This committee was formed for the specific intent of not only the Plan Update but also its implementation. Unlike the Hazard Mitigation Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (HMMEC), which included multi-agency participation, the Steering Committee included members only from VITEMA. FEMA played an advisory role in the Steering Committee in that it emphasized the importance of addressing certain items in the Plan Update, particularly the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and in the update of the Territory's Mitigation Strategy.
- Different Participants from Government Agencies. There was a marked reduction of Federal and Territory agencies that played a role in this Plan Update. During this Plan Update, many participants that were included on committees were familiar with the Hazard mitigation planning process. However, there were new members that required more information so as to arrive at a basic understanding of emergency management and hazard mitigation. As these person gain a better understanding of FEMA programs, processes and terminology, the Plan Update process in the future will become more efficient.
- Identification of Key Stakeholders. Key stakeholders such as the Office of the Governor, Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), and Department of Public Works (DPW) were identified during the planning process. These key agencies participated in the Hazard Mitigation Committee Meetings and/or Public Informational Workshops. These agencies also made staff available for the staff update, namely DPW and DPNR.

### 2.3.1 FACILITATING INTERAGENCY COORDINATION

There were numerous ways in which VITEMA encouraged coordination among US Virgin Island departments, agencies and authorities. The most important way that VITEMA encouraged coordination was to invite representatives of the relevant agencies to participate in the Hazard Mitigation Committees. The list of Public Sector participation in the Committees, presented in Section 2.3.2, reflects the success that VITEMA had in involving a broad range of Territorial and Federal agencies in the mitigation planning process from the very beginning.

Public Sector participants were encouraged to discuss the planning process with other staff in their respective departments. This brought their collective insight and enabled identification of potential mitigation projects that could be brought back to subsequent Committee meetings. By interfacing with representatives of other VI departments within the setting of the Hazard Mitigation Committee meetings, participants gained an understanding of the respective roles of many agencies and departments. All of the

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agencies that participated in the Hazard Mitigation Committees meetings had a stake and a vote in identifying and prioritizing new hazard mitigation actions at the Territorial-level as well as for each major Island.

### 2.3.2 PARTICIPANTS

These workshops and meetings were facilitated by VITEMA and its consultants. A number of individuals from private and public sector played key roles in preparing the Plan Update. On a territory-wide basis, the three Committees reflected the participation from the following Federal and Territorial agencies, businesses, institutions, associations, and organizations:

#### Public Sector

- Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA)
- Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR),
- Department of Housing, Parks and Recreation (HPR)
- VI Port Authority
- VI Property and Procurement
- VI Fire Service
- VI Police Department
- VI Department of Education
- Emergency Management Services (EMS)
- VI Department of Human Services
- Governor's Office
- Governor Juan Luis Hospital and Medical Center
- VI Water and Power Authority

#### Private Sector

- HOVENSA
- Westin Resort
- Tropical Shipping
- Caneel Bay Hotel

#### Organizations

- University of the Virgin Islands
- The American Red Cross

#### Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region II

FEMA Region II, through its Caribbean Area Office, San Juan, Puerto Rico participated in the Plan Update planning process. FEMA CAD's representative in the Virgin Islands, Mr. Leonard Gumbs, participated in an advisory capacity in the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee.

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## Consultants

The consultant for the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update was the Council for Information and Planning Alternatives, Inc. (CIPA). The consultant assisted in the following ways:

- Developing an appropriate planning process for the Plan Update;
- Providing technical support in performing the risk assessments for the Plan Update;
- Developing written materials for meetings and web postings;
- Facilitating VITEMA meetings and workshops and addressed Plan elements;
- Assembling information for inclusion in the Plan Update.

### 2.3.3 STAKEHOLDERS

VITEMA has undertaken a number of steps to encourage the widest range of stakeholder involvement from the onset of the Plan Update process. The Update of the US Virgin Islands Territorial Hazard Mitigation Plan was a collaborative effort resulting from dedicated efforts of a number US Virgin Islands agencies, departments, and authorities, in addition to the vital involvement of the public and private sectors.

- 1) Public notices were provided to the print and voice media, encouraging the general public and special interest groups to participate in the Plan Update process (Appendix C).
- 2) Representatives of government agencies were identified as key stakeholders and were invited to be members of the three Island Hazard Mitigation Committees and/or participate in public workshops. The term "Stakeholders" as used in the rest of this Plan Update includes the following:

- Office of the Governor.
- Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA)
- VI Office of Management & Budget (OMB)
- Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR),
- Department of Public Works (DPW)

#### 2.3.3.1 Outreach to Virgin Island Agencies

In addition to involvement on the hazard mitigation committees, contacts were made with the important government agencies for the Plan Update in order to solicit their involvement in the review of key elements of the Plan. The meetings were held with the following agencies:

##### The Department of Public Works (DPW)

DPW has lead responsibility for the design, construction and maintenance of drainage infrastructure and public roads throughout the Islands;

##### The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR)

DPNR is responsible for administration of the Natural Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). It is also responsible for the following activities that have the potential to reduce the future vulnerability of the US Virgin Islands:

- Reviewing subdivision plans and development proposals
- Developing long-range land use plans and policies for the US Virgin Islands

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- Approving building permits
- Conducting building inspections
- Protecting natural resources

Meetings were held with each of the above referenced agencies to review existing plans, program and policies. Discussions focused around the development of appropriate hazard mitigation actions that should be included in this Plan Update.

Further to these discussions, a series of one-on-one interviews were held with mid-level representatives of key US Virgin Islands agencies. Their goal was twofold: to obtain legislation, regulations, plans, and policies relevant to hazard mitigation; and, to jointly discuss opportunities to encourage hazard mitigation in the agencies day-to-day, and strategic, long-term planning activities.

These meetings and discussions proved beneficial for improving coordination among these key agencies with a major role in implementing hazard mitigation.

### 2.3.3.2 Contributions from Interagency Coordination

First and foremost, the contributions to Plan's development from interagency coordination were reflected in the broad-based composition of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committees. Representatives of Federal and Territorial agencies, departments and authorities actively participated in the Committee meetings. They provided oversight to VITEMA, contributed to the development of goals and objectives, and by voting to prioritize programmatic and island-specific mitigation actions. However, it is also important in the Plan Update to acknowledge the specific contributions made by key government agencies. They include:

- **Tax Assessor's Office.** The Tax Assessor's Office provided a copy of the Territory's tax database in the 2008 Plan. It was updated to reflect changes in the Territory's real property values. This data was used to develop damage estimates for specific natural hazards.
- **Department of Public Works.** DPW representatives participated as active members of the Hazard Mitigation Committees. In addition, the Department provided a list of projects that require Federal funding to be constructed. Most of the projects listed were included in the Plan Update and address repetitive flooding problems. DPW representatives provided project descriptions for the Plan's mitigation actions.
- **Department of Planning and Natural Resources.** The Department contributed to the Plan development in many ways. They provided representatives to the numerous Committee meetings, in addition to facilitating numerous interviews between the VITEMA planning team and major DPNR divisions. The DPNR was very responsive and accompanied CIPA planners on field visits to areas that have experienced repetitive losses. Mr. Lorne Lewis on St. Thomas and Mr. Alexis Doward on St. Croix deserve special mention.

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## 2.4 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER PLANNING EFFORTS

All relevant and completed plans and/or on-going planning efforts were reviewed for this Plan Update. The 2008 Plan provides a good departure point to identify new opportunities where hazard mitigation can be better integrated into US Virgin Islands long-range planning initiatives.

### 2.4.1 VIRGIN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

During the capability assessment for this Plan update, several DPNR planning initiatives are worth mentioning. They are USVI Zoning and Subdivision Code Update and several other NOAA watershed based planning initiatives. The specific documents, highlighted below, were reviewed and specific comments about these plans related to hazard mitigation can be found in Section 4, Capability Assessment.

- *Coral Bay Watershed Management Plan: A Pilot Project for Watershed Planning in the USVI*, Center for Watershed Protection, (2008)
- *St. Croix East End Marine Park Study*, currently under development by the US Department of Agriculture, the Nature Conservancy, and various local partners
- *USVI Zoning and Subdivision Code Update*, currently under development by Rutgers University and Duncan Associates, in conjunction with the Community Foundation of the Virgin Islands

The *USVI Zoning and Subdivision Code Update*, currently under development, should be ready for public and legislative review and comment in early 2012, and is intended to create a more streamlined, enforceable zoning process. This revision will consider and identify areas where DPNR can expand its managerial, administrative, technical and human capacity and will have a positive impact on controlling unadulterated development in highly susceptible hazard prone areas.

### 2.4.2 FEMA MITIGATION PROGRAMS

The most obvious programs and initiatives for VITEMA to integrate with are FEMA mitigation grant programs. VITEMA is to serve as the lead agency for the Territory in FEMA related grant efforts and will be the Grantee on almost all of the applications.

- Hazard Mitigation Grant program,
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive Grant program,
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Program,
- Public Assistance Grant Program,
- Severe Repetitive Loss Grant Program,
- Repetitive Flood Claims Grant Program

A more detailed description of FEMA programs is provided in Section 3 – Capability Assessment. It is important to note that the Territory has taken important steps to reduce its cost sharing of these Federal programs.

In this Plan Update it has developed a repetitive loss strategy that is consistent with the 2004 amendments to the National Flood Insurance Act (42 U.S.C 4001 et seq). The National Flood Insurance Act was amended to “introduce a mitigation plan requirement as a condition of receiving a reduced local cost share for the activities that mitigate severe repetitive loss properties under the Flood Mitigation Assistance and

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Severe Repetitive Loss grant programs. The October 31, 2007, interim final rule established this requirement under the 44 CFR § 201.4 (c)(3)(v) to allow a state to request the reduced costs share under the FMA and SRL programs if it has an approved State Mitigation Plan that also includes an approved Severe Repetitive Loss Strategy” (FEMA, Multi-Hazard Planning Guidance, 2008).

This Plan Update greatly expands the information presented in Appendix C: Repetitive Loss Strategy. The Strategy outlines how the Territory plans to reduce the number of repetitive loss properties. The Territory’s approach is primarily focused on public education, data collection, and direct mitigation actions focused on minimizing repetitive losses. These are highlighted in the Plan Update Mitigation Strategy (Section 5.), and outlined in both programmatic actions and island specific hazard mitigation actions.

The implementation of better flood management program in the FEMA Caribbean Area Division (CD), which is able to provide statistics and technical assistance to the Territory, particularly to DPNR with the lead responsibility for implementation of the Plan’s Repetitive Loss Strategy.