



Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety

2024 St. Thomas Carnival



Rueben Jennings
Assistant Commissioner

4/4/2024

Good day, Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, Chairperson of the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety; committee members; all other senators in attendance today; all those seated in the senate chambers; as well as those in the listening and viewing audience.

My name is Rueben Jennings, and I am an Assistant Commissioner at the Virgin Islands Department of Public Works (DPW). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the department's involvement and collaborative efforts ahead of this year's St. Thomas Carnival.

DPW started meeting with Division of Festival committee members, the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), and the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (WMA) and other key stakeholders earlier this year to prepare for the upcoming Carnival. In those meetings, we were able to outline our areas of responsibility, opportunities for improvements and other key areas of assistance needed.

The Department of Public Works will provide the Division of Festival access to the Fort Christian Parking Lot and its amenities from April 8 – May 6, 2024, to use as the venue for the Carnival village. Prior to turnover, DPW's Operations Division will prepare the facility by patching uneven areas, preparing the bathrooms facilities, and using our street sweeper to clean the parking lot of any debris or small construction material. DPW will also provide barricades for use during carnival events. Department crews will construct the Governor's reviewing stand for use during the Children's and Adult's parades and will deconstruct the stands after the parades.

Additionally, DPW will provide roadside crews to clean after Carnival events; namely J'ouvert, village nights, and the parades. Also, as this is the first year the horse races are expected to return since 2017, the department has been asked to provide logistical support to ensure this event's success. Lastly, the department will assist with advertising any road closures or traffic changes resulting from Carnival festivities.

As for the cost of these endeavors, the Department of Public Works receives only \$300,000 annually from the Tourism Revolving Fund to provide support for carnivals, festivals and other celebrations territory-wide.

Before closing, I'd like to recognize and thank the men and women of the department for their tireless efforts to ensure Carnival occurs without a hitch. Their invaluable support is critical, and we want to make sure the community recognizes their efforts. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony regarding the department's involvement. I am available to answer any questions.