

Project Background:

Improvements to the project area were studied in an Environmental Impact Study in 1984. In this EIS, Alternative B1—Raphune Hill Bypass started at the W.G. Lewis Sr. Lane and proceeded easterly to the top of Raphune Hill in the vicinity of Weymouth Rhymer Highway.

In 1997, a re-evaluation was completed. Alternative B1 would be very costly and could cause scars on the hillside above Charlotte Amalie that would detract from the setting of the historic district. Alternative D (from the 1984 EIS) was considered instead of Alternative B1. Alternative D would reconstruct the existing road system.

Purpose and Need:

The purpose of the proposed project is to upgrade Raphune Hill Road (Route 38). This project would expand roadway capacity to reduce congestion, flatten curves to increase safety, and construct a sidewalk to improve pedestrian access.

The need for improvement to Raphune Hill Road has been identified since the early 1980's. This two-lane road is one of the most important and heavily traveled routes on the island. Route 38 connects Charlotte Amalie to several major shopping centers and links central areas to the eastern end of St. Thomas. The existing road consists of narrow lanes with sharp curves, which cause traffic to slow. Raphune Hill Road also currently provides limited pedestrian access because there is no paved shoulder or sidewalk.

