

# THE FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY *Proposal*



*"Happy as the day is long." (Castillo de San Marcos),  
William Henry Jackson, c. 1902*



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# INTRODUCTION

## *St. Johns County, The Premier Location for the Florida Museum of Black History*

*“It is difficult to name a destination in the United States with a more varied and rich history of the African American experience than St. Johns County.”<sup>1</sup>*

Near the center of St. Johns County lies the City of St. Augustine, the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the United States and the site of the first free black settlement in what would become the United States. The vibrant tourism industry of St. Augustine, anchored in culture and history, provides an enchanting landscape through which to immerse oneself in the steps of African Americans from the 1500s to present day.

St. Johns County and the Northeast Florida region are steeped in the African American experience from the West African influence of the Gullah Geechee people to the contemporary leaders and trailblazers, such as Dr. Otis A. Mason, the first elected black superintendent of schools in Florida.

St. Johns County would be honored to partner with the State to convey the 450 plus years of experiences of Black Floridians and the African American diaspora from a state-of-the-art facility located on a historic property and within a region of deep historical African American relevance.

In support of St. Johns County’s proposal to be the location of the Florida Museum of Black History, and as a testament of the collective enthusiasm of St. Johns County and its numerous educational, cultural, governmental, and community partners, a detailed response to the evaluation criteria is provided for the Task Force’s consideration.



<sup>1</sup>St. Johns County Cultural Marketing Review, 2020, Robin Malpass & Associates Inc.

# CRITERIA 1

## *Historical Significance of St. Johns County and the Northeast Florida Region*

### *St. Johns County, A World-Class African American Heritage Destination*

History and Culture are the backbone of St. Johns County Tourism. Each year, St. Johns County welcomes more than 10 million historical and cultural tourists who come to experience the 450 plus years of history. Black History is a predominant thread throughout that story.

*A Cultural Marketing Review completed by Robin Malpass & Associates Inc. in 2020 proclaimed, “St. Johns County has the assets and product to compete as a world-class African American Heritage destination.” Finding that “it is difficult to name a destination in the United States with a more varied and rich history of the African American experience than St. Johns County.”*

Indeed, with numerous physical sites of significance and hundreds of notable events spanning nearly five centuries, St. Johns County offers an immersive experience for visitors of all ages.

At Fort Mose, dedicated Militia re-enactors bring the 18th Century back to life throughout the year by recreating the military drills and musket firing that once protected St. Augustine from invasion by the British. The groundbreaking for the reconstruction of the 1738 Fort was celebrated in February and the “doors” to the Fort will open to visitors in late 2024.

But the immersive historical adventure of Fort Mose is just the beginning of exploring Florida’s Black History (Appendix A). Visitors can continue through the centuries of Florida’s Black History by exploring the self-guided ACCORD Freedom Trail, pausing for a moment of reflection at the Historic former Slave Market in the Plaza de la Constitución, and walking the footsteps of Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Robert B. Hayling, and the foot soldiers of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, while in the heart of Historic Downtown St. Augustine. Visitors continuing their journey through the centuries can stop at the cemeteries of Pinehurst and San Sebastian where black enlisted soldiers are buried, such as Scipio Miller, a private in the 33rd U.S. Colored Infantry during the Civil War. Just outside the city in the western part of the County, visitors can explore the late Stetson Kennedy’s house and learn about the writer and activist that infiltrated the KKK in the 1940s.



As St. Augustine prepared to celebrate its 400th anniversary in the Spring of 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) lent their support to the local Civil Rights Movement to end racial discrimination in the City. King hoped that the demonstrations would lead to local desegregation, and that the subsequent media attention would generate national support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which was then stalled in a congressional filibuster. In the Summer of 1963, Robert B. Hayling, a local dentist and advisor to the Youth Council of St. Augustine's NAACP branch, organized demonstrations against segregated businesses through pickets and sit-ins. June 12, 1964, MLK was arrested at Monson Motor Lodge for asking to be served at the whites-only restaurant. He was taken to Old St. Johns County Jail, where he wrote to Rabbi Israel Dresner, encouraging rabbis to assist in the St. Augustine movement. This spurred protesters to enter the pool to end segregation at motel pools.

Six days later, on June 18, 1964, sixteen rabbis were arrested at the Monson Motor Lodge for praying at the entrance. The manager of the Monson Motor Lodge, poured muriatic acid into the pool to get a group of White and Black integrationists out of the swimming pool. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, and other movement members planned this swim-in. This incident made national headlines and was known as the 'Splash Heard Around the World'. The next day, the U.S. Congress finally passed the Civil Rights Act, outlawing segregation.

In the following map, historically significant locations are highlighted in reference to the proposed site for the Florida Museum of Black History.



# Historically Significant Sites of Black History in St. Augustine

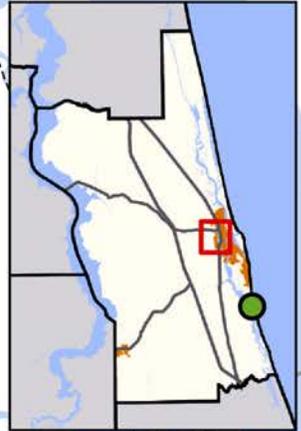
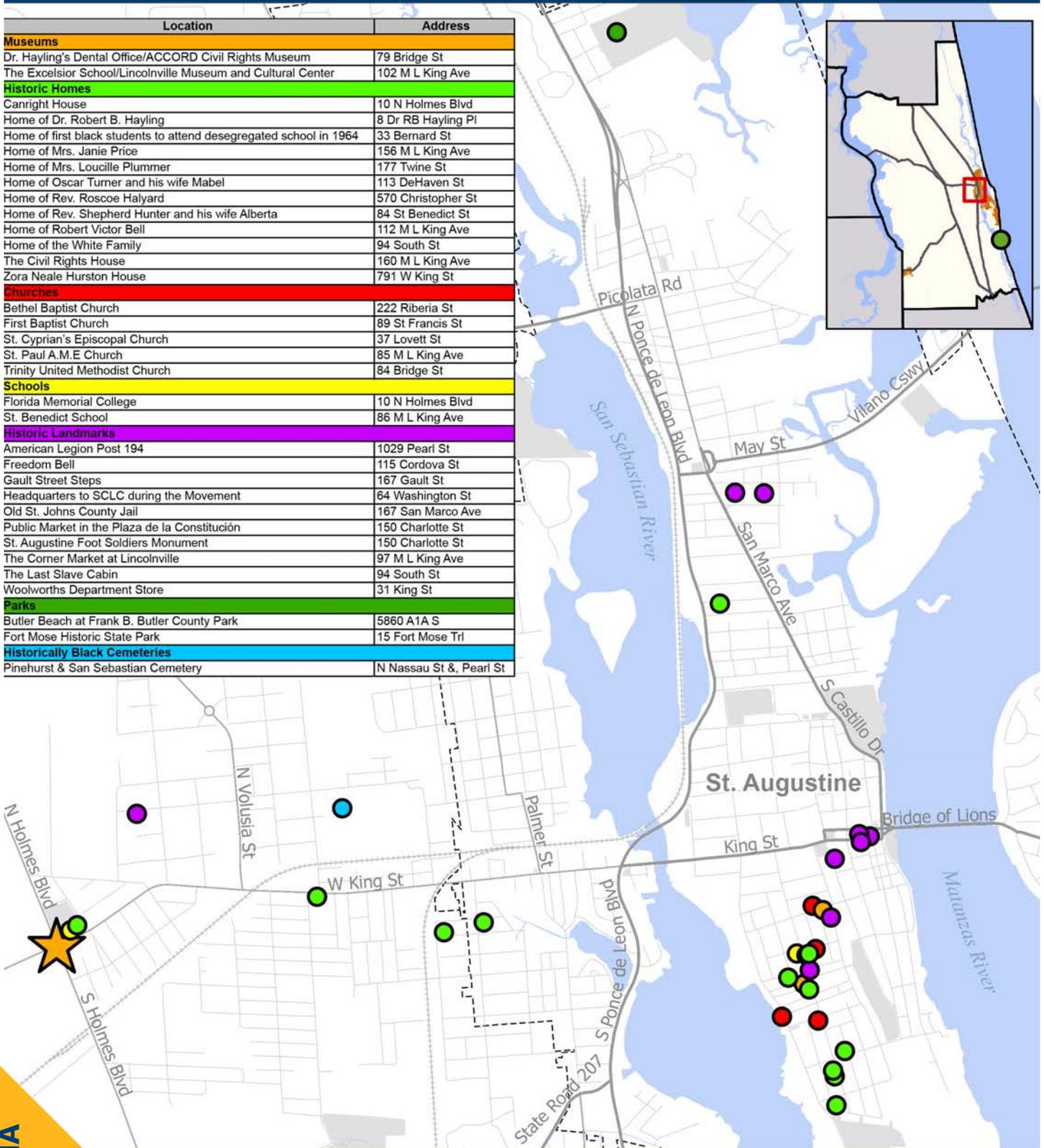


Proposed Florida Museum of Black History



Municipal Boundary

Location	Address
<b>Museums</b>	
Dr. Hayling's Dental Office/ACCORD Civil Rights Museum	79 Bridge St
The Excelsior School/Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center	102 M L King Ave
<b>Historic Homes</b>	
Canright House	10 N Holmes Blvd
Home of Dr. Robert B. Hayling	8 Dr RB Hayling Pl
Home of first black students to attend desegregated school in 1964	33 Bernard St
Home of Mrs. Janie Price	156 M L King Ave
Home of Mrs. Loucille Plummer	177 Twine St
Home of Oscar Turner and his wife Mabel	113 DeHaven St
Home of Rev. Roscoe Halyard	570 Christopher St
Home of Rev. Shepherd Hunter and his wife Alberta	84 St Benedict St
Home of Robert Victor Bell	112 M L King Ave
Home of the White Family	94 South St
The Civil Rights House	160 M L King Ave
Zora Neale Hurston House	791 W King St
<b>Churches</b>	
Bethel Baptist Church	222 Riberia St
First Baptist Church	89 St Francis St
St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church	37 Lovett St
St. Paul A.M.E Church	85 M L King Ave
Trinity United Methodist Church	84 Bridge St
<b>Schools</b>	
Florida Memorial College	10 N Holmes Blvd
St. Benedict School	86 M L King Ave
<b>Historic Landmarks</b>	
American Legion Post 194	1029 Pearl St
Freedom Bell	115 Cordova St
Gault Street Steps	167 Gault St
Headquarters to SCLC during the Movement	64 Washington St
Old St. Johns County Jail	167 San Marco Ave
Public Market in the Plaza de la Constitución	150 Charlotte St
St. Augustine Foot Soldiers Monument	150 Charlotte St
The Corner Market at Lincolnville	97 M L King Ave
The Last Slave Cabin	94 South St
Woolworths Department Store	31 King St
<b>Parks</b>	
Butler Beach at Frank B. Butler County Park	5860 A1A S
Fort Mose Historic State Park	15 Fort Mose Trl
<b>Historically Black Cemeteries</b>	
Pinehurst & San Sebastian Cemetery	N Nassau St & Pearl St

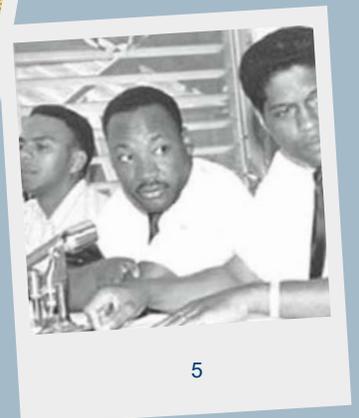


DISCLAIMER: This map is for reference use only. Data provided are derived from multiple sources with varying levels of accuracy. The St. Johns County GIS Division disclaims all responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the data shown hereon. |20147

## Significant Historical Figures of St. Augustine and Northeast Florida

The historical significance of sites and events were made relevant by the courageous persons who lived the history. Few figures are more synonymous to St. Augustine than Captain Francisco Menéndez, the formerly enslaved African-born co-founder of Fort Mose, however, the footsteps of numerous significant African Americans passed through St. Augustine.

- ***Captain Francisco Menéndez (1704-1763)***  
Formerly enslaved African-born captain who co-founded Fort Mose
- ***James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)***  
Wrote the Black National Anthem
- ***A. Philip Randolph (1889-1979)***  
American labor unionist and civil rights activist
- ***Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)***  
Author, anthropologist, and filmmaker residing in West Augustine
- ***Jackie Robinson (1919-1972)***  
First African American to play in Major League Baseball in the modern era
- ***Dr. Robert B. Hayling (1929-2015)***  
Father of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
- ***Martin Luther King Junior (1929-1968)***  
One of the most prominent leaders in the civil rights movement, arrested in St. Augustine
- ***Dr. Otis A. Mason (1928-2024)***  
First African American elected school superintendent in Florida
- ***Ray Charles (1930-2004)***  
Renowned musician who attended Florida School of the Deaf and Blind
- ***Lieutenant General Ronald L. Bailey (2011-2017)***  
First African American to command the 1st Marine Division



## *Historical Significance of the Greater Northeast Florida Region*

Within a short-drive of St. Augustine, visitors can step into the slave cabins at Kingsley Plantation, walk along the shore of American Beach and view the production site of some of the first Black Films, Norman Studios.

Kingsley Plantation is the oldest plantation house in Florida, built in 1798. It has 23 remaining slave cabins and had many owners until the State of Florida acquired it in 1955. Today, Kingsley Plantation is part of the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve.

American Beach was founded in the early 1930s by Abraham Lincoln Lewis, who was the owner of Afro-American Insurance Company and one of the first black millionaires in Florida. Initially, the beach was exclusively meant for Lewis's staff and was one of the few beaches open to African Americans during the period of segregation in Florida. Lewis and his partners envisioned building a resort for middle-class African American families from Atlanta and Savannah, along with retirement homes and access to the beach.

The Norman Studios was founded in 1916 in Jacksonville under Eagle Film City. It was later purchased by Richard E. Norman and served as the headquarters of the Norman Film Manufacturing Company from 1922 to 1928. During the early 1920s, the Norman Studios was among the first film studios in the United States to produce "race films" featuring positive, non-stereotypical African American characters. Notable films include *Regeneration*, *A Debtor to the Law*, and *The Flying Ace*, all of which were shot at the studio and nationally distributed.

Other notable Black History locations within a short-drive of the proposed St. Johns County site for the Florida Museum of Black History include:

### *Duval County and Clay County Sites*

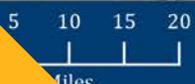
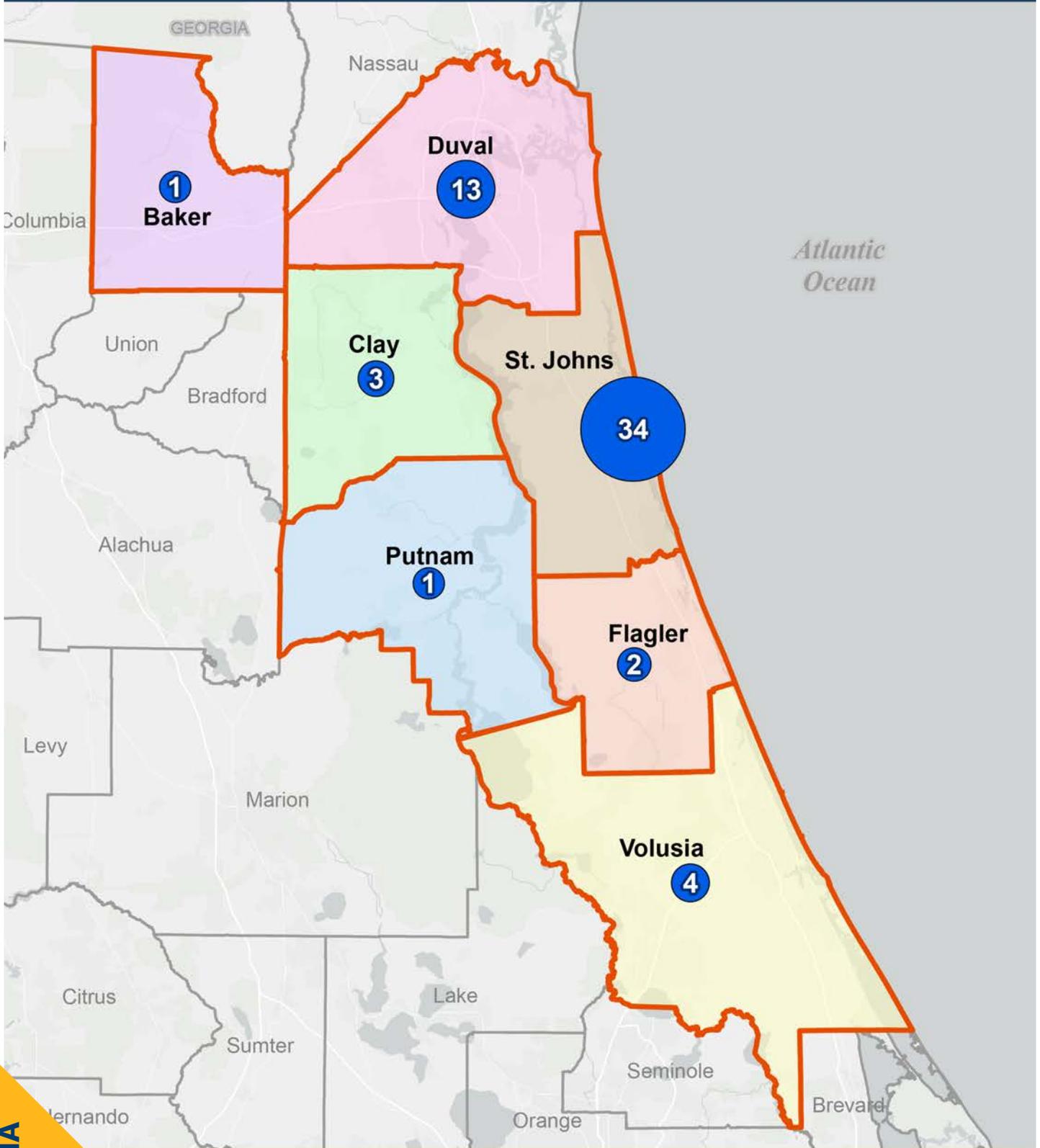
- Hollywood Music Store & Clara White Mission Museum
- Bethel Baptist Institutional Church and Mother Midway AME Church
- Edward Waters University
- Ritz Theatre & Museum
- Orange Park Negro Elementary School and the Old Middleburg Colored School

### *Flagler County and Volusia County Sites*

- African American Cultural Center
- Masonic Cemetery
- African American Museum of the Arts
- Mary McLeod Bethune House Museum – Bethune-Cookman University



# Historically Significant Sites of Black History in Northeast Florida



# CRITERIA 2

## *Appropriateness of Proposed Location*

Located at a strategic intersection approximately 2.5 miles from the center of Historic Downtown St. Augustine, up to 40 acres of undeveloped property can be made available for the Florida Museum of Black History.

St. Johns County has successfully forged a partnership with **Florida Memorial University (FMU)** to curate the historic property for the Florida Museum of Black History if St. Johns County is selected as the location (Appendix B). The ample acreage could accommodate an expansive museum campus with gardens, a vibrant research facility, and performing arts center complex along with ample parking space for all.

Once home to the FMU campus, the proposed location has a rich history all of its own. In 1779, Joseph Peavett owned a 420-acre parcel of land in present day West Augustine upon which was housing for 28 slaves. After his death, a freed slave named Philip Edinburgh was granted 100 acres of the property by Governor Enrique White. Philip remained the owner for about 20 years until the 1830's when a business owner purchased the property for \$234 and established a sugar plantation. After the end of the Civil War, the property changed hands several times until, in 1918, when Florida Memorial University (the then named Florida Normal and Industrial Institute) took advantage of an offer from the City of St. Augustine to relocate to the Old Hansen Plantation.

Influenced by the educational model popularized by Booker T. Washington at his Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, students were encouraged to be industrious and self-sufficient, constructing many of the campus buildings themselves, as well as growing and preparing their own food. The students received hands-on training in the practical fields which would allow them to support themselves and their families.





*If selected as the site, St. Johns County envisions working with the State of Florida to develop a state-of-the-art facility that embodies and conveys the historical relevance and importance of the property with a design that mirrors the original campus and creates a Museum that serves as an immersive exhibit of Black History in and of itself.*



In 2019, St. Johns County commissioned a Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for an Arts and Cultural Center. The study found that a performing arts center in the St. Augustine area would “help to develop and support the robust local arts and culture tourism industry.” The study provided an analysis of the economic and demographic characteristics of St. Johns County, as well as the broader region and recommended the development of a performing arts center which includes a 500-seat main theater, a 200-seat black box venue, educational studios and classrooms as well as shared office space for arts organizations and administration. The study included a financial feasibility analysis which showed the facility could sustain into the future with minimal assistance (Appendix C).

With the extensive existing alternative transportation system in the Historic Downtown St. Augustine area, a museum on the FMU property could easily be accessed within minutes by trolley, shuttle, pedicab, segway, etc by the millions of visitors who already come to explore and enjoy the history and culture of the area each year.



# CRITERIA 3

## *Regional Economy*

### ***Talent Supply and Education***

***St. Johns County*** (Florida Commerce, December 2023)

- 157,867 labor force
- 2.6% unemployment rate

***Within 50 miles of St. Johns County*** (ESRI 2023)

- 944,309 labor force

***The St. Johns County School District has received an A grade from the Florida Department of Education every year for the past 20+ years***

***St. Johns County Education Rates*** (ESRI 2023)

- 95.7% of the total population age 25+ have a high school education or greater
- 74.2% of the total population age 25+ have at least some college education

***St. Johns County is Home to the Following Higher-Education Institutions:***

- Bethune-Cookman University (SJC campus)
- First Coast Technical College, 1,358 enrollment
- Flagler College, 2,100 enrollment
- St. Johns River State College (SJC Campus), 1,140 enrollment
- University of St. Augustine, 937 enrollment

***The following Higher-Education Institutions are Located within a 50-Mile Radius of St. Johns County:***

- Daytona State College, Palm Coast Campus, 1,200 enrollment
- Edward Waters University, 1,200 enrollment
- Florida State College at Jacksonville, 37,556 enrollment
- Jacksonville University, 3,957 enrollment
- University of North Florida, 16,575 enrollment



## ***Innovation and Economic Development***

*Economic Development is a top priority of the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners.*

- 11,027 total businesses in St. Johns County (ESRI 2023)
- 75,403 total businesses within 50 miles of St. Johns County (ESRI 2023)
- Tourism is one of the top industries in St. Johns County. In 2023, Tourist Development Tax collections totaled more than \$23 million
- More than 40% of tourists to St. Johns County indicate that they come here specifically for historical and cultural experiences
- St. Johns County offers an annual Arts, Culture and Heritage Grant Program that provides more than \$650,000 in Tourist Development Tax revenue for annual program support

## ***Infrastructure and Growth Leadership***

*Business locations within St. Johns County and Northeast Florida are connected to multi-modal transportation networks through I-95 and U.S. 1 corridors, which provide convenient access to regional assets such as the Jacksonville International Airport and JAXPORT as well as local assets like the Northeast Florida Regional Airport in St. Augustine.*

- St. Johns County is also within 30 minutes of I-10, an hour of I-4, and 90 minutes of I-75
- The First Coast Expressway is a multi-lane, limited access toll road that, once completed, will cross parts of Duval, Clay and St. Johns counties

*St. Johns County's Infrastructure Delivery Team is managing the County's growth leadership. Currently, there are 195 capital projects under design or construction that totals more than \$503 million in infrastructure improvements. The breakdown of the project types include:*

- 59% transportation
- 16% facilities
- 16% parks
- 10% drainage



## ***Business Climate and Competitiveness***

From a survey distributed to St. Johns County businesses in 2023, 60% of respondents said that they plan to expand their business in St. Johns County in the next three years.

## ***Civics and Governance***

St. Johns County created an Office of Performance and Transparency that develops key performance indicators for County departments and uses data to identify areas for improvement and opportunities to enhance effectiveness.

## ***Quality of Life***

*St. Johns County is home to:*

- 43 county parks/community centers
- 42 miles of beaches
- More than a dozen public and private golf courses
- 3 state parks – Fort Mose State Park, Anastasia State Park and Faver-Dykes State Park
- 2 national monuments – Castillo de San Marcos and Fort Matanzas
- 2 music venues – St. Augustine Amphitheatre and Ponte Vedra Concert Hall
- 2 community theaters – Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College and Limelight Theater
- Many miles of trails, including the Palatka to St. Augustine State Rail to Trail and the GTM Research Reserve
- With more than 450 years of history, St. Augustine has an abundance of additional historical sites and attractions

# CRITERIA 4

## *Regional Demographics*

### **Population by Race/Ethnicity of St. Johns County** (ESRI 2023)

#### **Total Population, 311,014**

- Median Age, 42.6
- Diversity Index, 44.0
- White Alone, 80.6%
- Black Alone, 4.9%
- American Indian Alone, 0.3%
- Asian Alone, 3.7%
- Pacific Islander Alone, 0.1%
- Some Other Race Alone, 1.7%
- Two or More Races, 8.8%
- Hispanic Origin, 8.3%



### **Population by Race/Ethnicity of the Community within 1 mile of the proposed Museum Site** (ESRI 2023)

#### **Total Population, 2,795**

- Median Age, 37.7
- Diversity Index, 64.7
- White Alone, 43.1%
- Black Alone, 46.6%
- American Indian Alone, 0.3%
- Asian Alone, 1.0%
- Pacific Islander Alone, 0.0%
- Some Other Race Alone, 2.5%
- Two or More Races, 6.5%
- Hispanic Origin, 7.3%



### **St. Johns County Education** ([www.thefloridascorecard.org](http://www.thefloridascorecard.org))

#### **8th Grade Scores**

- Math, 81%
- Science, 71%
- Reading, 69%

**High School Graduation Rate, 94%**  
**Associates Degree or Higher, 56.5%**  
**Bachelor's Degree or Higher, 47.4%**



## St. Johns County Economy

- 11,027 total businesses in St. Johns County (ESRI 2023)
- Tourism is one of the top industries in St. Johns County
- \$23.2 million in Tourist Development Tax Revenue collected in FY23
- 12,250+ overnight accommodation units
- Small Businesses, 48.6% ([www.thefloridascorecard.org](http://www.thefloridascorecard.org))
- Manufacturing Jobs, 4,668 ([www.thefloridascorecard.org](http://www.thefloridascorecard.org))
- Manufacturing Job Annual Wage, \$87,463
- Manufacturing Job Wage Share, 10%
- Median Household Income, 100,020 in 2022
- Income Migration, \$853.37 Million Per Year ([www.thefloridascorecard.org](http://www.thefloridascorecard.org))



## Income and Poverty

### 2023 Households by Income (ESRI 2023)

- Average Household Income, \$141,754
  - \$200,000+, 18.0%
  - \$150,000 - \$199,999, 13.2%
  - \$100,000 - \$149,999, 18.7%
  - \$75,000 - \$99,999, 11.5%
  - \$50,000 - \$74,999, 17.0%
  - \$35,000 - \$49,999, 9.6%
  - \$25,000 - \$34,999, 4.5%
  - \$15,000 - \$24,999, 3.0%
  - <\$15,000, 4.6%



### Persons in Poverty, 5.9% (Census Bureau)

### Housing Unit Summary 2023 (ESRI 2023)

- Owner Occupied Housing, 75.6%
- Renter Occupied Housing, 13.2%
- Vacation Housing, 11.1%

## Business in St. Johns County (Census Bureau)

- Total employer establishments 2021, 7,699
- Total employment 2021, 69,233
- Total annual payroll 2021, \$3,226,990
- Total employment percentage change 2020-2021, 2.0%
- All employer firms (Reference year 2017), 5,692
- Woman-owned firms, 1,181
- Minority-owned firms, 510
- Veteran-owned firms, 364



### Geography: land area, density, etc. (Census Bureau)

- Population by square mile 2020, 455.2
- Land area in square miles 2020, 600.64

# CRITERIA 5

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## *Transportation Infrastructure*

The central location and easy access of the proposed St. Johns County site within Northeast Florida not only allows visitors to readily access the Museum but also provides easy access to the surrounding communities. The accessibility creates an appealing opportunity for visitors to explore the many Black History Sites both in St. Johns County and in the neighboring cities and counties, making the stories and experience more memorable while also maximizing the economic impact to the region.

Tourism is already one of the primary economic drivers in St. Johns County and 44% of tourist indicate that they visit the area specifically to experience the local history. Many visitors to St. Johns County spend significant time in Historic Downtown St. Augustine which is located approximately 2 miles east of the proposed Museum location.

Historic Downtown St. Augustine is home to many significant Black History Sites and the area offers seemingly endless dining and entertainment opportunities for tourist. With the extensive alternative transportation system that is already in place, a Museum on the proposed FMU property could easily be accessed within minutes by trolley, shuttle, pedicab, segway, etc. by the millions of visitors who come to explore and enjoy the history and culture of St. Augustine each year.

If selected as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History, St. Johns County is committed to working with FDOT and the City of St. Augustine to expand the route of the STAR Circulator, a free shuttle bus service starting at the Visitor Information Center (VIC), to the Museum. The County will also work with locally established private alternative transportation vendors, such as Old Town Trolley to incorporate the Museum into their regular pick-up and drop-off locations.

The primary transit corridor between Historic Downtown St. Augustine and the proposed Museum location is West King Street. Pedestrian and alternative transit improvements to West King Street are included in the Safe Street Program action plan for St. Johns County. Planned improvements for the corridor will include enhanced pedestrian and bicycle separation from the vehicular traffic.

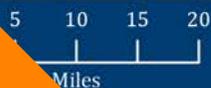
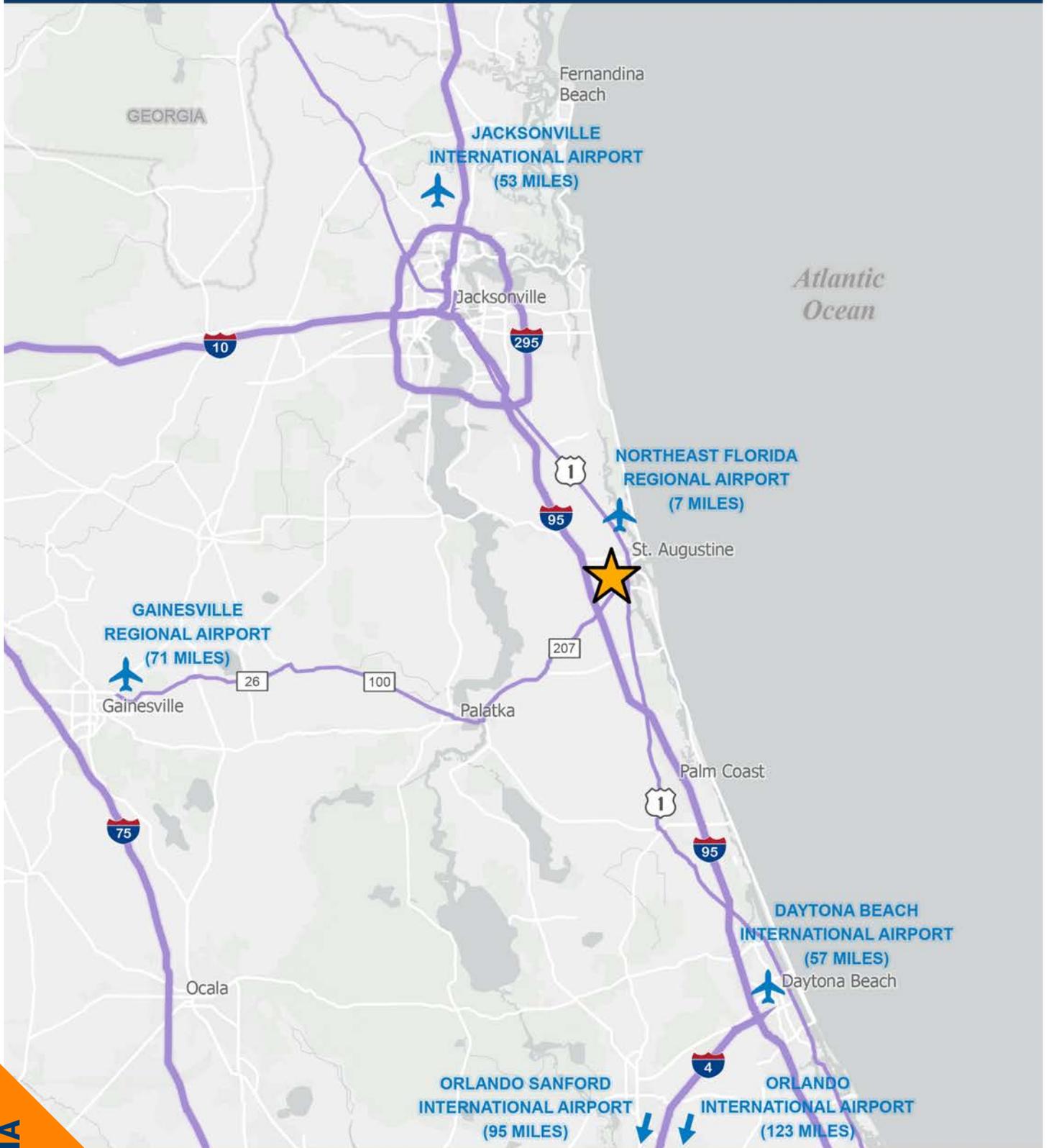
The proposed St. Johns County Museum site offers easy access to significant regional and international transit infrastructure including both interstate highways and international airports and is also just a short trolley ride away from the vibrant historic and cultural tourism hub of Historic Downtown St. Augustine. St. Johns County is confident that the proposed site will successfully support the Florida Museum of Black History while also encouraging visitors to get out and explore the region. Included in Appendix D, are letters of support from our local and regional partners including, JaxUSA, Jacksonville International Airport, JAXPort, the City of Jacksonville, the City of Palm Coast and the City of St. Augustine, who agree.



# Transportation Corridors



Florida Black History Museum



**DISCLAIMER:**  
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## **Summary of Supporting Transportation Infrastructure for the St. Johns County Proposed Museum Site**

### **Existing Interstate Highways**

- I-95 Exit 311, 4.7 miles
- I-95 Exit 318, 5.1 miles
- US-1, 1.8 miles

### **Existing International or Regional Airport**

- Northeast Florida Regional Airport, 7 miles
- Jacksonville International Airport, 53 miles
- Daytona Beach International Airport, 57 miles
- Gainesville Regional Airport, 71 miles
- Orlando Sanfor International Airport, 95 miles

### **Public and Alternative Transportation**

- Public Transit
  - St. Augustine Rider (STAR shuttle) – Free FDOT Shuttle for Downtown St. Augustine. St. Johns County would work with FDOT and the City of St. Augustine to establish the Florida Museum of Black History as a designated shuttle stop.

#### **Sunshine Bus**

- Trolley Tours – St. Johns County would work with the private trolley companies to establish the Florida Museum of Black History as a designated tour stop
 

Old Town Trolley	Red Train Trolley
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- Segway Rentals

- Sling Shot Vehicle Rentals
 

Ancient City Sling Shots	Seaside Adventures
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- Bike Rentals

- Scoot Coupe Rentals
 

Fun Rental St. Augustine
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- Pedi Cabs
 

Pineapple Ride and Tours	St. Augustine Pedicab
Wonder Traveler Pedicab	E-ped

- Cart Taxi's
 

Old Town Cart	Hopper's Shuttle
Explore Tours	Pick-up

# CRITERIA 6

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## *Local Funding and Other Support*

St. Johns County has received extensive support as the proposed location of the Florida Museum of Black History on the historic Florida Memorial University property from the Community and the Region. The St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners has unanimously supported the initiative and the Community has enthusiastically gotten behind the proposal. Locating the Museum on the site of the historic Florida Memorial University property has not only been supported by FMU itself but has also received support from Florida A&M University. A complete list of letters of support received to date are included below and the letters can be found in Appendix D.

St. Johns County and the surrounding Community have long been committed to offering and supporting historical and cultural assets and programming. Each year, the County offers an Art, Culture and Heritage Grants program which is funded with Tourist Development Tax Funds. The annual grant provides more the \$650k to over 25+ local organizations offering tourism based historical and cultural events and programming. The County also provides significant annual funding (\$2.5 million+ from Tourist Development Tax Funds) to support both the operation of the St. Augustine Amphitheater and the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall as well as the annual Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series and the month long Sing Out Loud Festival.

In addition to government support of arts, culture and heritage in the community, many local businesses offer support to local initiatives and programs as well. As an example, Northrup Grumman Corporation provided financial support to the ACCORD Civil Right Museum for the development and installation of 30 markers along the ACCORD Freedom Trail which highlight some of the area's notable Civil Rights sites. Northrup Grumman also provided the ACCORD Civil Rights Museum with grant funding for the restoration of the only remaining slave cabin in St. Johns County. Many local businesses such as the St. Augustine Distillery and Canan Law have provided sponsorships and financial support for arts and cultural events and have also funded facility improvements at the St. Augustine Amphitheater and the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall.

If St. Johns County is selected as the location for the Museum, the organization operating the St. Augustine Amphitheater and Ponte Vedra Concert Hall, St. Johns County Cultural Events, Inc., could lend the organizations collective knowledge, experience and expertise in the startup and operation of the Florida Museum of Black History's performing arts space. St. Johns County Cultural Events, Inc. not only operates both the St. Augustine Amphitheater and the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall but coordinates two of the area's unique annual music festivals, the Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series and the month long Sing Out Loud Festival. Profits from both the Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series and the Sing Out Loud Festival go to support community initiatives such as the reconstruction of the 1738 Fort Mose.

St. Johns County and the surrounding Community have diligently and creatively provided support to art, culture and heritage assets and programming in the area. Together, we are confident and committed to expanding that collective support to the Florida Museum of Black History with great enthusiasm.

## ***Summary of Letters of Support for the Proposed St. Johns County Museum location (Appendix D)***

### ***Historically Black College and University (HBCU) Support***

- Florida Memorial University
- Florida A&M University

### ***Historical, Cultural and Tourism Organization Support***

- Fort Mose Historical Society
- The Anniversary to Commemorate the Civil Rights Demonstrations, Inc. (ACCORD)
- St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau
- St. Johns County Cultural Council
- St. Johns County Cultural Events, Inc (operators of the St. Augustine Amphitheatre)
- Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Makers Project
- Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission
- The Stetson Kennedy Foundation

### ***Regional Support***

- St. Johns County
- City of St. Augustine
- City of Jacksonville
- Northeast Florida Regional Council
- Jacksonville Aviation Authority
- JaxPort
- JAXUSA Partnership
- City of Palm Coast

### ***General Community Support***

- United Way
- American Legion
- Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County
- Diocese of St. Augustine, Office of the Bishop
- Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
- Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church
- New Mt. Moriah Christian Church
- Antioch Missionary Baptist Church
- Leo C. Chase and Associates, Inc.

# CRITERIA 7

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## *Educational Resources*

In 2023, 10.2 million visitors came to St. Johns County with 44% of County visitors indicating that historical sites are their top reason for visiting. With nearly five centuries of history under our belt, it is easy to see why St. Johns County is a hub for historical and cultural tourism. Accurately interpreting all that history and sharing it with the residents and visitors in a memorable way is something the Community of St. Johns County takes very seriously and actively participates.

In 2022, local community organizations were able to secure approximately \$3 million in State Grant Funding to support and preserve four local Black History Sites including the reconstruction of the original fort structure at Fort Mose, renovation of the Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center, stabilization and restoration of the former St. Augustine Beach Hotel, and repairs to the historic Zion Missionary Baptist Church. St. Johns County, the City of St. Augustine and the City of St. Augustine Beach collectively provided additional funding and/or owner support for at least three of these projects.

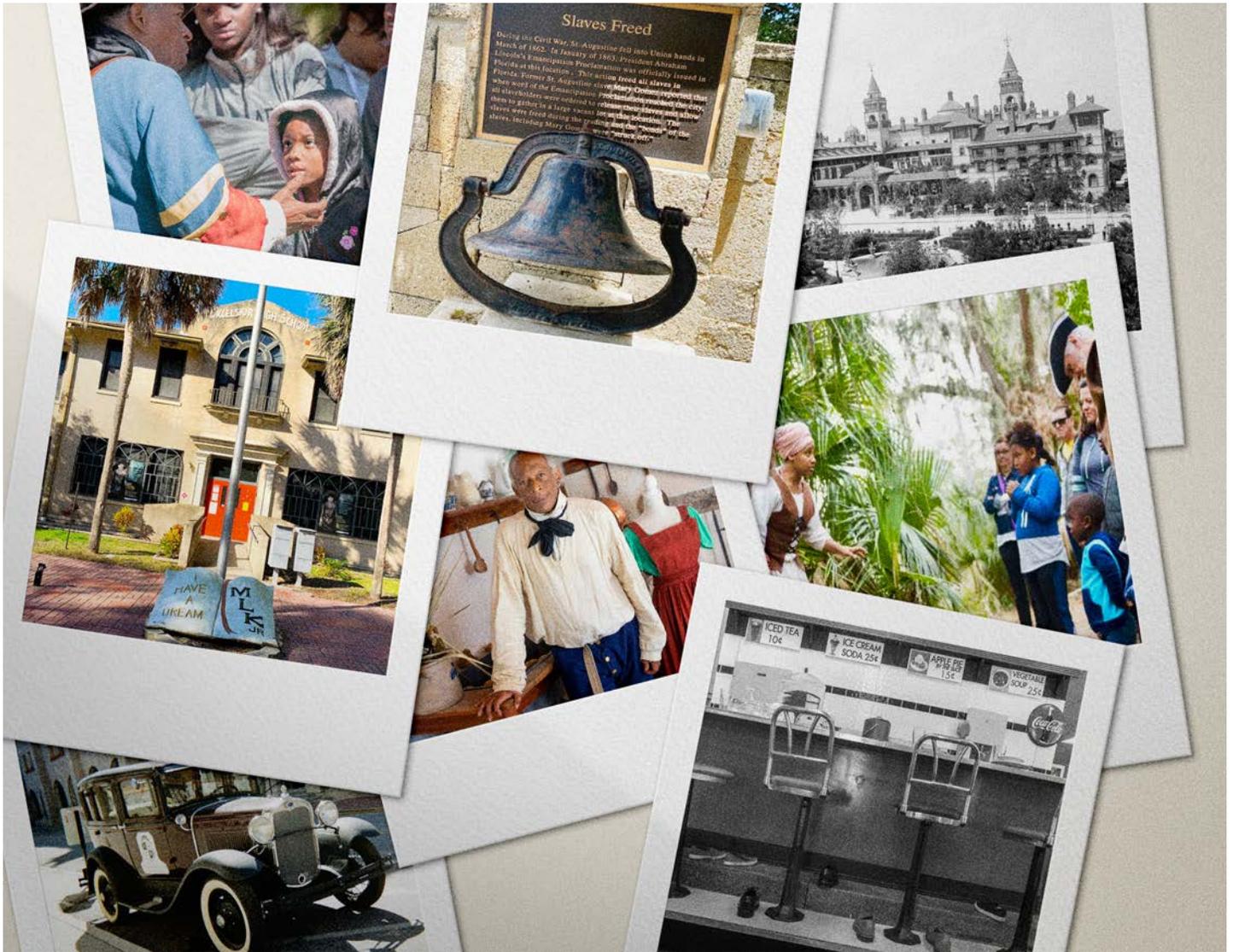
Together St. Johns County, the municipal governments and the local community organizations within the County work to support and promote the preservation and interpretation of these historical and cultural resources as well as many others through grants and partnerships. Examples of this ongoing commitment to historical and cultural interpretation and presentation include:

Through extensive collaboration with the Florida Department of Education, the City of St. Augustine along with multiple local historical organizations, have worked to develop an approved upper elementary (4th and/or 5th grade) field-trip to St. Augustine. As a result, each year, tens of thousands of public, private and homeschooled elementary school children and their chaperones visit St. Augustine to learn about colonial history and the early history of Florida.

For the past decade, the City of St. Augustine Beach has been working with the St. Johns Cultural Council to preserve and restore the St. Augustin Beach Hotel which has national importance due to the sites role in the “St. Augustine Campaign,” a notable part of the Civil Rights Movement. The St. Augustine Beach Hotel and Beachfront were added to the National Register of Historic Places on January 11, 2022.

Through partnerships with numerous local organizations, St. Johns County is able to provide support to important historic and cultural events such as the annual Gullah Geechee Heritage Festival, which will be celebrating its 11th year in 2024.

With the help of St. Johns Cultural Events, Inc., St. Johns County successfully partners with the City of St. Augustine, Fort Mose Historic State Park and numerous local businesses to coordinate and host nearly two months of musical performances which take place annually in February and September. The Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series and the Sing Out Loud Festival collectively bring in an estimated 500,000+ visitors to the area each year.



*The community of St. Johns County has a strong track record of partnership and coordination focused on historic and cultural events. Together, we know we can seamlessly integrate the St. Johns County based Florida Museum of Black History into the experience, creating a memorable immersive educational experience for all those who visit.*



# APPENDIX A

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## *Black History in St. Johns County*

# The Cultural and Historical Capital of America

## ST. JOHNS COUNTY: The Birthplace of African American History

St. Augustine is the birthplace of African American history spanning from the arrival of Ponce de Leon in 1513 and includes a robust Black history through nationally significant events of the Civil Rights movement.

### Significant Black History Events (1513):

First person of African descent arrives in America, Juan Garrido arrived with Ponce de Leon in 1513 as a free black conquistador.

- On September 8, 1565, with much pomp and circumstance and 600 voyagers cheering, Pedro Menéndez set foot on the shores of Florida. In honor of the saint whose feast day fell on the day he first sighted land, Menéndez named the colonial settlement St. Augustine after the Catholic Saint Augustine, a man of North African descent, part of present day Algeria. "An unjust law is no law at all" - St. Augustine of Hippo (Algeria, Africa) 354-430 A.D
- Founded in 1565, St. Augustine is the oldest continuously occupied settlement of European and African-American origin in the United States.
- In 1606, per the Cathedral Parish Archives, the first black child was born in what is now America. This birth is thirteen years before many textbooks say that the first blacks arrived at Jamestown in 1619.

### Fort Mose (1738):

First Sanctioned Free Black Settlement, a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) heritage site.

- The first legally recognized community of free African Americans in the State.
- In 1738, the Spanish governor of Florida chartered the settlement of Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, or Fort Mose for short, as a settlement for those fleeing slavery from the English colonies in the Carolinas.
- Over the next 25 years, Fort Mose and Spanish St. Augustine became a sanctuary for Africans seeking liberation from the tyranny of English slavery amidst a large-scale power struggle between European powers in the New World.
- Fort Mose is on the Florida Black Heritage Trail and the NPS highlights it as a precursor site of the Underground Railroad.

### 1800s - 1900s:

#### Public Market in the Plaza de la Constitución or 1824 Slave Market.

- At the center of the historic quarter in St. Augustine, stands the "Old Slave Market", an open-air pavilion where enslaved Africans were bought and sold.
- Also the site of the worst violence in the Country for demonstrators during the civil rights movement.

#### Civil War Participation & Cemeteries

- During the Civil War, Black St. Augustinians served in both the Union and Confederate armies. Graves of Black Union Army troops are marked with U.S.C.I. (U.S. Colored Infantry)
- Pinehurst and San Sebastian Cemeteries located in West Augustine are believed to be the oldest segregated black cemeteries in Florida.

- Headstones date it back to as early as the 1840s. Many buried here were born into slavery, but other, later graves are those of World War I veterans and railroad workers who were not allowed to be buried in the same ground as their white counterparts.

#### Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955)

- African American woman officially a part of the US delegation that created the United Nations charter.

- Moved to St. Johns County (Palatka, FL) in 1899

#### Ray Charles attends Florida School of the Deaf and the Blind (1937-1945)

Similar to the Tuskegee airmen, Florida Normal and Industrial Institute had a Fourth Army Signal Corps program.



## ST. AUGUSTINE, FL: The Start of the Civil Rights Movement (1963-1964) The Birthplace of African American History

Walking the same steps as the foot soldiers did during the civil rights movement

- The foot soldiers protested racial discrimination by marching, picketing, kneeling-in at churches, sitting-in at lunch counters, wading-in at beaches, attending rallies, raising money and persisted in the face of jailing, beatings, shootings, loss of employment, threats and other dangers.
- The citizens who marched in St. Augustine, who survived a staggering level of violence, are credited with helping to sustain the political pressure needed to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### Dr. Robert Hayling - "Father of the Civil Rights Act of 1964"

- Shortly after moving to St. Augustine, Dr. Hayling became the Advisor of the St. Augustine NAACP's Youth Council. Civil Rights movement planning

meetings were held at his dental office, and he became the head of the St. Augustine Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC).

- Civil rights leader who worked closest with MLK to desegregate St. Augustine.

**The St. Augustine Movement (1963-1964)**, was a series of peaceful protests and demonstrations which were responded to with violence, which led to more complicated protests.

### The Splash Heard 'Round the World'

- On June 12, 1964, MLK was arrested on the steps of the Monson Motor Lodge when he asked to be served at the whites-only hotel restaurant. He was taken to the Old St. Johns County Jail where he wrote to Rabbi Israel Dresner of New Jersey, encouraging rabbis to assist in the St. Augustine movement.

- This (and other things) helped spur on a group of protesters, Black and White, to jump into the pool as a strategically planned event to end segregation at motel pools.
- On June 18, 1964, Sixteen rabbis were arrested at the Monson Motor Lodge for praying at the entrance. James Brock, the manager of the Monson Motor Lodge poured muriatic acid into the pool to get a group of White and Black integrationists out of the swimming pool. This swim-in was planned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr and other members of the movement.
- This incident made national headlines. The image shocked the world, that the next day the U.S. Congress finally passed the Civil Rights Act, outlawing segregation.

JOURNEY Civil Rights Teacher's Guide

[https://sharesync.serverdata.net/us4/s/file?public\\_share=06vzAYuTVD8iwwVkw8pFcA003e583b](https://sharesync.serverdata.net/us4/s/file?public_share=06vzAYuTVD8iwwVkw8pFcA003e583b)

*Dr. Martin Luther King speaks at a rally at a church in St. Augustine on June 11, 1964, before marching on downtown.*

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reacts in St. Augustine after learning that the Senate passed the civil rights bill, June 19, 1964.*

# APPENDIX B

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## *Florida Memorial University Letters of Support*



February 20, 2023

Ms. Joy Andrews  
County Administrator  
St. Johns County Board of County  
Commissioners 500 San Sebastian View  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

Dear Administrator Andrews:

Thanks for contacting us regarding the parcel of land for the State Black History Museum. We appreciate your efforts to inform the Foundation of your progress on this initiative. Previously, we shared that we must ensure that the parcel chosen by the State does not impede the most desirable development of the property, and that is still our position.

Since our last meeting the Foundation has partnered with a major developer to help us decide on the best future use of the land. The developer has made several recommendations that must be discussed before we can decide on the location and size of the parcel for a museum. We look forward to further discussion about the details of designating a parcel for the State Black History Museum. Please contact Mr. Hord to schedule a meeting when convenient.

Respectfully,

*Walt Weatherington*

Walter Weatherington, Sr.  
Chairman  
Florida Memorial University Foundation



November 21, 2023

Joy Andrews  
County Commissioner  
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners  
500 San Sebastian View  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

Dear Commissioner Andrews,

I trust this letter finds you well, and I appreciate your thoughtful communication regarding establishing the State Black History Museum. We share your enthusiasm for this significant initiative and are excited about the prospect of forging a meaningful partnership between the Florida Memorial University Foundation and the State.

I want to express our sincere gratitude for considering the Florida Memorial University Foundation as a critical partner in this historic endeavor. We fully recognize the cultural and economic impact such a museum can have, and we are eager to contribute to its success.

Your vision of securing a strategic parcel of land within West Augustine for the museum aligns seamlessly with our commitment to preserving and honoring the rich cultural heritage of the First Coast region. We are enthusiastic about the potential collaboration to acquire a parcel ranging from 20 to 40 acres at a market rate. This location, integrated with the university's history, not only enhances the cultural significance of the museum but also dovetails with our goals of contributing to revitalizing the surrounding area.

Moreover, we appreciate your anticipation that the state will provide the necessary appropriations for both the construction and operation of the State Black History Museum. We share your belief that the museum will serve as a cultural and educational hub, attracting visitors and positioning West Augustine as a destination with historical significance.

As we embark on this journey, we must ensure that the parcel chosen by the State does not impede the most desirable development of the property.

In that light, we are willing to engage in further discussions to address potential challenges and explore ways to collaborate effectively for additional benefits. Our intent is clear - to work together to make the State Black History Museum a reality while ensuring that the chosen parcel supports the overall development goals for the benefit of the Florida Memorial University Foundation.

We look forward to further discussing this proposal's details and collaboratively shaping a partnership that will leave a legacy for Florida Memorial University, the county, and the state.

Sincerely,



Horace Hord  
Vice President/Chair-Elect

# APPENDIX C

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## *Section from 2019 Arts and Cultural Center Market Analysis and Feasibility Study*

## **SECTION 2**

### INTRODUCTION & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Johnson Consulting and DLR Group were retained by the St. Johns County Government (“St. Johns County” or “Client”) to conduct an Arts and Cultural Center Market Analysis and Feasibility Study. This study is intended to ensure that St. Johns County’s investment in this project will maximize value — not just economic value, but also how to enhance significantly the vibrancy of the County’s cultural arts offerings, provide affordable working space for artists and help to develop and support the robust local arts and culture tourism industry.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to complete the analysis required for this project, Johnson Consulting performed the following tasks:

1. Interviewed and surveyed various Client representatives, and event facility operators and managers, along with other relevant stakeholders, in order to gather information about expectations for the proposed project.
2. Examined and projected regional economic, demographic, and market trends that may influence demand for the proposed venue.
3. Identified and examined relevant regional and national comparable facilities.
4. Confirmed market viability of the proposed PAC program developed by DLR Group.
5. Developed projections of future demand, attendance, and financial models for the proposed venue, in terms of annual events and attendance. Johnson Consulting utilized proven local, regional, and national formulas to forecast revenue and expense models.
6. Developed an economic and fiscal impact analysis of the proposed facility.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is significant opportunity for additional cultural and performing arts facilities in St. Johns County.

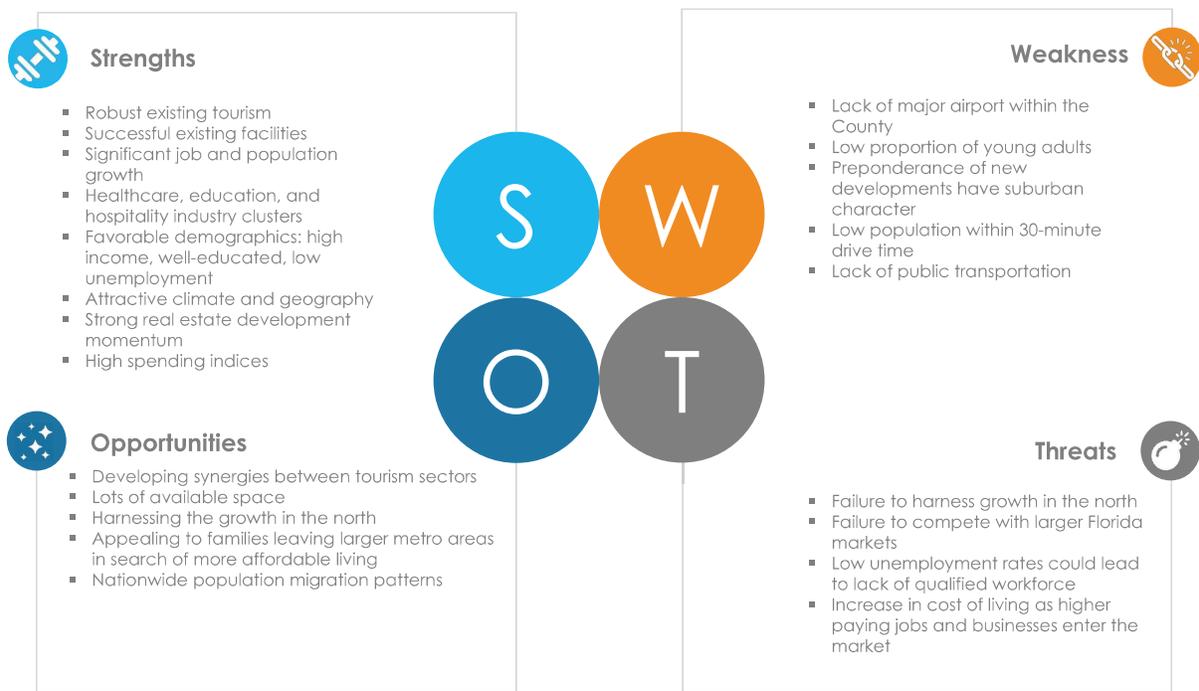
### ECONOMIC & DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

In terms of local resident demand, St. Johns County performs well considering a variety of the indicators that are typically used to gauge the potential for cultural tourism facilities and activities. St. Johns County has a smaller resident population within its political boundaries, but it is demographically well-situated to support year-round arts and cultural programming. There is also a robust tourism industry that induces additional demand on the cultural and performing arts facilities in the County. Most importantly, existing larger arts facilities in the County perform very successfully. Expanding arts, cultural, and entertainment facilities will allow the existing needs to be met, grow the selection of events held in the County, extend visitor stays, and allow

the County to attract more residents and visitors and to capture visitors that may otherwise travel to other places in search of these activities.

The following SWOT analysis summarizes the key findings and implications of this section by sorting them into strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths are things that are already going well in St. Johns County, while opportunities are things that could become strengths if taken advantage of. Likewise, weaknesses are things that could present challenges for St. Johns County, while threats could become weaknesses if not given proper attention. Figure 2-1 presents this SWOT analysis.

Figure 2-1



**INTERVIEW SUMMARY & INDUSTRY TRENDS**

Stakeholders, community leaders, and potential users of St. Johns County’s arts and cultural facilities expressed general support and enthusiasm regarding both the expansion of existing facilities and the addition of new facilities. These observations are supported by research indicating that arts and cultural events and organizations are proving successful in generating both arts and cultural engagement among citizens and tourists and economic impact in the communities which they call home. This research holds true nationally, regionally, and locally.

## FACILITIES ANALYSIS AND CASE STUDIES

St. Johns County has a unique array of existing cultural and performing arts venues that are successful, but the overall inventory of venues in the County leaves gaps that are limiting the market. The St. Augustine Amphitheatre (“SAAMP”) is one of the premiere amphitheater venues in the nation, but there is a considerable portion of demand that cannot be accommodated due to the logistical and technical limitations of an outdoor amphitheater-type venue. The Ponte Vedra Concert Hall serves a key role in serving this market in St. Johns County, but is currently undersized relative to other venues profiled in this report. Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College is also serving as a key space for cultural and performing arts in St. Johns County, but is frequently booked with programming that doesn’t utilize the entire capacity of the facility and is often booked for College-related uses. Figure 2-2 presents a regional facility inventory, including relevant arts and cultural facilities within a 100-mile radius.

Figure 2-2

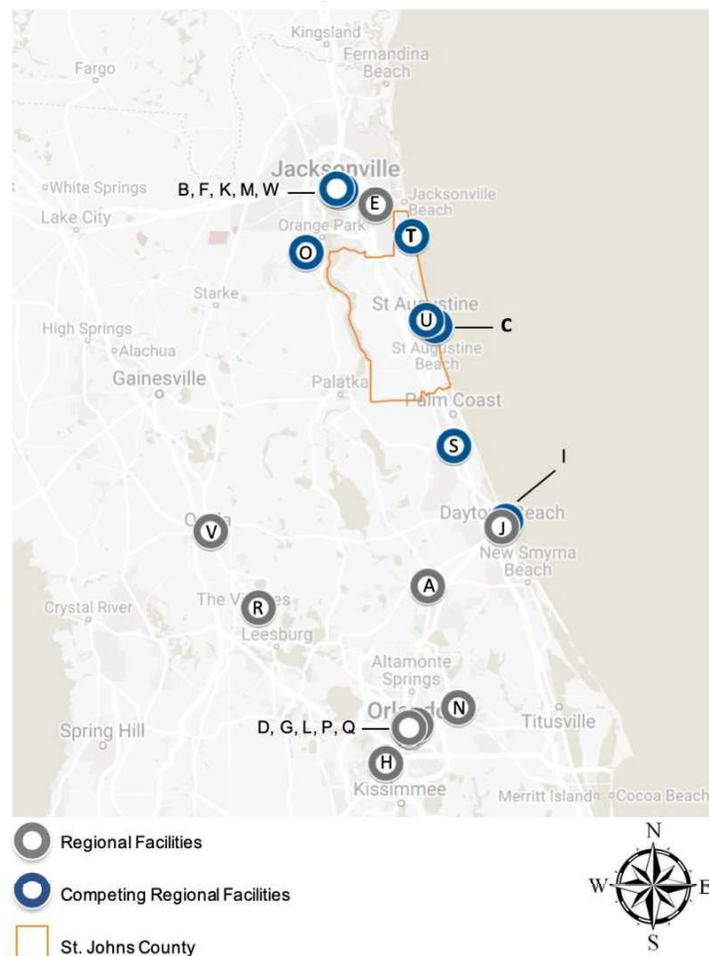
Regional Facility Inventory				
Map Key	Facility	Location	Distance to St. Johns County	Capacity
<b>Outdoor Facilities</b>				
A	Spec Martin Municipal Stadium	Deland	59	6,000
B	Daily’s Place Amphitheater	Jacksonville	36	5,500
C	<b>St. Augustine Amphitheatre</b>	<b>St. Augustine</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,060</b>
D	Dr. Phillips Center - Seneff Arts Plaza	Orlando	93	2,000
<b>Indoor Facilities</b>				
E	UNF Arena	Jacksonville	28	5,000
F	Times-Union Center - Moran Theater	Jacksonville	37	2,976
G	Dr. Phillips Center - Walt Disney Theater	Orlando	93	2,711
H	Chapin Theater	Orlando	94	2,643
I	Peabody Auditorium	Daytona Beach	49	2,521
J	Mary McLeod Bethune Performing Arts Center	Daytona Beach	51	2,500
K	Times-Union Center Jacoby Symphony Hall	Jacksonville	37	2,400
L	Bob Carr Theater	Orlando	92	2,360
M	Florida Theatre	Jacksonville	37	1,900
N	The Venue at UCF	Orlando	94	1,800
O	Thrasher-Horne Center	Orange Park	31	1,725
P	Plaza Live Orlando	Orlando	92	1,255
Q	The Beacham	Orlando	93	1,129
R	Sharon L. Morse Performing Arts Center	The Villages	74	1,022
S	Flagler Auditorium	Palm Coast	34	1,000
T	<b>Ponte Vedra Concert Hall</b>	<b>Ponte Vedra Beach</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>900*</b>
U	<b>Lewis Auditorium at Flagler College</b>	<b>St. Augustine</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>815</b>
V	Reilly Arts Center	Ocala	69	810
W	Times-Union Center - Terry Theater	Jacksonville	37	609

\*Standing room only set up

Sources: Relevant Facilities, Pollstar, Johnson Consulting

Within 100 miles, the St. Augustine Amphitheatre is one of only two outdoor venues. The Daily’s Place Amphitheater, located in Jacksonville, has a larger stage, larger seating capacity, and is located closer to the population center of the Jacksonville market, so it may be a more attractive offer for some events. However, it only does formal bookings, not commercial or community rentals, which is a barrier that may allow the SAAMP some competitive leverage. In addition, there are some target demographics for which the St. Johns County market may be more attractive. There are a few key players in the larger indoor facility market, but none of which are within St. Johns County’s primary market. The seating capacity and set up efforts for the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall are a significant hindrance to the venue’s ability to attract more shows and events. A larger indoor venue inventory is lacking, most notably within St. Augustine. The portion of St. Johns County in and around St. Augustine stands to benefit significantly from the expansion, improvement, or addition of cultural and performing arts facilities. Figure 2-3 illustrates a map of this regional facility inventory, which highlights facilities considered to be competitive with the St. Johns County facilities.

**Figure 2-3**



As shown, this map highlights facilities considered to be competitive with the St. Johns County facilities. It emphasizes the relevance of geographic proximity, venue capacity, venue configuration, and technical infrastructure in relation to market competition. The key for this map can be found in Figure 2-1. Johnson Consulting also analyzed the following case studies of arts and cultural facilities and markets that are comparable to that of St. Johns County, which provided insight into facilities, operations, demand, and budgets:

- Ruth Eckerd Hall and Capitol Theatre - Clearwater, Florida
- Arvada Center - Arvada, Colorado
- Peace Center - Greenville, South Carolina

**RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROJECTIONS**

Johnson Consulting and DLR Group partnered to arrive at two development recommendations for arts and cultural facilities in St. Johns County. These recommendations are summarized in Figure 2-4 below.

**Figure 2-4**

St. Johns County Performing Arts & Cultural Facilities Program Recommendation Summary	
	Capacity
<b>Recommendation #1:</b>	
Expanded PVCH	1,300 attendees
<b>Recommendation #2:</b>	
Main Theater	500 seats
Black Box	200 seats
<i>Source: Johnson Consulting</i>	

**Recommendation #1** calls for an expansion of the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall (“PVCH”), as follows:

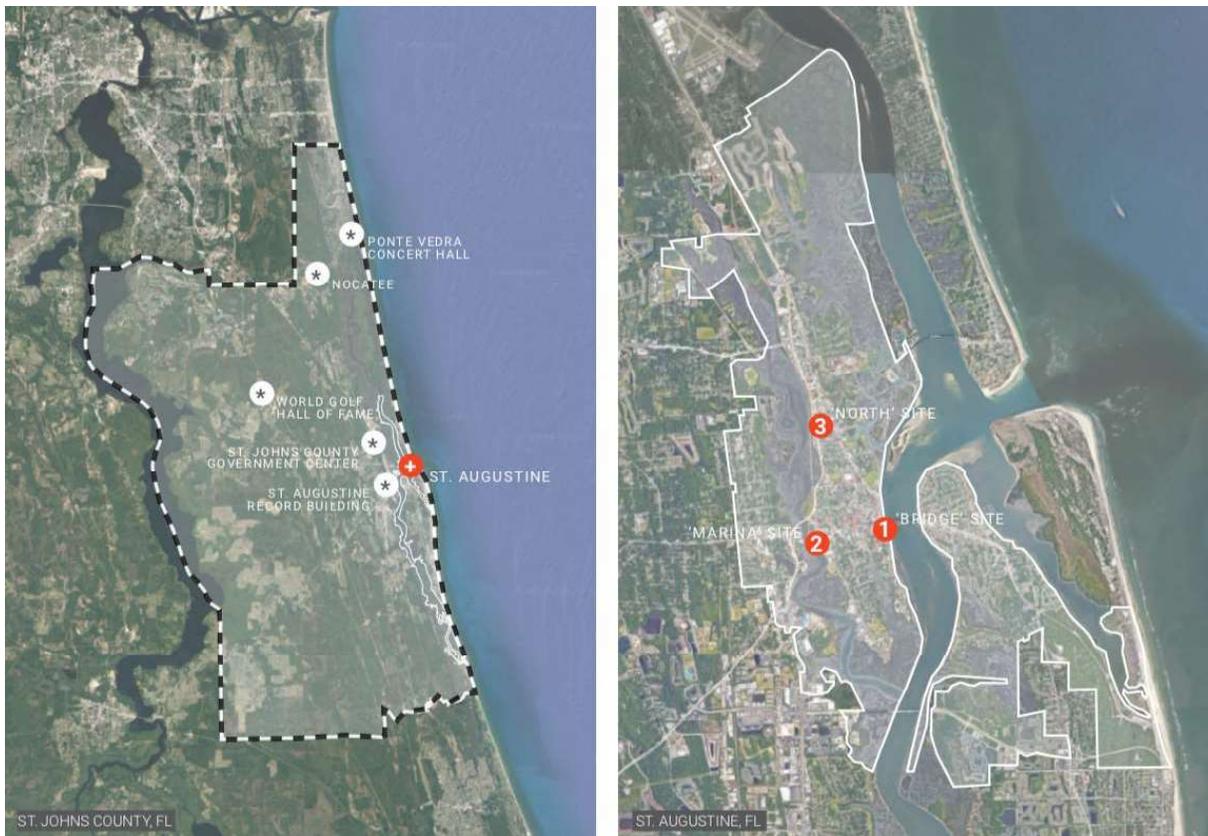
- **Concert Hall:** addition of a seating balcony, increasing total capacity to 1,300 and creating opportunities for VIP areas.
- **Expansion:** addition of approximately 14,000 square feet of rehearsal, education, and cultural facilities, such as classrooms, studios, and gallery spaces

**Recommendation #2** calls for the development of a new performing arts center in St. Johns County (“SJCPAC”), to include:

- **500-seat main theater venue**, including adequate wing space, fly system, orchestra pit, loading dock, dressing rooms, and scene and costume shop
- **200-seat black box venue**
- **Lobby and pre-function space** that supports event activity for both venues and can also be used for gallery and function space
- **Rehearsal space** that mirrors the main stage venue's stage
- Educational **studios and classrooms**
- Shared **office space** for arts organizations and administration

After screening the entire County, **three representative sites**, as shown in Figure 2-5, were selected as potential locations for the SJCPAC in St. Augustine that would best utilize existing infrastructure and enhance the existing tourism market:

**Figure 2-5**



‘BRIDGE’ SITE – St. Augustine – Matanzas River site at Bridge of Lions

‘MARINA’ SITE – St. Augustine – San Sebastian River site at King Street

‘NORTH’ SITE – St. Augustine – North of downtown Historic District

Johnson Consulting developed projection models from evidence-based assumptions for these two recommended facilities, which are summarized in Figure 2-6:

**Figure 2-6**

<b>St. Johns County Arts &amp; Cultural Facilities Summary of Demand and Operating Projections (Year 5)</b>			
	Ponte Vedra Concert Hall Expansion	New Theater and Black Box Venue	Combined Venues
<b># of Events</b>			
Ticketed Entertainment Events	110	70	180
Non-Entertainment Events*	23	105	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Attendance</b>			
Ticketed Entertainment Events	71,500	47,650	119,150
Non-Entertainment Events*	8,970	16,950	25,920
<b>Total</b>	<b>80,470</b>	<b>64,600</b>	<b>145,070</b>
<b>Financials</b>			
Operating Revenues	\$3,072,000	\$2,856,000	\$5,928,000
Operating Expenses**	\$2,781,000	\$2,960,000	\$5,741,000
<b>Net Operating Income (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$291,000</b>	<b>(\$104,000)</b>	<b>\$187,000</b>

\*Including seminars, lectures, meetings, graduations, corporate events, social functions, et cetera.

\*\*Including Reserve for Replacement.

Source: Johnson Consulting

Recommendation #1’s expanded PVCH is expected to operate in the upper quartile of similar national facilities, in terms of demand. While many variables are still to be defined, there is a genesis of good events in the marketplace and if the strong management and entertainment culture of the area is maintained, the facility should continue to be very attractive and competitive. Given that the management team works to adequately penetrate the regional market and attract a high enough caliber of entertainment acts, the expanded facility will be much better equipped to host these higher caliber events and will therefore have enhanced revenue earning potential.

Recommendation #2’s new performing arts and black box venue, referred to as the SJCPAC, will allow the County to capture some of the additional arts and cultural activities that this venue will attract. The SJCPAC

represents a significant investment in quality of life for the residents of St. Johns County and also serves as a tool to increase tourism and economic development of the County.

Operationally, the expanded PVCH is expected to continue to have a positive net operating income, which will grow over time with demand and utilization. The SJCPAC will require a modest annual subsidy in the initial years of operation, which will gradually decrease as the utilization ramps up. However, as previously noted, a portion of an annual operating subsidy could possibly be reduced with higher amounts of private donations received by the SJCPAC through the marketing efforts of staff, local officials, and arts and cultural organizations in the area.

**ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACTS**

The expansion of the PVCH and the development of the SJCPAC will generate significant economic and fiscal impacts both in terms of operation and construction. Figure 2-7 presents a summary of the combined economic and fiscal impact of these proposed arts and cultural facilities.

**Figure 2-7**

St. Johns County Arts & Cultural Facilities PVCH Expansion and SJCPAC Summary of Combined Economic and Fiscal Impact		
	ONE-TIME Impact of Construction	ANNUAL Impact of Facility Operations
<b>On-Site Construction Jobs (FTE)</b>	520	
Construction Labor Wages	15,620,000	
<b>Economic Impact</b>		
Direct Spending	\$8,328,000	\$30,340,000
Indirect Spending	\$3,170,000	\$11,560,000
Induced Spending	\$3,430,000	\$12,510,000
<b>Total Spending</b>	<b>\$14,928,000</b>	<b>\$54,410,000</b>
Increased Earnings	\$4,150,000	\$15,110,000
Employment (in FTE Jobs)*	70	273
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>		
State Sales Tax	\$895,000	\$3,265,000
County Sales Tax	\$75,000	\$272,000
City Sales Tax	\$0	\$0
Tourist Development Tax		\$180,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$970,000</b>	<b>\$3,717,000</b>

\*Reflects increased employment in the area as a result of (or commonly referred to as "ripple effect" from) direct spending.

Source: Johnson Consulting

As shown, total annual economic impact of combined facility operations is estimated to generate over \$54 million in spending, over \$15 million in increased earnings, and approximately 273 FTE jobs. Total annual fiscal impact of facility operations will generate over \$3.7 million tax revenues.

The combined one-time impact of construction for these facilities is estimated to generate nearly \$15 million in spending, over \$4.1 million in increased earnings, and 70 FTE jobs. Total combined fiscal impact of construction equates to nearly \$1 million in tax revenues.

These facilities will stimulate a considerable amount of spending, increased earnings, employment, and fiscal revenues. While the quantitative impacts are impressive, there are also a variety of qualitative impacts that will be generated by these facilities. The expansion of the PVCH and the development of SJCPAC will expand the offering of affordable entertainment activity in the local area as well as spur economic growth via ancillary private sector development. These investments will also bolster the County's ability to attract people from outside the region, promote the identity of the market, and develop an ever-expanding portfolio of repeat events. Such venues will continue to play host to tens of thousands of residents and visitors in the region annually. Overall, these projects represent strategic investments that will be pivotal in bolstering the County's tourism draw and elevating the quality of life for current and future residents.

# APPENDIX D

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## *Letters of Support*



February 20, 2023

Ms. Joy Andrews  
County Administrator  
St. Johns County Board of County  
Commissioners 500 San Sebastian View  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

Dear Administrator Andrews:

Thanks for contacting us regarding the parcel of land for the State Black History Museum. We appreciate your efforts to inform the Foundation of your progress on this initiative. Previously, we shared that we must ensure that the parcel chosen by the State does not impede the most desirable development of the property, and that is still our position.

Since our last meeting the Foundation has partnered with a major developer to help us decide on the best future use of the land. The developer has made several recommendations that must be discussed before we can decide on the location and size of the parcel for a museum. We look forward to further discussion about the details of designating a parcel for the State Black History Museum. Please contact Mr. Hord to schedule a meeting when convenient.

Respectfully,

*Walt Weatherington*

Walter Weatherington, Sr.  
Chairman  
Florida Memorial University Foundation



November 21, 2023

Joy Andrews  
County Commissioner  
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners  
500 San Sebastian View  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

Dear Commissioner Andrews,

I trust this letter finds you well, and I appreciate your thoughtful communication regarding establishing the State Black History Museum. We share your enthusiasm for this significant initiative and are excited about the prospect of forging a meaningful partnership between the Florida Memorial University Foundation and the State.

I want to express our sincere gratitude for considering the Florida Memorial University Foundation as a critical partner in this historic endeavor. We fully recognize the cultural and economic impact such a museum can have, and we are eager to contribute to its success.

Your vision of securing a strategic parcel of land within West Augustine for the museum aligns seamlessly with our commitment to preserving and honoring the rich cultural heritage of the First Coast region. We are enthusiastic about the potential collaboration to acquire a parcel ranging from 20 to 40 acres at a market rate. This location, integrated with the university's history, not only enhances the cultural significance of the museum but also dovetails with our goals of contributing to revitalizing the surrounding area.

Moreover, we appreciate your anticipation that the state will provide the necessary appropriations for both the construction and operation of the State Black History Museum. We share your belief that the museum will serve as a cultural and educational hub, attracting visitors and positioning West Augustine as a destination with historical significance.

As we embark on this journey, we must ensure that the parcel chosen by the State does not impede the most desirable development of the property.

In that light, we are willing to engage in further discussions to address potential challenges and explore ways to collaborate effectively for additional benefits. Our intent is clear - to work together to make the State Black History Museum a reality while ensuring that the chosen parcel supports the overall development goals for the benefit of the Florida Memorial University Foundation.

We look forward to further discussing this proposal's details and collaboratively shaping a partnership that will leave a legacy for Florida Memorial University, the county, and the state.

Sincerely,



Horace Hord  
Vice President/Chair-Elect

15800 NW 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Miami Gardens, FL 33054, (954)294-9759



# Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32307-3100

LARRY ROBINSON, Ph.D., PRESIDENT

TELEPHONE: (850) 599-3225  
FAX: (850) 561-2152  
TDD: (850) 561-2784

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

December 5, 2023

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
[FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

I am writing to express my wholehearted endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic Saint Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education, and inspiration for our community and beyond.

I firmly believe that a State African American Museum will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and understanding. It will celebrate the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (850) 599-3225 or [larry.robinson@famuedu](mailto:larry.robinson@famuedu).

Sincerely,

Larry Robinson, Ph.D.  
President

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force** [FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic Saint Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education, and inspiration for our community and beyond.

As a representative of **Fort Mose Historical Society**, I firmly believe that a State African American Museum in our area will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and understanding. It will celebrate the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project, and I request that my support be noted and shared with all decision-makers involved in this important endeavor.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at **904-501-8299** or **email at [ceellis@bellsouth.net](mailto:ceellis@bellsouth.net)**.

Sincerely,

**Charles Ellis, President**  
**Fort Mose Historical Society**



The Anniversary to Commemorate the Civil Rights Demonstrations, Inc.

**ACCORD Freedom Trail**  
www.accordfreedomtrail.org

**ACCORD Civil Rights Museum**  
79 Bridge Street  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

**ACCORD Audio Tour**  
(904) 335-3002

The Anniversary to Commemorate the Civil Rights Demonstrations, Inc. (BKA, the 40th ACCORD) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization envisioned in 2002, established in 2003, and incorporated in 2004.

*"Remembering, Recognizing, and Honoring all those who risked their lives to attain civil rights for all and celebrating St. Augustine's pivotal role in the Civil Rights Act of 1964."*

**ACCORD Board Members**

**Dalonja Duncan**, President

**Cora Tyson**, Vice President

**Audrey Willis**, Treasurer

**Julia Heckendorn**, Secretary

**Elizabeth Duncan**, Museum Chair

**David Nolan**, Author & Historian

**Dr. Priscilla Duncan**, Events Director

**Gwendolyn Duncan**, Pres. Emeritus

**Richard P. Burton, Sr.**, Advisor

**Yvonne McGregor**, Advisor

March 4, 2024

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Re: Support Letter for Black History Museum in West Augustine, FL

To All Concerned,

Our organization, [Anniversary to Commemorate the Civil Rights Demonstrations, Inc.](#) dba The ACCORD Freedom Trail and Civil Right Museum is the first Civil Rights Museum in the entire State of Florida. We had a soft opening in January, 2014 and a Grand Opening on July 2, 2014. This occasion took place on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Signing of the Landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. This Letter is to give our support for the proposed Black History Museum being located in West. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida, on the land owned by The Florida Memorial College which relocated to Miami Gardens, Florida many decades ago.

Our Museum and the ACCORD Freedom Trail share the many stories of the people, places, and events that took place in St. Augustine during the 1960s Demonstrations led by Dr. Robert B. Hayling, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Little was known about that Movement, but over twenty-two years ago after the interment of Mrs. Katherine Twine known as the Rosa Parks of St. Augustine, it was decided to commemorate the upcoming 2004 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary signing of Civil Rights Act. From the Street Renaming Ceremony, our first event, until now our mission has been to Remember, Recognize, and Honor all those who risked their lives to attain civil rights for all and celebrate St. Augustine's pivotal role in the passage of the Landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although there are other museums in St. Augustine, to have a Black History Museum dedicated to the entire Black American Experience in the Nation's Oldest City would be an asset to the city, County, State, and Nation. With that said, we are in support of this effort to bring the Museum to St. Augustine, Florida.

Wholeheartedly Submitted,

Dalonja Duncan, M.Ed.  
President



ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

ST. AUGUSTINE, PONTE VEDRA & THE BEACHES VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU

December 1, 2023

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

I am pleased to convey the collective enthusiasm of the St. Johns Visitors and Convention Bureau, in collaboration with Florida Memorial University, the West Augustine Community Redevelopment Area, the Accord Civil Rights Museum, the Friends of Fort Mose State Park, Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center, the City of St. Augustine, St. Johns County, and the St. Johns Cultural Council. We are excited to share the Presentation and Media Packet supporting the placement of the Florida Museum of Black History in St. Johns County, the home of Florida's most iconic historic tourism destination, St. Augustine.

In the rich tapestry of St. Johns County's history, Florida Memorial University holds a profound chapter. One of the oldest academic centers in the state, Florida Memorial University began its third incarnation in St. Augustine on September 24, 1918. Influenced by the educational model popularized by Booker T. Washington at his Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, students were encouraged to be industrious and self-sufficient, even constructing many of the campus buildings themselves.



# ST. AUGUSTINE PONTE VEDRA

FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

## ST. AUGUSTINE, PONTE VEDRA & THE BEACHES VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU

The advent of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s brought about a whirlwind of challenges and changes to St. Augustine. Students from Florida Memorial joined the efforts, participating in sit-ins, wade-ins, and swim-ins. While these events significantly influenced federal legislation, resulting in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the activism by Florida Memorial students threatened to upset the delicate relationship between the City of St. Augustine and the University.

Given this tense and uncertain situation, Dr. Royal W. Puryear oversaw the relocation of the school to Dade County in 1965. However, Florida Memorial maintained ownership of the land in St. Augustine through the decades, and this project provides the exciting opportunity to redevelop a portion of the property with reverence to its historical roots.

As part of St. Johns County's commitment to cultivating appropriate historic and cultural tourism opportunities overall, a Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for a Performing Arts Center was completed in 2019. The study provided a recommendation for a financially self-sustaining performing arts facility, which would include a 500-seat main theater with a supporting 200-seat black box theater along with pre-function space, rehearsal space, and educational studios and classrooms. The study noted that St. Johns County's "robust tourism industry induces additional demand for cultural and performing arts" and cited that "the existing larger arts facilities in the County perform very successfully."

With an existing vibrant tourism industry anchored in culture and history and a local landscape dotted with many significant landmarks of Black History, St. Johns County is the premier location for the Florida Black History Museum.



ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

ST. AUGUSTINE, PONTE VEDRA & THE BEACHES VISITORS & CONVENTION BUREAU

We recognize that our partners' contributions are what make these stories come alive, and thus St. Johns County is committed to ongoing collaboration with local organizations, as well as our neighboring cities and counties, and the State's Destination Marketing Organization, Visit Florida, to cultivate, support, and promote a Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County that is successful on day one and well into history.

We want to thank you for your time and consideration of St. Johns County as a location for this significant historical resource. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact me at 904-209-4430.

Sincerely

Susan Phillips

President & Chief Executive Officer

St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors & Convention Bureau

29 Old Mission Avenue

St. Augustine, Florida 32084

904-209-4430 (office)

SPhillips@FloridasHistoricCoast.com

February 19, 2024

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Fl 32399

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express support for the establishment of the Florida Museum of Black History in the City of St. Augustine, in St. Johns County, FL. St. Augustine's profound ties to the history of Black Floridians trace back to the courageous journey of the first Africans who sought freedom from enslavement in British colonies, ultimately finding refuge in Spanish-occupied St. Augustine and establishing Fort Mose in 1738, the first legally-sanctioned free Black settlement in the United States. Fort Mose is a living testament to the unwavering courage, resilience, and triumph intrinsic to the Black experience.

In my capacity as the Board President, I have had the privilege of collaborating closely with SJC Cultural Events, Inc., the 501c3 organization behind the award-winning St. Augustine Amphitheatre and the now iconic Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series. Since its inception in 2022, Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series has served as a beacon of cultural fusion, seamlessly intertwining music and history to create an immersive experience on the hallowed grounds of the National Historic Landmark. For two weekends every February, thousands of jazz and blues fans travel to experience the rich legacy of Black musicianship. Musical luminaries such as Gladys Knight, Wynton Marsalis, Mavis Staples, Keb Mo, Rhiannon Giddens and more perform against the backdrop of Fort Mose's centuries-old oaks. Artists and attendees alike find themselves immersed in the echoes of history.

Fort Mose Jazz and Blues Series exemplifies the potent intersection of history, music, and community – a blueprint that the Florida Museum of Black History could undoubtedly draw upon to craft its own distinctive brand of cultural programming. From captivating musical and theatrical performances to

enlightening educational events and enriching master classes, the museum would stand poised to become a vibrant hub of cultural exchange. Additionally, the potential economic benefits stemming from such programming initiatives cannot be overstated. By diversifying its offerings and fostering deeper community engagement, the museum would not only enhance its own financial sustainability but also serve as a catalyst for economic growth within the region.

As advocates for the preservation and celebration of Florida's Black heritage, SJC Cultural Events, Inc. stands ready and willing to contribute its expertise and resources to the programming of the museum, as a partner in its service to honoring Florida Black history.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dylan Rumrell', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Dylan Rumrell  
SJC Cultural Events, Inc. Board President



# Middle Passage Ceremonies & Port Markers Project

## *Remembering Ancestors*

December 30, 2023

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Ann C. Cobb: Executive Director  
Ann L. Chinn: Founder

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Shirikiana Aina Germina  
Bernice Johnson Reagon

Dear members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

### The **Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project**

**(MPCPMP)** submits this letter of support to locate the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County. Beginning in 2013, **MPCPMP** has worked with residents of the County and state to acknowledge the contributions of Africans and their descendants. Florida has the nation's richest and longest history of documented African presence. St. Johns County has the recorded birth of the first child of African descent (1604) as well as the nation's first legally sanctioned site of free Africans, Fort Mose.

Many interpret this history and truth-telling distinctly as tourist attraction; however it is much more. Establishing the Florida Black History Museum in continental North America's oldest multi-ethnic region provides the opportunity for residents and visitors to be informed about the state's rich, complex and diverse national and international story. Those who visit the museum also will experience the significance and beauty of St. Augustine and Northeast Florida's First Coast communities.

In St. Johns County and the surrounding counties, Black history is woven through 510 years of the state's story. From Jacksonville and Amelia Island to Daytona, Black History abounds. Florida Memorial University, an original HBCU, in coordination with the West Augustine Community Development Corporation, has identified the former Florida Memorial University site as an appropriate location for the museum.

We request your serious consideration of St. Johns County for this much-needed resource that will have an economic and social impact on Northeast Florida and the state.

Sincerely,

Ann Chinn, Project Director

**P.O. Box 3071 • Jacksonville, Florida 32206 • (202) 460-2446**  
**[middlepassagemarkers@gmail.com](mailto:middlepassagemarkers@gmail.com) • [www.middlepassageproject.org](http://www.middlepassageproject.org)**



Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor  
PO BOX 787  
Beaufort, SC 29901  
[www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://www.gullahgeecheecorridor.org)

January 5, 2024

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

**Executive Committee**

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Griffin Lotson  
Vice Chair, Georgia

Dawn Dawson-House  
Secretary, North Carolina

Floyd Phillips  
Treasurer, Florida

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Dawn Dawson-House  
Veronica Hemingway  
Marilyn Hemingway  
Tamara Butler, Ph.D.  
Damon Fordham

**Georgia**

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Dionne Hoskins-Brown, Ph.D.

**North Carolina**

Sean Palmer  
Michelle Lanier

**Florida**

Floyd Phillips  
Eugene Emory, Ph.D.  
Meredith Hardy, Ph.D.

**National Park Service**

Elisa Kunz

Dear members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

The Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission is pleased to provide this letter of support to locate the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County.

Each year, St. Johns County welcomes millions of historical and cultural tourists to experience the **significance that is America's first city. International and national visitors are drawn to St. Johns County** and the adjacent First Coast communities to partake in the natural beauty of the Northeast Florida region.

In St. Johns County and the surrounding counties, Black history is woven through all 450 plus years of that story. From Jacksonville to Daytona, Black History abounds with two of the four HCBUs having a presence in the First Coast since the late 1800s. Florida Memorial University, one of the original HCBUs, in coordination with the West Augustine Community Development Corporation have identified the site of the former Florida Memorial University in West Augustine as a historically and culturally relevant site to house the museum.

With a vibrant tourism industry anchored in culture and history and a local landscape dotted with many significant landmarks of Black History, the Northeast Florida region is the premier location for the Florida Black History Museum. We request your consideration of St. Johns County as a location for this significant historical resource that will have a regional impact on the economy for all Northeast Florida.

Kindly,

Dionne Hoskins-Brown, Chair  
GGCHCC

Cc: F. Phillips, E. Emory, A. Parson



THE  
STETSON KENNEDY  
FOUNDATION

1523 SR 13, Fruit Cove, FL 32259

February 29, 2024

Florida Black History Museum Task Force  
To Whom It May Concern:

The Stetson Kennedy Foundation supports the development of a Florida Black History Museum and urges that it should be located in St. Johns County. The proposed museum's mission parallels Stetson Kennedy's life and work.

In the 1930's Kennedy was a writer for Florida Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration. He edited the Florida slave narratives and worked with Zora Neale Hurston to gather Black folklore. In the 1940's he infiltrated the Ku Klux Klan and provided evidence of its crimes in court and to the media. In the 1950's and '60's Kennedy was a journalist for the Pittsburgh Courier, one of America's leading African-American newspapers, reporting on civil rights demonstrations across the South, including the 1963-64 demonstrations in St. Augustine. In 2005 Kennedy was named to the Florida Artists Hall of Fame.

We support locating the proposed Florida Black History Museum near St. Augustine on the 110-acre former location of Florida Memorial College. This site offers three significant features important to visitors: authenticity, accessibility, and comfort.

The Florida Memorial College location is already an historic site. The college was located there from 1918 to 1968. Its faculty has included Zora Neale Hurston and Rosamond Johnson, who wrote the music to *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, commonly known as the "Negro national anthem." Its alumni include civil rights leader Harry T. Moore.

St. Augustine holds special significance in Florida's Black history, including the first African-descent soldiers and families that came with Pedro Menendez in 1565, the first free Black settlement Fort Mose in Spanish Florida in the 1700's, Ray Charles's education here in the 1930's, and the Civil Rights demonstrations, led by Dr. Martin Luther King and Andrew Young, resulting in the passage of the 1964 civil rights act.

The Florida Memorial College location is about three miles from downtown St. Augustine's Black history sites. The Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center, housed in the one-hundred-year old Excelsior School building, features displays of Black history from colonization to the present. It was named the "best small-town museum" in the 2024 USA TODAY Readers' Choice awards. The nearby St. Benedict the Moor School, where in 1916 white nuns were arrested for educating Black students, is being developed as a community center.

Downtown St. Augustine's numerous civil rights sites are identified by historic markers. They include the ACCORD Civil Rights Museum and the St. Augustine Plaza Slave Market, where the 1964 civil rights demonstrations were held.

The Florida Memorial College site is about five miles from Ft. Mose State Park, the site of the first free black town in Spanish Florida. Its fortifications and village are currently being reconstructed. Each year the Fort Mose Historical Society hosts national jazz performers for a music festival to support reconstruction of the Black fort.

The Florida Memorial College site is located at the western edge of an historic Black neighborhood. Adding to the historical significance of that neighborhood, the St. Johns County Commission has approved moving to that area a home that was vandalized by a white mob that believed that Dr. King was the family's guest.

Annually the black community of Armstrong celebrates its Gullah Geechee heritage as the southern-most location of Gullah-Geechee culture. Nearby, the Bethune-Cookman College established its extension campus, serving students in St. Johns County and throughout Northeast Florida.

There are large tracts of land to the north and west of the Florida Memorial College site for future expansion of the museum and the development of amenities for visitors. It is located across from a county park with a large playground for young children.

Accessibility and comfort are key factors in choosing the museum site. The Florida Memorial College site located about five miles from the I-95 exits on SR 16 and SR 207, (about an 8-10 minute drive in mid-day traffic). At the I-95 and SR-16 exit there are twelve hotels/motels and more than a dozen restaurants.

The proposed site is about two miles (less than a 5-minute drive) from US-1, where the City of St. Augustine will construct an additional parking garage. This location is near two new, large hotels and the St. Augustine Winery, where the two tour trolley companies pick up and drop off passengers for tours of the downtown.

St. Johns County has well-established regional and national marketing as a historic destination. The St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra, & the Beaches Visitor and Convention Bureau and the St. Johns Cultural Council assist dozens of local organizations and attractions to publicize their programs and events, including Nights of Lights that brings tens of thousands of visitors to the area from November to February.

Locating the Florida Black History Museum in a city rich in African-American culture will increase visitation to St. Augustine's many Black history attractions and, in turn, is marketed by them. Visitors to the state museum may seek deeper understanding of events and people displayed there by visiting local sites. Conversely, visitors to local Black history attractions may seek a broader understanding of Florida's African-American history by visiting the state museum.

St. Augustine's many historic sites and history-related organizations have entertained and informed visitors for more than a century. Its hotels, motels, and bed-and breakfast inns accommodate millions of visitors each year. Its numerous and varied restaurants add to visitors' enjoyment of the ancient city.

The Stetson Kennedy Foundation applauds establishing the Florida Black History Museum and is prepared to support and participate in telling Florida's African-American story.

Yours sincerely,



Sandra Parks, Chairman  
Stetson Kennedy Foundation



## St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Office of the County Administrator

December 1, 2023

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

I am thrilled to convey the collective enthusiasm of St. Johns County, in collaboration with Florida Memorial University, the West Augustine Community Redevelopment Area, the Accord Civil Rights Museum, the Friends of Fort Mose State Park, Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center, the City of St. Augustine, the St. Johns County Visitors and Convention Bureau, and the St. Johns Cultural Council. We are excited to share the Presentation and Media Packet supporting the placement of the Florida Museum of Black History in St. Johns County, the home of Florida's most iconic historic tourism destination, St. Augustine.

In the rich tapestry of St. Johns County's history, Florida Memorial University holds a profound chapter. One of the oldest academic centers in the state, Florida Memorial University began its third incarnation in St. Augustine on September 24, 1918. Influenced by the educational model popularized by Booker T. Washington at his Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, students were encouraged to be industrious and self-sufficient, even constructing many of the campus buildings themselves.

The advent of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s brought about a whirlwind of challenges and changes to St. Augustine. Students from Florida Memorial joined the efforts, participating in sit-ins, wade-ins, and swim-ins. While these events significantly influenced federal legislation, resulting in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the activism by Florida Memorial students threatened to upset the delicate relationship between the City of St. Augustine and the University.

Given this tense and uncertain situation, Dr. Royal W. Puryear oversaw the relocation of the school to Dade County in 1965. However, Florida Memorial maintained ownership of the land in St. Augustine through the decades, and this project provides the exciting opportunity to redevelop a portion of the property with reverence to its historical roots.

As part of St. Johns County's commitment to cultivating appropriate historic and cultural tourism opportunities overall, a Market Analysis and Feasibility Study for a Performing Arts Center was completed in 2019. The study provided a recommendation for a financially self-sustaining performing arts facility, which would include a 500-seat main theater with a supporting 200-seat black box theater along with pre-function space, rehearsal space, and educational studios and classrooms. The study noted that St. Johns County's "robust tourism industry induces additional demand for cultural and performing arts" and cited that "the existing larger arts facilities in the County perform very successfully."



## St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners

Office of the County Administrator

With an existing vibrant tourism industry anchored in culture and history and a local landscape dotted with many significant landmarks of Black History, St. Johns County is the premier location for the Florida Black History Museum.

We recognize that our partners' contributions are what make these stories come alive, and thus St. Johns County is committed to ongoing collaboration with local organizations, as well as our neighboring cities and counties, and the State's Destination Marketing Organization, Visit Florida, to cultivate, support, and promote a Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County that is successful on day one and well into history.

We want to thank you for your time and consideration of St. Johns County as a location for this significant historical resource. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact me anytime at 904-209-0530, or [jqandrews@sjcfl.us](mailto:jqandrews@sjcfl.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joy Andrews", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Joy Andrews  
County Administrator



January 30, 2024

R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Re: Letter of Support for The Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Task Force Members:

The City of St. Augustine is pleased to provide this letter in support of establishing The Florida Museum of Black History in St. Augustine, Florida on the site of the former Florida Memorial College. The museum would bring great value to the citizens in St. Augustine and St. Johns County and would help to further expand the deep history of Black and African Americans in Florida.

The beginning of African American history in the United States can be traced back to St. Augustine when Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrived from Spain in September 1565 with 800 colonists including fifty Africans both free and enslaved. The Africans brought by Menéndez became an integral part of America's first colony.

In 1738 Governor Manuel de Montiano granted land for free Africans and fugitive slaves to build a settlement called Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, now known as Fort Mose. This settlement became the first legally sanctioned free Black town and is a critically important site for Black American history.

Under Spanish colonial rule, there were free and enslaved people of African descent living in St. Augustine. The Adams-Onís Treaty recognized the rights of free African Americans; however, laws were soon passed infringing on the rights of freedmen. According to credible sources, the Emancipation Proclamation was first publicly read in St. Augustine. Emancipation led to a deepening of segregation laws known as Jim Crow.

As St. Augustine was preparing to celebrate its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Civil Rights movement brought Southern Christian Leadership Conference leaders Andrew Young, Hosea Williams, Rev. C.T. Vivian, and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to lead nonviolent campaign efforts in St. Augustine to bring national attention to the struggle. The events of the summer of 1964 in St. Augustine are widely credited for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

I strongly urge your support for establishing The Florida Museum of Black History in St. Augustine.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Sikes-Kline, Mayor/Commissioner



## OFFICE OF MAYOR DONNA DEEGAN

ST. JAMES BUILDING  
117 WEST DUVAL STREET, SUITE 400  
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

PH: (904) 255-5000  
FAX: (904) 255-5032  
[www.coj.net](http://www.coj.net)

February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

The City of Jacksonville is pleased to provide this letter of support for St. Johns County as the location of the Florida Museum of Black History.

With a vibrant tourism industry anchored in culture and history and a landscape brimming with significant Black History sites, Northeast Florida is the premier location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

A visit to the many historical sites in the region will make the stories shared in the Florida Museum of Black History come alive for the patrons. Jacksonville offers many of these unique historical sites for visitors to explore including the Ritz Theater and Museum, Norman Studios and Kingsley Plantation, all located within a short drive of St. Johns County.

Its central location on the First Coast makes St. Johns County an ideal location for the Florida Museum of Black History. The proposed St. Johns County site is easily accessed from both the I-95 corridor and US-1 which would make both the Museum and the surrounding historical sites appealing day trip attractions, encouraging visitors to explore more and stay in the region longer.

We sincerely hope the Florida Museum of Black History Task force will give due consideration to locating the Museum in St. Johns County. We are confident that the collective resources of the region will make St. Johns County a successful location for the Museum and provide the visitors to and residents of Northeast Florida with an accessible and memorable Black History experience.

Sincerely,

Donna Deegan  
Mayor



Serving the communities of Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns Counties

100 Festival Park Avenue  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
☎ (904) 279-0880  
📠 (904) 279-0881  
🌐 www.nefrc.org  
✉ info@nefrc.org

***Bringing Communities Together***

March 12, 2024

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

On behalf of the Northeast Florida Regional Council, I am pleased to provide this letter of support to locate the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County.

Each year, St. Johns County welcomes millions of historical and cultural tourists to experience the significance that is America's first city. International and national visitors are drawn to St. Johns County and the adjacent First Coast communities like Palm Coast to partake in the natural beauty of the Northeast Florida region. The tourism industry across Northeast Florida therefore is a significant economic driver sustaining many of the local governments in the region.

In St. Johns County and the surrounding counties, black history is woven through all 450 plus years of that story. From Jacksonville to Daytona, Black History abounds with three of the four HBCUs having a presence in the First Coast since the late 1800s. Florida Memorial University, one of the original HBCUs, in coordination with the West Augustine Community Development Corporation have identified the site of the former Florida Memorial University in West Augustine as a historically and culturally relevant site to house the museum.

With a vibrant tourism industry anchored in culture and history and a local landscape dotted with many significant landmarks of Black History, the Northeast Florida Region is the premier location for the Florida Black History Museum. We request your consideration of St. Johns County as a location for this significant historical resource that will have a regional impact on the economy for all Northeast Florida.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Payne, AICP  
Chief Executive Officer

**Follow Us.**



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



**JAA**

**Jacksonville  
Aviation  
Authority**

14201 Pecan Park Road  
Jacksonville, Florida 32218

January 31, 2024

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
[FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Black History Museum Task Force:

It is with great enthusiasm that I share this letter of support for the establishment of the Florida Black History Museum in historic St. Johns County.

Each month, the Jacksonville Aviation Authority (JAA) welcomes an average of more than 300,000 arriving passengers at Jacksonville International Airport (JAX) for both business and leisure travel. Developing the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County would establish a significant cultural resource that is accessible in under one hour's drive from the airport. Not only would the Museum be an interesting stop for passengers traveling from JAX already, but it may incentivize additional travel through our facility.

St. Johns County would provide easy access for travelers and Florida residents alike. In doing so, a museum there would help to support wide-spread awareness and understanding of the significant African American culture and heritage in the Northeast Florida region.

St. Johns County has been a center for Black History in the region throughout the centuries. The JAA would be proud to share with the passengers arriving at JAX that a significant historical and cultural resource, the Florida Black History Museum, is located just a short drive away.

Please consider this letter as my endorsement for establishing the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County.

Sincerely,

Mark VanLoh  
Chief Executive Officer



February 1, 2024

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
[FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

The Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT) is thrilled to provide this letter of support for the establishment of the Florida Black History Museum in historic St. Johns County.

Just a short drive north of St. Johns County, JAXPORT offers visitors and residents alike year-round access to four-day and five-day Carnival Cruise Line cruises that tour The Bahamas. Developing the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County would establish a significant cultural resource that is accessible in under an hour from JAXPORT by both the I-95 corridor and US-1. The proximity and ease of access to a Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County would result in an appealing and accessible day trip attraction for visitors and residents on their way to and from a JAXPORT-based cruise to The Bahamas, a destination which has its own unique role in Florida's Black History.

St. Johns County offers an accessible historic central location that lends itself to telling the story of Florida's Black History in a manner that engages visitors and residents in the surrounding communities and provides a meaningful positive impact on the region's economy. Thus, we hope the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force will consider St. Johns County as the location for this significant historical resource.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel K. Bean".

Daniel K. Bean, Chairman  
JAXPORT Board of Directors



February 5, 2024

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
[FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

JAXUSA Partnership is pleased to provide this letter of support for the establishment of the Florida Black History Museum in historic St. Johns County.

JAXUSA serves a region comprised of seven unique and thriving counties, which include Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties, all of which work collaboratively together to attract businesses and labor. Although tourism is not a target industry for JAXUSA, we do recognize that tourism is one of the primary economic drivers across Northeast Florida. Developing the Florida Black History Museum in a regionally central location, such as St. Johns County, creates an appealing and accessible day trip attraction for visitors to the region, which in turn enhances and supports tourism in Northeast Florida. Visitors to the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County could easily visit significant sites like Fort Mose in St. Johns County, Norman Studios in Duval County and American Beach in Nassau County.

JAXUSA believes that St. Johns County is well-suited to successfully support a regionally significant cultural resource like the Florida Black History Museum.

We hope the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force will consider St. Johns County's proposal to make St. Augustine the location for this significant cultural resource that would have a meaningful, positive impact on the economy of the Northeast Florida.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aundra L. Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a loop at the end of the last name.

Aundra Wallace  
JAXUSA Partnership, President  
904-864-0616 (M)  
[awallace@jaxua.org](mailto:awallace@jaxua.org)



# City of PALM COAST

Office of the Mayor

160 Lake Avenue  
Palm Coast, FL 32164  
386-986-3710

November 30, 2023

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

The City of Palm Coast is pleased to provide this letter of support for St. Johns County as the location of the Florida Black History Museum.

Tourism is one of the primary economic drivers across Northeast Florida and St. Johns County is centrally located on the First Coast. Developing the Florida Black History Museum in a regionally central location that is easy to access from both the I-95 corridor and US-1 creates an appealing and accessible day trip attraction for visitors already staying in the Northeast Florida area. The central location and easy access of St. Johns County would also allow for the regional stories of the area to be shared in a manner that encourages visitors to the museum to explore black history sites in the neighboring cities and counties, like the City of Palm Coast.

Therefore, placing the Florida Black History Museum in St. Johns County could help to develop tourism across the region by encouraging visitors to further explore Northeast Florida and even stay an extra day in the destination.

With a vibrant tourism industry anchored in culture and history and a landscape brimming with significant landmarks of Black History, the Northeast Florida region is the premier location for the Florida Black History Museum and St. Johns County is an accessible central location in the region.

Therefore, we respectfully request your consideration of St. Johns County as a location for this significant historical resource, which will have a regional impact on the economy of Northeast Florida.

Sincerely,

David Alfin  
Mayor of the City of Palm Coast





November 3, 2023

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express my strong endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic St. Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education and inspiration for our communities and region.

As a representative of United Way of St Johns County, I believe that a State African American Museum in this community will serve as a beacon of culture and understanding. I can see the Museum celebrating the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promoting diversity and encouraging more unity among all citizens in this community.

Please consider this letter as my formal endorsement of the project and I ask that my support be noted.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 904.673.9000.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark LeMaire".

Mark LeMaire

President

United Way of St. Johns County

mark.lemaire@unitedway-sjc.org



## Alton Green Memorial AL Post 194

For God and Country

CMDR-Derry Greene 1st Vice-Robt Bush 2nd Vice-Sam Sanks Adjutant-Jim Crutchfield Finance-Lawson Dukes Chaplain-Bob Osterfeld  
Judge Advocate Greg White Sgt At Arms-Dwight Swearnigen Exec Board CB Williams SAL Cmdr-Joe Logan ALR Dir-Pop Terry ALA Pres-Bridgette Greene

1029 Pearl St. St. Augustine, Florida 32084 (904) 829-8189 [www.falpost194.com](http://www.falpost194.com)

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force [FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express the American Legion Post 194's wholehearted endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic Saint Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education, and inspiration for our community and beyond.

As a representative of Alton Green Memorial Post 194, my fellow comrades and I firmly believe that a State African American Museum in our area will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and understanding. It will celebrate the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project, and I request that my support be noted and shared with all decision-makers involved in this important endeavor.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at **the above**.

Sincerely,

**ROBERT BUSH, US Navy rt'd**  
**Commander**

## Willis, Dwala

---

**From:** Malinda Everson <director@habitatstjohns.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 1, 2023 3:27 PM  
**To:** FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com  
**Subject:** State African American Museum

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic Saint Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education, and inspiration for our community members as well as those visiting St. Augustine.

As a representative of Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County, I firmly believe that a State African American Museum in our area will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and understanding. It will celebrate the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project, and I request that my support be noted and shared with all decision-makers involved in this important endeavor.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 904-599-2220.

### Malinda Everson

Executive Director  
Habitat for Humanity of St. Augustine/St. Johns County  
7 Hopkins Street, St. Augustine, FL 32084  
office: (904) 826-3252, ext. 2003  
[www.habitatstjohns.org](http://www.habitatstjohns.org)



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# DIOCESE OF ST. AUGUSTINE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

THE MOST REVEREND ERIK T. POHLMEIER

January 2, 2024

Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

It is with great honor that I write this letter of recommendation for St. John's County as the site of the Florida Black History Museum. The rich history of the City of St. Augustine includes triumphs and failures in our country's treatment of people of African descent. As the current Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine, my perspective is through the Catholic lens in particular. My comments will focus on this part of the story of Black history in Florida.

In 1866 Bishop Verot of Le Puy, France recruited the Sisters of Saint Joseph from his home city to come to the St. Augustine. Their express mission was to educate the children of Color as they began a new role in society following the Civil War. The sisters arrived to face many challenges that were part of life in 19<sup>th</sup> century Florida. The commitment of their lives to learning a new language and adapting to new circumstances reflects their desire to protect the innate human dignity in the children they served. The Gospel is clear that people of every race should come to know Jesus Christ and their efforts served to challenge other Christians to mature in the example of Jesus' love for neighbor.

In 1916, three of the Sisters of Saint Joseph were arrested for being White and teaching children of Color. A 1913 state law was unjustly applied by Florida Governor Park Monroe Trammell and enforced by St. Johns Co. Sheriff C. Joe Perry. In May of 1916, a Judge ruled the law did not apply to private Catholic institutions. The only schools in the state at the time where White teachers were educating students of Color were Catholic schools in St. Augustine (SSJ's) and Key West (Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary) and the Daytona Literary and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls (now Bethune-Cookman University).

St. Augustine was the location of the first Black Catholic School in the State (the school became St. Benedict the Moor) built in 1898. From the Catholic perspective, the school is significant because it was funded by St. Katharine Drexel.

The outskirts of St. Augustine include the first settlement for Free Persons of Color which was also a Spanish Mission, Gracia Real de Sta. Teresa de Mose, established in 1738, although the first documented case of a person of Color escaping slavery is 1687.

A number of US Colored Troops (USCT) are buried in the cemetery on the grounds of Mission Nombre de Dios.

During the Civil Rights Movement, St. Augustine was the location of many demonstrations including a sit-in at Monson Motor Lodge Restaurant which drew Martin Luther King's participation (1964). Apparently, he stayed at St. Benedict's rectory while he was in town, but Archbishop Hurley would not let him use the property to park cars and as a staging area for city-wide demonstrations.

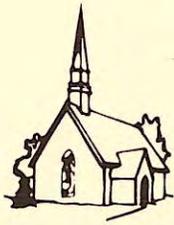
The vision of a Black history museum is to tell the stories of people who have too often been forgotten or neglected. With this letter I fully endorse this project and make the pitch for St. John's County as the perfect location. Many significant events have taken place in St. Augustine and the surrounding area, and many individual people have worked to live out their human dignity. Their stories should be told.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Erik T. Pohlmeier  
Bishop of St. Augustine

C: Katy Lockard, Director, Archives & Records Management



*Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church*  
*280 W. Duval Street. – P.O. Box 3683*  
*St. Augustine, Florida 32084*  
*(904) 829-2041*  
*Rev. Richard A. Madison Sr., Pastor*



November 22, 2023

To: Esteemed Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

I am indeed encouraged to learn of a proposal to establish a state African American Museum of History in the city of St. Augustine, Florida.

A museum of this nature will augment the established historical nature of the city, add to the cultural interest of the community, and make a significant contribution to the local tourist industry.

I humbly serve as the Pastor of Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, here in the city, and I am excited to share this news, and encourage the community in which we serve to embrace and support this endeavor.

Per submission of this letter, I hereby endorse and support the establishment of subject museum and pledge our ardent support for this project.

Thank you for your consideration of this endorsement and I stand ready to be of assistance.

I may be reached via phone (904) 708-4995.

Respectfully submitted, In Jesus' Name and Devine Spirit,

Brother Richard A. Madison, Sr, Pastor



## Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Dr. Randy Hezekiah, Jr. Pastor

Sister Chestine Bell, Church Clerk

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force [FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic Saint Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education, and inspiration for our community and beyond.

As a representative of Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church I firmly believe that a State African American Museum in our area will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and understanding. It will celebrate the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project, and I request that my support be noted and shared with all decision-makers involved in this important endeavor.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at.

**If you need any additional** information, please give me a call – 904.412.1137  
[Shilohmbc32084@gmail.com](mailto:Shilohmbc32084@gmail.com)

Best Regards!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "A. Dewey Britton, Sr.".

Pastor A. Dewey Britton, Sr.  
Pastor



**Board of Directors**

Elder Carol Britton, Vice-Chairman

Deacon Alex Jackson, Chairman of Deacons

Sister Thelma Stevens, Director of Education

Elder Cassandra Bartley, Director of Youth

Elder Emory Blake, Director of Evangelism

Elder Andrew Tate, III Director of Music

Elder Pauline Garden, Director Financial Board

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
[FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express my wholehearted endorsement and support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic Saint Augustine. This initiative has the potential to be a source of great pride, education, and inspiration for our community and beyond.

As a representative of New Mt Moriah Christian Ministry I firmly believe that a State African American Museum in our area will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and understanding. It will celebrate the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a

greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project, and I request that my support be noted and shared with all decision-makers involved in this important endeavor.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving our history and heritage. If you require any further information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at.

**If you need any additional** information, please give me a call – 904.412.1137  
[Newmtmoriah@outlook.com](mailto:Newmtmoriah@outlook.com)

Best Regards!

Pastor A. Dewey Britton, Sr.  
Chairman of the Board

Antioch Missionary Baptist Church

833 Pearl Street

St. Augustine, Fla

32084

November 1, 2023

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the establishment of an African American Museum at the historic site where the old Black College, Florida Memorial College, once stood. It is with great excitement and a profound sense of historical significance that I endorse this vital initiative, which aims to honor and preserve the rich heritage of African Americans in Florida.

The proposed African American Museum at the former Florida Memorial College site has the potential to become a cultural landmark that not only celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of African Americans but also educates and enlightens generations to come. This museum will serve as a beacon of knowledge, fostering a deeper understanding of the struggles, triumphs, and enduring legacy of African Americans in our state.

There are several compelling reasons why I wholeheartedly endorse this project:

1. **Preserving History:** The Florida Memorial College site is a place of great historical importance, with a profound legacy in African American education. By repurposing this site for a museum, we ensure that this history is not forgotten but instead celebrated and passed on to future generations.
2. **Educational Opportunity:** The African American Museum will serve as an invaluable educational resource, offering programs and exhibits that engage visitors of all ages in learning about the African American experience in Florida. It will provide a platform for dialogue and reflection, promoting a better understanding of our shared history.
3. **Cultural Enrichment:** This museum will offer a diverse range of cultural exhibits, art, and artifacts, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the rich and

multifaceted heritage of African Americans. It will be a source of inspiration and pride for our community.

4. **Tourism and Economic Development:** The museum will draw visitors from across the state and beyond, promoting tourism and contributing to the economic development of the region. It has the potential to invigorate the local economy and create jobs.
5. **Community Engagement:** The establishment of this museum is a collaborative effort, involving the collective support of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force and the broader community. This initiative underscores the unity and shared commitment to preserving and celebrating African American history.

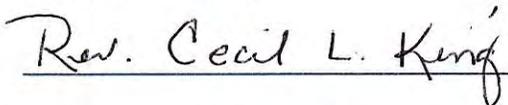
I believe that the African American Museum at the old Florida Memorial College site will be a symbol of progress and unity in our community. It will stand as a testament to our collective dedication to inclusivity, diversity, and the recognition of the vital role African Americans have played in shaping the history and culture of Florida.

Please consider this communication as Representative of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church our official endorsement of the project. I encourage all members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to rally behind this exceptional project, offering your unwavering support, expertise, and resources to ensure its success. Let us work together to create a legacy that will inspire generations to come and promote the understanding and appreciation of African American history.

Thank you for your dedication to this important cause. I look forward to witnessing the transformation of this historic site into a place of learning, celebration, and remembrance. Please do not hesitate to contact me @904-629-3827.

Sincerely,

Rev. Cecil L. King

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Cecil L. King". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Pastor- Antioch Missionary Church

**LEO C. CHASE AND ASSOCIATES, INC.,**  
262 West King Street  
St. Augustine, Florida 32084  
(904) 824-2865 fax (904) 824-2867  
"Founded on Faith.....Growing on Reputation and Service"  
leochaseandassoc@att.net

Avis C. Chase  
262 West King Street  
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

Dear Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I pen this endorsement of support for the proposal to establish a State African American Museum in Historic St. Augustine. A project of this magnitude has the potential to be a source of pride, education, and inspiration for our community and surrounding areas.

As President of Leo C. Chase and Associates, Inc., I believe that an African American Museum in our area will serve as a beacon of culture, heritage, and of great historical value. It will shed light on the remarkable contributions of African Americans to our region, promote diversity and inclusivity, and foster a greater sense of unity among all members of our community.

Please consider this communication as my official endorsement of the project, and I request that my support be noted and shared with all decision-makers involved in this important endeavor.

Thank you for your commitment to preserving our history and heritage. If further information is required or you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at the number listed in this letter of endorsement.

Sincerely,

*Avis C. Chase*

Avis C. Chase, LFD



ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®



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ACC  RD



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St. Johns County

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CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA



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JACKSONVILLE PORT AUTHORITY



United Way of  
St. Johns County



CITY OF  
ST. AUGUSTINE™  
EST. 1565



**CONTACT**

*Tera Meeks*

*Director of Tourism & Cultural Development*

*St. Johns County*

*tmeeks@sjcfl.us*

*904-209-4428*