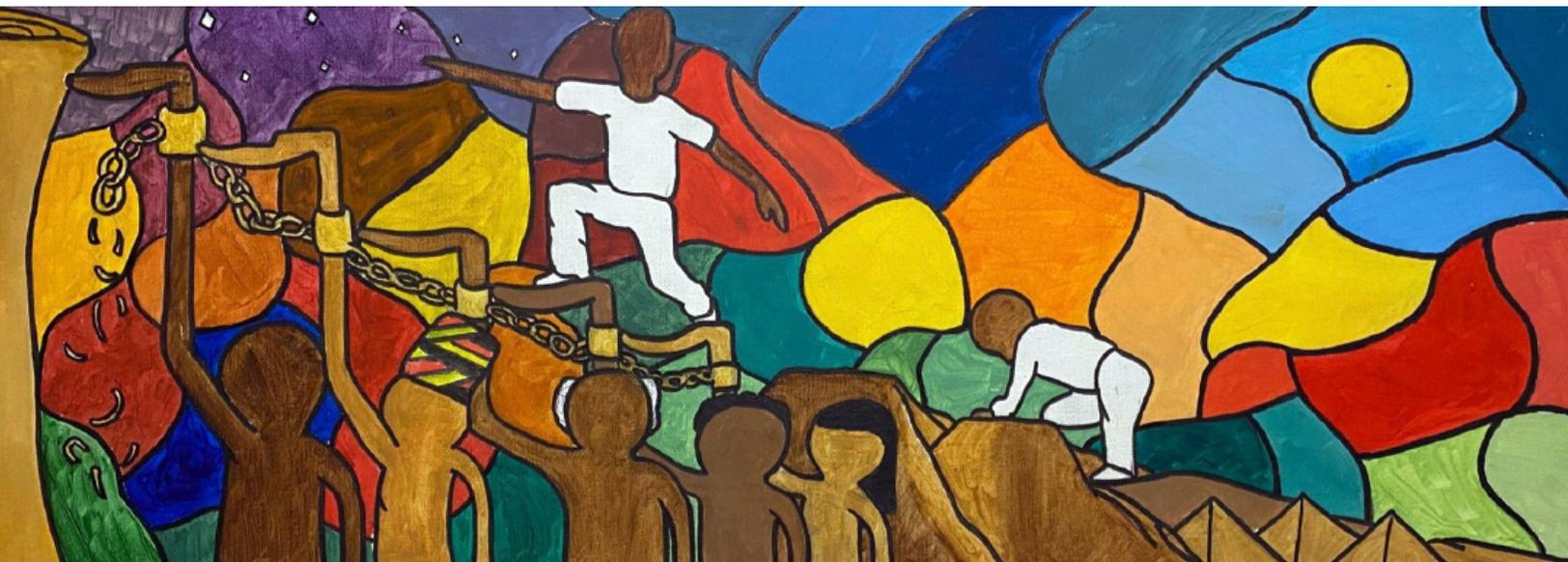


HISTORIC TOWN OF
EATONVILLE
ESTABLISHED 1887



Courtesy of Sharard X

The Town That Freedom Built...

continuing the

JOURNEY FORWARD

Presented by: **Committee to Build the Florida Black History Museum Complex**
in Eatonville, Orange County



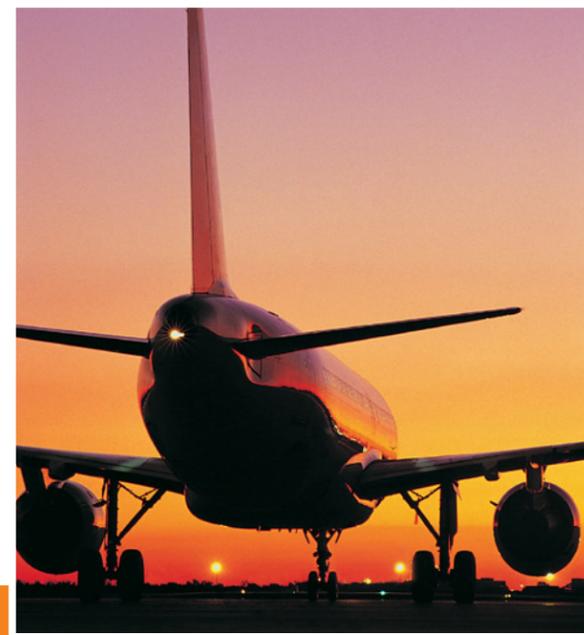
TABLE OF *Contents*

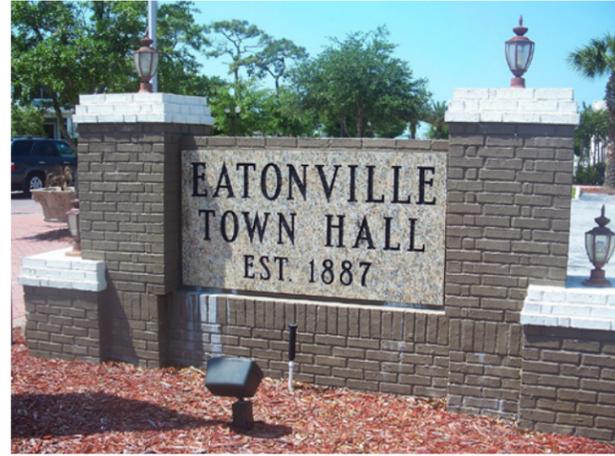
Top Reasons Why	4
Eatonville	7
What to Know	8
Diversity in Orlando	9
Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community	11
Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location	17
Letter of Intent	18
Criteria 3: Regional Economy	23
Criteria 4: Regional Demographics	25
Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure	26
Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support	32
Letters of Support	35
Criteria 7: Educational Resources	51
Contributors	60

TOP REASONS WHY



- Eatonville is the **oldest incorporated Black municipality** in the United States, established in 1887
- Centrally located in the **country's No. 1 tourism** and meeting destination
- **Highly desirable** economic and regional demographics
- **Immediate access** to major highways, airports, and rail
- Adjacent to **numerous recreational and entertainment** opportunities
- Close proximity to the country's **second-largest convention center**
- Site of the **annual ZORA! Outdoor Festival of the Arts**
- Our vision is to establish a **premier immersive cultural museum** that sets the standard for museums worldwide.





Just North of Orlando, Eatonville is the oldest Black community in the United States.



Zora Neale Hurston

EATONVILLE

Orange County, Florida, might be best known for world-famous theme parks and attractions, but the region boasts many other reasons to visit — starting with the **historic Town of Eatonville**, part of the Orlando metropolitan area and a Florida Main Street member.

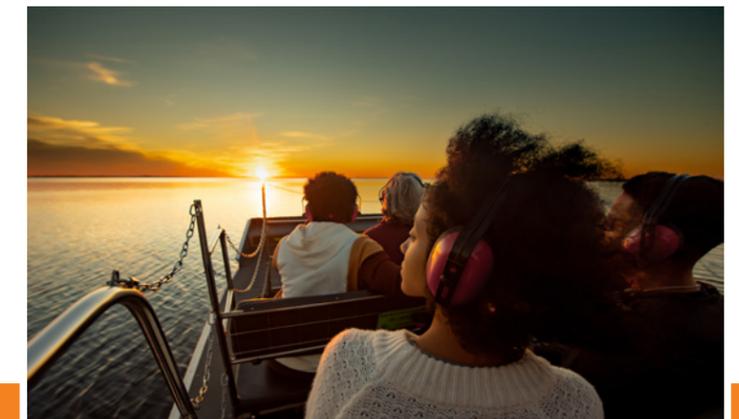
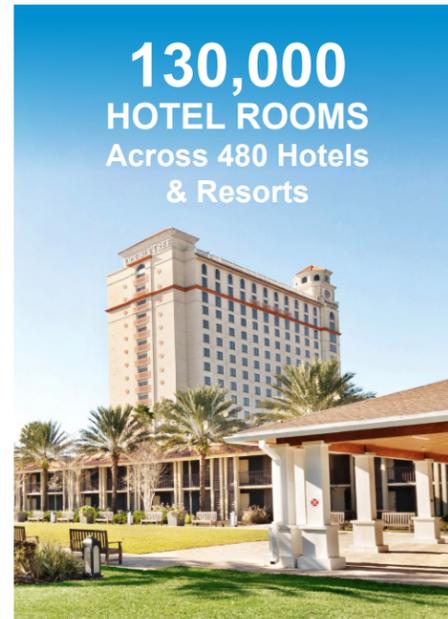
Known as the Town That Freedom Built, Eatonville was incorporated in 1887, making it the oldest incorporated Black community still in existence in the United States. It was also the childhood home of celebrated author Zora Neale Hurston (*Their Eyes Were Watching God*), whose legacy continues to be felt to this day.

Combined with 74 million global visitors to the Orlando area, a centrally located site that is within easy driving distance of all other major Florida destinations, and highly desirable regional demographics, this historic community offers an unparalleled location for this exciting project. Read on to discover the many reasons why Eatonville deserves to be the site for the Florida Museum of Black History.



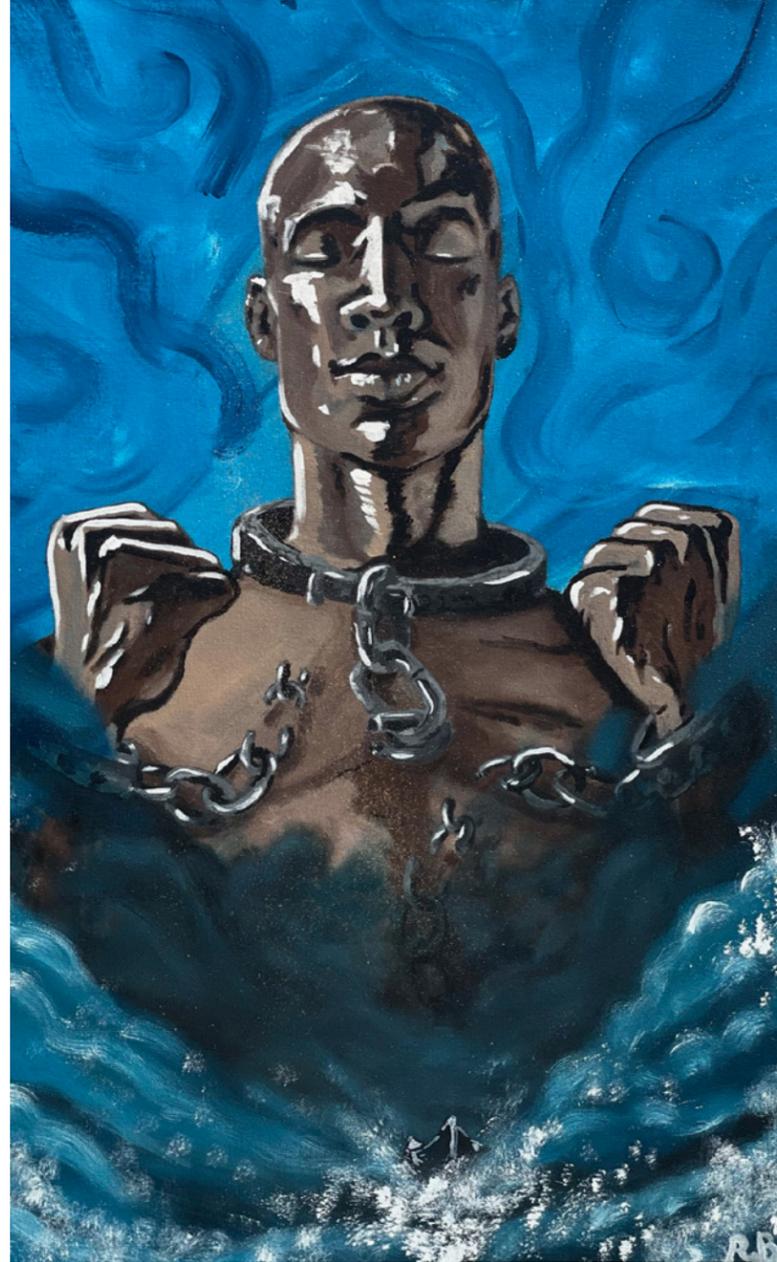
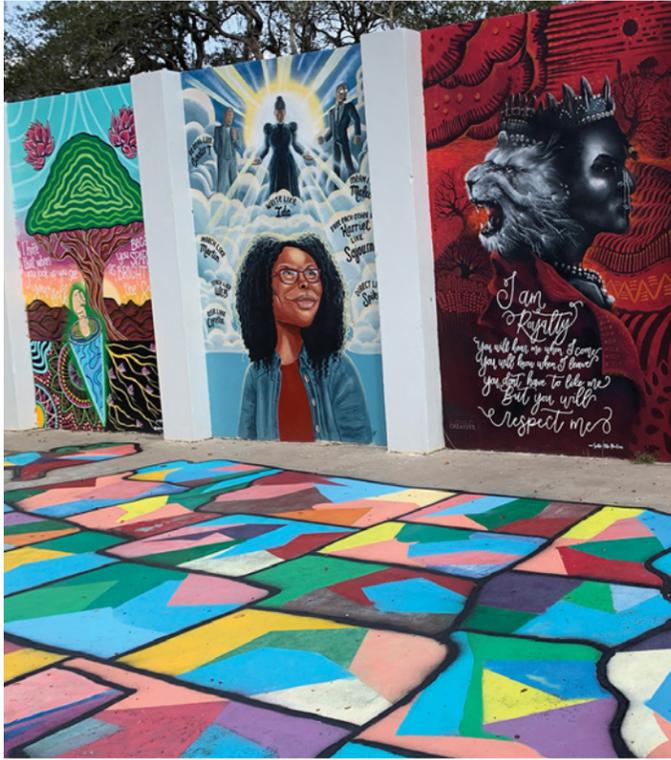
WHAT TO KNOW

THE ORLANDO AREA *and...* WHY EATONVILLE WORKS



DIVERSITY IN ORLANDO

- No matter who you are or where you come from, you're sure to feel welcome as you delight in Orlando's endless diversity.
- Orlando has earned a perfect score eight years in a row from the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index, which measures the LGBTQ+ inclusiveness of cities' laws, policies and services.
- Home to more than 7,000 Minority-Owned Businesses & 6,000+ Women-Owned Businesses



Courtesy of Ridge Bonnick – Ridge Bonnick Art

The Town of Eatonville embraces their Black cultural heritage, supporting local artists longing to continue the legacy of Black history.



Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community

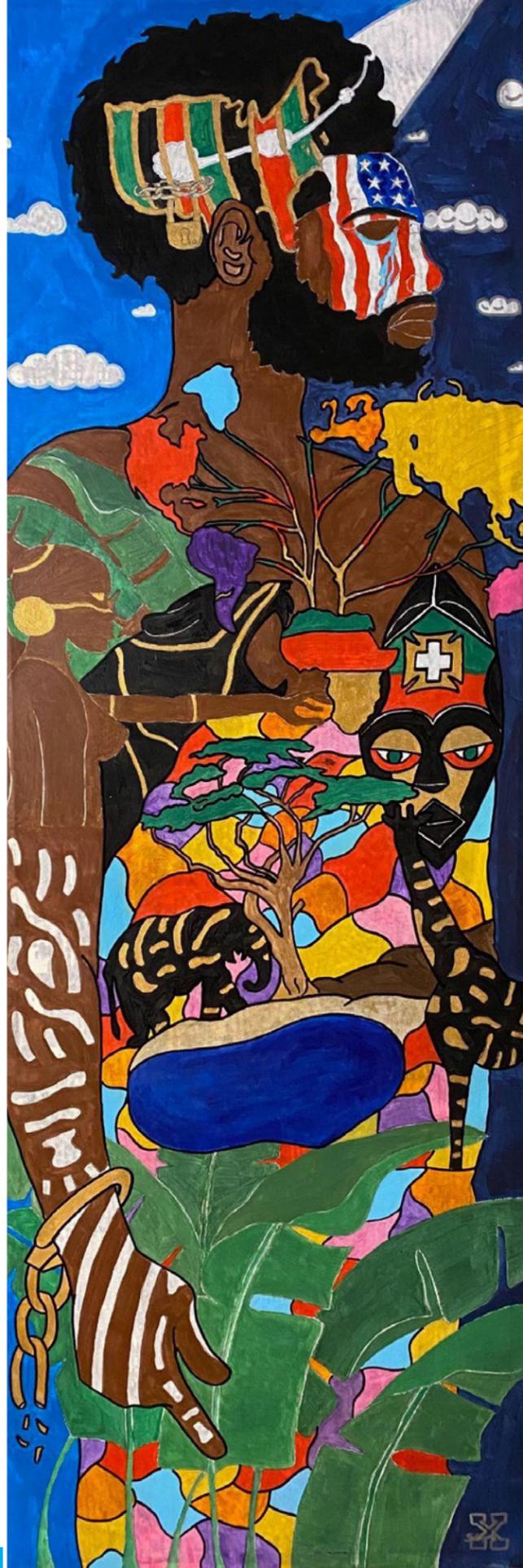
Since the first day people of African descent arrived in St. Augustine, Florida, more than 500 years ago, they have significantly shaped the state's history. From 1513 to 1865, freedom for these individuals varied as control over Florida changed between the French, Spanish, British, and American governments. By the early 1800s, most Black people in Florida were held in bondage as part of an economic system that relied on slavery. Since the end of the Civil War, freedom hasn't really been free, but Black residents of the Central Florida region have dreamed, toiled, and worked through both triumphs and tragedies that illustrate not only a local story, but a state-wide, regional, and nationally relevant narrative.

Just north of Orlando, Joseph E. Clarke, who had been formerly enslaved, along with 26 other men, established Eatonville — Florida's first historically Black city — in 1887. Just a short drive from this Town, myriad other events of importance create a center for understanding of Black history and relevance to our modern landscape.

From major figures to pivotal moments, the people and events surrounding Eatonville present a rich tableau of placemaking importance in Black history, including:

- **Mary McLeod Bethune**, a champion for education and civil rights, an anti-lynching crusader who fought for women's suffrage, led voter registration drives, and became the president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs;
- **Reverend Nelson Pinder**, who along with others worked to build the foundation of Central Florida's civil rights movement;
- **The Ocoee Massacre**, a mass racial violence event predating both Rosewood and Tulsa;
- **The injustices against the Groveland Four**, the systemic and unlawful murder and treatment of four Black men wrongfully accused of a crime; and,
- **The confounding Fishbowl Desegregation of Orange County Public Schools** nearly 20 years after Brown v. Board of Education.

As a matter of economic opportunity for Eatonville, the legacies of the Town and its most famous daughter, celebrated Black author Zora Neale Hurston, offer a strong promotional and marketing vantage point from which to launch a comprehensive cultural heritage tourism initiative in the form of the Florida Museum of Black History. Leadership of the Town of Eatonville recognizes the economic potential of developing such a sustainable cultural tourism initiative and is determined that the time is right to launch a proposal for this intentional opportunity.



Courtesy of Sharad X

Historic Eatonville

The first historically Black city to be incorporated in Florida, Eatonville was established in 1887 after being settled by former slaves two decades after the Civil War ended. Located 6 miles north of Orlando, the Town was founded when former slave, Joseph C. Clarke, along with northern philanthropist Lewis Lawrence, bought over a hundred acres of land from Josiah Eaton, one of the few white landowners willing to sell to Black citizens. They parceled the acres to Black families from the surrounding area of Central Florida.

On August 15, 1887, the Town was officially incorporated when 27 registered Black voters indicated their intention to create a municipality. They named the Town in honor of Josiah Eaton, who eventually also served as its mayor. The new Town's citizens, however, chose Columbus H. Boger as its first mayor to head an entirely Black-staffed government.

Eatonville's story, proclaimed in *The Eatonville Speaker*, resonated as a call to Black citizens seeking a haven in post-Civil War America, offering a place where dignity and self-determination flourished. This call, echoing through the ages, finds its modern counterpart in our effort to establish a new beacon —

The Town of Eatonville continues to emphasize the importance of preserving the Town's cultural and historical significance.



Photo 1: St. Lawrence (A.M.E.)
Photo 2: The Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts



a call to those near and far to engage with and be part of this living legacy. The Town's fabric was woven with the industriousness of its people, who built homes, churches, and businesses, creating a self-sustaining community that thrived on the fruits of their own labor.

Today, Eatonville's rich legacy continues to inspire, embodying the resilience and cultural vitality of its founders. We aim to honor and perpetuate this remarkable chapter of American history, ensuring that Eatonville's spirit endures for generations to come.

Zora Neale Hurston

Around the turn of the 20th century, Eatonville emerged as the childhood home of Zora Neale Hurston. Her novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, illuminated the culture and vitality of the Black community. Her work has been integral to American literature curricula for nearly 50 years, enlightening generations nationwide about Eatonville's distinct role in American history.

Today, Eatonville proudly maintains her legacy, connecting through The Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts, aka The Hurston; the ZORA! Festival Season, which spans a full calendar year; and more notably the ZORA! Outdoor Festival, which has drawn over 70,000 participants.

Other Notable Landmarks & Events

St. Lawrence African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.)

The life of Eatonville, like other historically Black Towns and the Black sections of mostly white communities, revolved around its church and its school. The St. Lawrence African Methodist Episcopal Church (A.M.E.), then simply called the Methodist Church, was the Town's first religious institution. Upon its founding in 1881 (predating the Town by six years), it became the first Black church in the area. St. Lawrence A.M.E. still stands in Eatonville and continues to serve the community to this day.



Club Eaton

One of the most famous venues along the Chitlin Circuit, which helped Black entertainers book performances during the segregation era, was Central Florida's very own Club Eaton. The club opened its doors in 1946, just a year after World War II and only 59 years after the Town itself was established.

Club Eaton's star-studded roster boasted names like Duke Ellington, B.B. King, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, Tina Turner, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, and Cab Calloway. The club had rooms on the second floor where the performers would stay — a key safety measure for the time, as many white-owned hotels wouldn't allow Black performers to stay the night. The club has seen several owners through the years, and the current owner is in the process of a full restoration with the intention of naming it "The Circuit."

Famous Residents

In addition to Zora Neale Hurston, notable residents of Eatonville have included:

David D. "Deacon" Jones: An American football defensive end who played in the National Football League (NFL) for 14 seasons. In his honor, a street in the Town of Eatonville is named after him.

Ha'Sean Treshon "Ha Ha" Clinton-Dix: An American professional football player who was a safety for seven seasons in the NFL, primarily with the Green Bay Packers.

Joyce "Fenderella" Irby: An American singer, songwriter, bass guitarist and producer, Irby was the co-lead vocalist of the all-female band, Klymaxx.

Norm Lewis: The first Black actor to star in the title role of the Broadway production of *The Phantom of the Opera*.



The Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts



Modern Cultural Significance

Historic Eatonville is an asset of major cultural significance. New York Times journalist Damien Cave chronicled his discovery of Eatonville in an article, "In a Town Apart, the Pride and Trials of Black Life." He described 21st century Eatonville as a rare, authentic, intact, historically Black community whose physical appearance, sense of community, values, and traditions have been carefully protected and preserved through the decades by the descendants of the first 27 founding families. Telling the Eatonville story is a sacred trust for the Town's families.

Eatonville's government has actively maintained the Town's history through the recent development of its government building and structures, walking tours, and monument to Zora Neale Hurston. The cultural landscapes restorations undertaken by the Town of Eatonville have already demonstrated the value of restoring and preserving the Town's cultural and historical assets. Additional properties and assets are being considered for restoration, tours, and trail inclusion.

Indeed, perseverance and gratitude for independence are key characteristics evident in the history of this little community in central Florida. Present-day Eatonville is a meld of modern society and Old Florida. The Town is now mainly a residential community, but it also has a number of businesses such as barbershops, restaurants, and retailers. Churches, government offices, and school buildings line its main traffic artery, Kennedy Boulevard. When traveling east or west down this thoroughfare, drivers see brick-lined intersections, planted palm trees, and modern-style municipal buildings mingling with Eatonville's century-old wood-framed homes.

Memor Agency, Zora Festival 2024 (2)



The Town of Eatonville offers many ways to enjoy the Florida sunshine, with easy access and beautiful views.



Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

A successful museum must be highly accessible both locally and regionally. The Town of Eatonville, home to over 2,700 residents, is at the center of the center of Florida tourism, being located less than 10 miles from downtown Orlando and about 20 miles from Orlando International Airport (MCO) — one of nine international airports within 100 miles of the proposed location. See Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure for additional information about Eatonville’s accessibility.

Eatonville is only 19 miles from the Orange County Convention Center (OCCC), the second largest and one of the busiest convention centers in the United States. The OCCC hosted 178 meetings and conventions in 2023 with over 1.6 million attendees. These include large-scale events from Black organizations such as the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the National Society of Black Engineers, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Love United Global, and Potter House, with more scheduled for coming years.

Many convention groups like to provide participants with unique cultural opportunities and special event locations. The Museum of Black History would benefit from an audience already in town looking for unique, cultural, and historical experiences.

In part due to Eatonville’s proximity to Orlando, numerous recreational and entertainment opportunities are in the surrounding area. Eatonville is also in one of the most beautiful and picturesque parts of Florida. Despite decades of changes brought on by development, Eatonville retains its beauty and its charm. The proposed location is a largely natural setting that can more easily accommodate a wider variety of outdoor activities and a more naturally integrated design for the museum.

Within the Town of Eatonville’s borders are six lakes, known as “The Ring of Lakes.” An additional four lakes, located in the neighboring communities of Maitland and Winter Park, surround Eatonville. The lakes offer beautiful, natural landscapes that hold the promise of complementing the proposed Florida Museum of Black History as recreational and ecotourism sites. The acreage also offers the opportunity to expand the current housing stock and commercial establishments.

In addition, as the nation’s oldest incorporated Black township, Eatonville is recognized as a major center of Black heritage and culture. Because of the cultural heritage nature of the proposed museum, it is anticipated that Black visitors to the area will have a special interest in the museum and its programs.

March 12, 2024

Demetris Pressley, CSM
307 E. Kennedy Blvd.
Eatonville, FL 32751

Dear Mr. Pressley:

On behalf of Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), the eighth-largest district in the nation and the fourth-largest in Florida, I would like to express our conditional support for the Florida Museum of Black History project authorized by House Bill 1441. The purpose of the museum is to enrich the educational experience of our students, celebrate the rich heritage of our community, and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse learning environment.

Through immersive programs and interactive exhibits, students will gain a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives and build bridges of understanding across cultural divides. This active engagement with history will not only enhance academic achievement but also empower students to become lifelong learners and critical thinkers. Partnerships between the school and the museum can foster joint service projects, cultural celebrations, and educational forums, further strengthening the ties between generations and fostering a spirit of civic engagement.

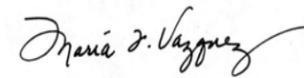
OCPS is willing to partner in this venture with the Town of Eatonville by entering into a Joint Use Agreement with the Town for the usage of up to ten (10) acres of property currently owned by the School Board in the Town for the placement of the Florida Museum of Black History. The School Board would retain ownership of the property while the Town would be responsible for the construction and the operation of the Florida Museum of Black History. Nothing in this Joint Use Agreement would determine the status with the remaining property owned by the School Board in the Town of Eatonville beyond the up to ten (10) acres being committed for the Joint Use Agreement.

Also, as you are aware, the property currently sought by the Town as the site for the Florida Museum of Black History is the subject of litigation in the case styled Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc., et al. v. School Board of Orange County, Florida, Ninth Circuit Case No. 2023-CA-005295-O. In that litigation, the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community is seeking to place a covenant back on the land that had previously been removed by a Court-approved Settlement Agreement in 2015 which requires the property at issue to be utilized for the education of African-American children with an emphasis on vocational education of African-American children.

Until such litigation is dismissed either voluntarily by the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community or by the Circuit Court, OCPS cannot move forward with any potential Joint Use Agreement – OCPS cannot enter into usage of a property which may be deemed later to be in violation of a Court order.

We look forward to the time when we can collaborate in this effort to establish the Florida Museum of Black History in the Town of Eatonville. This initiative aligns with our mission: With the support of families and the community, we create enriching and diverse pathways to lead our students to success.

Sincerely,

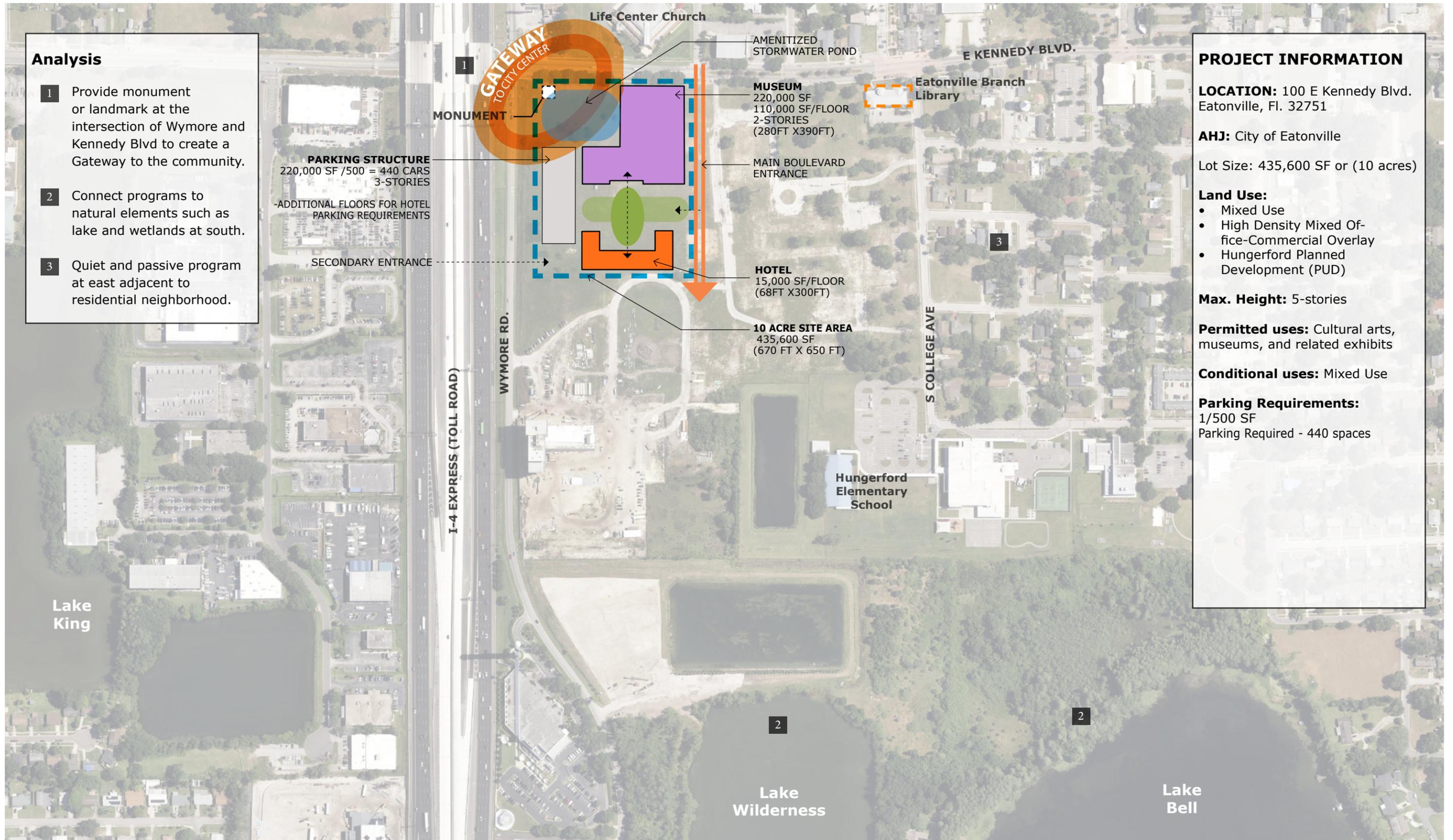


Maria F. Vazquez, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: School Board of Orange County, Florida
Amy D. Envall, General Counsel
John C. Palmerini, Deputy General Counsel
Rory Salimbene, Chief Facilities Officer
Cabinet

Analysis

- 1 Provide monument or landmark at the intersection of Wymore and Kennedy Blvd to create a Gateway to the community.
- 2 Connect programs to natural elements such as lake and wetlands at south.
- 3 Quiet and passive program at east adjacent to residential neighborhood.



PROJECT INFORMATION

LOCATION: 100 E Kennedy Blvd. Eatonville, Fl. 32751

AHJ: City of Eatonville

Lot Size: 435,600 SF or (10 acres)

Land Use:

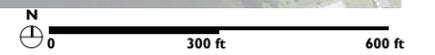
- Mixed Use
- High Density Mixed Of-ice-Commercial Overlay
- Hungerford Planned Development (PUD)

Max. Height: 5-stories

Permitted uses: Cultural arts, museums, and related exhibits

Conditional uses: Mixed Use

Parking Requirements:
1/500 SF
Parking Required - 440 spaces



THE ORLANDO AREA *and...* GROWING TALENT

- 74 million annual visitors**
VisitOrlando, 2022
- Tourist visiting Florida pumped \$125B into its economy in 2022**
VisitFlorida, 2022
- 2.2 million domestic visitors enjoyed 33 museums in Orlando in 2022**
VisitOrlando
- UCF's graduate game design program (FIEA) has been recognized as the best in the world**
The Princeton Review Magazine, 2022
- \$190 million raised in Central Florida arts and culture**
United Arts Central Florida

ECOSYSTEM BUILDERS



United Arts of Central Florida is the hub for arts in the region, consisting of initiatives for arts education, arts advocacy, cultural tourism, and more.

Creative Village is a digital media-focused technology district in the heart of downtown Orlando co-located with UCF and Valencia College's downtown campus.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS



Orlando Economic Partnership

Criteria 3: Regional Economy

• Talent Supply and Education

- Kindergarten Readiness: 50%
- VPK Completers: 55%
- 3rd Grade Reading Scores: 52%
- 3rd Grade Math Scores: 59%
- 8th Grade Reading Scores: 46%
- 8th Grade Math Scores: 58%
- 8th Grade Science Scores: 50%
- High School Graduation Rate: 89.1%
- High School Graduation Rate With Disability: 80.8%
- Without High School Diploma:
 - Ages 18-24: 15.4K
 - Ages 25+: 102K
- Degree Attainment:
 - AA+: 48.4%
 - Bachelor+: 37.4%
- Unemployment Rate

• Infrastructure and Growth Leadership

- Land in Conservation: 17%
- Population (as of April 1, 2022): 1.48M
- Housing Permits: 4,749
- Population Estimate 2030: 1,688.6M – 1,857.4M
- High Speed Communications: 99.6%
 - 2030 Goal: 100%

• Business Climate and Competitiveness

- Local Option Sales Tax Revenue: \$300.85M
- Homeowners' Insurance Affordability: #27

• Civics and Governance

- Voter Participation: 75.4%
- Inmate Population: 3,265

• Quality of Life

- Poverty Rate: 13.5%
- Children in Poverty
 - Rate: 18.1%
 - 2030 Goal: <10%
 - Quantity: 54,868
- Alice Households: 47%
- Housing Cost Burdened
 - Burdened: 54.2%
 - 2030 Goal: <10%
 - Severely Burdened: 27.7%
- Child Health Ranking: 33
- Free & Reduced Lunch: 69%
- Per Capita Income: \$54,979
- Crime Data: 2,542

• Innovation and Economic Development

- Business Startups: 48,710
- GDP Per Capita: \$58,539
- Percent Small Business: 23.1%
- Income Migration: \$525.69M/Year
- Manufacturing Jobs: 36,504
 - Share of Jobs: 4.8%
- Manufacturing Wages: \$84,236
 - Share of Wages: 6.9%

Source: <https://thefloridascorecard.org/>

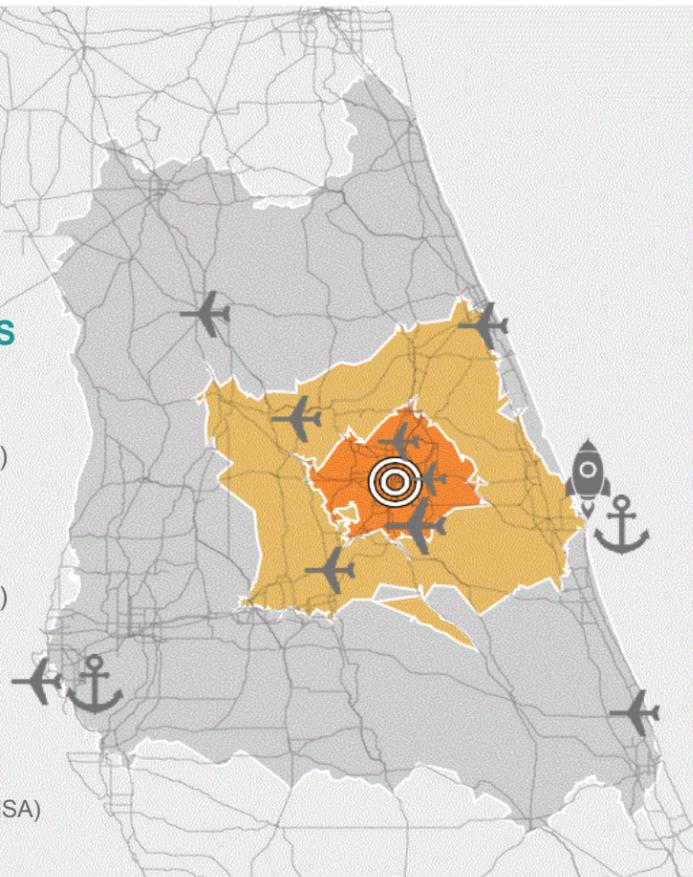
THE ORLANDO AREA OFFERS DIVERSITY, EDUCATION *and...* ECONOMIC GROWTH

- ✓ **STRONG TALENT PIPELINE**
- ✓ **TOP-RANKED INFRASTRUCTURE**
- ✓ **VARIETY OF REAL ESTATE**
- ✓ **GREAT ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS**

POPULATION	4,855,658 (Seven Counties)
	2,833,764 (Orlando MSA)
LABOR FORCE	2,404,479 (Seven Counties)
	1,476,666 (Orlando MSA)
UNEMPLOYMENT	3.0% (Orlando MSA)
SIZE	4,012 square miles (Orlando MSA)
MEDIAN AGE	38 (Orlando MSA)
AVG HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$98,717 (Orlando MSA)
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	1,054,342 (Orlando MSA)
MEDIAN HOME PRICE	\$442,000 (Orlando MSA)
CLIMATE	92° / 66° May-Oct 83° / 49° Nov-Apr

Sources: Univ. FL Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2023 estimates
 FL Department of Commerce Local Area Labor and Unemployment Statistics, December 2023
 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2022 5-year estimates
 National Association of Realtors, Q4 2023

Orlando Economic Partnership



1,000+ NEW
 residents added to
 Orlando's population
 each week

UF BEBR, 2022

No. 2

Fastest-growing large
 region in the US by
 population growth

U.S. Census Bureau,
 July 2021 – July 2022

Criteria 4: Regional Demographics

• Population Characteristics (2020 Decennial Census)

- Total Population: 1,429,908 (Orange County) / 2,833,764 (Orlando MSA)
- Total Households: 1,054,342 (Orlando MSA)
- Median age: 36.7
- Language Other Than English Spoken at Home: 37.8%
- Foreign-Born Population: 23.7%
- Older Population (65+): 13.2%
- Veterans: 5.2%
- Race and Ethnicity
 - White: 629,789
 - Not Hispanic/Latino: 531,362
 - Hispanic/Latino: 473,025
 - Black/African American: 277,027
 - Two or More Races: 265,095
 - Other: 171,904
 - Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 1,417

• Education (2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates)

- Bachelor's Degree or Higher: 41.0%
 - High School or Equivalent: 23.1%
 - Some College, No Degree: 15.4%
 - Associate's Degree: 10.5%
 - Bachelor's Degree: 26.8%
 - Graduate or Professional Degree: 14.1%
- School Enrollment
 - Total Enrollment, Kindergarten to 12th Grade: 60.0%

• Economy

- Annual Visitors: 74 million (Visit Orlando, 2022)

• Income and Poverty

- Median Household Income: \$72,324
 - Families: \$85,827
 - Married-Couple Families: \$102,530
 - Nonfamily Households: \$49,798
- Poverty: 12.5%

• Business

- Total Employer Establishments: 43,195

• Geography

- Size: 4,012 square miles (Orlando MSA)

Source: https://data.census.gov/profile/Orange_County,_Florida?g=050XX00US12095





Regional travelers to the Town of Eatonville will be able to access a well-established network of local roads within its urban boundary, which provides ease of access to the museum site and regional amenities. Both North Wymore Road and East Kennedy Boulevard intersect at the heart of Eatonville, making the Town the ideal location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

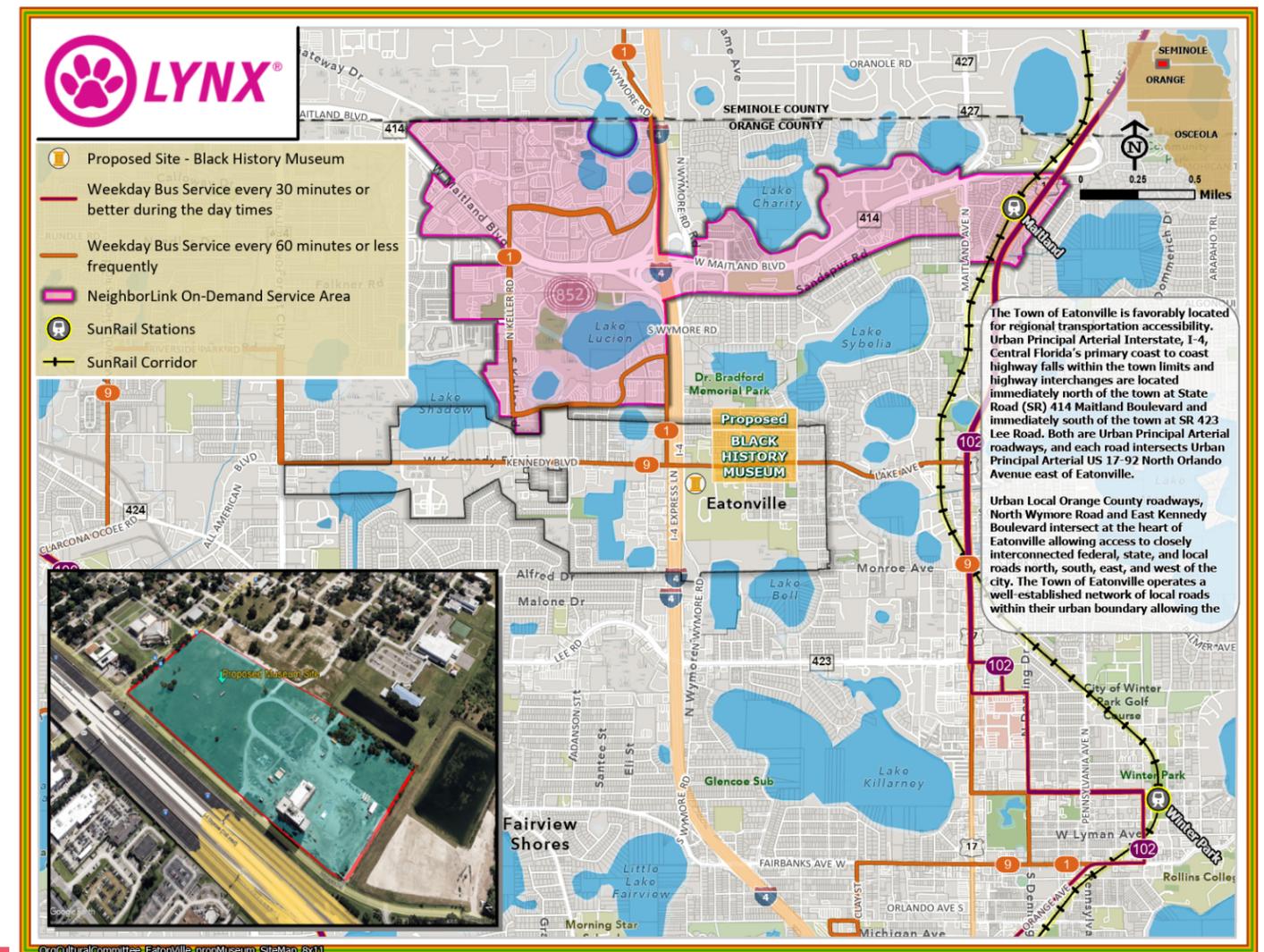
The proposed Florida Black History Museum site in Eatonville benefits from a well-established airport, bus and commuter rail system that provides accessible transportation options for workers and visitors alike. The map below illustrates the existing bus and commuter rail service and its proximity to Interstate I-4.

Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure

The Town of Eatonville is in the center of Florida and easily accessible to visitors from all parts of the state. The proposed site is favorably located for regional transportation accessibility, providing easy access to closely interconnected federal, state, and local roads north, south, east, and west of the Town.

Eatonville is adjacent to Interstate 4 (I-4), Central Florida's primary coast-to-coast highway, which falls within the Town limits and just received a major upgrade via the \$2.3B I-4 Ultimate Project. I-4 interchanges are in close proximity at State Road (SR) 414 Maitland Boulevard to the north and immediately south of the Town at SR 423 Lee Road. Both roadways intersect US 17-92 North Orlando Avenue east of Eatonville.

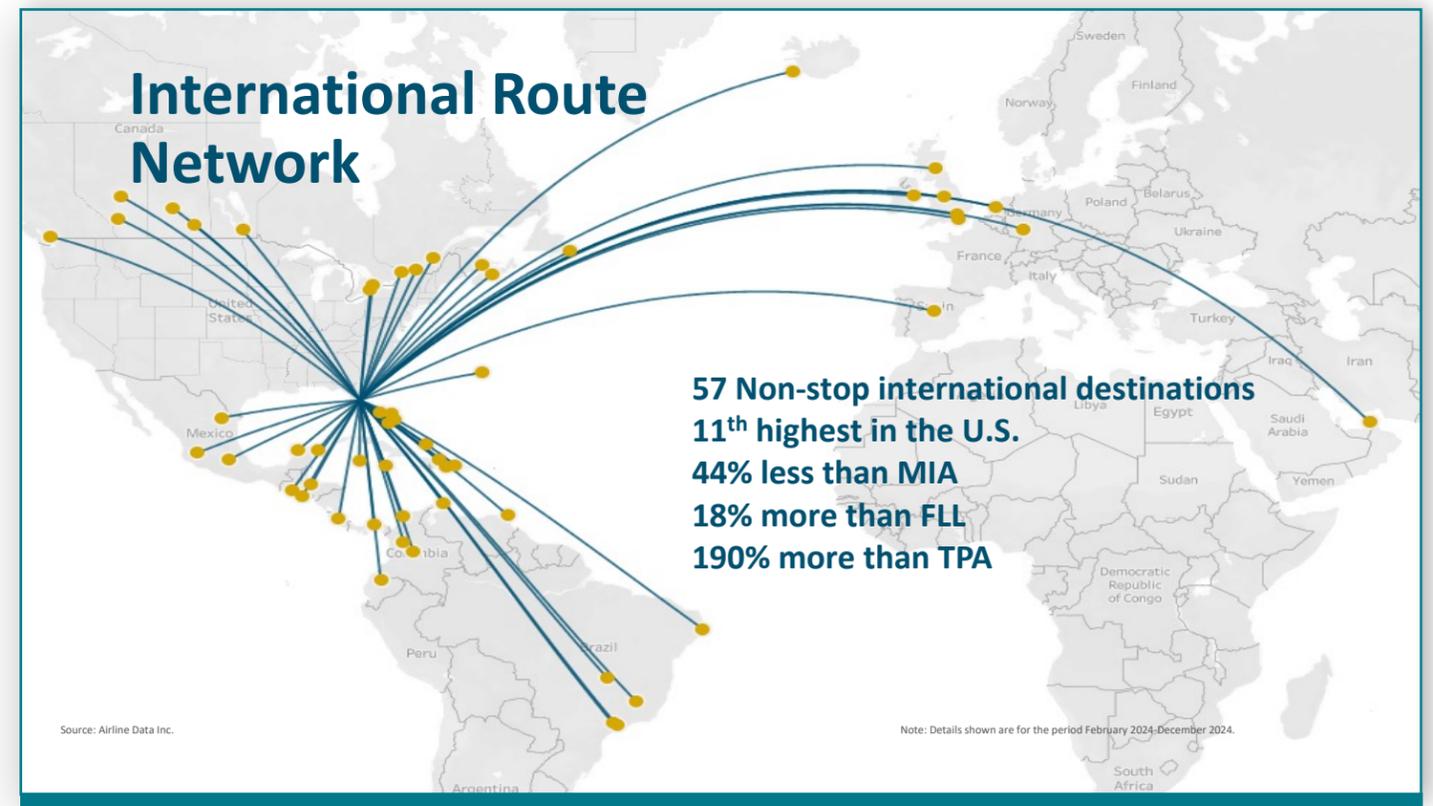
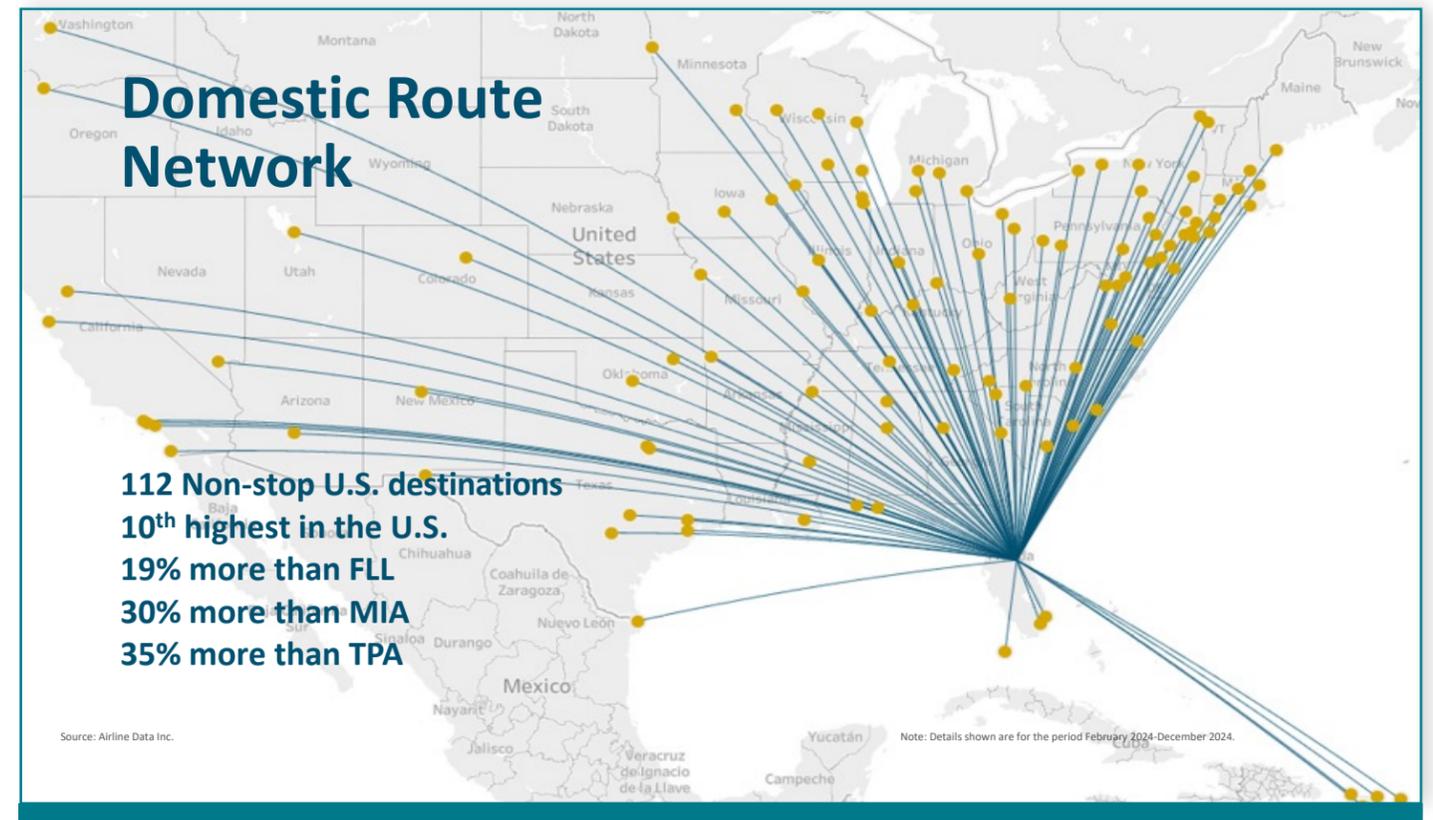
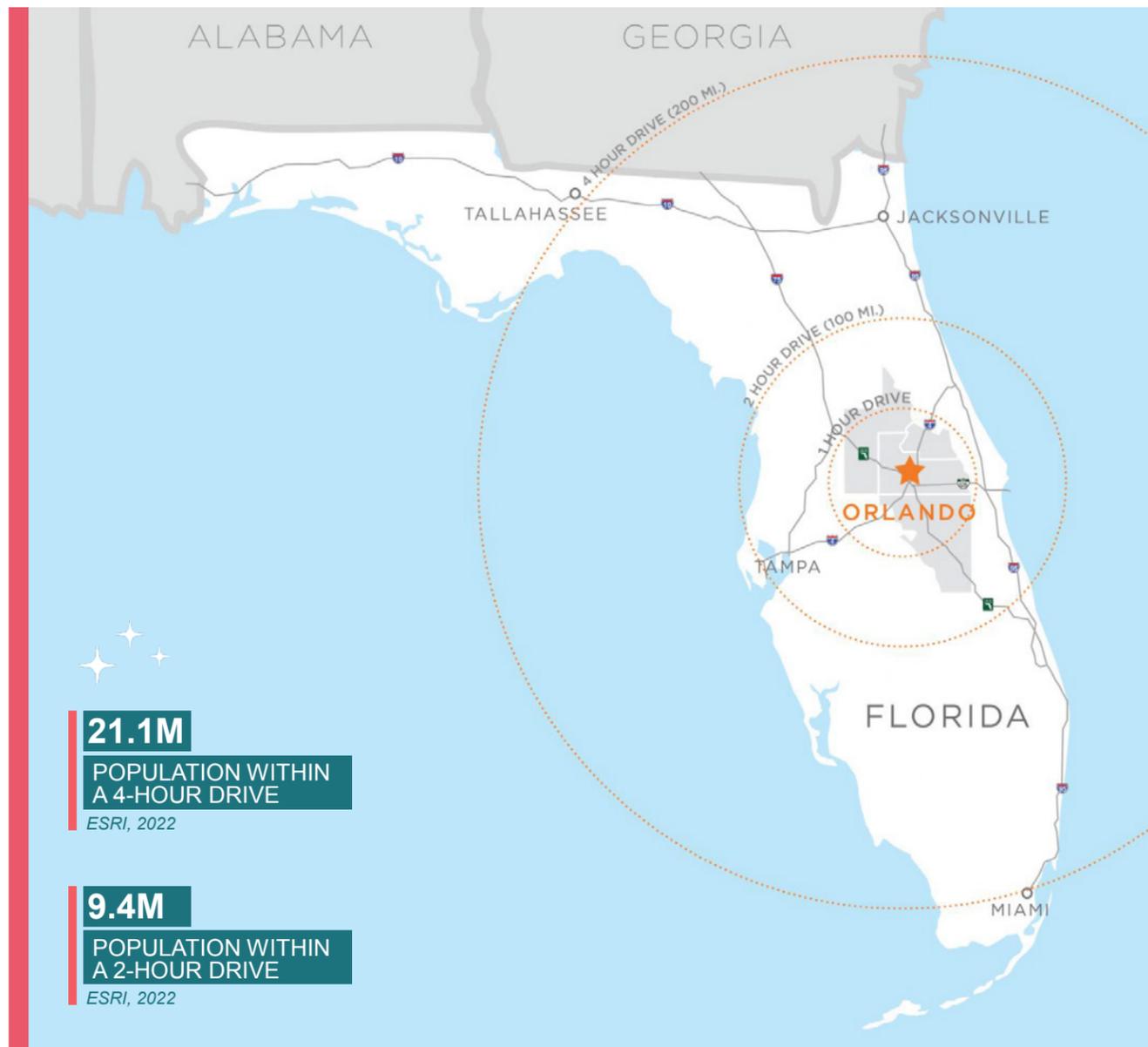
Interstate 4 is the primary interstate highway in the Orlando Metropolitan Area, providing access to Daytona Beach to the northeast and Tampa to the southwest. This short distance from the interstate highway system creates the opportunity to attract the pass-through market, visitors from the periphery of the Orlando region, and tourists visiting the area. It gives Eatonville access to 9.4M potential visitors within a two-hour drive and 21.1M visitors within a four-hour drive (ESRI, 2022).



Eatonville's proximity to Orlando International Airport — the second busiest airport in Florida with 53 million passengers in 2023 — and eight additional international airports exponentially increases its access to potential visitors.

MCO alone offers 112 non-stop U.S. destinations, making it the 10th highest in the country. It also exceeds domestic routes offered by Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport by 19%, Miami International Airport by 30%, and Tampa International Airport by 35%.

Furthermore, MCO offers routes to 57 non-stop international destinations. That's the 11th highest number in the country, and second only to Miami International Airport in Florida.





3-HOUR COMMUTE
Orlando – Miami Hourly Service

The proposed site also benefits from Brightline, which provides connectivity between South Florida and Orlando to the Brightline station at MCO's new Terminal C, with plans to expand to Tampa. The train will facilitate day-trippers to the museum. Brightline ridership continues to grow, with 2,053,893 passengers in 2023 and 8.2 million annual riders projected by 2026.

Eatonville's transportation infrastructure further includes 72 Orange County bus routes and 6.1 miles of SunRail commuter track, with SunRail stations available in nearby Maitland and Winter Park.



THE ORLANDO AREA *with* IMPRESSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

\$2.3 BILLION
INTERSTATE-4 ULTIMATE PROJECT

CAR

There are a few significant projects that will transform transportation and quality of life in Central Florida. Including the largest transportation infrastructure project, now completed, in Florida's history: the Interstate-4 Ultimate Improvement Project.

61 MILES
OF SUNRAIL
COMMUTER TRACK

RAIL

Orlando's rail initiatives include SunRail, Orlando's commuter rail service, and Brightline, a privately funded high-speed rail from Miami to Orlando. The region is also connected by 68 miles of rail operated by the Florida Central Railroad (FCEN).

9 INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS
WITHIN 2 DRIVING HOURS

AIR

The region is home to nine international airports within 100 miles. While Orlando International Airport is one of the largest origin and destination airports in the U.S., the region is also supported by a community of general aviation airports including Orlando Executive and Kissimmee Gateway.

\$3.5 BILLION
BRIGHTLINE TRAINS
MIAMI-ORLANDO CONNECTION

RAIL

Brightline, Florida's intercity express train providing service between Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Orlando, allows passengers to travel from Miami to Orlando in three hours.

72 BUS ROUTES
LYNX

BUS

LYNX Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority provides 72 local fixed bus routes (or links), 14 NeighborLinks, four Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes, four FastLinks, contracted express bus service and paratransit and commuter assistance vanpools.

ONLY
DEEP SPACE HUMAN
LAUNCH CENTER IN U.S.

SPACE

Why limit your connectivity to just planet Earth? Orlando's proximity to the space coast takes transportation out of this world. A short drive from Orlando, this multi-use spaceport is the nation's only human launch center and current site of Blue Origin, Boeing, SpaceX, Lockheed Martin and Space Florida.

**Note: Statistics reflect pre-pandemic report activity.*



Funding to preserve history and the importance of Eatonville's role in Black culture.



Committee (ARC) is authorized to consider applications for excess tourist development tax revenue funding and to provide written funding recommendations to the Tourist Development Council (TDC) and the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) based on applicable criteria established by ordinance. **The Black History Museum is perfectly aligned with the three categories of impact the ARC ranks, which are Tourism Expansion, Project Soundness, and Return on Investment.**

The BCC in consultation with the TDC has goals for the use of TDT for facilities to: 1) ensure compliance with Florida TDT statutorily allowed uses, 2) support facilities that enhance the County economy by raising the profile of the community, attract events that bring overnight visitors, and enhance the Orange County economy including the vital tourism industry, and 3) provide partnership funding to facilities that best use the TDT funding in connection with funding from other partners to deliver the proposed economic and/or promotional benefits.

The ARC will begin accepting applications in April 2024, and make recommendations to the TDC in September 2024.

National Park Service, US. Department of the Interior, African American Civil Rights (AACR) grant program awards \$75,000 - \$750,000. The African American Civil Rights (AACR) documents, interprets, and preserves sites and stories related to the Black struggle to gain equal rights as citizens. The grants are funded by the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and administered by the National Park Service (NPS). This competitive grant program provides grants to states, tribes, local governments (including Certified Local Governments), and nonprofits. Grants will fund a broad range of planning, development, and research projects for historic sites including: survey, inventory, documentation, interpretation, education, architectural services, historic structure reports, preservation plans, and "bricks and mortar" repair.

Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support

The **Committee to Build the Florida Black History Museum in Eatonville, Orange County** will use a number of funding sources to complete the project and has great support from community leaders.

The Committee will use a funding model with three major sources of revenue to design and develop the museum:

1. **State of Florida:** The State Legislature will designate up to \$30 million for the development of the museum. This funding will only be available if matching support is made available from the "local" area.
2. **County and Federal:** Orange County generates Tourist Development Tax (TDT) dollars annually. The TDT is a tax on the total paid by guests for the rental of a hotel, motel, rooming house, trailer camp, condominium, apartment, multiple-unit structure, mobile home, trailer, single-family home, or any other sleeping accommodations that are rented for a period of six months or less. The Orange County Tourist Development Tax Application Review

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

EATONVILLE *the* TOWN THAT FREEDOM BUILT



Memor Agency, Zora Festival 2024

The National Trust's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund award \$50,000 - \$150,000. In November 2017, the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched its African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, a program that makes an important and lasting contribution to the American landscape by preserving sites of Black activism, achievement, and resilience. Through this preservation effort — the largest ever undertaken in support of Black historic sites — we work to expand the American story.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is authorized by Federal statute as a result of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996. The Museum Grants for African American History and Culture (AAHC) program is designed to build the capacity of Black museums and support the growth and development of museum professionals at Black museums. The AAHC program supports projects that nurture museum professionals, build institutional capacity, and increase access to museum and archival collections at Black museums and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. **The deadline to submit a request for this federal funding is November 15, 2024.**

3. **Foundations & Philanthropy:** Once the State and TDT dollars are secured the development team will be able to secure “matching” grants and donations from local and national Foundations. In addition, there are several “high net-worth” individuals that will support this project.



The Signing of Town Charter August 18, 1887



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT of STATE

RON DESANTIS
Governor

CORD BYRD
Secretary of State

February 14, 2024

Demetris Pressley
Chief Administrative Officer
The Town of Eatonville
307 East Kennedy Boulevard
Eatonville, Florida 32751

Dear Demetris Pressley,

On May 11, 2023, Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law [CS/CS/HB 1441 \(Chapter 2023-72, Laws of Florida\)](#) relating to a Florida Museum of Black History Task Force. The bill created a nine-member task force to provide recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History. One of the bill's requirements is for the Task Force to develop plans for the museum's location.

Since September 2023, the Task Force has heard presentations and received materials from several prospective locations, including Eatonville/Orange County. At the January 12, 2024 meeting, the Task Force approved Museum Location Criteria for distribution to prospective locations who make presentations on or before the February 19, 2024, meeting.

Please find attached the approved Museum Location Criteria. If you would like your location to be considered as part of the final recommendations of the Task Force, you may provide information in response to each of the seven (7) criteria for the Task Force to consider when assessing your proposal.

Responses must be in writing and should follow the order in which the criteria appear on the attached sheet. You may include text, images, and infographics in your response, but your response cannot contain video or audio components. Include complete citations for any data or information used in your response. Only electronic submissions will be accepted.

Division of Historical Resources
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) • FLHeritage.com



ORANGE COUNTY MAYOR
Jerry L. Demings

P.O. BOX 1393, 201 SOUTH ROSALIND AVENUE, ORLANDO, FL 32802-1393
PHONE: 407-836-7370 • FAX: 407-836-7360 • EMAIL: MAYOR@OCFL.NET

January 10, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Eatonville – Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for the Town of Eatonville's efforts to bring Florida's first Museum of Black History to the oldest black township in the United States. Eatonville, also known as the Town That Freedom Built is the ideal location to celebrate the vibrant history and rich culture of African Americans in Florida. The Town of Eatonville is home to prominent figures such as Zora Neale Hurston, Robert Hungerford, Josiah Eaton, David "Deacon" Jones, and others who contributed to building the town's institutions, which were hallmarks of economic development and cultural expression.

The Town of Eatonville is well-positioned for success due to its active cultural tourism marketing, rich history, and proximity to Orlando. Orange County, the most visited destination in North America, welcomed 74 million visitors in 2022. As the most visited destination in the nation, we have the potential to provide the necessary number of visitors to sustain and promote the museum in the long term. Additionally, the Florida Museum of Black History will boost the local economy, create jobs, encourage education and learning, showcase works of art and artifacts, and inspire the next generation of innovators, writers, and artists.

The museum would be a beacon of pride honoring the significant contributions of African Americans in the Town of Eatonville, the State of Florida, and the entire nation. On behalf of the Orange County Government and the more than 1.5 million people who call Orange County home, I look forward to your favorable consideration of the Town of Eatonville's proposal.

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Demings
Orange County Mayor



February 2, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Eatonville – Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

I am writing this letter to express my support for the Town of Eatonville’s efforts to be the location for Florida’s first Museum of Black History. The Town of Eatonville has a rich history and is known as the Town That Freedom Built for its legacy of prominent historical figures such as Zora Neale Hurston, Robert Hungerford, Josiah Eaton and David “Deacon” Jones, and others.

Eatonville is the oldest black township in the United States and is centrally located in Orange County, the most visited destination in North America. Many of 74 million visitors a year who come to Orange County seek authentic historic and cultural experiences. As a worldwide leader in the tourism industry, Orange County has the potential number of visitors to ensure the success and growth of the museum. Conversely, the Florida Museum of Black History would boost the local economy, providing career and educational opportunities. The Town of Eatonville has been active in investing and building its cultural tourism and the Museum of Black History would be the ideal cornerstone for their preservation and visitation efforts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Nicole H. Wilson
Commissioner District 1
201 South Rosiland Avenue
Orlando, FL 32802-1393
Phone 407-836-7312

COMMISSIONER NICOLE H. WILSON, DISTRICT 1
201 South Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor • Reply To: Post Office Box 1393 • Orlando, Florida 32802-1393
407.836.7350 • Fax 407.836.5879



Feb. 9, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Eatonville – Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for the Town of Eatonville's efforts to bring Florida's first Museum of Black History to the oldest black township in the United States. Eatonville, also known as the Town That Freedom Built, is the ideal location to celebrate the vibrant history and rich culture of African Americans in Florida. The Town of Eatonville is home to prominent figures such as Zora Neale Hurston, Robert Hungerford, Josiah Eaton, David "Deacon" Jones, and others who contributed to building the town's institutions, which were hallmarks of economic development and cultural expression.

The Town of Eatonville is well-positioned for success due to its active cultural tourism marketing, rich history, and proximity to Orlando. Orange County, the most visited destination in North America, welcomed 74 million visitors in 2022. As the most visited destination in the nation, we have the potential to provide the necessary number of visitors to sustain and promote the museum in the long term. Additionally, the Florida Museum of Black History will boost the local economy, create jobs, encourage education and learning, showcase works of art and artifacts, and inspire the next generation of innovators, writers, and artists.

Located in District 2, the museum would be a beacon of pride honoring the significant contributions of African Americans in the Town of Eatonville, the State of Florida, and the entire nation. On behalf of Orange County Government and the more than 1.5 million people who call Orange County home, I look forward to your favorable consideration of the Town of Eatonville's proposal.

Sincerely,

Christine Moore
Commissioner, District 2

COMMISSIONER CHRISTINE MOORE, DISTRICT 2
201 South Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor • Reply To: Post Office Box 1393 • Orlando, Florida 32802-1393
407.836.7350 • Fax 407.836.5976



February 7, 2024

It is with great honor that I compose this letter in full support of the Town of Eatonville's ambitious initiative to establish the first Museum of Black History in the region. This endeavor marks a monumental milestone not only for Eatonville but also for the entire county, underscoring its rich cultural and historical significance.

Eatonville, renowned as one of the earliest all-Black incorporated towns in the United States, occupies a cherished place in American history. The creation of a Museum of Black History will not only honor this unique heritage but also serve as a beacon, drawing individuals from across Florida and beyond to experience its profound narrative.

Situated strategically for success, Eatonville's emphasis on cultural tourism promotion, coupled with its abundant history and proximity to Orlando, positions it as a prime destination. As Orange County stands as the nation's most visited destination, attracting 74 million tourists in 2022, the Museum of Black History holds immense potential to sustainably draw visitors while contributing to the economic growth of the region through job creation and cultural enrichment. Moreover, beyond its economic impact, the museum will serve as an invaluable educational resource and cultural hub, inspiring generations to come. Through its exhibits, educational programs, and community outreach initiatives, it will not only chronicle the past but also foster understanding, dialogue, and unity in the present.

I urge your favorable consideration of the Town of Eatonville's proposal. Let us join hands in celebrating and amplifying the voices and experiences that have shaped Florida's history, enriching our collective heritage for years to come.

Regards,

Mayra Uribe

District3@ocfl.net
Commissioner District 3
Orange County

COMMISSIONER MAYRA URIBE, DISTRICT 3
201 South Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor • Reply To: Post Office Box 1393 • Orlando, Florida 32802-1393
407-836-7350 • Fax 407-836-5976



February 5, 2024

Shaniqua "Shan" Rose
CRA Executive Director
Town of Eatonville
307 E. Kennedy Boulevard
Eatonville, Florida 32751

Dear Ms. Rose,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Town of Eatonville African American Museum. As a resident of Orlando, Florida, and someone passionate about community service, I understand the vital role that cultural institutions like yours play in preserving and celebrating our shared history.

Having explored the rich tapestry of our local communities, I recognize the significance of Eatonville, not only as one of the oldest African American incorporated municipalities but also as a beacon of African American culture and heritage. The establishment of the African American Museum in Eatonville is a commendable initiative that aligns with the values of inclusivity, education, and community engagement.

Your museum has the potential to become a hub for cultural exchange, fostering a deeper understanding of the African American experience, both within the local context and on a broader scale. By showcasing the history, achievements, and contributions of African Americans, the museum can serve as an educational resource for residents and visitors alike.

I believe that supporting the Town of Eatonville African American Museum is an investment in the enrichment of our community. It not only contributes to preserving our shared heritage but also promotes unity, diversity, and mutual respect. As an Orange County Commissioner, I understand the importance of community initiatives in shaping a positive and inclusive environment, and I wholeheartedly endorse the efforts of your organization.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving and promoting the African American heritage in Eatonville. I look forward to witnessing the positive impact the museum will undoubtedly have on our community.

Sincerely,

Maribel Gomez Cordero
Commissioner
Orange County - District 4

COMMISSIONER MARIBEL GOMEZ CORDERO, DISTRICT 4
201 South Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor • Reply To: Post Office Box 1393 • Orlando, Florida 32802-1393
407-836-7350 • Fax 407-836-5879



February 1, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Florida Museum of Black History in the Town of Eatonville

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

I am delighted to express my wholehearted support for the Town of Eatonville's initiative to establish Florida's inaugural Museum of Black History. This endeavor aligns with our commitment to fostering economic development and tourism in culturally significant communities. Eatonville, recognized as the oldest black township in the United States, stands as a beacon of historical and cultural richness. I am enthusiastic about the potential impact of hosting this museum within its borders.

Eatonville's unique legacy, notably as the hometown of the esteemed literary legend Zora Neale Hurston, serves as a testament to the town's enduring influence on the arts and its vital role in inspiring the next generation of artists and local authors. In these challenging times, where teaching children about African American history and appreciating diverse histories are more critical than ever, the construction of the Florida Museum of Black History in the Town of Eatonville represents a pivotal step towards rectifying the educational disparity in our public schools.

As the District 5 Orange County Commissioner, I am steadfast in my commitment to promoting economic growth in the Eatonville region. Eatonville actively pursues cultural tourism marketing and is an ideal location for the museum. Orange County, as the most visited destination in North America, has the potential to contribute significantly to the sustained success and promotion of the museum. The museum will not only bolster the local economy and job creation, but also serve as an educational hub, showcasing artistic works and artifacts that celebrate the rich tapestry of African American history.

The Florida Museum of Black History in the Town of Eatonville has the potential to be a source of immense pride, commemorating the significant contributions of African Americans not only to the Town of Eatonville but also to the broader State of Florida and the entire nation.

Therefore, I urge you to consider the Town of Eatonville's proposal favorably.

Sincerely,

Emily Bonilla
Orange County Commissioner, District 5



March 4, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Eatonville – Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force,

With this letter, I offer my utmost support for the Town of Eatonville's endeavor to establish Florida's first Museum of Black History. As one of the first self-governing, all-Black municipalities and home to famed author, Zora Neale Hurston, this initiative is primed to cement Florida as an educational hub.

Of the 74 million tourists that venture to Orange County every year, many of those visitors are looking to be immersed in an authentic cultural experience. Given that Eatonville has been added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, it is the ideal location for a Black History Museum and an opportunity to create an invaluable educational resource and chronicle of our local heritage. Its proximity to Orlando also guarantees a visitor count that would ensure the success and growth of the museum overall. In a similar regard, the museum would help to boost the local economy as well as provide a plethora of new career opportunities.

I encourage you all to thoughtfully consider the Town of Eatonville's proposal. This is a chance not only to facilitate a greater dialogue about Florida's rich history, but to also position ourselves amongst some of the other leaders in historical tourism.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Michael "Mike" Scott
Commissioner District 6
Orange County

COMMISSIONER MIKE SCOTT, DISTRICT 6
201 South Rosalind Avenue, 5th Floor • Reply To: Post Office Box 1393 • Orlando, Florida 32802-1393
407-836-5860 • Fax 407-836-54-83

January 11, 2024

Demetris Pressley, CSM
307 E. Kennedy Blvd.
Eatonville, FL 32751

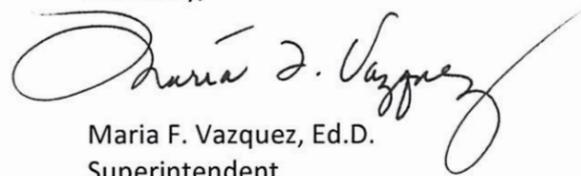
Dear Mr. Pressley:

On behalf of Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), the eighth-largest district in the nation and the fourth-largest in Florida, I would like to express our support for the Florida Museum of Black History project authorized by House Bill 1441. The purpose of the museum is to enrich the educational experience of our students, celebrate the rich heritage of our community, and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse learning environment.

Through immersive programs and interactive exhibits, students will gain a deeper appreciation for diverse perspectives and build bridges of understanding across cultural divides. This active engagement with history will not only enhance academic achievement but also empower students to become lifelong learners and critical thinkers. Partnerships between the school and the museum can foster joint service projects, cultural celebrations, and educational forums, further strengthening the ties between generations and fostering a spirit of civic engagement.

We look forward to collaborating in this effort to establish the Florida Museum of Black History in the Town of Eatonville. This initiative aligns with our mission: With the support of families and the community, we create enriching and diverse pathways to lead our students to success.

Sincerely,


Maria F. Vazquez, Ed.D.
Superintendent

RESOLUTION 2282-24

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WINTER PARK, FLORIDA SUPPORTING THE TOWN OF EATONVILLE'S APPLICATION TO BE CONSIDERED AS THE SITE FOR THE FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY

Whereas, Eatonville was founded after the Civil War and is the first incorporated (1887) Black town in the United States, giving Eatonville the most unique historical significance to the Black community, and

Whereas, since incorporation, Eatonville flourished as a haven for African Americans providing Black residents with the opportunity for self-government, economic development and education, and

Whereas, this historical significance furthers Eatonville role and responsibility to continue fostering the cultural, social, and political development of Black communities, and

Whereas, Eatonville's historical legacy aligns with the Florida Museum of Black History's mission to preserve, interpret, and share the rich and complex history of African Americans in Florida, and

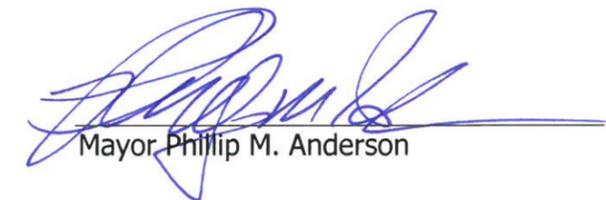
Whereas, the potential synergy between the museum in Eatonville and two of Winter Park's existing museums, specifically the Winter Park History Museum and Hannibal Square Heritage Center, creates a compelling destination for arts, culture and history enthusiasts, and

Whereas, the museum in Eatonville will foster even more collaboration between the two neighboring communities enhancing the region's thriving arts and cultural industry and serve as a significant tribute to the state's Black history,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

Section 1. The City Commission of the City of Winter Park hereby supports the application of the Town of Eatonville to be considered as the site for the Florida Museum of Black History and encourages the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to recommend Eatonville as their top choice for the museum's final location to the Florida Legislature.

Adopted this 13th day of March, 2024.


Mayor Phillip M. Anderson

ATTEST:


Deputy City Clerk ~~Rene Cranis~~ Kim Breland



1887 FIRST

To :

AFRICAN- AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM TASK FORCE

Date: 11 January 2024

I am Julian Johnson, a dedicated supporter & resident of Eatonville, I advocate for our town as the ideal location for the statewide African American History Museum. Eatonville, the first self-governing all-black municipality in the U.S., embodies a unique historical significance that perfectly aligns with the museum's mission.

Located in the heart of Central Florida, near Orlando in Orange County, Eatonville offers unparalleled accessibility to a global audience. This, coupled with a strategic position in the state, ensures easy access for visitors and Floridians alike.

We possess a land parcel capable of hosting a museum that echoes the stature of Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian African American History Museum. Choosing Eatonville means not only honoring African American heritage but also enhancing the cultural and educational fabric of Florida's tourism capital.

Eatonville, with its rich culture, historical importance, and ideal location, is a natural choice for the museum, promising to be both a beacon of African American history and a vibrant educational resource.

Thank you for considering Eatonville as the museum's home.

Julian Johnson
Founder, 1887 first

**CENTRAL FLORIDA
FOUNDATION**

Building Community
By Building Philanthropy

Board of Directors

Waymon Armstrong
Chair

John Martinez
Vice Chair

Ashley Hill, CPA
Treasurer

Shari Costantini, RN, MBA
Secretary

Achal Aggarwal, Esq.
Carlos Carbonell
Sean DeMartino
Avani Desai, CPA
Tanya Easterling
Roi Ewell
Eddie Fernandez
Peter Hilera, CPA
Michael Johnson
Giti Khalsa
Jorge Martinez, CPA
Karla Muniz
Rob Panepinto
Kay Rawlins
Stefanie Steele
Rebecca True

Mark Brewer
President/CEO

March 11, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Eatonville – Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force:

On behalf of the Central Florida Foundation, we are writing to express our support for the Florida Museum of Black History in Eatonville, Florida. This museum can preserve and promote African American history and culture in our community.

Eatonville holds a special place in American history as one of the first all-black towns to be incorporated in the United States. As such, it is a center for resilience, community, and cultural heritage. The museum's dedication to preserving and sharing the rich history and contributions of African Americans in Florida is commendable.

From educational and economic perspectives, the museum will serve as an opportunity for the local community and tourists to engage in educational programs, exhibitions, and events that ensure this vital history is accessible to all. This museum is an opportunity to expand the cultural offerings in Central Florida and will promote increased economic opportunity in the Town of Eatonville and surrounding areas.

Supporting institutions like the Florida Museum of Black History is not only a chance to preserve the past but is also an investment in creating a more equitable and inclusive future. The Central Florida Foundation's framework includes arts and culture as an important part of creating a healthy and thriving community. We believe this museum is an investment in the future, and encourage your full support of the Town of Eatonville's proposal.

Sincerely,

Sandi Vidal
Vice President of Community Strategies and Initiatives
Central Florida Foundation

800 North Magnolia Ave.
Suite 1700
Orlando, FL 32803

407.872.3050
cffound.org



March 11, 2024

Re: Letter of Support for the Town of Eatonville- Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Museum of Black History Task Force:

It is with great pleasure I write to you on behalf of Dr. Phillips Charities to express our support of the Town of Eatonville's efforts to bring the Florida Museum of Black History to the oldest black township in the United States. Eatonville is already known as the center of Black History in Florida with its annual Zora Neale Hurston festival, and the addition of the Black History Museum will further solidify that position. The Town of Eatonville is proud of its rich black history and would be the ideal location for this new museum.

Beyond the Town of Eatonville, Central Florida is the #1 most visited destination in America, not just for Americans but for people from all over the world. This location will give the Black History Museum the greatest opportunity for success in reaching the greatest number of visitors. The Black History Museum will be a cultural tourist mecca that will expose the country to Eatonville. Additionally having the museum in Eatonville will create jobs and opportunities for the community and its residents, as well as inspire the next generation to learn more about black history.

I know the Town of Eatonville, its residents, all of Central Florida and we at Dr. Phillips Charities would be proud to have the Black History Museum in our community.

Sincerely,

Kenneth D. Robinson
President and CEO
Dr. Phillips, Inc.
The Dr. P. Phillips Foundation

7400 Dr. Phillips Blvd. • Orlando, FL 32819-5146
P.O. Box 692709 • Orlando, FL 32869-2709
Tel 407/422-6105 • Fax 407/422-4952 • www.drphillips.org

"Enriching the Community With the Fruits of our Labor"

March 10, 2024

To: The Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

I am Joyce Irby, a 4th generation resident of Eatonville, I believe the Town of Eatonville is the ideal location for the statewide Florida Black History Museum. Eatonville, the first self-governing all-black municipality in the U.S., embodies a unique historical significance that perfectly aligns with the museum's mission. Located in the heart of Central Florida, near Orlando, Eatonville offers unparalleled accessibility to a global audience.

This, coupled with a strategic position in the state, ensures easy access for visitors and Floridians alike. There is a land within Eatonville capable of hosting a museum that echoes the stature of Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian African American History Museum. Choosing Eatonville means not only honoring African American heritage but also enhancing the cultural and educational fabric of Florida's tourism capital.

Eatonville, with its rich culture, historical importance, and ideal location, is a natural choice for the museum, promising to be both a beacon of Black history and a vibrant educational resource.

Thank you for considering Eatonville as the museum's home.

Sincerely,

"This is sacred land on which we stand...
Right here, history's mysteries still live in the sands
The breeze still carries our ancestor's hopes here in the wind,
I sense them, and breathe them in, and they have life again..."
- Song Lyrics from the song Sacred featuring Joyce Irby

March 10, 2024

To: The Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

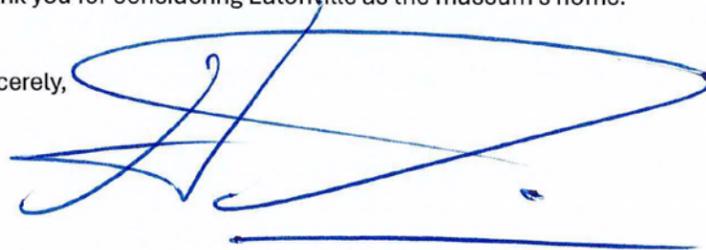
I am Ha'Sean Treshon "Ha Ha" Clinton-Dix, a former resident of Eatonville, I believe the Town of Eatonville is the ideal location for the statewide Florida Black History Museum. Eatonville, the first self-governing all-black municipality in the U.S., embodies a unique historical significance that perfectly aligns with the museum's mission. Located in the heart of Central Florida, near Orlando, Eatonville offers unparalleled accessibility to a global audience.

This, coupled with a strategic position in the state, ensures easy access for visitors and Floridians alike. There is a land within Eatonville capable of hosting a museum that echoes the stature of Washington D.C.'s Smithsonian African American History Museum. Choosing Eatonville means not only honoring African American heritage but also enhancing the cultural and educational fabric of Florida's tourism capital.

Eatonville, with its rich culture, historical importance, and ideal location, is a natural choice for the museum, promising to be both a beacon of Black history and a vibrant educational resource.

Thank you for considering Eatonville as the museum's home.

Sincerely,



The Town of Eatonville continually emphasizes the importance of education among the Black community.

Criteria 7: Educational Resources

Educational programming for both youth and adults is a necessary ingredient, and student programs and curricula need to be tied to the appropriate state education standards. Older student and adult education can be coordinated with local colleges to include internships and other on-site learning opportunities.

The museum can be seen as an interactive institution combining a life-long learning center focusing on history and the "living arts," with traditional aspects of a museum focused on interpretation and commemoration, as well as archival and research activities. It contains both indoor and outdoor spaces and activities, some free and open to the public and some within a more controlled environment. It can partner with the Hungerford School and related commercial development in sharing activities and spaces wherever possible.

This combination of activities will create the demand for a myriad of public open spaces. In addition to outdoor activities specifically associated with the museum, other spaces that could be shared include school-related spaces, spaces for festival events (including an amphitheater), parks and passive recreation space for picnics and family activities (particularly near the lakes), and civic gathering spaces for other events in the Town of Eatonville.



Photo courtesy of the Orange County Regional History Center



Wells' Built Museum of African American History and Culture



Robert Hungerford Normal and Industrial School in Eatonville, shown in about 1910, was established in 1889 with the help of educator Booker T. Washington. Credit: Florida State Archives (2)



Courtesy of Ridge Bonnick – Ridge Bonnick Art



Educational resources available to the Town of Eatonville and the Florida Museum of Black History include:

Hungerford Normal and Industrial School

In the spring of 1898, along with the help of friends and relatives, Mr. E C. Hungerford donated 160 acres of land for the Town of Eatonville’s first post-primary school, the Hungerford Normal and Industrial School. The donation was made in memory of his late son, Robert, who died due to yellow fever. The Hungerford Normal and Industrial School was central to the Town’s culture, headed by Tuskegee Institute graduates, who taught vocational, literacy, and life skills to Black students in Central Florida.

Classrooms and dormitories sat near the workshops, barns, and garden plots that were created to teach self-sufficiency to Eatonville’s children. When the Hungerford School was incorporated into Eatonville, it covered 340 acres and made up 62% of the town, a dominant institution physically, culturally, and educationally.

Today there lies a newly built Hungerford Elementary School with approximately 300 students and 40 staff members. There are a variety of wonderful programs at Hungerford, including the STEAM Program, which stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Aviation, and Mathematics.

Orange County Regional History Center and Historical Society of Central Florida — Executive Director Pamela Schwartz: A national award-winning curator and museum industry executive. She has become a national authority on historical collecting after community tragedy PULSE, an effort that earned History Center staff the 2019 Institute of Museums and Library Service National Medal, the top award in the industry. Prior to working at the History Center, Schwartz was executive director at Boone County Historical Society.

Her previous work experience also includes stints at Iowa cultural institutions Maquoketa Art Experience (2010), Cedar Rock: Frank Lloyd Wright Residence (2009), UNI Museums (2007-2009) and Jackson County Historical Society (2002-2005). Schwartz received her Master of Arts in Museum Professions, Exhibition Development, from Seton Hall and a Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations from the University of Northern Iowa.

Wells’ Built Museum of African American History and Culture, U.S. National Register of History of Historic Places: The Wells’ Built Hotel has been converted into a museum housing memorabilia of Orlando’s Black community and displays on the Civil Rights movement along with some African art and artifacts. On February 4, 2000, it was added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. It’s located in downtown Orlando’s Parramore District, just 10 miles south of Eatonville.



The Orlando area is rich with historical and educational resources.

University of Central Florida — School of Arts & Humanities

- Scot A. French, Ph.D.
 - University of Central Florida
 - Associate Professor, Department of History
 - Director of Public History Associate Director, Center for Humanities & Digital Research
 - University of Virginia, Associate Director, Woodson Institute for Afro-American & African Studies, 2000-05
- Connie L. Lester, Ph.D.
 - Associate Professor of History
 - Director of RICHES of Central Florida
 - Editor, Florida Historical Quarterly

Orange County Public Library — 100 Years of Learning (Steve Powell, Library Director/CEO)

Educational Content Advisory Board: At the core of our mission to craft an unparalleled museum experience lies a fundamental belief in the transcendent role of education. We recognize that education serves as the catalyst for curiosity, understanding, and profound connections. With this conviction driving us forward, we have proudly unveiled a pioneering initiative: establishing a precedent-setting Educational Content Advisory Board.

Establishing our Educational Content Advisory Board heralds a pivotal moment in our journey toward excellence and inclusivity. Through the board’s collective wisdom and expertise, we are poised to redefine the essence of education, illumination, and captivation through the transformative power of storytelling and immersive experiences. Welcome to a new era in museum excellence, where the pursuit of knowledge knows no bounds, and every visitor embarks on a journey of discovery and enlightenment.

This esteemed board, comprising a blend of local luminaries and national talents of diverse backgrounds, embodies our steadfast commitment to excellence in educational content. Serving as the cornerstone of their vision for an exceptional museum journey, this board is meticulously curated to ensure that their offerings are dynamic, inclusive, and enlightening, resonating with visitors from all walks of life.

At the forefront of this initiative are individuals with a wide range of skills and expertise. Dan Picard, Florida native and owner of minority-owned business and experimental design firm MDSX, has over two decades of experience in museum and experiential design, having collaborated with prestigious institutions such as the Emmett Till Center, The Franklin Institute, The Met, Walt Disney World Entertainment, and Universal Studios.

Through these collaborations, he has developed groundbreaking narratives that captivate and inspire, providing invaluable insights into crafting immersive storytelling experiences that break boundaries and ignite imaginations. Additionally, Picard has spearheaded community engagements with students and educators in Philadelphia, leading to the creation of The Franklin Institute’s latest gallery, Wondrous Space. This futuristic experience explores diverse people and careers in space exploration, sparking interest and inspiration among the next generation of space enthusiasts.

Accompanying Picard is Abby Bysshe, the Franklin Institute’s chief executive and strategy officer. Bysshe’s adeptness in cultural programming and educational outreach, coupled with Darryl Willams, The Franklin Institute’s senior vice president of science and education, brings years of leadership in museum landscapes and education programs for students and educators. This helps to ensure our team’s ability to navigate complexities and innovate approaches. Together, their collective expertise guides us toward elevating the visitor experience to unprecedented heights, fostering inclusivity and engagement.



Including Emmett Till Interpretive Center representatives underscores our deep-rooted commitment to honoring and preserving Black history and heritage. Their profound understanding of pivotal moments in Black history and dedication to authentic representation will enrich our museum's offerings and ensure that diverse voices are heard and celebrated.

To ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all, we have enlisted the expertise of an ADA consultant from Tech Owl. Their invaluable guidance will facilitate the creation of experiences that cater to diverse audiences, upholding principles of equity and inclusion to ensure that every visitor feels valued and welcomed.

Additionally, cultural consultant Kelleon Nixon and his team at Nixon & Co. bring a unique perspective rooted in community and cultural competence. Their unwavering commitment to authentic engagement and human-centered action will ensure that our museum's content authentically reflects the rich tapestry of experiences within our community, fostering meaningful connections and dialogue.

RICHES Digital Archiving Project and Bending Toward Justice Interactive Exhibits: The Regional Initiative for Collecting History, Experiences & Stories (RICHES) Digital Archiving Project is an interactive digital database housed in the History Department at the University of Central Florida under the direction of Connie. L. Lester, PhD. The project was created in 2009 and is now in its 15th year of operation. All RICHES content is free and open to the public. RICHES focuses on the collection and archiving of ordinary people in Florida history with a special emphasis on Central Florida. The collections include photographs, maps, personal and public documents, newspapers, oral histories, podcasts, film, and digital exhibits. Users can search using a variety of tools, including a Connection tool that combines time and geographical results with text analysis techniques to find links between items in the archive.

RICHES focuses its collection strategy on the stories of ordinary people whose histories are not readily available in institutional museums and archives. One methodology for collecting these stories is the History Harvest, a community event that invites the public to bring photographs to scan and provides an opportunity to tell their story in a videoed oral history. RICHES has more than 78 community, academic, and technology partners and has conducted more than twenty History Harvests, eight of them in historic Black communities.

In 2019, in preparation for the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Ocoee Massacre in Orange County, RICHES expanded its exhibit potential with the creation of new digital space titled "Bending Toward Justice." Building on the RICHES commitment to capturing the history of ordinary people, BTJ's mission is to document the history of Central Florida's Black communities to understand how Black citizens "bent the arch of history" toward justice through their everyday lives and under extraordinary conditions. The Ocoee Massacre interactive digital exhibit, "Voting Rights and Voter Suppression," consists of four parts:

- **Part 1, "Ocoee, A Case Study,"** explores life in Ocoee and the election day massacre and places them in a state and national context.
- **Part 2, "Voting Rights,"** analyzes the expansion and contraction of voting rights.
- **Part 3, "The Legacy of Ocoee,"** examines the commemoration of the massacre in 2020.
- **Part 4, "Bibliography,"** provides an extensive source bibliography for future research.

The second exhibit, currently under construction and scheduled for a 2025 opening, is funded by an Iron Mountain Living Legacy Initiative grant. This exhibit focuses on Black entrepreneurship in the Parramore District of downtown Orlando. The interactive exhibit is map-based and consists of five parts:

- **Part 1, "Jonestown, 1870-1945: Community as the Foundation for Entrepreneurship"**
- **Part 2, "Parramore, 1890-1945: Black Businesses, Professionals, and Tradespeople as Foundations for Resistance to Jim Crow"**
- **Part 3, "Parramore, 1945-1980: The Promise of Prosperity [in postwar America] and the Reality of Transitions [the construction of I-4 and SR 408]"**
- **Part 4, "Parramore, 1980-2015: Neighborhood to Downtown and the Search for History"**
- **Part 5 is a bibliography.**

RICHES and BTJ are student and community centered with student interns and community partners actively engaged in collecting materials, writing text, and critiquing presentations.



500,000+
STUDENTS WITHIN
100 MILES OF ORLANDO

Lightcast, IPEDS, 2022



No. 2
LARGEST
UNIVERSITY
IN THE U.S.

Lightcast, IPEDS, 2022




Additional Considerations

Educational programming for both children and adults is a necessary ingredient, and student programs and curricula need to be tied to the appropriate state education standards. Older student and adult education can be coordinated with local colleges to include internships and other on-site learning opportunities.

The museum can be seen as an interactive institution combining a life-long learning center focusing on history and the “living arts,” with traditional aspects of a museum focused on interpretation and commemoration and archival and research activities. It would contain both indoor and outdoor spaces and activities, some free and open to the public and some within a more controlled environment. And it can partner with the Hungerford School and related commercial development in sharing activities and spaces wherever possible.

This combination of activities will create the demand for a myriad of public open spaces. In addition to outdoor activities specifically associated with the museum, other spaces which could be shared include school-related spaces; spaces for festival events, including an amphitheater, parks and passive recreation space for picnics and family activities (particularly near the lakes); and civic gathering spaces for other events in the Town of Eatonville.

	Total Students Enrolled*	Undergraduate Students per Program	Graduate Students per Program
Valencia College	71,892		
Associate in Arts		25,811	N/A
Associate in Science		10,332	N/A
Other (Miscellaneous)		12,641	N/A
Seminole State College	109,083		
Associate of Arts		9,708	N/A
Associate of Applied Science		4,537	N/A
Certificate/Technical		2,645	N/A
University of Florida	55,781		
Engineering		6,887	2,076
Business		5,772	2,028
University of South Florida	48,008		
Engineering		5,122	1,001
Muma College of Business		6,164	1,925
University of Central Florida	67,919		
Engineering & Comp. Science		10,876	1,835
Business Administration		7,349	729

*Most recent academic year Source: Individual institutions' data

CONTRIBUTORS

THE FLORIDA BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM COMPLEX *and...* SUPPORTING CONTRIBUTORS



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE



Demetris Pressley, CSM
Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Eatonville

Shaniqua "Shan" Rose
CRA Executive Director
Town of Eatonville

Valerie W. Mundy, P.E.
Public Works Director
Town of Eatonville

Roseann Harrington
Chief of Staff to Orange County

Mayor Jerry L. Demings

Terry W. Prather
Visit Orlando Board Chair

Derek Ephrem
Director, Economic Development
Orlando Economic Partnership

Jennifer Evins
President & CEO
United Arts of Central Florida

Dan Picard
Owner + Creative Director
MDSX

Carolyn Fennell
Former Senior Vice President of
Public Affairs and Community Relations
Greater Orlando Aviation Authority

Tim Baker
Principal in Charge
Baker Barrios

Wayne Dunkelberger
Chief Design Officer
Baker Barrios

Briana Johnson
Designer
Baker Barrios

Anzhelika Arbatskaia
Master Planner
Baker Barrios

Jed Prest
Executive Project Manager
Baker Barrios

Cassandra Matej
President & CEO
Visit Orlando

Danielle Hollander
Chief Marketing Officer
Visit Orlando

Stan Rubins
Sr. Corporate Counsel & VP
of External Affairs
Visit Orlando

Chris Neas
Director of Creative Services
Visit Orlando

Nate Shelton
Content Senior Manager
Visit Orlando

Ranae Ledebuhr
Senior Graphic Designer
Visit Orlando

A special Thank You to contributing artists Sharard X, Ridge Bonnick – Ridge Bonnick Art and photographer Victor K. Watkins.

Presented by: **Committee to Build the Florida Black History Museum Complex**
in Eatonville, Orange County