

# Florida Museum of Black History Task Force



Final Report

June 28, 2024

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## Executive Summary

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.<sup>1</sup> CS/CS/HB 1441 (“the bill”) created a nine-member task force (Task Force) to provide recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a proposed Florida Museum of Black History. The Task Force consisted of nine total members: three members appointed by Governor DeSantis, three appointed by Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, and three appointed by House Speaker Paul Renner.

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair <sup>^</sup>	Senate President Passidomo
Brian M. Butler	Governor DeSantis
Howard M. Holley, Sr.	Speaker Renner
Rep. Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair <sup>^</sup>	Governor DeSantis
Altony Lee, Ed.D.	Governor DeSantis
Dr. Nashid Madyun <sup>*</sup>	Senate President Passidomo
Rep. Kiyon Michael	Speaker Renner
Regina Gayle Phillips	Speaker Renner
Sen. Bobby Powell	Senate President Passidomo

<sup>^</sup>Chair and Vice-Chair as elected by Task Force.

<sup>\*</sup>Dr. Madyun replaced Terri Lipsey-Scott, who resigned from the Task Force on December 20, 2023.

Florida Department of State staff from the Division of Historical Resources and the Office of the Secretary supported the Task Force. The Task Force convened ten (10) public meetings between September 25, 2023, and June 28, 2024. During its meetings, the Task Force heard presentations from staff, experts, and various community stakeholders, pursuant to its duties outlined in the bill. The Task Force discussed the information provided and created a series of recommendations based on the language in the bill. Meeting materials, including agendas and minutes, are included in Appendix A: Meeting Materials.

In addition to hearing public comment during its meetings, the Task Force released a survey to gather input from Florida residents and visitors. Between December 1, 2023,

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix F: Additional Resources.

and February 29, 2024, more than 4,000 individuals responded to the survey. Survey results are summarized in the Overview and survey questions are included in Appendix D: Public Survey. Full responses to free response questions are available at [dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/](https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/).

This Final Report of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force (Final Report) includes materials related to the Task Force's public meetings and its recommendations for the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. Upon submission of this Final Report, dated June 30, 2024, the Task Force expires.

For more information about the Task Force, visit:  
[dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/](https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/).

## **Overview**

Florida's Black history began with the earliest recorded European voyages to North America in the early sixteenth century. Free and enslaved Africans participated in the first contacts with Florida's Native peoples, the exploration of the continent, and the founding of St. Augustine in 1565—the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the mainland United States. For over five hundred years, Black Floridians have contributed to shaping the state's history, its institution, and its communities.

Previous state-mandated task forces and state-sponsored research initiatives have examined certain aspects of Florida's Black history; however, the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force is the first such body to develop specific recommendations for building a state museum dedicated to Black history. The work of the Task Force is situated within the broader context of the scholarly study of Black history, state funding and resources, and the efforts of grassroots preservationists to protect, preserve, and promote stories and sites important to documenting and sharing the contributions of Black Floridians.

The remainder of this section highlights the major issues discussed by the Task Force during its ten (10) public meetings between September 25, 2023, and June 28, 2024. Please refer to Appendix A: Meeting Materials for more detailed information contained within the agendas and meeting minutes.

### **- Location**

The principal topic examined by the Task Force was the most appropriate location to recommend for the future Florida Museum of Black History. Beginning with the October 26, 2023, meeting, the Task Force heard presentations from prospective locations. In response to the high level of interest in being considered, the Task Force directed Department staff to facilitate presentations by Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO) and other location representatives at future meetings.

At the November 13, 2023, meeting, the first prospective location representatives made their initial presentations before the Task Force. To create a process for determining the most appropriate location to recommend, the Task Force directed staff to develop Location Selection Criteria as a tool to use during the location selection process.<sup>2</sup> At the December 15, 2023, meeting, DOS staff presented draft Location Selection Criteria. At

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B: Location Selection.

the January 12, 2024, meeting, the Task Force voted to approve the Location Selection Criteria as amended. Also at the January 12, 2024, meeting, the Task Force decided to apply the criteria only to locations that presented on or before the February 19, 2024, Task Force meeting.

The following locations made initial presentations to the Task Force on or before the February 19, 2024, meeting (in alphabetical order):

1. Daytona Beach
2. Eatonville/Orange County
3. Havana
4. Jackson County
5. Nassau County/Amelia Island
6. Opa-locka
7. Panama City Beach
8. Quincy
9. Sarasota
10. Seminole County
11. St. Augustine/St. Johns County
12. St. Petersburg
13. West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County

On February 14, 2024, the Department sent letters to each of the thirteen (13) prospective locations listed above outlining the process for submitting a formal proposal for consideration by the Task Force. Prospective locations were given a deadline of 5:00 p.m. EDT on March 15, 2024, to submit their proposals by email. By the deadline, the Department received proposals from the following eight (8) locations (in alphabetical order):

1. Eatonville/Orange County
2. Jackson County
3. Nassau County/Ameila Island
4. Opa-locka
5. Panama City
6. Sarasota
7. Seminole County
8. St. Augustine/St. Johns County

Task Force members received the eight (8) above listed proposals from the Department on Wednesday, March 27, 2024. Members were asked to return their preliminary scores to the Department by April 12, 2024. Based on the vote of the Task Force, Department staff would compile the preliminary scores and invite the top four (4) ranked locations (by average score) to attend the April 19, 2024, meeting to answer questions from the Task Force.

The top four (4) ranked locations invited to attend the April 19, 2024, meeting were (in order of highest to lowest preliminary scores):

1. St. Augustine/St. Johns County	94.00
2. Eatonville/Orange County	91.56
3. Sarasota	81.32
4. Opa-locka	77.44

At the April 19, 2024, meeting, the Task Force voted to narrow down the list of top ranked locations from four (4) to three (3). After they completed the scoring process and voted on its results, the Task Force's final ranking list was (in order from highest to lowest average score):

1. St. Augustine/St. Johns County	96.78
2. Eatonville/Orange County	95.33
3. Opa-locka	84.89

The top three (3) locations were forwarded to Andrew Chin, Dean & Associate Professor of Architecture and Engineering Technology at Florida A&M University, for further study.<sup>3</sup>

At the May 21, 2024, meeting, after further discussion and public comment on the proposed location of the museum, the Task Force voted, based on the rankings that occurred on April 19, 2024, to recommend St. Augustine/St. Johns County as the site for the future Florida Museum of Black History.

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C: Architectural Study.

At the May 21, 2024, meeting, the Task Force also voted to recommend that a feasibility study be funded by the legislature to provide funds to the Department of State to further study the top three ranked locations.

- **Existing Resources**

Most of Florida's Black history and cultural organizations exist at the local level and were founded by grassroots organizers, often at their own expense. Some of these local organizations receive recurring operational support from government entities, but, like many museums and cultural organization throughout the United States, most rely on a combination of grants, private donations, and earned revenue.

The Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN), founded in 2001 by the John Gilmore Riley Center and Museum, currently consists of over 30 member sites throughout the state.<sup>4</sup> On several occasions, the Task Force received information from FAAHPN, including at the October 26, 2023, meeting, when six (6) regional representatives spoke about the scope of existing Black-created and Black-focused museums in Florida. The regional representatives highlighted the stories that made these resources unique and their own efforts to preserve sites at the grassroots level. A common theme in the FAAHPN presentations was the importance of their network in providing support, both within the organization and as a connection point to national efforts and organizations. Another major theme expressed by FAAHPN representatives was their personal investments in preserving Florida's Black history. Several representatives spoke about multi-generational efforts undertaken at the local level to ensure that Black history sites were not forgotten.

FAAHPN representatives also highlighted their successes, both individually and as a network of sites, including collaboration in the creation of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) and as members of the Association of African American Museums (AAAM). Challenges cited by FAAHPN members focused primarily on securing recurring funding. All representatives noted a growing public interest in Florida's Black history and the growth of audiences, including school groups, in recent years. FAAHPN members also expressed concerns that funding for a new state museum would divert existing funding from network sites.

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<sup>4</sup> Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network: [faahpn.com/about-faahpn/](https://faahpn.com/about-faahpn/). Not all of Florida's Black-focused history and cultural organizations belong to FAAHPN.



Also at the October 26, 2023, meeting, Department staff shared information regarding state-managed museums and related programs in Tallahassee, which all feature interpretation of Florida's Black history. In addition to museums, the Department issues publications, digitizes archival materials, and supports the preservation of Black history and culture through its grant programs, most recently through the creation of the Abandoned African American Cemeteries Grant Program by the 2023 Legislature.<sup>5</sup> At the March 25, 2024, meeting, representatives from the Division of Arts and Culture and the Division of Historical Resources discussed their grant programs and types of funding opportunities available to museums and cultural organizations across the state, including those that focus on Black history and culture.

The Task Force heard from subject area experts on Black history several times during its meetings, including during public comment and from invited presenters. Notably, at the February 19, 2024, meeting, historians Dr. Tameka Bradly Hobbs and Dr. Yanela G. McLeod provided overviews of the museum and public history fields, specifically in the context of challenges and opportunities related to the preservation and interpretation of Florida's Black history.

Museum and education professionals spoke on the major issues facing the field and provided an overview of special considerations for collections management, financial planning, and developing educational materials. At the November 13, 2023, meeting, Malinda Horton, Executive Director, Florida Association of Museums, spoke broadly about issues facing Florida and national museums, particularly financial sustainability. She recommended various resources, cited models for consideration, and highlighted how Florida's museums collaborate with each other and with national organizations, including the American Alliance of Museums (AAM).

To provide further information on museum best practices, Lisa Barton, Director of the Department's Museum of Florida History and Chief of the Division of Historical Resources' Bureau of Historical Museums, discussed museum collections plans, policies, and various collections management issues.

On educational materials and resources, the Task Force heard from Dr. Paul Burns, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, at the January 12, 2024, meeting. Dr. Burns provided an overview of the Florida Commissioner of

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<sup>5</sup> Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Abandoned African American Cemeteries Grant Program: [dos.fl.gov/historical/grants/abandoned-african-american-cemeteries-grants/](https://dos.fl.gov/historical/grants/abandoned-african-american-cemeteries-grants/).

Education’s African American History Task Force. He also identified school districts in Florida that had achieved “exemplary” status in the teaching of Black history. Dr. Burns provided insight on how the future museum might connect with Florida educators and students, citing successful examples from around the state. Other presentations on educational materials focused on expanding upon the list of topics referenced in the bill. This expanded list of recommended topics for educational materials is available in the Recommendations section of this report.<sup>6</sup>

Taken together, the information presented before the Task Force on existing resources demonstrates the commitment of small and large organizations across Florida to the preservation of Black history. Comments from museum professionals and historians also point to public interest in Black history and historic sites, particularly the unique aspects of Florida’s Black history. In summary, while Black history is presented throughout the state, there is not a single museum or site that explores, comprehensively, Florida’s Black history and culture and Black contributions to shaping Florida.

#### - **Public Input**

The Task Force collected public comments to inform its recommendations for the future Florida Museum of Black History. In addition to receiving public comments during its meetings, as well as comments from professionals and scholars, the Task Force directed Department staff to develop a survey for distribution to Florida residents and visitors.

The Task Force first asked staff to develop the survey at its initial meeting on September 25, 2023. At the October 26, 2023, meeting, DOS staff presented a draft of the survey questions and discussed methodology and distribution. Based on Task Force comments, staff updated the survey questions, and the Task Force voted to approve the public survey as amended at the November 13, 2023, meeting.<sup>7</sup>

The Department announced the survey via press release on December 8, 2023.<sup>8</sup> The Department also promoted the survey through social media and email. Open from December 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024, the public survey received 4,091 total

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<sup>6</sup> See pages 17-18.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix D: Public Survey.

<sup>8</sup> “Secretary of State Cord Byrd Seeks Public Input on the Proposed Florida Museum of Black History,” December 8, 2023, [dos.fl.gov/communications/press-releases/2023/press-release-secretary-of-state-cord-byrd-seeks-public-input-on-proposed-florida-museum-of-black-history/](https://dos.fl.gov/communications/press-releases/2023/press-release-secretary-of-state-cord-byrd-seeks-public-input-on-proposed-florida-museum-of-black-history/).

individual responses. The survey did not collect comprehensive demographic information about respondents; however, the first three questions asked:

1. Are you a Florida Resident? (yes or no)
2. What is your age group? (providing seven (7) age group options from <18 to 65+)
3. Which of the following best describes you? (providing a list of occupations/affiliations)

The demographic information showed that over 97% of respondents were Florida residents. The majority of respondents (55.16%) indicated that they were over age 55. The largest single age group responding to the survey were individuals aged 65 and over (35.23%). The majority of respondents (53.72%) answered that they were either an “Individual/Private Citizen” (27.51%) or “Retired” (26.21%).

At the March 25, 2024, meeting, John Grandage, Assistant Director for Historical Resources, provided an overview of the final survey results. The survey was divided into three sections. The first section asked the demographic questions listed above. Section two listed a statement on different priorities for the museum and asked respondents to choose the level of priority they would assign to that item. The third section allowed free response answers, up to 3,500 characters in length, on a series of questions about the future museum.

Department staff and the Task Force discussed the demographic information of survey respondents. Particularly when viewed in the context of museum audiences, the survey population appropriately represents the core interest groups served by museums and cultural organizations.

Trends in the second section indicated that most respondents felt that strong historical content was essential to the museum. Amenities associated with large museum facilities, such as spaces for outdoor gardens, performing arts, art galleries, and areas for public research, were generally viewed as high priorities, but less so than the museum’s content. Charts on the results of the first section of survey questions are available online: [dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/](https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/).

The free response section provided an important space for public input on the future museum. Answers to the free response questions are available online: [dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/](https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/). Major themes in the responses

included questions about the cost of the museum, the timeline for opening, its governance, the role of academic advisors on museum content, the types of visitor experiences and amenities desired, and how the future Florida Museum of Black History would consult with other prominent Black-focused museums in the United States. Respondents listed dozens of topics that they felt were crucial to include in the museum. Department staff included the most often cited topics in the list of additional education materials recommended by the Task Force.<sup>9</sup>

The free response section also included questions related to selecting the site. Respondents indicated that physical building accessibility, adequate parking, and a variety of spaces and amenities available for programming were important factors to consider. At the March 25, 2024, meeting, the Task Force asked staff to compile a list of locations cited by respondents. At the April 19, 2024, meeting, Department staff reported on the frequency of locations mentioned in survey responses (in order of most frequent to least frequent):

1. Eatonville/Orange County	528
2. Tallahassee	288
3. St. Augustine/St. Johns County	270
4. Jacksonville	187
5. Miami/Miami-Dade County	148
6. Tampa	125
7. St. Petersburg	33
8. Rosewood	27
9. Ft. Lauderdale/Broward County	22
10. Opa-locka	21
11. Sarasota	16
12. Jackson County	15
13. Ft. Pierce	5
14. Gadsden County	5
15. Quincy	5
16. Panama City	4
17. Nassau County	2
18. Havana	1
19. Seminole County	1

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<sup>9</sup> See pages 18-19.

Overall, the survey indicated strong interest from the public in the museum, its content, and the benefits of the future museum to Florida’s heritage tourism economy.

- **Museum Design**

While the bill requires plans for design and construction of the museum, no funding was provided to the Department for this purpose. In an effort to respond to this requirement, the Department issued a Collaborative Requisition through the “My Florida Marketplace” system to solicit proposals for preliminary design services. However, none of the proposals received by the deadline met the needs of the Department and the Task Force.

The Department then contacted Andrew Chin, Dean & Associate Professor of Architecture and Engineering Technology at Florida A&M University (FAMU). Dean Chin provided a proposal to study the top three ranked location proposals. The Department utilized \$20,000 from its existing operating budget to compensate FAMU for this study. Procurement followed applicable sections of Chapter 287, *Florida Statutes*.

At the February 19, 2024, meeting, Dean Chin provided an overview of the study that FAMU would conduct on the top three ranked locations. At the May 21, 2024, meeting, Dean Chin presented the results of the study.<sup>10</sup> By studying the proposals submitted by the top three locations, Dean Chin provided information based on analysis of Location Criteria 2, “Appropriateness of Proposed Location,” and Location Criteria 5, “Transportation Infrastructure.” His focus included information on lot size, points of interest, pedestrian access, parking, transportation, land use, and the building program. Dean Chin mentioned colleagues from the National Association of Minority Architects who also reviewed the location proposals and contributed information used in his report. Dean Chin responded to Task Force questions regarding his presentation. Overall, his presentation highlighted some of the potential strengths and weaknesses of each site within their geographic context. Dean Chin emphasized the need for further study to obtain more detailed information about each location.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C: Architectural Study.

- **Marketing Plan**

At the April 19, 2024, meeting, Brenna Dacks, Regional Partnership Manger, VISIT FLORIDA, presented on the overall mission of VISIT FLORIDA and how its resources could be leveraged by the future Florida Museum of Black History. She indicated VISIT FLORIDA's commitment to working with the recommended location to develop marketing plans for the museum at the appropriate time. Since her presentation occurred prior to the final vote to accept the location rankings, the remainder of her remarks were general in nature and spoke to the resources available to the future museum from VISIT FLORIDA and from local Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). These resources include, but are not limited to, enhanced web listings, prominent listings on website landing pages and subpages, dedicated listing pages for the museum, access to travel writers and content creators who produce promotion articles, listing in the printed and digital versions of the annual vacation guide, integration into familiarization tours for travel professionals and social media influencers, visitor-centric press releases, coordination with VISIT FLORIDA's regional market program manager, social media promotion, research tools and resources, and building visitor personas to create targeted marketing materials. She provided examples from sites around the state to illustrate how Florida's museums and cultural organizations utilize these resources. Overall, her presentation underscored the commitment of VISIT FLORIDA to help promote the future Florida Museum of Black History.

## Recommendations

The bill requires the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to make recommendations on the following:

1. Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum.
2. Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum.
3. A marketing plan to promote the museum.
4. A transition plan for the museum to become financially self-sufficient.
5. Recommendations for archival and artifact acquisition, preservation, and research; exhibits; installations; and educational materials that complement and support required instruction provided in public schools in accordance with s.1003.42(2)(h).

At the May 21, 2024, meeting, the Task Force voted to approve preliminary recommendations to be included in the Final Report, which would be discussed at its next meeting. At the June 28, 2024, meeting, the Task Force voted, 6 to 1, to adopt the following revised recommendations as part of this Final Report: <sup>11</sup>

1. Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum.
  - a. Location
    - i. At the May 21, 2024, meeting, the Task Force voted St. Augustine/St. Johns County as the site based on the rankings that occurred on April 19, 2024. Therefore, the Task Force's recommendation for the location of the future Florida Museum of Black History is St. Augustine/St. Johns County.
    - ii. Conduct a feasibility study on the top three locations as ranked by the Task Force on April 19, 2024: 1. St. Augustine/St. Johns County; 2. Eatonville/Orange County; 3. Opa-locka. Funds for the feasibility study should be appropriated by the Legislature to the Department of State, who will procure the required services and manage the project. Local feasibility studies should be leveraged however appropriate to reduce costs and improve turn-around-time.

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<sup>11</sup> Voting in favor: Brian Bulter, Howard Holley, Rep. Berny Jacques, Dr. Altony Lee, Rep. Kiyon Michael, Regina Gayle Philips. Voting against: Sen. Geraldine Thompson. Present at the meeting, but not at the time of the vote: Dr. Nashid Madyun and Sen. Bobby Powell.

- b. Design & Construction
  - i. The new museum shall be a large facility up to 100,000 square feet capable of supporting all the functions of a leading institution, including, but not limited to, collections care and storage, exhibits, programs, large public events, large rental events, and as a repository for genealogical and archival materials, with appropriate space for public research.
  - ii. Procure architectural design services based on the feasibility study.
  - iii. Procure construction management services based on the final architectural design and construction budget.
  
- 2. Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum.
  - a. Operation
    - i. The museum shall be operated as a hybrid model, by a non-profit entity in combination with a governing body, either a state agency, a local government entity, or a college or university, depending on the results of the feasibility study and the available options for the location selected.
    - ii. Relevant operational models should include, but are not limited to:
      - a. Avron B. Fogelman Sports Museum, Boca Raton
      - b. Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit
      - c. Florida Museum of Natural History, Gainesville
      - d. Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, Charlotte
      - e. John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota
      - f. Meek-Eaton Black Archives, Research Center & Museum, Tallahassee
      - g. Museum of Florida History, Tallahassee
      - h. National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis
      - i. Patricia & Philip Frost Art Museum, Miami
  - b. Administration
    - i. The museum shall receive program support from an Operating Board of Directors, appointed by the governing body, consisting of scholarly experts and other key stakeholders representing community organizations.



- ii. The museum shall receive funding support from a non-profit Foundation Board of Directors, appointed by the governing body.
  - iii. The museum shall follow the standards advanced by leading national organizations.
  - iv. The museum shall be administered by a team of professional staff representing expertise in the relevant disciplines.
- 3. A marketing plan to promote the museum.
  - a. The Florida Tourism Marketing Corporation [VISIT FLORIDA], in coordination with the governing body of the Florida Museum of Black History, will develop and execute a marketing plan to promote the museum.
  - b. The museum will collaborate with the appropriate local Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) or Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB).
- 4. A transition plan for the museum to become financially self-sufficient.
  - a. Construction of the museum shall be funded by a combination of local funding and by the state via legislative appropriation.
  - b. Estimates for recurring operational costs shall be included in the feasibility study and further developed during the building design, site development, and construction process.
  - c. As soon as practical and feasible, the organization shall seek to raise private funds, gifts, donations, and solicit grants, through its Foundation Board of Directors, to augment any recurring funding received from its governing body.
  - d. The museum shall earn revenue from general admission fees, ticketed programming and events, retail partnerships, and from facility rentals.
  - e. An endowment shall be created to support the acquisition, research, and care of collections obtained from across the network of museums that exist in Florida.
- 5. Recommendations for archival and artifact acquisition, preservation, and research; exhibits; installations; and educational materials that complement and support required instruction provided in public schools in accordance with s.1003.42(2)(h).
  - a. The Operating Board of Directors, in consultation with appropriate museum staff, and with the approval of the governing body, will develop a

collecting plan for the museum, including the acquisition of archival materials and artifacts.

- b. The museum will develop a collections management policy to care for, preserve, and curate its collections as well as collections that may be loaned to the museum.
- c. The Operating Board of Directors, in consultation with appropriate museum staff, colleagues from other institutions, and other external content experts, will develop plans for permanent and temporary exhibitions.
- d. The Operating Board of Directors, in consultation with appropriate museum staff, colleagues from the Florida Department of Education, and other external stakeholders, will develop programs and educational materials consistent with applicable *Florida Statutes*, including the list of topics below, and within the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History.

As stated in the bill, the recommendations must include educational materials relating to:

1. The role of African American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airmen, and all African American veterans.
2. The history of slavery in the state.
3. The history of segregation in the state.
4. Notable African Americans in the state.
5. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune Cookman University.
6. The history of historically Black colleges and universities in this state.
7. The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide.

In addition to the topics listed above, the Task Force recommends that the museum develop education materials on (in alphabetical order):

1. African Civilizations
2. Agriculture, including the Cattle Industry
3. Arts, Music, Fashion, Entertainment, Sports
4. Black Business and Entrepreneurs
5. Black Contributions to Florida's Colonial History

6. Black Diaspora and Florida
7. Black Historians, Preservationists, Academics, Scholars
8. Black Press and Media
9. Education
10. Emancipation
11. Genealogy and Local History
12. Gullah Geechee Culture and History
13. Long Civil Rights Movement
14. Maroon Communities and Resistance to Slavery
15. Reconstruction
16. Science, Medicine, Technology, Architecture, Engineering
17. Traditional and Modern Black Culture, including Foodways

## **Appendix A: Meeting Materials**



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

September 25, 2023 – 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

All Task Force members will join via Go to Webinar

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1194494473100481877>

**Webinar ID: 897-007-723**

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

An **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

Call in Only: 562.247.8422

Room 307, R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

ITEM	Presenter
I. Call to Order	Lotane
II. Welcome	Secretary of State Cord Byrd
III. Introduction of Task Force Members	Members
IV. Overview of Legislation including Task Force Responsibilities, Goals, & Objectives	Lotane
V. <b>Election of Chairperson</b>	Lotane
VI. Future Meeting Dates, Number of Meetings, and Agendas	Lotane
VII. Sunshine Law and Public Records Presentation	Morris
VIII. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions	Members
IX. Public Comment	
X. Adjourn	

To request copies of meeting materials associated with this agenda, but not included herein, contact Alexys Johnson with the Division of Historical Resources at [alexys.johnson@dos.myflorida.com](mailto:alexys.johnson@dos.myflorida.com) or 850.245.6306 or 850.245.6333.

Under Florida law, email addresses are public records. If you do not want your email address released in response to a public records request, do not send electronic mail to this entity. Instead, contact this office by phone or in writing.



## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**October 26, 2023 – 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399  
And Via Webinar

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3147074291914638168>

**Webinar ID: 711-570-219**

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.  
Call in Only: 213.929.4212

ITEM	Presenter
Items printed in <b>RED</b> indicate that a motion is required.	
I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force, Staff & Guests	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from September 25, 2023, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. <b>Election of Vice-Chairperson</b>	Thompson
VI. Discussion of Academic Advisory Council	Morris
VII. Discussion of Public Survey	Lotane
VIII. Presentation of Existing Museum and Archival Resources	
A. Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network	FAAHPN
B. Florida Division of Historical Resources	Grandage
C. Florida Division of Library and Information Services	Storey
IX. Break (Optional)	
X. Discussion of Museum Location	Members
XI. Discussion of Museum Design	Members/Lotane
XII. Future Meeting Dates, Number of Meetings & Agendas	Lotane
XIII. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions	Members
XIV. Public Comment	
XV. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**November 13, 2023 – 1:00-5:00 p.m.**

R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and via webinar

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5212534373432684889>

**Webinar ID:** 329-262-835

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

Call in Only: 562.247.8321

ITEM	Presenter
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Items printed in **RED** indicate that a motion is required.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from October 26, 2023, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. <b>Approval of Public Survey</b>	Grandage
VI. Information on Marketing Plan	DOS
VII. Presentations on Museum Locations	Various
VIII. Break	
IX. Discussion of Museum Location & Governance	Members
X. Location Criteria & Museum Visits	Members/Lotane
XI. Update on Museum Design Solicitation	Lotane
XII. Update on Educational Materials	Lotane
XIII. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas	Lotane
XIV. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions	Members
XV. Public Comment	
XVI. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**December 15, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.**

R.A. Gray Building, Room 307, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and via webinar

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/772220436557488733>

**Webinar ID:** 558-604-475

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

Call in Only: 415.930.5321

ITEM	Presenter
Items printed in <b>RED</b> indicate that a motion is required.	
I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from November 13, 2023, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Presentations on Museum Locations	Various
VI. Break	
VII. Presentation of Proposed Selection Criteria for Museum Location	Lotane
VIII. <b>Vote on Selection Criteria for Museum Location</b>	Thompson
IX. Update on Museum Design Solicitation	Lotane
X. Update on Educational Materials	Lotane
XI. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas	Lotane
XII. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions	Members
XIII. Public Comment	
XIV. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**January 12, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**

Location: R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 or by webinar.

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/4358427144743733592>

**Webinar ID:** 202-473-211

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

Call in Only: 562.247.8321

ITEM	Presenter
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Items printed in **RED** indicate that a motion is required.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from December 15, 2023, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Remarks by Dr. Paul Burns, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools, Florida Department of Education	Burns
VI. Task Force Discussion of Educational Themes/Topics	Members
VII. Presentation for Proposed Museum Location	Opa-locka
VIII. Break	
IX. Update on Public Survey	Lotane
X. Update on Museum Design Solicitation	Lotane
XI. Presentation of Revised Selection and Scoring Criteria for Museum Location	Grandage
XII. <b>Vote on Revised Selection and Scoring Criteria for Museum Location</b>	Thompson
XIII. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas	Lotane
XIV. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements	Members
XV. Public Comment	
XVI. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**February 19, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.**

Location: R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 or via webinar.

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6191200878060307029>

**Webinar ID:** 733-929-635

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

Call in Only: 415.655.0060

ITEM	Presenter
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Items printed in **RED** indicate that a motion is required.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from January 12, 2024, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Update on Public Survey	Lotane
VI. Presentation for Proposed Museum Location	West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County
VII. Discussion of Location Criteria Process	Lotane/Members
VIII. Remarks by Kathe Hambrick, Founder, River Road African American Museum and Professor of Museology, Southern University, New Orleans	Hambrick
IX. Break	
X. Remarks by Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs, Library Regional Manager, African American Research Library and Cultural Center, Ft. Lauderdale	Hobbs
XI. Remarks by Dr. Yanela G. McLeod, History Professor and Director of Communications and Alumni Relations at Florida A&M University's College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities	McLeod
XII. Break	
XIII. Presentation on Museum Best Practices and American Alliance of Museums (AAM) Standards by Lisa Barton, Director, Museum of Florida History	Barton
XIV. Update on Museum Design	Lotane/Chin
XV. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas	Lotane
XVI. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements	Members
XVII. Public Comment	
XVIII. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**March 25, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.**

**Location:** Task Force Members will attend by webinar.

Staff will be present at R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1502998747829966686>

**Webinar ID: 552-350-691**

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

Call in Only: 416.872.929

ITEM	Presenter
Items printed in <b>RED</b> indicate that a motion is required.	
I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from February 19, 2024, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Status of Museum Location Proposal Submissions	Lotane
VI. Presentation of Final Results of Public Survey	Grandage
VII. Discussion of Survey Results and Next Steps	Members
VIII. Break	
IX. Presentation on Museum Best Practices and AAM Standards by Lisa Barton, Director, Museum of Florida History	Barton
X. Presentation of Division of Arts & Culture Grants Programs by Terri Abstein, Financial Administrator	Abstein
XI. Presentation of Division of Historical Resources Grants Programs by Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director	Tomlinson
XII. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas	Lotane
XIII. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements	Members
XIV. Public Comment	
XV. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

April 19, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and via webinar

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2756214405510872151>

**Webinar ID:** 394-671-699

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

ITEM	Presenter
Items printed in <b>RED</b> indicate that a motion is required.	
I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from March 25, 2024, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Overview of the Location Scoring Process	Lotane
VI. Presentation of Preliminary Scores	Lotane
VII. Individual Consideration of the Top Four Locations	Members
VIII. <b>Final Ranking of Museum Locations</b>	Members
IX. <b>Vote on Top Three Museum Locations</b>	Members
X. Next Steps for Top Three Museum Locations	Lotane/Chin
XI. Break	
XII. Discussion of Museum Marketing Plan	VISIT FLORIDA
XIII. Discussion of Educational Materials	Grandage/Members
XIV. Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations & Final Report Process	Grandage/Members
XV. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas	Lotane
XVI. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements	Members
XVII. Public Comment	
XVIII. Adjourn	

To request copies of meeting materials associated with this agenda, but not included herein, contact Khara Fleming with the Division of Historical Resources at [Khara.Fleming@dos.myflorida.com](mailto:Khara.Fleming@dos.myflorida.com) or 850.245.6302 or 850.245.6333.

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**May 21, 2024 – 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.**

R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and via webinar  
**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5525566437617895776>  
**Webinar ID:** 479-791-619

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

ITEM	Presenter
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Items printed in **RED** indicate that a motion is required.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from April 19, 2024, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Presentation of Architectural Study	Chin
VI. Discussion of Design Materials and Next Steps	Lotane/Members
VII. <b>Optional Vote on Museum Location</b>	Members
VIII. Break	
IX. Discussion of Feasibility Study for Museum Location(s)	Lotane/Members
X. <b>Optional Vote to Recommend Feasibility Study</b>	Members
XI. Presentation of Draft Recommendations	Grandage
XII. Discussion of Draft Recommendations	Members
XIII. <b>Vote(s) to Accept or Amend Draft Recommendations</b>	<b>Lotane/Members</b>
XIV. Next Steps for Task Force	Lotane
XV. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements	Members
XVI. Public Comment	
XVII. Adjourn	

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## FLORIDA MUSEUM OF BLACK HISTORY TASK FORCE

**June 28, 2024 – 9:30-11:00 a.m.**

R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399 and via webinar

**Register and Join Meeting:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1198791370405678431>

**Webinar ID: 659-755-651**

Participants can use their telephone or computer mic & speakers (VoIP).

If using a phone, an **audio pin** will be shown after joining the webinar and must be entered to speak.

ITEM	Presenter
Items printed in <b>RED</b> indicate that a motion is required.	

I. Call to Order & Roll Call	Thompson
II. Introduction of Task Force & Staff	Thompson
III. <b>Adoption of Agenda</b>	Thompson
IV. <b>Adoption of Minutes from May 21, 2024, Meeting</b>	Thompson
V. Update on Draft Recommendations	Grandage
VI. <b>Vote(s) on Draft Recommendations</b>	Members
VII. Next Steps for Task Force	Lotane
VIII. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements	Members
IX. Public Comment	
X. Adjourn	

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**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Web Meeting, GoTo Meeting, ID: 897-007-723**  
**Monday, September 25, 2023—11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present In-Person:** N/A

**Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Howard Holley; Rep. Berny Jacques; Dr. Altony Lee; Rep. Kiyan Michael; Gayle Phillips; Sen. Bobby Powell; Terri Lipsey Scott; Sen. Geraldine Thompson.

**Members Not Present:** N/A

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Cord Byrd, Secretary of State; Jennifer Kennedy, Assistant Secretary of State/Chief of Staff; Alissa Lotane, Director of Historical Resources; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director for Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director for Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel; Jillian Pratt, Assistant General Counsel; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Historical Marker Program Coordinator; Trampas Alderman, Curator of Education and Public Engagement, Museum of Florida History; Lisa Barton, Director, Museum of Florida History; Danila Coppola, Development and Financial Director, Museum of Florida History; Lisa Dunbar, Senior Curator, Museum of Florida History; Kimberlyn Elliott, Senior Curator, Museum of Florida History; Jennifer England, Public Information Specialist, Division of Historical Resources; Khara Flemming, Administrative Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Amanda Hamon, Executive Director, The Grove Museum; Elizabeth Johnson, Public Outreach and Information Coordinator, Office of External Affairs; Dr. Sarah Liko, Operations Manager, Division of Historical Resources; Daniel Webster, Florida History Day Coordinator, Museum of Florida History.

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Althemese Barnes.

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Carol Alexander; Imani Asukile; Pasha Baker; Dr. Martha Bireda; Sharon Blake; Andrea Bruton; Nancy Chanin; Ciara Cosby; Jaha Cummings; King Duncan; Patsy Eccles; Charlene Farrington; Vivian Filer; Anika Hamilton; Yvonne Hill; Dr. Tameka Hobbs; Thomas Jackson; Walter Gulley, Jr.; Dr. Natalie King-Pedroso; Dr. Nancy Lawther; Sonya Mallard; Wilma McKay; Eric Miller; Wanda Milton-Whitehead; Velma Monteiro-Tribble; Harriet Myers; Jonnie Perry; Floyd Phillips; Rosa Pickett; Deloris E. Rentz; Dianne Robinson; Sandra Rooks; Gwendolyn Thomas; William Thomas, Jr.; Adonnica Toler; Lloyd Washington; Autumn Watkins Holloway; Diane Williams-Cox.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Alissa Lotane called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m. Roll call confirmed that all Task Force members were in attendance, via webinar.

**Item II. Welcome**

Secretary of State Cord Byrd welcomed Task Force members, discussed the purpose of the Task Force, and thanked members for their willingness to serve.

**Item III. Introduction of Task Force Members**

Task Force members introduced themselves.

**Item IV. Overview of Legislation including Task Force Responsibilities, Goals, & Objectives**

Alissa Lotane provided an overview of the legislation that created the Task Force (CS/CS/HB 1441, Chapter 2023-72, Laws of Florida), including the intended role of Task Force members in making recommendations on a proposed future museum location; the design of the building and museum exhibits; museum operations, administration, and marketing; a financial sustainability transition plan for the museum to become self-sufficient; and how the museum's programs will contribute to curriculum and standards in Florida schools. Alissa Lotane also discussed DOS responsibilities for drafting the final report of the Task Force, handling meeting logistics, and handling member travel.

**Item V. Election of Chairperson**

Task Force members heard nominations for Chairperson. Sen. Powell nominated Sen. Thompson and Rep. Michael nominated Rep. Jacques. Both Sen. Thompson and Rep. Jacques accepted their nominations. Terri Lipsey Scott moved to close nominations and Brian Butler seconded. The motion passed.

Task Force members then held a roll call vote, in the order in which their names appear on the meeting materials roster:

- Rep. Berny Jacques voted for Rep. Berny Jacques
- Brian Butler voted for Sen. Geraldine Thompson
- Dr. Altony Lee voted for Rep. Berny Jacques
- Sen. Bobby Powell voted for Sen. Geraldine Thompson
- Sen. Geraldine Thompson voted for Sen. Geraldine Thompson
- Terri Lipsey Scott voted for Sen. Geraldine Thompson
- Rep. Kiyon Michael voted for Rep. Berny Jacques
- Howard Holley voted for Rep. Berny Jacques
- Gayle Phillips voted for Sen. Geraldine Thompson

Based on the roll call vote, Task Force members elected Sen. Thompson as Chairperson with five votes. Rep. Jacques received four votes.

**Item VII. Future Meeting Dates, Number of Meetings, and Agendas**

The next Task Force meeting will be held on October 26, 2023. The third meeting will be on November 13, 2023. Task Force members requested that DOS staff circulate a poll to help determine possible future meeting times and dates between December 2023 and June 2024. Task Force members will discuss the number of meetings, meeting locations, and items to be considered on each agenda at future meetings, starting in October 2023.

**Item VIII. Sunshine Law and Public Records Presentation**

DOS Deputy General Counsel Jon Morris provided an overview of Florida’s Sunshine Laws and Public Records Laws as it pertains to the work of the Task Force. DOS staff will distribute the presentation to all Task Force members.

**Item IX. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions**

Task Force members discussed creating an academic advisory panel and releasing poll questions to survey the public for input on the future museum. Alissa Lotane discussed the state process for procuring architectural design services. Task Force members also discussed hosting listening tour sessions to gather additional public input about the future museum.

**Item XI. Public Comment**

Several members of the public provided comments.

Althemese Barnes, founding Director of the John G. Riley Center and Museum and the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN), spoke about efforts in the past to engage leaders from the National Museum of African American History and Culture with Black history in Florida. She also spoke about FAAHPN accomplishments, including Institute on Museum and Library Services (IMLS) grants, economic impact studies, and internships.

Jaha Cummings spoke about the need to make more widely known the existing resources already developed by FAAHPN members, including the Blanchard House Museum in Punta Gorda, and voiced concern about how interest in and funding for the new museum may impact FAAHPN member sites and smaller museums.



Sen. Thompson discussed her role in the Wells' Built Museum in Orlando and her work in historic preservation, and how the new proposed museum would serve as a statewide hub and not diminish the work of or the resources available to FAAHPN members.

Sen. Powell discussed how the new museum would create a broader economic impact, but not at the expense of FAAHPN member sites or other smaller, local museums.

Walter Gulley commented in support of establishing an academic advisory committee to assist the Task Force.

Charlene Farrington Jones, from the Spady Cultural Heritage Museum in Delray Beach, expressed concerns about what would happen to existing FAAHPN funding once the new museum comes into existence.

Dr. Martha Bireda, from the Blanchard House Museum in Punta Gorda, expressed concerns about existing FAAHPN funding once the new museum came into existence. Dr. Bireda also expressed interest in seeing acknowledgment in the new museum about the work of FAAHPN.

Thomas Jackson spoke about the importance of Black contributions during Florida's Spanish period, including Fort Mose and other sites in St. Augustine.

Sen. Thompson discussed Estevanico, who is considered the first documented person of African descent to participate in Spanish expeditions in North America.

Lloyd Washington, from Jacksonville, wished the Task Force well and thanked them for their efforts.

Sen. Thompson mentioned programming at the historic Ritz Theater in Jacksonville and efforts to preserve the stories of sites demolished in the past.

Pasha Baker, from the Goldsboro West Side Community Historical Association in Sanford, discussed how many of the FAAHPN sites were preserved by earlier generations, often at their own expense, and how these institutions have worked together to promote Black history across generations.

Sandra Rooks, from the Pinellas County African American History Museum, spoke about recovering erased Black cemeteries; how FAAHPN members have worked to preserve historic buildings; and concerns about future funding for small museums once the new museum comes into existence.

Sen. Thompson and Terri Lipsey Scott spoke about their own work and leadership in the museum field and the need to preserve funding for small museums, along with moving forward on the development of a new statewide Black history museum.

Task Force members discussed establishing an academic advisory committee. Terri Lipsey Scott moved to vote on each recommended advisor at a future meeting. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The motion passed. Task Force members should send their recommendations to DOS staff.

Task Force members requested that the election of a Vice Chair be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

## **Item XII. Adjourn**

Sen. Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. Terri Lipsey Scott seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:12 p.m.

Beraldine F. Thompson Presiding Officer

Missie Ham State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/7/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Thursday, October 26, 2023–9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 711-570-219**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Dr. Altony Lee; Gayle Phillips; Sen. Geraldine Thompson  
**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Rep. Berny Jacques; Terri Lipsey-Scott; Rep. Kiyon Michael; Sen. Bobby Powell

**Task Force Members Not Present:** N/A

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel; Lisa Barton, Chief, Bureau of Historical Museums; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Alexa Wilson, Grants Specialist; Matt Storey, Archives Historian; Mark Nicolou, Florida Memory Program Director; Mark Ard, Director of External Affairs, Office of the Secretary of State

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Members of the public who spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Members of the Public and Staff Present Via Webinar:** 75 individuals registered for the webinar.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m. Roll call confirmed that all Task Force members were present, either in-person or via webinar.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Dr. Altony Lee moved to adopt the agenda and Terri Lipsey-Scott seconded. The motion passed.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from September 25, 2023, Meeting**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson requested that staff correct "Commissioners" to "Task Force Members" at the top of the minutes. With this change, Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adopt the minutes from the September 25, 2023, meeting. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed.

**Item V. Election of Vice Chairperson**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chairperson. Brian Butler nominated Rep. Berny Jacques. Rep. Berny Jacques accepted the nomination. No other nominations were brought forward, therefore, Rep. Berny Jacques becomes Vice Chairperson.

**Item VI. Discussion of Academic Advisory Council**

Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, provided comment on the Task Force creating an academic advisory council. He advised against creating a council separate from the Task Force, in order to ensure compliance with Chapter 286, *Florida Statutes*, regarding public notice of meetings. He further explained that this would not prohibit individual members of the task force from conducting their own research, having discussions with members of the public or education professionals, or providing communications to staff on matters that they wish to come before the Task Force as a whole. Task Force members should coordinate with staff on facilitating participation at future meetings by representatives of the academic or educational communities.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson recognized Rep. Bruce Antone, sponsor of House Bill 1441 that created the Task Force, to provide information about the legislation. Rep. Bruce Antone spoke about his vision for the future museum and provided information about tourism in Orlando and Central Florida.

Discussion ensued regarding the information provided by Rep. Bruce Antone, including construction cost figures, tourism data, and Task Force expectations for how to consider the proposed location, amenities, and scale of the future museum.

**Item VII. Discussion of Public Survey**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson recognized Alissa Lotane to present on the public survey. Alissa Slade Lotane asked that John Grandage present on the survey.

John Grandage presented on staff progress towards developing a public survey. Discussion ensued about survey methodology, distribution strategies, and timeline. In advance of the next meeting, staff will send the draft survey to Task Force Members, who will provide feedback in preparation for potentially approving the public survey at the November 13 meeting, for public distribution.

**Item VIII. Presentation of Existing Museum and Archival Resources**

The following representatives from the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network (FAAHPN) spoke about museums in their respective regions:

Althemese Barnes, Founder of the John G. Riley Center & Museum, Tallahassee, and Founder of FAAHPN, introduced FAAHPN.

Walter Gulley Jr., Executive Director, Ella Jordan Black History House Museum, Pensacola, also represented the Chappie James Black History Museum & Flight Academy; and the African American Historical Society Museum, all located in Escambia County.

Gayle Phillips, Executive Director, Lincolnville Museum & Cultural Center, St. Augustine, also represented the John G. Riley Center & Museum, Tallahassee.

Adonnica Toler, Toler-Vision Creative Consulting, also represented the Cotton Club Museum, Gainesville; Clara White Mission & Eartha M.M. White Museum, Jacksonville; and Durkeeville Historical Society & Museum, Jacksonville.

Pasha Baker, Executive Director, Goldsboro African American History Museum, Sanford, also represented African American Museum of the Arts, DeLand; Pinellas County African American Museum, Clearwater; Mary Harrell Black History Museum, New Smyrna Beach; and Harry T. & Harriette V. Moore Museum, Mims.

Dr. Martha Bireda, Executive Director, Blanchard House Museum, Punta Gorda, also represented Spady Black History Museum, West Palm Beach; and the African-American Research Library & Cultural Center, Fort Lauderdale.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break after the FAAHPN presentations and before the DOS presentations.

John Grandage spoke about resources from the Division of Historical Resources.

Matt Storey spoke about resources from the Division of Library and Information Services.

**Item IX. Break (Optional)**

See above, the break began at 11:35 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:50 a.m.

**Item X. Discussion of Museum Location**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called upon each Task Force Member to share their thoughts on the location for the proposed museum. As part of this discussion, Task Force Members asked staff to facilitate presentations at the November 13 meeting by representatives from Florida’s Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs). Task Force Members want to ensure that more robust information is provided by organizations that represent potential museum sites so that Task Force Members can hear from all interested parties and other stakeholders before developing any recommendations on location.

**Item XI. Discussion of Museum Design**

Alissa Lotane updated the Task Force on DOS efforts to procure architectural services to provide conceptual renderings and schematic floor plans for presentation at future meetings.

**Item XII. Future Meeting Dates, Number of Meetings & Agendas**

Staff will circulate a meeting poll to determine potential dates and times for the December 2023 meeting. Task Force Members recommended that the meeting be held by webinar only and discussed moving the discussion about marketing, which would involve the presentations by DMOs, to the November 13 meeting and shifting discussion about educational components to the December 2023 meeting.

**Item XIII. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions**

Task Force Members discussed organizations that would be appropriate to present at future meetings, including the Smithsonian, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), and Association of African American Museums (AAAM). Task Force Members discussed potential visits to museums by members to gather additional information and ideas for consideration when developing the future museum.

**Item XIV. Public Comment**

Ted Ellis, Director of the Civil Rights Institute at Florida State University, offered his support and willingness to serve as a resource to the Task Force.

Staff read into the record comments received from the public. Task Force Members responded to public comments.

**Item XV. Adjourn**

Sen. Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.

 Presiding Officer

 State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/7/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Monday, November 13, 2023–1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 711-570-219**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Rep. Berny Jacques; Dr. Altony Lee; Gayle Phillips; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chairperson

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Terri Lipsey-Scott; Rep. Kiyon Michael

**Task Force Members Not Present:** Sen. Bobby Powell

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Slade Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Alexa Wilson, Grants Specialist, Division of Historical Resources; Mark Ard, Director of External Affairs, Office of the Secretary of State; Lisa Barton, Director, Museum of Florida History

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Members of the public who spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Slade Lotane introduced herself and Division staff present in person.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adopt the agenda. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from October 26, 2023, Meeting**

Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adopt the minutes from the October 26, 2023, meeting. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed.

**Item V. Approval of Public Survey**

John Grandage discussed the public survey. Task Force members offered suggestions for improvement. Howard Holley suggested allowing survey respondents to indicate their residency and affiliation. Discussion ensued. Task Force members also directed staff to distribute the survey as widely as possible, noting potential interest groups and avenues for dissemination. Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a roll call vote to approve the public survey. All Task Force members present voted to approve the survey. Staff will finalize changes and distribute the survey as discussed.

**Item VI. Information on Marketing Plan**

Mark Ard discussed the marketing plan, as required by the legislation, including involvement from Visit Florida. Next, Malinda Horton, Executive Director, Florida Association of Museums, broadly discussed issues facing Florida's museums and considerations for creating the new proposed museum. Dr. Altony Lee brought up issues regarding funding and considering locations with an existing donor base. Discussion ensued. Brian Butler asked about best practices for museum budgets, in terms of percentages from earned revenue, versus grants, endowments, donations, and other means of support, etc., to fund large museums, offering Florida State Parks as a potential model to examine for guidance. Malinda Horton provided information on typical museum budget arrangements and best practices but noted

that these can vary from site to site. Gayle Phillips offered perspective on issues facing small museums, in the context of competition for funding and support, and provided various sources for more information on this and other questions raised. Malinda Horton highlighted ways that small museums and regional organizations in Florida collaborate to share resources and foster connections with the public and with supporters. Staff will gather related guidance documents from organizations like the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) to share with the Task Force.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked members to provide suggestions on other groups that should present before the Task Force, including educational associations and marketing organizations, to generate further discussion on this topic.

#### **Item VII. Presentations on Museum Locations**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson acknowledged Angela Stack, Vice President for Public Affairs and Community Relations, who spoke on behalf of Orlando International Airport. Brian Butler asked about future trends for the Brightline rail system. Angela Starke provided updates on the newly opened section of the system that connects Orlando to Miami.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson acknowledged Kristin Westover, Director of External Affairs, who spoke on behalf of Visit Orlando. Rep. Berny Jacques asked for data on the percentage of visitors to Orlando who participated in cultural tourism. Kristin Westover stated that 17% of visitors participated in cultural tourism activities while in her market area, which equates to about 10.4 million people on an annual basis.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson acknowledged Jennifer Vigil, who was scheduled to speak on behalf of Destination Panama City. Jennifer Vigil was not present. Panama City will be offered another opportunity to present at a future meeting.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson acknowledged Regina Davis, who spoke on behalf of Quincy, Florida, and the Big Bend Community Development Corporation. Dr. Altony Lee asked if the Florida Museum of African American History, which is currently in development for placement in Quincy, is part of the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network. Regina Davis responded that it is not. Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked about current museum visitation and transportation considerations for placing a museum in Quincy. Regina Davis responded that the Florida Museum of African American History is still in development and that the nearest airport to Quincy is in Tallahassee. Gayle Phillips asked about the museum's anticipated square footage. Regina Davis responded that they are planning for about 7,500 square feet, spread out over multiple buildings.

Sen. Geraldine Thompson acknowledged Guilherme "Gui" Cunha, Administrator of the Office of Economic Development and Tourism, who spoke on behalf of Seminole County. Brady Lessard, Economic Development Director, City of Sanford, and Kenneth Bentley, Sanford Airport Authority, also spoke on behalf of Seminole County.

Alissa Slade Lotane asked Task Force members to continue to invite representatives from other organizations to make presentations at future meetings. Members should forward any direct contacts that they have to staff.

Terri Lipsey-Scott said that she submitted a request for the City of St. Petersburg to present in December. Staff will add this organization to the December agenda.

#### **Item VIII. Break (Optional)**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break at 2:30 p.m. The meeting resumed at 2:40 p.m.

#### **Item IX. Discussion of Museum Location & Governance**

Task Force members discussed various factors related to location and governance, including financial support, sustainability, and issues related to other statewide organizations on these topics. Dr. Altony Lee spoke about considerations for state government versus non-profit management of the proposed museum. Dr. Altony Lee also provided insight on museums that are primarily government funded, but that also have an associated non-profit entity

providing non-government support. Discussion ensued on the general structure of existing state-funded museums and similar, state properties managed by a central entity, like Florida State Parks.

#### **Item X. Location Criteria & Museum Visits**

Task Force members discussed potential criteria for evaluating locations for the future museum. Discussion ensued on the following points: guidance from leading museum organizations (e.g. American Association for State and Local History, AAM, Association of African American Museums); population; transportation infrastructure; historical significance of the proposed site/community/region; hub and spoke concepts, versus one large museum; campus setting versus a single, large building; availability of land; building footprint and acreage requirements; multipurpose spaces; and parking and large vehicle access. Task Force members also discussed factors related to desired museum amenities, including outdoors spaces, performance spaces, retail, etc.

On the issue of the Task Force traveling to visit museum sites as a group, Alissa Slade Lotane and Jon Morris discussed Sunshine Law compliance and encouraged individual members to visit sites and report findings, or secure presentations by representatives from key Black history museums, or other organizations, at future meetings.

#### **Item XI. Update on Museum Design Solicitation**

Alissa Slade Lotane updated Task Force members on the timeline for the design solicitation.

#### **Item XII. Update on Educational Materials**

Alissa Slade Lotane provided an overview on topics that would be included in the museum as outlined in the legislation:

- The role of African American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including, by way of example and without limitation, the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airman, and all African American veterans
- The history of slavery in the state
- The history of segregation in the state
- Notable African Americans in Florida
- Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune-Cookman University
- The history of historically black colleges and universities in Florida
- The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide

Alissa Slade Lotane requested that if Task Force members wanted scholars to present on these and other subjects at future meetings, please provide their names and contact information to staff.

John Grandage discussed, in general, how museum design relates to museum education, particularly in the context of serving different audiences, by providing some examples from DOS managed museums and historic sites. Task Force members discussed inviting experts from different aspects of the museum field to present at future meetings.

#### **Item XIII. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas**

Task Force members indicated a preference for meeting on Mondays or Fridays during the upcoming legislative session. Staff will circulate a digital poll to facilitate scheduling future meetings.

#### **Item XIV. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions**

Task Force discussion focused on the possibility of a feasibility study to help determine the best path forward on making objective recommendations regarding the proposed museum. One of the major factors, raised by Brian Butler, is determining the construction cost per square foot for a world class museum. Brian Butler offered that his research indicates this cost can range from between \$800 to \$1100 per square foot, noting that there are many other factors to consider in a final calculation. As a point of reference, Alissa Slade Lotane provided background information, including cost and procurement issues, on a master plan underway for the Museum of Florida History, funded by the 2023 Florida Legislature.



**Item XV. Public Comment**

Dr. Nashid Madyun, Director of Florida Humanities, provided comments in support of a feasibility study and the need to produce design assets, such as renderings and artwork, as a means of gaining support.

**Item XVI. Adjourn**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Geraldine F. Thompson Presiding Officer

Alissa Straw State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/7/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Friday, December 15, 2023–9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 558-604-475**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** N/A

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Howard Holley; Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Altony Lee; Regina Gayle Phillips; Terri Lipsey-Scott; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Not Present:** Rep. Kiyon Michael; Sen. Bobby Powell

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Slade Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Alexa Wilson, Grants Specialist, Division of Historical Resources

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** N/A

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff present in person.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson requested to add discussion on the Florida Legislative Black Caucus during agenda Item XII. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions. Dr. Altony Lee moved to adopt the agenda. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from November 13, 2023, Meeting**

Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adopt the minutes from the November 13, 2023, meeting. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The motion passed.

**Item V. Presentations on Museum Locations**

The speakers listed below presented on behalf of their locations. Task Force Members asked questions throughout the presentations.

- **Amelia Island/Nassau County** - Maurie Duggar, Amelia Island Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- **Daytona Beach** - Lori Campbell Baker, Executive Director, Daytona Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau; Derrek Feature, Daytona Beach City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer; Beth Gibson, President of Planning Solutions Corporation

**Havana** - Harold Knowles, CEO, Havana Community Development Corporation; Mark Tarmey, 4M Architects

- **Jackson County** - Kelsi Williams, Executive Director, Jackson County First Development Council, Board of County Commissioners; Byron Dickens, Executive Director of the Emancipation Day Celebration (in Jackson County, Florida)
- **Opa-Locka Main Street** - Regina Silas, Founder, CEO, and President, the JBS Foundation, Inc.
- **Panama City** - Janice Lucas, Commissioner, LEAD Coalition of Bay County, Inc.; Willie Spears, author of "George and Hawk's Big Adventure with Big Dreams"; Jennifer Vigil, President and CEO, Destination Panama City
- **Sarasota** - Shantel Norman, Meeting Sales Manager, Visit Sarasota County; Nicki Oldham, President and CEO, Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition, Inc., and CEO, Vickie O Heritage Productions, Inc.; and Erin Duggan, President and CEO of Visit Sarasota

At approximately 10:17 a.m., Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a 10 minute break. The presentations resumed at 10:27 a.m.

- **St. Johns County/St. Augustine** - Susan Philips, President and CEO, St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau; Sarah S. Arnold, St. Johns County District 2 County Commissioner
- **St. Petersburg** - Terri Lipsey-Scott, Executive Director, Woodson African American Museum of Florida

In response to Terri Lipsey-Scott's presentation, the Task Force discussed potential conflicts of interest that might arise based on member participation in the location selection process. Jon Morris recommended that the Task Force review Chapter 112, *Florida Statutes*, for guidance on this issue.

#### **Item VI. Break**

As noted above, Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a break during Item V: Presentations on Museum Locations.

#### **Item VII. Presentation of Proposed Selection Criteria for Museum Location**

Prior to the discussion of proposed selection criteria for museum location, Alissa Lotane provided an update and brief overview of survey results thus far received (as of December 14):

- 253 responses were received
- 95% of respondents are Florida residents
- 30% of respondents were aged 65+
- 22% of respondents identified as general citizens
- 18% of respondents identified as retirees

Howard Holley suggested adding a section that would capture if survey respondents were members of the business community. Staff will see if this can be added to the survey.

Alissa Lotane provided feedback on Task Force Member travel as a group. DOS recommends that individuals visit museums on their own and report back to the entire group. Official group travel is not possible due to Sunshine Laws compliance and lack of agency funding.

Discussion ensued regarding a feasibility study. Alissa Lotane explained that staff will schedule presentations at future meetings by museum professionals familiar with budgeting, finance, and sustainability. Sen. Geraldine Thompson provided comments on her conversation with Secretary of State Cord Byrd on feasibility study costs and the timeline needed to procure the services necessary to complete such a project. Because of the lack of time and funds to complete a feasibility study, the Task Force may recommend that such a project be undertaken as a next step in the final report due to the legislature before June 30, 2024.

John Grandage presented an overview of the draft museum location criteria evaluation sheet. Discussion ensued on proposed text edits, weighting of scores, language used in criteria, and reorganizing the evaluation sheet to include less individual criteria in favor of grouping together like items. Staff will make changes and present a revised version at the next meeting.

Members of the public provided comments regarding the draft museum location criteria evaluation sheet. Sarah Newell suggested adding more weight to historical significance of the proposed community or region and also increasing the weight given to estimated construction cost and land availability. Beth Gibson suggested first narrowing down the list of locations to the top three before going further with evaluation criteria. Kimberlyn Elliot suggested an application process for applications to submit answers to a list of questions related to selection criteria. Dr. Sharon Brown suggested developing a rubric that better outlined standards within the criteria to provide for a more objective scoring process. Lawrence Walker, President/CEO of Sankofa African American 3D Museum, offered to be a resource for the Task Force in developing materials in the future. Jacob Gordon also offered to be a resource for the Task Force in developing materials in the future.

#### **Item VIII. Vote on Selection Criteria for Museum Location**

Based on discussion from the Task Force, staff will make changes and present a revised version for approval at the next meeting.

#### **Item IX. Update on Museum Design Solicitation**

Alissa Lotane discussed the solicitation that went out on November 13, 2023, to over 150 minority vendors, including the National Association of Minority Architects. Three proposals were received, but these did not meet the standards needed for this project. DOS will continue to solicit additional responses from vendors, with the goal of having a vendor participate in future meetings when under contract.

Task Force members discussed their questions and concerns regarding the solicitation and its deliverables. Alissa Lotane stated that, once under contract, the selected vendor would be able to attend future meetings, present their work, and receive feedback from the Task Force.

#### **Item X. Update on Educational Materials**

Alissa Lotane informed the Task Force that they will receive a link to view all educational materials compiled by staff and to review museum location presentation materials. Alissa Lotane also updated the Task Force on her efforts to secure a presentation from Chancellor Paul Burns, from the Florida Department of Education, at the January 2024 meeting. Alissa Slade Lotane asked the Task Force to supply contact information for other scholars who they may wish to present at future meetings. Recommendations provided by Task Force Members included: Dr. Maxine Jones, Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs, and Ted Ellis.

**Item XIII. Future Meeting Dates & Agendas**

Task Force members discussed proposed dates for future meetings. Alissa Lotane explained that while February 19 is a federal holiday, it is not a state holiday, and therefore the meeting would be held as planned on that day. Alissa Slade Lotane explained that locations for future meetings would be shared with the Task Force and announced to the public when available.

**Item XIV. Task Force Open Discussion and Questions**

Howard Holley commented on the richness of the presentations by prospective location representatives. Meeting times were reconfirmed as requested by Rep. Berny Jacques.

**Item XV. Public Comment**

Althemese Barnes asked about Task Force involvement in the preservation of historic buildings in Florida related to Black history. Evelyn Pierre suggested including the contributions of Black Floridians with ties to Caribbean nations in the future museum. Sen. Geraldine Thompson responded to both public comments.

Task Force members highlighted upcoming events related to Florida's Black history and culture.

**Item XVI. Adjourn**

Terri Lipsey-Scott moved to adjourn the meeting. Howard Holley seconded. The meeting adjourned at 12:51 p.m.

Geraldine L. Thompson Presiding Officer

Alissa Slade State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/7/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Friday, January 12, 2024–9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 202-473-211**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Sen. Bobby Powell; Regina Gayle Phillips

**Task Force Members Not Present:** Rep. Kiyon Michael (excused); Dr. Altony Lee (excused)

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Slade Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Alexa Wilson, Grants Specialist, Division of Historical Resources

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Members of the public who attended in-person and spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who attended via webinar and spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff present in person.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson requested to add a presentation from Eatonville during agenda Item VII. Presentation for Proposed Museum Location. Howard Holley moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Berny Jacques seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from December 15, 2023, Meeting**

Howard Holley moved to adopt the minutes from the December 15, 2023, meeting. Berny Jacques seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Remarks by Dr. Paul Burns, Chancellor, K-12 Public Schools, Florida Department of Education**

Dr. Paul Burns began by outlining his current position as Chancellor of Florida's K-12 Public Schools and his experience in the education field. He provided background on the Commissioner of Education's African American History Task Force and discussed collaboration between Florida school districts and the Department of Education (DOE) to provide professional learning opportunities for teachers throughout the year. Dr. Burns listed Florida counties that qualify as "exemplary districts," under DOE's reporting standards, in the teaching of African American history. These counties include Alachua, Broward, Duval, Gadsden, Hillsborough, Leon,

Marion, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Pinellas, and St. Lucie. Dr. Burns outlined the benchmarks needed for a school district to qualify as an “exemplary district.”

Howard Holley asked how Dr. Burns sees the proposed Florida Museum Black History Museum adding value to the mission of DOE and Florida’s school districts. Dr. Burns offered that alignment will occur in multiple ways, including professional development for educators. He added that the proposed Florida Museum of Black History will provide students and educators with opportunities for outside enrichment that connect back to curriculum used in the classroom.

**Item VI. Task Force Discussion of Educational Themes/Topics**

Alissa Lotane reviewed topics listed in the legislation that will be included in the Task Force’s recommendations:

1. The role of African-American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including, by way of example and without limitation, the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airmen, and all African-American veterans.
2. The history of slavery in the state.
3. The history of segregation in the state.
4. Notable African-Americans in the state.
5. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune Cookman University.
6. The history of historically black colleges and universities in this state.
7. The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide.

Alissa Lotane asked the Task Force for additional subjects that can be included in the recommendations and also discussed historians and museum professionals who will be presenting at the next meeting, including:

1. Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs - Library Regional Manager, Broward County Library African American Research Library and Cultural Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
2. Kathe Hambrick - Founder and former Executive Director of the River Road African-American Museum, Donaldsonville, Louisiana
3. Lisa Barton - Director of the Museum of Florida History, Florida Department of State

The Task Force discussed subjects that could be included in the recommendations.

**Item VII. Presentation of Proposed Museum Location**

Representatives from the City of Opa-locka discussed their community as a potential location for the proposed museum. Representatives who spoke on behalf of Opa-locka included: James Nixon, Vice President of Program, Strategy & External Affairs, Ten North Group (formerly Opa-locka Community Development Corporation); Alex Van Mecl, founder of Discover Opa-locka, and Senior Project Manager at Ten North Group; and Darvin Williams, Opa-locka City Manager.

Representatives from Eatonville discussed their community as a potential location for the proposed museum. Representatives who spoke on behalf of Eatonville included: Angie Gardner, Mayor, Town of Eatonville; Demetris Pressley, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Eatonville; and Shaniqua Rose, Eatonville Community Redevelopment Agency Executive Director; Cobbin McGee, Planning & Zoning, Town of Eatonville; Brittani Gragg, Planning & Zoning.

**Item VIII. Break (Optional)**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break at 10:36 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:46 a.m.

**Item IX. Update on Public Survey**

Alissa Lotane highlighted results from the public survey and reiterated that the survey will be open until February 29, 2024.

**Item X. Update on Museum Design Solicitation**

Alissa Lotane informed the Task Force that responses received for the Museum Design solicitation did not meet current needs and that she has made contact with Andrew Chin, Associate Professor, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University School of Architecture + Engineering Technology, who will be likely engaging with the Task Force at future meetings and offering support for the design deliverables required by legislation.

**Item XI. Presentation of Revised Selection and Scoring Criteria for Museum Location**

John Grandage reviewed the list of prospective locations who have made presentations to the Task Force thus far and discussed materials gathered together from these presentations by DOS staff, which are available to the Task Force via OneDrive. The communities are (in alphabetical order):

- 1) Daytona Beach
- 2) Havana
- 3) Jackson County
- 4) Nassau County/Amelia Island
- 5) Opa-locka
- 6) Orange County/Eatonville
- 8) Panama City Beach
- 9) Quincy
- 10) Sarasota
- 11) Seminole County
- 12) St. Johns County/St. Augustine
- 13) St. Petersburg

Howard Holley suggested combining Orlando and Eatonville into a single shared folder.

John Grandage presented the revised criteria and received feedback from the Task Force. Discussion ensued. The key updates are adding weight to Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location, which increased from 10 to 20 points, and changing the title of Criteria 6 to read Local Funding and Other Support, with accompanying changes to the corresponding bullet points. The Task Force discussed closing the window to receive presentations and agreed that the February 19 meeting will be the last opportunity to present. Only locations who presented on or before the February 19 meeting will be eligible to submit a written response to the criteria.

**Item XII. Vote on Revised Selection and Scoring Criteria for Museum Location**

Based on the above discussion, Howard Holley moved to approve the criteria as amended. Brian Butler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.



**Item XIII. Future Meeting Dates and Agendas**

Alissa Lotane discussed future meeting dates and agenda items. The next meeting will be held virtually on February 19, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A poll for the March and April meeting dates will be sent out. Alissa Lotane asked whether the Task Force would prefer all virtual meetings in the future and asked the Task Force for suggestions on future agenda items. Task Force members preferred to meet in person in March and April.

**Item XIV. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, and Announcements**

Howard Holley asked about issuing a Request for Proposals to conduct a feasibility study. Alissa Lotane explained that this could be an option for the next fiscal year, if funds become available. Sen. Geraldine Thompson discussed the upcoming Legislative Black Caucus event on January 23, 2024.

**Item XV. Public Comment**

Lawrence Walker, with Sankofa African American 3D Museum, provided comments and offered his assistance with the work of the Task Force. Sarah Newell asked if locations submitting responses to the criteria must do so in writing. Sen. Geraldine Thompson responded that responses to the criteria must be in writing.

**Item XVI. Adourn**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Howard Holley moved to adjourn. Berny Jacques seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.

 Presiding Officer

 State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/11/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Monday, February 19, 2024 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 733-929-635**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** N/A

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Howard Holley; Rep. Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Altony Lee; Dr. Nashid Madyun; Rep. Kiyon Michael; Regina Gayle Phillips; Sen. Bobby Powell; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Not Present:** Brian Butler (excused)

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Historical Resources

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** N/A

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who attended via webinar and spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Rep. Berny Jacques called the meeting to order at 1:16 p.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff present in person.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Dr. Nashid Madyun moved to adopt the agenda. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from the January 12, 2024, Meeting**

Howard Holley moved to adopt the minutes from the January 12, 2024, meeting. Regina Gayle Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Update on Public Survey**

Alissa Lotane provided a brief update on the public survey and shared that as of Friday, February 9, 2024, there were a total of 3,039 responses received. Alissa Lotane stated that DOS will continue to promote the survey, which is set to close on February 29, 2024.

**Item VI. Presentation for Proposed Museum Location**

Alissa Lotane stated that today's meeting is the final opportunity for presentations from prospective locations. On Thursday, February 8, 2024, the Division emailed the approved criteria to the thirteen (13) prospective locations who have presented thus far. Responses from prospective locations are due on Friday, March 15, 2024. Alissa Lotane discussed submission details and how scoring will take place at the April 2024 Task Force meeting. Alissa Lotane mentioned that Andrew Chin, Dean of the School of Architecture and Engineering

Technology at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), will speak later in the meeting on what FAMU plans to provide, in terms of site and building design, for Task Force consideration.

The Task Force discussed other considerations regarding receiving and evaluating responses from prospective locations. The Task Force discussed adding a June meeting and the need for additional presentations from finalists, as determined by members' evaluation of responses from prospective locations. Howard Holley motioned to hear presentations from the three (3) finalists at the May 2024 meeting. Regina Gayle Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Representatives from West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County discussed their community as a potential location for the proposed museum. Representatives who spoke on behalf of West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County included: Mack Bernard, Palm Beach County Commission Chair, District Seven (7); Verdenia Baker, County Administrator; Jennifer Sullivan, Senior Vice President of the Culture Council of Palm Beach County; Keith James, Palm Beach Mayor; and Edwin Furguson, School Board Member.

#### **Item VII. Discussion of Location Criteria Process**

Alissa Lotane reviewed the list of prospective locations who have made presentations to the Task Force thus far:

- 1) Daytona Beach
- 2) Havana
- 3) Jackson County
- 4) Nassau County/Amelia Island
- 5) Opa-locka
- 6) Orange County/Eatonville
- 7) West Palm Beach/Palm Beach County
- 8) Panama City Beach
- 9) Quincy
- 10) Sarasota
- 11) Seminole County
- 12) St. Johns County/St. Augustine
- 13) St. Petersburg

#### **Item VIII. Break (optional)**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break at 2:09 p.m. The meeting resumed at 2:25 p.m.

#### **Item IX. Remarks by Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson recognized Dr. Tameka Bradley Hobbs to present on her experience and work in the history and museum fields. Dr. Hobbs discussed her work and experience in public history, education, and academia. Dr. Hobbs shared her observations regarding planning for the future museum and answered questions from the Task Force, particularly regarding the need for a feasibility study and the timeline for a project of this scope.

#### **Item X. Remarks by Dr. Yanela G. McLeod**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson recognized Dr. Yanela G. McLeod to present on her work in the history and museum fields. Dr. McLeod discussed her work and experience in public history, education, and academia. Dr. McLeod

shared her observations regarding planning for the future museum, particularly the need to focus on certain themes in order for the future museum to reach its full potential and to best serve the community.

**Item XI. Break (optional)**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break at 3:40 p.m. The meeting resumed at 3:45 p.m.

**Item XII. Update on Museum Design**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson recognized Andrew Chin, Dean of the School of Architecture and Engineering Technology at FAMU, to provide an overview of plans for the museum design. Before Andrew Chin spoke, Alissa Lotane reviewed DOS efforts to solicit architectural services for a museum design, and how FAMU would be partnering with DOS to provide these services. Andrew Chin discussed his experience, role at FAMU, and engagement with similar projects. Andrew Chin provided an overview of the type of services FAMU can provide towards developing preliminary work on the proposed future museum, including site evaluation, space planning, and building use and massing diagrams. Andrew Chin answered questions from the Task Force. On project turnaround time, he explained that, once finalist sites have been identified, the turnaround time for design deliverables would be about one (1) month. Andrew Chin further explained considerations for site topography and how that would determine access points and influence the project budget.

**Item XIII. Future Meeting Dates and Agendas**

Alissa Lotane discussed future meeting dates and agenda items. Key points included adjustments to the schedule, including presentations by Lisa Barton, Director of the Museum of Florida History and Chief of Historical Museums, who will present on museum best practices, and Visit Florida, who will present on the marketing plan. Other key points include scoring responses received from prospective locations at the April meeting and hearing presentations, as previously discussed in Item VI. Presentation for Proposed Museum Location, at the May meeting. Staff will send out a poll to Task Force members to determine the dates for the March and April meetings, followed thereafter by a poll to determine the dates for the May and June meetings.

**Item XIV. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked the Task Force to respond promptly to the poll so future meetings can be scheduled as soon as possible. Sen. Geraldine Thompson discussed legislation introduced by Rep. Lawrence McClure and Sen. Danny Burgess that directs DOS to partner with the Florida African American Heritage Preservation Network. Dr. Altony Lee discussed deadlines for achieving the work of the Task Force and offered to assist staff with the financial sustainability transition plan, which is mentioned in the Task Force's legislation. Howard Holley offered to assist by working with Visit Florida on the marketing plan, which is also mentioned in the Task Force's legislation. Other Task Force members discussed concerns regarding the Task Force's timeline for completing the report and strategies for completing the work.

**Item XV. Public Comment**

Mr. William Thomas, Jr., who represents the Bing Rooming House Museum, in Plant City, Florida, voiced support for the proposed museum.

**Item XVI. Adjourn**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Altony Lee moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

Geraldine F. Thompson Presiding Officer

Glissa Logan State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 3/29/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Monday, March 25, 2024 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 733-929-635**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** N/A

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Howard Holley; Rep. Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Altony Lee; Dr. Nashid Madyun; Rep. Kiyon Michael; Regina Gayle Phillips; Sen. Bobby Powell; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Alexys Johnson, Executive Assistant, Division of Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Lisa Barton, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Historical Museums and Director, Museum of Florida History; Sandy Shaughnessy, Director, DOS Division of Arts & Culture; Teri Abstein, DAC Financial Administrator

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** None

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who attended via webinar and spoke during the meeting are noted below, where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Rep. Berny Jacques called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Howard Holley moved to adopt the agenda. Brian Butler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from the February 19, 2024, Meeting**

Dr. Nashid Madyun moved to adopt the minutes from the February 19, 2024, meeting. Regina Gayle Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Status of Museum Location Proposal Submissions**

Alissa Lotane provided an update on the location submissions. The following locations submitted proposals:

- 1) Eatonville/Orange County
- 2) Jackson County
- 3) Nassau County
- 4) Opa-locka
- 5) Panama City
- 6) Sarasota
- 7) Seminole County
- 8) St. Johns County

Alissa Lotane discussed next steps in preparation for the April 19, 2024, meeting. DOS will send the eight proposals, approved location criteria, and a scoring sheet to the Task Force by Wednesday, March 27, 2024. Task Force members will return their preliminary scores to DOS by April 12, 2024. DOS will compile the scores and invite the top four locations to attend the April 19 meeting. On April 19, Task Force members may ask questions of the location representatives present. Following any discussion and clarification, Task Force members may amend their scores. The Task Force will then vote on the top three locations that will be subject to further study by FAMU School of Architecture and Engineering. Regina Gayle Phillips motioned to invite the top four location presenters to the April 19, 2024, meeting, as described above, and to narrow the list down to the top three during the April 19 meeting. Rep. Kiyan Michael seconded. The motion passed. The Task Force also discussed inviting representatives of the top three locations to the May meeting.

#### **Item VI. Presentation of Final Results of Public Survey**

John Grandage provided an update on the public survey, which was distributed by DOS through multiple press releases, social media, and email blasts. DOS received over 4,000 survey responses. John Grandage briefly discussed respondent demographics and provided analysis of responses to all survey questions.

#### **Item VII. Discussion of Survey Results and Next Steps**

Task Force members provided feedback on the survey results. Discussion ensued on the reliability of the survey data. Task Force members and staff concur that the survey data is reliable to gauging public interest with planning for the future member and provides a representative sample of public comments, questions, and concerns about the museum.

#### **Item VIII. Break**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a break at 2:09 p.m. The meeting resumed at 2:25 p.m.

#### **Item IX. Presentation on Museum Best Practices and AAM Standards**

Lisa Barton, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Historical Museums, presented on museum best practices and AAM standards, including the importance of having and following a collections plan and policy, storage and exhibition needs, collections management expenses, as well as management ethics. Lisa Barton answered questions from the Task Force on collections care, the importance of an accessioning plan when accepting objects, and on digitization efforts undertaken by DOS in the Division of Library and Information Services.

#### **Item X. Presentation of Division of Arts & Culture Grants Programs**

Sandy Shaughnessy, Director, DOS Division of Arts & Culture (DAC), presented on DAC's General Program Support and Specific Cultural Projects grant programs. Teri Abstein, DAC Financial Administrator, presented on DAC's Cultural Facilities grant program. For each grant program area, Sandy Shaughnessy and Teri Abstein discussed the types of eligible projects, grant requirements, funding amounts, and grant timelines.

#### **Item XI. Presentation of Division of Historical Resources Grants Programs**

Dr. Angela Tomlinson presented on the Division of Historical Resources' grants programs, including Small Matching Grants, Special Category Grants, and Abandoned African American Cemeteries Grants. For each grant program area, Dr. Angela Tomlinson discussed the types of eligible projects, grant requirements, funding amounts, grant timelines, and provided examples of funded projects. Dr. Angela Tomlinson provided information on legislative appropriations for recent state fiscal years.

**Item XII. Future Meeting Dates and Agendas**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson and Alissa Lotane discussed future meeting dates and agenda items. Alissa Lotane provided that staff are drafting the final report, which will be discussed at future meetings.

**Item XIII. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements**

Alissa Lotane asked members for availability for upcoming meetings. Discussion ensued. Staff will circulate a poll to confirm available and dates.

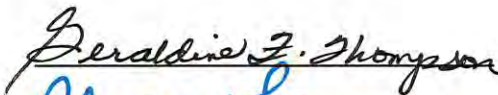
**Item XIV. Public Comment**

Vicki Oldham, Sarasota County, asked for an update on FAMU’s proposed architectural design. Alissa Lotane discussed the progress and what to expect at future meetings. Vicki Oldham also asked for an expected opening date for the museum. Sen. Geraldine Thompson explained that while a completion date is yet to be determined, that, based on present information, it could be five years or more in the future.

Tay Dickinson, Vice President of White Springs Historic Preservation Society, asked if there was anything that the public could do in the meantime to help the museum become successful. Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked that interested members of the public write letters of support to their legislators.

**Item XV. Adjourn**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Tony Lee moved to adjourn. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

 Presiding Officer

 State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 5/21/24



**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Friday, April 19, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 394-671-699**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Regina Gayle Phillips; Sen. Bobby Powell; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Rep. Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Altony Lee; Dr. Nashid Madyun; Rep. Kiyon Michael

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Members of the public who attended in-person and spoke during the meeting are noted where appropriate.

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who attended via webinar and spoke during the meeting are noted where appropriate.

**Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Roll call confirmed quorum. Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked for a moment of silence in honor of former Florida Governor and United States Senator Bob Graham, who passed away on April 16, 2024, at age 87.

**Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff.

**Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

Howard Holley moved to adopt the agenda as amended. Regina Gayle Phillips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from the February 19, 2024, Meeting**

Regina Gayle Philips moved to adopt the minutes from the March 25, 2024, meeting. Howard Holley seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item V. Discussion of Educational Materials**

John Grandage discussed educational materials outlined in the bill and additional topics gathered by DOS during Task Force meetings, from the public survey, and from scholarly sources. Additional topics for educational materials suggested by the Task Force include: foodways, sports, Gullah-Geechee culture and history, agriculture, cattle, education, and local and regional stories gathered from FAAHPN. DOS is building a working list of educational materials to include in the Final Report.

**Item VI. Discussion of Preliminary Recommendations & Final Report Process**

John Grandage provided an overview of the draft table of contents for the Final Report. Howard Holley recommended including a section on the Marketing Plan. The Task Force discussed preliminary items to be considered in the Recommendations section, specifically regarding museum operations and administration. DOS will prepare a list of recommendations in advance of the May 19 meeting for consideration by the Task Force. As stated in the bill, the Task Force must include in its Final Report recommendations on:

1. Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum.
2. Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum.
3. A marketing plan to promote the museum.
4. A transition plan for the museum to become financially self-sufficient.
5. Recommendations for archival and artifact acquisition, preservation, and research; exhibits; and educational materials.

The Recommendations must include educational materials relating to:

1. The role of African-American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airmen, and all African-American veterans.
2. The history of slavery in the state.
3. The history of segregation in the state.
4. Notable African Americans in the state.
5. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune Cookman University.
6. The history of historically black colleges and universities in this state.
7. The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide.

#### **Item VII. Overview of the Location Scoring Process**

Alissa Lotane summarized the location scoring process, including key dates, the locations from which responses were received by DOS, the criteria used by the Task Force in evaluating responses, and the process for completing final scores during today's meeting to determine the top three prospective locations. Alissa Lotane also provided information on the frequency of locations mentioned in the public survey.

#### **Item VIII. Presentation of Preliminary Scores**

Alissa Lotane discussed the preliminary scores for the eight proposals received and clarified the process for determining the final ranking:

1. St. Johns County, 94.00
2. Eatonville/Orange County, 91.56
3. Sarasota, 81.22
4. Opa-locka, 77.44
5. Nassau County, 75.56
6. Seminole County, 73.00
7. Panama City, 65.00
8. Jackson County, 61.00

#### **Item IX. Individual Consideration of the Top Four Locations**

The Task Force asked questions to representatives from the top four locations based on preliminary scoring (in alphabetical order):

- Eatonville

- Opa-locka
- Sarasota
- St. Johns County

Representatives from each location answered questions from the Task Force. Prior to St. Johns County's presentation, the Task Force elected to move to briefly to Item X. Discussion of Museum Marketing Plan, prior to returning to Item IX. to the St. Johns County presentation to accommodate travel delays.

Upon completion of the question-and-answer period, the Task Force heard public comment prior to holding a vote on the final rankings.

**Item X. Discussion of Museum Marketing Plan**

Brenna Dacks, Regional Partnership Manger, Visit Florida, provided an overview of Visit Florida, the specific services that could be provided to the future museum and the ways that Visit Florida would help promote the museum.

**Item XII. Final Raking of Museum Locations**

Task Force members individually read into the record any changes to their scores for each location.

**Item XI. Break**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a break for DOS staff to make adjustments to the scoring, based on changes voiced by individual Task Force members.

**Item XIII. Vote on Top Three Museum Locations**

Alissa Lotane presented the final scores based on any updates from Task Force members.

1. St. Johns County, 96.78
2. Eatonville/Orange County, 95.33
3. Opa-locka, 84.89
4. Sarasota, 80.78

Howard Holley moved to accept the updated final score sheet as presented by staff. Sen. Bobby Powell seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Howard Holley moved to accept the final ranking order as presented. Regina Gayle Philips seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Item XIV. Next Steps for Top Three Museum Locations**

Alissa Lotane discussed next steps for the upcoming meetings, including the presentation by FAMU on the top three locations.

**Item XV. Future Meeting Dates and Agendas**

Alissa Lotane discussed the upcoming meeting dates and the items on the agendas for May and June.

**Item XVI. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, & Announcements**

The Task Force briefly discussed some of the items to be on the agenda during the May meeting.

**Item XVII. Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Item XVIII. Adjourn**

Howard Holley made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Geraldine F. Thompson Presiding Officer

Bliss Lane State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical Resources

Approved: 5/21/24

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force**  
**Tuesday, May 21, 2024 – 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**  
**R.A. Gray Building, 500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399**  
**And via GoToMeeting Webinar, ID: 479-791-619**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members Present In-Person:** Howard Holley; Dr. Altony Lee; Regina Gayle Phillips; Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

**Task Force Members Present Via Webinar:** Brian Butler; Rep. Berny Jacques, Vice-Chair; Dr. Nashid Madyun; Rep. Kiyan Michael; Sen. Bobby Powell

**Department of State (DOS) Staff Members Present:** Alissa Lotane, Director, Historical Resources; John Grandage, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jeremy Heiker, Webinar Facilitator; Dr. Angela Tomlinson, Assistant Director, Historical Resources; Jon Morris, Deputy General Counsel, Florida Department of State

**Members of the Public Present In-Person:** Members of the public who attended in-person and spoke during the meeting are noted where appropriate.

**Members of the Public Present Via Webinar:** Members of the public who attended via webinar and spoke during the meeting are noted where appropriate.

#### **Item I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Roll call confirmed quorum.

#### **Item II. Introduction of Task Force Members, Staff, & Guests**

Task Force members introduced themselves. Alissa Lotane introduced herself and Division staff (occurred later in the meeting).

#### **Item III. Adoption of Agenda**

After discussion regarding Item VII. Optional Vote on Museum Location, Brian Bulter moved to adopt the agenda. Sen. Bobby Powell seconded. The motion passed.

#### **Item IV. Adoption of Minutes from the April 19, 2024, Meeting**

After discussion regarding a correction on Page 3, Item XII, of the April 19, 2024, meeting minutes (changing “scores” to “ranking”), Sen. Bobby Powell moved to adopt the minutes from the April 19, 2024, meeting, as corrected. Dr. Nashid Madyun seconded. The motion passed.

#### **Item V. Presentation of Architectural Study**

Andrew Chin, Dean & Associate Professor, Florida A&M University College of Architecture & Engineering Technology, presented findings from the architectural study of the top three locations (in alphabetical order): Eatonville/Orange County, Opa-locka, and St. Augustine/St. Johns County. Using the proposals submitted by the top three locations, Dean Chin provided information based on analysis of Location Criteria 2, “Appropriateness of Proposed Location,” and Location Criteria 5, “Transportation Infrastructure.” His focus included information on lot size, points of interest, pedestrian access, parking, transportation, land use, and the building program. Dean Chin mentioned colleagues from the National Association of Minority Architects

who also reviewed the location proposals and contributed information used in his report. Dean Chin responded to Task Force questions regarding his presentation.

#### **Item VI. Discussion of Design Materials and Next Steps**

Alissa Lotane discussed next steps in the design process. Staff provided copies of Dean Chin’s presentation to the Task Force members.

#### **Item VII. Optional Vote on Museum Location**

Sen. Geraldine Thompson asked Task Force members, by a show of hands, to indicate if they were prepared to take a vote regarding the final recommendation on museum location. No members indicated that they were ready to vote. Discussion ensued regarding the selection process implemented by the Task Force in its previous meetings.

Mr. Howard Holley moved “that the Task Force take the rankings [from the April 19, 2024, meeting] as the vote for the site, in which case St. Augustine/St. Johns County would be the site based on the rankings that occurred.” Regina Gayle Philips seconded the motion. Dr. Nashid Madyun offered an amendment to the motion, for Task Force members to vote by indicating their first and second choice for museum location. Dr. Altony Lee seconded. Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a vote on the amendment. Brian Bulter and Dr. Nashid Madyun voted in favor, all other members voted against. The amendment to Howard Holley’s motion failed.

Before hearing public comment on Howard Holley’s original motion, Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a short break at 2:55 p.m. The meeting resumed at 3:05 p.m.

The Task Force heard public comment on the motion prior to holding the vote:

- Willie Logan spoke in favor of Opa-locka, specifically on how the development model used by the Ten North Group promotes economic sustainability. He also commented on the benefits of South Florida’s infrastructure network.
- Carolyn Fennell spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County, focusing on the historical significance of Eatonville, including the proposed Hungerford site, as well as the regional economy of Central Florida and potential sources of funding.
- Rep. Bruce Antone spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County, focusing on the benefits of Eatonville in relation to the Task Force’s criteria location selection and the reports he produced and submitted to the Task Force in support of locating the museum in Eatonville.
- Dr. Candace Findley spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County, focusing on environmental concerns of the St. Augustine site and the reasons why she believes Eatonville presents a more sustainable option for the future museum.
- Angela Johnson spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County, focusing on community support for the museum. She spoke about the appropriateness of the Hungerford site, including proximity to educational resources, in addition to the benefits of tourism and infrastructure in Central Florida.
- LaPhyena Jordan spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County, including her family’s long-time residence in Eatonville and local community support for the museum.
- Joy Andrews spoke in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns County, focusing on the appropriateness of St. Augustine/St. Johns County in the context of the criteria established by the Task Force. She stated that

St. Augustine/St. Johns County would pay for a feasibility study if it was selected as the site for the future museum.

- Sarah Arnold spoke in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns County, focusing on community support, by listing local and regional organizations and individuals that have committed support to establishing the museum in St. Augustine/St. Johns County. She reiterated that St. Augustine/St. Johns County would pay for a feasibility study if it was selected as the site for the future museum.
- The webinar facilitator read two written comments into the record, that were received via the webinar chat function, both in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns County.
- Angie Gardener spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County, focusing on the educational role of museums. She also spoke about the historical significance and sustainability of Eatonville.
- Sara Elbadri read a letter of support from U.S. Congressman Maxwell Frost in favor of Eatonville/Orange County. She also shared information about funding secured by Congressman Frost for improvements in Eatonville and his support for future projects in the area.
- Vickie Pepper spoke in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns County, commented on the Task Force's process, and shared her thoughts on why St. Augustine/St. Johns County is the best location for the future museum.
- Tera Meeks spoke in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns County, complimented the work of the Task Force, and provided information on tourism in the St. Augustine/St. Johns County region.
- Sarah Jenness spoke in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns, focusing on its historical significance.

Sen. Gerladine Thompson called for Alissa Lotane to do a roll call vote on the original motion. Howard Holley, Rep. Berny Jacques, Dr. Altony Lee, Rep. Kiyon Michael, and Regina Gayle Philips voted in favor. Brian Bulter, Dr. Nashid Madyun, Sen. Bobby Powell, and Sen. Geraldine Thompson voted against. The motion to recommend St. Augustine/St. Johns County as the site passed 5 to 4.

#### **Item VIII. Break**

See above, break occurred prior to vote in Item VII.

#### **Item IX. Discussion of Feasibility Study for Museum Location(s)**

Alissa Lotane introduced the item. Discussion ensued.

#### **Item X. Optional Vote to Recommend Feasibility Study**

Dr. Altony Lee moved to recommend a feasibility study on the top three locations as ranked at the April 19, 2024, meeting. Regina Gayle Philips seconded. Discussion ensued. Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a vote. The motion passed.

#### **Item XI. Presentation of Draft Recommendations**

John Grandage read the draft recommendations that were emailed to the Task Force prior to the meeting.

The Task Force heard additional public comment prior to holding a vote:

- Rep. Bruce Antone spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County
- Dr. Candace Findley spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County
- Angela Johnson spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County
- Thomas Jackson spoke in favor of St. Augustine/St. Johns County

## **Item XII. Discussion of Draft Recommendations**

Task Force members discussed the recommendations. John Grandage recorded proposed amendments to the draft recommendations from the Task Force.

- Under Recommendation 1, “Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum.”
  - o In subsection a. Location, change the order of items i and ii.
  - o In subsection a. Location, state that the feasibility study (now item i) would consider the top three locations as ranked at the April 19, 2024, meeting. On the same, state that funds for the feasibility study would be appropriated by the legislature to the Department of State, who would manage the project.
  - o In subsection b. Design & Construction, state that the “museum shall be a large facility up to 100,000 square feet...”
- Under Recommendation 2, “Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum.”
  - o In subsection a. Operation, item ii, add the following: National Civil Rights Museum, Memphis; Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts + Culture, Charlotte; Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit
- Under Recommendation 4, “A transition plan for the museum to become financially self-sufficient.”
  - o Subsection a. shall read “...the museum shall be fully funded by the state via legislative appropriation.”

## **Item XIII. Vote(s) to Accept or Amend Draft Recommendations**

Dr. Nashid Madyun moved to accept the draft recommendations as amended. Sen. Bobby Powell seconded. Sen. Geraldine Thompson called for a preliminary vote to accept the draft recommendations. The motion passed. Staff will provide an updated copy of the recommendations and other materials for Task Force consideration prior to the next meeting.

## **Item XIV. Next Steps for Task Force**

Alissa Lotane discussed next steps for the upcoming meetings.

## **Item XV. Task Force Open Discussion, Questions, and Announcements**

None offered.

## **Item XV. Public Comment**

Rep. Bruce Antone spoke in favor of Eatonville/Orange County.

## **Item XVIII. Adjourn**

Dr. Altony Lee moved to adjourn. Sen. Geraldine Thompson adjourned the meeting at 4:58 p.m.

*\*\*These May 21, 2024, Meeting Minutes include changes to the draft minutes approved by unanimous vote by the Task Force at the June 28, 2024, meeting.\*\**

\_\_\_\_\_ Presiding Officer

\_\_\_\_\_ State Historic Preservation Officer and Director, Division of Historical

Resources



## **Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Meeting Recordings**

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – First Meeting, September 25, 2023

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/9-25-23-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Second Meeting, October 26, 2023

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/10-26-23-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Third Meeting, November 13, 2023

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/11-13-23-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Fourth Meeting, December 15, 2023

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/12-15-23-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Fifth Meeting, January 12, 2024

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/1-12-24-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Sixth Meeting, February 19, 2024

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/2-19-24-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Seventh Meeting, March 24, 2024

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/3-25-24-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Eighth Meeting, April 19, 2024

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/4-19-24-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Ninth Meeting, May 21, 2024

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/5-21-24-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

Florida Black History Museum Task Force – Tenth Meeting, June 28, 2024

- <https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/6-28-24-florida-museum-of-black-history-task-force/>

## **Appendix B: Location Selection**

# Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

## Museum Location Criteria

*Approved January 12, 2024*

### Instructions to Respondents:

- Please respond in writing to each of the seven (7) criteria in the order in which they appear.
- Responses may include text, images, and infographics, but cannot contain video or audio components.
- Include complete citations for any data or information used in your response.
- Responses must be transmitted in **PDF format**, via email, to [FLheritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLheritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com) by **5:00 p.m. E.S.T. by Friday, March 15, 2024**.

### Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

- A maximum of 20 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
  - o Proposed location has a demonstrated connection to the history and culture of Black Floridians and the African Diaspora, including significant historical figures, events, and places

### Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

- A maximum of 20 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
  - o Availability of land for new construction, or availability of existing facilities for renovation and adaptive reuse
  - o Scale of new construction or renovations
  - o Adaptability of location for site access and parking needs

### Criteria 3: Regional Economy

- A maximum of 10 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
  - o Talent Supply and Education
  - o Innovation and Economic Development
  - o Infrastructure and Growth Leadership
  - o Business Climate and Competitiveness
  - o Civics and Governance
  - o Quality of Life
- For data on these factors, see “The Florida Scorecard,” published online by the Florida Chamber of Commerce: <https://thefloridascorecard.org/>.

### Criteria 4: Regional Demographics

- A maximum of 10 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:

## **Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Museum Location Criteria**

*Approved January 12, 2024*

- Population Characteristics
- Education
- Economy
- Income and Poverty
- Business
- Geography (land area, density, etc.)
- For data on these factors, please refer to information published online by the United States Census Bureau: <https://data.census.gov/>.

### **Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure**

- A maximum of 10 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
  - Existing interstate highways
  - Existing international or regional airport
  - Availability of public transportation
  - Alternative transportation (bicycle and pedestrian safety considerations)
- Data related to these factors may be accessed through publications by the Florida Department of Transportation's Forecasting and Trends Office:
  - Accessibility Reports: <https://www.fdot.gov/planning/fto/accessibility/default.shtm>
  - Emerging Trends: <https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/planning/fto/emergingtrends.pdf>
  - Performance Data Integration Space: <https://performance-data-integration-space-fdot.hub.arcgis.com/>

### **Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support**

- A maximum of 20 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
  - Support from government (federal, state, local)
  - Support from private donors

### **Criteria 7: Educational Resources**

- A maximum of 20 points can be awarded in this category.
- Factors to consider include, but are not limited to:
  - Partnerships with public or private schools
  - Existing cultural heritage tourism visitor/supporter Base
  - Partnerships with established museums, universities, or cultural organizations

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



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# 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

**7**  
MILLION  
SQUARE FEET OF SPACE  
at the Orange County  
Convention Center



**137**  
NON-STOP FLIGHTS  
at Orlando International  
Airport




**130,000**  
HOTEL ROOMS  
Across 480 Hotels  
& Resorts



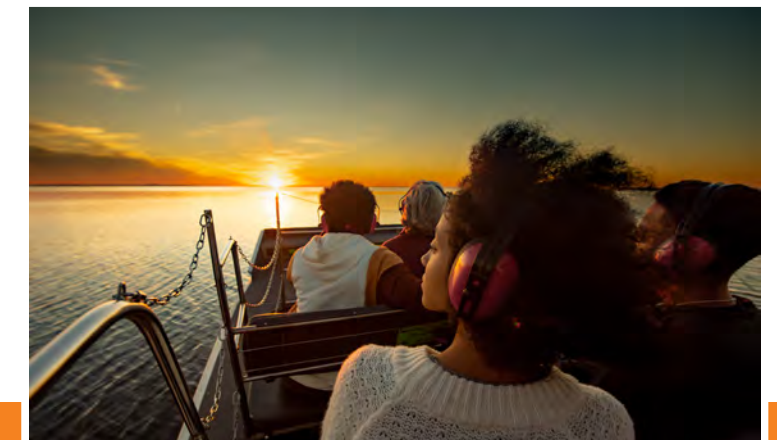

**12.7**  
MILLION  
SQUARE FEET OF  
TOTAL MEETING SPACE



**200+**  
UNIQUE VENUES  
& ATTRACTIONS

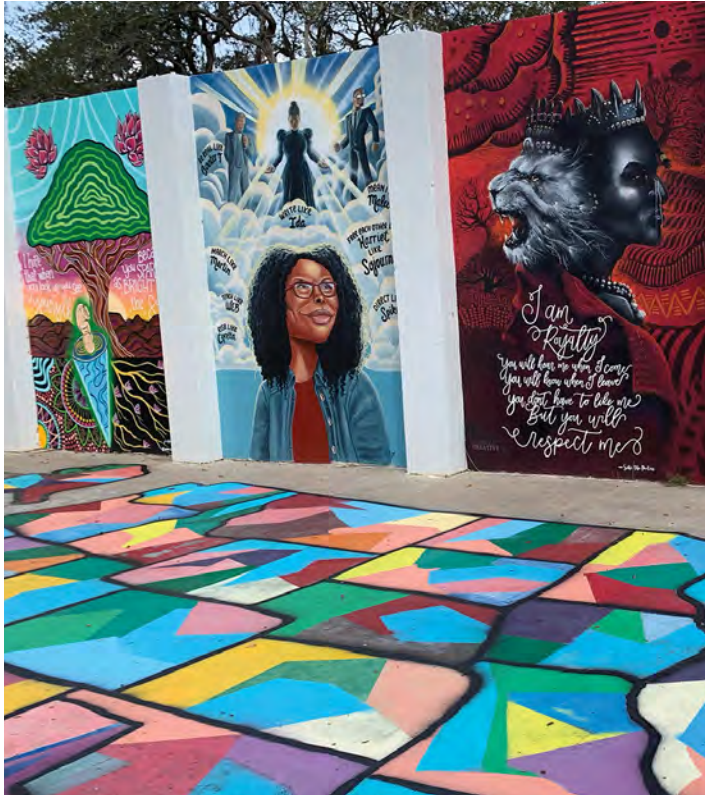


**6,000+**  
RESTAURANT &  
BARS



## 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.



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.

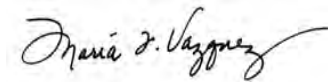
OCPS is willing to partner in this venture with the Town of Eatonville by entering into a Joint Use Agreement with the Town for the usage of up to ten (10) acres of property currently owned by the School Board in the Town for the placement of the Florida Museum of Black History. The School Board would 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:**

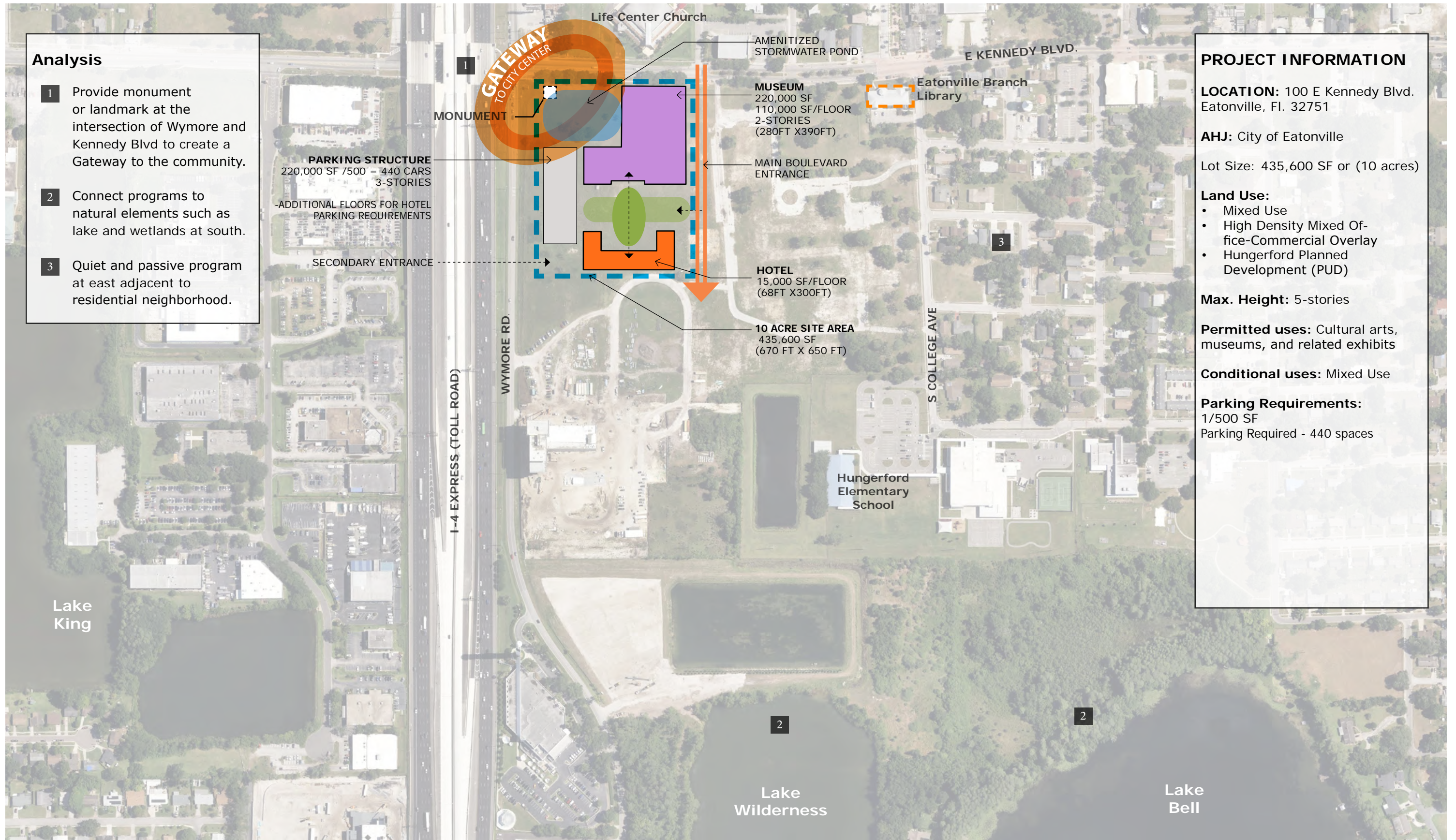
- Mixed Use
- High Density Mixed Office-Commercial Overlay
- Hungerford Planned Development (PUD)

**Max. Height:** 5-stories

**Permitted uses:** Cultural arts, museums, and related exhibits

**Conditional uses:** Mixed Use

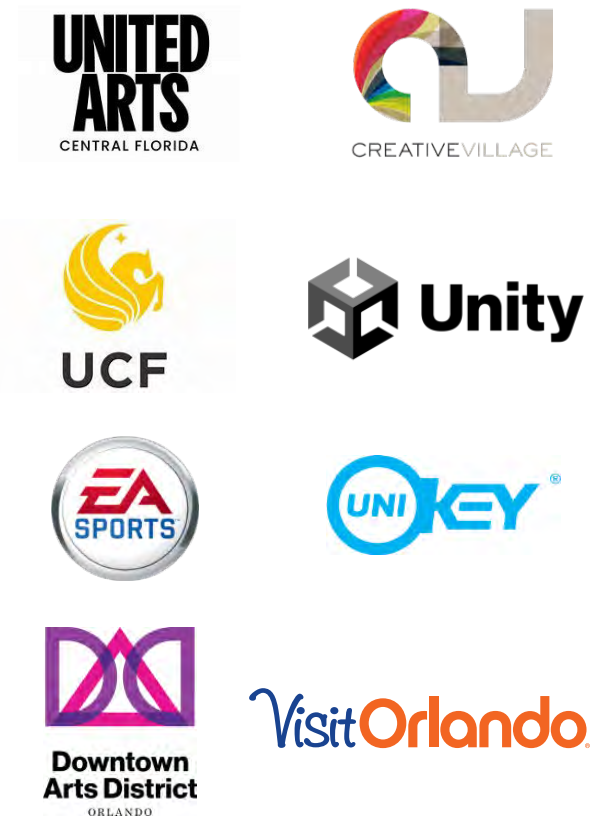
**Parking Requirements:**  
1/500 SF  
Parking Required - 440 spaces



# 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

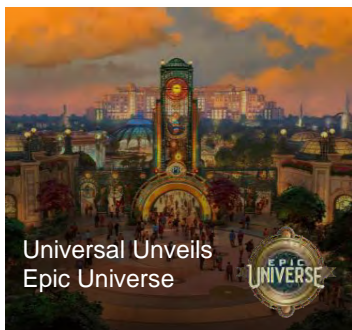
## ECOSYSTEM BUILDERS



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

### • 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%

### • 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

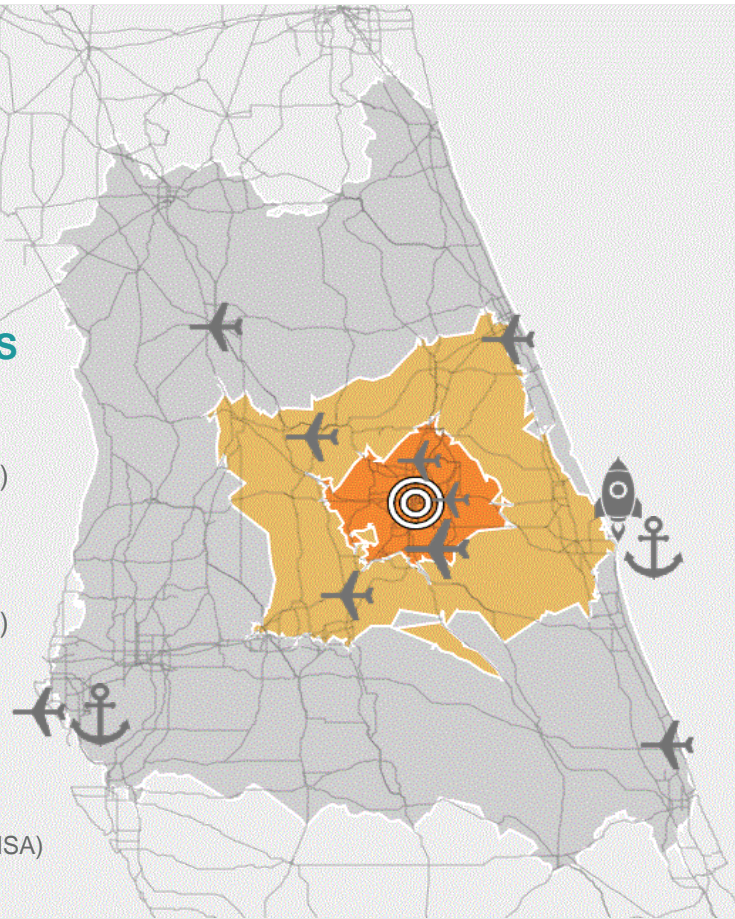
Source: <https://thefloridascorecard.org/>



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

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

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



**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

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

## 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](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.

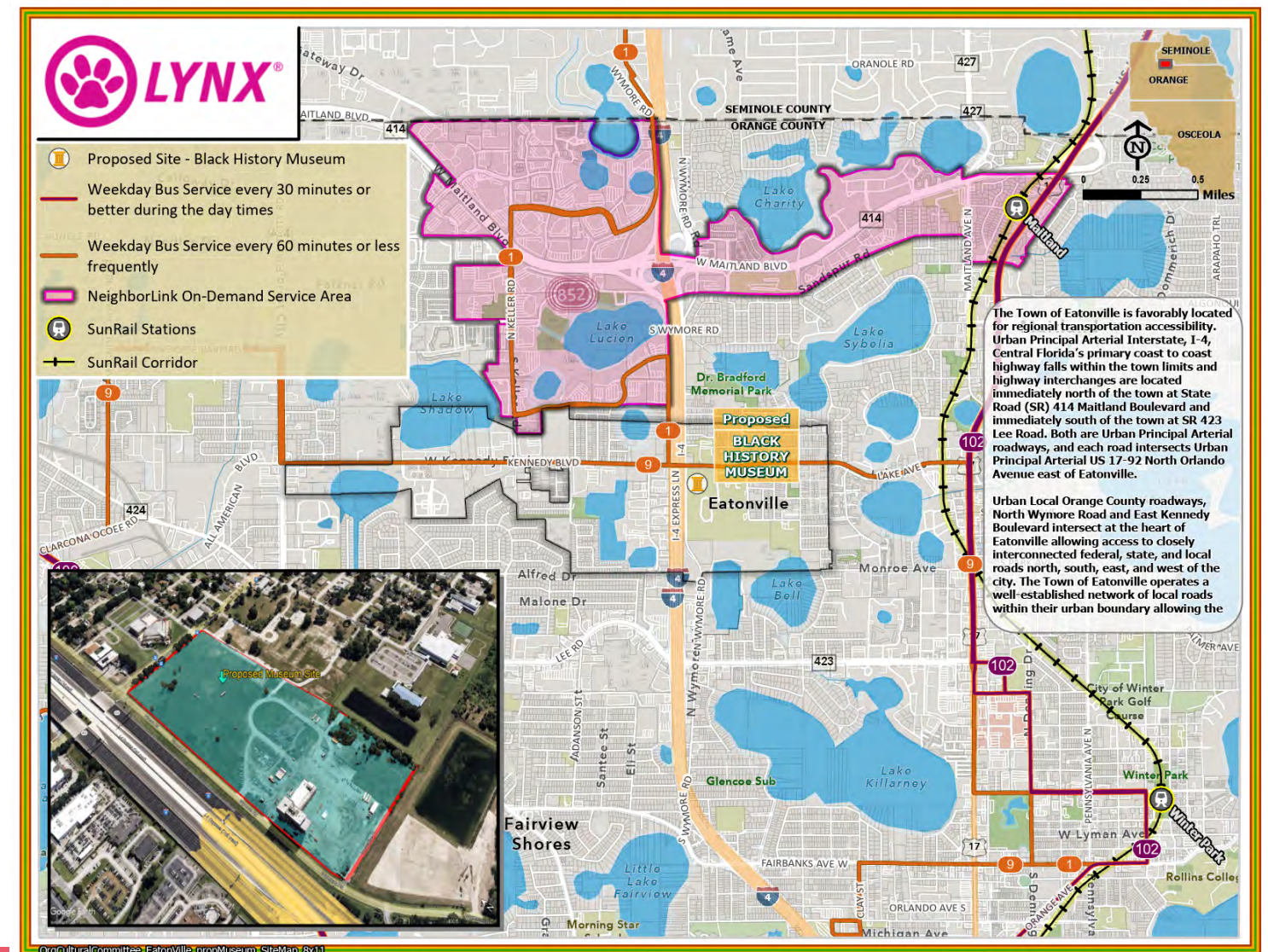
The proposed Florida Black History Museum site in Eatonville benefits from a well-established airport, bus and commuter rail system that provides accessible transportation options for workers and visitors alike. The map below illustrates the existing bus and commuter rail service and its proximity to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

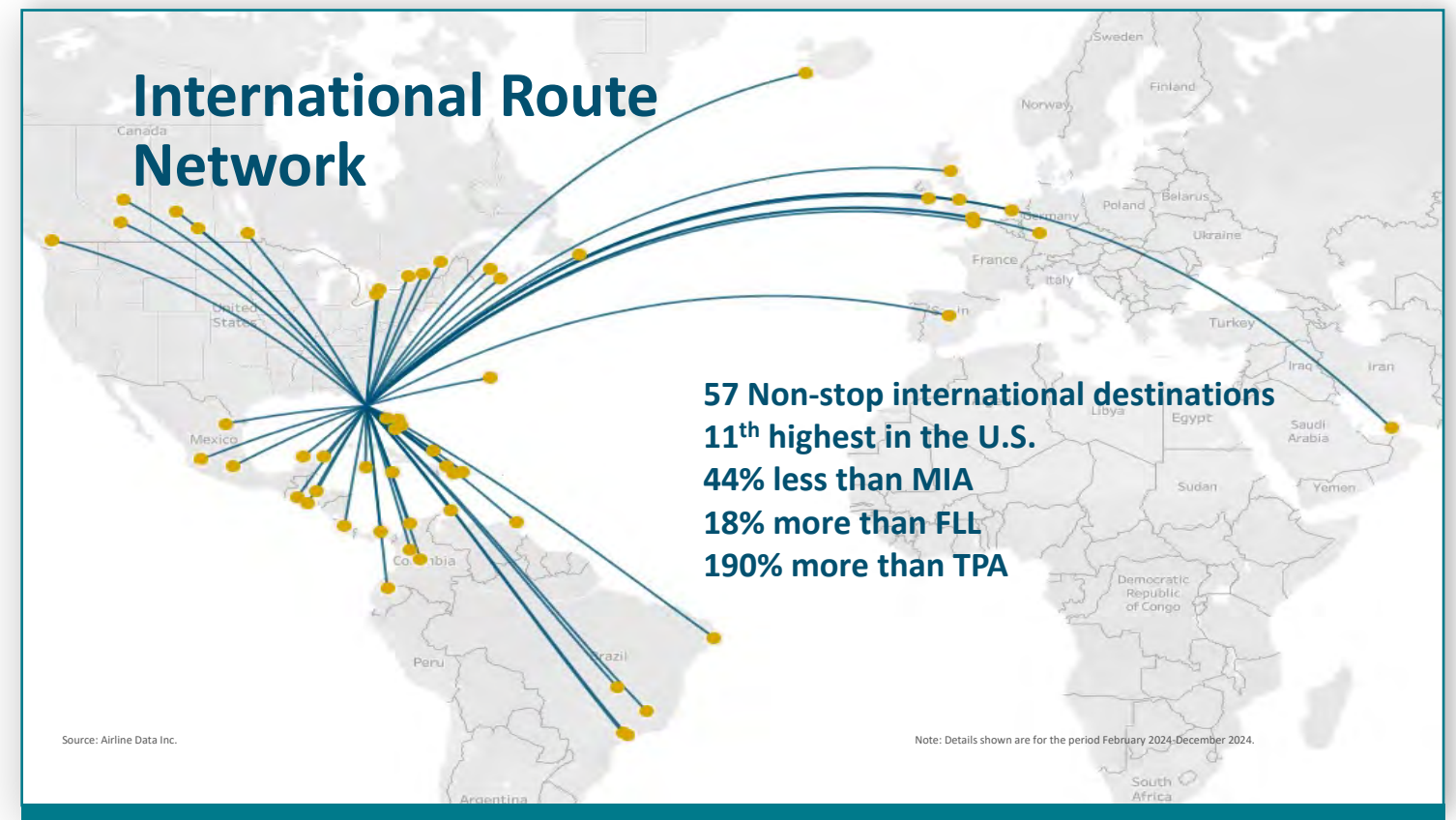
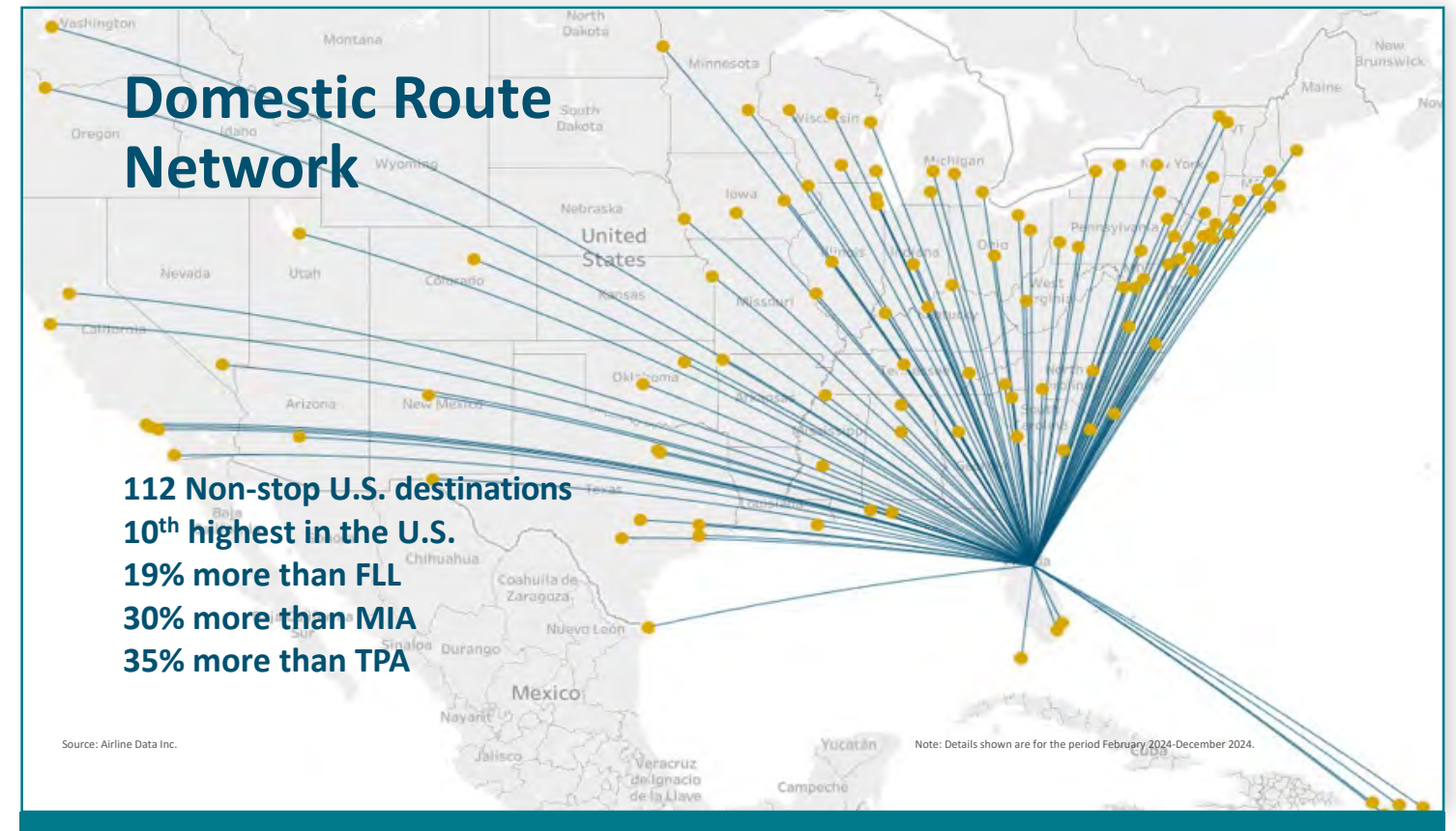
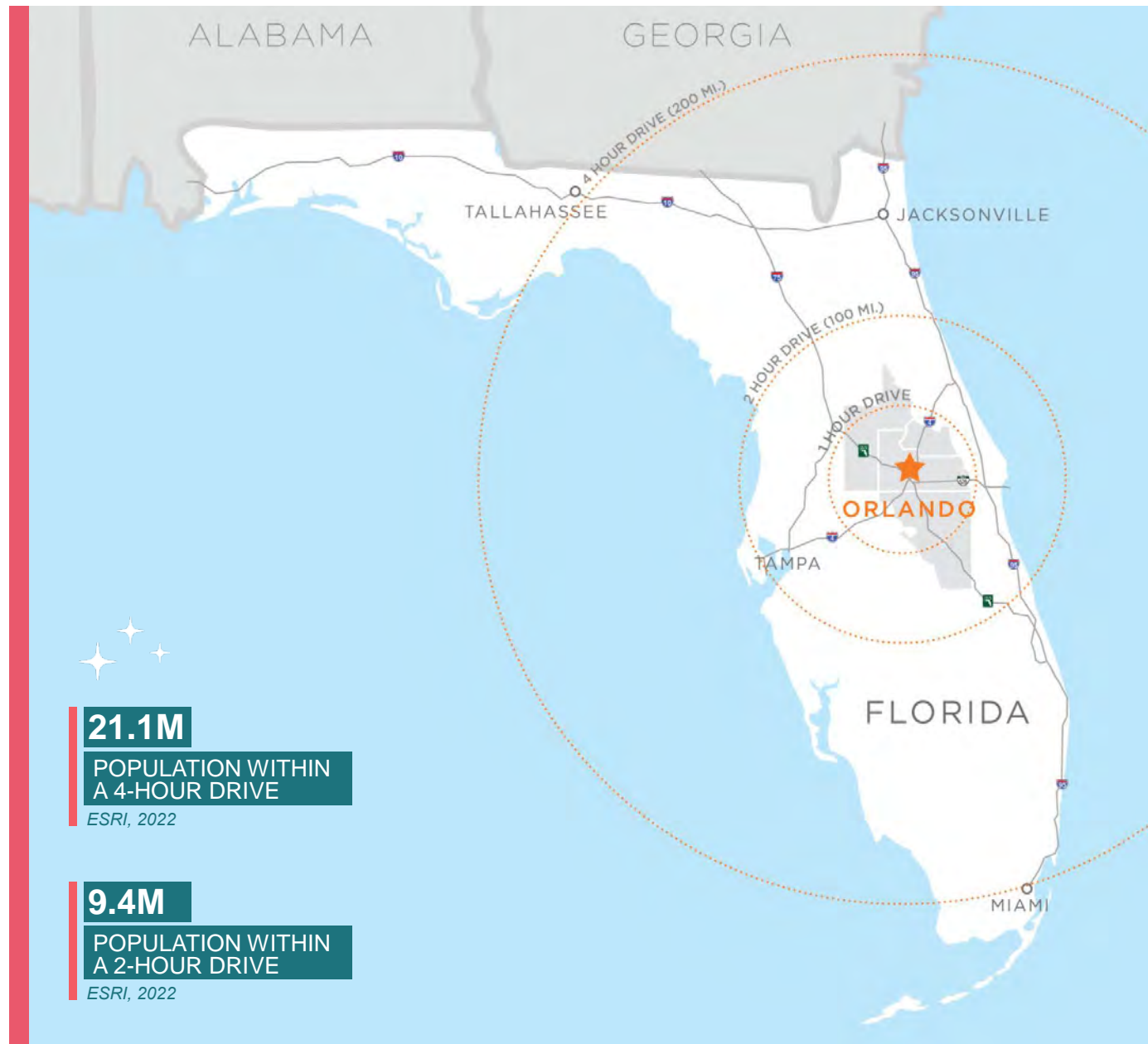
Interstate 4 is the primary interstate highway in the Orlando Metropolitan Area, providing access to Daytona Beach to the northeast and Tampa to the southwest. This short distance from the interstate highway system creates the opportunity to attract the pass-through market, visitors from the periphery 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 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.



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.

*\*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, 5<sup>th</sup> 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

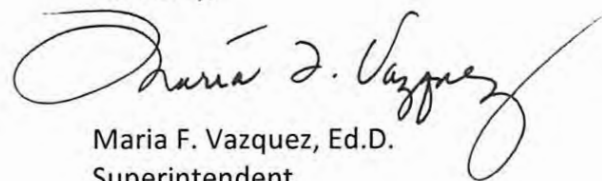
Dear Mr. Pressley:

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

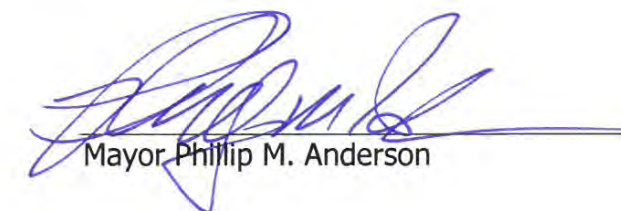
**Whereas**, the potential synergy between the museum in Eatonville and two of Winter Park's existing museums, specifically the Winter Park History Museum and Hannibal Square Heritage Center, creates a compelling destination for arts, culture and history enthusiasts, and

**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 13<sup>th</sup> 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

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Kay Rawlins  
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Rebecca True

Mark Brewer  
President/CEO

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 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



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

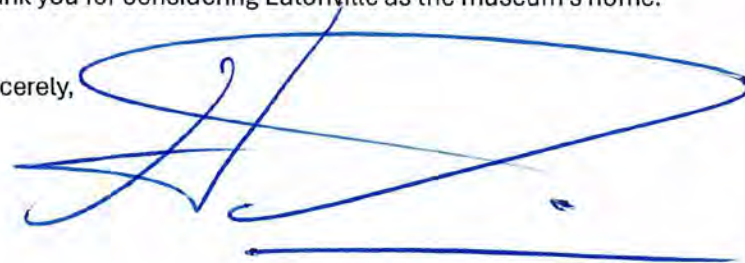
I am Ha'Sean Treshon "Ha Ha" Clinton-Dix, a former resident of Eatonville, I believe the Town of Eatonville is the ideal location for the statewide Florida Black History Museum. Eatonville, the first self-governing all-black municipality in the U.S., embodies a unique historical significance that perfectly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

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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.

**RICHS Digital Archiving Project and Bending Toward Justice Interactive Exhibits:** The Regional Initiative for Collecting History, Experiences & Stories (RICHS) 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 RICHS content is free and open to the public. RICHS 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.

RICHS 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. RICHS 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, RICHS expanded its exhibit potential with the creation of new digital space titled "Bending Toward Justice." Building on the RICHS 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.**

RICHS 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.

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



CENTRAL FLORIDA FOUNDATION

Building Community  
By Building Philanthropy



**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**  
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**Anzhelika Arbatskaia**  
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**Stan Rubins**  
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**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

March 1st, 2024

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

We extend our sincere appreciation for the invaluable opportunity to present Jackson County's bid as the permanent home for the esteemed Florida Black History Museum. It is with great honor and enthusiasm that we submit this proposal for your consideration.

Recognizing the profound importance of preserving and celebrating Florida's diverse history, we believe that the establishment of the museum at Endeavor Park stands as a pivotal step towards enriching the cultural tapestry of our state. This project, we contend, holds immeasurable value in its potential to serve as a beacon of education, reconciliation, and unity for current and future generations.

As stewards of our shared heritage, we stand ready and eager to embrace the responsibility of hosting the Florida Black History Museum in Jackson County, fostering a space that pays homage to the past while guiding us toward a more enlightened and unified future.

Sincerely,

Byron Dickens  
Executive Director  
Emancipation Day Festival of NWFL

Kelsi Jackson  
Executive Director  
Jackson County TDC/BOCC

Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region.....Page 2  
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## Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

Jackson County would like to propose the Black History Museum Task Force select Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Dozier School for Boys, as the future site of the State of Florida Black History Museum. We are moved by our rich history that predates even the establishment of Florida as a state. Our county is the cornerstone of Florida's African American history, and it is here that we must begin to tell this vital story. We must tell the story from the State's roots – "Before the beginning began."

From its earliest human inhabitants, its pre-Civil War African American early settlements including the Seminole Nation (mix of Creek, Cherokee, and runaway slaves), the Seminole War which most consider the nation's largest Slave rebellion, to the Battle of Marianna during the Civil War, to the bloodbaths that took place after Reconstruction also known as the Jackson County War; our community's historical significance provides a strong foundation for the museum's potential impact on preserving and showcasing the State's important heritage.

Jackson County has been home to many pivotal moments and figures in African American history, making it an ideal location for this museum. By situating it here, we ensure that future generations learn about these important narratives where they unfolded.

We believe that history should be told accurately and authentically - starting from its roots. The construction of the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park will allow us to do just that while also providing economic benefits for our community.

Significant figures, events, and places include:

- **The significance of slavery in Florida begins with Jackson County.** On March 3, 1845, Florida became a slave state of the United States. Almost half the state's population were enslaved African Americans working on large cotton and sugar plantations, between the Chattahoochee/Apalachicola River and the Suwannee Rivers in the northwest part of the state.<sup>1</sup>
- **Dozier School for Boys:** The former campus in Marianna is our proposed site for the museum. The complex and often troubling history of the school, especially its impact on African American youth, is a crucial aspect to consider.<sup>2</sup>



- **Battle of Marianna:** This battle marks one of the most tragic and memorable events in Jackson County history where a **500 Union Soldier Regiment consisting of two (2) U.S. Colored Infantry Detachments** brutally defeated the 200 Confederate troops, consisting of old men and young boys. The Episcopal Church was burned in the battle.<sup>3</sup>
- **Governor John Milton:** Marianna was the home of Governor Milton and was an important supply depot at the time. Less than seven months after this loss, Governor Milton committed suicide, leading to Florida's surrender to the Union only a few weeks later on April 26, 1865. Less than a month later General Edward M. McCook announced the Emancipation of Florida slaves per President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation on May 20, 1865. <sup>4</sup>

- The **Jackson County War:** After the Civil War ended, Jackson County became known as one of the most violent counties in Florida during the Reconstruction era. The role of the Freedmen's Bureau during this time was instrumental in bringing in food and education for freed slaves. This era brought forth the development of African American political consciousness and leadership. <sup>5</sup>



- **Calvin Rogers:** First African American elected to public office as the first black Constable of Marianna. He was murdered in 1870 and is believed that Constable Calvin Rogers was the first black law enforcement officer killed in the history of the state. In 1997 at the request of Jackson County Sheriff John P. McDaniel, Rogers's name was added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C. <sup>6</sup>
- **Emanuel Fortune:** Born into slavery in Marianna in 1833. Elected to the 1868 Florida Constitutional Convention as one of four representatives for Jackson County. He was later forced to leave Jackson County and served the remainder of his term in Jacksonville. Father to Timothy Thomas Fortune. <sup>7</sup>

- **Timothy Thomas Fortune:** Born into slavery in Marianna. He attended Marianna's first school for African Americans after the Civil War. He later became a Civil Rights leader, journalist, editor, and publisher. He was a highly influential editor of the nation's leading black newspaper The New York Age, and was the leading economist in the black community. Fortune was also a long-time adviser to Booker T. Washington. Fortune's philosophy of militant agitation on behalf of the rights of black people laid one of the foundations of the Civil Rights Movement. He was considered the best and leading black publicist/writer of this Civil Rights era. <sup>8</sup>





- **Armstrong Purdee:** Witnessed the burning of St. Luke's Episcopal Church during the Battle of Marianna. Later went on to become the first black lawyer in Jackson County. A monument was recently erected at the courthouse to honor Purdee and African American colored soldiers from the Civil War. <sup>9</sup>
- **North Star Legacy Communities** - Project from Florida State University that was developed to preserve and document self-sufficient communities that were developed by enslaved blacks and some freedmen on and around plantations. There are 21 currently known North Star Legacy Communities located in Jackson County. <sup>10</sup>
- **Jacob City:** Known as the first black community in Jackson County. After emancipation, freed slaves came to the area to restart their lives. <sup>11</sup>
- **Springfield Schoolhouse:** Built in 1936 and served as a school from 1937 to 1956 for black children in grades one through eight. Students then transferred to either Jackson County Training School in Marianna or to St. Paul High School in Campbellton. Currently is owned by the Springfield African Methodist Episcopal Church and currently serves as a museum. <sup>12</sup>
- **Jackson County Training School / Gilmore Academy** - First school in the county where black students could attend grades one through twelve. <sup>13</sup>
- **Union Grove School** – Another school created during segregation for black students which is the home of very prominent African Americans in the Jackson County community. <sup>14</sup>
- **Renaissance Park** - 40-acre wilderness park north of Marianna. The park is filled with artifacts and relics of folk life from early rural farm life in Jackson County and provides a hands-on experience on African American cultural traditions from the early 1900's. <sup>15</sup>

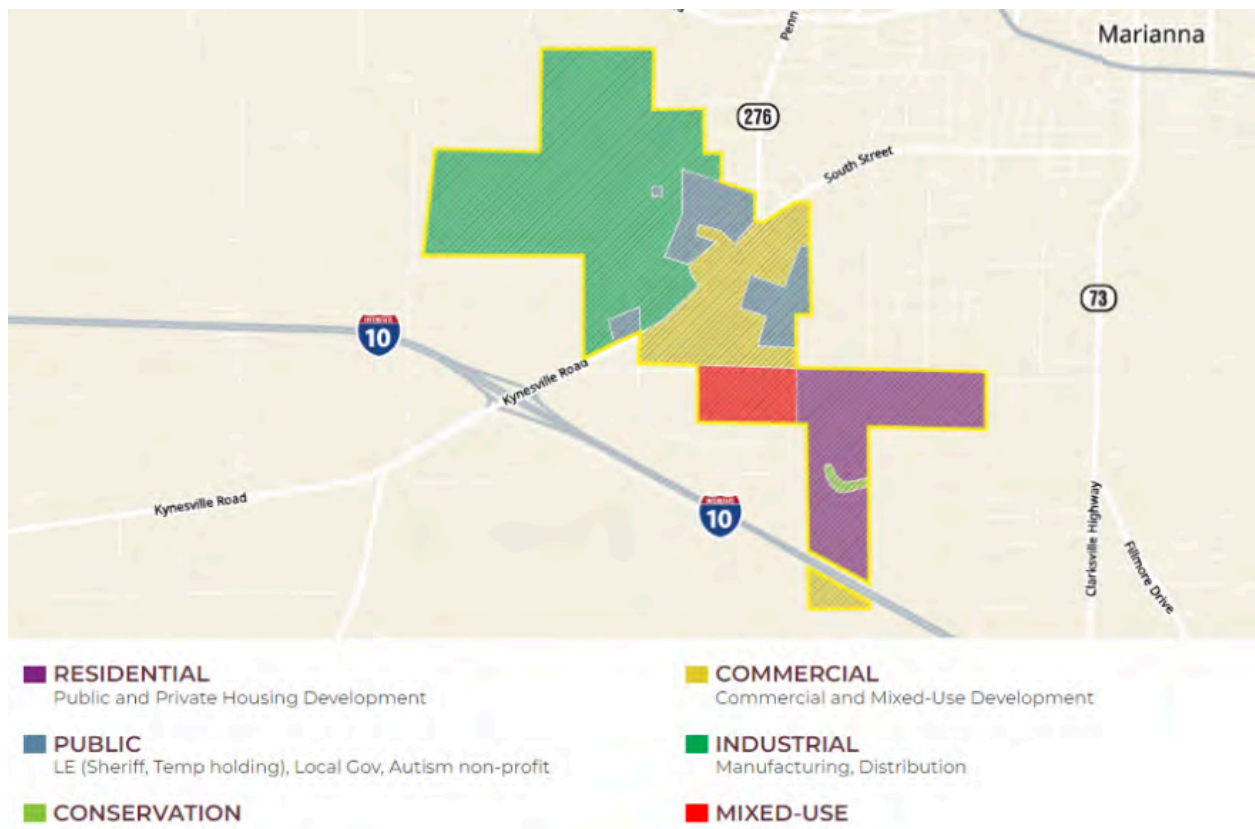


## Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

The proposed location for the Florida State Black History Museum at Endeavor Park offers a compelling blend of expansive land availability, existing facilities for adaptive reuse, and the necessary infrastructure to support this project. Endeavor Park boasts a substantial 1200 acres of available land, providing ample space for the envisioned development.

This expansive canvas offers flexibility in designing the museum's layout, ensuring a harmonious integration with the natural surroundings. The presence of existing buildings earmarked for potential renovation adds a layer of historical continuity, blending the old with the new to create a dynamic and immersive visitor experience. The extensive acreage allows for thoughtful planning, ensuring that the museum's footprint respects the historical context of the site while providing the necessary space for exhibitions, educational facilities, and community engagement areas.

Endeavor Park's strategic location and well-established infrastructure make it highly adaptable for site access and parking requirements. Accessibility is facilitated by the proximity to major transportation routes, including Interstate 10, Highways 71, 231, and 90, ensuring ease of travel for visitors. The existing adult autism academy and convention center on-site speak to the adaptability of the location for diverse and inclusive community-focused initiatives.



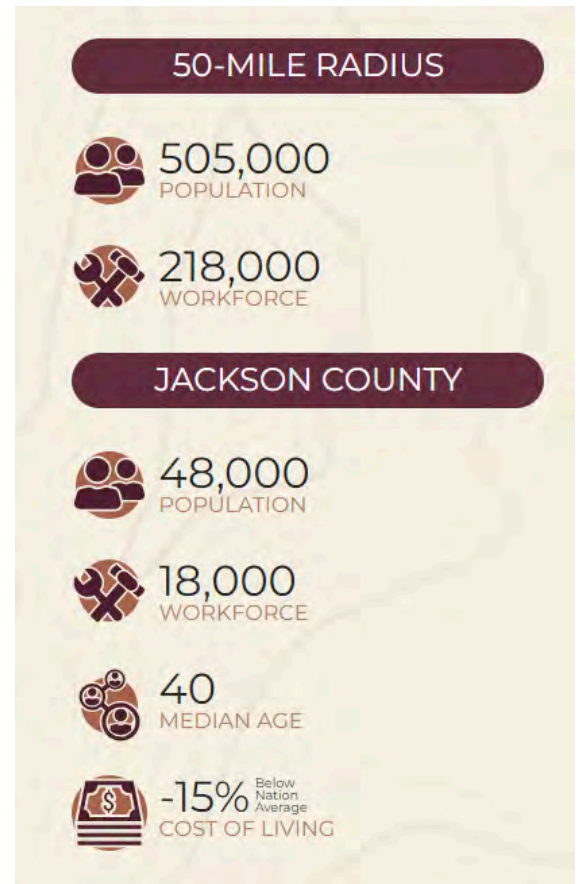
### Criteria 3: Regional Economy

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

The county boasts a robust talent pool supported by a commitment to education and workforce development. With nearly 60% of third-grade students performing at or above a third-grade reading level, Jackson County demonstrates a dedication to nurturing academic achievement from an early age. Furthermore, the presence of two four-year colleges within the county, along with several others within a 100-mile radius, provides a rich educational ecosystem that supports a skilled workforce ready for the demands of modern industries.

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

Jackson County's economic landscape is characterized by innovation and adaptability, mirroring job growth trends similar to neighboring counties such as Bay, Gulf, Franklin, Calhoun, Washington, and Holmes. The strategic partnerships with regional economic development groups, such as Florida's Great Northwest, offer access to certified development sites and streamlined processes, fostering a conducive environment for business expansion and investment. Notably, initiatives like NextStep at Endeavor Academy, an adult autism academy focusing on teaching independent living skills, exemplify the county's commitment to innovative solutions for workforce inclusion and development.



*NextStep participants celebrate the grand opening of the autism facility.*

***Infrastructure and Growth Leadership:***

Strategic infrastructure investments have positioned Jackson County as a prime location for business and economic growth. Major road corridors such as Interstate 10, and Highways 71, 73, 90, and 231 ensure ease of accessibility, facilitating seamless connectivity to neighboring regions and markets. Additionally, sales tax revenue has nearly doubled since 2013, reaching over \$7.71 million, reflecting a thriving business climate and robust economic activity.



***Business Climate and Competitiveness:***

Jackson County's business climate is characterized by a supportive ecosystem that encourages entrepreneurship and innovation. Local government agencies have engaged in extensive community engagement sessions, working to streamline processes and create an environment that is conducive to business growth and development. These efforts have contributed to a vibrant and competitive business landscape that attracts investment and fosters long-term economic sustainability.

***Civics and Governance:***

Jackson County's commitment to effective governance and civic engagement is evident in its proactive approach to community development. Local government agencies have demonstrated a dedication to transparency and accountability, engaging residents in decision-making processes and implementing policies that prioritize the needs and aspirations of the community.

***Quality of Life:***

Beyond economic indicators, Jackson County offers a vibrant quality of life that enriches the overall well-being of its residents. With a focus on community amenities, recreational opportunities, and cultural offerings, Jackson County is not just a place to work, but a place to thrive and call home.



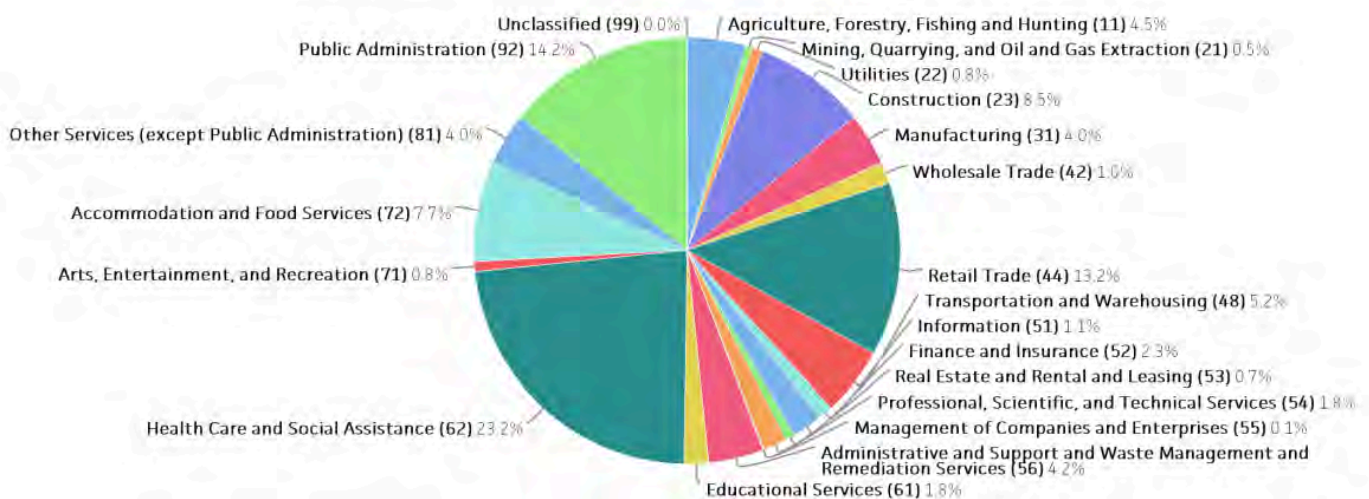
## Criteria 4: Regional Demographics

Jackson County presents a diverse and vibrant demographic landscape. Comprising a population with rich historical roots, the county embodies a blend of cultural heritage that forms the backbone of its identity. Jackson County demographics include a population of 69.1% White and 26.6% Black or African American, which is over 10% higher than the state of Florida. This diversity contributes to a dynamic community poised to embrace the inclusive mission of the Florida State Black History Museum.

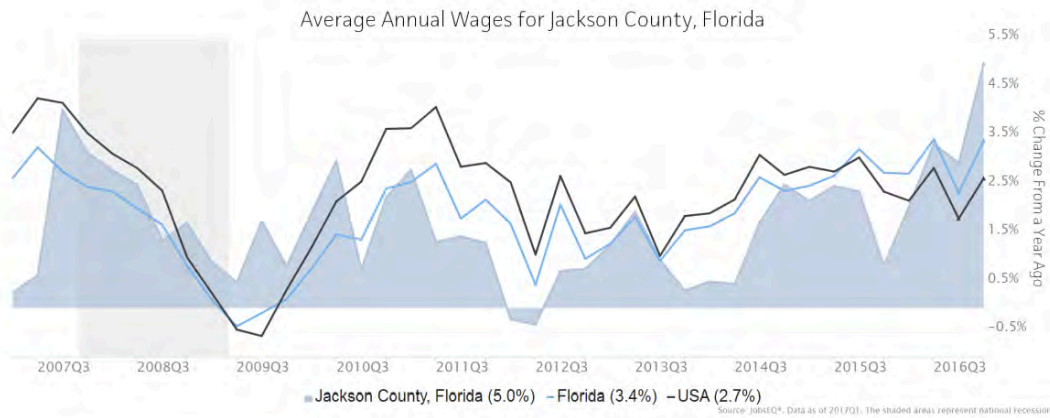
Education stands as a cornerstone of Jackson County's community, with a commitment to fostering learning and intellectual growth. The presence of educational institutions, such as Chipola College and the Baptist College of Florida, within and near the county reflects a dedication to providing residents with opportunities for academic advancement and cultural enrichment. The County's populations have shown improvement in educational attainment, with the percentage of residents holding a Bachelor's degree increasing from 12.4% to 14.6% from 2010 to 2017.<sup>16</sup>

Jackson County's economic landscape is marked by diversity and resilience, supported by key industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism. According to a recent census report, the county's total non-farm employment grew by 7.5% between 2010 and 2017, outpacing the statewide growth rate of 6.8% over the same period.<sup>16</sup> This strong job growth reflects Jackson County's status as a dynamic economic hub within the region, attracting businesses and fostering entrepreneurship. The proposed Florida State Black History Museum at Endeavor Park aligns with the community's economic aspirations, offering the potential for increased tourism, job creation, and a positive impact on local businesses.

Total Workers for Jackson County, Florida by Industry



While Jackson County celebrates economic progress, it also faces challenges related to income inequality and poverty. Highlights include that the median household income in the county increased from \$36,726 in 2010 to \$41,000 in 2017, representing a significant improvement. However, poverty rates remain a concern, with 20.1% of the population living below the poverty line in 2017.<sup>16</sup> Efforts to address poverty and promote economic mobility are ongoing, underscoring Jackson County's commitment to ensuring equitable opportunities for all residents.



Jackson County's business landscape is characterized by a diverse mix of enterprises across various sectors, contributing to its economic vibrancy. The county is home to over 1,200 business establishments, ranging from small startups to large corporations.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, strategic initiatives aimed at supporting business growth and entrepreneurship, such as the Jackson County Economic Development Committee's programs and incentives, demonstrate the county's proactive approach to fostering a conducive business environment.

Geographically, Jackson County's strategic location and natural assets contribute to its appeal as a desirable destination for residents and businesses alike. The county's proximity to major transportation routes, including Interstate 10 and U.S. Highways 231 and 90, facilitates connectivity and accessibility. Additionally, the county's diverse geography, which includes fertile agricultural lands and scenic landscapes, enhances its attractiveness as a destination for tourism and outdoor recreation.

## Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure

The proposed location at Endeavor Park benefits from proximity to Interstate 10, located less than a mile from the proposed site. Close proximities to Highways 231, 90, and 71 provide easy access to those traveling from the north or south of Marianna as well.

While direct access to an international airport within Jackson County is limited, the site's strategic location places it within reasonable reach of regional airports. Air travel convenience is enhanced through access to airports in Tallahassee and Panama City Beach, ensuring that the museum remains easily accessible for both regional and national visitors.



Public transportation options within Jackson County contribute to the region's connectivity. JTrans is a local transportation network that is available to Jackson County residents. In addition to JTrans, a number of tour buses and guided tours travel to Jackson County to explore the Florida Caverns State Park, allowing ample transportation options for those wishing to visit the museum. While the county may not have an extensive public transit network, the collaborative potential with neighboring areas provides opportunities for coordinated transportation services. The museum's presence could catalyze further developments in public transportation infrastructure.

As an advocate for inclusivity and community engagement, the proposed museum at Endeavor Park recognizes the importance of alternative transportation. Bicycle and pedestrian safety considerations align with the site's commitment to providing a welcoming and accessible experience for visitors. By promoting alternative transportation options, the museum contributes to a sustainable and health-conscious approach to accessibility.

## Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support

The vision of establishing the Florida State Black History Museum at Endeavor Park in Jackson County has garnered steadfast support from government entities at multiple levels. Locally, the county government has expressed enthusiasm and commitment to the project, recognizing its potential to be a cultural and economic cornerstone for the region. Furthermore, the state government has shown a keen interest in supporting initiatives that celebrate and preserve Florida's diverse heritage, indicating a collaborative effort to make this museum a reality.

Given the proposed location at Endeavor Park, organizations and universities that have closely followed updates related to the Dozier School may serve as potential partners for funding. Their vested interest in the historical significance of the site and commitment to justice and reconciliation initiatives aligns with the museum's objectives. Collaborative efforts with these advocates could further enhance financial backing and community involvement.

Please see attached letters of support from the Jackson County NAACP, City of Marianna, Tourist Development Council, Jackson County Board of County Commissioners, and Jackson County Chamber of Commerce.



## Criteria 7: Educational Resources

We envision a partnership with the Florida State Black History Museum to play an impactful role in educational outreach, fostering partnerships with both public and private schools in the region. Collaborative initiatives aim to provide students with enriching experiences, aligning with curriculum objectives and promoting a deeper understanding of Florida's diverse cultural heritage.



The museum stands to benefit from an established cultural heritage tourism visitor and supporter base within and beyond Jackson County. Building upon the rich historical narrative of Endeavor Park and the Dozier School, the museum aims to attract visitors passionate about preserving and learning from Florida's complex history.

The educational resources of the Florida State Black History Museum extend beyond its physical location through strategic partnerships. The collaboration with the University of South Florida, pivotal in researching the Dozier School post-closure, enriches the museum's offerings with academic rigor and historical depth. Additionally, the partnership with Florida State University in their research and development with the North Star Legacy Community reinforces a commitment to comprehensive and inclusive historical narratives.

A significant advocate for cultural heritage tourism in Jackson County and the wider panhandle and tri-state area, historian Dale Cox contributes a wealth of knowledge and expertise. The museum's partnership with Cox ensures a seamless integration into the existing cultural heritage tourism initiatives, leveraging his deep understanding of the region's history to enhance the museum's educational impact.



We would seek to embrace a multifaceted approach to educational resources, anchored in partnerships with schools, an established visitor base, and collaborations with prestigious institutions and passionate advocates. This tapestry of educational alliances positions the museum as a dynamic and enriching hub for learning, cultural exploration, and community engagement.



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[https://www.jacksonedc.com/docs/Jackson\\_County\\_Economic\\_Overview\\_2017.pdf](https://www.jacksonedc.com/docs/Jackson_County_Economic_Overview_2017.pdf)



## BOARD of COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Phone : (850) 482-9633  
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www.jacksoncountyfl.gov

Administration Building  
2864 Madison Street  
Marianna, Florida 32448-4021

January 17, 2024

### Jackson County BOCC Letter of Support

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

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Jackson County's bid to become the permanent home of the Florida Black History Museum. As the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners, I believe that our county, with its rich history and commitment to inclusivity, is an ideal location for this significant institution.

Jackson County's historical legacy, dating back to well before Florida's statehood, makes it a natural fit for hosting the Florida Black History Museum. The proposed site, Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys, holds a unique historical significance that should be honored and celebrated.

The transformation of the campus into a museum dedicated to Black history represents a powerful and positive evolution for our community. It underscores our commitment to learning from our history, fostering positive change, and promoting a more unified and inclusive future.

Beyond its cultural and historical importance, the museum's presence in Jackson County would have far-reaching economic benefits. It has the potential to invigorate local businesses, attract tourism, and create new avenues for growth and prosperity within our community.

I urge the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to recognize the value and potential impact of selecting Jackson County as the future site for the Florida Black History Museum. Our community is ready and eager to embrace this responsibility and contribute to the preservation of Florida's rich cultural heritage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Paul Donofro, Jr.  
Chairman, Jackson County Board of County Commissioners

#### Commissioners

District 1  
Alex B. McKinnie

District 2  
Edward  
Crutchfield

District 3  
Paul Donofro, Jr.

District 4  
Donnie Branch

District 5  
Jim Peacock



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Administration Building  
2864 Madison Street  
Marianna, Florida 32448-4021

January 17, 2024

## Jackson County BOCC Letter of Support

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

I am writing to express my strong endorsement for Jackson County's bid to host the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. As the County Administrator, I believe that designating Jackson County as the permanent home for this esteemed institution aligns seamlessly with our commitment to acknowledging and reconciling with our historical past.

Jackson County, being the third oldest county in the state of Florida, holds a deep and multifaceted history that is woven into the fabric of our state. The proposed site for the museum, not only symbolizes our rich heritage but also provides a unique opportunity for transformation and healing.

The historical significance of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys serves as a testament to the challenges faced in the struggle against segregation and inequality. Converting this site into the Florida Black History Museum would not only preserve history but also serve as a beacon of education, celebration, and reconciliation.

Selecting Jackson County as the museum's location is not merely a decision for historical preservation; it is an investment in our community's future. The economic benefits, including increased tourism, local business development, and enhanced community growth, are invaluable contributions that this museum will bring to our area.

I encourage the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to recognize the potential impact and historical significance of choosing Jackson County. We are ready to contribute to the enduring legacy of Black history in Florida.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Wilanne Daniels  
County Administrator  
Jackson County Board of County Commissioners

Commissioners

District 1  
Alex B. McKinnie

District 2  
Edward Crutchfield

District 3  
Paul Donofro, Jr.

District 4  
Donnie Branch

District 5  
Jim Peacock



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Administration Building  
2864 Madison Street  
Marianna, Florida 32448-4021

January 17, 2024

### Jackson County BOCC Letter of Support

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

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Jackson County's bid to become the permanent home of the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park, the historic site of the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys.

Jackson County's rich history and deep cultural roots make it an ideal setting for the Florida Black History Museum. As the third oldest county in Florida, our community's legacy is entwined with the broader narrative of the state.

The community of Jackson County has shown time and again its commitment to positive transformation, most notably in the aftermath of Hurricane Michael. The shared experiences and challenges we have overcome together have forged a strong sense of community engagement and cooperation, qualities that will undoubtedly contribute to the success of this monumental project.

Selecting Jackson County as the location for the museum aligns with our community's vision for growth and inclusivity. The economic benefits stemming from this decision would extend beyond the cultural sphere, invigorating local businesses, promoting tourism, and providing new opportunities for development and prosperity in our region.

Our community is ready and enthusiastic about the opportunity to host the Florida Black History Museum, contributing to the preservation and celebration of Florida's diverse cultural legacy.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to enriching Florida's cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

  
Kelsi Jackson

Executive Director, Tourist Development Council, JCBOCC

Commissioners

District 1  
Alex B. McKinnie

District 2  
Edward Crutchfield

District 3  
Paul Donofro, Jr

District 4  
Donnie Blanch

District 5  
Jim Peacock



# CITY OF MARIANNA

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Post Office Box 936

Marianna, FL 32447

(850) 482-4353

January 17, 2024

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

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Jackson County's bid to host the Florida Black History Museum at Endeavor Park, formerly known as the Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys. As the City Manager for the City of Marianna, I believe that our city, nestled within Jackson County, is poised to contribute significantly to the success and impact of this important cultural institution.

Marianna, like the rest of Jackson County, has a deep and intertwined history with the state of Florida. Our community recognizes the significance of preserving and celebrating Black history, and hosting the Florida Black History Museum aligns perfectly with our values.

The proposed site, Endeavor Park, holds a unique historical narrative that reflects the challenges and triumphs of the struggle against segregation and inequality. Transforming this site into a museum dedicated to Black history would not only pay homage to our past but also serve as a catalyst for education, reconciliation, and positive change.

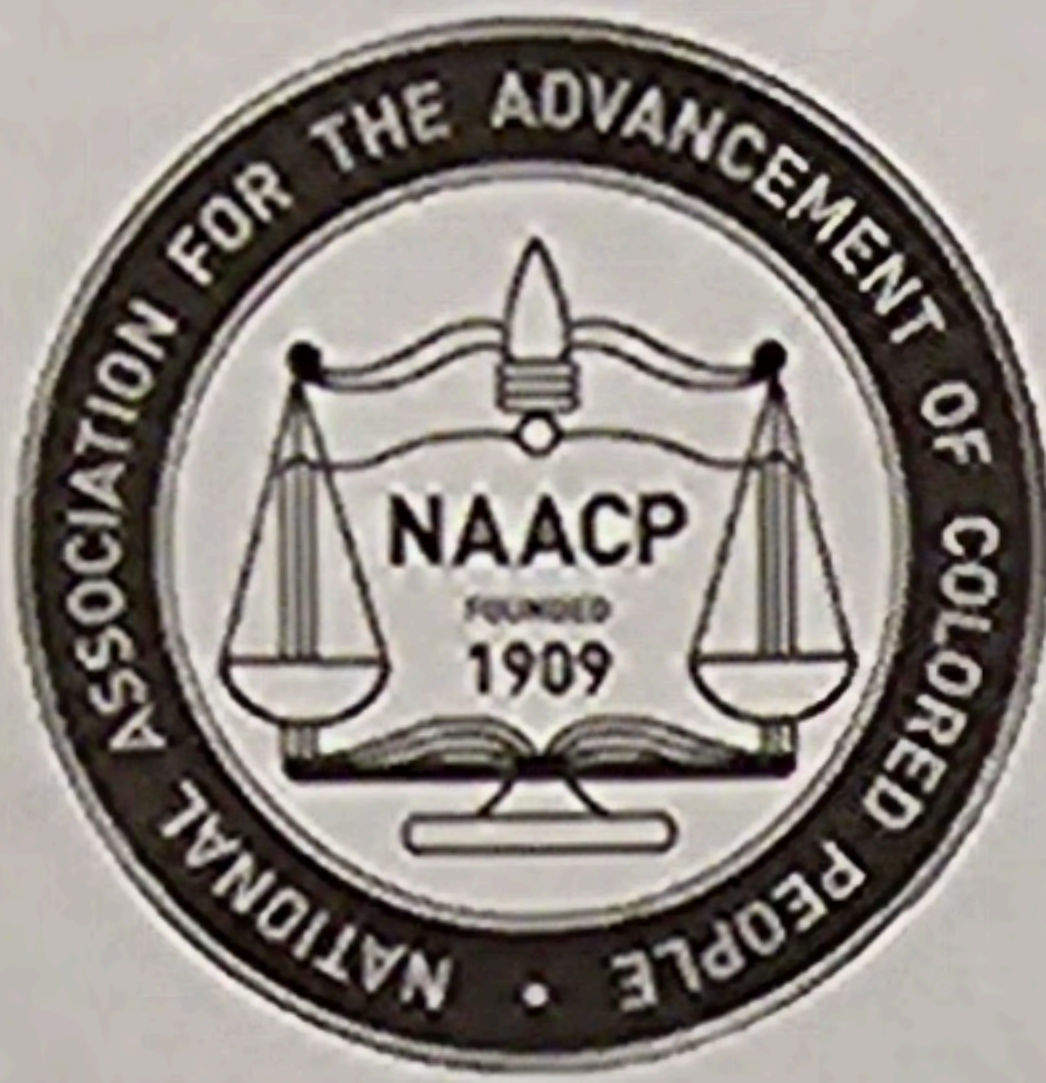
Establishing the museum in Jackson County, and by extension, Marianna, offers an unprecedented opportunity to alter perceptions of our area. It showcases our commitment to acknowledging and learning from history, fostering inclusivity, and contributing to the cultural enrichment of our community.

I encourage the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to recognize the depth of commitment and readiness within Jackson County, and particularly Marianna, to embrace this responsibility. The economic, cultural, and historical benefits that will emanate from selecting our community as the museum's home are immeasurable.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

William H. Long  
City Manager



## Jackson County NAACP #5104-B

Bishop Adrian D. Abner, *President*  
Pastor DeRon D. Johnson, *1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*  
Leon Kelly, *2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President*  
Linda B. Franklin, *3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President*  
Randall Wynn, Sr., *Secretary*  
LaRhonda S. Barnes, *Assistant Secretary*  
LaVon Pope, *Treasurer*  
Mozell Jackson, *Assistant Treasurer*

January 7, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Jackson County NAACP Branch #5104-B, Marianna, Florida, and its 125-plus members, I wish to communicate our strong and continued support for The Florida Black History Museum to be erected in Jackson County. This noble and worthy effort, spearheaded by The Emancipation Day Festival of NW Florida, Inc. Executive Director, Byron Dickens, deserves the recognition and respect that is due for not just a community but a national treasure. As a President and Member of the oldest and largest Civil Rights Organization in The United States, we are proud of what this museum and the grounds on which it is proposed to be built symbolize for the state, the Northwest Florida region, and this honored American history.

With humility and strong support,

**Bishop Adrian D. Abner, *Branch President***



December 27, 2023

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

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Jackson County's bid to become the permanent home of the esteemed Florida Black History Museum. As the President & CEO of the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, I am fervently convinced that our county stands as an exemplary site for such a significant institution, and I believe that choosing Jackson County would be a testament to the profound historical relevance and transformative potential of our region.

Jackson County boasts a rich and storied legacy, serving as the third oldest county in the state of Florida. Our roots run deep, preceding Florida's statehood, and much of our history resonates statewide, contributing significantly to the fabric of Florida's narrative. It is within this historical tapestry that we find the proposed site for the museum, the former Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys now known as Endeavor Park.

The Arthur G. Dozier School for Boys carries a complex and poignant history, emblematic of the struggle against segregation and inequality. Transforming this site into a bastion of education, celebration, and reconciliation through the Florida Black History Museum would represent a powerful and positive evolution. It would not only preserve our heritage but also stand as a beacon of hope and progress, embracing our past while guiding us toward a more unified future.

Furthermore, establishing the museum in Jackson County would be a monumental step in altering perceptions of our area. It presents an unparalleled opportunity to showcase our commitment to acknowledging and learning from our history, catalyzing positive change and promoting inclusivity. The economic benefits stemming from the museum's presence cannot be overlooked either, as it would undoubtedly invigorate local businesses, foster tourism, and create new opportunities for growth and prosperity within our community.

In conclusion, I urge the State of Florida Black History Museum Task Force to consider the immense significance and potential impact of selecting Jackson County as the future site for the Florida Black History Museum. Our community stands ready and eager to embrace this responsibility and honor the legacy of Black history in Florida.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and dedication to preserving and promoting Florida's rich cultural heritage.

Sincerely,

Tiffany Wilson Garling, CCE, IOM, FCCP  
President & CEO

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**Carmen Smith, Chair**  
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**Logan Chappell, Chair Elect**  
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Melvin Engineering

**Michael John Mitchell**  
Miller Miller Chevrolet

**Arthur Obar**  
City of Graceville/Obar Insurance

**Winter Spires**  
Winter Spires & Associates, P.A.

**Kevin Yoder**  
Rivertown Community Church

**Steve Young**  
Chipola College

# Florida Museum of Black History Task Force: Nassau County Museum Location Criteria Request

## Introduction

Nassau County, Florida, is submitting the following information to assist the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force in providing recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History, per CS/CS/HB 1441 (Chapter 2023-72, Laws of Florida). The African American history of Nassau County, Florida, is deeply intertwined with the broader narrative of the region's development. From the era of slavery through the Civil Rights Movement and into the present day, African Americans have played pivotal roles in shaping the county's social, cultural, and economic landscape. Descendants of enslaved individuals who worked on plantations in the area, many African American families have deep roots in Nassau County, contributing to its rich heritage. Despite facing segregation and systemic discrimination, African Americans have demonstrated resilience and perseverance, establishing vibrant communities, churches, and businesses.

## **Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region**

Nassau County has a rich African American heritage with a long history of contributions by Black individuals to the local community, the state of Florida, and beyond. As a gateway to Florida when the U.S. was still a foundling country, the museum could highlight this local heritage, setting the stage for the larger experience and celebrating the achievements, struggles, and resilience of not just Nassau's Black community, but of communities throughout the state. The museum would also serve as a focal point for preserving and sharing these local historical narratives, including:

As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the **Middle Passage**<sup>1</sup> in the early 19th century. The Middle Passage was a stage in the route slave ships took from Africa to America, forcibly transporting millions of Africans to the New World. Descendants of these Africans recognize Fernandina Beach as the southernmost island in the Gullah Geechee Cultural



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.middlepassageproject.org/fernandina-beach-fl/>



Heritage corridor. A Middle Passage port marker in Old Town Fernandina commemorates those who died in the crossing and the legacy of those who survived.

In **1798, Kingsley Plantation**<sup>2</sup> was built and named for early owner Zephaniah Kingsley. Kingsley's wife, Anna Madgigine Jai, was purchased from Senegal, West Africa. Zephaniah and Anna would later become the great-grandparents of Mary Francis Sammis, A.L. Lewis's wife, and co-founder of American Beach on Amelia Island. Located on Fort George Island, just across the Amelia River in Duval County, Kingsley Plantation is managed by the U.S. National Park Service and is one of the only examples of a plantation system in Florida today. Visitors can explore the slave quarters, kitchen house, interpretive gardens, and more during guided tours of the cotton plantation.

**The Williams House**<sup>3</sup>, named for Marcellus A. Williams, was built in **1856** and now operates as an award-winning Bed & Breakfast in historic downtown Fernandina Beach. During the Civil War when Union troops occupied Fernandina and took over his residence, Williams and his family fled until it was safe to return, at which time he became active in the Underground Railroad.

Nassau County is home to **Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church**, built in 1870, which was a gathering site for free Blacks, Indians, Spanish Indians, and Mulattoes. Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach features more than 400 historic structures on the **National Register of Historic Places**, including:

- **New Zion Missionary Baptist Church** was the second oldest and largest Black Baptist Church on Amelia Island founded in 1870.
- **Macedonia AME Church** was founded in 1872 by Samuel Irving.
- **Trinity United Methodist Church** was built in 1891 and served the African American population of Amelia Island during the time of segregation in the South.

**American Beach** was co-founded in **1935** by African American businessman and Florida's first black self-made millionaire, Abraham Lincoln Lewis. A.L. Lewis, as President of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company's Pension Bureau, purchased and opened 33 acres of oceanfront property on Amelia Island and named it American Beach. The initial property was subdivided and sold to company



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/kp.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ameliaisland.com/itineraries/african-american-heritage/>

executives, shareholders, and community leaders as a place to rest and relax with dignity. In 1937, American Beach expanded by another 100 acres and offered them to the wider Black community for purchase. For the next 30 years, American Beach was a paradise for vacationing African Americans. Home to several restaurants, hotels, and shops, American Beach drew thousands of visitors every year.

*Evans' Rendezvous<sup>4</sup>, an oceanfront dining and entertainment establishment, and community gathering place, attracted celebrities and artists like Ray Charles, Cab Callaway, Louis Armstrong, and James Brown during its heyday.*



Today, the **A. L. Lewis Museum<sup>5</sup>** tells the story of American Beach and the African Americans who found triumph over segregation and disenfranchisement. The museum also brings conservationist MaVynee Oshun Betsch's vision to life. Betsch spent her formative years on American Beach but graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio. In 1955, she embarked on a remarkable journey through Europe, where she pursued a career as an opera singer. Betsch eventually came back to American Beach and made it her life's work to protect the environment, dunes, beaches, and livelihood of her grandfather's legacy and her beloved hometown. She became well known as "**The Beach Lady**" and fought south island development to protect the NaNa dunes, named after the Twi word, "NaNa", which means "grandmother" in the West African language.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=144780>

<sup>5</sup> <https://allewismuseum.org/>

**NaNa Dunes**, a 60-foot dune system, is the largest in Florida and is now protected as part of the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve by providing a vital habitat for a diverse array of native wildlife and plant species. Through “the Beach Lady’s” tireless efforts, American Beach was listed as a historic site on the **National Register of Historic Places** in 2001.



*Nassau County’s Fernandina Beach is home to the former Peck High School, originally known as Colored School No. 1. Opened in 1885 through the Rosenwald Foundation school-building program, the school was later named for Howard University graduate Professor William H. Peck, teacher and principal of the school. The original school building is one of many historic sites on Nassau’s Amelia Island.*

## **Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location**

Nassau County’s strategic location makes it accessible to a wide audience. Situated in the northeast corner of Florida, Nassau County shares its northern and western borders with Georgia and is home to one of the state’s five **official Welcome Centers on bustling I-95**. Nassau County is also home to **Amelia Island**, the southernmost of the Sea Islands along the Atlantic coast, presenting multi-state opportunities for museum visitation from South Carolina (less than 2 hours) and all of Georgia. A Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County would serve as a “gateway” to the state’s rich African American heritage, promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness for residents and millions of visitors as they arrive in Florida via I-95 and the Jacksonville International Airport. As Florida’s first attraction heading into the state, the museum would also make an ideal starting point for the **Florida Black Heritage Trail** connecting Florida’s many African American museums, sites, and attractions. At the intersection of I-95 and A1A, Nassau County is home to the award-winning Wildlight community comprised of over 4,000 acres

of land that is currently undergoing a master plan of business and residential development. With an estimated 40 million visitors traveling on I-95 annually, proximity to I-95 and A1A, and with its proposed road network, Wildlight is enhancing accessibility to key regional destinations, and providing ready access to new schools, public recreational amenities, cultural opportunities, and businesses. With more than a thousand acres set aside for conservation, new parks, and community facilities, Wildlight could be an ideal setting for a world-class Museum of Black History in fast-growing Nassau County. In addition, landowners in American Beach have reached out to begin the conversation of offering land for the proposed location.

### **Criteria 3: Regional Economy**

Tourism is Nassau County's main economic driver, responsible for 26% of total county employment and 29% of county GDP, with over **1.2 million visitors** creating a direct economic impact of nearly **\$1 billion (2022)**. The destination has been cherished by generations of travelers for its natural beauty, pristine beaches, small-town southern charm, and historic and cultural treasures. Most of this tourism revenue is generated on Amelia Island on the county's eastern/Atlantic shoreline.

The addition of a world-class attraction such as the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County would contribute to the overall strength of its most critical industry by attracting more visitors interested in cultural and historical experiences. It would also have positive economic implications by creating new business and employment opportunities and fostering growth. This would be consistent with a focus on the western part of the county detailed in the recently announced [Destination and Community Enhancement Strategy](#).<sup>6</sup> The strategy is designed to promote the sustainability of the destination while ensuring a balance between visitor management and the life of residents. As a major local attraction, the museum would benefit greatly from the [award-winning tourism](#)<sup>7</sup> marketing efforts of the **Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (AICVB)**, which executes the county's tourism programs by promoting the destination's appeal to a global audience.

Additionally, Nassau County has a strong presence in agriculture, particularly in timber production and farming, contributing to its rural economy. With a natural deepwater port, the maritime industry also thrives, with ports facilitating shipping activities and supporting related businesses. Furthermore, the county's real estate market experiences steady growth, driven by a mix of residential and commercial development. Our residents enjoy the ultimate work-life balance, enjoying our relatively low cost of living and coastal lifestyle.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://ameliaislandtdc.com/home/destination-strategic-plan>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ameliaisland.com/about/>

Nassau County, Florida, is home to **98,433** residents and lies within the Jacksonville MSA with 760,000+ working-age adults and over 1.6 million residents. Nassau County’s population continues to grow as the **7<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing county in Florida**.

Residents of Nassau County enjoy access to pristine beaches, picturesque landscapes, and abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, including hiking, boating and fishing. The county’s charming small towns and historic districts foster a strong sense of community, while its proximity to urban centers like Jacksonville ensures convenient access to a wider variety of needs. The county recently passed a referendum focused on preserving natural resources and sustainable development to contribute to the overall well-being and satisfaction of its residents.

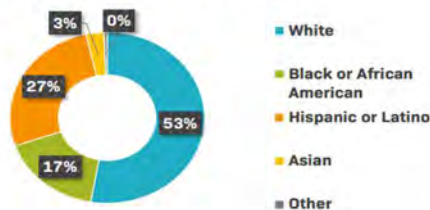
#### Criteria 4: Regional Demographics<sup>8</sup>

Nassau County, Florida, exhibits a diverse and evolving regional demographic landscape shaped by various factors. Consisting of 726 square miles of natural beauty located in the northeast corner of Florida along the Atlantic Ocean and Interstate 95, Nassau borders Duval County (Jacksonville) and is less than 10 miles from the **Jacksonville International Airport**. The county-wide population is just shy of 100,000 full-time residents and is part of the Jacksonville MSA which boasts a regional population of over 1.6 million. The latest population estimates from the US Census Bureau revealed that Nassau’s population expanded by 7.02% from 2020 to 2022. This extraordinary growth rate ranks Nassau as the **65<sup>th</sup> fastest-growing county out of 3,145 counties in the United States**. In addition, according to Lightcast's Talent Attraction Scorecard, from 2016-2020, Nassau County ranked as the **#1 small county (<100,000 pop) in the Nation for Net Migration and Talent Attraction**. While the majority of residents are White, there is a notable African American population, along with growing Hispanic and Latino communities, contributing to the cultural richness of the region.

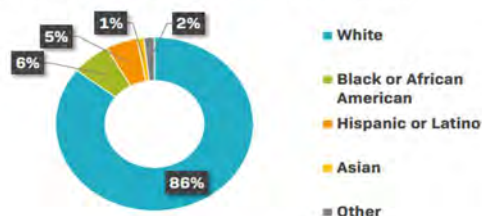
**2022 ANNUAL POPULATION**  
3.01% INCREASE (BEBR)<sup>3</sup>

Based on data from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), Nassau County saw an annual population percentage change of 3.01%.

**GRAPH 5: RACE IN FLORIDA 2022<sup>1</sup>**



**GRAPH 6: RACE IN NASSAU COUNTY 2022<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nassaucountyfl.com/DocumentCenter/View/24647/2023-Growth-Trends-Report>

The population is spread across different age groups, with a significant proportion of retirees drawn to the area's natural beauty and recreational amenities. Family households dominate, reflecting a community-oriented environment, while an increasing number of young professionals are drawn to the area for its economic opportunities and quality of life. In 2022, there were **1,564 new businesses**, with an income migration of \$328.87 million. The poverty rate is currently 9.9% with a median income of \$70,010<sup>9</sup>.

The Nassau County School District ranked **second statewide** in overall performance by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) and earned the highest percentage of “A” school grades statewide.<sup>10</sup> With a student population of almost 13,000 students, 17 schools, and almost 800 teachers, Nassau County School District’s graduation rate for the 2022-23 school year is 91%, with a 95% goal by 2023, which ranks second highest in the state. More than 41% of adults in Nassau County have an AA degree with 32% having a Bachelor’s degree or more. The unemployment rate in Nassau County is currently 3.2% with an estimated 830 new jobs needed in the next year.

### **Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure**

Nassau County’s strategic location makes it accessible to a wide audience. Situated in the northeast corner of Florida, Nassau County shares its northern and western borders with Georgia and is home to one of the state’s five official Welcome Centers on bustling I-95. **An estimated 40 million visitors arrive in Florida via I-95 every year as a major artery into Florida**<sup>11</sup>. This interstate access puts the county just 20 minutes from Jacksonville, Florida’s largest city, and Jacksonville International Airport (JAX), with more than 7.5 million annual passengers from around the world. Nassau County is also home to Amelia Island, on State Road A1A, the southernmost of the Sea Islands along the Atlantic coast, presenting multi-state opportunities for museum visitation from South Carolina (less than 2 hours) and all of Georgia, with millions of visitors within a 5-hour drive radius. A Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County would serve as a “gateway” to the state’s rich African American heritage, promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness for residents and millions of visitors as they arrive in Florida via I-95 and JAX. As Florida’s first attraction heading into the state, the museum would also make an ideal starting point for the Florida Black Heritage Trail connecting Florida’s many African American museums, sites, and attractions.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://thefloridascorecard.org/pillar&c=45&pillar=6>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.fldoe.org/ahpsd/>

<sup>11</sup><https://www.fdot.gov/>

Nassau County Planning Department has recently partnered with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority to identify areas of growth and opportunities to expand the existing transit system to move residents and visitors around Nassau County. In the coming months, the report will be available for review and implementation.

**Existing Highway System:**

- **I-95** - serves the East Coast of the United States and terminates at the Houlton–Woodstock Border Crossing at the Canada-United States border
- **I-295** - located 8 miles south of Nassau County provides access to the Port of Jacksonville and I-10, which runs from Jacksonville to Los Angeles, California.
- **I-10** - runs east to west across the southern United States and terminates in Santa Monica, California
- **US 1** - runs from Fort Kent, Maine at the Canadian border south to Key West, Florida, making it the longest north-south road in the United States
- **US 17** - also known as the Coastal Highway, it is a north–south artery that spans the Southeastern United States. It runs south to Punta Gorda, Florida, and its northern terminus point is in downtown Winchester, Virginia. US 17 runs parallel to I-95 for much of its extent
- **US 301** - runs from Sarasota, Florida, to Glasgow, Delaware
- **I-75** - less than one hour from the western part of the county, serves the Southeast and Midwest and terminates in Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

**Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support**

With the development of a state-of-the-art venue, the museum would act as the crown jewel and gateway to the Black history of Florida. In addition to the obvious educational, tourism, and economic benefits to Nassau County, the museum would serve as a community focal point and become a preferred venue and revenue source for hosting events, lectures, and exhibitions that promote understanding, tolerance, and unity among the fast-growing and increasingly diverse population of Nassau County with potential for future expansions to become a performing arts center to support the goals and objectives of telling the Black story throughout the southeast. With over \$12 million in Tourism Development Bed Tax dollars committed to a global marketing plan, the destination can strategically support promoting the museum to the world. The rapid population growth and firmly established philanthropic nature of the community would present an incredible opportunity for generating support for a museum of this caliber. Corporate sponsors throughout Florida, funding from grants and local organizations, and additional state

resources could provide the seed money for this venture. In addition, the American Beach community has a long and established history of supporting efforts to promote and protect the African American history of Nassau County.

### **Criteria 7: Educational Resources**

Placing a state Museum of Black History in Nassau County would provide unique educational opportunities for schools, colleges, and universities in the region. Students and educators would have easy access to a wealth of resources that enhance curriculum and deepen understanding of Florida's African American heritage. If located along I-95 in Nassau County, the museum would be an easy drive from **Flagler College**, the **University of North Florida**, and the **University of Florida**, and just minutes away from **Jacksonville University**, **Florida State College**, Florida's first HBCU **Edward Waters University**, and several other educational institutions. The **Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ)** - Nassau campus is part of FSCJ's system of five campuses located throughout Duval and Nassau County within short commuting distances from each other. FSCJ offers baccalaureate degrees as well as a wide array of college transfer A.A. degrees, over 80 A.S. degrees, numerous work certification programs, and specialized industry training.

Florida State College at Jacksonville and the Nassau County School District partnered to build the Lewis "Red" Bean Technical Center located on the FSCJ Betty P. Cook Nassau Center campus. The 90,000 sq.ft. facility is home to state-of-the-art computer and technology labs and classrooms and is utilized for high school dual enrollment, career certification courses, and continuing education programs.

As previously mentioned, Nassau County's local school system, the No. 2 rated district in the state, would benefit as well, providing unprecedented access and insights to students of all ages.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, locating the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County, Florida, aligns with the region's statewide historical significance, promotes cultural awareness, provides educational and economic benefits, and open accessibility to a broad audience. It would serve as a testament to the diverse and impactful contributions of the African American community in Nassau County, and the broader state of Florida. The museum's "gateway" status as Florida's first attraction on I-95 and as the port of entry for many enslaved Africans would also make a resounding statement



about the state’s commitment to sharing and honoring its rich African American heritage.





**NASSAU COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
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DENISE C. MAY  
County Attorney

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

To Whom It May Concern:

At their meeting on March 11, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners, of Nassau County, Florida, voted to send a letter of support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. The Board applauds this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

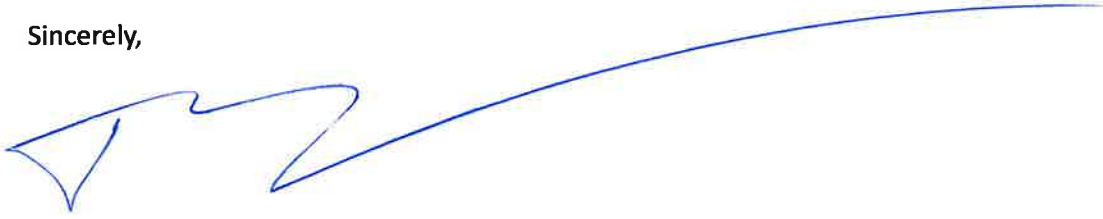
The economic impact of such a museum is invaluable. Museums are not only cultural institutions but also drivers of tourism and economic development. Visitors from across the state and the greater Southeast United States would be drawn to Nassau County to explore the exhibits, attend events, and engage with the local community. The impact would stimulate growth for local businesses and create job opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality and retail.

The Florida Museum of Black History would serve as an educational center, providing resources and programming for our A+-rated schools, universities in the Northeast Florida region, and community organizations. By offering exhibitions, workshops, and outreach programs, the museum would foster an understanding and appreciation of African American history and culture among residents and visitors alike.

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized first name followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves slightly upwards at the end.

Taco E. Pope, AICP  
County Manager



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

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(904) 279-0880  
(904) 279-0881  
www.nefrc.org  
info@nefrc.org

**Bringing Communities Together**

March 11, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the Region.

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On behalf of the Northeast Florida Regional Council, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

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



Nassau County Chamber of Commerce  
961687 Gateway Blvd.  
Suite 101-G  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

O: (904) 261-3248  
F: (904) 261-6997  
E: [info@NassauCountyFLChamber.com](mailto:info@NassauCountyFLChamber.com)  
W: [www.NassauCountyFLChamber.com](http://www.NassauCountyFLChamber.com)

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Northeast Florida Fair

Joe Zimmerman  
The Zimmerman Group LLC

March 11, 2024

Senator Geraldine Thompson  
Black History Museum Task Force  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Senator Thompson,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

The economic impact of such a museum is invaluable. Museums are not only cultural institutions but also drivers of tourism and economic development. Visitors from across the state and the greater Southeast United States would be drawn to Nassau County to explore the exhibits, attend events, and engage with the local community. The impact would stimulate growth for local businesses and create job opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality and retail.

The Florida Museum of Black History would serve as an educational center, providing resources and programming for our A+-rated schools, universities in the Northeast Florida region, and community organizations. By offering exhibitions, workshops, and outreach programs, the museum would foster an understanding and appreciation of African American history and culture among residents and visitors alike.

On behalf of the Nassau County Chamber of Commerce, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

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

Sincerely,

Regina Duncan  
President



14 MARCH 2024,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

I am a returning son of Fernandina. My family has been on Amelia Island since the 1850s. I am a Roberts, a Traeye, and a Delaney. Many of my descendants left the Fernandina area in the early 1900s to move up north for greater opportunities and to escape the stifling and degrading effects of the Jim Crow south. I am part of the mass migration of the descendants of those individuals who moved north who are now moving back south. We are proudly reclaiming our rich heritage and telling our own story.

I moved back to Fernandina in 2014 and I started doing Black history tours and lectures with my company - Golden Gullah Geechee, LLC. As a West Point Graduate, I am also fascinated by all the Civil War history in the area and the fact that so many US Colored Troops served here, stayed here, and built this great community from the ground up. Additionally, I am currently the Worshipful Master of Silver Square #703, one of two historic Prince Hall Masonic lodges in Nassau County. Local area Prince Hall Masons such as A.L. Lewis, John R. Scott, Thomas Sterling Delaney, Sollie Michell, A. Phillip Randolph and Elmo V. Myers helped shape the culture and dynamics here in Nassau County and made it the culturally rich location it is today.

This is why I believe Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

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On behalf of my company Golden Gullah Geechee, LLC, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By



engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

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

Sincerely,

*Michael A. Kegler*

Michael A. Kegler

Golden Gullah Geechee, LLC

[XENOPHON6@AOL.COM](mailto:XENOPHON6@AOL.COM)

(678) 523-7943

FERNANDINA BEACH  
MAIN STREET

Re: Florida Museum of Black History

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

As the Director of the Fernandina Beach Main Street program, I recognize that the economic impact of such a museum is invaluable. Museums are not only cultural institutions but also drivers of tourism and economic development. Visitors from across the state and the greater Southeast United States would be drawn to Nassau County to explore the exhibits, attend events, and engage with the local community. The impact would stimulate growth for local businesses and create job opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality and retail.

On behalf of Fernandina Beach Main Street, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

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

Sincerely,



Lisa Finkelstein, Executive Director



A M E L I A I S L A N D  
**MUSEUM OF HISTORY**



Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources &  
State Historic Preservation Officer  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lotane,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History as it seeks to celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

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The Florida Museum of Black History would serve as an educational center, providing resources and programming for our A+-rated schools, universities in the Northeast Florida region, and community organizations. By offering exhibitions, workshops, and outreach programs, the museum would foster an understanding and appreciation of African American history and culture among residents and visitors alike.

The Amelia Island Museum of History for 47 years has been a place of opportunity and boasts a membership of over 500 people who are concerned with preserving and celebrating our area's rich history. It is in this capacity that we are lending our support to this important initiative which will showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phyllis E. Davis', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Phyllis E. Davis, Executive Director

phyllis@ameliamuseum.org, 904.261.7378, x. 101



1510 Persimmon Cir N.  
Fernandina Beach FL 32034-5280

To whom this may concern,

We are writing to express our support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. We applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

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On behalf of **Coast One Tours LLC**, we encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

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

Sincerely,

Ron & Avis Miller Owners

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
Museum Location Criteria for

# OPA-LOCKA, Florida

## Miami-Dade County

March 15, 2024



Prepared By



# CRITERIA 1

## Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

Opa-locka, although not historically founded as a Black community, has since become a welcoming place for Black families to grow and prosper, a movement which began in the early 1950s as a result of the rapid development of Black veteran housing.

During the Florida Land Boom of the 1920s, South Florida was eagerly attracting those relocating from the Northeast and the South to begin a new life in a rapidly growing landscape. One of the leaders of this migration was Glenn Hammond Curtiss, a New Yorker who took his wealth and fame amassed from his successes in motorcycles and aviation and quickly dove into the business of real estate. He established three themed housing developments, those being Hialeah, Miami Springs, and lastly, Opa-locka.

For his third and 'final' housing concept, he tasked his architect with bringing a dream of Araby to fruition, as informed by the vastly popular novel of the era, the *Arabian Nights*. The architecture would be exceptional, exotic, and a transport to a place in the world many have never been. Much of the style was informed by Morocco's composite architectural identity, but also that of Egypt and Tunisia. Today, Opa-locka's remaining historical inventory is a source of pride for the community's 97-year legacy, having been part of the educational and event programming for decades. Now, less than three years away from the grand centennial, Opa-locka is charting a new path to a brighter future, one that also is taking an inclusive approach to better documenting and presenting its Black history.

As was the case during the Jim Crow era, Opa-locka was a community not intended for - or occupied by - African Americans. Black men build the city along with their White counterparts, but were not able to leisurely enjoy attractions in the city and with their families, such as the Opa-locka Zoo. The reality for communities like this is the fact that an area was reserved for Black occupancy, and that for Opa-locka was Magnolia Park, east of 27th and north of State Road 9. Over time, especially during the Black veteran housing boom of the 1950s, areas such as Bunche Park, Eleanor Park, and Rainbow Park flourished immediately around Magnolia Park, all of which were affectionally known as part of Opa-locka's boundaries. Not until the incorporation of neighboring Miami Gardens, one of the largest Black communities nationwide, was this familial belonging separated.



# CRITERIA 1

## (Continued)

According to Dr. Deryl G. Hunt in his book *Opa-locka: The Good City*, which details the city's demographics history, Opa-locka is regarded as the first city in northern Dade County to integrate, which began in the 1960s. It was also the city to have the first female Black mayor, Helen Miller, the youngest Black mayor and youngest state legislator, Willie Logan, and the first Black mayor in Miami-Dade and Opa-locka's first Black commissioner, Albert Tresvant. These names and many others make-up of Opa-locka's rich history, one not without its strifes, but certainly one that is seeking to provide an equitable and safe place for all.

Opa-locka features historic architecture that has since been designated as Moorish Revival, unique to the city and with such structures as the Opa-locka Administration Building, the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Station, and the Harry Hurt Business Center being the finest and stateliest examples of this exceptional identity. These buildings and many others are part of the National Register of Historic Place's Opa-locka Thematic Resource Area, and several are on the local Opa-locka Historic Registry.



## CRITERIA 2

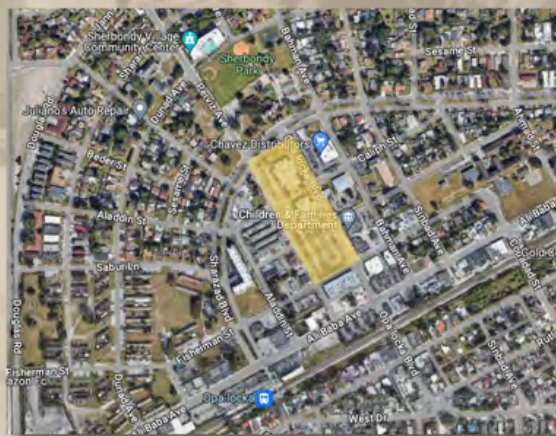
### Appropriateness of Proposed Location

Opa-locka offers a site that serves as a turn-key solution not only to occupy an existing space, but reactivate downtown. This is located in the heart of the most populated county in the State, and is prime for redevelopment: part of a six-block area anchored by the Tri-Rail regional train system, the Opa-locka Government Center and Police Headquarters, and is at the centerfold of South Florida.

The property is the State operated **Opa-locka Regional Service Center** \*\* with a primary address of **151 Perviz Avenue**. This 4.5-acre site is property owned is by the City; entered into a long-term lease agreement with the State in the late 1990s. The site features two expansive, single-story buildings **totaling 46,770 in combined square footage**. Adjoining the two buildings is a stately courtyard with connecting Moorish Revival gateways; surrounding the facility to the West and south is an abundance of surface parking with space for further parking development.

The current use of the complex does little to support the economics of the downtown core and provide economic opportunities for residents and businesses. The future developments of the area, including Ten North Group's City Terrace project, will bring density to this area, redesigned streetscapes, foot traffic from around the county, activities and programming, and a re-energized business community. The visionary 850-unit, multi-complex housing development, alongside 58,300 sq. ft. of commercial and retail space will breathe even more new life into Downtown Opa-locka.

Between the two main structures, outdoor courtyard, and the large vacancy of the southern portion, the site is ideal for habitation by a cultural institution of this magnitude. Not only is there opportunity to scale the square footage of the existing structures, but also to re-develop the property to include mixed-used, mixed-income, workforce housing, retail/commercial spaces, and a parking garage.



\*\*Comprised of several folios, the current owner listed is TIITF/DMS, Regional Service Center, with a mailing address of 3900 Commonwealth Blvd, Tallahassee, Fla. 32399. It's PA primary one is 8500 Civic/Gov't, and primary land use being 8713 State: Office Building.

## CRITERIA 2 (Continued)

The rendering presented combines the two approaches: re-purposing the existing structure and a longer term vision of re-developing the site to focus on a scalable, economically promising transformation.



Conceptual 3-D rendering of the Florida Museum of Black History in downtown Opa-locka on the existing state-managed property

# CRITERIA 3

## Regional Economy

Opa-locka's centrality within Miami-Dade County and also in its short distance to bordering Broward County makes it an appealing gateway to many industries, modes of transportation, educational institutions, and tourism draws.

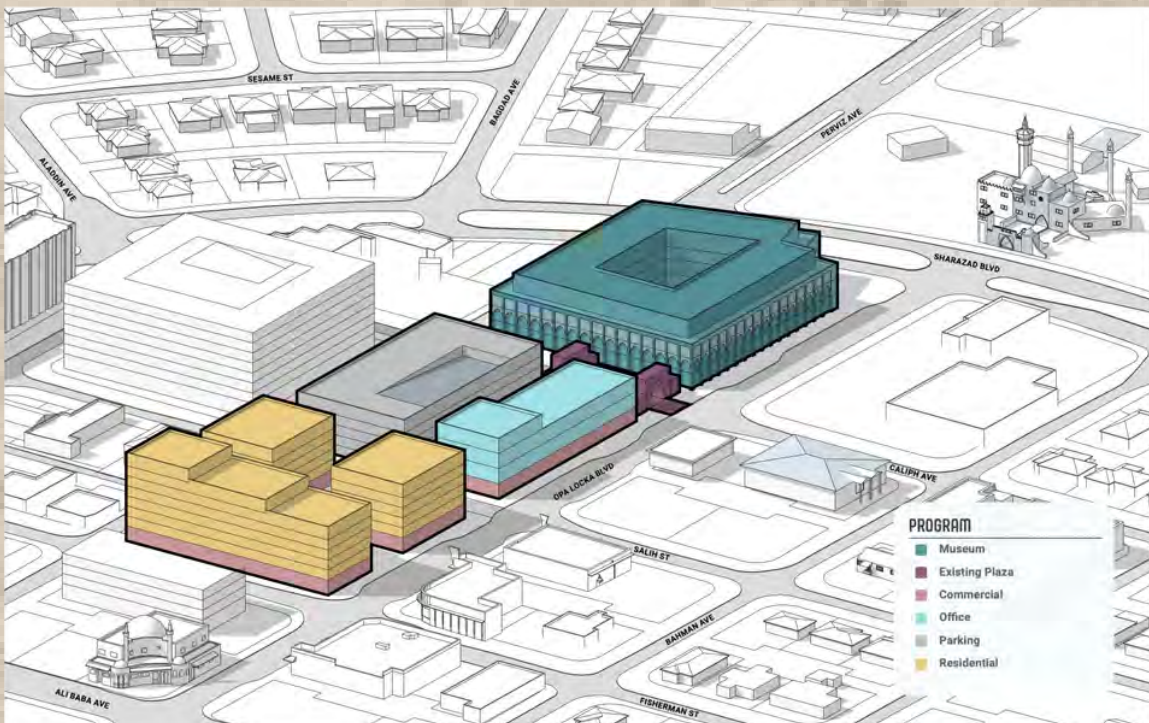
### Miami-Dade County

As of 2023 and according to the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Miami-Dade County welcomed more than **26.5 million visitors in 2022**, generating over \$20.8 billion, an increase of 8% in tourism revenue over 2021. Of Florida Resident Overnight Visitors to the area, 21% were to visit museums. The county welcomes major sporting events, including the Miami Open, Formula 1 Racing, and the World Cup in 2026, which all take place within 10 minutes from Opa-locka at the Hard Rock Stadium.

The region is host to countless world-class cultural and entertainment showcases and festivals on a year-round basis, such as Ultra, Jazz in the Gardens, SoBe Food and Wine Festival, the Miami Film Festival, Art Basel, and much more.

### Broward County

Just north of Opa-locka in Broward County, Visit Lauderdale reported for **\$1.36 billion in hotel revenue and \$99.9 million in tourist development tax collections in 2021**.



Aerial schematic showing possible development outcomes



# CRITERIA 3

(Continued)

## Opa-locka

Opa-locka is within very close proximity to many of the renowned event and sporting venues that host some of the aforementioned seasonal highlights. These include the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Gulfstream Park in Hallandale, the Marlins and Miami Heat Stadiums in Miami, soon-to-come InterMiami Stadium, and much more.

Nearby, higher education institutions like Florida Memorial University, St. Thomas University, Barry University, and Miami-Dade College North Campus are within a stones throw away. Not far to the south are the University of Miami and Florida International University, and to the north there is Florida Atlantic University, Nova Southeastern, and Broward College, to name a few.

Opa-locka's government consists of 12 departments and over 130 employees. The city also has its own police department, has three public parks and programming primarily geared to youth and seniors. Opa-locka is also designated a Florida Main Street community and has an established Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

**The city's financial position is the strongest it has been in nearly a decade, according to an analysis conducted by the Opa-locka Finance Department for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2022. The net position of Opa-locka was set \$52.4 million, an increase of 21% from the year prior. The estimate for active capital improvement projects in the City of Opa-locka as of March 14, 2024 is \$32,750,00.00.**

The primary industries of Opa-locka are comprised of industrial, manufacturing, and logistics with the most notable businesses of which is the Amazon Fulfillment Center and the Opa-locka Executive Airport.

The current millage rate is 9.35%, and as of February 2024 the average home is valued at \$419,900.00, a 3.7% year-over-year increase according to Realtor.com, and consistent with the housing trends across Miami-Dade County.

The city will expect to bring significant tax increases in the coming years with the welcoming of major housing projects, most notably Ten North Group's City Terrace. The project, to be constructed in the area immediate blocks surrounding the proposed site for the museum, will consist of two phases, and in a five-to-ten-year pipeline.

# CRITERIA 3 (Continued)



City Terrace Phase I artist rendering subject to change

# CRITERIA 4

## Regional Demographics

### Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties

As the **largest population in the State of Florida, Miami-Dade County has an estimated 2,701,767 residents as of the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau.** Following this, and from the same year, neighboring Broward County has approximately 1,944,375 residents, and Palm Beach County with 1,492,191. Opa-locka is at the nexus of tapping into all of these audiences, as well as the entire state, conveniently connected to the entire tri-county region, both in highways and reliable public transit systems.

### Opa-locka

Referencing the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau statistics, and within the 4.2 square miles of the city's limits, Opa-locka has a population of 16,463, of which 8,558 persons identify as Black/African American. The city is also within very close proximity to other notable historically Black communities such as Lemon City, Brownsville, Liberty City, Overtown, and Coconut Grove.

The median household income is \$30,101.00, and those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher is 7.6%. Total households came to 6,231.

Unemployment was at 54.3 %, and those without health care coverage was 23.3%. The area has a ready workforce for the museum and will bring economic impact to the community.

Additional demographic statistics include: Hispanic/Latino - 7,604; White - 2, 244, American Indian and Alaska Native - 38; Some other race - 1,864.

## CRITERIA 5

### Transportation Infrastructure

Opa-locka is a strategic choice to establish a State-wide cultural institution that would be nestled in the heart of South Florida, it is connected to all major transportation systems.

The city has an active railroad that goes through the downtown core. Additionally, AmTrak utilizes the line and ending just south of the city, and the active Opa-locka Tri-Rail Station within a short walk of the proposed museum location, as well as other historic landmarks. Riders currently are venturing down from as far as West Palm Beach on the Tri-Rail to join historic walking tours of Opa-locka, presented by the Opa-locka Preservation Association, and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has opened a connector rail that **now joins Tri-Rail with the new downtown Miami Central Station, which houses Brightline.**

**Miami-Dade County plans to extend the above-ground Metro Rail system to include the North Corridor in the next phase of its expansion.** This would take the 25-mile system from Liberty City upwards on 27th Avenue to the Hard Rock Stadium, the county line, with a stop being placed in Opa-locka at Ali Baba Avenue. This would expand yet another public transit system another 10 miles, making Opa-locka yet another focal point for visitors to the area as well as residents in this rapidly developing Transportation-Oriented Development (TOD). Opa-locka is located next to significant highway systems, including 826, I-95, the Florida Turnpike, and I-75's Alligator Alley connecting to West Florida.

Adding to this, Opa-locka features the county's oldest-operating airport and the State's busiest general aviation airport, Miami-Opa Locka Executive (OPF), established by Glenn Curtiss in the early 1920s and today remains the primary choice for high-profile clientele and terminals, including FountainBleau Aviation, Atlantic Aviation, Embassair and Signature. Aside from a more exclusive audience, Opa-locka is within 30 minutes of both Miami International Airport (MIA) and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL). Both airports are connected to Tri-Rail, connecting to Opa-locka.



## CRITERIA 6

### Local Funding and Other Support

The most compelling proposition for the economics of the decision to choose Opa-locka rests in the value of City-owned/State-managed property at 151 Perviz Avenue.

**Given the existing property of 4.5 acres and sizable structures upwards of 42,000 square feet are unencumbered, the repurposing of this site has a significant quantifiable value, one that lessens the financial capital outlay. Thereby foregoing the cost of land acquisition and provides options for development phasing and scale.**

Direct support and interest to further the capital development of this project include participation from: City of Opa-locka, Opa-locka CRA, Ten North Group, and Miami-Dade County. Additional partners include: Arts Council, the Beacon Council, Knight Foundation, The Miami Foundation, The Children's Trust and others.

**This proposal also includes letters of support from District 109 House of Representative Ashley Gantt, as well as District 34 Senator Shevrin Jones. Additional discussions and capital fundraising would occur should Opa-locka be chosen.**



# CRITERIA 7

## Educational Resources

### **Miami-Dade County**

Opa-locka is based in a county that certainly is not without an abundance of renowned cultural institutions that bring in resources and cultural presentations from all over, a fitting addition would be the Florida Museum of Black History. These include the Smithsonian-affiliate HistoryMiami, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, the Black Archives at the Lyric Theatre, the Historic Hampton House, a Green Book motel, and several art museums such as the The Wolfsonian, Perez Art Museum, Rubell Museum, Coral Gables Museum, The Bass, and much more.

Other institutions such as the Greater Miami Convention & Visitor's Bureau, the Children's Trust, as well as Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs, have given and expressed their support to the organization and initiatives being pursued in partnership with the City.

### **Opa-locka**

In the last five years, Opa-locka has begun its evolution to housing a burgeoning arts and culture landscape, much of which can be attributed to the growth and scale of the services and activities from Ten North Group.

In the 43 years since the non-profit was founded, Ten North Group, formerly the Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC) has made its mission to bridge economic gaps and provide resources to the underserved and disenfranchised Black and Brown communities of Opa-locka and the region. Having served thousands of families and children through the family services division, to the Community Fund offering low-interest business loans and workshops, the organization has been steadfast in being part of growing a more prosperous community for all.

Ten North Group has directly served as a key component in the community education space as both a provider and as an a community partner and connector.

Ten North has evolved its business model to take full advantage of assets, partnerships. and financial resources to maximize the opportunities for building a strong ecosystem of art, culture and creative place-making . Ten North Group is a community builder offering a host of arts programs for children, youth, and adults that support all art forms. These programs are done in collaboration with community partners like the Miami-Dade Public School System, CareerSource serving the public including children and youth, entrepreneurs, academics and creatives alike.

## CRITERIA 7 (Continued)

Through the arts and culture services, the power of art in revitalizing communities has been proven time and time again. Since 2010, there has been a vigorous commitment to the arts by educating, advocating, and integrating the African Diaspora cultural and historic experience as part of revitalizing Black and Brown communities. This has led to multiple collaborations and initiatives. Year-round programming has been established providing arts and culture opportunities to the community; 57 exhibitions and activations since 2016. Additionally thousands of local, state-wide, national and international tourists as well as hundreds of curators, artists, scholars come to Opa-locka to the Ten North Group campus and downtown areas which are adjacent to the proposed museum site.

Uniquely and remarkably, Ten North Group is an invited satellite location of the international art fair, Art Basel. Additionally, Ten North Group has relationships with art fairs who are expanding to the campus, Also Known As Africa (AKAA) and 1-54. Both are the largest art fairs representing the continent of Africa. Additionally, the Museum of Black Civilization (Dakar, Senegal), the largest museum on the continent, has a partnership with Ten North including working with the same chief curator. The Art of Transformation held during Art Basel Miami, Miami Art Week and Greater Miami Convention and Visitor's Bureau's Art of Black Miami alone welcomes over 2,000 visitors to the Opa-locka area that is adjacent to the proposed site. The "A-List" of the "Who's Who" in the African and African Diaspora Art world in addition to the local community attend. The immersive installations, performances and cross-cultural programs add an innovative layer to the successes achieved.

Through the family services, educational, care coordination, wraparound services and youth programming are provided. In the past year alone, more than 800 children were serviced in partnership with the Florida Education Fund (FEF). The programs offered a high quality, and innovative evidence-based school year and summer enrichment programs exploring STEM, life skills, postsecondary and career planning for students in grades 6-12

Through Financial Empowerment, education and technical assistance was provided to 266 community clients that received business support and guidance, through individual support, group workshops, programs and matching technical assistance grants. Since inception five years ago, this educational and support program has served approximately 2,000 technical assistant participants through 114 workshops and over 450 hours of one-on-one technical assistance.

## **CRITERIA 7**

### **(Continued)**

Additionally, the Opa-locka Preservation Association, whose mission it is to preserve and promote the built and natural environments of the community, gives free walking and bike tours of the downtown area, and produced the Opa-locka Heritage Trail, a 15-station interpretive trail that shares never-before-seen images and stories of the city's founding history. The Trail project was funded by Ten North Group and supported by the City of Opa-locka, with an official unveiling date of April 13, 2024. Following this unveiling, a day-long cultural mini festival, MENA Fest, will take place, celebrating the history of the city and its connection with the architectural identity of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The event will be a co-production of Ten North Group and the City of Opa-locka.

Ten North Group has generated great interest and support for its arts collection, programs, and services from stakeholders and partners from all over the world. With close partnerships to the aforementioned cultural institutions, to international partners at the Museum of Human Civilization in Dakar, Senegal, as well as countless art galleries focused on the curation of African art, exposure for Opa-locka and this growing arts district has begun.

Ten North Group has amassed the largest collection of art of the African diaspora. Its mission is to ensure access and to provide exposure to the arts.



# **LETTERS OF SUPPORT**



## THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

### COMMITTEES:

Appropriations Committee on Education, *Vice Chair*  
Commerce and Tourism  
Education Postsecondary  
Education Pre-K -12  
Finance and Tax  
Fiscal Policy  
Regulated Industries  
Rules

**SENATOR SHEVRIN D. "SHEV" JONES**

District 34

February 13, 2024

Dear Chair and Members  
Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair  
Mr. Tony Lee, Ed.D.  
Rep. Kiyon Michael  
Ms. Gayle Phillips  
Sen. Bobby Powell

Dear Chair and Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic endorsement to locate the Florida Museum of Black History in Opa-Locka, Florida. As set forth more fully in this letter, my support of Opa-Locka becoming the chosen site for establishing this Museum is based on location, historical significance, and the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets.

First, as to the location, Opa-Locka is strategically situated in the heart of South Florida. It is the ideal location for this significant cultural institution. Opa-Locka is not only minutes away from several higher education institutions but is also at the epicenter of the urban core tri-county region, with connections to: major highways, rail, and airports. A transportation-oriented city such as Opa-Locka is aggressively pursuing a revitalized downtown core, with several projects that will soon welcome a level of density and economic drive that has yet to be seen. One of these development projects, being the Opa-Locka City Terrace, is a transformative multi-family, mixed-use development. Such a project is promising to bring: 1,000 units, 100,000 square feet of commercial space, accessible and activated community cultural spaces, as well as beautifully designed streetscapes and parks.

The second is historical significance. Opa-Locka boasts a rich Black history, as it was the first community in Northern Miami-Dade County known to integrate, and one of the last remaining

### REPLY TO:

□ Capitol Office, 218 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 • (850) 487-5034  
□ District Office, 606 NW 183rd Street, Miami Gardens, FL 33169 • (305) 493-6002

Website: [www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S34](http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S34)

**KATHLEEN PASSIDOMO**  
President of the Senate

**DENNIS BAXLEY**  
President Pro Tempore

predominantly Black neighborhoods in the county. Moreover, the City's racial and ethnic diversity (boasting large numbers of Black and Hispanic/Latino residents and business owners) makes it an ideal setting to showcase the positive effects of diversity and inclusion in our State. Just as importantly, the City features an incredibly unique and valuable backdrop of Moorish Revival architecture, one that is inextricably linked to the Moors of North Africa and was built by founding members of the Black community in 1926.

Third is the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets. At the local level, the City of Opa-Locka has already expressed its unwavering support for this proposal and backed that support with a promise to be the State's full partner in making the Museum a reality. Indeed, the City of Opa-Locka has already expended significant resources in the promotion of its unique cultural heritage, including the City-led restoration of its Opa-locka Historic City Hall (which is more than halfway completed), and the non-profit-led restoration of the historic Hurt Building and Opa-locka Seaboard Air Line Station (both of which are routinely activated for cultural programming and exhibitions). All three brilliant beacons of the Moorish identity are proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places, part of a federally recognized Thematic Resource Area that the City's Historic Preservation Board led. Additionally, Miami-Dade County is also committed to bolstering the success of the Florida Museum of Black History in Opa-Locka.

Lastly, the "game-changer" in all of this is the fact that there is a state-controlled complex located at 151 Perviz Avenue, in the heart of Opa-Locka's historic downtown, which is the ideal place to situate the Museum. Indeed, I understand that 151 Perviz Avenue, a regional service center, is a City-owned property that has been leased, on a long-term basis, to the State of Florida for \$1.00. This location affords the project 46,770 square feet of existing space, comprising two large structures and a connecting plaza with a grand Moorish design. As an additional benefit, the property is surrounded by vacant land prime for future development that will further enhance the sustainable framework of our downtown.

I have had the opportunity to review the drawings for the re-imagined 151 Perviz Avenue, which the organizations pushing forward this proposal have taken the time and expended the resources to create, and I am blown away. The drawings show not only the full potential of this Museum to be a symbol of our State's cultural richness and its appreciation of its history but also a place where future generations of Floridians can draw pride, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

I appreciate your dedication to this vital cultural endeavor. I look forward to witnessing the success and growth of the Florida Museum of Black History, and I wholeheartedly believe this cultural gem belongs in Opa-Locka, Florida. Thank you very much for considering this matter.

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**KATHLEEN PASSIDOMO**  
President of the Senate

**DENNIS BAXLEY**  
President Pro Tempore

Your partner in making a difference,



Shevrin D. "Shev" Jones  
Florida State Senator – Senate District 34

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President of the Senate

**DENNIS BAXLEY**  
President Pro Tempore



# Florida House of Representatives

*Representative Ashley V. Gantt*

District 109

**District Office:**

5400 NW 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave  
Suite 101, Building C  
Miami, FL 33142  
(786) 505-1081

**Tallahassee Office:**

1003 The Capitol  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
(850) 717-5109

Email: [Ashley.Gantt@myfloridahouse.com](mailto:Ashley.Gantt@myfloridahouse.com)

**Chair and Members**

Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
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Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair

Mr. Tony Lee, Ed.D.

Rep. Kiyon Michael

Ms. Gayle Phillips

Sen. Bobby Powell

[FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com](mailto:FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com)

**Subject: Unconditional Endorsement and Support for the Florida Museum of Black History To Be Located in Opa-locka, Miami-Dade County, Florida**

Dear Chair and Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce,

I am writing to express my endorsement of the proposal submitted to your esteemed Taskforce, to locate the Florida Museum of Black History, in Opa-locka, Miami-Dade County (the "Proposal"). As set forth more fully in this letter, my support of Opa-locka becoming the chosen site for the establishment of this very important Museum is based on location, historical significance, and the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets.

**First, as to location.** Opa-locka is strategically situated in the heart of South Florida. It is, in my view, the ideal location for this significant cultural institution. Opa-locka is not only minutes away from several higher education institutions but is also at the epicenter of the urban core tri-county region, with connections to major highways, rail, and airports. Indeed, as a transportation-oriented development (TOD), the City of Opa-locka is aggressively pursuing the revitalization of its downtown core, with several projects that will soon welcome a level of density and economic drive never previously achieved. One of these development projects, Opa-locka City Terrace, a transformative multi-family, mixed use development, is promised to bring 1,000 units, 100,000 square feet of



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commercial space, and will feature accessible and activated community and cultural spaces, as well as beautifully designed streetscapes and parks.

***Second, its historical significance.*** Opa-locka boasts a rich Black history, as it was the first community of Northern Miami-Dade County known to integrate, and is one of the last-remaining, predominantly Black neighborhoods in the County. Moreover, the City's racial and ethnic diversity (boasting large Black and Hispanic/Latino residents and business owners), makes it an ideal setting to showcase the positive effects of diversity and inclusion in our State. Just as importantly, the built landscape features an incredibly unique and valuable backdrop of Moorish Revival architecture, one that is inextricably linked to the Moors of North Africa and was built by founding members of the Black community in 1926.

***Third is the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets.*** At the local level, it is my understanding that the City of Opa-locka has already expressed its unwavering support for the Proposal and backed that support with a promise to be the State's full partner in making the Museum a reality. Indeed, the City of Opa-locka has already expended significant resources in the promotion of its unique cultural heritage, including the City-led restoration of its Opa-locka Historic City Hall (which is more than halfway completed), and the non-profit led restoration of the historic Hurt Building and Opa-locka Seaboard Air Line Station (both of which are routinely activated for cultural programming and exhibitions). All three of these brilliant beacons of the Moorish identity are proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places, part of a federally recognized Thematic Resource Area that was led by the City's Historic Preservation Board. Additionally, Miami-Dade County is also committed to bolstering the success of the Florida Museum of Black History in Opa-locka.

Lastly, the "game-changer" in all of this is the fact that, as I understand it, there is a state-controlled complex located at 151 Perviz Avenue, in the heart of Opa-locka's historic downtown, that is the ideal place to situate the Museum. Indeed, it is my understanding that 151 Perviz Avenue, which is currently a regional service center, is a City-owned property which has been leased, on a long-term basis, to the State of Florida for \$1.00. This location affords the project 46,770 square feet of existing space, comprising two large structures and a connecting plaza with a grand Moorish design. As an additional benefit, the property is surrounded by vacant land prime for future development that will further enhance the sustainable framework of our downtown.



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I have had the opportunity to review the drawings for the re-imagined 151 Perviz Avenue which the organizations pushing forward the Proposal have taken the time and expended the resources to create, and I am simply blown away. The drawings show not only the full potential of this Museum to be a symbol of our State's cultural richness and its appreciation of its history, but also a place where future generations of Floridians can draw pride, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

Thank you for your dedication to this vital cultural endeavor. I look forward to witnessing the success and growth of the Florida Museum of Black History and I wholeheartedly believe that this cultural gem truly belongs in Opa-locka, Florida.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

*Ashley V. Gantt*

Honorable Ashley V. Gantt  
Florida State Representative – District 109

Chair and Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce  
March 3rd 2024  
Page 2.

Historical research demonstrate that Opa-locka boasts a rich Black history, as it was the first community of Northern Miami-Dade County known to integrate. It will also reveal that it is one of the last-remaining, predominately Black neighborhoods in Miami Dade County. Moreover, the City's racial and ethnic diversity (boasting large Black and Hispanic/Latino residents and business owners) makes it an ideal setting to showcase the positive effects of diversity and inclusion in our State.

Just as importantly, the built landscape features an incredibly unique and valuable backdrop of Moorish Revival architecture, one that is inextricably linked to the Moors of North Africa and was built by founding members of the Black community in 1926.

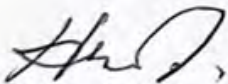
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We have had the opportunity to review the impressive drawings for the re-imagined 151 Perviz Avenue, which the organizations pushing forward the Proposal have taken the time and expended the resources to create. These drawings show not only the full potential of this Museum to symbolize the State of Florida's cultural richness and appreciation of its history, but also a place where future generations of Floridians can draw pride, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

We appreciate your dedication to this vital cultural endeavor and look forward to witnessing the success and growth of the Florida Museum of Black History. We wholeheartedly believe this cultural gem truly belongs in Opa-locka, Florida.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter. Should you have any questions or need more information, I can be reached at (011) 221 776 370 097.

Sincerely,



Pr. Hamady Bocoum, Directeur Général,  
Musée des Civilisations Noires Dakar Sénégal





DESTINATION  
**PANAMA CITY**  
FLORIDA

**Panama City is ready to be the proud host of the Florida Black History Museum; a beacon that will illuminate the past, inspire the present, and shape the future.**

Panama City is on the brink of a transformative era with massive growth on the horizon. Since Category 5 Hurricane Michael ravaged the community in October 2018, the reconstruction has been nothing short of miraculous. Bay County and local municipalities have steadily prepared for the growth with intelligent and thoughtful infrastructure improvements and developments. On the federal level, the Pentagon is investing over \$5 Billion to rebuild Tyndall Air Force Base as the 'Installation of the Future'. With the rebuild, revitalization, and growth Panama City is currently in one of the most significant chapters in history of our community. We have heard the vision you have for the future Florida Black History Museum, and we firmly believe Panama City is not just a place but a perfect partner for this transformational project.



# Historical Significance

Panama City bears witness to a rich history that echoes the resilience and accomplishments of the African American community. Notably, our city housed one of the rare black-owned baseball stadiums, emblematic of the vibrant sports scene that flourished here. Throughout the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, Panama City emerged as a hub for African American musical talent, imprinting an enduring legacy on the cultural fabric. The venerable Rosenwald High School, operational to this day, stands as a living testament to the pursuit of education and advancement. Additionally, the esteemed Rosenwald High School Alumni, comprising original students of the renowned community colleges of the Magnificent 12, convene bi-annually for a reunion, underscoring their enduring pride and unity.

In 1836, Jose Massalina, a free black Spanish mariner, set up shop as a boat builder on The Bayou. Eventually, he founded the inaugural black settlement across the bay on Redfish Point, presently encompassed within Tyndall Air Force Base. There, he erected a school, a church, and numerous residences for the community. Recognizing his substantial contributions, the bayou was officially christened Massalina Bayou in 1886. This rich history is the foundation upon which Panama City stands, and we are committed to preserving and sharing these stories and others like it with the world.

Panama City is also the only city in Northwest Florida currently on the US Civil Rights Trail.

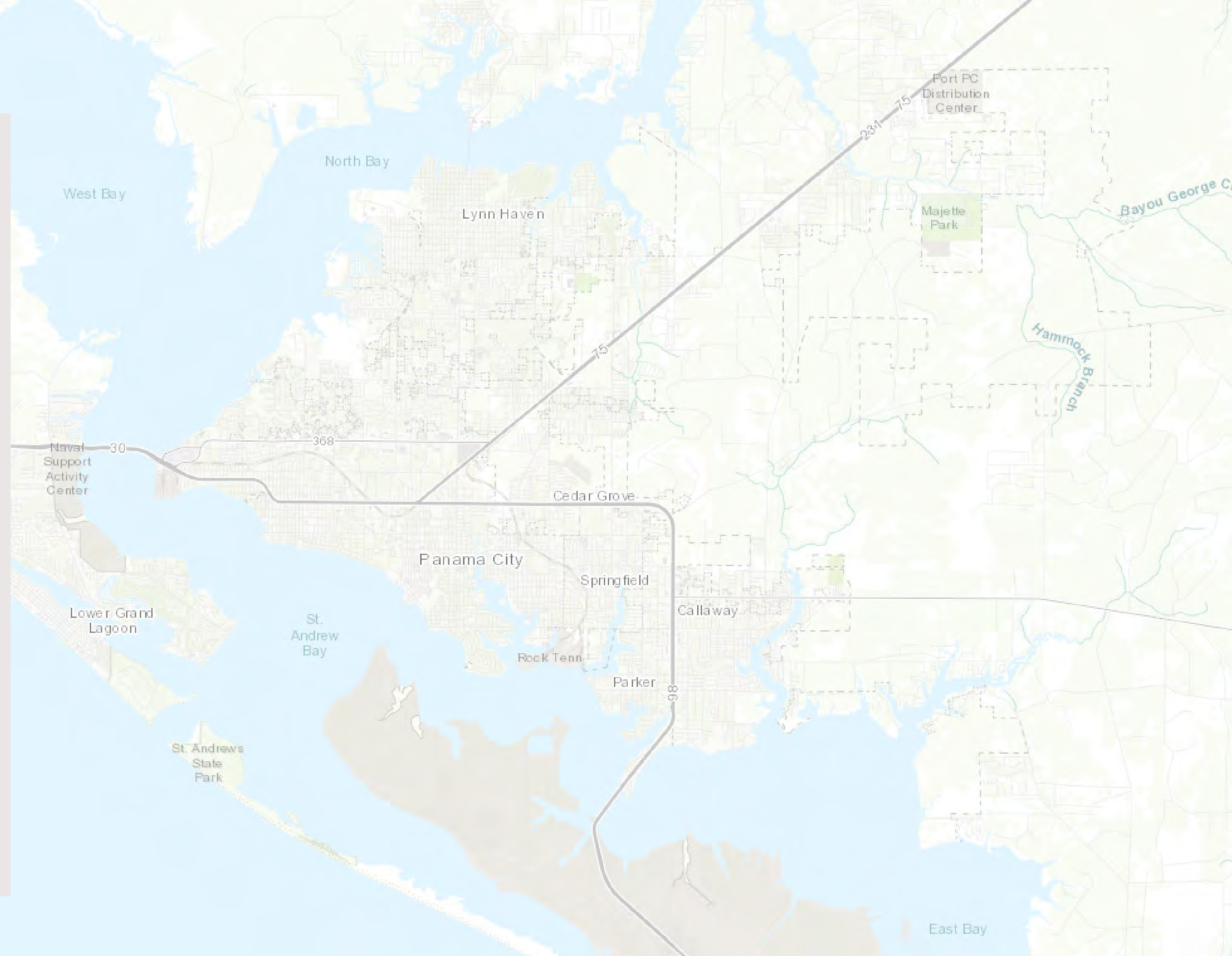
## APPROPRIATENESS OF PROPOSED LOCATION(S)

Panama City and Bay County offers a variety of potential locations for the future home of the Florida Black History Museum.

City owned property includes the former site of the Marina Civic Center; a waterfront parcel on the Panama City Marina.

County owned property includes the former site of the Juvenile Justice Courthouse.

Privately owned properties are numerous, but the former Panama City Mall property is ideal with surrounding hotel infrastructure and located on Highway 231.



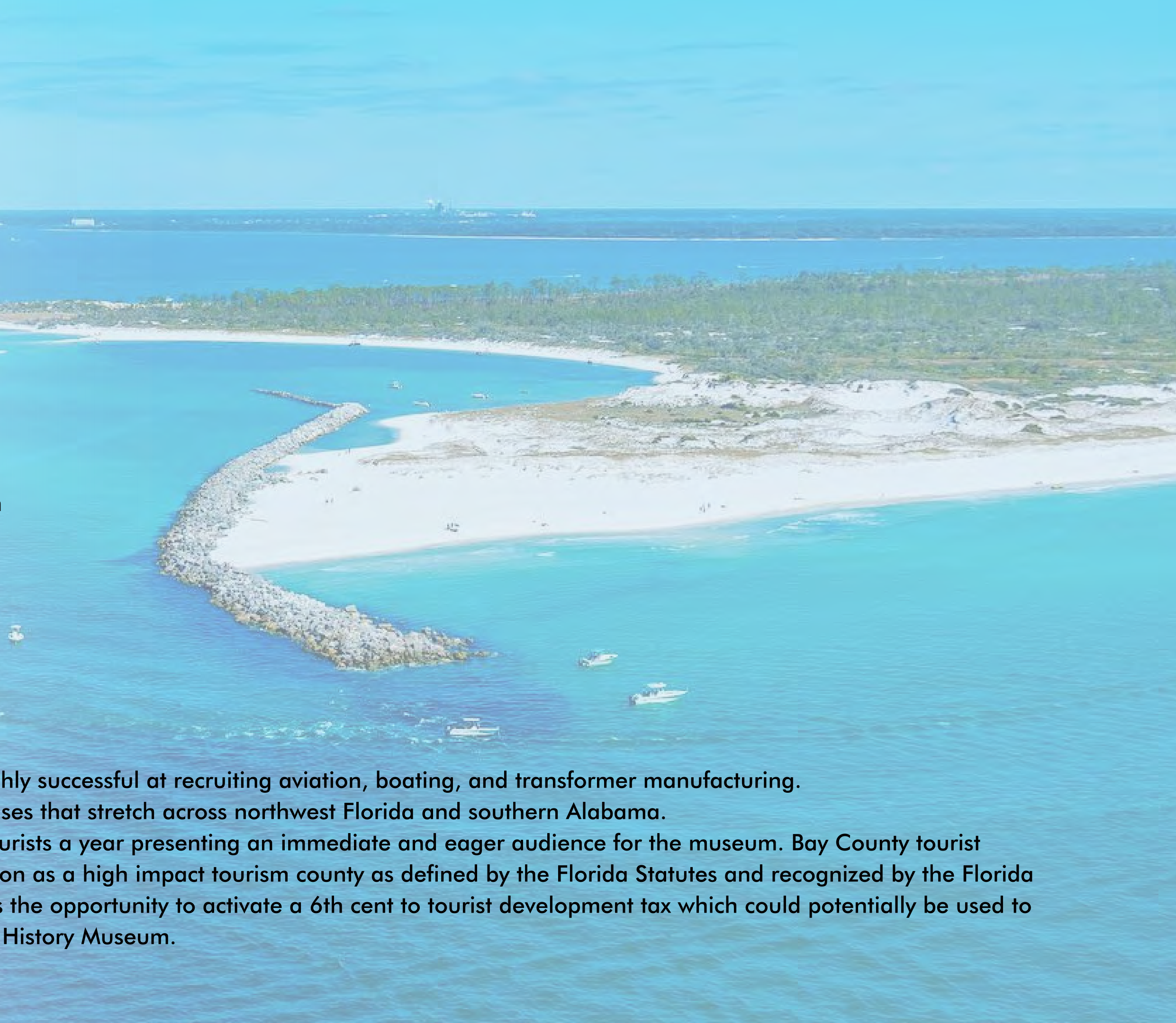
# REGIONAL ECONOMY

- Talent Supply & Education

- Within a 60-mile radius of Bay County, there is a population of approximately one-half million and a civilian labor shed of more than one-quarter millions with a mean age that is the state's youngest.
- Bay County has a labor force approaching 282,000 people within a 90-minute commute.
- The Bay County Economic Development Alliance works with CareerSource Florida to accommodate new industry training assistance.
- Panama City is home to multiple higher education institutions such as Florida State University - Panama City Campus, Gulf Coast State College, Troy University's Panama City site, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's Tyndall Air Force Base site.

- Innovation & Economic Development

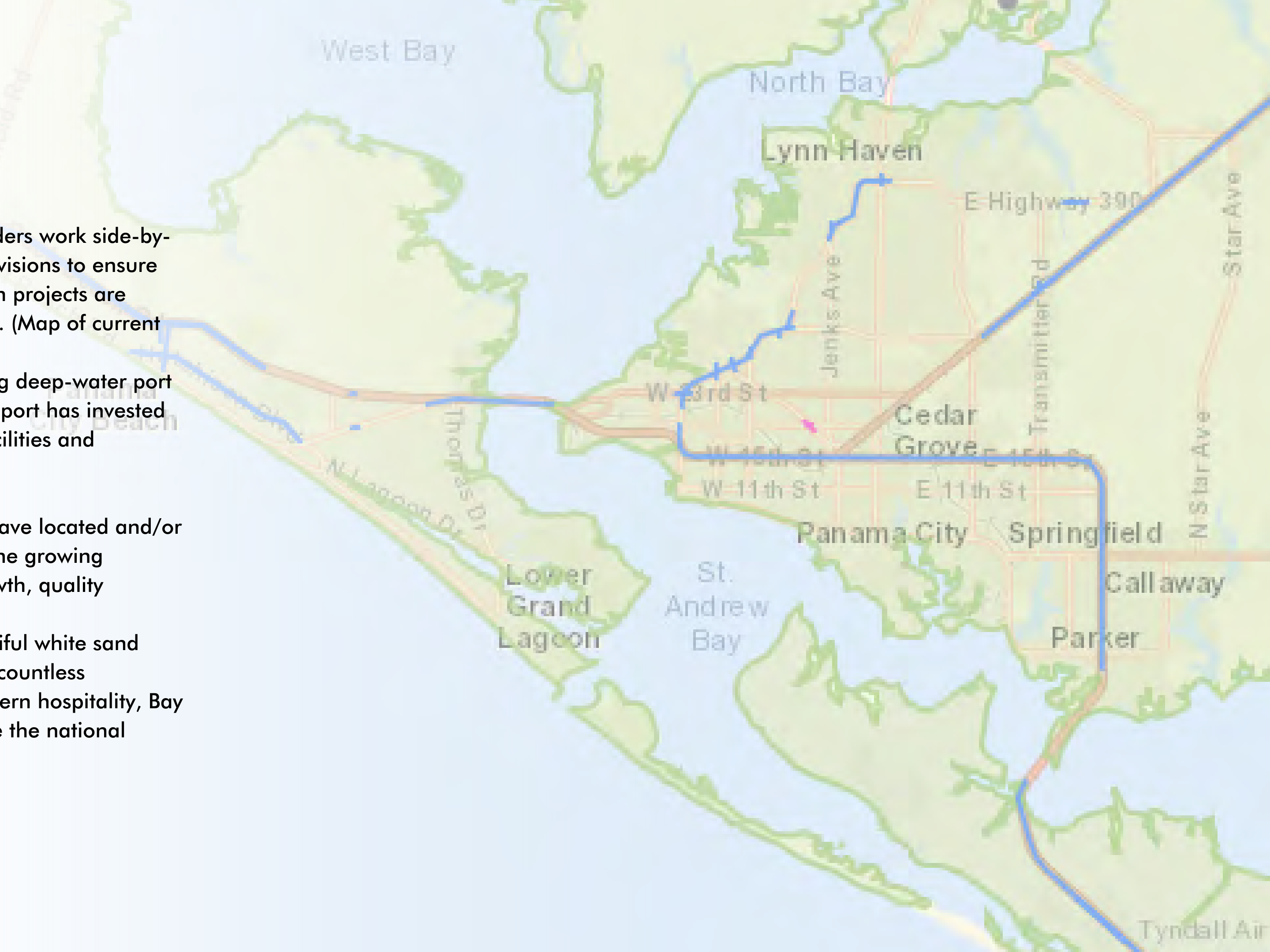
- Bay County Economic Development Alliance is highly successful at recruiting aviation, boating, and transformer manufacturing.
- The community is surrounded by seven military bases that stretch across northwest Florida and southern Alabama.
- **TOURISM:** Bay County welcomes over 4 million tourists a year presenting an immediate and eager audience for the museum. Bay County tourist development tax collections reached the designation as a high impact tourism county as defined by the Florida Statutes and recognized by the Florida Department of Revenue. This designation provides the opportunity to activate a 6th cent to tourist development tax which could potentially be used to help promote and market the future Florida Black History Museum.



# REGIONAL ECONOMY

- Infrastructure & Growth Leadership
- Business Climate & Competiveness
- Civic & Governance
  - Local municipal and county leaders work side-by-side with state transportation divisions to ensure infrastructure and transportation projects are proactively initiated and funded. (Map of current FDOT projects.)
  - Port of Panama City is a growing deep-water port and international gateway. The port has invested over \$50 million in new port facilities and equipment.
- Quality of Life
  - Many residents of Bay County have located and/or moved to the area because of the growing economy, opportunities for growth, quality education, and quality of life.
  - “Thanks to many miles of beautiful white sand beaches and pristine coastline, countless recreational activities and southern hospitality, Bay County consistently ranks above the national average for quality of life.”

Source: BayEDA.com

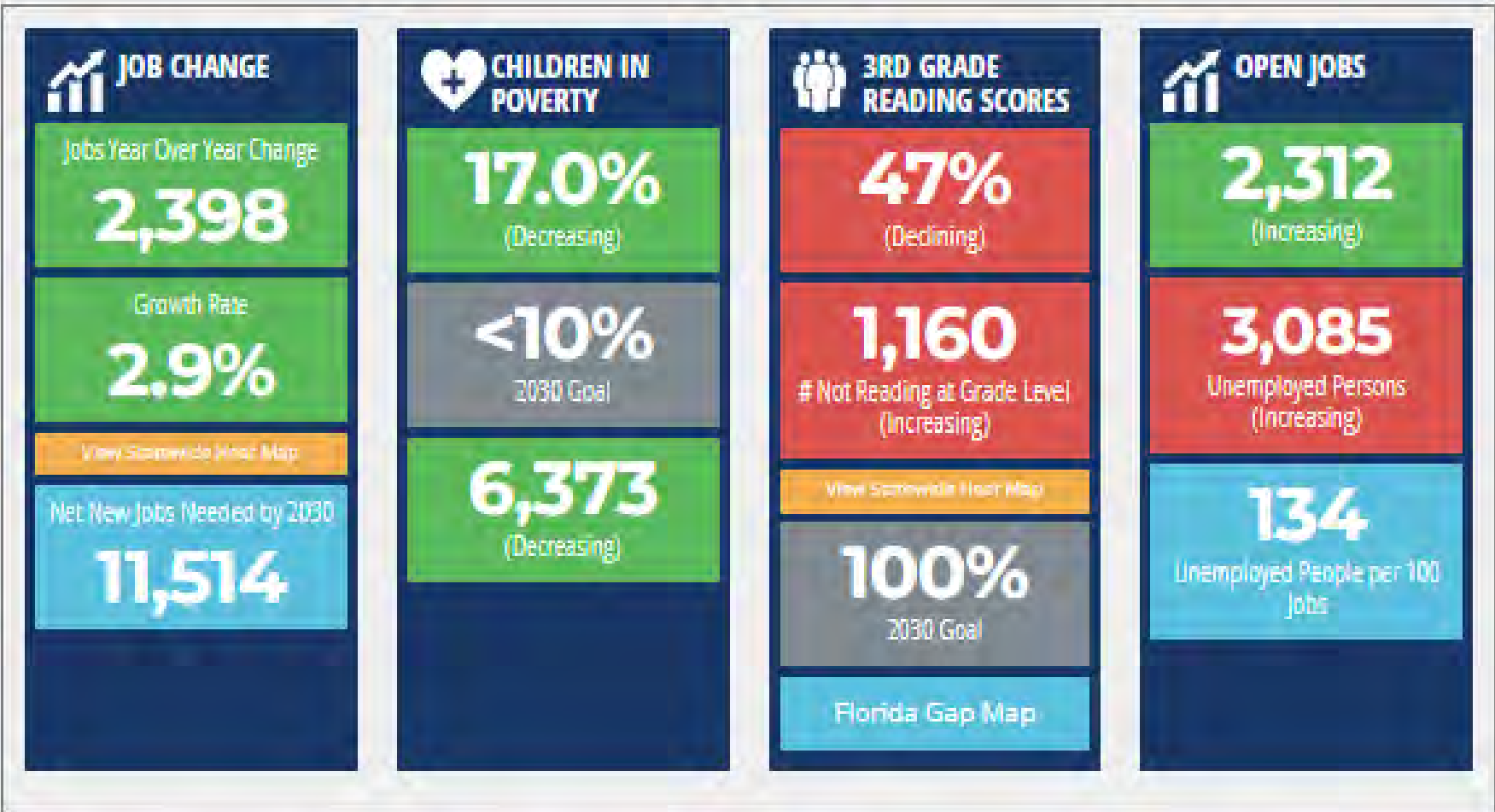


# REGIONAL ECONOMY

- The data factors to the right are published online by the Florida Chamber of Commerce. Source: thefloridascorecard.org

As a result of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, the nonprofit corporation Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc was established. It was organized to oversee the expenditure of 75% of all funds recovered by the Florida Attorney General for economic damages to the state. Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. is required to administer the distribution of the funds to be used for the recovery, diversification, and enhancement of the eight Northwest Florida counties that were disproportionately affected by the oil spill. Bay County is one of the eight disproportionately affected counties. Source: MyFloridaTriumph.com

The availability of Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc funding is bringing about transformational change in Bay County with the largest grant recently awarded to Florida State University for \$98 million to support aerospace, manufacturing facilities. This award is indicative of the growth that is on the horizon in Panama City, Florida.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

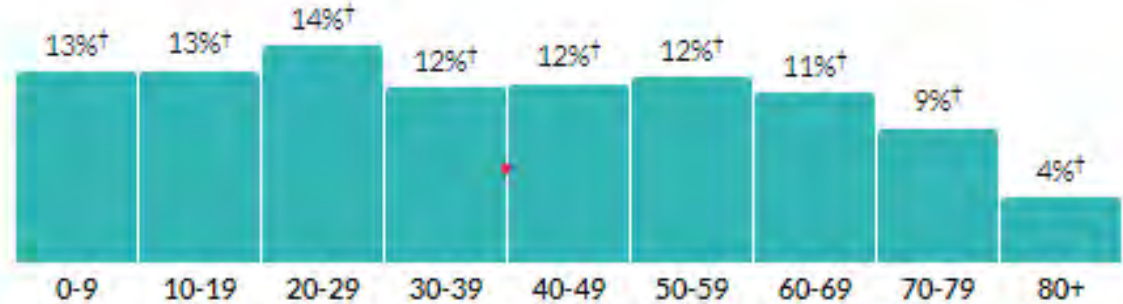
## Age

**38.5**

Median age

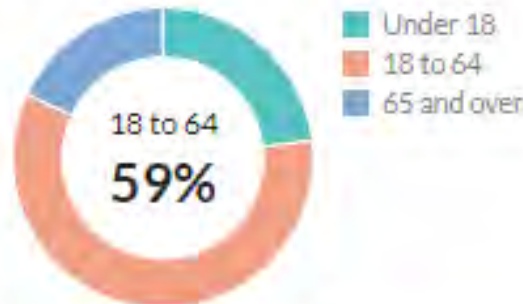
about 90 percent of the figure in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 41.2  
 about 90 percent of the figure in Florida: 42.4

Population by age range



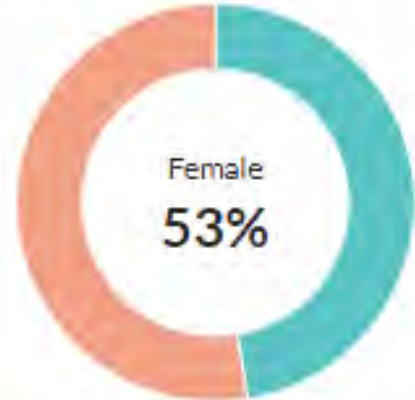
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Population by age category



Show data / Embed

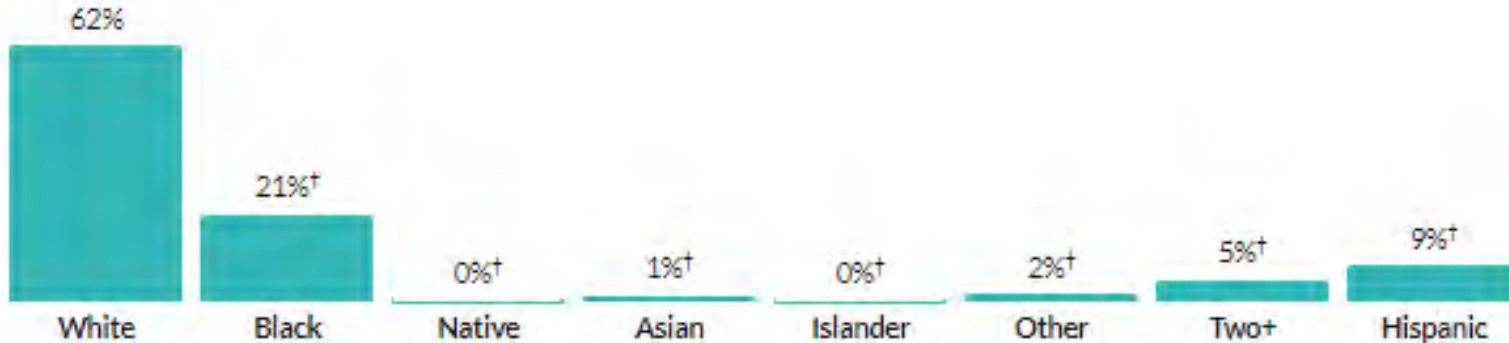
## Sex



Male  
Female

Show data / Embed

## Race & Ethnicity



\* Hispanic includes respondents of any race. Other categories are non-Hispanic.

Show data / Embed



# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Income

**\$33,853**

Per capita income

about 90 percent of the amount in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: \$36,868

about 90 percent of the amount in Florida: \$38,850

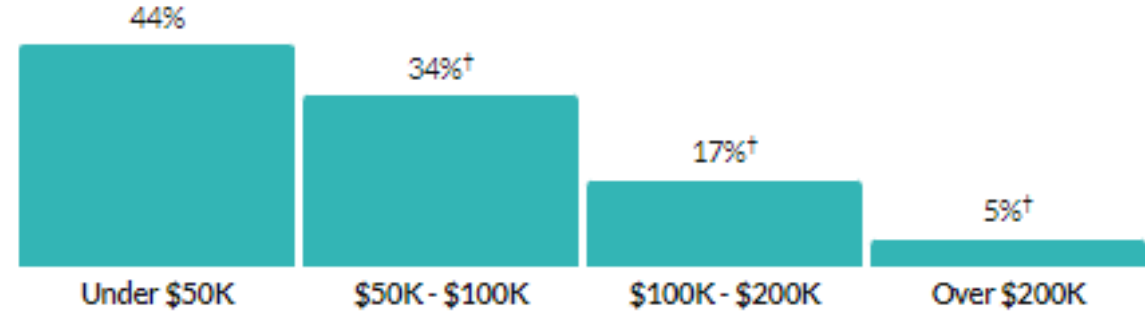
**\$57,221**

Median household income

about 90 percent of the amount in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: \$65,999

about 80 percent of the amount in Florida: \$67,917

## Household income



[Show data / Embed](#)

## Poverty

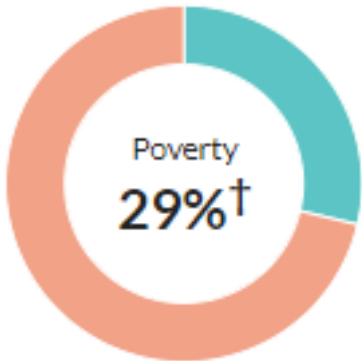
**18.7%**

Persons below poverty line

about 1.5 times the rate in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 12.2%

about 1.5 times the rate in Florida: 12.9%

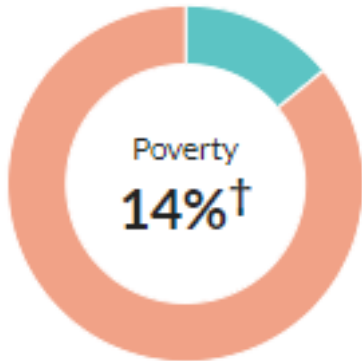
### Children (Under 18)



■ Poverty  
■ Non-poverty

[Show data / Embed](#)

### Seniors (65 and over)



■ Poverty  
■ Non-poverty

[Show data / Embed](#)

## Transportation to work

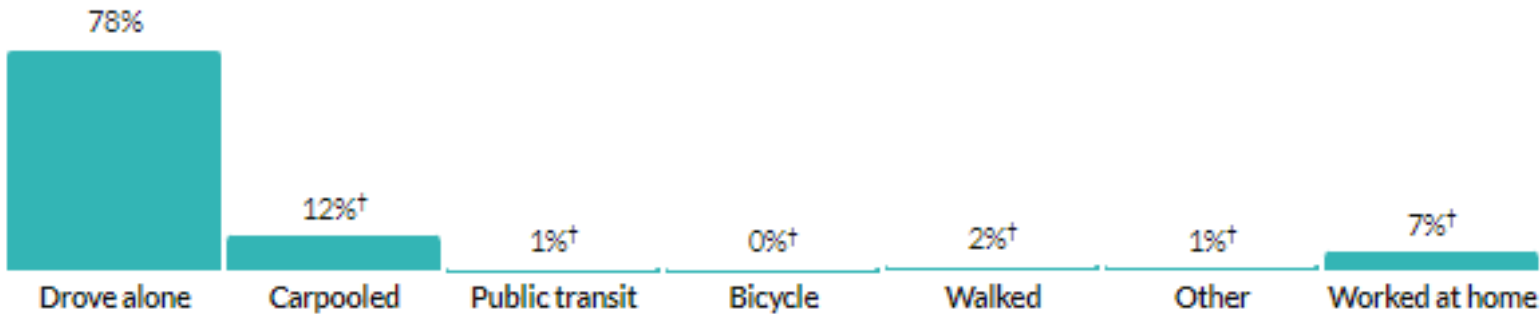
**21.1** minutes

Mean travel time to work

about 90 percent of the figure in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 24.4

about three-quarters of the figure in Florida: 27.9

## Means of transportation to work



\* Universe: Workers 16 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Households

**14,550**

Number of households

the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 74,678

Florida: 8,353,441

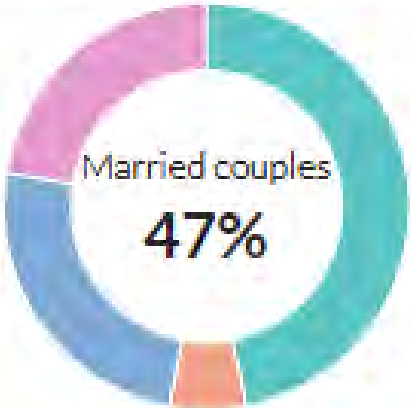
**2.3**

Persons per household

a little less than the figure in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 2.4

about 90 percent of the figure in Florida: 2.5

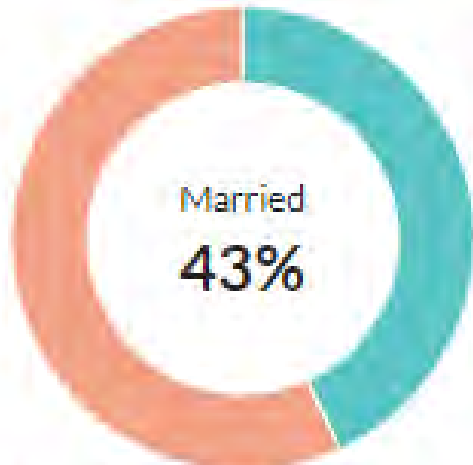
## Population by household type



- Married couples
- Male householder
- Female householder
- Non-family

Show data / Embed

## Marital status

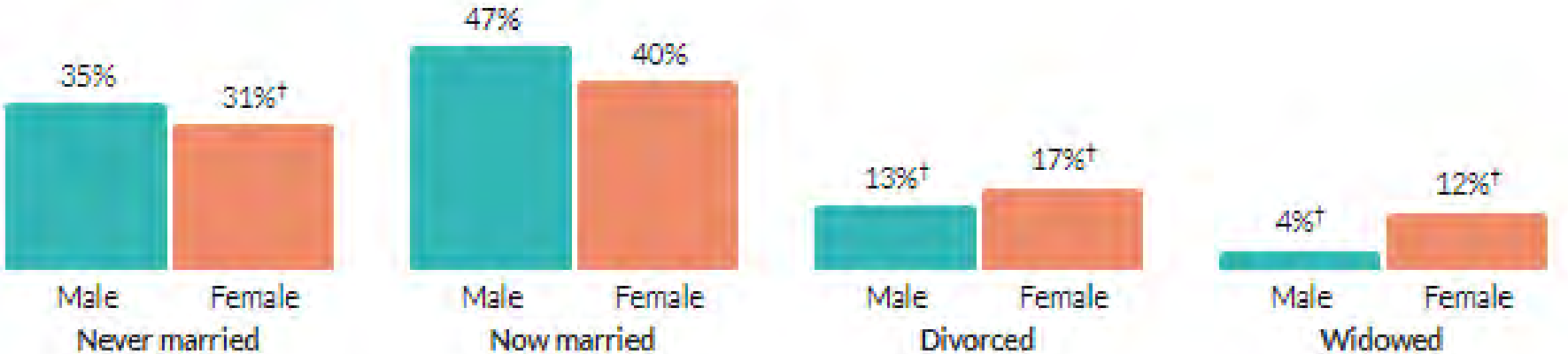


- Married
- Single

\* Universe: Population 15 years and over

Show data / Embed

## Marital status, by sex



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# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Units & Occupancy

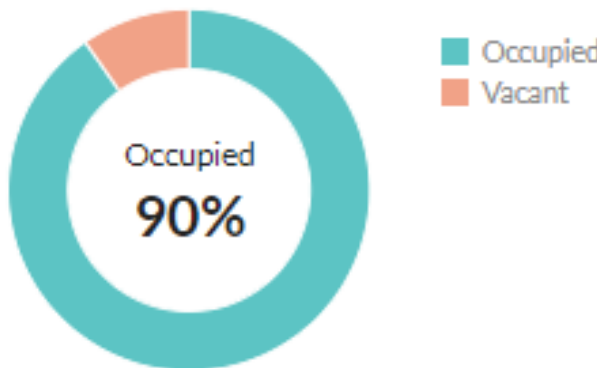
**16,117**

Number of housing units

the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 104,428

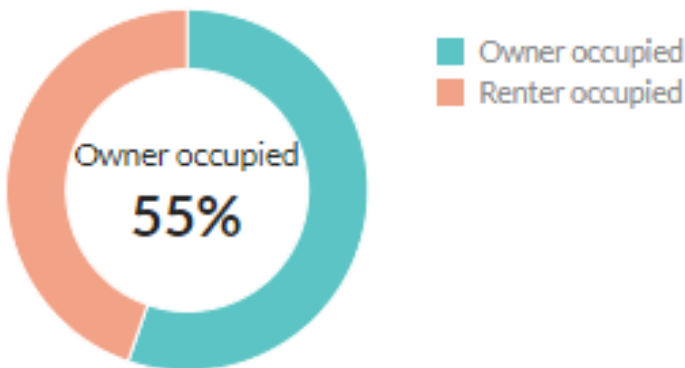
Florida: 9,915,957

### Occupied vs. Vacant



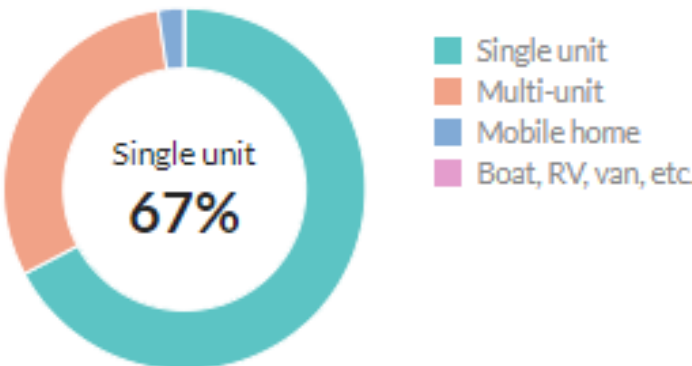
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### Ownership of occupied units



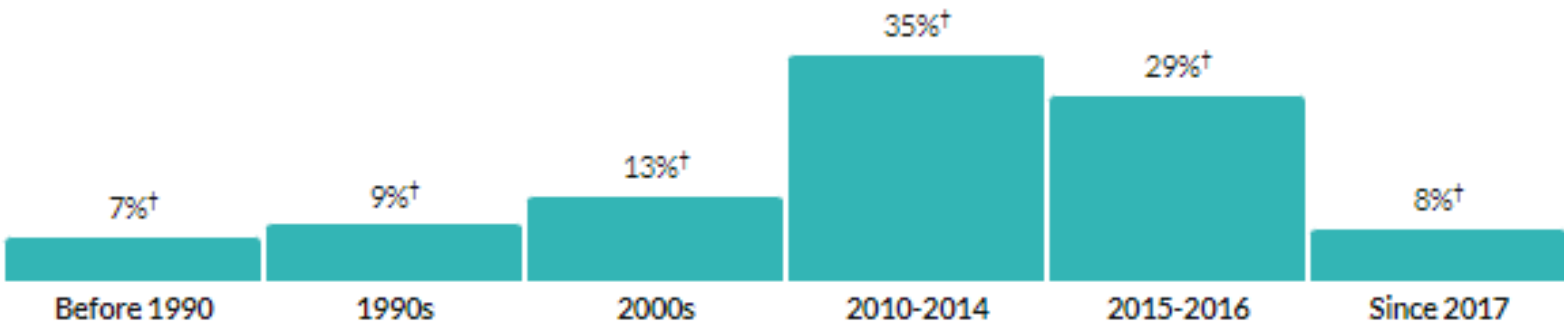
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## Types of structure



Show data / Embed

## Year moved in, by percentage of population



Show data / Embed

## Value

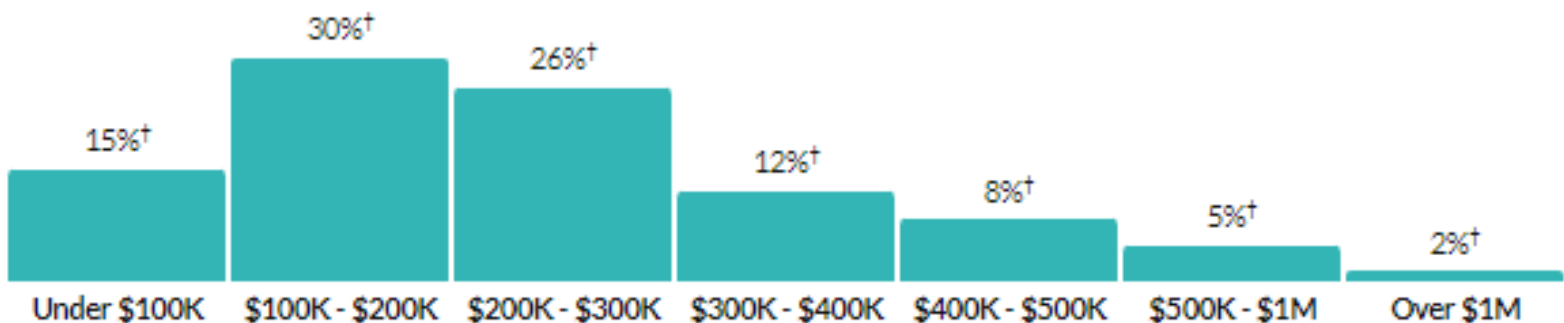
**\$213,600**

Median value of owner-occupied housing units

about 90 percent of the amount in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: \$246,800

about three-quarters of the amount in Florida: \$292,200

### Value of owner-occupied housing units



Show data / Embed

# DEMOGRAPHICS

## Educational attainment

**89.2%**

High school grad or higher

about the same as the rate in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 90.4%

about the same as the rate in Florida: 89.3%

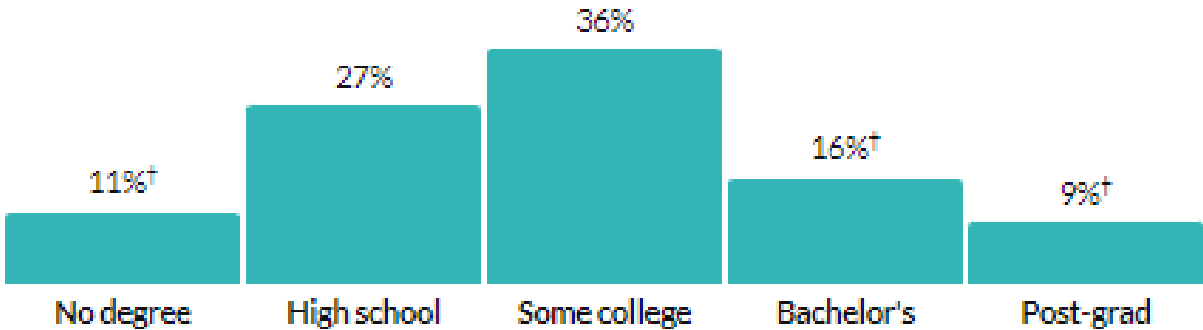
**25.7%**

Bachelor's degree or higher

a little less than the rate in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 26.6%

about 80 percent of the rate in Florida: 32.3%

## Population by highest level of education



\* Universe: Population 25 years and over

[Show data / Embed](#)

## Veteran status

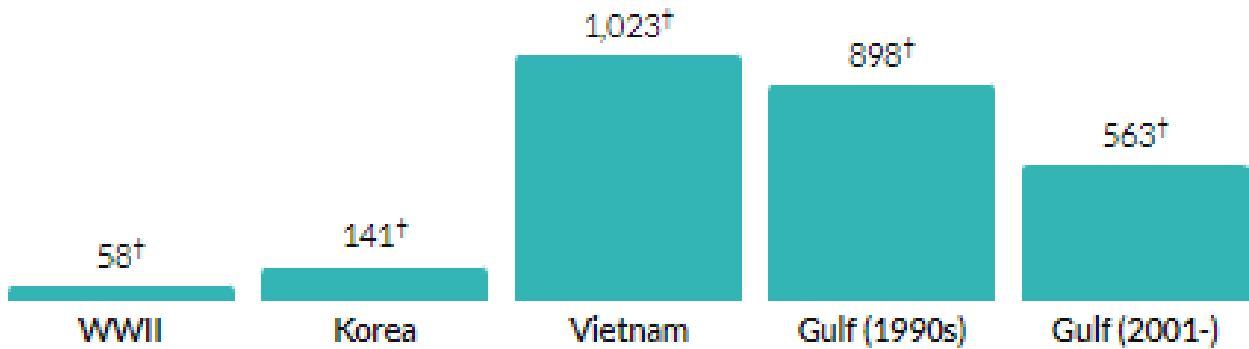
**11.1%**

Population with veteran status

about 80 percent of the rate in the Panama City, FL Metro Area: 14.2%

about 1.4 times the rate in Florida: 7.9%

## Veterans by wartime service



\* Civilian veterans who served during wartime only

[Show data / Embed](#)

**2,865** Total veterans  
**2,534** Male  
**331** Female

# Transportation Infrastructure

Panama City, Florida is conveniently accessible for visitors across Florida and beyond by car or by plane.

Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) was recently recognized as one of the fastest growing airports in the southeast United States. (Source: Simple Flying's 2021 list of US airports that have the most growth - Ranked 4th with 58% growth.)

Existing east - west highways include Highway 98 and Interstate 10. Existing north - south highways include Highway 79, Highway 77, and Highway 231.

Local public transportation is provided by The BayWay bus system.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths are abundant. Panama City is considered Very Walkable with a score of 73. (Source: WalkScore.com)



# **Local Funding and Other Support**

The Panama City / Bay County area has some unique potential funding sources.

**Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. - requires application**

**Bay County Tourist Development Tax, 6th Cent High Impact Tourism - requires approval by a referendum of the voters in Bay County.**

**St. Joe Foundation - requires application**

**Potential Land Donations - City of Panama City, Bay County, St Joe Company.**

# **Educational Resources**



**Panama City, Florida is home to the picturesque waterfront campuses of Florida State University and Gulf Coast State College. Additional higher education institutions include Troy University Panama City, and Embry-Riddle Tyndall Air Force Base. Panama City is also home to Tom P Haney Technical College.**

**FSU-PC received a \$98 million Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc. grant for aerospace and manufacturing programming.**

A graphic on the left side of the page features a large, stylized sun with a thick white outline and a light blue fill, partially obscured by a darker blue shape. Below the sun are several horizontal, wavy lines in shades of blue, representing water or waves. The entire graphic is set against a solid blue background.

# Thank You

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
JENNIFER VIGIL  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
DESTINATION PANAMA CITY  
JENNIFER@DESTINATIONPANAMACITY.COM  
850.832.5262



# Courage. Dignity. Determination.

**African American History**  
**Sarasota / Manatee County Region**

Tell our stories so that everybody knows who we are. The people who hate us don't know us. It's not because people love to hate.

**Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

**VICKIE OLDHAM**  
SAACC PRESIDENT/CEO  
941.962.8761  
[AACCSRQ@GMAIL.COM](mailto:AACCSRQ@GMAIL.COM)

SARASOTA  
AFRICAN  
AMERICAN  
CULTURAL  
COALITION

The logo for the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition features a stylized sunburst or leaf-like pattern in shades of orange and yellow, positioned to the right of the text.



# Introduction

## Why the Sarasota / Manatee County Region?

**10 Reasons.** Sarasota is ranked one of the best places to live in the U.S. But conditions were unfavorable for Black pioneers and their descendants from the time of their arrival in 1800s, until the Civil Rights Movement and later. Newtown has existed for 110 years. Now “sites of memory” where they established community are recognized on national historic listings, coveted designations, and markers.

There are at least 10 Reasons (and more) that the Sarasota / Manatee County destination should be selected as the location of the Florida Museum of Black History. Criteria one provides the historical significance of people and places, timelines and archival news clips, photos and references that support this thesis.

One reason Sarasota must be considered is related to its history related to Native people. The Angola Settlement that existed along waterways in Manatee and Sarasota Counties is listed on the Underground Network to Freedom of the National Park Service. Angola is also poised to receive a UNESCO listing [UB2] [UB3] of the International Scientific Committee of the Routes of Enslaved Peoples.

Another major reason is outlined in this proposal. Florida is surrounded by water. But there was a time when only two miles of the state’s coastline was available for African Americans to enjoy. Sarasota Civil Rights activists asserted their right to enjoy the sand and surf. In doing so, their work is listed on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail alongside iconic sites such as Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta and the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama.

We are telling Sarasota’s story. It is a city rich in African American history with a wealth of historic resources. Young leaders with little money, influence or power banded together; and through tenacity, courage, creative solutions, and determination tore down racial barriers. Today, the world community has access to information online about their exploits.

10 reasons prove why Sarasota is the best destination for the Florida Museum of Black History.



## Criteria 1: Historical Significance

Recently, a New York Times “36 Hours” column (March 14) described Sarasota’s African American community of Newtown, the year it was established and recorded oral history interviews with Black pioneers.

[https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/14/travel/things-to-do-sarasota.html?unlocked\\_article\\_code=1.ck0.XfAE.lkUp9aOG-fM3&smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/03/14/travel/things-to-do-sarasota.html?unlocked_article_code=1.ck0.XfAE.lkUp9aOG-fM3&smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare).

The work was only a segment of a more expansive research initiative to document the 100-year history of Newtown, among the city’s oldest neighborhoods. Newtown Alive chronicled the contributions and achievements of Black pioneers and activists during the transformative Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. The work of activists positioned Sarasota alongside iconic Civil Rights destinations.

The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition, Inc. (SAACC) formed after significant research was completed for the City of Sarasota by consultant Vickie Oldham of Vickie O. Heritage Productions, Inc.

SAACC was founded to illuminate the accomplishments and heritage of visionary pioneers. The Coalition is resolute in its commitment to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical tapestry of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond. A driving force behind the resurgence of Newtown, a vibrant and thriving community that honors the African American experience is SAACC’s arts, cultural and history center at the historic Leonard Reid House. It is a beacon where individuals converge to live, learn, work, invest, and celebrate.

Why Sarasota as the destination for the Florida Museum of Black History? Stories about the Angola Settlement, beach desegregation, the area’s lynching history, its Major League Baseball Hall of Fame inductee John “Buck” O’Neil; and the historic resources completed and available to the public are reasons. Also, the historic designations of Overtown/Rosemary District and Newtown, the listing of the Leonard Reid House on the National Register of Historic Places and SAACC’s significant collection of Harlem Renaissance art stored at the Ringling Museum are points of pride. Currently, the artwork is on display at the Reid House. Reason #9 is because the largest Black organization in the country founded Dr. Carter G. Woodson called the Association for the Study of African American Life and History is located in Sarasota. Manasota ASALH’s mission is to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history, and culture to the global community. Dr. Woodson is called the “Father of Black History.” Reason 10 details the awards received for all of the Black history projects completed by humanities scholars, Newtown and Overtown residents, staff at the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County, SAACC’s board of directors, philanthropic organizations, private donors, and volunteers.



# Reason 1: The Angola Settlement



***“Angola ranks as one of the most important locations related to African American history and heritage in Florida and the southwest.” Dr. Canter Brown***

A multi-disciplinary initiative called “Looking for Angola” attracted the attention of the British Broadcasting Corporation shortly after it began in 2004. Dr. Canter Brown’s research (1990) jumpstarted the community-based public archaeology program. Vickie Oldham, a community scholar from Sarasota, created and led the initiative to locate material remains of the maroon community (Howard 2013, Baram 2014). The project began with forums to share the extant research and reach out to residents about their knowledge. A documentary was produced by Oldham, and test excavations were completed. The interdisciplinary team’s logo represented an image of a maroon and Seminole at Angola.

Since the 1600s, formerly enslaved Africans from plantations in Georgia, Alabama, and the Carolinas came into to Spanish Florida seeking freedom. They were promised freedom by adopting Catholicism and fighting against the Americans. By the late 18th century, a community called Sarrazota (also known as Angola) existed in the Tampa-Sarasota Bay area and its residents included free people of color, formerly enslaved Africans, some of whom were called Black Seminoles, and Seminole Indians. All were driven out of their villages and towns by American incursions into Florida.

That maroon community thrived on Florida’s southwest coast from 1812-1821.

Angola was similar to many documented maroon communities which existed in North America during the Colonial period, but their presence was largely underreported by historians. The settlement near the Manatee River is believed to be one of the largest maroon communities in North America. The residents found a haven of safety and a beacon of freedom from slavery and the vengeance of Andrew Jackson by living undetected, surrounded by dense vegetation and rough terrain.



*Over the early 19th century, maroons created communities at Prospect Bluff, Suwannee, and Angola, continually being pushed south by threats of slave raids and US military interventions. Attacks destroyed Prospect Bluff in 1816, Suwannee in 1818, and Angola in 1821. But the struggle for freedom continued. Map credit: Uzi Baram*

## Quick Facts: The Raid Of Angola

- **The Adams-Onís Treaty signed in 1819**, converted Florida from a territory of Spain to a territory of the U.S. and no longer a haven for freedom-seeking Africans. Andrew Jackson was determined to rid the territory of Seminole Indians and free people of color.
- **Andrew Jackson became the provisional governor** of Florida in 1821 (and later the seventh U.S. President).
- **Jackson, a slave trader, and owner** was determined to rid the territory of maroons (Seminole Indians and free people of color) as a result of battles fought against them.
- **As many as 750 people lived in the Angola Settlement.** They came in waves, as more battles were won and lost, and more Black Seminole survivors retreated further south into Spanish Florida, according to historian Dr. Canter Brown.
- **Jackson sought permission** to destroy the maroon community.
- **U.S. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun** directed Jackson to take no action.
- **Jackson quietly refused the order** and sent his allies to destroy the Angola community.
- **Men, women, and children** were killed in 1821.
- **A remnant of Angola survivors escaped** to Central Florida and others ran south, crossed the gulf stream at Cape Florida (present day Key Biscayne) and landed on Andros Island in The Bahamas where there is a descendant population of Black Seminoles.
- **The destruction of Angola in 1821** effectively eliminated the presence of free African American people in the area until 20 years after the end of the Civil War.



*Red Bays Village is a community on the northwest coast of Andros Island where many Angola descendants reside.*

# Rev. Newton's History Of Red Bays

In 1821 the United States acquired Florida from Spain, setting the stage for three wars against the Seminole Indians. Previous to the United States taking over Florida, it had been a haven for runaway slaves from Georgia and Alabama, and these people had joined the Seminole Indians.

The Negroes now found themselves again in the position of being captured as runaway slaves and moved further and further south in Florida to escape the Americans who were moving in. They were driven to the Everglades and to Cape Sable, where they met Bahamian Privateers and pirates who told them of the free land to the east of the Bahamas as part of the British Empire having abolished slavery in 1838. In ones and twos, in their dugout canoes, the Negro Seminoles crossed the Gulf Stream and landed along the Western Shore of Andros from the Souther Cays south over a 30-year period. Some Seminole Indians apparently also migrated as a result of their long struggle with the white men. They congregated at Red Bays, and their history and a description of the settlement as it is today, follows.

Red Bays, a settlement of Andros Island, is a very small community. It has a population of 88 and lies North and South on the West Side of the Island.

The largest portion of the settlement is owned by the Lewis family who came from America in about 1840. The first Lewis came with his wife and children in a small boat to seek freedom, and was the grandfather of Mr. Joseph Lewis. He landed at one of the creeks, named "Blue Creek," and went about 20 miles inland, where he stayed for several years until a hurricane sent water covering a portion of the land where he was, which he named after himself, "Sammy Lewis."

After the hurricane he came along shore until he reached the place now called "Red Bays." He stayed there for some time and afterwards purchased about 10 acres of land. He was later joined by the other families: the Howlegs, Russells and the McNeils. The population grew and they made a church where they used to worship God.

The 1866 hurricane did great damage to this Settlement and many houses, boats and lives were lost. It was said that as the eye of the hurricane came over the Settlement the spongers went on Red Cays to secure their sponges, and while there an argument was in progress. The tide came from the West and covered the Cay. Of the 38 men on the Cay only eight survived, the rest drowned and a part from those who were on their boats, the survivors were compelled to move to a higher part of the land. The Russells, the McNeils and the Howlegs moved to the eastern part of the island, to Lowe Sound, Nicoll's Town and Mastix Point where the families of many still survive. The Lewis family moved to the Lewis Coppice south of the Red Bays. This was a high stand of timber, so high that the first man who went through it was lost for two days, which is why that part of the coppice is

ing prosperity to the community until some evil-minded men got together and received the goods and never paid. This discouraged the members, and the union was broken up.

In the years 1945 and 1946 Mr. Newton launched a new idea, that of the fruit growing. The people were encouraged to select sour orange seeds and plant these into pots made from red soil earth. These seeds stayed in the earth for about two months more. When they got big enough, the sweet orange shoot was budded on to the sour orange root. This new idea proved successful and soon even the skeptics came to join the fruit-growing program. The program was carried on until the death of Mr. Newton in 1950. He will be remembered by all for his outstanding effort for the people of Red Bays, especially those who were sometimes able to ship as much as 3-4,000 fruits per year to Nassau.

The Agricultural and Marine Products Board encouraged this program and sent budding equipment, oil emulsion and other necessities. Then Hurricane Betsy, the destroyer of 1965, came.

During the long years of the early part of the Red Bays history, there was no school, and only those people who had relatives in Lowe Sound or other settlements were able to send their children to school, the other children having to stay at home without schooling.

For this reason, many people cannot read or write even now. My father, a grade six scholar at that time, became sorry for the people and in the year 1935 applied for the position of headteacher of Red Bays. This was granted by the former Board of Education.

He was obligated to work for six months without payment. After that he was paid 12 pounds per year. He worked under these conditions for some time and was later able to have the designation of the school change from "Grant-in-Aid" school to "Public" school. The government owned no land at the settlement at that time and by the kind permission of the late Rev. Daniel Dean, the writer's grandfather kept school in the Baptist Church for about four years. With the assistance of the community he was able to have built in 1939 a large school made by pine torch, wattles and tatch leaves. About 1941, a few bags of cement and a few pounds were given to make the floor. This building lasted for 21 years before it collapsed. Mr. Newton did all his teaching in this building and did a fine job.

After Mr. Newton's death in 1950 (Sept. 1) the writer succeeded him and worked in the same building for six years before the first school house ever built in Red Bays was under my supervision. I also taught for five years under sun and sky with trees as shelter from sun and rain. When the present school building was finally built the following proverb was put up in it: "He who laughs last laughs best," and again, "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Psalm 27:14.

Another outstanding effort done by my father was the road leading from



WELCOME: Town sign includes illustration of Seminole scene.



The people began to farm, and although being engaged in the sponge industry, were more successful in the fruit growing, and this made the settlement a fruit-growing center.

The late Mr. Watkins Lewis, father of Joseph Lewis, brought 65 acres of land and lived here more than 96 years before he died. Thirty acres of land was used for farming and fruit growing. Fruits were sold and exchanged in the United States by an old man, Captain Kelly, of the "Heaths Darling" who paid the people in money and clothes for the fruit and sold them in the United States. This ship used to anchor at a grass patch named "Harbour Island Grass" just abreast of the hutlover, a sound inland leading out to Lowe Sound from Red Bays. Going through this sound, boats must be pulled as far as two miles to reach deeper water.

In 1899, another severe hurricane afflicted the settlement. As the wind began to come up, the men went down to secure their boats but the tide that happened in the earlier hurricane caught them unaware and separated them from the land, and it was obvious that the water could cover the spit of the land they were on. Mr. Joseph Lewis decided to swim for his life and struck out towards the settlement. But the tide carried him in a different direction and he spent two days and two nights in the water along with the frogs, snakes and other creatures, holding on to pieces of driftwood. Finally, the only survivor of the men who left the settlement, Lewis arrived at Quarter Master, a now uninhabited little settlement about four miles from Lowe Sound. The rest of the people suffered loss of crops and fruit trees, but the water never covered the settlement.

It came as far as the brow of the hill and stayed here. Another dangerous hurricane was the 1926 one. I was at the time about one year old. Many houses were broken down but there was no loss of life. Trees were broken but the inhabitants kept on planting.

After these hurricanes, things were very poor. A little supply of food and lumber was given by Government in the whole area but very little reached Red Bays. However, the people continued to succeed in their fruit growing despite all the disasters.

During the years 1935 to 1950, my father was interested in farming. About 1940 or 1943, he established a farmer's union association and with everyone working together they made rapid progress. A team of men, women and children were seen every morning going from the settlement to the former Red Bay, where they used to work for the whole day. The chief crops were pigeon peas, beans, corn, and benny (sesame seeds). As much as 60 bushels of benny were shipped into Nassau where, at the time, it was sold for a very low price of ninepence a quart. The money was spent to buy food and sold to the members of the union. Charcoal was also burned and sold, the proceeds going to union funds.

This was a great help to the people and was bring-

ing first to establish road building in Red Bays. When he came here, he saw that the Settlement of Red Bays and the nearest neighboring Settlement was made by foot-paths and tracks, between swamps and marshy pine forest, and he pitied their condition.

My Forsythe, acting as District Commissioner at that time (1937-1945), gave a grant of five pounds to start the road to the Bay. When this money was spent, Mr. Newton asked the inhabitants to give a few days work as a Community effort. This they willingly did and built the road to a distance of about one-quarter mile. Mr. Forsythe's interest was aroused and he gave a further grant of fifteen pounds. This of course did not finish the road but more than three-quarters of a mile of it was finished. Afterwards the road was brought to completion. Many times in rainy season when officials visited Red Bays Beach, shoes had to be taken off at the bay because two to three feet of water had to be crossed from the bay to the settlement.

In August of 1968, the Owens Illinois Company, properly known as Bahamas Agricultural Industries Limited, generously put through a road to our settlement in order to cut the timber in our area.

The road was officially declared open by the Company at ceremonies held at Red Bays on Aug. 3, 1968 when 200 visitors came. This road immediately allowed the people to sell all of their mango crop without leaving their settlement and in the near future it is likely that bonfish enthusiasts will be coming to Red Bays for the wonderful bonfish on our shores.

I believe that this is an appropriate spot to finish my short history, as the opening of our road brings the firm chapters to a close, and will be opening up a whole new story.

— Rev. Bertram A. Newton, 76, is a descendant of Seminoles who arrived on Andros in the 1840s. He was principal of Red Bays School for 39 1/2 years and currently is pastor of the New Salem Baptist Church. This story was written in August of 1968 and reprinted from his book, *A History of Red Bays, Andros*.

The insights from Rev. Bertram start in the 1830s and were researched by the "Looking for Angola" team that facilitated the earlier origin of the ancestors of the people of Red Bays and elsewhere on Andros.

1799-1803	State of Muskogee
1812	Patriots Rebellion and War of 1812
1814-1816	British Fort Prospect Bluff and its destruction
1817	Gregor MacGregor and the Republic of the Floridas
1818	Arbutnot and Ambrister incident and Battle of Suwannee
1818-1821	Negotiations of the Adams-Onís Treaty
1821	Slave raid

Timeline for the international intrigue in the early 19th century.

From the Charleston City Gazette.

*Advice to the Southern Planters.*

Towards the end of the month of April last, some men of influence and fortune residing somewhere in the western country, thought of making a speculation in order to obtain Slaves for a trifle. For this purpose, they hired Charles Miller, William Weatherford, Adam, alias Allamouchee, all half breed Indians, and Daniel Perimans a mulatto, and under these chief, were engaged about two hundred Cowetas Indians. They were ordered to proceed along the western coast of East Florida, southerly, and there take, in the name of the United States, and make prisoners of all the men of colour, including women and children, they would be able to find, and bring them all, well secured, to a certain place, which has been kept a secret.

The expedition took place, under the chief command of Charles Miller. They arrived at Sazazota, surprised and captured about 300 of them, plundered their plantations, set on fire all their houses, and then proceeding southerly captured several others; and on the 17th day of June, arrived at the Spanish Ranches, in Pointerrass Key, in Carlos Bay, where not finding as many Negroes as they expected, they plundered the Spanish fishermen of more than 2000 dollars worth of property, besides committing the greatest excess; with their

plunder and prisoners they returned to the place appointed for the deposit of both.

But the terror thus spread along the Western Coast of East Florida, broke all the establishments of both blacks and Indians, who fled in great consternation. The blacks principally, thought they could not save their lives but by abandoning the country; therefore, they, by small parties and in their Indian canoes, doubled Cape Sable and arrived at Key Taviniere, which is the general place of rendezvous for all the English wreckers, from Nassau, Providence; an agreement was soon entered into between them, and about 250 of these negroes were by the wreckers carried to Nassau and clandestinely landed. On the 7th of Oct. last, about 40 more were at Key Taviniere, ready to take their departure for Nassau; these were the stragglers who had found it difficult to make their escape, and had remained concealed in the forests.

Now all these Negroes, as well as those captured by the Indians, and those gone to Nassau, are runaway Slaves, from the Planters on St. John's River, in Florida, Georgia, Carolina, and a few from Alabama.

Cannot those Planters who have had their Negroes missing recover them by means of these chiefs I have named, and who are so well known by the parts they have been playing for some time past in the late Indian wars, and discover who are those speculative gentlemen who now hold their Negroes, and if they were lawfully their slaves? Could not all those Negroes unlawfully introduced into Nassau be also recovered by an application to the English Governor, backed by a formal demand from the Government of the United States?

Let the Southern Planters reflect on the above. I can assure them that they may depend on the correctness of the statement I have just given to them.

AN EYE-WITNESS.

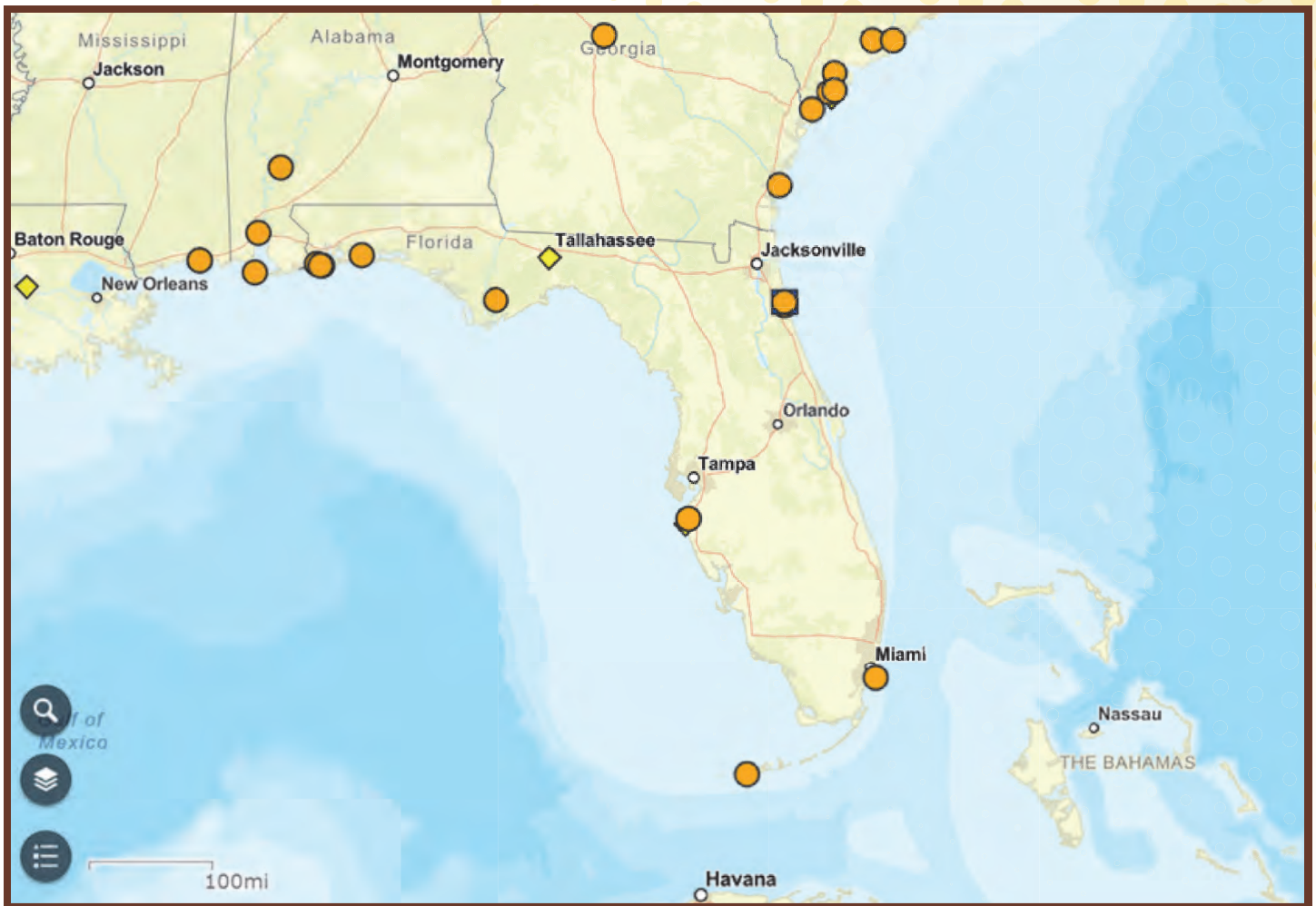
A newspaper account noted "terror thus spread along the Western Coast of East Florida," that is the Gulf Coast of today's Florida. Dr. Brown (1990) located the article about the destruction of the maroon settlement during the late spring and early summer of 1821 in the Charleston, South Carolina, City Gazette and Commercial Advertiser.

The account is chilling and provides a glimpse into the world of ranchos and maroons, and the escape by many to the Bahamas.

That account puts into context the observation of an early Florida historian John Lee Williams who wrote: "The point between these two rivers is called Negro Point. The famous Arbuthnot and Ambrister had at one time a plantation here cultivated by two hundred negroes. The ruins of their cabins, and domestic utensils are still seen on the old fields."

A team of archaeologists began the search for Angola artifacts in 2004. Dr. Uzi Baram then professor of anthropology at New College of Florida unearthed ceramics linked to the period of Angola's existence and to traders operating in the area as well as remnants of a structure's foundation. The most extensive material remains come from the excavations by the Manatee Mineral Spring (Baram 2014, Baram 2021). Notable material culture include:

- 1808 Coin
- Ritual items (a half glass projectile point and a G-shaped ornament)
- Kaolin tobacco pipes
- Pearlware
- A Freshwater Well
- Dog burial



*Angola is listed on the Underground Railroad, the Network to Freedom by National Park Service (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/index.htm>).*

Beginning in the 17th century and continuing through the mid-19th century in the United States, enslaved African Americans resisted bondage to gain their freedom through acts of self-emancipation. The individuals who sought this freedom from enslavement, known as freedom seekers, and those who assisted along the way, united together to form what is known as the Underground Railroad. Stories of escape demonstrate the significance of the Underground Railroad in the eradication of slavery as a cornerstone of the national civil rights movement. Angola is listed on the NPS Underground Network to Freedom.

To balance the well-known northern escape route to Canada, the National Park Service organized the 6th Annual National Underground Railroad Conference in St. Augustine, Florida in June 2012 to highlight the southern escape route.

Angola organized beginning in the 1770s and grew as refugees from military clashes at Prospect Bluff and Suwannee drove maroons southward. The community, made up of agricultural hamlets, stretched from where the Braden River meets the Manatee River to Sarasota Bay. Archaeological excavations by the Manatee Mineral Spring provide a view of daily life for these freedom-seeking people.



*Virtual Reconstruction of the Village of Angola by the Manatee Mineral Spring.*



# HISTORIC RESOURCES (partial list)

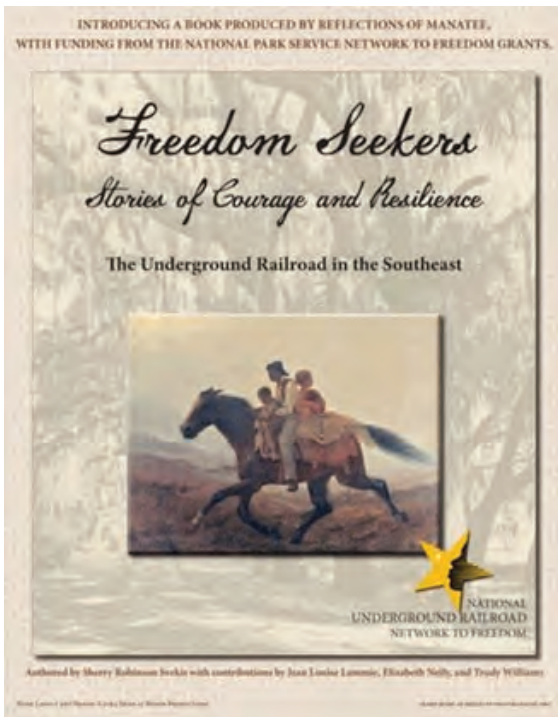
## Feature length documentary

- Finding Angola: Documenting Manatee County's First Black Settlement - Sarasota Film Festival <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-h1GK8Ru6w> (60 minutes long, features Baram walking at Manatee Mineral Springs Park and interviews with Vickie Oldham and Rosalyn Howard).
- LCV Cities Tour - Tampa: Angola - Escaped Slave Community [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ\\_etCIBC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ_etCIBC)

## School Curriculum Materials

There are available resources about Angola and the Network to Freedom that can be presented as school curriculum to meet state standards.

1. Freedom Seekers: Stories of Courage and Resilience  
Reflections of Manatee 2023 publication



2. Looking for Angola tabloids (4):

- Roots of Community
- History
- Archeology
- The Journey Continues

Newspapers in Education 2008 publication



Roots of Community



History



Archeology



The Journey Continues

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[Finding Angola: Documenting Manatee County's First Black Settlement - Sarasota Film Festival](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-h1GK8Ru6w) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-h1GK8Ru6w> (60 minutes long, features Baram walking at Manatee Mineral Springs Park and interviews with Vickie Oldham and Rosalyn Howard).

[LCV Cities Tour - Tampa: Angola - Escaped Slave Community](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ_etClbc) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ\\_etClbc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOhZ_etClbc)

## School Curriculum Materials

There are available resources about Angola and the Network to Freedom that can be presented as school curriculum to meet state standards.

### 1. Freedom Seekers: Stories of Courage and Resilience Reflections of Manatee 2023 publication

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# Reason 2: Beach Desegregation Trolley & Bus Tour Traces Newtown Car Caravans Route to Integrate Sarasota Beaches

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**DAYS OF OPERATION/  
HOURS OF OPERATION**

Monthly, Group Bookings By Appointment  
10 a.m. - Noon; 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

**COST OF ADMISSION**

\$40/per person

**ESTIMATED TOTAL VISITORS LAST YEAR**

2017 / 100  
September, 2018 / 800

**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
STUDENT VISITORS**

150

**ESTIMATED NUMBER OF  
GROUP TOUR GUESTS**

18 groups, 700 guests

**HISTORICAL DESIGNATION**

Sarasota County Historic Marker at Lido Beach

## **MOST MEANINGFUL CLAIM IN CONNECTION TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

Sarasota NAACP President Neil Humphrey, Sr. put Newtown on the map of a movement in the early stages of the national battle for civil rights. “Beach wade-ins” of the 1950s drew media attention and opened up an early front in the fight for equal rights years before better-known state and national victories of the 1960s. The wade-ins, modeled after lunch counter sit-ins coupled with activists’ attendance at city and county commission meetings moved the needle toward beach access at a time when less than two miles of state beaches out of a total 2,000 miles were open for use by African Americans.

The campaign to end beach segregation began close to the same time as the Brown vs. Board of Education decision and occurred before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. became the leader of the Civil Rights Movement. As a result of the highly publicized car caravans and wade-ins (there are over 1,800 stories about “the Negro Beach Issue” in Sarasota that appear in an archival newspaper database), activists began pushing for the integration of beaches in locations such as St. Augustine, Miami, Rainbow Beach in Chicago, throughout Mississippi and in South Africa.

A bus tour of historic Overtown and Newtown includes tracing the same route of beach activists. It is led by a community scholar who describes significant locations along the route and their meaning. Wade-in participants step aboard to share their personal experiences of traveling in the caravans. The most moving part of the tour is the ride on the Ringling Bridge across Sarasota Bay to the beach.

## **ARTICLES, NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE CLIPPINGS**

Several documents are included and a partial list is in the bibliography

## Desegregating Sarasota County Beaches

African American leaders and residents of the Newtown and Overtown communities came to Sarasota from small towns in Florida and southern states for employment, and opportunities to improve their lives. Of paramount importance were three institutions: church, family and school.

Upon arrival, they faced the challenges of Jim Crow policies. An indomitable spirit led residents to survive the harsh realities of living in a “sun down town.” They built their own homes, churches, schools; and established self- help benevolent organizations, two thriving business districts and a village where residents exercised control over their lives.

Segregation prohibited access to public accommodations that Sarasota’s white residents enjoyed. African American leaders began asserting their rights and articulating their desire for equal access to county beaches before Rosa Parks’ arrest for refusing to give up her bus seat to a man in Alabama on December 1, 1955. The Brown vs. Board of Education decision had become law close to the same time period. Back then, only a small circle of community organizers knew about the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

African American leaders in South Florida challenged the segregation of public beaches in 1946, but faced continuous roadblocks and barriers. The Urban League of Greater Miami and Negro Service Council developed an idea similar to lunch counter sit-ins that attracted national media attention. The Negro Professional and Business Men’s League also voiced concerns about the paucity of public beaches open to blacks. They penned a petition asking Broward County Commissioners for a “public bathing beach for colored people.” The request produced little action.

In Florida, less than 2 miles of beach was open to blacks out of 2,000 miles of beach that stretched across the state.

In 1951, a campaign began to open public spaces to Newtown residents with a simple request for a beach. Newtown entrepreneur Mary Emma Jones attended a Sarasota County Commission meeting and requested that lawmakers provide a beach for “colored residents.” The same year, county commissioners purchased its first public beach.

In 1952, after voters approved a recreational bond that included beach acquisition, commissioners proposed a swimming pool in the black neighborhood.

Another Sarasota leader, frustrated over the lack of progress over the beach issue, began to more aggressively organize for change. Sarasota NAACP president Neil Humphrey Sr. served in the Navy during World War II. He moved from Plant City, Florida to Sarasota looking for a better quality of life for his family in 1935. After starting a business called Humphrey’s Pharmacy, located in the heart of Newtown’s business district, he became a respected community leader. Residents purchased over-the-counter medications, snacks, household goods and the African American weekly *Pittsburgh Courier* newspaper.

Mr. Humphrey read about news events and experienced the same impatience and uneasiness of civil rights leaders throughout the country.

In a *Herald Tribune* article, written in celebration of Newtown's 2014 centennial, reporter Ian Cummings wrote:

"Newtown had no beaches. Only nine miles away, others enjoyed the best beach in the world. The white sands of Lido were close. But for children growing up in Newtown 60 years ago, those beautiful sandy shores were off-limits. There were no signs posted, and no laws on the books prohibiting use. It was "understood," say people who remember the 1950s."

Mr. Humphrey attended another commission meeting to advocate for a beach on behalf of black residents and continued calls for desegregation. The requests fell on deaf ears and were met with resistance from white residents and hand wringing among city and county officials.

In September 1955, several carpools of Newtown residents led by Mr. Humphrey challenged the old order by piling into cars, and driving to Lido Beach. They swam and walked the shores.

A *Tampa Morning Tribune* article on Friday, September 30 published the headline, "Sarasotans Calm as Negroes Swim at City's Lido Beach."

On Oct. 3, 1955, about 100 black residents in a car caravan returned to the shores and waded in the water.

"It was a time of challenges," said the late Dr. Edward E. James II, a community activist who was involved in the caravans as a high school student. "They didn't want to do anything to hurt the tourist trade. But that didn't mean they weren't malicious and ironclad in what they would do, like other Southern towns."

Black swimmers continued breaking unwritten rules at Lido Beach and made front-page news. Police officers came to monitor the scene. Articles dubbed the civic crisis "The Negro Beach Issue" and described Sarasota as a "powder keg."

County and City Commissioners refused to advance the request and even closed Lido Beach temporarily claiming erosion as the cause. Longboat Key town leaders banned public beaches. After delays and denials, committees were organized to research a suitable location for a "colored beach" and develop a plan for purchase. Public officials and staffers also attended conferences with others throughout the state. Several sites on Casey, Longboat and Siesta Keys were discussed; also a manmade island between Lido and Siesta Key that required transport by ferry. Beach residents of Siesta Key and Midnight Pass balked during a meeting that lasted 5 hours with 27 speakers. A beach set aside for enjoyment by black residents never gained public approval.

Mr. Humphrey consulted with Tampa NAACP leaders and pushed for full beach integration. Older black residents comfortable with segregation and fearful of clashes with whites and a backlash were satisfied with the status quo and said, a "half loaf is better than none."

Meantime, city officials advanced a proposal in 1956 to construct a community pool in Newtown to quell the controversy. At a public meeting County Commissioner Glenn R. Leach said:

"I didn't come out here to ram a swimming pool down your throats. But we just felt you would be

satisfied with a swimming pool where you don't have to be worrying about jellyfish and stingrays." Amid a sea of stoic faces, a member of the black community stood up and drew laughter in the chamber. "If white folks can put up with jellyfish and stingrays, I think maybe we people can put up with them too."

City officials dedicated a community pool in November 1957 at what was known then as the Newtown Recreation Center. During the ribbon cutting, a group of Newtown residents sent a clear message. They left the ceremony to hold a wade-in at Lido.

After many editorials, articles and debate about the issue, a beach in south Venice more than 40 miles from the community was unofficially sanctioned for Newtown residents and their guests. The landmark 1964 Civil Rights Act banned discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It prohibited the segregation of public accommodations and made it a crime to keep Newtown residents from any beach anywhere.

Similar to the school district's compliance with the Brown vs. Board of Education decision six years after passage, it took several years more before Sarasota County beaches were fully integrated. Mr. Humphrey put Newtown on the map of a movement in the early stages of a national battle for civil rights. Beach wade-ins drew media attention and opened up an early front in the fight for civil rights, years before better-known state and national victories of the 1960s.

The word desegregation became a byword and battle cry for activists integrating beaches in locations such as St. Augustine, Miami, Rainbow Beach in Chicago, throughout Mississippi and South Africa. A bus tour of historic Overtown and Newtown includes traveling the same route of beach activists. A tour stop is Jetson's Gallery. Its walls are filled with archival photographs and newspaper articles documenting the actions of NAACP members. A community scholar points out the location of Mr. Humphrey's Pharmacy and the flagpole where carpoolers met. Wade-in participants Pam Cherry Moreland, Wade Harvin and former Sarasota mayor Fredd Atkins step aboard to share their personal caravan experiences. The most moving part of the tour is traveling on the Ringling Bridge across Sarasota Bay to the beach.

# Sarasota “Wade Ins”

## TIMELINE

The goal of wade-ins by African Americans residents in Sarasota was to gain equal access to safe public beaches and pools. The work of Sarasota NAACP president Neil Humphrey, Sr. influenced national wade-ins in Rainbow Beach, Chicago, throughout Mississippi and in South Africa.

There was little action on beach integration in Florida until the mid 40s when Broward County’s black leaders set the stage for a campaign to begin.

### 1945

African American leaders in Dade County began planning to challenge and draw attention to the issue. Under the Urban League of Greater Miami, Negro Service Council members developed a spin off of the lunch counter sit-ins that had attracted national attention. They proposed nonviolent “wade-ins” to gain equal access at Florida beaches and pools. Wade-ins began at Baker’s Haulover Beach.

African Americans entered the water with white beachgoers.  
Activists anticipated court challenges after arrests.

### 1946

**May 14** - The Negro Professional and Business Men’s League of Fort Lauderdale attempted to make the concern over lack of public beaches a recognized issue. Members presented a petition before the Broward County Commission requesting “a public bathing beach for colored people.” The county appointed a committee to research the issue, but there was little action.

### 1949

City of Fort Lauderdale officials attempted to address the request again but were unsuccessful.

### 1952

The first sign of change came when the Fort Lauderdale Hotel Association publically supported a campaign for an African American recreational beach.

### 1953

Broward County’s only “colored beach” was purchased by developers. It became known as Galt Ocean Mile. The sale meant African Americans had no beach options. Broward County finally purchased a strip of land in the Everglades for use by African Americans, but there was no road to the isolated shores. A ferry provided access but was unreliable and took a while to reach the destination. The beach had no facilities, tables, shelter, or bathrooms.



## 1955

**June 17** - 125 residents in Sarasota's African American community of Newtown attended a County Commission meeting to speak against a proposed swimming pool that would put an end to the request for their own public beach. No vote was taken on the issue, although there was a discussion about finding a suitable location. A committee was organized to study the issue.

**October 3** - 100 Newtown residents piled into cars and staged wade-ins at Lido Beach. City of Sarasota officials placed "no parking" signs to turn around the caravans and closed the beach. Anticipating that it was a temporary closure, Sarasota NAACP leader John Rivers returned to the beach soon after. The caravans expanded.

A series of articles about beach access in other communities in the state were published locally. Reports found that less than 2 miles of Florida's coastline was "set aside for Negro use."

**Nov. 29** - Longboat Town Council banned public beaches. The Longboat Key Town Council located in Sarasota County banned public beaches.

## 1956

Mid-February, the Sarasota County Commission appointed a citizen's committee to submit recommendations for the location of a "Negro" beach. One recommendation listed land near Midnight Pass on Siesta Key (same location recommended by a group two years prior). Another recommendation was the construction of a community swimming pool.

300 Midnight Pass and Siesta Key residents attended a commission meeting to speak against the plan. The meeting lasted five hours.

**June 6** - At Booker school, architects presented a plan to construct the Newtown pool.

**September 7** - Sarasota County Commissioners discussed fencing in all beaches and requiring the purchase of a \$1.25 car tag to access the beach.

**September 25** - Sarasota County Commissioners reject the Siesta Key location.

Pulitzer Prize winning writer and Siesta Key resident Mackinley Kantor lambasted commissioners and threatened to write an article in a national publication to expose what he termed "cowardice."

**October 2** - Sarasota city officials announced plans to construct a neighborhood pool for two reasons: 1) improve recreational facilities in Newtown; 2) prevent Lido Beach integration.

## 1957

**November 27** - A "colored swimming pool" was dedicated to appease Newtown residents. A group left the ribbon cutting to continue wade-ins demanding equal access to public beaches.

## 1960

In September, wade-ins gained more news headlines. The NAACP filed a lawsuit supporting black residents in Miami. The court order was not enforced. Discrimination of public swimming facilities continued.

## 1961

During summer months, there were frequent wade-ins in Fort Lauderdale. Activists faced police officers and Ku Klux Klan members carrying axes.

## 1962

Fort Lauderdale officials filed a lawsuit blaming blacks for causing “chaos” and “disturbing the peace.” A state judge ruled against segregated beaches there.

## 1964

**June 17-** St. Augustine black and white activists held a 2-hour wade-in.

A week later, on June 24, white beachgoers in St. Augustine set up a physical barricade preventing black waders from entering the water. The court order compelled police to provide protection. That night, white groups held a rally of anti-black speeches and 300 whites marched against beach integration.

The next day, African Americans entered Monson Motor Lodge, a testing ground for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Black swimmers entered the motel’s pool. The hotel manager poured a bottle of acid into the water and an off duty policeman jumped into the water and beat the swimmers who were later arrested. Photos of the act went “viral” allowing a worldwide audience to view the violence.

**June 22** - Police arrested 22 waders in St. Augustine. A Danish photographer was brutally beaten.

**June 25** - The most violent incident occurred in St. Augustine during the Civil Rights campaign. Whites and police officers attacked 75 waders. That night, 500 whites attacked St. Augustine protesters, hospitalizing 19 and causing severe injuries.

## 1964

On July 2, the landmark Civil Rights Act outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex or national origin for the first time. Swimming facilities throughout Florida and the country opened to African Americans.

A beach south of Venice in Sarasota County (40 miles from Newtown), adjacent to the airport and near the sewage treatment plant now known as Caspersen Beach was the unofficial destination for Newtown beachgoers, the few that owned automobiles.

## 1967

**March 13** - Mr. Humphrey affirms the Sarasota NAACP’s priority: to integrate all Sarasota beaches.

14-Man Committee Asked To Study Problem

# County Passes Negro Beach Issue To Citizens

The Board of County Commissioners yesterday failed to take the direct action expected, but instead, for the third time in three years, named a citizens advisory committee to carry the much-scuffed ball in the problem of securing a Negro beach.

The action, termed a "double-cross" by a member of the board itself, passed 3 to 2 on a roll call vote.

Tension marked the beginning of the special meeting as a proposal by Commissioner Glen R.

Leach for immediate action was tabled by a majority vote.

Then, after more than an hour's further discussion, the board voted to adopt the move to set up the citizens group. The motion was offered by Commissioner A. D. Corson, who had also moved Leach's proposal be put aside.

Leach protested that the full board had been taken into his confidence in the preparation of his proposal—to condemn land for a fourth public beach to be used by Negroes, to fence in all beaches

and require purchase of a \$1.25 car tag to allow beach use by citizens. He also claimed he had heard nothing of Corson's proposal until it was read and that "I have been excluded for its preparation."

(Complete text of Commissioner Corson and Leach's proposals on page eight)

He added, however, "I am solely interested in the solution, not the means."

Corson said some of the points

in the Leach proposal had merit but that he did not agree with others.

"I hope what you prepared accomplishes the results desired," Leach stated.

After extensive discussion among both commissioners and a number of citizens present, the motion came up for vote, and Leach requested a roll call vote. Voting for it were Corson, Commissioner Edwin F. McCann, who seconded it, and Commission Chairman Gustin M. Nelson. Siding with Leach

in opposition was Commissioner Jacob F. Baumgartner.

After the meeting, Leach commented to a Herald-Tribune reporter in passing, "That's what I call a thorough doublecross."

Corson, reading a prepared statement, put forth the suggestion of the use of the advisory committee—with George Higgins named temporary chairman—and said its purpose would be "to determine and recommend such proposals as they deem advisable for the establishment of a public beach."

(Continued on Page 3, Col. 3)

## 100 Negroes Visit Lido Key Again

(Continued From Page 1)

all right for us to use the beach.

"When we met with the city commissioners last June they said 'us' — 'help us find a beach for you' — well, we've found one."

Asked if the Negroes are offered a beach of their own, would the lake be, Humphries replied that it could not answer this question, as that when the "proper time" as they say we will consider it.

**No Answer Given**

Then asked if this was a case of the Supreme Court decision, or a vote to obtain a Negro beach, Humphries said that he was answering he would have to talk with the NAACP lawyer.

In a telephone conversation with Francis Rodriguez, NAACP attorney of Tampa, Mr. Humphries told THE NEWS that the NAACP would leave it up to the Negroes in Sarasota to make their own decision on whether to accept a beach or to press the issue of integration.

**Willing To Comply**

Humphries yesterday did not state that the Negroes were ready to talk over the situation with local authorities when he said that they were "willing to sit down with a committee."

The Negroes, traveling in a group of 20 cars, arrived at the beach at 4:30 p.m. About 20 men were swimming while the rest sat on the rocks or walked on the beach.

**Handled Of Whites**

A handful of white people, who were swimming nearby, paid no attention while two others fed the beach.

At 8:30 p.m. the Negroes came out of the water and drove off again in a procession.

Police stopped one car on its arrival at the bay and issued a summons for an improper matter.

While a few of the cars had out of town license plates, all the Negroes were Sarasota residents.

**City-County Problem**

As reported in THE NEWS on Friday, Mayor Ben H. Hawkins Jr. has put the problem of acquiring a beach for the Negroes up to the county commission.

The county commission had been attempting to find a suitable beach, but at Commissioner Gustin M. Nelson said, "The problem is everybody's problem."

Nelson said that every time the county suggests that a Negro beach should be located in the city, that the city commissioners protest.

### Our Town (An Editorial)

The time has come for Our Town to face the facts of life. We have before us the delicate question of providing the Negroes with their own Gulf beach, hoping that they will accept it and use it.

If they don't, then, under the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Negroes will force the issue of integrated public bathing beaches.

In a tourist town this, we must say, will play havoc with our economic life — for Sarasota depends upon tourists. And the Negroes too should realize this, for most of them earn their living working in jobs related to the tourist business.

Thus something should be done now! Not next week, not next month — BUT NOW!

THE NEWS calls upon the City Commission and the County Commission to appoint a committee to handle the problem — for the City Commission has done nothing, merely passing the buck to the County Commission, which, in turn, has wasted a lot of time studying the useless idea of pumping up a beach in the bay for the Negroes.

There is no denying the rights of our Negro citizens to have a bathing beach on the Gulf.

Thus a committee of say, one City Commissioner, one County Commissioner, two ministers, two citizens, one representative from each Sarasota newspaper, and four Negro leaders, should be appointed to iron out the problem.

The Negro representation should contain not more than one member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Likewise, the committee should not attempt to hold a public hearing, but instead, meet in executive session so that the problem could be talked out and settled without any histrionics.

There must be swift action to forestall further inroads by a determined group that, under the direction of the NAACP, has seized a beachhead on Lido Key, hoping that police will try and stop them from using a public beach.

City police, under the direction of Chief Robert N. Wilson have handled the episode with excellent and intelligent foresight. Actually, they are not the rightful body — the City Commission — are carrying the burden of the problem.

Perhaps one of the main troubles is the lack of leadership on both sides. Authorities are blaming each other, and the Negroes are taking orders from Tampa.

Let's face it folks — squarely and soundly — right now!



SARASOTA NEGROES MADE another peaceful trip to the beach along Ben Franklin Dr., on Lido Key yesterday. In the top photo, the man in the center, Nell Humphries, local head of the NAACP, watches some of the 100 Negroes who used the public beach for an hour late yesterday afternoon.

## 100 Negroes Visit Lido Key Beach

By A. J. RUTENBER  
NEWS Political Editor

A group of 100 Negroes, in a peaceful group, yesterday made another trip to a public beach in an attempt to force the issue of having their own beach or, failing that, the point of integration in public beaches in SARASOTA.

Through their spokesman, Nell Humphries, they made it clear that they will keep coming to the beach along Ben Franklin Dr., on Lido Key.

"We will continue to come to the beach and we have no idea of stopping until the authorities stop us," Humphries, local head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said.

There were no unfortunate incidents to mar the test by the Negroes, as city police, under the personal direction of Chief Robert N. Wilson had the area well covered.

As there is no key ordinance preventing Negroes from using a public beach, the duty of the police, as Chief Wilson put it, was to "maintain order."

**Beach Tax Supported**

Interviewed on the beach, Humphries said, "We realize this is a public beach, supported by tax payers, both colored and white."

"We as taxpayers feel that it is

(Continued on Page 7)

## Floods Rack Mexico; Relief Pleas Heavy

## Police, Tommy Gunners Guard Him Peron Takes Up Exile In Buenos Aires

# Longboat Town Council Bans Public Beaches

(Continued from Page 1)

unteer fire department's partly completed headquarters.

They gave notice of intention to grant Ned Ulery an exclusive five year garbage collection franchise; appointed a committee of Guy Paschal and Mayor LePage to negotiate a power company franchise; set an eight cents per mile rate for travel of the town clerk and town marshal; and discussed financial matters.

With Attorney Glenn Berry's advice that the town will be "operating from hand to mouth" for the next year, the council planned to file its bills for a more prosperous day.

But unexpected gifts came in. T. M. Moore contributed \$25 to pay for the town's membership in the Florida League of Municipalities and funds to pay about \$100 in bills. These included about \$65 in expenses of Berry.

Ulery paid for a photograph of the town seal and W. A. Wympe contributed a \$25 gift.

Council will meet again next Monday.

# Longboat Town Council Bans Public Beaches

LONGBOAT KEY, Nov. 23—The Town Council of this, Florida's youngest community, settled down to business tonight and made short work of Sarasota County's plan to locate a Negro public beach on Longboat Key.

The Town Council passed a zoning ordinance which barred all public beaches from the island. The ordinance also prohibited all future trailer parks, fishing camps, bait selling establishments and public dumps from the Sarasota County portion of the newly incorporated portion of the island.

The Council by ordinance also reaffirmed the zoning regulations which have been in existence for the past five years in the Manatee County portion of the town. A committee of seven island citizens will be named next week as the town's zoning commission. At least three members will be from the Sarasota County section, which will come in for detailed zoning next.

Mayor Wilfred LePage explained the provision barring public beaches in the Sarasota County section was "to take care of immediate dangers." There was no specific reference to the Negro

# 'Negro Invasion' Of 2 State Beaches Rumored

JACKSONVILLE BEACH, July 3 (UP)—Police here and at Clearwater, today took precautions against a rumored Independence Day "Negro invasion" of white public beaches.

The state president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People denied rumors that the hundreds of Negroes plan to visit the two popular beaches on the Fourth of July, but authorities weren't taking any chances.

In Clearwater, on the West Coast, a quickly-passed city ordinance would allow police to control the flow of traffic to the beach, and here authorities said if any trouble arises a newly-formed auxiliary police force will be called into action.

"As far as I know there is no basis for these rumors," NAACP state President William Fordham of Tampa told the United Press.

"If such a move was planned, I think I would know about it." The rumblings, however, even reached the state capitol. Highway Patrol Director H. N. Kirkman said he knew nothing about the situation "except for some unofficial reports and rumblings."

Clearwater city commissioners were uneasy enough about the situation to pass an emergency ordinance designed to keep Negroes from Clearwater Beach. The law was passed after Mayor Herbert Brown spoke of widespread rumors that two busloads of Tampa Negroes would go to Clearwater in a protest against the lack of Negro beach facilities. Jacksonville Beach Police Chief Chiles H. Franks said he checked with Negro organizations and Negro newspapers and all deny they know any such "invasion" is planned.

# City To Build Newtown Pool

Immediate Work Is Authorized

On \$75,000 Facilities

By BOLIVAR B. O'BRIEN JR., NEWS Staff Writer

Immediate action on construction of a \$75,000 swimming pool development for Negroes in Newtown was authorized by the City Commission last night. At a special conference of the commissioners yesterday, two reasons were given for the action: 1. a desire to improve the recreational facilities of Newtown, and, 2. to prevent the integration of Lido Beach.

Mayor John Klingler said "it is no use to take on the integration battle in the area will be more integrated. If by this action we can stop the integration of Lido Beach I think we should do it immediately."

At the City Commission meeting last night, a resolution authorizing the city to proceed immediately with the swimming pool and bath house at Newtown Recreation Park was passed along with a companion resolution authorizing the city to construct a second pool and bath house when the Newtown pool is completed. The second pool would be for white persons. The action for it was decided upon last night.

The Newtown pool is to be an exact copy of a city pool in Tallahassee. The commissioners said with a capacity of about 300 people. A copy of the plans has been obtained from the city of Tallahassee and the pool is listed as costing about \$75,000. However, City Manager Donald Thompson said it will cost as high as \$125,000.

Plans for the pool will be taken from three sources in the city but, the commission decided there is \$22,000 in the city's general fund, and if no quarters were built the month of October, at which time the general fund would be empty will be available for use.

# GOP Caucus To Act On Local Bills

Important action on the Democratic resolution on the local bill privileges vote in the State Legislature is expected at Saturday's Republican legislative caucus in Tallahassee.

The Democratic legislative caucus in Jacksonville is expected to adopt a resolution asking that the legislative committee on local bills introduced by Republican legislators without first reporting the opposition to clear them with local Democratic leaders. But the resolution also would require the House Rules Committee to become effective.

The Sarasota GOP caucus will be for Florida's 22 Republican legislative candidates and for the purpose of directing up a platform for the campaign. Plans for the event will be discussed by Minority Leader Henry B. Bartholomew and George E. Youngberg Jr. of Venice, both seeking re-election. The caucus will also cover such subjects as constitutional revision, abolition of the price fixing powers of the State Milk Commission, and the need for a treatment govern-

# Pool For Negroes Opened

The city's \$75,000 Newtown Swimming Pool was opened officially yesterday when Mayor A. Ray Howard cut the ribbon across the pool deck and the pool is reported to be ready for use today. A mob of youngsters swam in with Newtown Recreation Center director Robert Taylor for special youth passes in the pool followed the opening ceremony.

There is attendance and an inspection tour of the sparkling facility after the ribbon cutting, which Mayor Howard described as "the last ribbon." He will return with the City Commission next month.

The pool will be open from 8 to 10 p.m. school days and from 1 to 5 p.m. weekends and holidays during the school year, according to city official Director Ray Howard.

The membership cards for which the proceeds were being sold yesterday will enable them to use the pool free of charge for all other age groups. Regular admission charges for the pool will be 10 cents for the one living inside the city limits, 20 cents for those living in Sarasota County and 30 cents for those living outside Sarasota County.

Admission charges for adults will be 25 cents for persons living inside the city limits, 30 cents for persons living in Sarasota County and 35 for persons living outside Sarasota County.

# Higgins To Head Beach Study Group

George Higgins, named yesterday by the county commission to head a 14-man citizens committee to study the Negro beach situation here, said last night that immediate action is needed to provide the facilities.

Higgins agreed to serve as chairman of the group, but as least three others named by Commissioner A. D. Corson have declined to serve.

"I believe, and have believed for some time, that we must do something immediately about the recreation facilities, and particularly the beach. I think that most of the colored citizens of Sarasota recognizes very well the economic impact of attempted integration on the beaches and our principal business, which is tourism, and I think that our responsible colored citizens would be perfectly satisfied with a beach of their own. I have felt that way for some time."

"When I agreed to serve as chairman (Continued on Page 2, Col. 5)



NEWTON POOL DEDICATED—The city's new swimming pool, built by the Royal Palm Pool Co. Inc., in the Newtown Recreation Center for the city's Negroes is shown during the inspection tour which followed dedication ceremony yesterday. Present today were young people and children. The \$75,000 pool will be open for business today.

# U.S. Paroles Jap Criminals

TOKYO, Nov. 26 (UP)—The United States has paroled three Japanese war criminals, the American embassy revealed today. The embassy, in a note to the Japanese Foreign Office, identified the men as Seiichi Magami, a former minor sergeant; Saburo Kobayashi, a former war-aid officer; and Kenji Hirose.

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## 300 Island Residents Oppose Proposed Site Higgins Committee Report Hit By Siesta Property Owners

A vigorous protest from more than 300 residents of the Midnight Pass area and Siesta Key was made before the Board of County Commissioners today over the proposal to locate a Negro beach on the southern tip of the key. Some of their fire was directed at George Higgins, chairman of the citizens committee which recommended the site.

At a jam-packed and frequently heated meeting which began in the county commission chambers and had to be moved to the county courtroom in Anconada for the huge crowd, County Commissioner George N. Leach warned Higgins and said he had been advised not to attend the meeting by his doctor.

**Leach Has Been Ill**  
The Commissioner has been under doctor's care for a heart ailment and was absent from several meetings earlier in the year due to ill health. "In justice to myself and my family I think it best that I be absent from the meeting," however, he said he would be available when it came time for a vote on the question.

As Leach left the chamber several persons in the crowd remarked, "There goes our last friend walking out the door." Leach's statement was warmly applauded by the operators.

The meeting began with Higgins reading the report of the special 15-member citizens committee which recommended the beach site last Friday. Before he launched into the report he said the county commissioners had approved the committee and the members had agreed to work on the committee. "They are my friends," he added.

"This brought a loud shout of 'Ho, ho, ho,' from operators many of whom stood along the wall, and took up every available inch of the commission chamber.

At the outbreak Higgins paused and said, "I called you gentlemen, I called you gentlemen."

**Two Things**  
Higgins said that two things were considered by the committee: (1) location of a site which would host the least number of people and (2) the site which would cost the least amount of money.

He said since the first report was made Friday by the committee, he had decided to make a change in the report and leave the location of the access road to the beach to the discretion of the Board of County Commissioners.

Next Higgins read the report which was the same as the first report carried in the newspapers the weekend before for the first about the access road.

Then came the first real outbreak of the meeting, but not the last. Chairman George M. Nelson rapped the gavel and declared the audience would be free to ask Higgins any questions about the report.

He said he thought the committee had the benefit of the complete thinking of the people of Siesta Key.

**Meeting Resumes**  
At this point Nelson interrupted and said that since the board was listening in the discussion with Higgins, it might as well listen to it now and put it on the minutes. He declared the meeting back to order.

Several spectators said that because the board had heard the citizens committee report it might be better to hear the report of the people of Siesta Key.

Donald Bentley, a businessman on Siesta Key, told the board that he had asked to serve on the committee but had been told it "was closed" to any more members. Bentley charged that the people of Siesta Key had been denied a voice on the committee.

Higgins said he didn't appoint the members to the committee and if some couldn't serve.

**Completely Healed**  
George B. Conroy, who said he was representing a group of 300

## Negroes' Demands Is Cause

BY FURMAN ARTHUR  
NEWS STAFF WRITER

County commissioners today called a halt to all work on county beaches not presently under construction in a move to meet the latest of Negro demands for desegregation of these areas.

In a surprise step, Commissioner Glen F. Leach advised these rapid-fire motions rejecting a bid for the Manatee Beach project, calling off other beach projects and requesting a beaching seeking permission to sell the beaches next May.

**Repeals Beach Theory**  
Leach based any of his motions on the proposition that the Negro population of Sarasota express its acceptance of the theory of a separate beach. If this is not done, he urged that the county sell its three beaches and refund the 120,000 bond issue.

His action followed the opening of bids for the erection of a beach glass on Manatee Key. Leach announced to report the sale bid, submitted to report the sale bid, submitted to report the sale bid, submitted to report the sale bid.

**Additional Story on Page 8**  
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## Negro Beach Findings Summarized

Race Is Said To Prefer Own Way And Ask No Gifts

These Negro beach findings are the result of a study made by the Citizens Committee on the Negro Beaches, which was organized by the Board of County Commissioners in 1954.

The study was conducted by a committee of 15 members, headed by George Higgins, chairman of the committee. The committee held several public hearings and received many suggestions from the community.

The findings of the study are summarized in a report which was presented to the Board of County Commissioners at a public hearing held in the county courtroom on May 15, 1955.

The report states that the Negro population of Sarasota County is growing rapidly and that there is a strong feeling among this group for the establishment of a separate beach for their own use.

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## Two Property Sales In Area Total \$120,500

Two property sales in the area have resulted in a total of \$120,500. The sales were conducted by the Board of County Commissioners and involved the sale of two parcels of land in the Siesta Key area.

The first sale was for a parcel of land measuring approximately 10 acres and was sold for a total of \$80,000. The second sale was for a parcel of land measuring approximately 5 acres and was sold for a total of \$40,500.

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# Negro Beach Question Reopened

Sarasota's Negro beach controversy again hangs in the air, almost five years after the problem which first hit Sarasota headlines five years ago. A hearing now for committee action for the latest time in three years.

It is a simple question, but one which separates the potential from the actual.

Should the county provide the colored citizens with a public beach?

**Question Sent To Committee**

The question was referred to a committee in 1936, again last year, and now stands a chance of being tied up in another committee as the summer swimming season approaches.

Each time the question was referred to a committee of citizens, referred out of committee, with recommendations and then killed.

Last year the committee recommendations for a Negro beach on Santa Key at Mulholland Pass died under the fire of key residents who lambasted the proposal with a

variety of heavy verbal artillery aimed chiefly at the county commission. The county commission dropped the whole proposal and Chairman G. M. Nelson proposed a beach on the Big Pass south of the pool, as well as one for a Negro beach near the Venice Airport on the Gulf, and a bathing beach.

Now the latest plan is to have membership of the county commission, led by Commissioner James D. Neville confer with a citizens committee of Negroes about the problem. It remains to be seen whether the same fate

awaits this effort as has killed previous ones.

**Efforts Date Back to 1935**

A review of the history of the Negro beach question shows the first normal effort to provide Negro beaches and recreational facilities in the county dates back to 1935. On May 16, 1935, Eddie Bailey, Negro citizen, appeared before the Board of County Commissioners and asked them to consider the matter of a public beach for Negroes.

He was informed that the county was contemplating a \$20,000 swim-

ming pool for Negro citizens in the city recreation area. Bailey advised the board that money probably could be better spent if it went to a beach. He was asked to come back and look over the plans for the pool when they were finished. He said he would and on the meantime he would look for some equipment, property that might be bought.

On May 21, 1935, Bailey appeared again to ask about the possibility of purchasing property for a Negro beach. He was told that if he could find a suitable site that would be suitable at the right price, and would be worked out satisfactorily, that the county would buy it. He was also told that facilities would be placed there and in all probability would be maintained at county expense by amounts of six or seven cents.



**NEWTOWN POOL** will look like this, according to architects' sketches. The pool, budgeted at \$75,000 to cover cost of construction, may not stop a drive by

Negro residents of Sarasota to gain use of public Gulf beaches. The pool, a T-shaped structure 75 feet by 42 feet, is to be built at the Negro Recreation Center.

Mary Emma Jones, also appeared at the May 21, 1935 meeting and stated she thought a beach would be more satisfactory to more of the people than the proposed swimming pool.

Commissioner Otto R. Leach, who was then serving on the board, told her that in his knowledge she and her associates were the only people that he knew of who were in favor of a beach in preference to the pool, but that if this were the case the commissioners would like to know so that the pool project could be stopped and defray any more expense.

Architects presented plans for the swimming pool on June 4, 1935 and it was decided to hold a public meeting in the auditorium of Booker School to see if the Negro citizens would accept the proposed pool in lieu of a public beach. The meeting was set for 8 p.m. June 17.

City officials were invited to the public meeting and on June 20, after the meeting, an action was taken by the commissioners and the County Attorney and Commissioner Leach were instructed to go to Tallahassee and look over records of a beach site.

Time moved on and the summer wound until a proposal was made for a beach on Longboat Key. This was vigorously opposed by Longboat residents and no action was taken on the proposal at an Oct. 21, 1936 meeting after the protests.

On Sept. 8, 1936, the county board received correspondence from J. M. Ruyter and Luther C. Hughes Jr., protesting the creation of a beach for Negro citizens which would necessitate transportation by ferry to and from the beach.

**Cost Not Brought**

Ruyter and Hughes asked that efforts be concentrated towards acquiring a site in the Gulf. Instructions were given to inform them that the number one item on the commission agenda was to seek and try to locate and furnish a Gulf beach.

The beach question did not come up again in county commissioner meetings until June 4, 1938 when Ray A. Siglin, Newtown Negro, cityman, again revived it by requesting that county recreation funds from the sale of beach bonds be used for the purchase of a Negro beach.

Commissioner Nelson asserted that an attempt had been made to do this and that, after a meeting of the county commissioners, city officials and representatives of the Negro citizens it was decided the county would attempt to purchase a beach and build facilities.

**Integration Move Planned**

However, he reported that after the property was shown to a Negro representative, a meeting was held by the Negro citizens and the information was gained through the press, that a meeting was held and that the commissioners were not invited and the Negro citizens did not want a beach but were going to integrate the other beaches.

Ray Siglin said that if the county would purchase a beach he felt the Negro citizens would use it. He cited incidents in Delray Beach where racial trouble had erupted over mixing of the races on the beach. He said he did not want that to happen here.

After a series of Sunday lunches at the city and county beaches on Lido and Santa Keys by residents of Newtown, the county commission named a committee to go into the Negro beach problem.

This committee recommended the midnight Pass site be considered and immediate progress were made by key residents leading eventually to the death of the project.

## Bond Issue Authorized Legislature Clears Way To Finance Air Terminal

The way was open today for joint financing of the proposed international building at the Sarasota-Manatee Airport following enactment of a legislative bill yesterday.

The legislation allows the two counties of Sarasota and Manatee to lease up a bond issue for the air terminal, splits out the authority of the airport governing body to lease property for film-making purposes, gives the airport authority permission to mortgage property and authorizes the cities of Sarasota and Bradenton to invest in airport bonds.

**Bill Brings Law**

The bill breaking law yesterday without the Governor's signature.

The airport will receive federal matching funds from the Civil Aeronautics Administration for part of the cost of the air terminal. However, the big obstacle in financing the terminal was lack of authority of the two counties to support a bond issue for the resolution of the cost. The bill cleared away this obstacle.

Under the mortgage provisions of the bill, the seller keeps the mortgage.

**Hospital Gets Authority**

Also enacted yesterday was a special bill to permit the Sarasota County Public Hospital Board to accept and distribute moneys and receipts of the hospital and allow stations of the freshwaters to decide to issue bonds for acquiring hospital sites and make improvements.

The bill also authorized the county hospital board to charge the county for prisoners who are hospitalized here.

## \$38,598 Due In Gas Tax

Sarasota County will receive a whopping \$38,598 as the share of gasoline taxes collected in March. It was announced today by State Comptroller Ray Orville.

Meanwhile, the state comptroller reported that \$209,427.31 in sales taxes were collected in this county in April.

Manatee County's sales tax installment for the same month was \$101,472.30 less than last the Sarasota County total.

While sales jumped in both counties, compared to MARCH, the figures showed Sarasota leading far ahead of its neighbor in the north.

The April figure for this county was about \$41,000 more than the amount collected in March and about \$10,000 more than the sum collected in April, 1936.



## Missing Mare May Haunt Your Dreams

If you think you're having a nightmare, it might belong to Martyna Whitman.

The woman, who resides at Second Street and Pineapple Avenue, reported to police that her black mare has been missing for a week.

She said a small boy who was keeping the mare at the street corner the White Quarters did not tell her the horse was missing until Wednesday.

The missing mare was described as having one white foot and was running without a rope or halter.

## Sarasotan Facing Bad Check Count

A Sarasota woman, Grace Birch, 31, 344 Broadway Ave., was charged yesterday with issuing a worthless check.

She was released after posting \$200 bond. Constable Ed Perpetuo made the arrest. No further details were available today.

Pablo Garcia, 21, a Cuban from Miami, was charged with having no driver's license by State Trooper E. E. Cheatham.

Wesley Jackson, 22, Negro, Tampa and Robert Taggart, 26, Port Myers, were charged with speeding and released after posting \$50 bond.

## Bee Ridge Zoning Plan To Be Aired

Zoning for the Bee Ridge area by the County Planning and Zoning Commission will be discussed tonight at 8 p.m. in the courthouse.

It will be the regular meeting of the County Planning and Zoning Commission. The discussion of the Bee Ridge zoning was postponed from last week in order to give the people of the area a chance to meet and make their views known to it.

Some of the residents expressed objection to industrial zoning in the Bee Ridge area and several will be on hand tonight from the area.

## Subdivision Residents Pick Officers

A protest group of 45 Januaria Lakes residents last night elected temporary officers and appointed a subcommittee to appear before the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners Wednesday.

Representing nearly half the families in the subdivision just outside the city limits along 17th Street from North Tuttle Avenue to Rinker Terrace, the proposed new subdivision east of Eastman Baptist Church on 17th Street.

Max Robert A. Reinhold, who had appeared last week at the county commission session, was named temporary chairman, and George D. Wray, temporary secretary. Both live on North Alameda Avenue.

**Report To Be Made**

One person from each street in the development was picked to collect and coordinate residents' complaints about conditions in the subdivision.

The Rev. Paul Caldwell, Eastside Baptist pastor, and an Alameda Avenue resident, opened last night's session.

Leona Lakes homeowners allege that Leona Lakes Builders does not intend to complete a lake south of the developed portion and that the developers will be putting in correct paving, drainage and storm drainage; and that septic tank discharge appears on lot surfaces and in street gutters.

L. A. Meyer, who with John A. Deacon is an officer of the corporation, is to appear at the county session.

## FBI Says Soldier AWOL From Base

The FBI has a hold order on Stanley Willard, Air Force aviator from Greenville, Miss., for being A.W.O.L. He was arrested last week here for petty larceny of an auto license tag and driving on an improper license.

He was bonded over to court on the charge after he pleaded guilty.

Willard also faces a charge of leaving out driver's license.

## Car Caravans to Integrate Sarasota County Beaches Oral History Interview Transcripts (Excerpts)

The Newtown Conservation Historic District project was established and funded by the City of Sarasota in 2015. Phase I includes 47 oral history interviews featuring Newtown pioneers, trailblazers and history makers who discussed beach integration in Sarasota County with interviewer Vickie Oldham. Brief video clips of the interviews can be found at: <http://www.newtownalive.org/people/> Podcasts of 10 full interviews are in production.

Sarasota NAACP president, the late John Rivers was interviewed by student Kortney Lapeyrolerie through a collaborative project of Sarasota County Government and New College of Florida. Rivers' interview is among the most viewed oral histories on the website, [www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu](http://www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu).

### John Rivers

*Former president of the Sarasota branch of the NAACP*

Well, everything was segregated at that time. And the beach was one of the top [places]. The schools were segregated...my kids were very small...when we came here and...I guess when my oldest daughter was about ten, twelve... we talked about integrating the school system, because it was so far away...

We had students coming all the way from Venice and Laurel, and that was a long distance for kids just starting to school. Some six-year-old, having to get up at four in the morning... to make it to school... and ride twenty miles or more to get to school. ...That was not what we wanted to see, and I didn't want that for my kids here. So, therefore, we took action against that. But we didn't get the school integrated at that time. So, we had to move on with other issues...we had good teachers...all Afro-American...It was very, very good for us. And once I got involved with the action in the city, especially the neighborhood, it was quite fun.

When I came here, the NAACP was already organized at that time...I went to a couple of meetings and they were talking about the things that I was concerned about... Therefore, I started attending... And ...I became an officer and from that to the president...

When we first started going to the beach, it was in Venice because we weren't allowed to go here in Sarasota. And going to the beaches in Venice, we had no problem at all...but...it's eighteen, twenty miles from here down there. And that was a long distance, unnecessary long distance. And we took issue with that. And after going there for a while, we then started to going to Lido Beach. And...we had some problems. The reporters came, and they identified the cars, took pictures of the cars... the tag number and all of that stuff. And from the tag numbers, the system could pick up the names of the people. And some of the people were fired just because they went to the beach...there. But we didn't stop at that time. We went into the water the first time. And then the next day, they canceled out everything, closed the beach on us. And, at that time...I was leading the group. So, we... left Lido...headed back into town on the second day that we were there. Then, I decided, I said... "Let's go back." And we turned around and went

back. And, sure enough, the beach was full of people. And the policemen came back, and say, "Oh, the beach is closing again." I said, "No, no, you go on to town. If we need you, we will call you. But other than that, we don't need you." But, by that time...with the photos that the reporters had taken...some of the people in the city... identified the people that was at the beach... their cars. And some of them was fired the next day because they was at the beach. And the remainder of us continued to go every week until it was a simple thing.

But there was a lot being done before that because when they first started talking about it, there was a group called John Birch Society. Now, who they are and what their activities, I'm not sure. But they was very outspoken against us going to the beach. So, they suggested that they go out in the water, out in the beach waters and then develop an island there, and then get a boat and take us out to the island, and then bring us back on the boat. Well, that didn't fly. So, we continued to work on going to the beach. And, later, a lot of people got involved...people of the school system got involved...talking about the opportunities by having your beach, going to the beach out there on this island...

So, sure enough, they finally came to the conclusion. They said, "Well, okay, we will build a pool in the Newtown area there if you all would accept that instead of the beach." It was about August, late August or sometime around then. And that kind of angered the people, especially leaders at that time.

You had ministers and all involved. And they decided, no, no, no. We don't even want to talk about that. So, I looked at it. I said, "Look, look, wait a minute, let's think." I said, "We don't have a beach. We don't have a pool." I said, "We wait. We don't go to the beach that much in the wintertime anyway...Therefore... Let's accept that, and then we'll have a [pool]. And then when you all bring about the dedication of the pool, I will then take a group and we will go to the beach. And we'll have both." Then, that's exactly what happened there.

Just as Rivers stated, *"In 1957, the county built a new swimming pool in Newtown, hoping to appease residents. The day it opened, another beach caravan set out for Lido Key."*

...We got that one [Lido] under control. So, we wanted to go Siesta... And that was a...nicer beach. And we only had one incident. Some guy came up there with a pickup truck... He got out of the truck, got the bottles, and he put them under each one of the cars that we was there, that was ours...And I was out in the water at that time. And someone called out to me to "come, come, hurry..." So, when I came out, he was still putting his bottles under the tires of the cars. And I walked right up to him and, just nearly nose-to-nose, and I said, "Look, I want you to get every bottle you had out there...I want them out. And I want it out now." So, he looked over and none of his people were there to support him. So, he started pulling the bottles out from under the cars. And that was a victory.

It was NAACP president Neil Humphrey, Sr. who organized the caravans. Humphrey's, a successful Newtown businessman, possessed the necessary financial independence to challenge the establishment. Shortly after the fight for the integration of the beaches came about there was a young man, young at the time, Mr. John Henry Rivers. Moved his family from Mobile, Alabama to Sarasota looking for better opportunities. John passed away this past year. He was an ally and friend in most of the civil rights things that I did in this community. He was assistant to Mr. Humphrey during that time...when the beach caravans would go...The way the city would fight us, a police car would come and say the beach is closed everybody leave. Well our folk would leave and as soon as we got across the Ringling Bridge the beach



mysteriously reopened again.

Though relatively short of stature, [Rivers] was respected, James said. "A real man. He meant what he said and said what he meant." And when it came to actively defending the caravans, Rivers was crucial, James said. "He would sometimes demonstrate what he meant, if you didn't understand it.

One white objector to the African American beach-goers was a man who did business with the residents of Newtown.

According to Rivers,

There [were] some people that didn't like what was going on, and one was an insurance [agent]. He...was out there on the beach. When he saw what was happening, he didn't like it either. But he was collecting the insurance fees throughout the black neighborhood. So, when he disagreed with that and kind of acted up, I called his headquarters the next day and told them, "We don't want him back in our neighborhood...collecting money, when he objects..." So, sure enough, they transferred him out of here, and we didn't see him no more. But, from then on, it was just, just fine. People go out to the beach for every little activity. We used to go there. Masons had an annual day... And we would go out there in the morning and round off an area. And then, go back there when all the people, two or three hundred people, would show up there. No problem at all.

## Prevell Barber

### *Participant in the Car Caravans*

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**B:** Uh-huh. You could count the blacks who had a car.

**O:** How about the beach, could you go to the beach? Did you go to the beach at that time?

**B:** No you couldn't go to the beach.

**O:** Why?

**B:** Well that was for the other people, the whites.

**O:** Did you want to go to the beach?

**B:** You was afraid to go.

**O:** What were you afraid of?

**B:** You was afraid they was gonna drown you out there.

**O:** Did you hear about some drowns that occurred? I know Mr. Humphrey's came along later to integrate the beaches.

**B:** Right. I was with that group.

**O:** You were with the group that integrated the beaches? Oh tell me about that story please.

**B:** Well we went out there.

**O:** So I read that you were not allowed and then you organized a group in one car to go and use the beach. Were you in that one car?

**B:** Um-hm.

**O:** That first car that went out there to integrate the beaches, you were in it.

**B:** Um-hm.

**O:** Who else was in the car?

**B:** Ms. Elease Suarez and Mr. Humphrey and myself and it look like her brother-in-law from Key West was in it because he spoke Spanish.

**O:** Okay now who's car was it that you all took?

**B:** It had to be Mr. Humphrey's car.

**O:** Okay why did you all decide to go? Were you afraid?

**B:** Yes, we were afraid.

**O:** But you went anyway because why?

**B:** Well they said God made the water. It wasn't made by man. So it should be exposed to everybody.

**O:** And describe what happened when you went to the beach. Which beach did you go to, Lido Beach or Siesta?

**B:** I believe it was Lido Beach.

**O:** So you drove in the car with the group and you parked and what happened?

**B:** Well we were approached and called all kinds of names.

**O:** In the parking lot?

**B:** Um-hm.

**O:** Did you get out of the car?

**B:** Yeah.

**O:** So you got out of the car and then what, walked to the beach?

**B:** Right.

**O:** Did you get in?

**B:** Yeah.

**O:** You did stick your feet in the water?

**B:** Um-hm.

**O:** Tell me more about what happened that day.  
And what day was it? Was it a Sunday or a Saturday?

**B:** No.

**O:** It was a weekday.

**B:** Mhm-hm.

**O:** So just kinda describe what happened when you went to the beach.

**B:** Well most of it was just name calling.

**O:** How long did you stay that day?

**B:** We didn't stay too long.

**O:** Maybe an hour?

**B:** I don't believe we stayed that long.

**O:** So everybody got into the water?

**B:** Some of them.

**O:** You were one that got into the water?

**B:** Enough under my knees.

**O:** And then you got into the car and left?

**B:** Um-hm.

**O:** Can you describe, were there whites standing at the shore while you were getting into the water?

**B:** Mhm-hm.

**O:** And that's where the name calling happened?

**B:** Mhm-hm.

**O:** And what did it feel like when you were hearing all these names being called of you? Were they using the N-word?

**B:** Oh yeah.

**O:** How was that? How did that feel?

**B:** I had heard it so much, it didn't bother me.

**O:** Then you stayed for less than an hour and then left. So then what happened after that? How did you keep organizing? Because I understand more people started going to the beach with you, explain how that went.

**B:** Well then the others started going.

**O:** More cars of people. Did you go back?

**B:** Yes. I didn't go back for a long time.

**O:** Why?

**B:** I was afraid.

**O:** You didn't want to hear those names continue to be hurled at you.

**B:** Mhm-hm.

**O:** I see, so eventually I understand from my reading that there were many conversations back and forth about whether the beaches were going to be integrated but the black community just kept pushing and pushing. You were a part of that? And then the leaders said, "well we'll build the community a pool." Y'all weren't happy with just the pool. Why?

**B:** Well see God had made all that water.

**O:** All right and so you wanted to be able to enjoy it. Absolutely. And then I read that at first, you were pushing for just a Negro beach. A spot designated for Negroes. And then after getting the NAACP involved from Tampa, they said you can have access to the entire beach, anywhere on the beach that you want to. Not just a part of the beach. You remember that?

**B:** Yeah.

**O:** How did it make you feel when it was integrated and that you could go?

**B:** Well I was so busy that I didn't have much time to go.

**O:** What were you busy doing?

**B:** Well working in the store, working in the church, and teaching. I didn't have much free-time.

**O:** Well I'll tell you what Mrs. Barber, we're really so appreciative that you were in that first car that went. And sacrificed your life and took all of those nasty words, you endured that to enable subsequent generations of African American people to enjoy the beaches in Sarasota. We really really appreciate you for that effort. Did you get involved with any other civil rights moves in Sarasota, say the move to integrate the schools? Were you involved with any of that?

**B:** No.

**O:** You were busy?

**B:** Right.

## Wade Harvin

### *Participant in the Car Caravans*

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**O:** Did you go to the beach like what Robert Taylor was describing? Did you go to Siesta?

**H:** I went to Lido.

**O:** Oh you could go to Lido?

**H:** And my present that day...well doing that you sit in a circle. I watch your back, you watch my back. And I don't know if you know Pam Moreland I wouldn't be sitting here if she hadn't screamed.

**O:** What happened?

**H:** Kid had walked from here to that wall behind me and he had a rock about yey big and he threw it and she just said, "Look out." After I turned to see what she was talking about. And she said, "Look out," I just laid over her. The thing that startled me was not so much that he threw it but that he didn't run. I said, "Now I'm supposed to get up here and do something to this fella." But the rule was you could not participate and meet violence with violence. And I wondered after that, I said, "How many times I've been at meetings in different areas of Sarasota and that kid was there. How many times." And he didn't it, he finally said, "You Ns go back to Newtown." But that was it. He never run, he didn't look angry and he didn't look frightened and that kind of thing stayed with me still.

**O:** You participated in those marches and sit-ins?

**H:** Oh yes.

**O:** Oh we didn't talk about that part of your life, we have to. And who were the people involved? It was through the NAACP?

**H:** NAACP, Neil Humphrey and of course friend Justin, and my wife went with me one. She didn't go with me but she was with the other girls.

**O:** What happened? Where did you go?

**H:** Went to Lido.

**O:** In a car?

**H:** Oh yeah, went in a car. And that's one of the reasons now I still don't go to Lido.

**O:** You don't go to Lido?

**H:** Just because of that memory. It's because of that memory. I always think about it and I don't have to think about it if I don't go. If I don't go to Lido I don't have to think about one incident. It wasn't frightening other than the instructions that you were given, is that you can protect yourself only by ducking. You know it's not, if you see him pick it up and get ready to throw and you have one close to you, you don't do that. It's a non-violent movement and I'll be perfectly frank with you, the first time I heard that thing, I said, "Not for me. Not for me."

**O:** You know we always hear that you don't see black people on the beach or you may not see them in restaurants in Sarasota in large number and all. And I'm beginning to wonder if it's because of—

**H:** Some carry over.

**O:** Yes, some carry over from what happened in days of old. Because we know that many of the offspring of the folks who lived here and grew up here, they left and didn't come back. And the remnant of people who are left remember those times like you. And you're saying that you don't go to Lido anymore. Now there are new blacks here that probably go out and about but they don't have that history like you do. And so those are the few that we see probably around.

## **Jetson Grimes**

*Newtown entrepreneur of 40 years describes swimming in an old railroad tank behind Galilee Cemetery on a summer day when beaches were off limits to black residents.*

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**O:**What did y'all do for fun in the community, Newtown?

**G:**Well you know when I was kid, being a male you more were adventurous. I know we talk about the integration of the beaches, but I learned how to swim at a place where the train came and we used to call it "The Tank." Where at that particular time the train would have to come and fill up with water because they use coal and steam and stuff like that. And that's where they deposit a lot of water. And where the train came, it was the Seaboard Coast Line, it was right behind the graveyard. And what we would do in the afternoon, the kids, we would go and the water was warm you can even swim there because the water would stay warm. And it was just like we was lucky. You almost had to learn how to swim because you was gonna get drowned because it was kinda like a drop off. But that's where I learned how to swim but I can remember just enjoying. I didn't see I was a poor kid because we used to go in the pastures and ride the horses I mean you know. I used to go out and pick blackberries. We had blueberries we used to pick. So the neighborhood was kinda special. It wasn't that we were deprived of a lot because everybody was poor. So you didn't really see an image of you know – you saw people on the other side of town that looked kinda different but in your neighborhood everybody was kinda like equality of just being where you were and how you were there at that particular time.

## **Anthony “Tony” Major**

*University of Central Florida Professor, Newtown resident*

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We could not go to Lido Beach. We could not go to Longboat Key. To go to the beach we either had to go to Venice or all the way up to the Sunshine Skyway and swim. I guess they thought we [were] going to make the sand black, or something. ‘Cause Lido had the whitest sand in the world. It was rated as one of the top beaches with the whitest sand in the world. But we couldn’t swim there.

## **Walter L. Gilbert, III**

*Former Sarasota NAACP President describes Neil Humphrey, Sr.*

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The one guy that really, really made me want to be more involved was Neil Humphrey, Mr. Neil Humphrey. He owned a drug store; it was a little sundry store that sold some of everything, patent medicines, not a pharmacy type drug store. He had the only business like that in our community. Mr. Humphrey was probably 5’5” might’ve weighed 155 lbs., really soft spoken. If he raised his voice you could hardly hear him. I thought he was a meek little man.

But in these NAACP meetings he was fire and brimstone. He was telling us how we’d go down there, what we’d say, how we were to act. He wasn’t having no troubles. I’m looking at all the other people saying “yes sir, Mr. Humphrey.” It changed my perspective. His persona changed right in my face. I wanted to be like this guy, not only business-wise, I wanted to be a leader like him.

My first step in doing something in the leadership vein was at Sarasota High. My father said, “If you’re going to be upfront, be upfront.” At Sarasota High we didn’t feel that we were being treated properly in the lunchroom. We were sitting there; everyone was talking about it. I said, “Let’s get up, and we won’t eat lunch in here anymore.” Everybody said, “OK.” I said, “OK, let’s go.” Everybody just came. We had a strike at the lunchroom for a week and 1/2 before they decided to bring us in and talk to us. They actually appointed Fredd Atkins and I to the Student Council.

People [white staff] in lunchroom service treated us bad. It went on for a year or so. The other thing, we didn’t have any black cheerleaders although the football team was black. We had a bunch of grievances. We got the kids on the football team [I was a member of the team] to say they wouldn’t play anymore. So what the Missouri team did was nothing new. They gave us two cheerleaders. They changed the process in the lunchroom. We had the meetings to talk about this at my mom’s house. She encouraged us. In fact, while we were striking, she brought us lunch to the school because we wouldn’t go into the lunchroom. That was my first action. We were empowered. We were never afraid.



In the 1930s, Newtown residents began challenging the unwritten rules that had long kept blacks away from Sarasota's beaches. The so-called "beach caravans" of 1935 defied racial segregation of the beaches, though public officials sought to avoid the issue by, among other things, building a city pool in Newtown. The photo above is from a story that ran in the Herald-Tribune in 1935. It said about 100 blacks came to Lido Key Beach in a 19-car caravan. PROVIDED BY THE SARASOTA COUNTY HISTORICAL RESOURCES CENTER

## They couldn't arrest us. But they did everything they could to keep us out.

**AN CUMMINGS**  
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**SARASOTA** — For some kids, going swimming on a hot summer afternoon once meant going to the cemetery.

The easy part was getting there, walking in the sunshine through the gates of Gallie Cemetery on U.S. 301. (The back edge of the property, over by a train tracks, the young swimmers jumped into an old railroad tank set into the sand. It was filled with cold water, and deep enough for diving.)

The creepy part came when the sun went down and they'd make the long, cold walk home.

ing trains, it wasn't exactly safe. Even in the 1940s, it was nobody's idea of a great place for children.

Still, it was all they had.

Back then, in the days of segregation, black residents risked trouble almost any time they stepped outside the Newtown community. There were rules against walking downtown after dark, using certain water fountains, or trying on shoes in a Main Street shop.

And Newtown had no beaches.

Only nine miles away, others enjoyed the best beach in America, as Siesta Key has sometimes been called. The white sands of Lido were even closer. But for the kids

**ABOVE:** A group of young people visit a beach on Longboat Key back in the 1940s. For many years, undeveloped stretches on the key were destinations for black residents barred from the more popular beaches. PROVIDED BY JAMES ARCHER

**ONLINE**  
To read more on Newtown and see photos, videos and a timeline of events, visit [www.HeraldTribune.com/Newtown100](http://www.HeraldTribune.com/Newtown100)



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## Reason 3: Victims of Lynching Memorialized in Sarasota

A Sarasota organization joined the Equal Justice Initiative's effort to share stories about victims of lynching. Attorney and EJI founder Bryan Stephenson presented a keynote speech in Sarasota to a group of attorneys at a fundraising dinner. Afterwards, Manasota Remembers formed with a mission to participate in "a larger project to create an era of restorative truth-telling and justice that changes the consciousness of our nation." Volunteers worked with Sarasota County students on an essay contest; then a committee formed to develop and install a historic marker about lynching. The search for a marker site consumed the most time. Fundraising ensued.

Today, Sarasota is among only eight cities in Florida to recognize victims of lynching. A community remembrance marker was installed on property owned by the Unitarian Universalist Church. It honors the lives of six Black men who were lynched when Sarasota was a part of Manatee County.

- Henry Thomas – March 8, 1903
- Sam Ellis – March 7, 1910
- Wade Ellis – March 7, 1910
- Ruddy – March 8, 1910
- William English – July 1, 1912
- James Franklin – April 4, 1934\*

*\*after Sarasota separated from Manatee County.*

Another victim, Lewis Jackson was listed in the NAACP book, *Thirty Years of Lynching*. Manasota Remembers partnered with a collection of community organizations such as the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition and Newtown Alive to present to the public a memorial ceremony and marker unveiling.

Between the end of the Civil War and the end of World War II, thousands of African Americans were lynched in the United States in violent and public acts of torture that traumatized Black communities locally and throughout the country. The incidences, largely tolerated by state and federal officials, peaked between 1880 and 1940 and represented some of the most brutal violence in American history. The stories about Manatee and Sarasota lynching victims:

## **Henry Thomas**

Parrish, Manatee County, Florida, March 8, 1903

On March 6, 1903, a white girl was sent by her parents in Parrish, Florida to run an errand at a nearby farm. The girl returned home and claimed that during the trip a Black man attempted to embrace and then kiss her. The man then allegedly followed her home and threatened the girl and mother with a gun.

As these allegations spread, a mob formed and focused their suspicion on Henry Thomas, a black man. Reports do not indicate why Mr. Thomas was targeted, but the mob declared their intent to lynch Mr. Thomas before the legal system could or would act. They roamed Manatee County for two days.

On March 8, Henry Thomas was captured near Hickman's sawmill by a white man who claimed he planned to turn Mr. Thomas over to law enforcement. The mob found Mr. Thomas and abducted him for lynching. Although the mob coerced Mr. Thomas to "tremblingly admit" that he had hugged and kissed the girl, Mr. Thomas denied the allegation of rape and maintained his innocence.

The mob took Mr. Thomas to the garden where the alleged assault occurred and proceeded to lynch him. There is no evidence that anyone involved in the lynching of Mr. Thomas was ever held accountable.

Days later, on March 11, The Tampa Tribune reported that the sheriff had received photographs of Mr. Thomas's murder. Despite photographic evidence and many eyewitnesses, local law enforcement and prosecutors granted impunity to the members of the mob.

## **Mr. Ruddy, Sam Ellis, and Wade Ellis**

Palmetto, Manatee County, Florida, March 6-7, 1910

In March 1910, a mob of white men led by law enforcement lynched three Black men over the course of two days in Manatee County, Florida.

On March 6, 1910, a Black man named Mr. Ruddy was lynched following racial violence sparked by a conflict over wages. He was a contract employee.

This dispute between Mr. Ruddy and his boss escalated into a shootout that ended with Ruddy's boss fatally wounded. A deputy sheriff led the mob – with no legal authority – to find Mr. Ruddy.

After his murder, Mr. Ruddy's body was found abandoned near a swamp at his home; no one was held accountable for killing him. Contemporary newspapers reported only his last name. A white man later reported to the sheriff that during the search, he killed Mr. Ruddy. Mr. Ruddy had run for cover in palmetto trees near his home before deciding to act in self defense. When he did so, the man reportedly shot Mr. Ruddy multiple times and left his body abandoned in a swamp near his home, which was later found by the mob.

On Sunday, March 6, 1910, the deputy and mob hunting Mr. Ruddy arrived at the home of Sam and Wade Ellis. The Ellis brothers had no involvement in the death, but were soon accused of interference during the search.

The brothers were killed. No one was charged with their deaths.

## **Will English**

Bradenton, Manatee County, Florida, July 2, 1912

According to a 1910 Census of Manatee County, Florida, a 20-year-old Black man named Willie English was living in Manatee working as a teamster and living in the home of his step-father Henry Oliver, and mother Mollie Oliver. On July 2, 1912, a mob abducted him from the Manatee County Jail in Bradenton, Florida and lynched him.

A white woman had complained that Mr. English had spoken to her in a way she found insulting. Though press accounts provided no further information about the reported conversation between Mr. English and the woman, law enforcement arrested Mr. English, and he was placed in the Manatee County Jail.

The Tampa Tribune reported that after Mr. English was placed in jail, a mob of at least 40 white men from “the various river towns” came and surrounded the county jail close to midnight on July 1 intent on lynching Mr. English.

When the jailer on duty realized the mob was besieging the jail, he resisted, firing upon the mob and demanding they desist. Nevertheless, in a brazen display of disregard for the constitutional rights of Mr. English, the mob opened fire on the jail, broke through the door, confiscated the keys from the jailer, kidnapped Mr. English.

Willie English was shot to death before being hung from a tree.

The Tampa Tribune printed an article the day after Mr. English was lynched stating that the mob killed him “as a warning to others”. In the end, no one was held accountable for the lynching of Willie English.

## **James Franklin**

Bradenton, Manatee County, Florida, April 4, 1934

James Franklin was a middle-aged Black man who worked as a yardman in the City of Bradenton. Little is known about his life in Bradenton and whether he had a family. On March 31, Mr. Franklin was working near a citrus farm when he witnessed a young white girl fall to the ground from a tree. He attempted to help, but after the accident the girl told her father that Mr. Franklin assaulted her.

Police officers searched the city for several days before locating and arresting Mr. Franklin who was working. He denied the claims of assault.

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## Reason 4: Baseball Legend John “Buck” O’Neil

*“Sometimes, I think God may have kept me on this Earth for a long time so I could bear witness to the Negro Leagues.” - Buck O’Neil*

John “Buck” O’Neil is a baseball legend and national treasure. His contributions to baseball spans eight decades. He masterfully identified talent, was a skilled coach and player who broke down barriers for others; and Buck’s mission in life was to honor the legacy of the Negro Leagues.

His story and rise to prominence took root in Sarasota’s Overtown and Newtown communities where he grew up climbing fences to watch baseball greats play during spring training. Buck’s father worked in the celery fields and played baseball. The little boy retrieved balls for local teams as a bat boy.

### Quick Facts

- **Born Nov. 13, 1911, in Carrabelle, Florida.** He watched his dad John Jordan O’Neil play local baseball and traveled with him.
- **The O’Neil family moved to Sarasota** around 1920 where his childhood was spent.
- **Major league teams held spring training in the area.** Buck saw Babe Ruth hit a home run while watching the game through a fence.
- **O’Neil was not allowed to enroll at Sarasota High School** because he was Black.
- **He attended Edward Waters College** in Jacksonville.
- **O’Neil started in semipro ball**, then spent time with barnstorming and minor league clubs.
- **He broke into the Negro American League** with the Memphis Red Sox in 1937.
- **He was a Kansas City Monarchs first baseman in 1938** and remained there for nearly two decades.
- **The Monarchs captured four consecutive Negro American League pennants** in the Negro League World Series in 1942 (1939-42).
- **O’Neil was drafted into the Navy** and stepped away from baseball in 1943.

## Quick Facts

- **He returned to baseball in 1946**, the year Kansas City reached the World Series again.
- **O'Neil was named Monarchs player-manager from 1948 - 1955**. He discovered and developed future Black baseball players (i.e. Elston Howard was the Yankees first Black player).
- **O'Neil became a scout for the Chicago Cubs in 1955**. He signed future big leaguer Oscar Gamble and future Hall of Famer Lou Brock.
- **The Cubs promoted O'Neil to their major league coaching staff in 1962**. He was the first Black coach to serve on an American or National League roster.
- **He returned to scouting in 1964 and later signed future Hall of Famer Lee Smith** before the Royals brought him back to Kansas City as a scout in 1988.
- **O'Neil created a permanent museum to honor the legacy of the Negro Leagues**. The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum was established in 1990. O'Neil was chairman.
- **17 Negro League legends were inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2006**; O'Neil spoke on their behalf at the Induction Ceremony.
- **Less than three months later, on Oct. 6, 2006**, O'Neil passed away at 94 years old.
- **O'Neil was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom** by President George W. Bush.
- **In 2008, a Buck O'Neil statue was dedicated in the Hall of Fame**, and the Buck O'Neil Lifetime Achievement Award was established. The award honors "an individual whose extraordinary efforts enhanced baseball's positive impact on society, broadened the game's appeal, and whose character, integrity and dignity are comparable to the qualities exhibited by O'Neil." There is a Buck O'Neil spring training facility in Sarasota.
- **O'Neil was inducted** into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame in 2022.

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## **Reason 5: The list of historic resources produced about Sarasota's African American community for public use is expansive and increasing.**

**For over 100 years, African American residents played a major role in the development of Sarasota.** Black labor cleared snake infested land for real estate developers, laid railroad ties, harvested celery, helped plat golf courses and labored in the homes of Sarasota's influential power brokers cooking, cleaning, ironing and rearing children.

Historians, a cultural anthropologist, architectural historians, and a preservationist joined volunteers in combing the area's archives and repositories to collect information about Newtown and Overtown's history in 2015 to the present. The Newtown Conservation Historic District project was funded by the City of Sarasota and led by Vickie Oldham.

Residents shared their photographs, documents, and memorabilia.

The research team pieced together an almost forgotten history and produced the following resources for the public's use:

- Research report with over 400 primary and secondary source documents
- Colson Hotel preservation
- Oral history interviews
- Documentaries
- Podcast series
- 15 historic markers
- A Newtown Alive website
- Trolley tours
- Book
- WBTT theatrical play (3rd graders)
- Leonard Reid House renovation and tours
- Downtown murals
- Festivals
- Bronze bust of Black educator Dorothye Smith
- Speakers' series
- Marketing materials



## **Reason 6: Sarasota's Overtown and Newtown Historic Districts.**

- The Florida Department of State's Historic Preservation Office has approved the Newtown community of Sarasota for federal designation to the National Registry of Historic Places as the Newtown Historic District.
- Once approved, the African American Historic District designation of Newtown by the U.S. Department of the Interior will mean that the neighborhood has the largest, by the number of contributing structures, of any African American Historic District in the State of Florida.
- Overtown/Rosemary District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.



## **Reason 7: Historic Leonard Reid House, the first home of the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition is a contributing structure of Overtown, list on the National Register of Historic Places.**

- Leonard Reid and his wife Eddy, original owners of the house, played a significant role in the development of Sarasota's African American community, its growth and evolution from the time of his arrival in 1900 until his death in 1952.
- The Reid House is historically significant because of its existence for close to 100 years, and the family's work in establishing Payne Chapel AME Church (the second Black church in Sarasota), and Reid's leadership in several fraternal organizations in the city.
- The one-story wood Frame Vernacular residential building is important because it provides a visible reminder of a well-preserved example of the most common architectural style of the homes of Sarasota's early African American residents in the community in which they lived.
- The importance of the Reid House is greater because many similar structures have been lost due to deterioration or demolition.
- The structure's notable features: a low-pitched front-facing gable roof with exposed rafter ends; side cross-gable extension; a front-end porch and two end, exterior brick chimney stacks.
- Frame Vernacular is defined as the common wood frame construction technique of lay or self-taught builders.

- Frame Vernacular is defined as the common wood frame construction technique of lay or self-taught builders.
- Reid's daughters Ethel Reid Hayes and Viola Reid obtained a college education and played a significant role in the lives of Black children. The women taught children in a pioneering preschool program located in the Newtown community.

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4. But Your World and My World, 2.
5. "Leonard Reid Family House."



**Reason 8: Art collectors and donors gifted the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition, Inc. with a large collection of limited-edition prints by Harlem Renaissance artists, Florida Highwaymen artists and a collection of rare black and white photographs by African American photographer James Van Der Zee. Partial list of artwork:**

- Romare Bearden's "Tenor Sermon"
- Jacob Lawrence's "Grand Performers"
- Dawoud Bey's "A Woman and Two Boys Passing"
- Sanford Biggers' "Seven Heavens"
- Judy Bowden's "Mom in Harlem"
- Faith Ringgold's "Born in the USA"



**Reason 9: The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) founded by Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black History" is a national organization and has an active branch in Sarasota.**

- ASALH has the largest chapter of members in Sarasota who are generous donors to SAACC.
- A past ASALH national president is a SAACC board member.
- In 1926, Dr. Woodson initiated the celebration of Negro History Week. The celebration was expanded in 1976 to include the month of February. It is one of the most important components of advancing Dr. Woodson's legacy.



## **Reason 10: SAACC, Newtown Alive and its founder have received awards for their history work.**

- Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation honors “Reid House adaptive reuse project.”
- Florida Trust for Historic Preservation’s “outstanding achievement” honor.
- Vickie Oldham was named the 2020 Voice of Tourism by Visit Sarasota County.
- Preservation Coalition of Sarasota County.
- Colson Hotel was placed on the “6 to Save” list of historic structures.
- SAACC is listed on the African American Civil Rights Network.
- Association of African American Museums member.
- Vickie Oldham was an invited conference speaker at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Colson Hotel’s approval on the “11 Most Endangered Historic Buildings” list is pending.



## Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

Availability of land for new construction, or availability of existing facilities for renovation and adaptive reuse.

With a grant provided by the Sarasota City Commission, in 2019, the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) recruited local and national architects and museum consultants to begin a review of possible sites suitable for a new African American history, arts, and culture museum. One of the sites studied was Marian Anderson Place, a 13-acre tract near the southeast corner of N. Washington Boulevard (Highway 301) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Way.

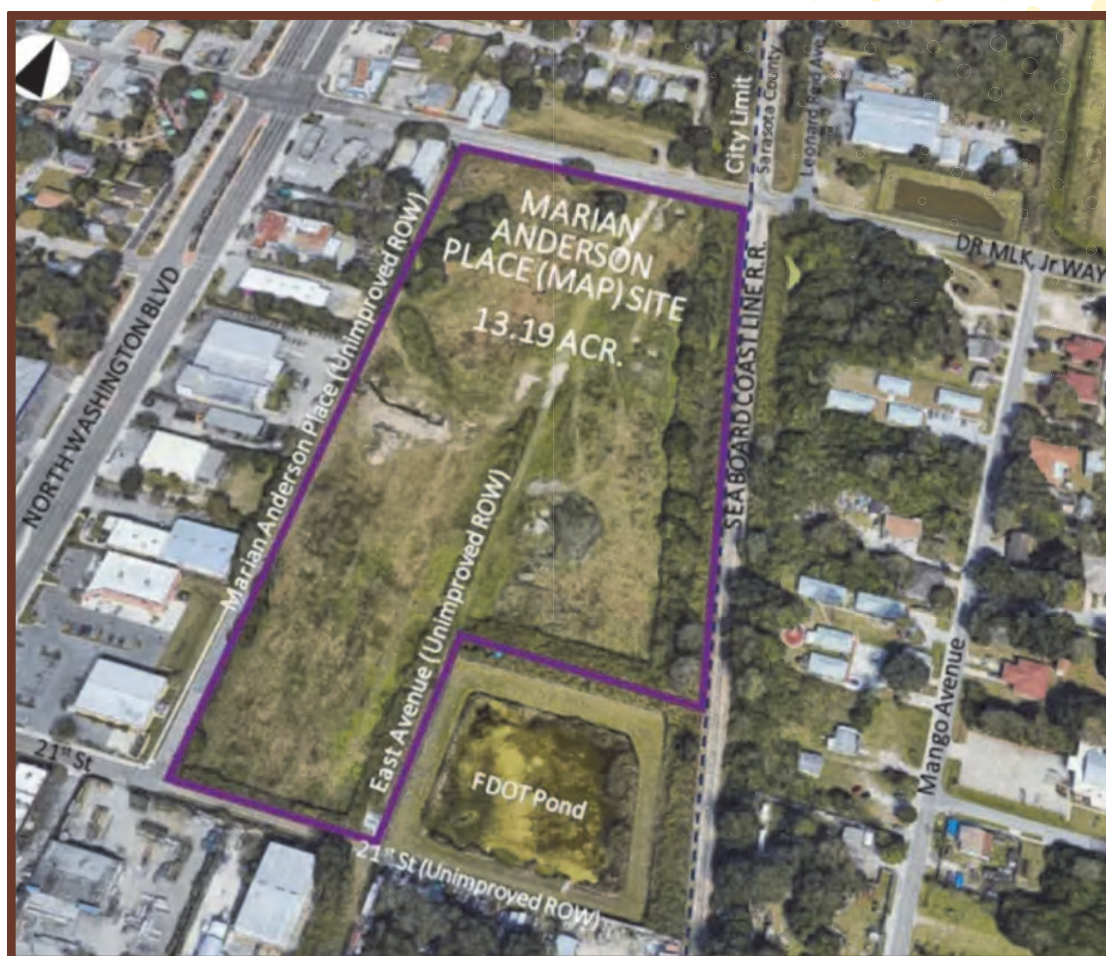


Figure 1 Aerial View of Marian Anderson Place

The site is bounded on the north by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Way, on the east by the Seaboard Coastline railroad, on the south by 21st Street and on the west by Marian Anderson Place. Although this site scored high marks in the review process, it was not available for acquisition at the time. However, through a collaboration between SAACC and the current property owner, Newtown Gateway, LLC, SAACC proposes Marian Anderson Place as the site for the new Florida Museum of Black History. This property is available and prime for the development of a new museum.

The 13-acre tract will allow the appropriate size and scale for the new Florida Black History Museum. It has both the size and scale to allow ample parking with the ability for expansion of the facility and parking area in the future. It can accommodate both indoor and outdoor events of varying sizes (large and small) as well as exterior interpretive spaces such as a sculpture garden and contemplative settings for a fully immersive experience.

### Scale of new construction or renovations

Because of its size, 13 acres, Marian Anderson Place is an ideal location for the scale of the proposed Florida Museum of Black History. It can easily accommodate all requirements for the new structure and future expansion and only needs a portion of the larger site—approximately 4 acres. This size also allows enough area for ample parking and on-site storm water management.



Figure 2 Aerial of site showing the portion dedicated for the museum

**Envisioned was a facility that would be between 25,000 and 30,000 square feet and would include:**

- Large lobby that could also accommodate small receptions and talks
- Gift shop
- Exhibit space for permanent collections
- Exhibit space for changing and/or traveling exhibits
- Multipurpose event space for large gatherings- banquets, conferences, training, etc. up to 500 people
- Full commercial kitchen
- Black box performing arts theater
- Archival storage
- Research facilities, including visiting scholars' library
- Educational spaces
- Meeting rooms
- Sculpture garden and courtyard
- Roof terrace
- Administrative offices

The site study commissioned by the City of Sarasota included the development of a program for a museum that would be a multipurpose facility to better facilitate the generation of self-sustaining revenues through programming and use of the building and grounds.

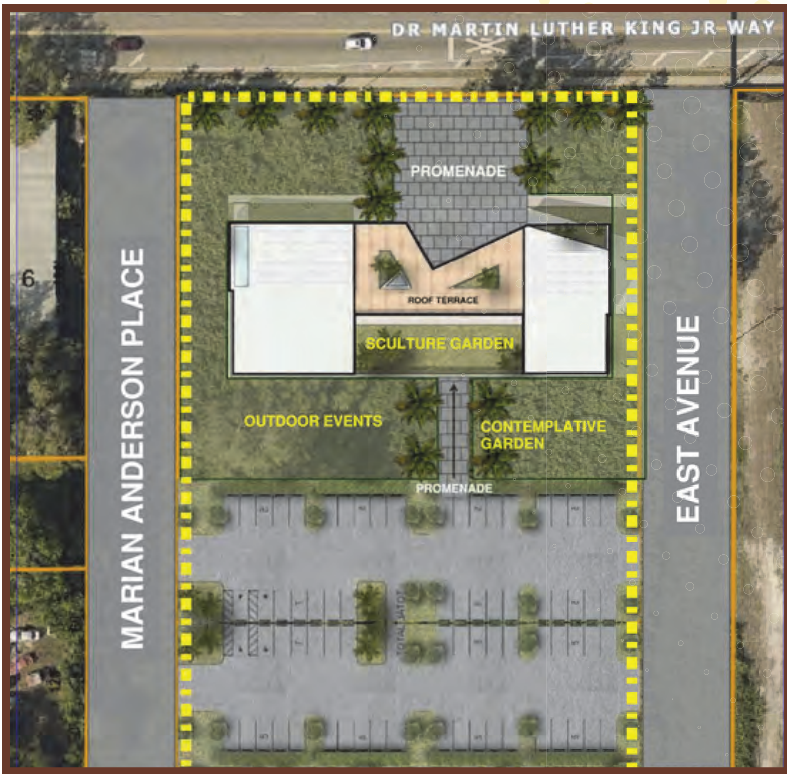


Figure 3 Site context for new museum



Figure 4 Artist's Rendering: Exterior



Figure 5 Artist's Rendering: Roof Terrace



*Figure 6 Artist's Rendering:  
Sculpture Garden*

### **Adaptability of location for site access and parking needs**

The proposed site, Marian Anderson Place is highly visible and easily accessible from both N. Washington Blvd. and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way. There are two (2) entry points from Dr. King Jr. Way, Marian Anderson Place and East Avenue. The site is located less than one block from N. Washington Blvd., a major arterial with access to downtown Sarasota and points south, Bradenton and I-275 to the north. I-75 to the east can be easily accessed from either University Parkway or Fruitville Road, both of which are connected by N. Washington Blvd. Dr. King, Jr. Way is a major urban connector thoroughway that runs east-west with access to Tamiami Trail 1 mile west of the proposed site.

The site is large enough to accommodate both initial and long-term parking needs.

Recent streetscape improvements made on Dr. King Jr. Way include bike lanes, improved intersections, new landscaping, and more easily walkable streets. Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) offers public transportation with access along Dr. King Jr. Way.

Because of its visibility, the new Florida Museum of Black History on this site will become a gateway to Sarasota from the north along N. Washington (301), bookending the planned gateway development by Ringling College near Tamiami Trail, approximately 1 mile west.

#### **Proximity to amenities within a 1-mile radius**

- Historic Newtown Community
- Public Library
- Booker High School
- West Coast Black Theater Troupe
- Sarasota's African American History Trail (on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail)
- Historic Leonard Reid House (Current home of SAACC)
- Ringling College
- Community Center

#### **Proximity to amenities within a 2-mile radius**

- Sarasota-Bradenton Airport (SRQ)
- Ringling Museum
- Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
- Overtown/Rosemary District
- Arts and Theater District
- The Bay Conservancy
- Sarasota Bay
- John Ringling Causeway
- Downtown Sarasota





# Criteria 3: Regional Economy: Data

## Talent Supply and Education

The data below will demonstrate that Sarasota County has a vibrant educational system and talent supply. Specifically, each of the data points below highlight that Sarasota County is doing just as well or exceeding the State of Florida's overall performance. Sarasota County's educational system ensures that the youth population is well educated, but it also creates a skilled and readied pipeline of workers for the local economy.

- **Kindergarten Readiness: 57%**
- **State of Florida: 51%**

The Florida Department of Education adopted a statewide kindergarten screening instrument that assesses the readiness of each student for kindergarten based on the performance standards. A score of 500 or higher on the Star Early Literacy assessment administered to kindergarten students during the first 30 days of the school year indicates a student is "ready for kindergarten."

- **3rd Grade Math Scores: 70%**
- **State of Florida: 50%**

Math: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 3rd Grade Math Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond) Standards Assessment.

- **3rd Grade Reading Scores: 61%**
- **State of Florida: 59%**

Reading: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 3rd Grade English Language Arts Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond).

- **8th Grade Math Scores: 54%**
- **State of Florida: 55%**

Math: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 8th Grade Math Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond).

- **8th Grade Reading Scores: 55%**
- **State of Florida: 47%**

Reading: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 8th Grade English Language Arts Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (Academic Year 22-23 and beyond).

- **8th Grade Science Scores: 55%**
- **State of Florida: 44%**

Science: The percentage of students who achieved Level 3 or Above in the 8th Grade Statewide Science Assessment.

- **Highschool Graduation Rate: 90.3%**
- **State of Florida: 88%**

Degree Attainment:

- **Bachelor+: 38.3%**
- **State of Florida: 32.2%**

The percentages of the population age 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher.

- **AA+: 47.8%**
- **State of Florida: 42.4%**

AA+: Percentage of Floridians aged 25 and older who have at least an Associate's Degree.

- **Unemployment Rate: 3.4%**
- **State of Florida: 3.1%**

**Percentage of unemployed individuals in an economy among individuals currently in the labor force.**

It is calculated as  $\text{Unemployed Individuals} / \text{Total Labor Force} \times 100$  where unemployed individuals are those who are currently not working but are actively seeking work.

### **Innovation and Economic Development**

This section highlights Sarasota County's vibrant economy. In 2022, there were nearly 10,000 new startup businesses in the county. Coincidentally, almost half of all businesses in the county are "small businesses." Even more so, migration to Sarasota County has resulted in over \$2 billion in Adjusted Gross Income change.

- **Business Start Ups: 9,705**

Number of businesses started in Sarasota County in 2022.

- **Percent Small Business: 44.7%**

Percentage of businesses that operate with less than 100 employees.

- **Income Migration: \$2,326.84 (in Millions per year)**

The amount of Adjusted Gross Income this county gains or loses each year from people migrating into and out of the county.

### **Infrastructure and growth Leadership**

The data points below highlight the effectiveness and readiness of County Infrastructure, but also demonstrate the continued growth in the County. With regard to land conservation and high-speed communications, Sarasota County exceeds levels of the State of Florida. Meanwhile, Sarasota's recent population estimates and forecasts depict continued growth in the county.

- **Land In Conservation: 32%**
- **State of Florida: 31%**

This is the total of local, state, federal and private acres of conservation land, divided by the county area in acres -- January 2022.

- **High Speed Communications: 97.9%**
- **State of Florida: 96.3%**

Percentage of residents with access to 100Mbps broadband.

- **Population (April 1st, 2022): 452.38 thousand**
- **Population Estimate 2030: 501,200 – 551,300**

*Recent and forecast total individuals in the county.*

### **Business Climate and Competitiveness**

Regarding the business climate and competitiveness, optional sales tax revenue has continued to grow since 2020. An increase in sales tax will allow for governments to increase their revenues and in turn increase their expenditures for public programs. Turning attention to homeowners' insurance affordability, Sarasota County is competitively increasing its standing as the 24th best county out of 63 counties.

- **Local Option Sales Tax Revenue 2022: \$99.36 (Million per year)**
- **Local Option Sales Tax Revenue 2021: \$80.59 (Million per year)**
- **Local Option Sales Tax Revenue 2020: \$72.19 (Million per year)**

This is the amount of Local Option Sales Taxes collected by fiscal year. Discretionary sales surtax, also called a local option county tax, is imposed by most Florida counties, and applies to most transactions subject to sales tax.

- **Homeowners' Insurance Affordability: #24 (Out of all 63 counties)**

The Index ranks homeowners' insurance affordability for each county by comparing insurance premiums to the level of income for the county's households. The county with the most affordable homeowners' insurance is ranked #1 and the least affordable county's ranking is #67. The Index is updated quarterly with new insurance premium information and updated as new household income measures are released for Florida Counties.

### **Civics and Governance**

Focusing on civics and governance, Sarasota County has a much higher level of voter participation in comparison to the State of Florida. This high level of voter participation highlights Sarasota County's astounding community engagement and interaction. Regarding the Inmate Population, Sarasota County's low level of incarceration demonstrates the safety and well-being of the county.

- **Voter Participation: 80.1%**
- **State of Florida: 54%**

Percentage of registered voters that vote, by year.

- **Inmate population: 6**
- **State of Florida: 112,659**

### **Estimated Inmate Population for individual Florida counties as of April 1, 2020.**

### **Quality of Life**

Sarasota County is known for its high quality of life with a myriad of beaches, amazing amenities, and beautiful neighborhoods. While these aspects are great, Sarasota County's quality of life is much more. For example, Sarasota County has a lower poverty rate and "children in poverty" rate than the State of Florida. Not only is the poverty rate lower, but the Per Capita Income in Sarasota County exceeds the State of Florida by nearly \$15,000. On top of these poverty and income statistics, Sarasota County has nearly 300 less criminal incidents reported per 100,000 individuals.

- **Poverty Rate: 8.1%**
- **State of Florida: 12.9%**

The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered in poverty. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U).

- **Children in Poverty: 12.2%/ 7,302**
- **State of Florida: 12.9%**

Percentage of children in families that fall under the poverty threshold.

- **Per Capita Income: \$78,815**
- **State of Florida: \$63,597**

Per Capita Income reflects the amount of money earned per person in a geographical region. The per capita personal income obtained through wages, proprietors' income, dividends, interest, rents, and government benefits. The figure is based on incomes for those living in the area, not necessarily working in the area.

- **Crime Data: 1,659**
- **State of Florida: 1,952**

The number of crimes reported per 100,000 citizens. Data includes both property crimes and violent crimes.

**Source: Florida Chamber of Commerce. "State of Florida Metrics." Florida Scorecard, 2023, [thefloridascorecard.org/](https://thefloridascorecard.org/).**

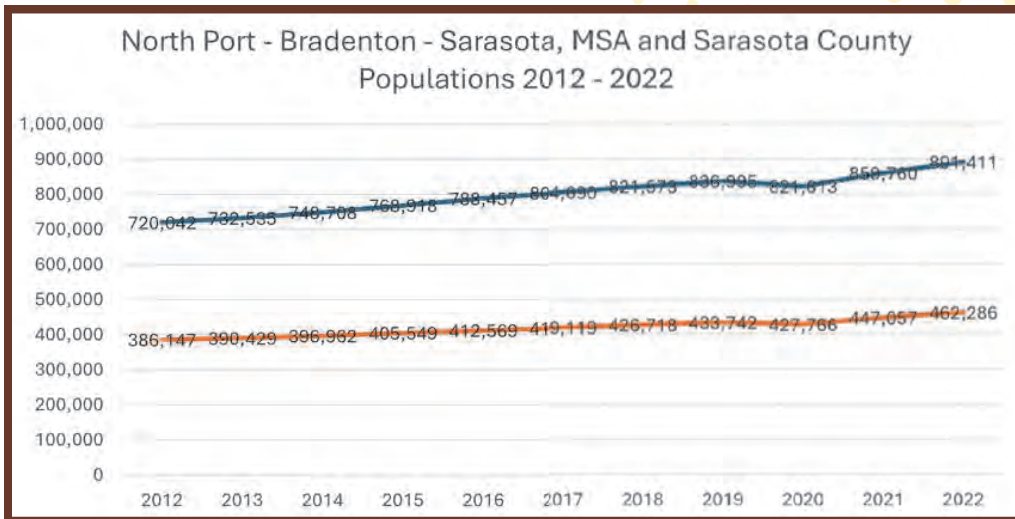
**<https://thefloridascorecard.org/>.**



# Criteria 4: Regional Demographics

## Population Characteristics:

The population of Sarasota County and the North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA has grown extensively from 2012-2022. This means that there are more consumers, producers, and workforce available in the county, which leads to greater economic activity. Specifically, from 2012-2022 the MSA has grown by over 170,000 individuals and Sarasota County has increased in population by 75,000 (See Graph and Table Below).



Year	Population	Sarasota County
2012	720,042	386,147
2013	732,535	390,429
2014	748,708	396,962
2015	768,918	405,549
2016	788,457	412,569
2017	804,690	419,119
2018	821,573	426,718
2019	836,995	433,742
2020	821,613	427,766
2021	859,760	447,057
2022	891,411	462,286

## Education:

Regarding education, Sarasota County and the MSA are outperforming the state on a myriad of the metrics presented in the table below. For example, the MSA and the County have a higher percentage of high school and bachelor's degree attainment for those over 25 years old, than the State of Florida. Meanwhile, for the 18- to 24-year-old population, Sarasota County independently outperforms the State of Florida with bachelors and associate degrees. (See next page)

	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA		Sarasota County		State of Florida	
2022	Total Estimate	Percent	Total Estimate	Percent	Total Estimate	Percent
<b>AGE BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Population 18 to 24 years	52,442	(X)	26,697	(X)	1,845,519	(X)
Less than high school graduate	7,699	14.70%	2,592	9.7%	229,379	12.4%
Highschool graduate (includes equivalency)	20,223	38.60%	8,575	32.1%	638,736	34.6%
Some college or associate's degree	19,166	36.50%	10,939	41.0%	754,968	40.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5,354	10.20%	4,591	17.2%	222,436	12.1%
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	<b>659,287</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>372,225</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>16,104,410</b>	<b>(X)</b>
Less than 9th grade	17,479	2.70%	6,843	1.8%	679,435	4.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	31,805	4.80%	14,543	3.9%	943,495	5.9%
Highschool graduate (includes equivalency)	182,970	27.80%	97,596	26.2%	4,363,609	27.1%
Some college, no degree	129,875	19.70%	70,157	18.8%	2,955,638	18.4%
Associate's degree	61,457	9.30%	31,720	8.5%	1,643,815	10.2%
Bachelor's degree	138,460	21.00%	86,559	23.3%	3,445,343	21.4%
Graduate or professional degree	97,241	14.70%	64,807	17.4%	2,073,075	12.9%
Highschool graduate or higher	610,003	92.50%	350,839	94.3%	14,481,480	89.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	235,701	35.80%	151,366	40.7%	5,518,418	34.3%
<b>Population 25 to 34 years</b>	<b>78,205</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>37,491</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>2,783,761</b>	<b>(X)</b>
High school graduate or higher	72,627	92.90%	35,147	93.7%	2,556,448	91.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	23,941	30.60%	13,911	37.1%	1,024,580	36.8%
<b>Population 35 to 44 years</b>	<b>79,794</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>39,865</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>2,799,499</b>	<b>(X)</b>
Highschool graduate or higher	71,466	89.60%	36,726	92.1%	2,528,694	90.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	28,569	35.80%	12,913	32.4%	1,053,736	37.6%
<b>Population 45 to 64 years</b>	<b>223,117</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>120,541</b>	<b>(X)</b>	<b>5,726,736</b>	<b>(X)</b>
High school graduate or higher	205,353	92.00%	112,124	93.0%	5,161,026	90.1%
Bachelor's degree or higher	75,297	33.70%	47,021	39.0%	1,898,957	33.2%
Population 65 years and over	278,171	(X)	174,328	(X)	4,794,414	(X)
Highschool graduate or higher	260,557	93.70%	166,842	95.7%	(X)	(X)
Bachelor's degree or higher	107,894	38.80%	77,521	44.5%	(X)	(X)

### Economy and Business:

The current census data (2019-2021) shows that Sarasota County and the MSA are both growing in the number of establishments. The growth or decrease in the number of establishments is an alternative economic indicator to demonstrate the economic well-being of a geographical area. The continued growth of Sarasota County and the MSA depict a growing and healthy economy.

	Sarasota County	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA
Year	Number of Establishments	
2019	14,331	23,843
2020	14,480	24,240
2021	15,198	25,584

### Income and Poverty:

The chart below highlights household income for Sarasota County, the MSA, and the State of Florida. Generally, Sarasota County and the MSA have less households that are in the lower income brackets than the State of Florida. In conjunction, the County and MSA also have a greater percentage of households in the highest income bracket. Additionally, median, and mean incomes in the County and MSA outpace the State of Florida.

	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA	Sarasota County	State of Florida
Label	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Total	391,897	215,125	8,826,394
Less than \$10,000	4.70%	4.1%	5.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.70%	2.8%	3.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6.30%	6.3%	7.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	8.20%	8.0%	8.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10.70%	10.1%	11.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.20%	16.8%	17.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.00%	14.1%	13.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.40%	18.7%	16.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7.30%	6.2%	7.7%
\$200,000 or more	11.60%	12.9%	9.5%
Median income (dollars)	75,631	78,341	69,303
Mean income (dollars)	109,074	116,410	99,349

### Geography (land area, density, etc.)

The Census Bureau does not report geographical indicators. Criteria 5 will include geographic data and information.



**Age:**

While Sarasota might have previously been known as an older or retirement community, the data highlights that the region has a demographic composition that is diverse in age. Having a population composition that is diverse in age will allow for the population to engage in a wide range of activities.

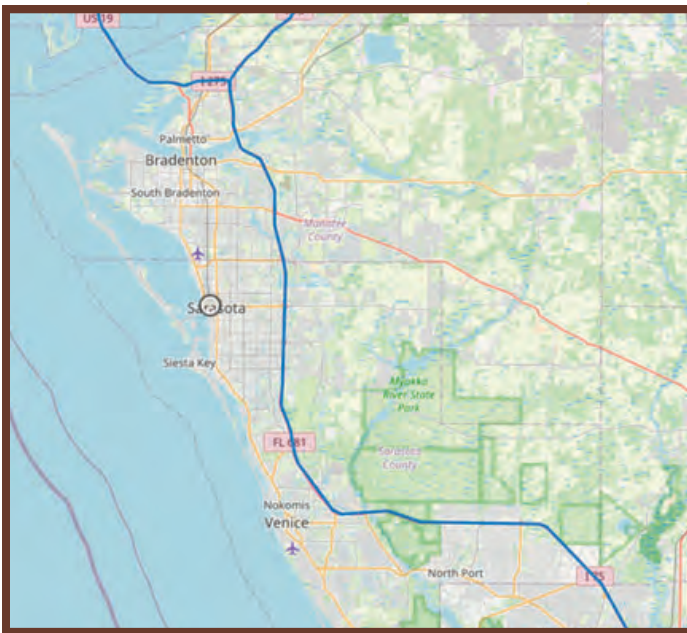
2022	Total	
Label	North Port-Bradenton-Sarasota, MSA	Sarasota County
Total population	891,411	462,286
<b>AGE</b>		
Under 5 years	32,840	14,417
5 to 9 years	37,336	16,957
10 to 14 years	40,802	19,908
15 to 19 years	39,732	18,533
20 to 24 years	39,801	20,246
25 to 29 years	40,329	18,322
30 to 34 years	42,346	19,169
35 to 39 years	40,928	20,005
40 to 44 years	44,724	19,860
45 to 49 years	43,841	21,027
50 to 54 years	55,176	28,027
55 to 59 years	63,614	31,313
60 to 64 years	71,745	40,174
65 to 69 years	80,131	46,366
70 to 74 years	69,509	38,746
75 to 79 years	74,307	43,701
80 to 84 years	40,425	24,528
85 years and over	33,825	20,987
<b>SUMMARY INDICATORS</b>		
Median age (years)	53.9	57.5



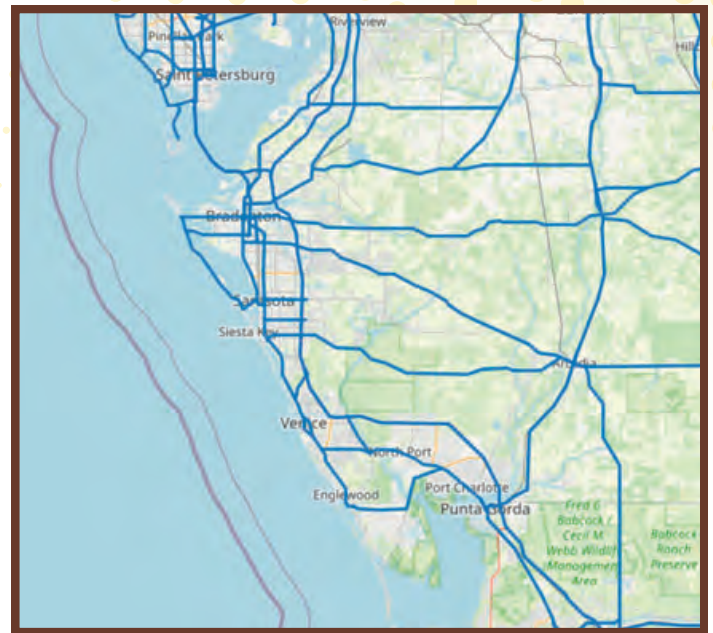
# Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure

## Existing Interstate Highways

Sarasota County's highway infrastructure is a primary driver in the County's ability to develop. Specifically, Interstate I-75, pictured below, runs through all of Sarasota County all the way to Northwest Ohio, which makes it an essential part of the shipping, tourism, and business infrastructure. On top of easy access to and from Sarasota, there are also a myriad of state roads that make internal travel more accessible. (Map of state roads included below)



Map: I-75



Map: Sarasota Region State Roads

## Existing International Airports or regional airports

Sarasota County is home to the Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport and has been named one of the fastest growing airports in the United States. A new terminal expansion project is underway. The new five-gate terminal will cover 75,300 square feet and include a four-lane security checkpoint and five boarding hold rooms with 970 seats. New terminal amenities include a café, bar, restaurant, and marketplace in the double-height connector hall. New restrooms for men, women, and families will be available, also mothers' nursing rooms and pet relief areas. In addition to the Sarasota/Bradenton International Airport, there are five other airports within 130 miles. With the Sarasota/Bradenton Airport and the other 5 surrounding airports, travel to and from Sarasota can be done in multiple ways, with ease.

## Availability of public transportation

Sarasota County's Breeze Transit makes the county accessible for tourism, hospitality, and business. The Breeze Transit network includes fixed routes, on-demand, and paratransit services. In 2022, these services provided over 2 million rides. Specifically, there are three transportation services in this program. First, is "Breeze" which entails bus and trolley travel on fixed routes. These routes operate from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Sunday. The second service, "Breeze OnDemand" provides on demand minivans and SUVs for curb-to-curb service upon request. Lastly, "Breeze Plus" is an eligibility-based service, which provides rides to those who are disabled, disadvantaged, and or veterans. Below is a map of the Breeze services provided by Sarasota County:



Sources: Breeze Transit | Sarasota County, FL ([scgov.net](http://scgov.net))

In conjunction with the services provided by the county, the City of Sarasota has implemented a micro mobility program that institutes the use of trolleys and VEO electric scooters throughout the city. The trolleys are free of charge, and the electric scooters are offered at a discounted rate for Sarasota residents. These programs aim to make transportation in the City of Sarasota more accessible and reduce traffic flow.

## Alternative Transportation: Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Regarding alternative transportation in the Sarasota County region, it is an extremely safe area for pedestrians and cyclists alike. According to FDOT, in 2019, Sarasota County only had 17 of the 910 pedestrian deaths in the State of Florida. This translates to only 1.8% of pedestrian accidents in the total state, which makes Sarasota a safe and effective region for alternative means of transportation.

Sources: [Performance Data Integration Space \(arcgis.com\)](http://Performance Data Integration Space (arcgis.com))  
[Transportation Data Portal \(fdot.gov\)](http://Transportation Data Portal (fdot.gov))



Sources: [Sarasota-in-Motion-Transportation-Master-Plan-July-2020.pdf \(sarasotainmotion.com\)](https://www.sarasotainmotion.com)

In conjunction with safe pedestrian and cycling, Sarasota County is home to an 18.2-mile paved public park, known as the Legacy Trail. The trail stretches from south county to north county, and there are 14 public access points throughout.



Map of the Legacy Trail



# Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support

**Black history work in Sarasota has received funding consistently from the public and private sector.** It has been a grassroots effort from the beginning. While it is impossible to assign an amount for the media coverage that Black history work has received since 2003 and the in-kind donations of services from volunteers, residents, institutions, and companies, below is a partial list of projects, funding, general resources and media coverage received.

<b>Support from government (federal, state and local)</b>	<b>\$3,340,500.00</b>
<b>Support from private donors</b>	<b>\$1,146,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,486,500.00</b>

## A. Angola Project Resources

Looking for Angola is a multidisciplinary research project, aimed at discovering artifacts and Angola’s location. The maroon community thrived on Florida's southwest coast from 1812-1821. It was comprised of formerly enslaved Africans, free Blacks and Seminoles.

The search for the 1800s Black Seminole Settlement includes archaeological field surveys of four sites (underground and underwater); historical research throughout the U.S. and The Bahamas; public lectures; historic markers, the construction of an archaeology laboratory at New College of Florida, the production of documentaries; an educational component for middle and high school students; “train the trainer” workshops, and an international cultural exchange program. Reflections of Manatee, another nonprofit 501 c3 organization received funding for several programs below. A cultural festival organized by Oaktree Community Outreach Inc. engages Sarasota/Manatee and Bahamian residents throughout the state and Bahamian cultural emissaries. The 3-day festival features classes about Bahamian arts, culture, and food. <https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/news-and-profiles/angola-enslaved-people-florida>

Year	Source	Amount	Project Description
2004	The Florida Division of Historical Resources	\$24,000	Tertiary archaeology
2005	The Florida Humanities Council	\$15,000	Public lectures in Sarasota/Manatee Counties
2007	The Florida Division of Historical Resources	\$25,000	Underwater archaeology
2006	The History Channel	\$10,000	Sarasota and Manatee County School programs
2007-2009	Comcast Foundation	\$90,000	Sarasota and Manatee County School programs
2009	US Department of Education	\$1,700,000	Manatee County Schools program
2010	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) + Florida Division of Historic Preservation	\$500,000	New College Archaeology Lab
2015	The Florida Humanities Council	\$15,000	Angola Digital Reconstruction
	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Public history presentations
	The City of Bradenton	\$100,000	Angola Archaeology grant
2018	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #1
2019	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #2
2022	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #3
2023	The Florida Humanities Council	\$24,000	Angola Festival #4
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,599,000</b>	

**B. African American History Resources (Newtown Conservation Historic District/Newtown Alive) and the SAACC Museum**

The Newtown Conservation Historic District, a project initially funded by the City of Sarasota produced key resources. A branding name change to “Newtown Alive” occurred and the initiative was leveraged to include more needed history products. The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) was established in 2019 to find a location for and oversee the operations of an African American arts, culture, and history center to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical heritage of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond. Its startup location, the historic Leonard Reid House was deeded to the City of Sarasota by a developer and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is leased by SAACC for 50 years at a rate of \$1/year.

The Reid House was renovated and transformed into a new arts, culture, and history center that hosts exhibitions about Black life and history. It is a performance space for Black artists and offers classes about Black history and public programs in drawing, painting, photography, writing, music, acting, health and wellness, leadership, mentoring and entrepreneurship. Presentations are held there and it is a rental space accessible to groups and individuals countywide and, during polarized times such as these, the facility is a safe space for discussions about race, identity, class, social justice, history, and culture. SAACC is negotiating with the City of Sarasota to lease a city-owned parcel for the construction of a larger facility.

Source	Amount	Project Description
City of Sarasota	\$50,000	Newtown Conservation Historic District
City of Sarasota	\$155,000	Newtown Conservation Historic District
Sarasota County Government	\$8,000	Newtown Alive website
Sarasota County Government	\$10,000	Newtown Alive’s Overtown Pioneers Festival
City of Sarasota	\$200,000	Site search for Black Museum and the creation of SAACC, 501(c)3 tax exempt org
Florida Division of Historical Resources	\$8,500	Podcast series (oral histories)
City of Sarasota	\$400,000	Leonard Reid House renovations
The Community Foundation of Sarasota County	\$29,000	Downtown Murals
The Community Foundation of Sarasota County	\$10,000	John “Buck” O’Neil Exhibit (MLB Hall of Fame)
Florida Humanities Council	\$10,000	Beaches, Benches, Boycotts Exhibition
Private Donors	\$12,000	Dorothea Smith bronze bust
Private Philanthropy (Individuals & Foundations)	\$995,000	General Operations support for SAACC
TOTAL:	\$1,887,500	

## NEWS ARTICLES

### Newtown Conservation Historic District, Newtown Alive, SAACC

2015 – 2023

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<http://www.heraldtribune.com/opinion/20180416/oldham-and-williams-newtown-needs-arts-center-and-museum>  
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180609/sarasota-county-civil-rights-history-comes-alive-for-local-youth>  
<http://www.heraldtribune.com/news/20180617/seidman-idea-long-overdue?template=ampart>  
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/local/manatee/2020/06/24/therersquos-lynching-history-in-sarasota-manatee-historian-says/41972837/>  
<https://www.ncf.edu/news/news/remember-their-names/>  
<http://thesaacc.com/>  
<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/news-and-profiles/2020/07/sarasota-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture-announces-location>  
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/opinion/columns/guest/2021/06/30/its-time-african-american-museum-sarasota/5365605001/>  
<https://wusfnews.wusf.usf.edu/arts-culture/2021-07-30/sarasota-leaders-will-make-their-pitch-for-the-citys-first-black-cultural-center-and-museum>  
<https://www.facebook.com/thesaacc/>  
[https://www.srqmagazine.com/srq-daily/2021-09-10/17932\\_The-Ringling-and-Sarasota-African-American-Cultural-Coalition-Announce-New-Collaboration](https://www.srqmagazine.com/srq-daily/2021-09-10/17932_The-Ringling-and-Sarasota-African-American-Cultural-Coalition-Announce-New-Collaboration)  
<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/news-and-profiles/2021/11/sarasota-african-american-cultural-coalition>  
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/2022/03/14/plans-progress-sarasota-african-american-art-and-history-museum/9361880002/>  
<https://www.fox13news.com/news/home-carrying-legacy-of-sarasotas-first-black-community-to-be-relocated-transformed-for-cultural-center>  
<https://veniceareahistoricalsociety.org/event-4978422>  
<https://www.sarasotafl.gov/Home/Components/News/News/2824/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IG2holwqG48>  
<https://selby.org/events/special-lecture-newtown-alive-conversations-presented-by-vickie-oldham/>  
<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/2022/03/14/plans-progress-sarasota-african-american-art-and-history-museum/9361880002/>



## Criteria 7: Educational Resources

**Sarasota County is the cultural hub of Florida.** The area is enriched by its visual and performing arts organizations and its cultural offerings. Florida is known for its cultural treasures and Sarasota is the the hub of the state. It's the place where visitors and residents can enjoy museums, art galleries and performing arts spaces. In fact, there are 13 stages within a one-mile radius of downtown.

The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition has signed partnership agreements and hosted special events with 59 arts, culture and history organizations; also, civic and social service groups.

An exciting partnership with the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art will open art classes, exhibition space and community meeting rooms to residents in an 8,000 square feet building located in Newtown. Self + Tucker Architects who designed the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel are the consultants who participated in meetings and site visits to make sure the Ringling structure's design compliments the community where it is situated. The Ringling Museum, established in 1927 is the official state art museum. Florida State University oversees operations.

The partnerships below are reflective of the Sarasota community at large. Each stakeholder is fully invested in the success of SAACC's mission and vision which is to amplify the work of African American artists, cultural influencers, early pioneers and activists through quality programming.

### A.Cultural Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Church of the Palms	History lessons and community engagement
Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal)	History lessons and community engagement
Frist Congregational United Church of Christ	History lessons and community engagement
Frist United Methodist Church	History lessons and community engagement
First Presbyterian Church	Community engagement
Light Of the World Church	Art lessons
Bethel A.M.E. Church	Historical discussions
Community Bible Church	Art lessons
Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church	History lessons and community connections
Jewish Federation of Sarasota- Manatee	Social Justice education
Temple Emanu-El of Sarasota	Social Justice education
Unitarian Universalist Church	Equal Justice Initiative Lynching Marker dedication



## B. Educational and Social Services Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Star Lab	Early Readers history program
Booker High School	Historical Tours and Volunteer program
Manasota Freedom School	Historical tours
Sarasota Housing Authority Youth Thrive	Student art program and history tours
The Association for the Study of African American Life and History	Community education partnership bringing history of the African American experience.
Florida Holocaust Museum Tampa	Civil Rights Historical exhibit
Greatness Beyond Measure	Artist and talent development
Sarasota County Department of Health	Health services awareness and education program
Betty Jean Johnson North Sarasota County Library	Community engagement and awareness of Library resources
Precious Jewels Academy	Student arts program
Equal Justice Initiative	Lynching Marker Recognition program
AARP Senior Community Service Employment Program	Resident work force training program to become Griots (story tellers and guides at the Historical Leonard Reid House)

## C. Civic and Philanthropic Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Brotherhood of Men	Mentoring program
Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation	Program planning and support
Community Foundation of Sarasota County	Program Planning and support
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Bradenton Alumnae Chapter	Mentoring Program
Gamma XI Boulé Foundation	Internships
Gulf Coast Community Foundation	Nonprofit mentoring program
The Links, Incorporated Bradenton/Sarasota	Music lessons
Masala Giving Circle of the Community Foundation of Sarasota	Reading Room dedication and design
William G. & Marie Selby Foundation	Program planning and support

## D.Community Organization Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association	Community engagement
Manasota Black Chamber of Commerce	Entrepreneurs meet and greet events
Newtown Community Redevelopment Agency	Community Planning discussions
Sarasota Chamber of Commerce	Building Community Awareness of available resources
Sarasota County Tourism Development Council	Marketing and Community connections
Visit Sarasota	Marketing
University Town Center Mall Benderson Development	History events and community connections

## E.Religious Congregation Partnerships

Partner	Program Description
Church of the Palms	History lessons and community engagement
Church of the Redeemer (Episcopal)	History lessons and community engagement
Frist Congregational United Church of Christ	History lessons and community engagement
Frist United Methodist Church	History lessons and community engagement
First Presbyterian Church	Community engagement
Light Of the World Church	Art lessons
Bethel A.M.E. Church	Historical discussions
Community Bible Church	Art lessons
Payne Chapel A.M.E. Church	History lessons and community connections
Jewish Federation of Sarasota- Manatee	Social Justice education
Temple Emanu-El of Sarasota	Social Justice education
Unitarian Universalist Church	Equal Justice Initiative Lynching Marker dedication



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6. **Mr. Uzi Baram** Professor Emeritus, New College of Florida
7. **Mr. Terry Connor** Superintendent, Sarasota County Schools
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9. **Mr. Steven High** Executive Director, John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art
10. **Mr. Trevor D. Harvey** President, NAACP, Sarasota Branch
11. **Mr. Vincent P. Foderingham** Sire Archon, Gamma Xi Boulé of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity
12. **Daniel Boxser** Co-President, The Boxser Diversity Initiative
13. **Mr. Marvin B. Austin** President/CEO, Black Communities Working Together
14. **Dr. Rachel Shelley** Principal, Booker High School
15. **Ms. Mary Butler** President, Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association
16. **Ms. Melanie S. Thomas** Founder & President, Greatness Beyond Measure
17. **Mr. Dale Booker** President, Masala Giving Circle
18. **Ms. Kathryn Chesley** Board Member, Historical Society of Sarasota County
19. **Ms. Kim Patton Manning** President – Board of Directors, Friends of the Sarasota County History Center
20. **Mr. David Baber** President, Sarasota Alliance for Historic Preservation
21. **Ms. Lois B. Wilkins** Board Chair, Friends of Betty J. Johnson North Sarasota Public Library
22. **Ms. Virginia J. Haley** Former President, Visit Sarasota County
23. **Dr. Washington Clark Hill** Board Chair, Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition



## THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

### SENATOR JOE GRUTERS

22nd District

#### COMMITTEES:

Regulated Industries, *Chair*  
Appropriations  
Appropriations Committee on Agriculture,  
Environment, and General Government  
Appropriations Committee on Health  
and Human Services  
Commerce and Tourism  
Community Affairs  
Transportation

#### SELECT COMMITTEE:

Select Committee on Resiliency

#### JOINT COMMITTEE:

Joint Committee on Public Counsel Oversight,  
*Alternating Chair*

March 6, 2024

Alissa Slade Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lorane,

It is with great pleasure that I write to endorse Sarasota as the location chosen for the Florida Museum of Black History.

Overtown was Sarasota's first historical black community. Now known as the Rosemary District, Overtown was established in 1884 when Lewis Colston arrived in the area. By 1920, Overtown was a thriving community that played a pivotal role in the development of both the city and county of Sarasota. In 2002, Overtown was listed on the National Register of Historic Places forever encapsulating this historic place.

Sarasota is also a first class tourist destination. Sarasota features world famous beaches, visual and performing arts theaters, festivals, shops, and distinctive cultural experiences for everyone. Overall, millions of individuals visit on a yearly basis to partake in these numerous experiences.

I wholeheartedly feel the addition of the Florida Museum of Black History would further build upon Sarasota's reputation as Florida's Cultural Coast. I strong recommend Sarasota as the chosen location for this museum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Gruters".

Joe Gruters  
State Senator

#### REPLY TO:

- 381 Interstate Boulevard, Sarasota, Florida 34240 (941) 378-6309
- 316 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5022

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**KATHLEEN PASSIDOMO**  
President of the Senate

**DENNIS BAXLEY**  
President Pro Tempore

Mayor Liz Alpert  
Vice Mayor Jen Ahearn-Koch  
Commissioner Kyle Battie  
Commissioner Erik Arroyo  
Commissioner Debbie Trice



Marlon Brown  
City Manager  
Shayla Griggs  
City Auditor and Clerk  
Robert Fournier  
City Attorney

March 4, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Member:

The City of Sarasota has led the way in producing historic resources such as a research report about the 100+ years of our African American community's history, oral history interviews, 15 historic markers, educational materials, Black heritage trail brochures and the renovations of the historic Leonard Reid House that serves as our City's first free-standing African-American History museum.

The City of Sarasota's financial commitment has been unwavering. Investments to ensure that significant Black history stories are documented and preserved include:

- Newtown Conservation Historic District \$50,000
- Newtown Conservation Historic District \$155,000
- Black Museum location search \$200,000
- Leonard Reid House move and renovations \$400,000

Courage, dignity, and determination describe the Black activists who organized nonviolent wade-ins to desegregate county beaches here. Their efforts predate the rise in prominence of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Mrs. Rosa Parks.

Sarasota's Black history stories had local, national, and international impact. Activists kept neighborhood schools open and changed the way city elections are held. It is for these reasons that I believe Sarasota is the best location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

I appreciate that it will take collaborative partnerships to make the facility a thriving institution and will continue to support the City of Sarasota's participation in the effort.

Thank you for considering the City of Sarasota for the location of the Florida Museum of Black History.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Trice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "D".

Commissioner Debbie Trice

\* This letter is sent solely on behalf of Commissioner Debbie Trice

# GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

March 7, 2023

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

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

We are a proud partner of our community's collective efforts to support the location of a new Florida Museum of Black History here in Sarasota County. We are known for our culture of arts and performance, as the original winter home of the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus, The Ringling Museum, and the historic Asolo Theater.

However, Sarasota's Black history past mirrors other southeastern communities during that period, but predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence, as a non-violent protest strategy for local beach integration was replicated by civil rights activists in Texas, California, and South Africa during apartheid. Activists' beach wade-ins are listed on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites.

Major League Baseball Hall of Famer John Buck O'Neil, who is a national treasure, was reared in Sarasota's Black community, Overtown. Overtown and its neighboring Newtown is listed on the state's historic register and is awaiting national historic approval. O'Neil played in the Negro Baseball Leagues and was the first Black coach of a major league team. His decades of work and sacrifice finally received recognition when he was featured in Ken Burns' baseball documentary. Today, a 40-foot mural of O'Neil is on the wall of a building in downtown Sarasota, in addition to four other murals in that area, also depicting Black history stories.

Sarasota has a proven track of amplifying African American history through the production of historic resources including a research report, 15 Black history markers, a Newtown history book, trolley tours, a website, a podcast series, documentary shorts, and downtown murals show respect for the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of Florida's Black pioneers. Our town is only one of three cities in Florida to pay homage to its victims of lynching through the installation of a historic marker.

In 2018, the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) was created to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical heritage of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond. SAACC's fundraising efforts to open a Black arts center (Leonard Reid House) and history museum has netted close to \$1 million in donations in a year. Today, SAACC partners with 44 arts, culture, civic, social, and educational institutions.

# GULF COAST COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Together with our donors, we transform our region through bold and proactive philanthropy. We are inspired by the bold vision of Sarasota being the home of the Florida Museum of Black History and we look forward to partnering proactively to make this vision a reality.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Lanham', written in a cursive style.

Phillip P. Lanham  
President | CEO





Ringling College  
of Art + Design

Office of the President

March 8, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

I am pleased to write this letter to support the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) and their request for the new Florida Museum of Black History to be located in Sarasota, FL. As President of Ringling College of Art and Design, I am proud of the close relationship our campus community has built with the SAACC over the years; in particular the many projects we have collaborated on with President and CEO Vickie Oldham at the helm.

The heart of the Ringling College campus is located on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Way and directly adjacent to Sarasota's historic Newtown neighborhood. In recent years, Ringling students have collaborated with both Newtown Alive and the SAACC on a number of projects to showcase and highlight the important Black histories locally. These projects have included erecting 15 historical markers, student work on websites for Newtown Alive and the SAACC; T-shirt designs; and placard designs for historical trolley tours.

The historic Sarasota activists' beach wade-ins are listed on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites. On Sarasota's Lido Key, murals can be seen depicting the caravan protests that led to beach integration, created by Ringling College Galleries Director and artist Tim Jaeger, and a marker that offers more details from that history. The markers and mural are part of a community project to bring those stories into the larger narrative of Sarasota. Ringling College also offers a Newtown History Book class in partnership with Newtown Alive. The product of this class will be a 48-plus-page book designed by students that will detail the history of the racial struggle for beach integration throughout Sarasota County in the 1950s and 1960s. Ringling students have been working with the SAACC to bring the historic Leonard Reid house back to life as a museum and community center. Reid pioneered Overtown, the first Black community in Sarasota and just minutes from Ringling College's campus.

Ringling College is a creative, inclusive community composed of people with diverse beliefs and backgrounds worldwide. Diversity of thought and perspective is integral to our mission, and we are relentlessly uncompromising in our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

It is more important now than ever before to do all we can to elevate and celebrate the histories of underrepresented communities. I hope the Task Force will strongly consider Sarasota as the location of the Florida Museum of Black History so that our community members, campus community, and many Sarasota visitors can access the critical, historical stories of our great city.

Sincerely,

  
Larry R. Thompson  
President  
Ringling College of Art and Design

March 8, 2024

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members:

Thanks for your work in providing recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History. As you develop plans for the museum's location, we ask that you consider Sarasota as the most suitable destination in the state for the facility. This site would complement the richness and beauty of the area from an aesthetic and historical perspective.

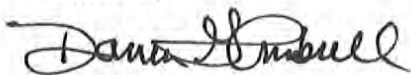
The work of researchers in documenting African American history is ongoing. As a result of their commitment, many resources are available to the public.

The Newtown Conservation Historic Team (now known as Newtown Alive) and the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition have a proven track of amplifying African American history through the production of a research report, 15 Black history markers, a Newtown history book, a website, podcast series, documentary shorts, downtown murals, and trolley tours that show respect for the sacrifices, challenges, and accomplishments of Black pioneers.

As the Assistant Director for the Office of Multicultural Affairs, at the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, I provided an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to take a trolley tour, hear presentations, and learn about key historical facts that helped shape Sarasota's development.

Thanks for considering Sarasota as the site to construct the facility. It would greatly benefit the institutions of higher education such as the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, Florida State University Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training, New College of Florida, the Ringling College of Art and Design, the State College of Florida, and our students.

Sincerely,



Darren L Gambrell

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CHANCELLOR

University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee • 8350 N. Tamiami Trail, SMC C305 • Sarasota, FL 34243-2049  
(941) 359-4340 • Fax (941) 359-4298 • [www.sarasota.usf.edu](http://www.sarasota.usf.edu)

March 4, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members,

I am writing to encourage locating the Florida Museum of Black History in Sarasota. The Sarasota region has a robust Black history and is leading one of the nation's most impressive community-based heritage initiatives. The FMBH will find wide ranging civic support and a robust audience and the facility will accelerate multiple heritage programs, expanding the region's moniker as the Cultural Coast.

I participated and continue to contribute to one of those heritage programs, and the details illuminate the reasons for placing FMBH in Sarasota.

Starting in 2004, a community scholar organized an interdisciplinary research team of historians, cultural anthropologists, archaeologists with educators for, as the program is known, Looking for Angola. Two decades ago, Angola was a local legend about a haven for escaped slaves, interpreted to be by the Manatee River only in meager form in obscure archives; in this quarter of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Angola is recognized by the National Park Service as a station of the Underground Railroad, the location and details are published in reports and peer-reviewed publications, and celebrated by descendants of those freedom seekers in a Back to Angola festival; a city park includes commemoration of the maroon community and the festival is featured by Visit Florida and local tourist organizations; the heritage is embraced by a wide range of residents as a legacy of this region. As Vickie Oldham, who led Looking for Angola, has noted many times: the spirit of Angola lives on.

Angola on the Manatee River is the first Black community in the region. Its people are known as maroons and as Black Seminoles. The history of the settlement started in the 1770s and though the community was destroyed in 1821, the descendants keep its spirit alive and the commemoration keeps the spirit of freedom burning bright.

The National Park Service considers the Underground Railroad movement as the first Civil Rights Revolution in the USA; Sarasota provides a significant and inspiring location for one of the most successful events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Civil Rights Revolution: at Lido Beach in

Sarasota, the 1950s Wade-in peacefully desegregated the coastal waters. Noted on the US Civil Rights Trail, thanks to the efforts of Vickie Oldham – who took her heritage as social action skills from Angola on the Manatee River to Newtown in Sarasota – there is a robust Black history bursting internationally across the media and providing a place-based heritage that enriches peoples' lives.

Sarasota is the ideal location for the Florida Museum of Black History for its Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region.

Displaying the history and archaeology of Angola at FMBH and the Wade-in are just two of the significant features of Cultural Coast. During my academic career, I encountered and made contributions to revealing the significance of Luis Fatio Pacheco (1800-1895) time on Sarasota Bay, the politics of Louis and Irene Colson being buried in the 20<sup>th</sup> century segregated Rosemary Cemetery in downtown Sarasota, the Wright Bush House (built in 1920), deeding of land for the Galilee Cemetery as a Black burial ground, and the role of the first Jewish mayor of Sarasota in relationship to the African American community during the Boom Times. And there is much more. And, please note, I engaged in these facets of Black history without the topic being my primary research focus – the extend of the heritage is so great that, as a community-minded scholar, I was fortunate to be able to partner and contribute to researching and representing these chapter of Florida Black history.

I trust these strands of history support the application for the FMBH to be placed in Sarasota. I will offer my services, as I know many other residents will as well, to continue the legacies of courageous, determined people that enrich the heritage of Florida.

Sincerely,

*Uzi Baram*

Uzi Baram  
Professor Emeritus  
New College of Florida  
Baram@ncf.edu



**Office of the Superintendent**  
1960 Landings Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34231  
941-927-9000 • fax 941-927-2539  
SarasotaCountySchools.net

March 6, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

As the Superintendent of Sarasota County Schools, I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for selecting Sarasota as the ideal location for the Florida Museum of Black History. This initiative aligns with our educational goals and our community's deep commitment to acknowledging and celebrating African American history.

Sarasota boasts a rich historical tapestry that profoundly encapsulates the African American experience, making it a compelling candidate for the museum. I want to highlight a few of Sarasota's notable contributions that underscore its suitability for this honor:

*The Angola settlement, parts of which expanded into Sarasota, represents a pivotal chapter in African American history, intertwining with Native American heritage. Angola's recognition on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and its pending designation as a UNESCO Slave Route site of memory testify to its historical importance and the profound stories awaiting to be shared through the museum.*

*Sarasota's proactive involvement in the civil rights movement, particularly the beach wade-ins, is a testament to the city's role in national civil rights discourse. These actions had a transformative impact locally and resonated nationally and internationally, contributing to the broader struggle for civil rights and setting a precedent for peaceful protests across various regions, including during pivotal moments in South Africa's fight against apartheid.*

*Sarasota's commitment to preserving and celebrating African American history is further evidenced by the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition's efforts and the city's robust tourist infrastructure. The proposed museum will benefit from Sarasota's vibrant cultural scene, accessibility, and ongoing dedication to educational and cultural enrichment, as seen through various initiatives, including historical markers, murals, and the preservation of significant districts like Newtown and Overtown.*

Selecting Sarasota as the site for the Florida Museum of Black History will honor the city's substantial contributions to African American history and ensure the museum's success by leveraging the region's rich cultural heritage, educational focus, and strong community support. We are excited about the potential for this museum to serve as an educational resource, providing invaluable learning opportunities for our students and the community.

Thank you for considering Sarasota as the home for the Florida Museum of Black History. We are eager to support this initiative in any way possible and look forward to the opportunity to contribute to this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Terry Connor  
Superintendent of Schools

March 11, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

It has been a pleasure for Marie Selby Botanical Gardens to partner with Vickie Oldham and the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition to present compelling programs to residents. We learned about the work of African American pioneers who were groundskeepers for the Selbys from Newtown Alive researchers who recorded oral history interviews with descendants. The stories illuminated the generosity of the philanthropists and the tight bonds formed with workers.

We hosted a program featuring family members of Lymus Dixon Sr. and Grover Yancy, for instance. The presentation was well received and is available to view on our website.

The work of the Florida Highwaymen artists was the subject of another program, an exhibition, talk and art sale in partnership with SAACC. Residents filled the campus to hear fascinating stories about life in 1950s Florida.

Sarasota is an ideal location the Florida Museum of Black History. Visitors already enjoy our botanical gardens, beautiful beaches, restaurants, cultural arts programming and golf courses. An institution that amplifies African American history will be another great option for residents and visitors.

There is infrastructure already in place that presents history trolley tours and historic house tours. Related history publications are distributed. Sarasota began the work to document Black history 20 years ago.



DOWNTOWN SARASOTA

1534 Maund Street, Sarasota, Florida 34236  
TEL 941.366.5731

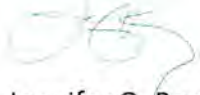


HISTORIC SPANISH POINT

401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229  
TEL 941.366.5731

We welcome new visitors to our community who want to experience vacation options, as well as residents interested in learning more about the beautiful place that we call home.

Sincerely,



Jennifer O. Rominiecki  
President & CEO  
Marie Selby Botanical Gardens



DOWNTOWN SARASOTA

1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, Florida 34236

TEL 941.366.5731



HISTORIC SPANISH POINT

401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229

TEL 941.366.5731



March 11, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

**Subject: Florida Museum of Black History**

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member:

The Sarasota NAACP's role in local, state, and national civil rights is undeniable. Our first president Mr. Neil Humphrey monitored the actions of our members throughout the country in the 1950s. Sit-ins by activists were underway. Mr. Humphrey was an entrepreneur, a former navy man and a community leader who courageously organized wade-ins to desegregate Sarasota County beaches.

The second Sarasota NAACP president followed using the same tactic to assert the rights of Black residents to enjoy the sand and surf. From 1955 until the 1964 Civil Rights Act passed, activists participated in car caravans to "wade in the water."

Their courage, dignity and determination earned Sarasota a designation on the US Civil Rights Trail with iconic locations such as Ebenezer Baptist Church and the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, AL.

The actions to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally, and internationally. The work of Sarasota activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and the non-violent protest strategy for beach integration was emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California, and South Africa during apartheid.

USA Today featured our community's victory and a commemoration in a 2022 story:

<https://www.yahoo.com/now/sun-sand-civil-rights-uncovering-100216695.html>

Beach desegregation is highlighted with other key Black history stories online and using traditional marketing tools (i.e., a research report, historic markers, a history book, on trolley tours, websites, and podcasts).

Thanks for your consideration of Sarasota as a location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

Sincerely,

**Trevor D. Harvey**  
President, NAACP, Sarasota Branch





March 7, 2024

Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Office  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399  
Attn: Alissa Satde Lorane, Director

**Re: Florida Museum of Black History**

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

Please allow this letter to serve in support and advocacy for Sarasota, FL to be the location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

Gamma Xi Boulé is a member boulé (chapter) of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity, the oldest Black Greek Letter Organization, founded in 1904 in Philadelphia, PA. Our Fraternity has over 5,000 members across 144 member boulés in the United States, the Bahamas and London, United Kingdom. On May 15, the Fraternity will be celebrating its 120<sup>th</sup> year of existence which is historical in itself. Additionally, Gamma Xi was chartered in Sarasota on March 4, 1995 and will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of existence.

The vision of Gamma Xi Boulé is to be known as the preeminent fraternal organization for Black men in the Sarasota and Bradenton communities committed to community service and recognized for its advocacy, programs, and initiatives that benefit the community and improve the quality of life for current and future generations. Our members are involved in countless community organizations bringing our vision to reality and several of our members are serving as board members for the Sarasota African American Coalition where Ms. Vicki Oldham presides as President.



There are 10 Reasons why Sarasota should be selected as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History:

1. Angola (parts of the settlement expanded into Sarasota) includes Native American history and is a national and international story.
  - a. Angola is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (National Park Service).
  - b. Angola is on tap to be listed as a UNESCO Slave Route site of memory.
2. Sarasota activists' *beach wade-ins* are listed on the US Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites. The actions to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. The work of Sarasota activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and the non-violent protest strategy for beach integration was emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California and South Africa during apartheid.
3. Major League Baseball Hall of Famer, John "Buck" O'Neil, is a national treasure and Negro League player for the Kansas City Monarchs. He was reared in Sarasota's Black community of Overtown and was instrumental in the establishment of the Negro League Museum in Kansas City, MO.

Featured in a PBS documentary, *Baseball: A Film by Ken Burns*, O'Neil's decades of work and sacrifice finally received recognition. As a Negro League baseball player and the first Black coach of a Major League Baseball team, a giant 40 ft mural was created in his honor on the wall of a building in Sarasota's Rosemary district. Coincidentally, there are 5 giant murals in the Overtown/Rosemary district that depict Black history stories.

4. Sarasota is only one of three cities in Florida to pay homage to its victims of lynching through the installation of a historic marker.



5. The Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition's fundraising efforts to open a Black arts center and history museum have been successful. Five major donors have given at the \$100,000+ level. Other donations under \$5,000 are flowing in. There are other major donors to cultivate for giving opportunities in Sarasota County which is amongst one of the wealthiest counties in the state in per capita income.
6. Sarasota attracts tourists. The city has amenities that visitors desire, including a rapidly growing international airport (SRQ). Recent statistics from FY2023 (October 2022-September 2023) indicate 3,065,800 visitors came to Sarasota County during this period, an increase of 2% (61,400 visitors) over the prior year.

Visitors to the region spent over \$2.6 billion on various goods and services during their stay in direct expenditures to include lodging, dining, shopping, entertainment, attractions, groceries, transportation and other costs.

7. Sarasota has a proven track record of highlighting African American history through the production and preservation of historic resources (a research report, 15 Black historical markers, a Newtown history book, trolley tours, a website, a podcast series, documentary shorts and downtown murals) that document and respect the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of Florida's Black pioneers.
8. Sarasota's original black settlement, Overtown/Rosemary, is a historic district and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
9. Sarasota's predominantly black neighborhood, Newtown, is also listed as a historic district after being approved by the State of Florida and is currently awaiting approval by the US Department of Interior to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



10. There are many other local attractions to see and things to do in Sarasota to include beaches, Selby Gardens, Mote Marine Aquarium, arts, sports (2 MLB spring training sites in Sarasota County, 28 golf courses within Sarasota city limits), entertainment, shopping, outdoor concerts, etc.

Sarasota also has a very active theater scene to include the award-winning Westcoast Black Theater Troupe, Asolo Repertory Theater and Florida Studio Theater all in downtown Sarasota.

With this extensive list of impressive qualities, the members Gamma Xi Boulé extends its wholehearted support for Sarasota being the home of the Florida Museum of Black History as it is in alignment with our vision which is to provide advocacy that benefits the community and improves the quality of life for current and future generations.

Warmest Regards,

Vincent P. Foderingham  
Sire Archon  
Gamma Xi Boulé of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity



THE BOXSER  
DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

5 March 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Member,

We would like to add our support to the proposal that Sarasota be the location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

As is well known, Sarasota is a center for culture in this State and in the Southeast U.S. The one thing that we need to have here is a Museum celebrating Black History, Art and Culture.

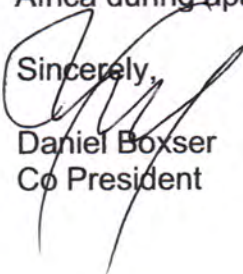
It is only one of three cities in Florida to pay homage to its victims of lynching through the installation of a historic marker as part of the Community Remembrance Project in conjunction with the Equal Justice Initiative.

The whole Sarasota community provided support with over 400 individuals and 80 organizations pledging their support for this memorial.

Angola is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom (Nat'l Park Service) Angola is expected to be listed as a UNESCO Slave Route site of memory.

Sarasota activists' beach wade-ins are listed on the US Civil Rights Trail with iconic national Civil Rights sites. The actions to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. The work of Sarasota activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and the non-violent protest strategy for beach integration was emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California and South Africa during apartheid.

Sincerely,

  
Daniel Boxser  
Co President

March 12, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Member, Alissa Slade Lotane,

I am writing to wholeheartedly endorse the task force selection of Sarasota for the Florida Museum of Black History. A local museum in Sarasota County that focuses on bringing history to life for our community, particularly in the realm of education is paramount.

As an educator with roots deeply embedded in Sarasota, I have witnessed the transformative impact of bridging textbook knowledge with real-life experiences. This museum promises to be a cornerstone in our community, aligning seamlessly with all state standards and providing a platform to represent diverse historical narratives.

The prospect of showcasing local black history, including pivotal events such as the beach sit-ins, Booker High School's significance, and the silent boycott, is genuinely exciting. By delving into the complexities of our past, the museum will contribute immensely to our students' understanding of our community's rich heritage.

I am confident that if Sarasota is selected for Florida Museum of Black History it will serve as a beacon for learning, fostering a dynamic environment where our students can connect with the profound historical significance of events like lynching, and appreciate the strides made by the first African-American school in the region.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse the selection of Sarasota for Florida Museum of Black History. It has the potential to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and tangible understanding, enriching the educational experience for our students.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rachel Shelley  
Principal of Booker High School  
[Rachel.Shelley@Sarasotacountyschools.net](mailto:Rachel.Shelley@Sarasotacountyschools.net)  
(941) 359-7884

# AMARYLLIS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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President            Mary Butler  
Vice President    OPEN  
Parliamentarian   Carlos Yancy



Treasurer            Joseph Mack  
Secretary            James Burke  
Chaplin                Danny Preston

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March 6, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task  
Force member:

I am a longtime Newtown resident and community organizer. I serve as the Amaryllis Park neighborhood association president. For the last 19 years I have seen an increase in the number of residents and visitors interested in local African-American history. There is a marked difference in the way visitors engage with our Black history as well.

Change occurred after the completion of historic resources by the Newtown Conservation Historic District research team. There are historic markers in 15 locations throughout Newtown; there is a history book, a research report, a website, heritage trail brochures, murals depicting Black history on the walls of commercial buildings, a bronze bust of a beloved Black principal at the entrance of a school, history trolleys, exhibitions (ie MLB Baseball Hall of Fame recipient Buck O'Neil); and more programs that showcase African American artists and historians are planned.

I supported and participated in a project to ensure that Newtown was designated an historic district on the national register of historic places. That measure was approved by state historians and will be approved by US Department of Interior leaders.

Members of the Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association are proud of the sacrifices and contributions of Black pioneers. We want to be known for the actions we took to live free and enjoy all that Sarasota offers; and now we are.

Sincerely,

*Mary Butler*

Mary Butler, President  
Amaryllis Park Neighborhood Association

1340 32<sup>ND</sup> ST, SARASOTA, FL 34234 – 941-306-8444  
[AMARYLLISPARKNA@YAHOO.COM](mailto:AMARYLLISPARKNA@YAHOO.COM)



March 10, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members:

I am the Founder and President of Greatness Beyond Measure, Inc., aka GBM, an empowerment and mentoring not-for-profit organization that provides an enriching environment that encourages academic and technology enhancement, self-expression, and entrepreneurial development for thousands of young people. GBM is a creative and artistic network of aspiring teen and young adult artists, musicians, poets, dancers, entrepreneurs, sports lovers, techies, hosts, social media influencers, that span across the country from Florida to California. Greatness Beyond Measure, Inc. was founded in 2008, as a bridge to underserved minority teens, ages 12 -19. Our mission is simply "Empowerment for Life, Believe it, Achieve it, Ignite the Genius."

GBM has partnered with the Sarasota AA Cultural Coalition and Newtown Alive to showcase young artists most recently at a holiday program to celebrate the opening of the historic Leonard Reid House and a Black History concert at the University Town Center Mall. Both events were well received and attended by hundreds.

It is essential that young people in the community have a venue to showcase their talents and where their voices can be heard, as well as a facility to learn about the accomplishments of African American icons in the arts, culture, and history.

The Florida Museum of Black History will be a source of pride for countless community young people who'll visit exhibitions, take classes, attend community showcases and listen to dynamic speakers.

Please consider Sarasota's proposal to locate the museum to a city that is the cultural hub of Florida. I can be reached at this email or (941) 735-5261.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melanie S. Thomas', written over a horizontal line.

Melanie S. Thomas,  
Greatness Beyond Measure, Founder & President





## Masala Giving Circle

P.O. Box 50002  
Sarasota, FL 34232  
Masalagivingcircle.org

March 6, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane,  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Buiding  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force member Alissa Satde Lorane

I am writing to you on behalf of Masala Giving Circle. Established in 2013, MGC is a group of African American women dedicated to the mission of promoting economic and personal empowerment through financial support in Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and DeSoto counties.

This letter extends our ardent support for Sarasota as the location for the State's Black Museum. I cannot think of a safer, more appropriate location for the State Museum. Sarasota is known as Florida's Cultural Coast given the plethora of museums, art galleries and performing art venues. Sarasota attracts visitors near and far, year-round, who enjoy the abundance of activities, as well as our stunning beauty from our award-winning beaches, bayfront, parks and other attractions, including Golf, botanical gardens and shopping.

Importantly, Sarasota has a very active and diverse population who take full advantage of the plethora of activities. Moreover, given our desirable geographic location, Sarasota is a short driving distance from several major cities, including, Tampa, Fort Meyers, Naples and only hours away from Orlando and East Coast locations like Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and more.

Our organization fully supports Sarasota as the location.

With regards,

Dale Booker, President  
Masala Giving Circle



## SARASOTA ALLIANCE FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

March 6, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History

Dear Florida Museum of Black History Task Force members:

I am writing to enthusiastically support the submittal by the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition in hopes that Sarasota is chosen as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History.

The Sarasota community has a long-standing commitment to promoting all cultural interests. Support of African American culture can be demonstrated by successful local programs such as the popular Newtown Alive project, a comprehensive program that resulted in a series of deliverables that demonstrated the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of many of Sarasota and Florida's Black pioneers. These deliverables include a research report, 15 Black exhibit quality history markers placed throughout the neighborhood, a Newtown history book, trolley tours, a website, a podcast series, and documentary shorts.

Other activities supporting African American history and culture include involvement in identifying and researching the Angola settlement and promoting its importance, one of only three locations in Florida to install a historic marker that recognized lynching victims, and a current effort to raise funding to develop a local Black arts center and history museum.

Sarasota is a major center for tourism with significant cultural venues such as the Ringling Museum of Art, Selby Botanical Garden, Historic Spanish Point, and the Sarasota Art Museum. The inclusion of the Florida Black History Museum will be a substantial contributor to Sarasota's cultural landscape.

I encourage the State to name Sarasota as the location of the Florida Black History Museum.

Sincerely,

David Baber  
President

ADVOCATE. PRESERVE. EDUCATE. CELEBRATE



**Friends of Betty J Johnson  
North Sarasota Public  
Library**

**President:**

Lois B Wilkins

**Vice President:**

Paul Ruffin

**Correspondence Secretary:**

Delores McFarland

**Recording Secretary:**

Martina Garris

**Treasurer:**

Francina Hollaway

**Immediate Past President:**

Dr. Celestine B. Campbell

**Committee Chairs:**

**Strategic Planning:**

V.P. Paul Ruffin

**Programming:**

Queen Mecca Zabriskie

**Nominating:**

George Bradt

**Past Presidents Ad-Hoc**

**Advisory:**

Dr. Celestine B. Campbell

**Internal Audit:**

Delores McFarland

**AACRC Reading Room**

**Advisory:**

Dave Harralson

**Membership & Hospitality:**

Shelia Atkins

**Bookstore Manager &**

**Fundraising:**

Ellia Manners

**Marketing & PR:**

Marion Black-Ruffin

**Chair Emerita:**

Lovette W. Harper

**Site Librarian Emerita:**

Betty J Johnson

**FRIENDS OF BETTY J. JOHNSON NORTH SARASOTA PUBLIC LIBRARY**

2801 Newtown Blvd., Sarasota, Fl. 34234

Phone: (941) 861-1360

[www.bettyjohnsonfriends.org](http://www.bettyjohnsonfriends.org)

[culturalresourcecenter@gmail.com](mailto:culturalresourcecenter@gmail.com)

March 8, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane

Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer

R.A. Gray Building

500 South Bronough Street

Tallahassee, FL 32399

Subject: Florida Museum of Black History; Letter of support from The African American Cultural Resource Center (AACRC Sarasota)

Dear Alissa Slade Lotane,

This letter of support is sent to you on behalf of our organizations vision and mission regarding Black History in Manasota, Florida. I am President of the Friends of the Betty J Johnson North Sarasota Public Library and Chair of the AACRC in Sarasota.

**Vision:** The vision is for The African American Cultural Resource Center to be the premier venue for the study of African and African American Life, history, and culture in the Sarasota/Manatee communities and beyond.

**Mission:** The African American Cultural Resource Center at Betty J. Johnson North Sarasota Public Library, Inc. (BJJNSPL) houses a special collection of books, periodicals, media, art, and artifacts pertinent to the Global Black Experience. Created by the Friends of BJJNSPL, Inc, it is a reading room and research facility with materials not only about African Americans but also about African people living in Africa and in many other parts of the world. There is a special section with information about the history of Newtown and African Americans in Florida. The African American Cultural Resource Center is available for use by students, scholars, historians, researchers, and other interested individuals in the larger community.

**Lovette W. Harper:** The Founder (1924 - 2023) Written by Lois B Wilkins

A true expert in African American heritage, Lovette W. Harper spent years cultivating a collection of Black memorabilia from around the world. To ensure this information was available to all, she negotiated a space in the Betty J.

Johnson North Sarasota Public Library so people in the community could interact daily with this wealth of knowledge.

A master curator, Ms. Harper delivered pieces of her massive collection to The Family Heritage House Museum at State College of Florida in Bradenton. It is one of few displays of its kind on a college campus in the state.

Greater among other inhabited locations is Lovette W. Harper's deposited diasporic collection to her alma mater, the former Tuskegee Institute. Now known as Tuskegee University, there two legends of African American history are laid to rest: Booker T. Washington and Dr. George Washington Carver. Tuskegee was built in 1881 under a charter from the Alabama legislature for the purpose of training teachers in Alabama. Its programs provided students with both academic and vocational training.

When Lovette W. Harper moved from New York City and settled here in Florida, she had an educational plan in mind. Ms. Harper felt the only real tools to combat racism were hidden in the books and special collections she had made available to everyone, adults, and children. She knew many of us had hidden treasures of history, often tucked away in taped boxes that we pass by every day.

Ms. Harper would have been pleased to see the location of a Black History Museum here in Sarasota. Ms. Harper passed away on December 8, 2023, at the age of 99 1/2.

On behalf of Ms. Harper and in recognition of her contributions, the legacy she left to the library systems in Manatee, Sarasota counties and Tuskegee University, I support the idea of having Sarasota, Florida as a site for its Black History Museum.

Sincerely,



Lois B. Wilkins, Chair of the AACRC

2635 Bay St  
Sarasota, FL 34237  
March 11, 2024

Alissa Satde Lorane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough St  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lorane:

I am writing in regards to the Florida Museum of Black History and to recommend to the Florida Museum of History Task Force that Sarasota County is the ideal location for this facility.

Although recently retired, I have spent the majority of my career in Florida's tourism industry with a specific interest in cultural tourism. I served as Chair of the VISIT FLORIDA Board of Directors and Chair of Destinations Florida Board of Directors. I was President of Visit Sarasota County for 26 years.

Choosing Sarasota ensures the ongoing operational and financial success of the Florida Museum of Black History. Sarasota is known as Florida's Cultural Coast™ and our community has a reputation for strong philanthropic support for our many cultural organizations. In addition, we have a robust cultural tourism program throughout Tourist Development Tax that annually provides millions of dollars in support for our cultural organizations. Sarasota is also home to the State's official art museum, the John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art.

The Sarasota region already has significant ties to Black history and Black cultural attractions. The story of the Angola settlement is significant in both Black and Native American history and is listed on the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom with the National Park Service and is soon to be listed as a UNESCO Slave Route site. Sarasota was one of the first five Florida sites to be included on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail in recognition of the Sarasota activists' beach wade-ins to desegregate our shorelines in the 1950's. And we can't forget Sarasota's ties to the Negro Baseball Leagues with the many tributes to be found in Sarasota to national treasure John Buck O'Neil who grew up in our community.

Sarasota is well-established as one of the nation's top tourism destinations with a demonstrated commitment to the arts and history. Sarasota, Florida's Cultural Coast™ is the superior choice for this exciting Museum. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance. My email is [virginiajoycehaley@gmail.com](mailto:virginiajoycehaley@gmail.com) and my cellphone is 941 720 6464.

Regards,  
Virginia J. Haley



March 8, 2024

Alissa Slade Lotane  
Director, Division of Historical Resources & State Historic Preservation Officer  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lotane,

**Re: Letter of Support for Sarasota Being Location for the Florida Museum of Black History from the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC) Board of Directors**

I am Washington Hill, MD, and I am Board Chair of the Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition (SAACC). SAACC is leading the way in exhibiting, showcasing and educating the Sarasota community about Black history through Sarasota's first free-standing arts, cultural and history center at the historic Leonard Reid House. Our mission is to preserve, celebrate, and share the cultural, artistic, and historical heritage of African Americans in Sarasota and beyond.

**There is much good work on Black History happening in Sarasota making it an ideal choice for the Florida Museum of Black History:**

-SAACC moved and now leases the Historic Leonard Reid House and the land from the City of Sarasota for \$1 annually for 50 years. Inside the house are the works, culture, and art of local Black artists. SAACC's fundraising efforts to open a Black arts and history center netted close to \$1 million in less than a year.

-SAACC hosted an exhibition about a Hall of Fame player in Major League Baseball, John Buck O'Neil in 2020. Reared in Sarasota's Black community of Overtown, Buck is a national treasure. He played in the Negro Baseball League and was the first Black coach of a major league team in Kansas City.

-Other major events in Civil Rights history happened in Sarasota. The beach wade-ins to desegregate county shorelines had an impact locally, statewide, nationally and internationally. The work of activists predated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s rise to prominence and their actions were emulated by civil rights activists in Texas, California and South Africa during apartheid.

-Sarasota destination should also be considered the location for the state museum because for over 20 years, our area's humanity's scholars have worked diligently to research, document and preserve early Black presence in Florida.

-Sarasota has a proven track record that shows respect for the sacrifices, struggles and accomplishments of Florida's Black pioneers. In a proud Sarasota is one of only three cities in Florida with a marker that pays homage to six named lynching victims and unknown victims who died at the hands of mobs.

-It will take collaborative partnerships to make the facility a thriving institution. SAACC has signed agreements with 44 arts, cultural, civic and social organizations e.g. the African American Cultural Resource Center a Sarasota venue for the study of African and African American Life, history, and culture.

It is for these reasons and more that Sarasota should be chosen the destination for the Florida Museum of Black History. Please strongly consider selecting Sarasota as the location for the Florida Museum of Black History. A state museum here will showcase major themes in Florida's African American history as well as Sarasota's Black history.

The SAACC Board of Directors and Sarasota are ready.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Washington Clark Hill, M.D.  
Board Chair  
Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition  
941-356-9099  
dr.washingtonhill@gmail.com  
[thesaacc.com](http://thesaacc.com)

**SEMINOLE COUNTY / CITY OF SANFORD  
INFORMATION**

for

**FLORIDA MUSEUM OF  
BLACK HISTORY**

SM



March 15, 2024

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
Tallahassee, FL

Via Email: FLheritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com

Dear Sirs,

Seminole County would like to express our sincere and enthusiastic interest for the establishment of the Florida Museum of Black History in our region. It is with great excitement that we submit this expression of interest, as we firmly believe that Seminole County is the perfect location to establish.

Seminole County offers an unparalleled combination of access, appeal, diversity, strong black history, and community support, making it an ideal choice for this initiative. Here are some key reasons why Seminole County stands out as the premier destination:

1. **Historical Significance:** Seminole County has a rich black history from before the county's inception. In fact, in 1891, Goldsboro was incorporated as an all-black community which was later annexed to the city of Sanford. The diversity of this community has been a testament to our rich history of collaboration and community involvement.
2. **Location Options:** There are many location options within Seminole County, the attached report shows some of these options, but additional options may be provided as soon as you share the ideal location requirements.
3. **Demographics:** Seminole County, while the third smallest county in the state of Florida, is also the third most densely populated, with one of the highest education levels and household incomes in the area. Our population is very diverse.
4. **Transportation Infrastructure:** Seminole County is strategically positioned in the heart of Florida with almost equal distance to the farthest points, from Pensacola to Key West, Seminole County is the most central point in the state of Florida. Our proximity to both the Orlando Sanford International Airport and the Orlando International Airport, offering over 150 non-stop flight destinations worldwide ensures accessibility and easy and convenient travel for all visitors from around the globe.
5. **Local Support:** Seminole County is backed by a strong foundation of government, community, and corporate support. Our local government is committed to fostering all cultural initiatives that benefit the community. Seminole County is home to well-known and established corporations, some of our largest employers include headquarters or central operations for companies like JP Morgan Chase, Verizon, Deloitte, AAA, Mitsubishi Power Corp, BNY Mellon, to mention just a few.

6. **Educational Resources:** Seminole County Public Schools is consistently rated an A school district, with 100% of our high schools rated in this category. Seminole State College with over 20,000 students enrolled and a placement rate of 93.5% for completers is an Aspen Prize 2023 semifinalist.

Seminole County is also home to a number of cultural amenities and a focus on our history.

Thank you in advance for considering Seminole County as a potential location for the Florida Museum of Black History. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to further discuss with you how we can bring this museum to fruition and contribute to highlighting our state's black history.

Please feel free to contact me at (407) 665-2901 or [gcunha@seminolecountyfl.gov](mailto:gcunha@seminolecountyfl.gov) to discuss this expression of interest and the potential collaboration in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Guilherme "Gui" Cunha  
Administrator  
Office of Economic Development and Tourism



The city of Sanford's prominent African American presence and leadership is inlaid in our history, with majority black historic communities as a testament to our pride in this diversity:

### Historic Georgetown Community

- A suburb within the City of Sanford
- Established circa 1870
- Comprised of lots sold by Henry Sanford to early Black pioneers who came from North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and other areas of Florida.
- Established in 1886, Hopper Academy was the 1st African American school in the Georgetown district originally named "Colored School No. 11"
- Georgetown landmarks, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Hopper Academy are listed on the National Register of Historic Places



### Historic Goldsboro Community

- Goldsboro is a community and a former town within the City of Sanford
- Founded in 1891
- Goldsboro was established by the Freedmen's Bureau during the Reconstruction Era for African Americans who were employed at local railroad yards & produce houses of farms.
- During this time, Goldsboro was the 2nd most flourishing African American towns in the United States.
- Established in 1926, Crooms Academy of Information Technology is a pillar of Historic Goldsboro. Boasts 1 of the highest ratings from Magnet Schools of America.



## Florida Museum of Black History Historical Importance



**Figure 1:** Henry Shelton Sanford, ca. 1880. Photograph of original portrait courtesy the Sanford Museum.

Henry Shelton Sanford (Fig. 1). Sanford was a Lincolnian Republican who founded the City of Sanford in 1870, and he perpetuated Reconstruction in this region even after its wider decline across the state and ensured the survival of African American communities in what was then northern Orange County. The incorporated Black communities of Eatonville (1887), Goldsboro (1891), and the unincorporated District of Georgetown (est. before 1886) are lasting legacies of

his influence. Two brothers, Joseph and William Clark (Fig. 2) founded Eatonville and Goldsboro respectively as the first incorporated African American communities in the United States, each with their own black mayors, sheriffs, tax collectors, and post offices. The safe spaces Henry Sanford fostered until his death in 1891 allowed black communities to flourish in north Orange County cities farther removed from the Southern Democrat influence of the county seat in Orlando. They fostered academics, artists, writers, and more. Zora Neale Hurston, who lived for years in both Eatonville and Goldsboro and became a national icon.



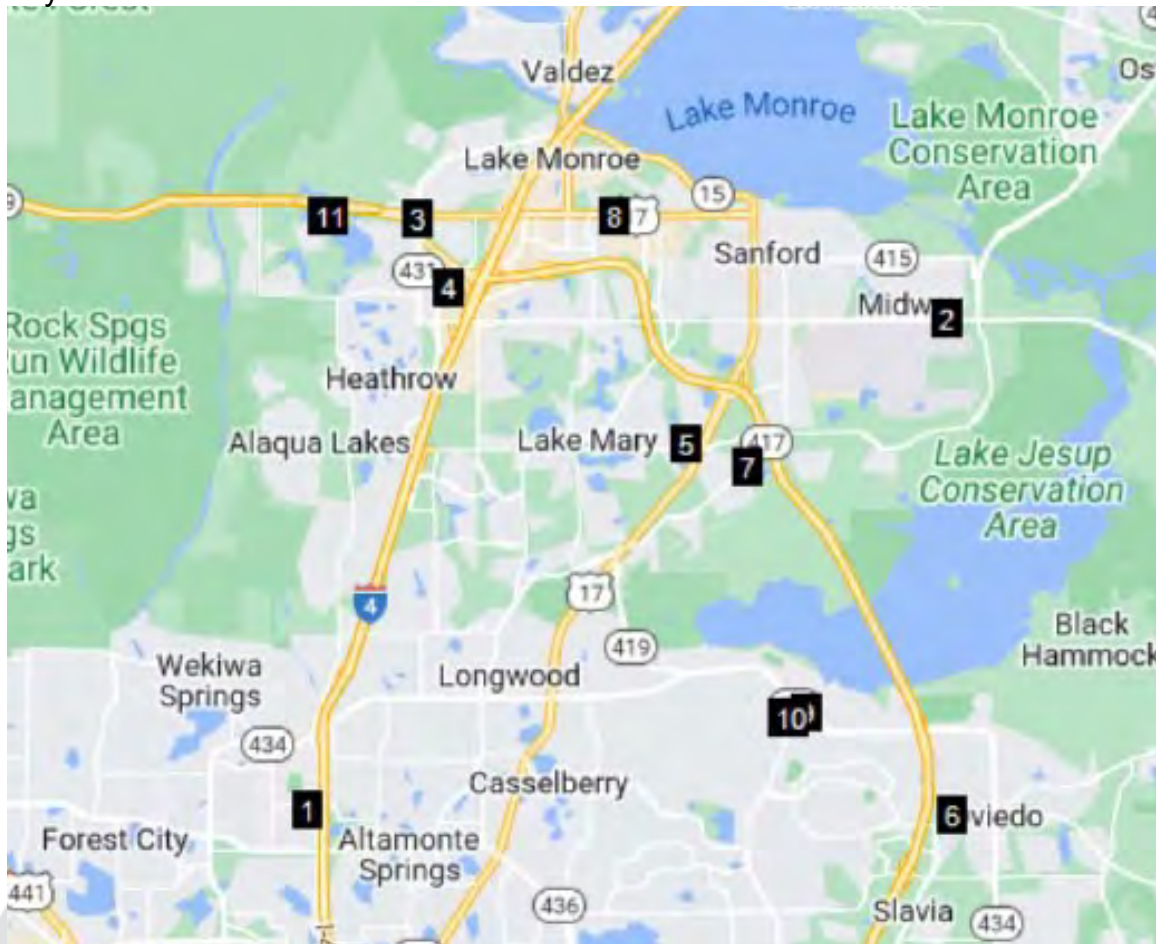
**Figure 2:** William Clark and His Grandson, ca. 1895. Scan of original photograph courtesy the Goldsboro Museum.

The lands on these pages will require clearing and conditioning prior to construction.

The buildings in this report have had other types of uses and will likely require a significant amount of interior construction to meet the needs of a museum, different from their prior use.

The lands as well as the buildings are located on easily accessible roads and with great visibility and will allow for ample parking for the potential visitors to the museum.

Land currently on the market for sale



	Address	City	Property Type	Property Size	Space Avail	Rent/SF/Yr
<b>1</b>	292 W Central Pky	Altamonte Springs	Land	2.65 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>2</b>	3750 East SR 46	Sanford	Land	5.98 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>3</b>	5701 Florida 46	Sanford	Land	3.25 AC	-	Withheld
<b>4</b>	3300 International Pkwy	Sanford	Land	5.94 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>5</b>	W Lake Mary Blvd	Sanford	Land	3.90 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>6</b>	100 N Pine Ave	Oviedo	Land	3.50 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>7</b>	7375-7441 N Ronald Reagan	Sanford	Land	2.98 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>8</b>	3550 W SR 46	Sanford	Land	11.41 AC	-	For Sale Only

SM

	Address	City	Property Type	Property Size	Space Avail	Rent/SF/Yr
<b>9</b>	434 S State Rd	Winter Springs	Land	2.90 AC	-	Withheld
<b>10</b>	290-300 Tuskawilla Rd	Winter Springs	Land	4.32 AC	-	For Sale Only
<b>11</b>	W Florida 46 @ Lake Markham	Sanford	Land	5.27 AC	-	For Sale Only

**1 LAND**

**FOR SALE**

**Village Grande-Altamonte Springs Develop**  
**292 W Central Pky**  
**Altamonte Springs, FL 32714**

**Structure**

Building Type: **Land**  
 SubType: **Commercial**  
 No. of Lots: -  
 Lot Dimensions: -  
 Proposed Use: **Retail, Office**  
 Improvements: -  
 On-Site Improv: **Curb/Gutter/Sidewalk**  
 Topography: -  
 Owner Type: -  
 Land Area: **2.65 AC**  
 Zoning: **MOI-2**  
 Parcel No: **11-21-29-300-007H-0000**  
 Parking: -



**For Sale Info**

For Sale - Active

**Sales Company**

Cushman & Wakefield of Florida, Inc.: Glen Jaffee (407) 541-4408

M

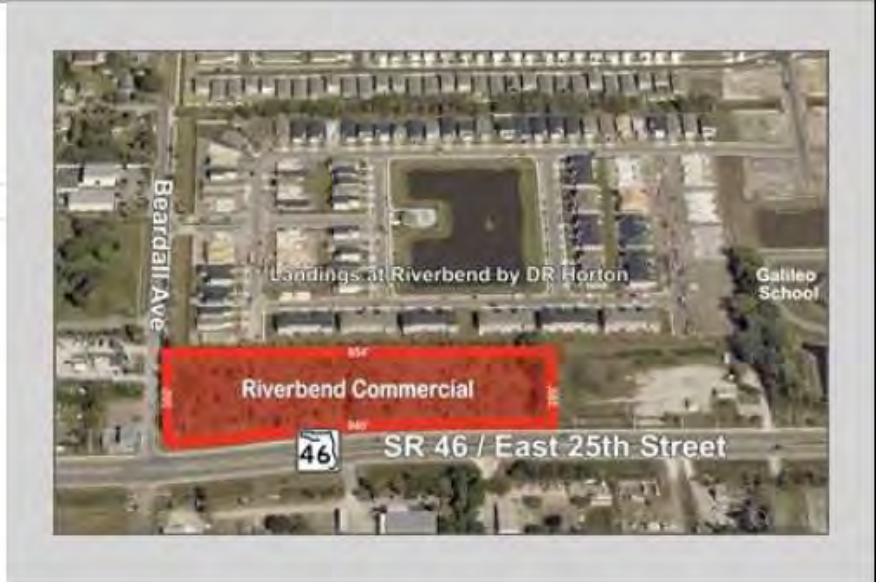
**2 LAND**

**FOR SALE**

**3750 East SR 46**  
**Sanford, FL 32771**

**Structure**

Building Type: Land  
 SubType: Commercial  
 No. of Lots: -  
 Lot Dimensions: -  
 Proposed Use: Retail, Service Station  
 Improvements: -  
 On-Site Improv: -  
 Topography: -  
 Owner Type: -  
 Land Area: 5.98 AC  
 Zoning: C-3  
 Parking: -



**For Sale Info**

For Sale at \$1,693,200 (\$6.50/SF) - Active

**Sales Company**

NAI Realvest: Paul P. P. Partyka (407) 875-9989

M



**3 LAND**

**FOR SALE / FOR LEASE**

**Orange Walk - Pad 1 & 2**  
**5701 Florida 46**  
**Sanford, FL 32771**

**Structure**

Building Type: Land  
 SubType: Commercial  
 No. of Lots: -  
 Lot Dimensions: -  
 Proposed Use: Retail  
 Improvements: -  
 On-Site Improv: -  
 Topography: Level  
 Owner Type: -  
 Land Area: 3.25 AC / 1.64 AC (Net)  
 Zoning: C-1  
 Parking: -



**For Sale Info**

**For Sale - Active**

**Sales Company**

Unicorp National Developments Inc.: Taylor Coan (407) 999-9985 X2209

**Building Notes**

Orange Walk at 5701 Florida 46 is a two-parcel assemblage at the signalized corner of State Road 46 and Orange Boulevard in Sanford, Florida. Spanning a combined 3.25 acres, the pad sites offer excellent connectivity to all directions throughout Central Florida and proximity to major retail shops, restaurants, hospitality concepts, and service businesses. Benefit from a level C-1 zoned site with exceptional visibility to approximately 30,000 passing vehicles per day along State Road 46.

The development site is two miles from Heathrow International Business Center, a nationally top-ranked business park with notable tenants such as Deloitte, Veritas Technologies, and Superior. Orange Walk is also located two miles from the 1.2 million-square-foot Seminole Towne Center, a super-regional mall anchored by JCPenney, Dillard's, and Dick's Sporting Goods.

Reach the heart of Orlando from the property within a 30-minute drive and benefit from easy connectivity to the recently completed Wekiva Parkway. Orange Walk is surrounded by a growing population of over 85,600 residents who live within a five-mile radius and represent an average household income of approximately \$110,900 per year. Whether looking to buy or lease, the development site at 5701 Florida 46 offers unrivaled access and is ideally primed to suit all major commercial needs.



**4 LAND FOR SALE**

**Mixed-Use Land**  
**3300 International Pkwy**  
**Sanford, FL 32771**

**Structure**

Building Type: Land  
 SubType: Commercial  
 No. of Lots: -  
 Lot Dimensions: Irregular  
 Proposed Use: Commercial, Retail, Mixed Use,  
 Bank, Fast Food, Hotel,  
 Improvements: Neighborhood Center, Planned Unit  
 On-Site Improv: Development, Restaurant, Strip  
 Center  
 Topography: Level  
 Owner Type: -  
 Land Area: 5.94 AC / 5.94 AC (Net)  
 Zoning: P-D  
 Parcel No: 31-19-30-514-0000-0020, 31-  
 19-30-514-0000-0030  
 Parking: -



**For Sale Info**

For Sale - Active

**Sales Company**

SRS Real Estate Partners: Brett Hartung (407) 204-9722

**Presented By**

LandQwest Commercial

**Building Notes**

**Description**

Highly sought after International Parkway pad sites for Retail, Restaurant, Bank & Hotel end users or developers. Within 2 miles of Colonial Townpark, Publix, Westin Hotel & Convention & Seminole Town Mall. Adjacent to proposed 300 unit multi-family development & directly across from future Colonial Townpark expansion.

**Highlights**

Available for Sale or Ground Lease  
 Seeking Retail, Restaurant, Bank & Hotel End Users or Developers  
 Highly Sought After International Parkway Frontage  
 Key Positioning at Strategic I-4/417 Extension  
 Extremely Convenient for Travelers; 3.5 Miles from the Sanford Sunrail Station and 6.5 Miles from Sanford Airport

M

**5 LAND FOR SALE**

**Vacant Land**  
**W Lake Mary Blvd**  
**Sanford, FL 32773**



**Structure**

Building Type: Land  
 SubType: Commercial  
 No. of Lots: -  
 Lot Dimensions: -  
 Proposed Use: Commercial, Retail  
 Improvements: -  
 On-Site Improv: -  
 Topography: Level  
 Owner Type: -  
 Land Area: 3.90 AC  
 Zoning: GC-2  
 Parcel No: 11-20-30-504-0A01-0000  
 Parking: -

**For Sale Info**

For Sale at \$2,750,000 (\$16.19/SF) - Active

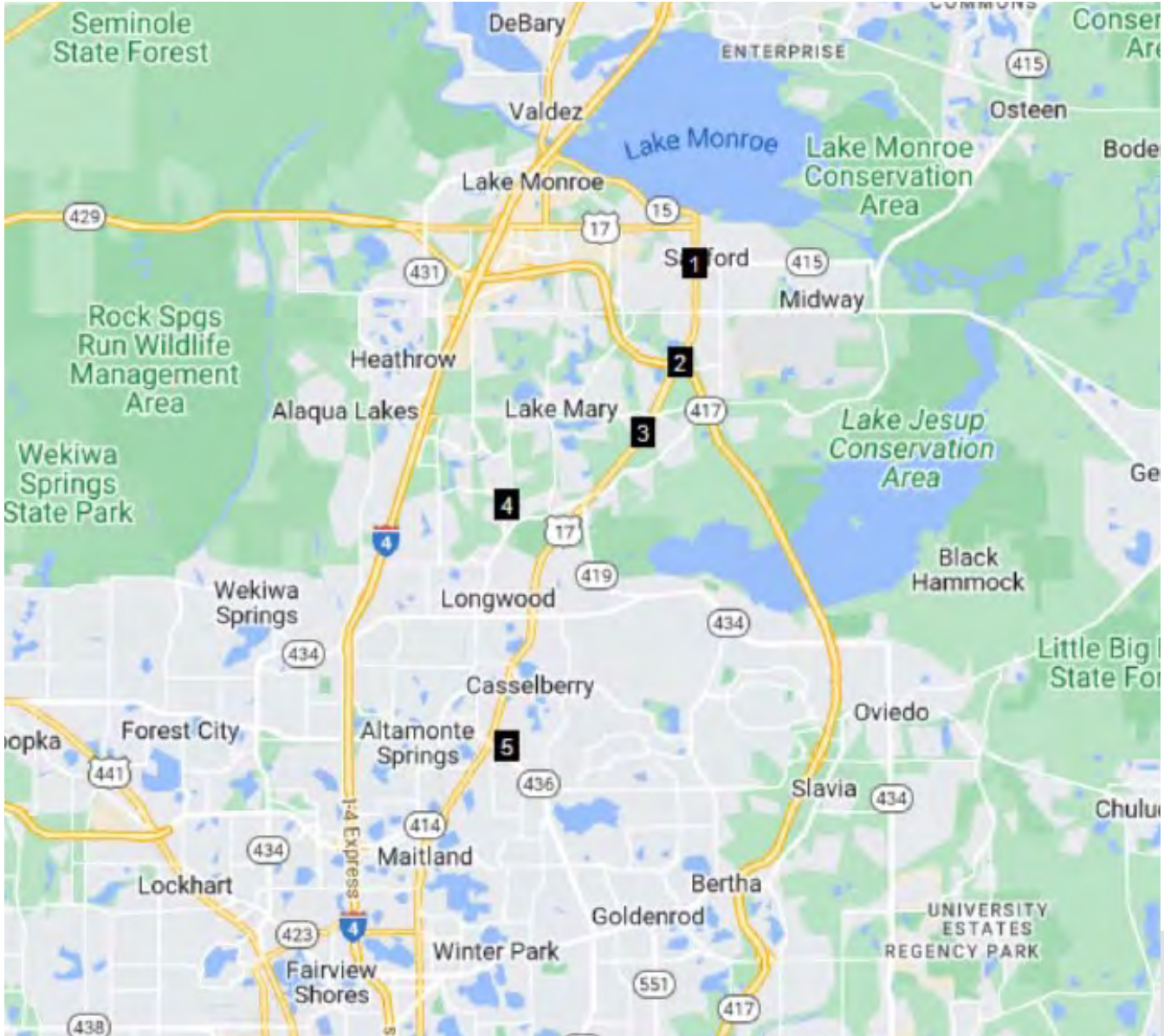
**Sales Company**

Results Real Estate Partners, LLC: Vincent F. Wolle (407) 647-0200 X1

**Presented By**

CBRE / Wood Belcher (407) 718-7165

Buildings currently on the market for sale



	Address	City	Property Type	Property Size	Space Avail	Rent/SF/Yr
<b>1</b>	1200 S French Ave	Sanford	Retail/Freestanding	17,345 SF	17,345 SF	For Sale Only
<b>2</b>	2921 S Orlando Dr	Sanford	Retail/Storefront Retail/Office (Neighborhood Center)	148,538 SF	2,698 SF	\$17.79
<b>3</b>	650 Lake Minnie Dr	Sanford	Retail/Freestanding (Strip Center)	21,240 SF	0 SF	For Sale Only
<b>4</b>	665 Longwood Lake Mary Rd	Lake Mary	Specialty/Lodge/Meeting Hall	24,941 SF	0 SF	For Sale Only
<b>5</b>	204 State Road 436	Casselberry	Retail	85,560 SF	0 SF	For Sale Only

**1 RETAIL**

**FOR SALE ONLY**

**The Barn**  
**1200 S French Ave**  
**Sanford, FL 32771**

**Structure**

Building Type: **Retail**  
 SubType: **Freestanding**  
 Class: **-**  
 RBA: **17,345 SF**  
 Typical Floor: **17,345 SF**  
 Stories: **1**  
 Building Status: **Existing**  
 Year Built: **1940**  
 % Leased: **0%**  
 Owner Occupied: **Yes**  
 Owner Type: **Developer/Owner-RGNL**  
 Tenancy: **Single Tenant**  
 Land Area: **3.38 AC**  
 Zoning: **GC-2, Sanford**  
 Parcel No: **19-30-25-5AG-1409-0010**  
 Parking: **140 Surface Spaces are available**  
           **Ratio of 8.20/1,000 SF**



**Lease**

Total Available: **17,345 SF**  
 Smallest Space: **17,345 SF**  
 Max Contig: **17,345 SF**  
 Space Use: **-**  
 Rent/SF/Yr: **For Sale Only**  
 Expenses: **2021 Tax @ \$0.99/sf**

**For Sale Info**

**For Sale at \$3,395,000 (\$195.73/SF) - Active**

**Sales Company**

Florida Premier Realty Group Inc: Scott Taylor (407) 256-0123

**Presented By**

Coldwell Banker Commercial Realty / Powell Austin (407) 333-8088

**Amenities**

Pylon Sign, Signage, Signalized Intersection

M

**2 RETAIL**

**FOR LEASE**

**Sanford Plaza**  
2921 S Orlando Dr  
Sanford, FL 32773



**Structure**

Building Type: **Retail**  
 SubType: **Storefront Retail/Office**  
 Class: **(Neighborhood Center)**  
 RBA: **148,538 SF**  
 Typical Floor: **148,538 SF**  
 Stories: **1**  
 Building Status: **Existing**  
 Year Built: **1965**  
 % Leased: **98.2%**  
 Owner Occupied: **No**  
 Owner Type: **-**  
 Tenancy: **Single Tenant**  
 Land Area: **10.88 AC**  
 Zoning: **PD**  
 Parcel No: **01-20-30-509-0000-2300**  
 Parking: **355 Surface Spaces are available**  
**Ratio of 2.39/1,000 SF**

**Lease**

Total Available: **2,698 SF**  
 Smallest Space: **2,698 SF**  
 Max Contig: **2,698 SF**  
 Space Use: **Retail**  
 Rent/SF/Yr: **\$17.79**  
 Expenses: **2020 Tax @ \$0.07/sf; 2010 Ops @ \$0.30/sf**

**For Sale Info**

**Not For Sale**

**Presented By**


SCHIE22620 INC / Louise Schie (408) 691-8493

**Amenities**

Bus Line, Dedicated Turn Lane, Freeway Visibility, Pylon Sign, Signage

Floor	SF Avail	Floor Contig	Bldg Contig	Price	Rent/SF/Yr + Svs	Occupancy	Term	Type
P 1st / Suite 220	2,698	2,698	2,698	No	\$17.79/nnn	Vacant	Negotiable	Direct

SCHIE22620 INC / Louise Schie (408) 691-8493  
 \$4,000 per month includes CAM.

<b>3</b>	<b>RETAIL</b>	<b>FOR SALE</b>																																
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 35%;"> <p><b>Lake Minnie Village</b>  <b>650 Lake Minnie Dr</b>  <b>Sanford, FL 32773</b></p> </div> <div style="width: 60%; text-align: right;">  </div> </div>																																		
<b>Structure</b>																																		
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Building Type:</td> <td><b>Retail</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>SubType:</td> <td><b>Freestanding (Strip Center)</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Class:</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RBA:</td> <td><b>21,240 SF</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Typical Floor:</td> <td><b>21,240 SF</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stories:</td> <td><b>1</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Building Status:</td> <td><b>Existing</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year Built:</td> <td><b>2006</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>% Leased:</td> <td><b>100%</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Owner Occupied:</td> <td><b>No</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Owner Type:</td> <td><b>Other/Unknown-Instl</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tenancy:</td> <td><b>Single Tenant</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Land Area:</td> <td><b>2.78 AC</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Zoning:</td> <td><b>GC2</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parcel No:</td> <td><b>20-30-14-520-0000-0010</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parking:</td> <td><b>Free Surface Spaces</b> Ratio of 0.00/1,000 SF</td> </tr> </table>			Building Type:	<b>Retail</b>	SubType:	<b>Freestanding (Strip Center)</b>	Class:	-	RBA:	<b>21,240 SF</b>	Typical Floor:	<b>21,240 SF</b>	Stories:	<b>1</b>	Building Status:	<b>Existing</b>	Year Built:	<b>2006</b>	% Leased:	<b>100%</b>	Owner Occupied:	<b>No</b>	Owner Type:	<b>Other/Unknown-Instl</b>	Tenancy:	<b>Single Tenant</b>	Land Area:	<b>2.78 AC</b>	Zoning:	<b>GC2</b>	Parcel No:	<b>20-30-14-520-0000-0010</b>	Parking:	<b>Free Surface Spaces</b> Ratio of 0.00/1,000 SF
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<b>For Sale at \$3,503,000 (\$164.93/SF) - Active</b>																																		
<b>Sales Company</b>																																		
SRS National Net Lease Group: Patrick R. Luther (949) 698-1115, Matthew Mousavi (949) 698-1116																																		
<b>Amenities</b>																																		
Pylon Sign, Signage																																		

**4 SPECIALTY**

**FOR SALE**

**J. Douglas Williams YMCA Family Center**  
**665 Longwood Lake Mary Rd**  
**Lake Mary, FL 32746**



**Structure**

Building Type: **Specialty**  
     SubType: **Lodge/Meeting Hall**  
     Class: **-**  
     RBA: **24,941 SF**  
 Typical Floor: **24,941 SF**  
     Stories: **1**  
 Building Status: **Existing**  
     Year Built: **1996**  
     % Leased: **0%**  
 Owner Occupied: **No**  
     Owner Type: **-**  
     Tenancy: **Single Tenant**  
     Land Area: **7.70 AC**  
     Zoning: **PD**  
     Parcel No: **20-30-20-300-006G-0000**  
     Parking: **80 free Surface Spaces are available**  
             **Ratio of 3.21/1,000 SF**

**Lease**


Total Available: **0**  
 Smallest Space: **-**  
     Max Contig: **0**  
     Space Use: **-**  
     Rent/SF/Yr: **For Sale Only**

**For Sale Info**

**For Sale - Active**

**Sales Company**

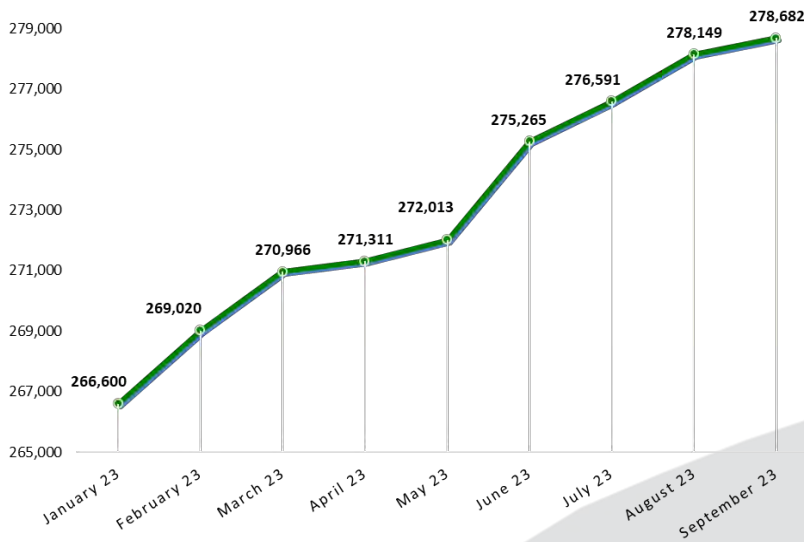
Foundry Commercial: Matt Messier (407) 540-7718, Carlin Beekman (407) 540-7789

<b>5</b>	<b>RETAIL</b>	<b>FOR SALE</b>
<p><b>204 State Road 436</b>  <b>Casselberry, FL 32707</b></p>		
<p><b>Structure</b></p> <p>           Building Type: <b>Retail</b>            Class: -            RBA: <b>85,560 SF</b>            Typical Floor: <b>85,560 SF</b>            Stories: <b>1</b>            Building Status: <b>Existing</b>            Year Built: <b>1986</b>            % Leased: <b>100%</b>            Owner Occupied: <b>No</b>            Owner Type: -            Tenancy: <b>Single Tenant</b>            Land Area: <b>7.58 AC</b>            Zoning: -            Parcel No: <b>21-30-17-519-0000-0010</b>            Parking: <b>179 Surface Spaces are available</b>  <b>Ratio of 2.09/1,000 SF</b> </p>		
		
<p><b>Lease</b></p> <p>           Total Available: <b>0</b>            Smallest Space: -            Max Contig: <b>0</b>            Space Use: -            Rent/SF/Yr: <b>For Sale Only</b>            Expenses: <b>2021 Tax @ \$0.56/sf</b> </p>		
<p><b>For Sale Info</b></p> <p><b>For Sale at \$9,000,000 (\$105.19/SF) - Active</b></p>		
<p><b>Sales Company</b></p> <p>NAI Realvest: Paul P. P. Partyka (407) 875-9989</p>		

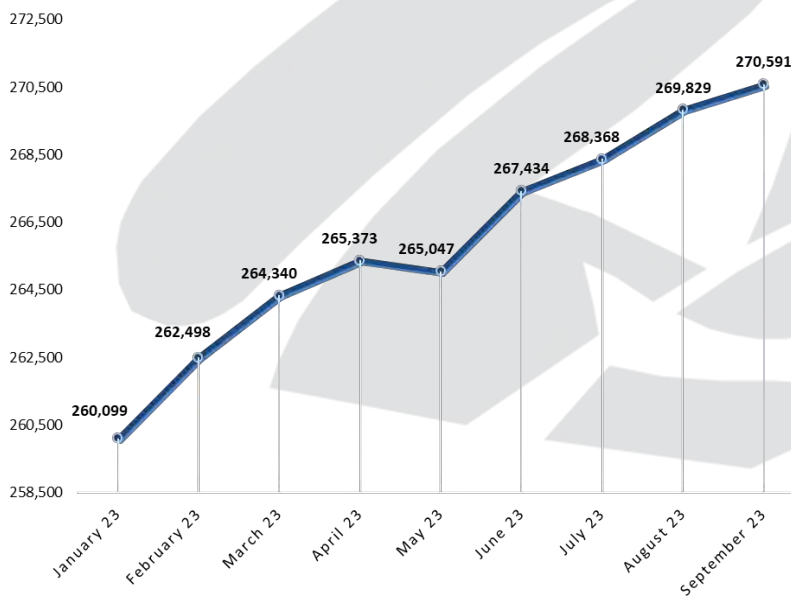


Seminole County's workforce is diverse in industry, background, experience and ethnicity. Our labor force and employment levels have been on a steady growth pattern

### Seminole County Labor Force



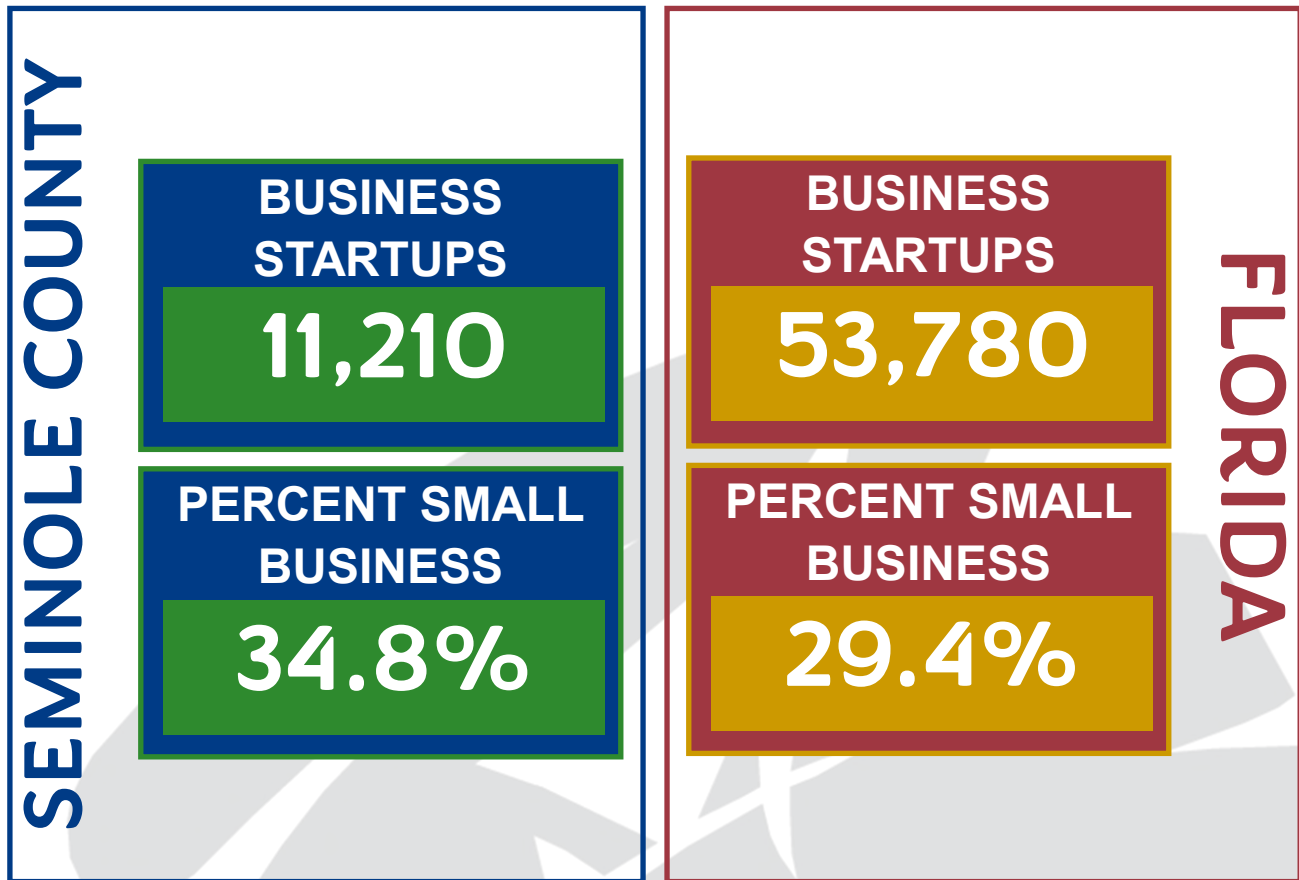
### Seminole County Employment Levels



*Innovation & Economic Development*

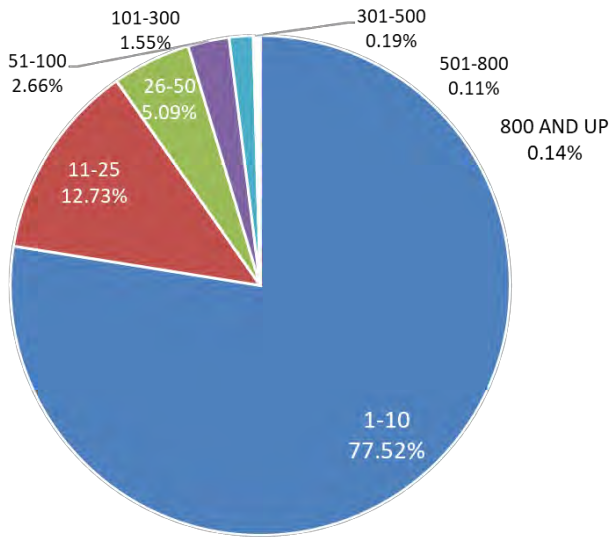
Our Economic Development office has a strong focus on small business and entrepreneurial support, since 95% of our businesses employ 50 workers or less.

The Seminole County BCC supports financially and has a strong partnership with the two business incubators in the County, the UCF Technology Incubator in Winter Springs and the Seminole State College Business Incubator in Sanford. We are currently exploring ways to help them grow and they are frequently at capacity.

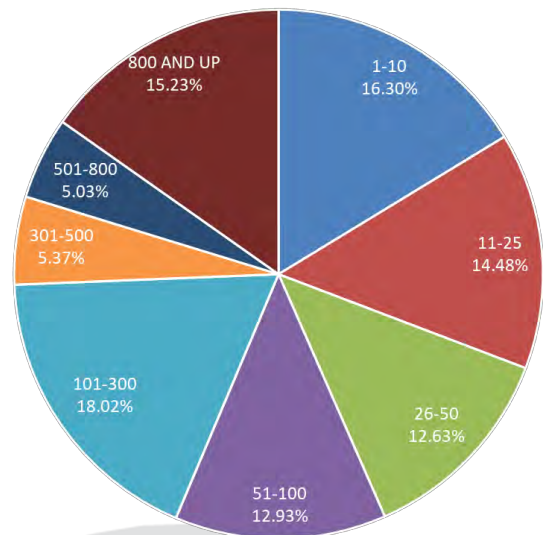


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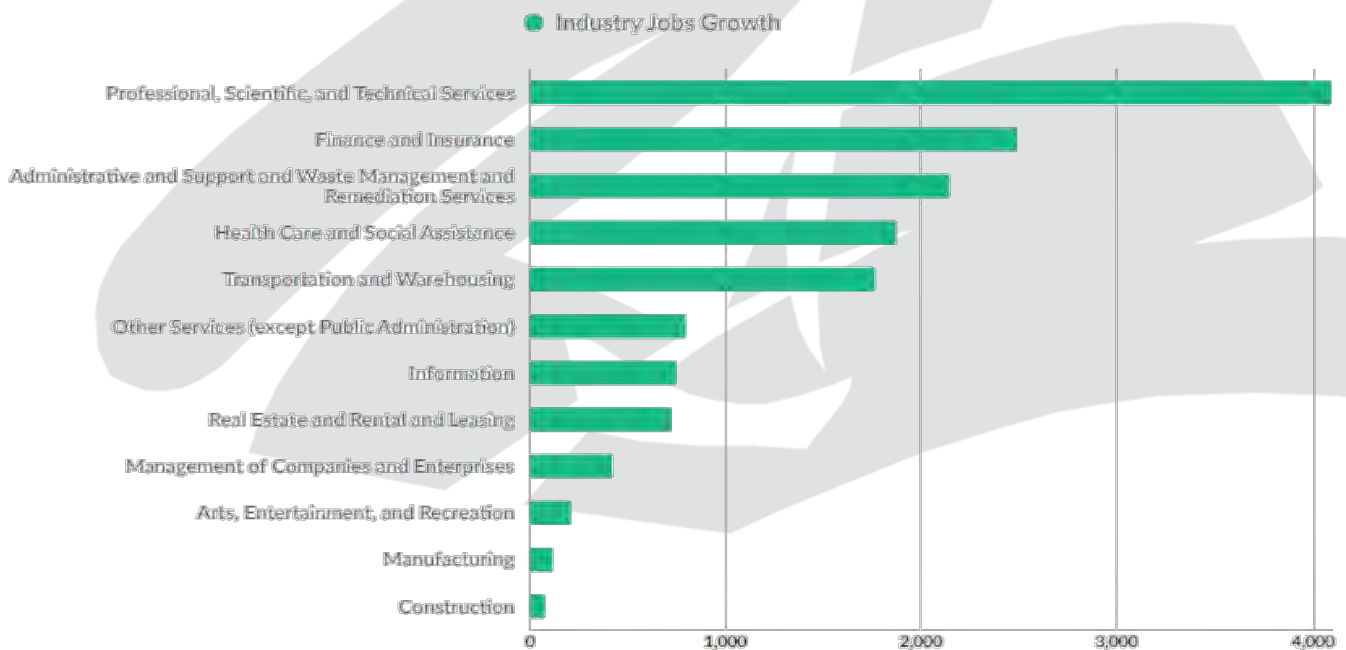
Percentage of Businesses by Employment Size



Percentage Employment by business Size Range

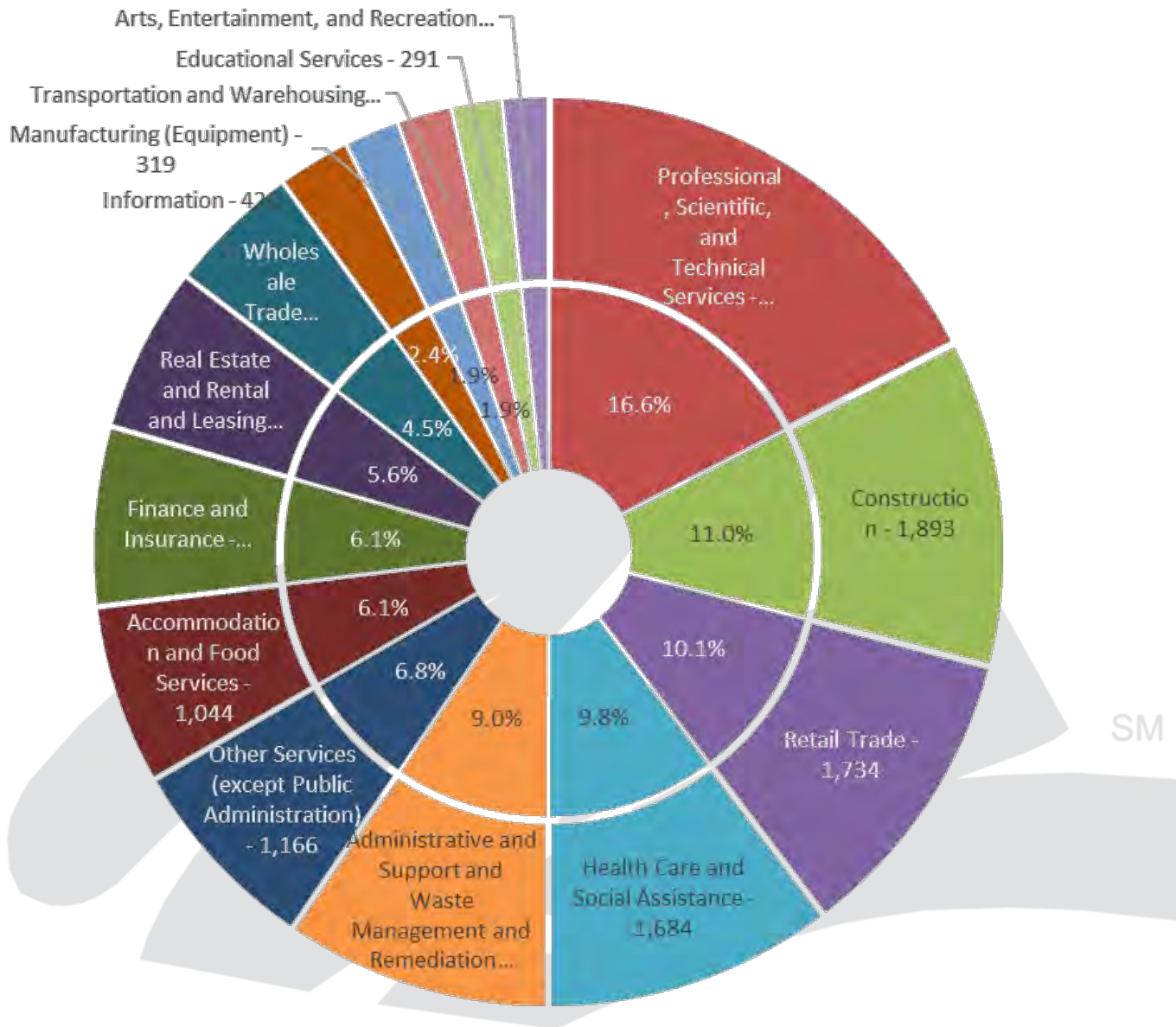


Top Growing Industries

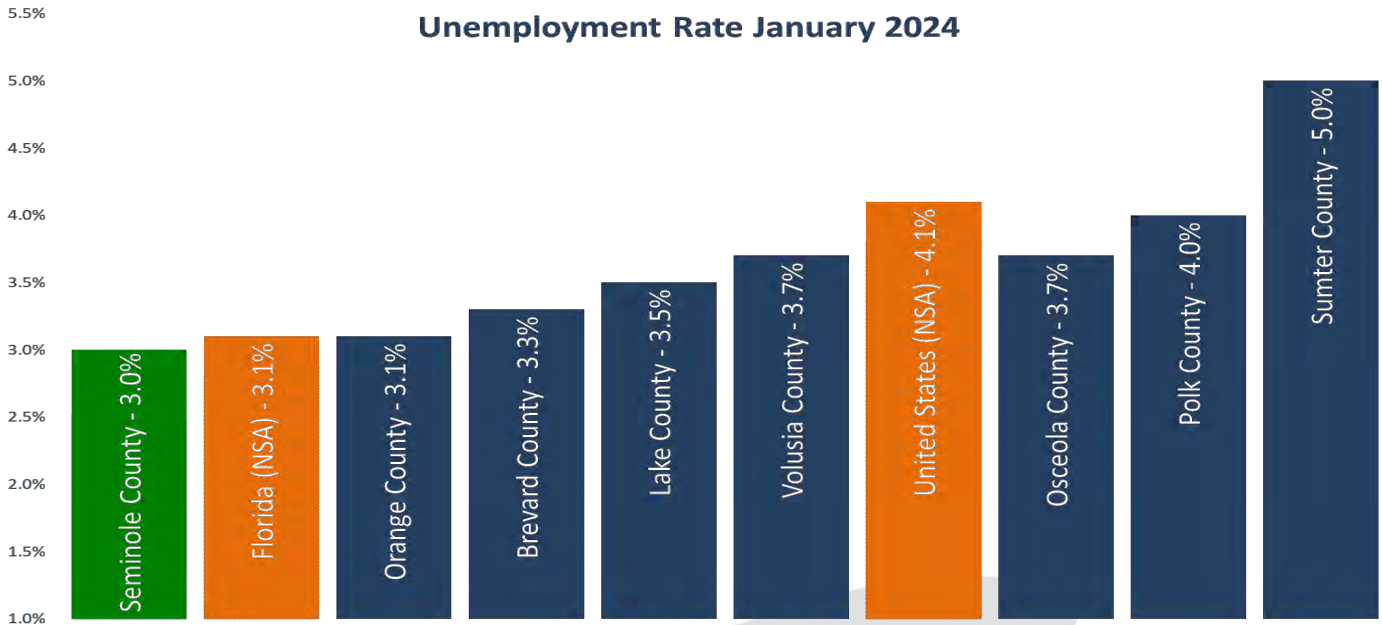


With a strong presence of manufacturing industry and proximity to a great number of manufacturing businesses in sectors related to the semiconductor and micro components sector, not only in Seminole county, but also in our neighboring counties, a location in Seminole County will prove beneficial to Chip1 from the industry access perspective.

### BUSINESSES BY INDUSTRY - Q2 2023



Seminole County boasts one of the highest education levels and household incomes of the population in Central Florida. We consistently have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the state, currently at 3%.



<b>SEMINOLE COUNTY</b>	<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>	<b>\$80,550</b>	<b>FLORIDA</b>
	<b>GDP PER CAPITA</b>	<b>\$63.26</b>	
	<b>POVERTY RATE</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	
	<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME</b>	<b>\$69,303</b>	
	<b>GDP PER CAPITA</b>	<b>\$66.07</b>	
	<b>POVERTY RATE</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	

## Florida Museum of Black History

# Demographics

### People



### Population

Total Population  
**470,856**

*U.S. Census 2020 Decennial Census*

### Age

Median Age in Seminole County  
**40.0**

*U.S. Census - 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

### Foreign Born Population

Seminole County Population Born Abroad  
**16.5%**

*U.S. Census - 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

### Race & Ethnicity



### Hispanic

Hispanic and Latino of any race  
**106,539**  
**22.6%**

*U.S. Census - 2020 Decennial Census*

### White

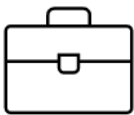
White Alone  
**284,811**  
**59.5%**

*U.S. Census - 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

### Black or African American

Black or African American Alone  
**55,285**  
**11.5%**

### Labor



### Employment

2022 Employment Rate  
**65.2%**

*U.S. Census - 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

### Unemployment

2023 Average Unemployment Rate in Seminole County, FL  
**2.7%**

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

### Labor Force

2023 Average Labor Force in Seminole County, FL  
**275,201**

### Education



### Percentage College Grads

Bachelor's Degree or Higher  
**40.4%**

*U.S. Census - 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

### Educational Attainment

Associate's Degree or Higher  
**52.8%**

### School Grades

Percentage of K-12 schools rated A or B  
**86%**

*Florida Department of Education. School Grades 2023*

### Income and Earnings



### Median Household Income

Median Household Income  
**\$80,550**

### Mean Household Income

Average Household Income  
**\$111,298**

### Per Capita Income

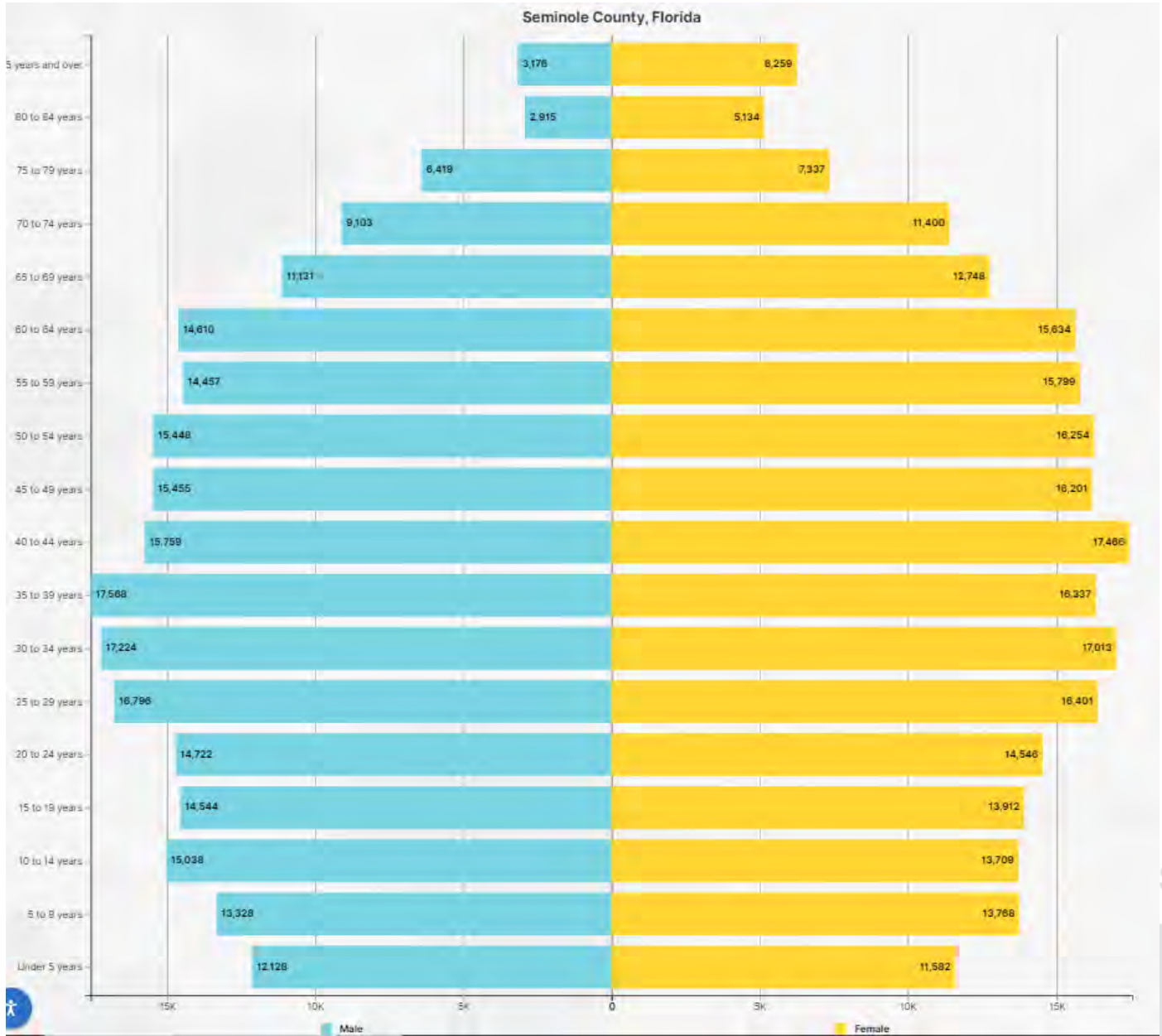
Per capita income in the past 12 months (in 2022 inflation-adjusted dollars)

**\$44,616**

*U.S. Census - 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates*

# Florida Museum of Black History

## Demographics

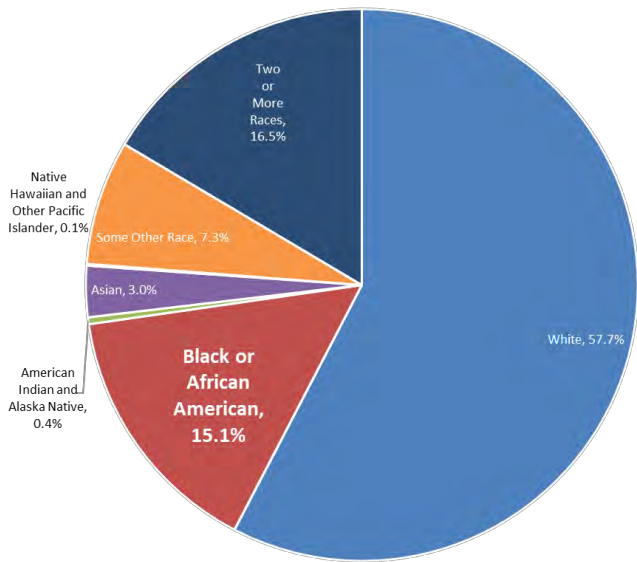


SM

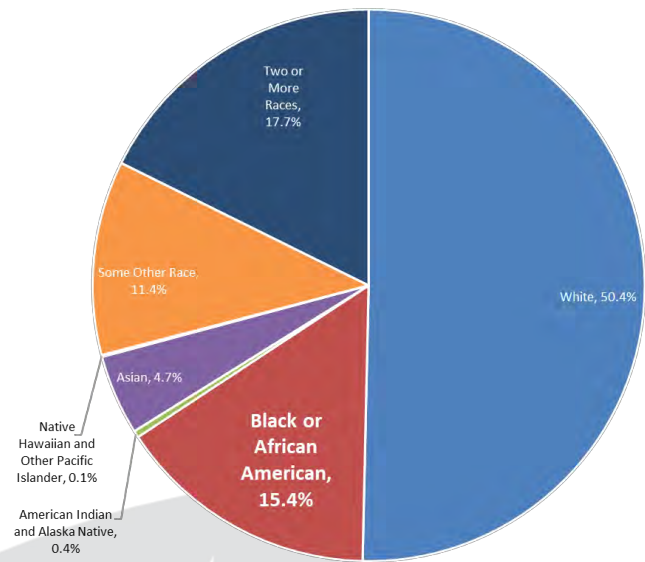
## Florida Museum of Black History Population Characteristics

The city of Sanford's population is highly diverse, with one of the highest percentages of black or African American population percentages.

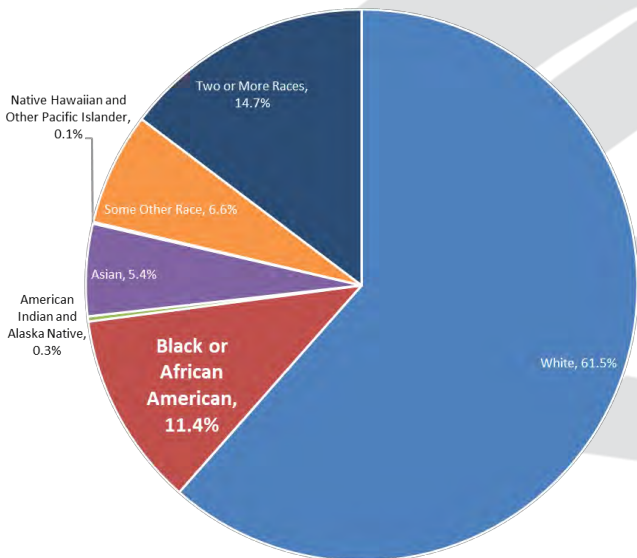
**Florida**



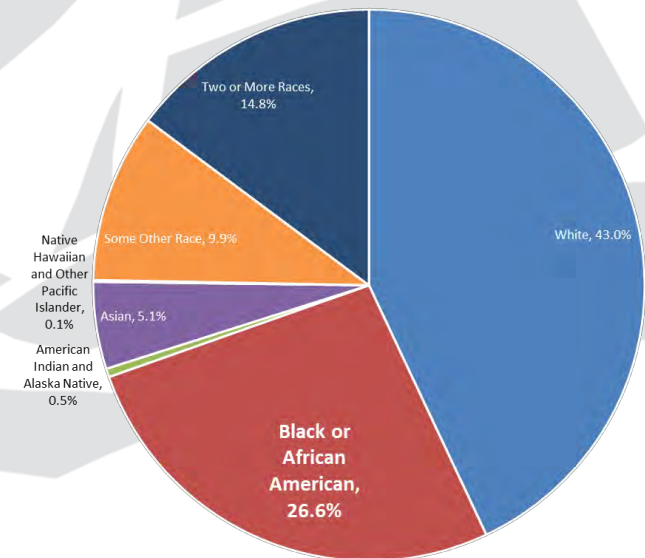
**Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford MSA**



**Seminole County**

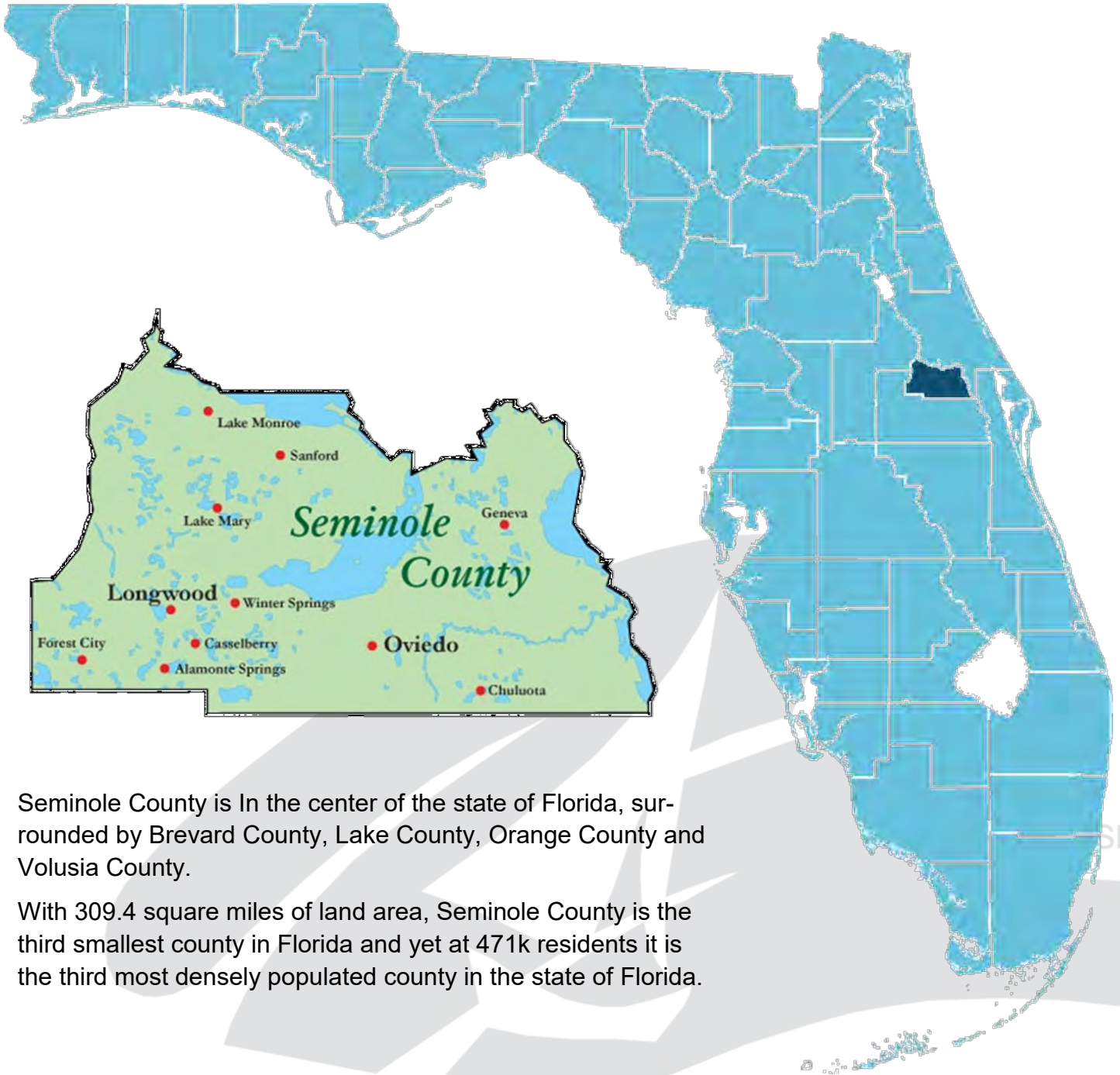


**Sanford**





## Florida Museum of Black History Geography Size and Density

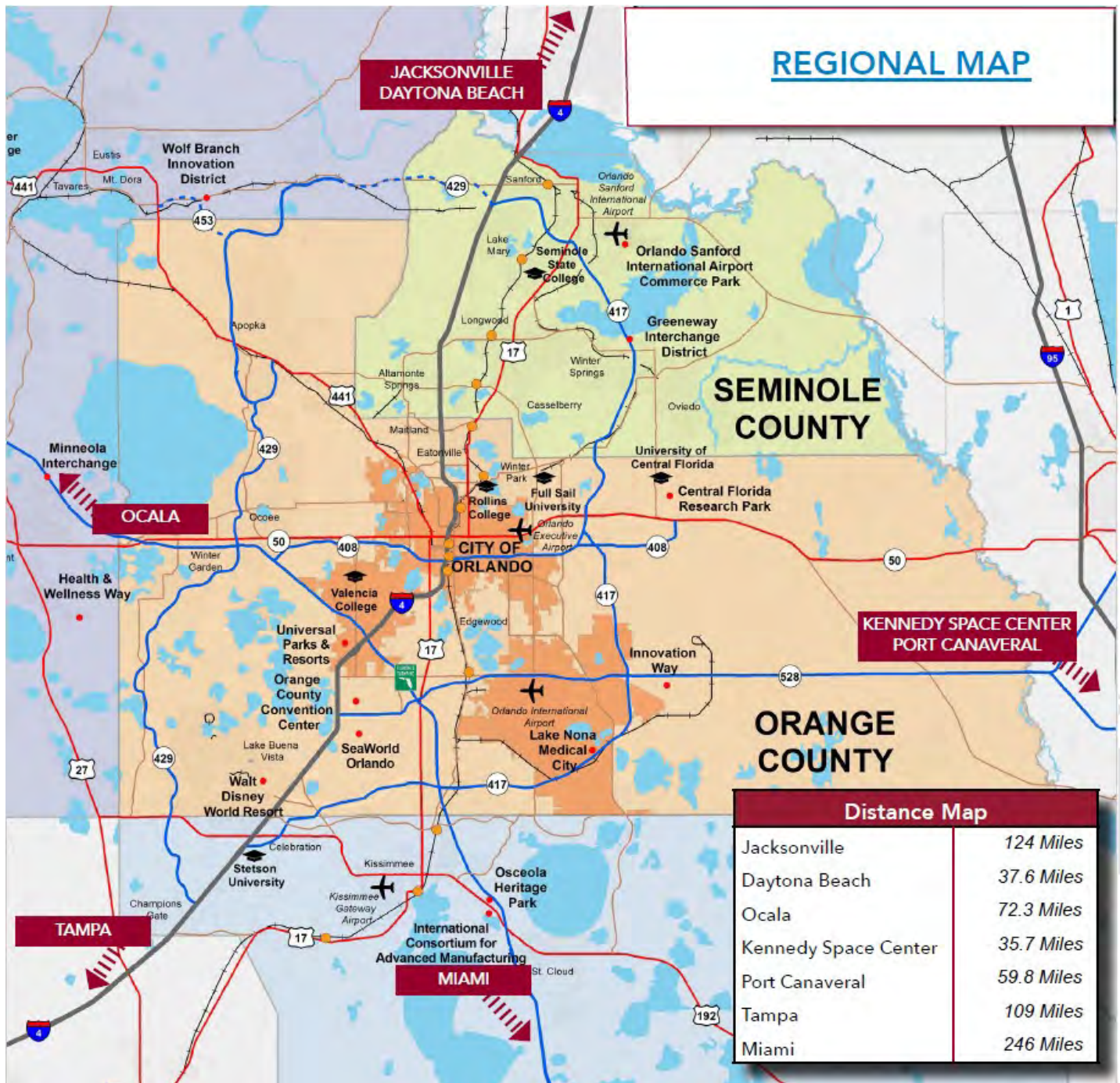


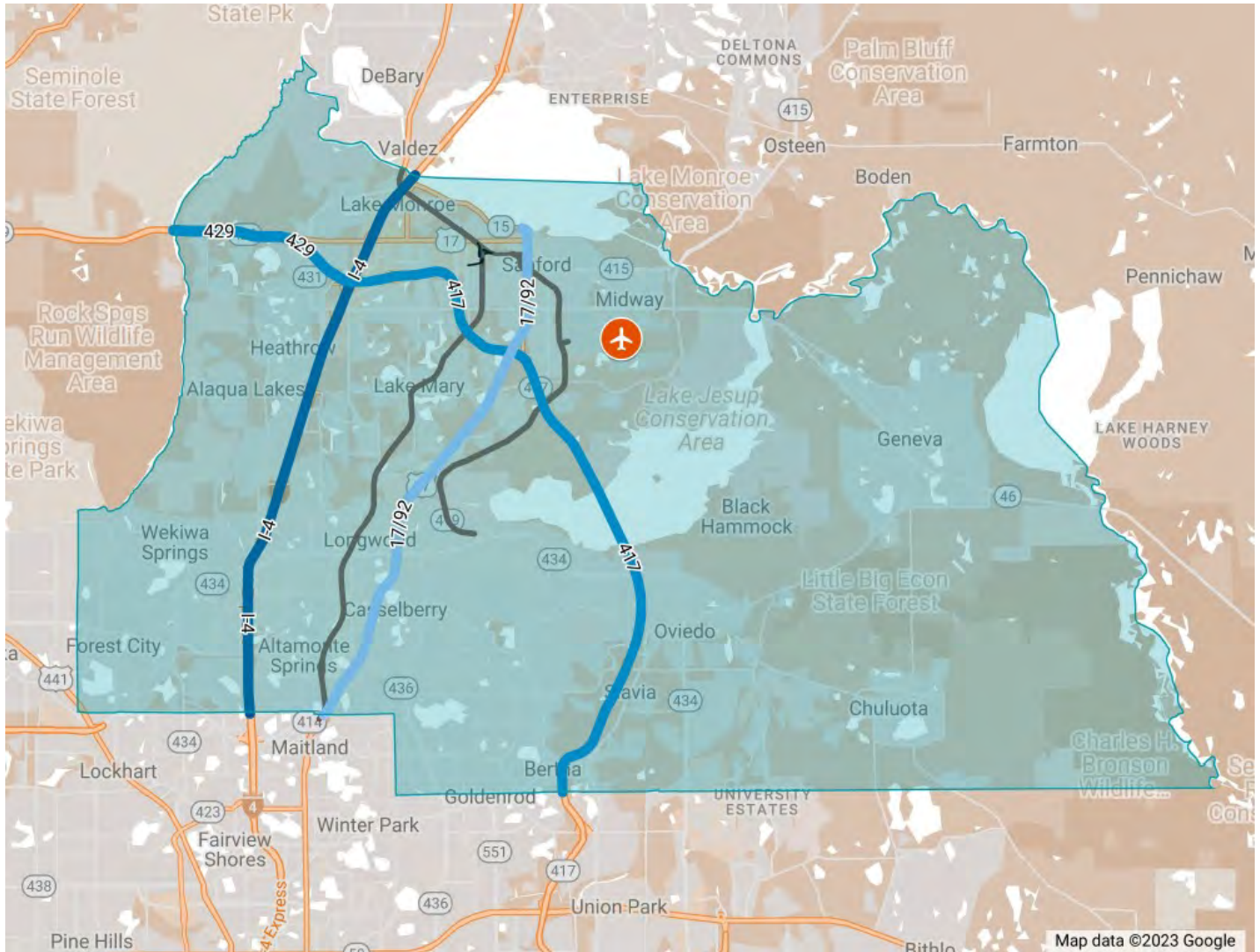
Seminole County is in the center of the state of Florida, surrounded by Brevard County, Lake County, Orange County and Volusia County.

With 309.4 square miles of land area, Seminole County is the third smallest county in Florida and yet at 471k residents it is the third most densely populated county in the state of Florida.

## Florida Museum of Black History Transportation

Seminole County is strategically positioned for any distribution business, between major transportation arteries in Florida, with I-4 crossing our county North-South, SR 429 on our western boundary, SR 417 on our eastern boundary and the CSX rail service traversing the county north-south. Additionally, we are within easy access to both the Orlando Sanford International Airport and the Orlando International Airport, offering over 150 non-stop flight destinations worldwide.





Seminole County's prime location in Central Florida, will provide easy access to the Florida Museum of Black History to all its visitors, from Florida, the rest of the nation or even international travelers. The Central Florida region already attracts 74 million visitors per year that will benefit from another cultural and educational opportunity while they are here.

Whether by trains, planes or automobiles, it will be a breeze for visitors to the Florida Museum of Black History to get here.

Some of our major transportation routes include the Orlando-Sanford International Airport (SFB), I-4, 429, 417, 17/92, Amtrak and Sunrail.

# Orlando Sanford INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

- 2.9M passengers in 2023
- 204 weekly flights to 75 destinations
- 6 International Destinations





**A**

Rated district 9 of the last 10 years  
**100%** OF High schools are rated A or B  
**82%** of all schools are rated A or B

**A highly-rated Public School System in Florida**



**23** Major colleges and Universities within a 50-mile radius

Ranked among the **most affordable** colleges in America

National Center of Educational Statistics

**132** Programs Offered  
**7,000** Degrees Conferred

**25,000** Students

2020/21

**TOP 150** U.S. Community Colleges

Aspen Institute



**238** Degrees Offered  
**18,403** Degrees Conferred  
**70k+** Students

2021

**Largest University in Florida and among largest in the U.S.**

Seminole County, with its monicker “**Florida’s Natural Choice**”, boasts over 40 parks, trailheads, and natural lands areas, encompassing over 7,300 acres, as evidence of our strong focus on the quality of life and wellness for our residents and visitors alike.

Known around the region, and the state, for our **A+ rated school** system, highly educated population, nature-based entertainment options, and state-of-the-art sports facilities, Seminole County has long displayed a passion for our leisure services and educational programs, enriching lives through outstanding cultural, educational, environmental and recreational experiences by providing quality accessible leisure programs, facilities, and services to Seminole County residents and visitors now and for the future.

Seminole County, and specifically the city of Sanford stands uniquely qualified to serve as home to the Florida Museum of Black History, moreover, Seminole County boasts a supportive and engaged community that values our history and diversity. Our local government is committed to supporting projects that uplift the community and foster a sense of pride and identity.

While Seminole County is best known for its natural beauty, the county and its seven cities also host a variety of cultural facilities, including:

### **Bradlee-Mc Intyre House Museum**

130 W Warren Ave, Longwood, FL 32750

Affectionately known as the "Bradlee-Mac," this home was once located in Altamonte Springs. Although published references have placed it as early as 1883 or even 1880, more modern research points to its construction beginning in 1885 and the finishing touches completed in 1888.

<http://www.historiclongwood.com/>



### **Goldsboro Museum**



1211 Historic Goldsboro Blvd, Sanford, FL 32771

On December 1, 1891 the town of Goldsboro was the second black incorporated City in the United States. The Goldsboro Museum showcases and preserves the history, heritage, livelihood, and culture of Goldsboro, Florida.

<http://goldsbormuseum.com/>

**Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum**

115 International Pkwy #101, Lake Mary, FL 32746

Founded in 1983 by the Karpeles, with the mission to share their love of history and learning, to inspire curiosity in others, and to promote education and literacy, the Karpeles Manuscript Library collection preserves more than a million historical documents in the categories of literature, science, religion, political history, exploration, music, and art. .

<https://www.karpeles.com/visit/lake-mary-florida/>



**Lake Mary Historical Museum**

158 N Country Club Rd, Lake Mary, FL 32746

The Lake Mary Historical Museum, which preserves and promote the history of the city and the surrounding area. The museum houses a collection of artifacts, photographs, documents and other materials related to the history of Lake Mary and the surrounding communities.

<http://www.lakemarymuseum.com/>

**Museum of Seminole County History**

300 Eslinger Way, Sanford, FL 32773

The Museum of Seminole County History highlights Seminole County, the historical gateway to interior Central Florida. The area has gone through periods of great importance militarily and as the area's transportation hub, and more recently as an agricultural leader.

<https://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/departments-services/leisure-services/parks-trails-and-natural-lands/museum-of-seminole-county-history/>



**Museum of Geneva History**

165 1st St, Geneva, FL 32732

The museum of Geneva History houses many artifacts and cool pieces of history that were originally found by many of Geneva Florida's first settlers and families.

<https://theclio.com/entry/95182>

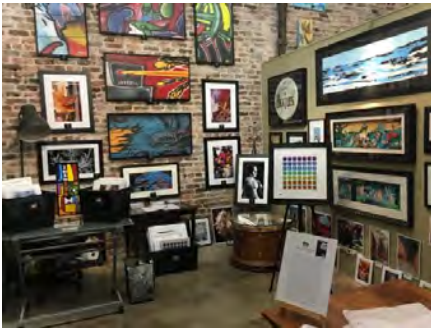
**Sanford Museum**

520 E 1st St, Sanford, FL 32771

The Sanford Museum opened in 1957 as The Henry Shelton Sanford Memorial Library and Museum. The building was expanded in 1974 and again in 1993. The Sanford Family Collection, including the library and papers of city founder Henry S. Sanford, was donated to the city by Sanford's daughter Carola Sanford Dow.



<https://sanfordfl.gov/government/parks-and-recreation/museum/>



**Jeanine Taylor Folk Art / Gallery on First**

211 E 1st St, Sanford, FL 32771

Celebrating the works of southern contemporary artists like Butch Anthony, Purvis Young, Mary Proctor, Ruby C Williams, John Cornbread Anderson, Ab the Flagman, Michael Banks, Jimmy Lee Suduth, Alyne Harris, Pat Juneau, Florida Highwaymen and many more!

<https://www.jtfolkart.com/>

**The Artistic Hand and Gallery Studio**

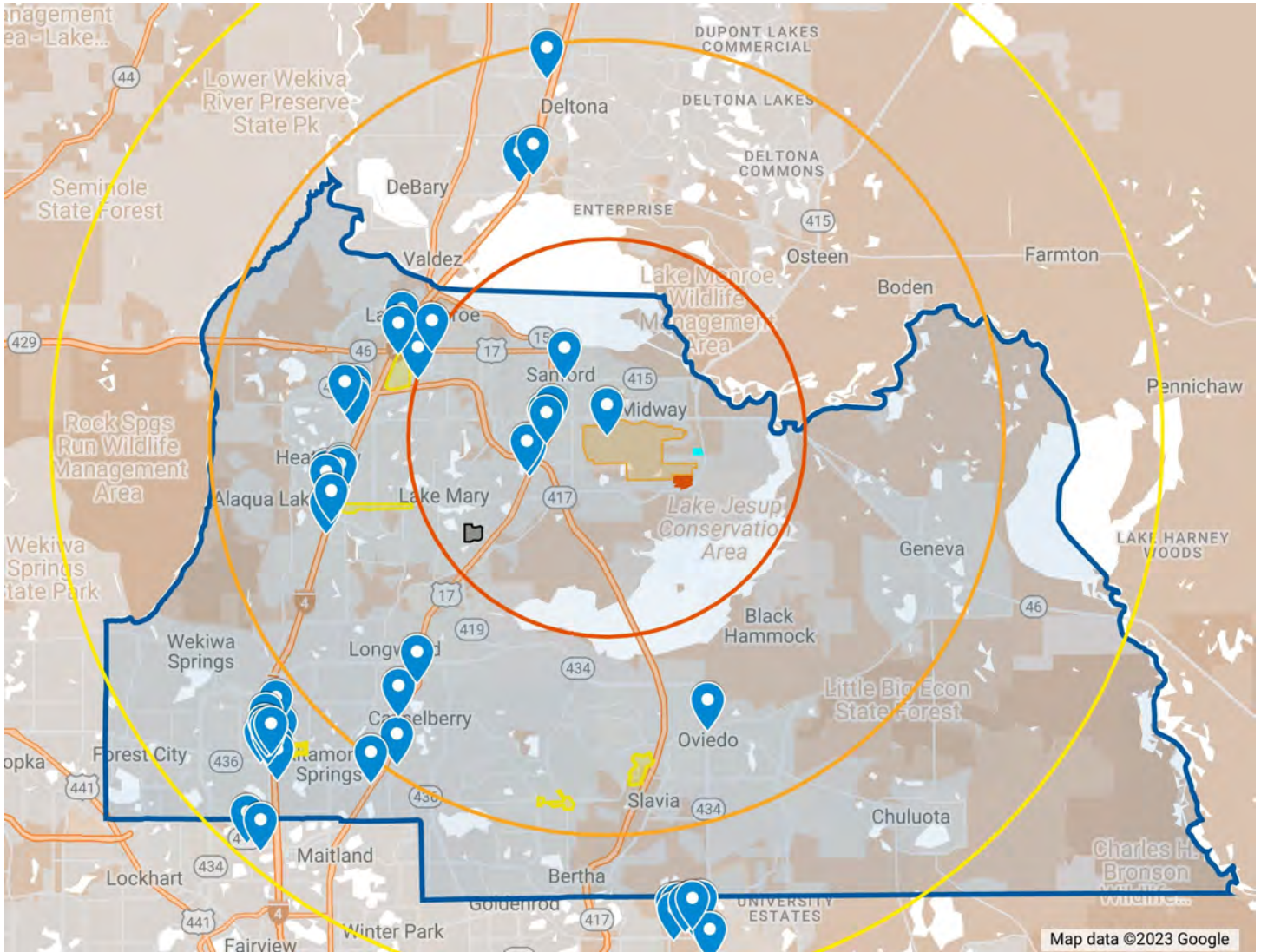
353 N Central Ave, Oviedo, FL 32765

Art gallery (retail) with over 100 local artists as well as a studio where students of all ages learn a variety of art making techniques, in clay, mixed media, painting & drawing, and more!

<https://artistichandgalleryandstudio.com/>







With more than 480 hotels and resorts and over 130,000 rooms in Central Florida, the Orlando area visitors have plenty of options to choose from.

In Seminole County alone, 39 hotels offer over 5,000 rooms. The map above displays the hotel properties within a 5-mile, 10-mile and 14-mile radius of the Orlando-Sanford International Airport.

The thousands of youth athletes –and their families– that participate in the hundreds of sports tournaments throughout Seminole County consistently lodge at these facilities.

Seminole County is led by a responsible and dedicated Board of County Commissioners divided into five districts.



**BOB DALLARI**  
 District 1  
 Commissioner



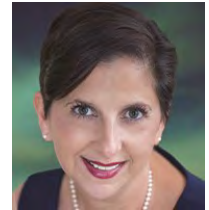
**JAY ZEMBOWER**  
 District 2  
 Chairman



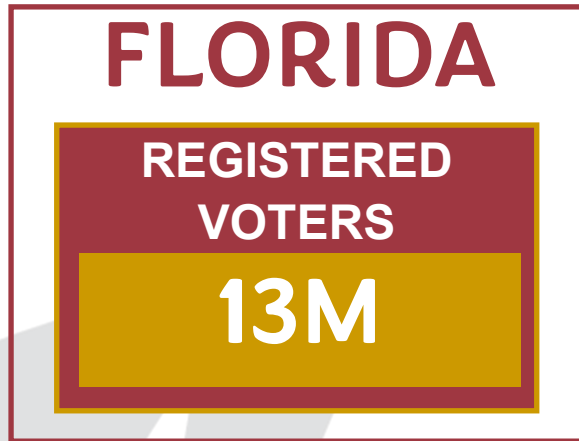
**LEE CONSTANTINE**  
 District 3  
 Commissioner



**AMY LOCKHART**  
 District 4  
 Commissioner

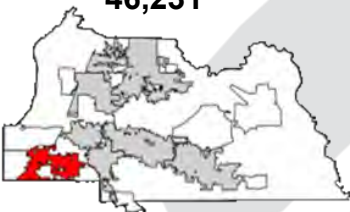


**ANDRIA HERR**  
 District 5  
 Commissioner

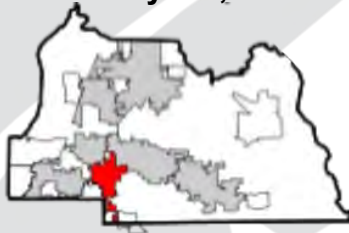


Each of our seven cities offers their own unique leisure and entertainment options enhancing our quality of life.

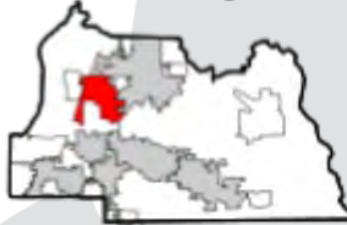
**Altamonte Springs:**  
**46,231**



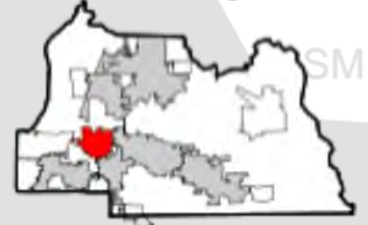
**Casselberry: 28,794**



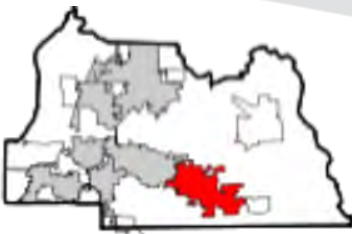
**Lake Mary: 16,798**



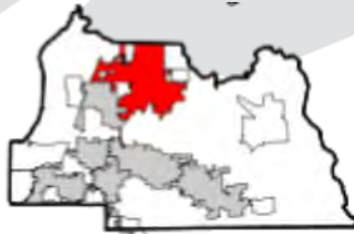
**Longwood: 15,087**



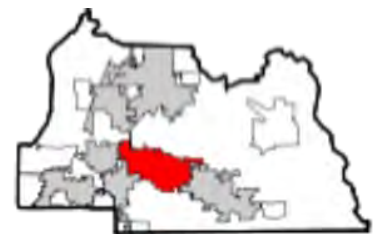
**Oviedo: 40,059**



**Sanford: 61,051**



**Winter Springs: 38,342**



## Florida Museum of Black History Quality of Life

### Attractions and Outdoors Activities:

Boundless fun awaits you at Seminole County / Orlando North's attractions. Take a wind-in-your-hair airboat ride. Visit a zoo set amid lovely botanical gardens. Go kayaking in search of manatees, and much, much more.

**Shopping:** For traditional needs, the national retailers at our malls, including Altamonte Mall and Seminole Towne Center will have you covered. For quirkier items, explore our unique boutiques, antique shops, indie bookstores, and eclectic specialty stores.

**Dining:** Seminole County offers plenty for foodies and beer lovers to enjoy. Whether you're a culinary expert or just someone who appreciates an amazing meal, your taste buds will never forget their time here!

**Arts:** Seminole County is no stranger to the performing and fine arts, as evident in our array of intimate museums and galleries, our abundance of free public art, or live shows at Wayne Densch Performing Arts Center. Seminole County offers the kind of genuine, -to-earth arts and culture that fits our unhurried, uncrowded vibe.



# 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.



# 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

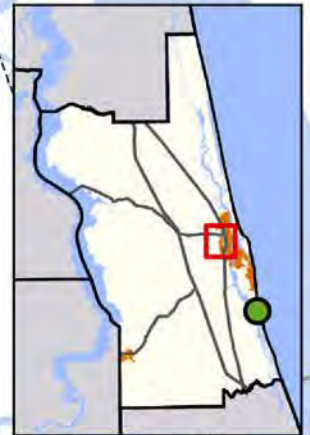
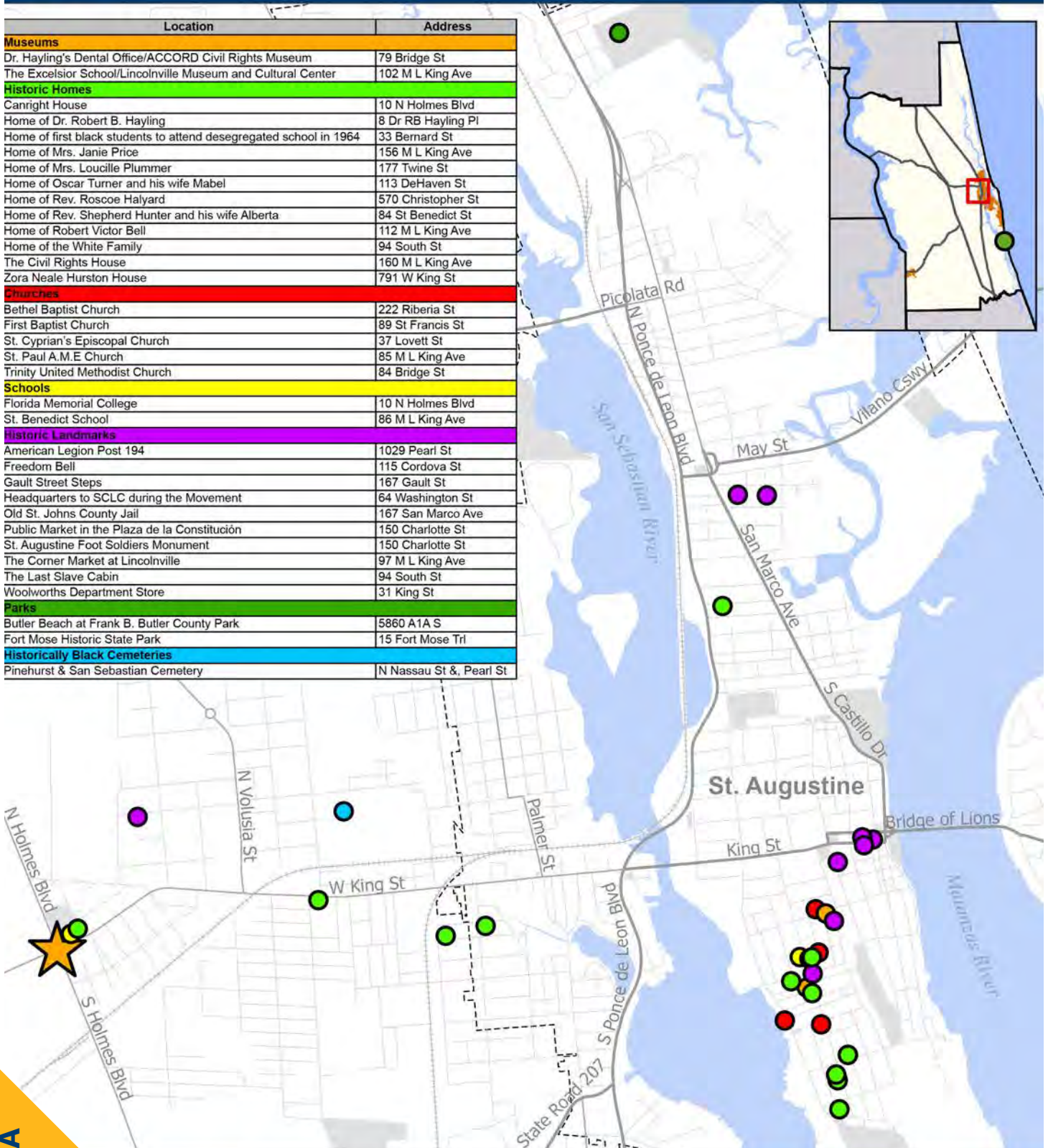


Proposed Florida Museum of Black History



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



CRITERIA 1



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*

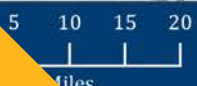
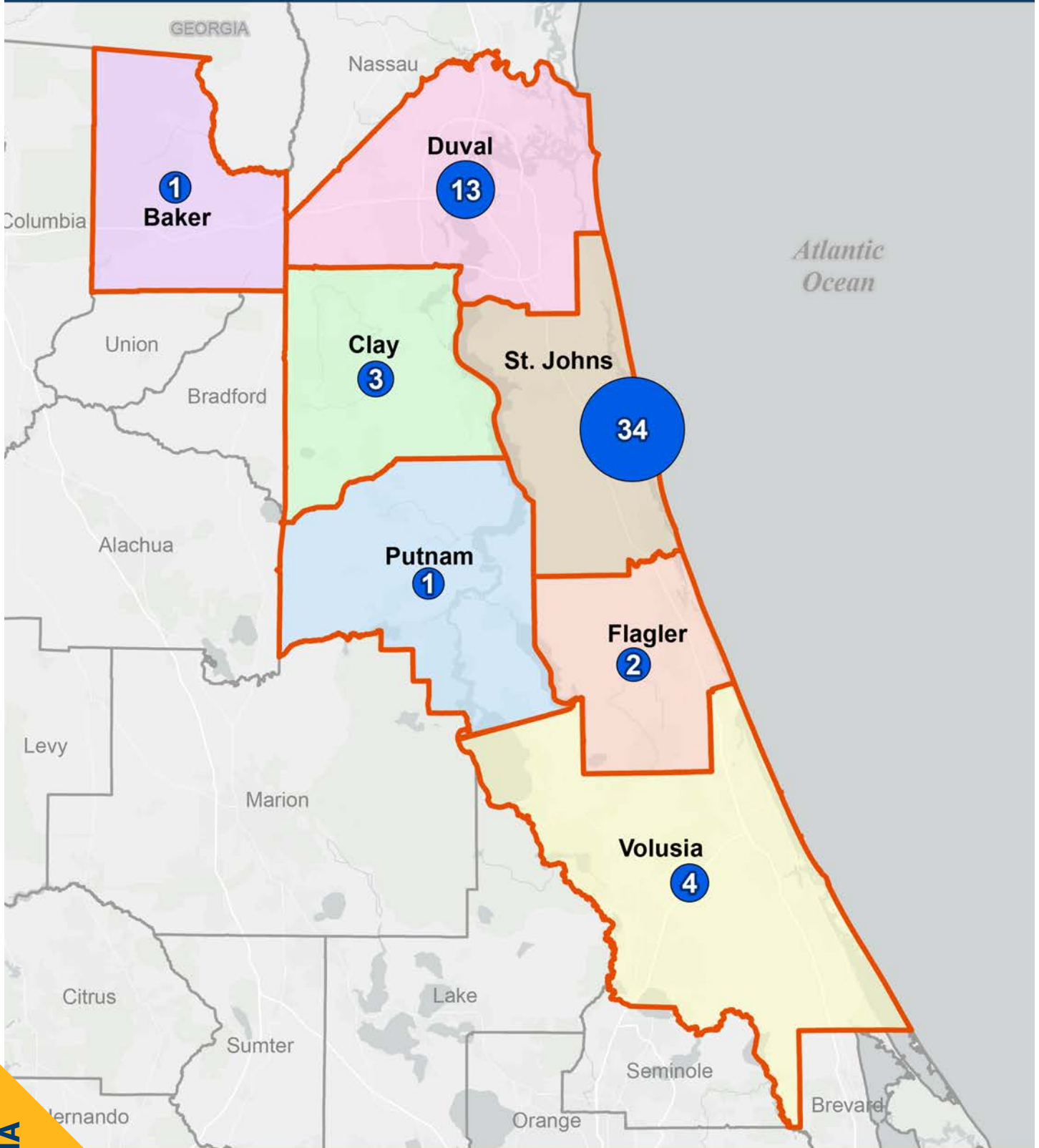
- Hollywood Music Store & Clara White Mission Museum
- Bethel Baptist Institutional Church and Mother Midway AME Church
- Edward Waters University
- Ritz Theatre & Museum
- Orange Park Negro Elementary School and the Old Middleburg Colored School

### *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

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## *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

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## *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.

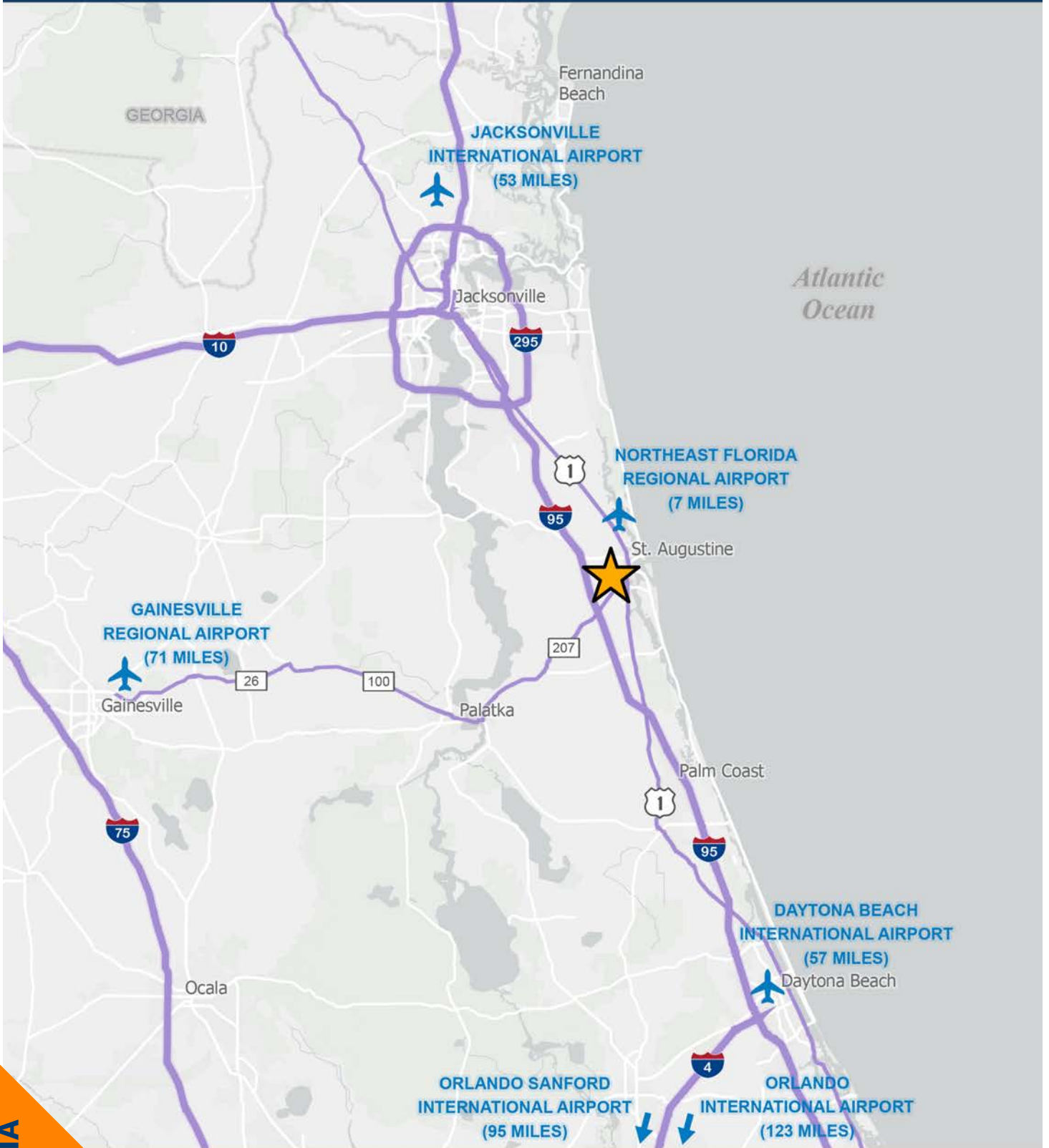
The proposed St. Johns County Museum site offers easy access to significant regional and international transit infrastructure including both interstate highways and international airports and is also just a short trolley ride away from the vibrant historic and cultural tourism hub of Historic Downtown 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:**  
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 herein. |20147

**CRITERIA**  
**51**



## **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
--------------------------

- 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

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

# 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.

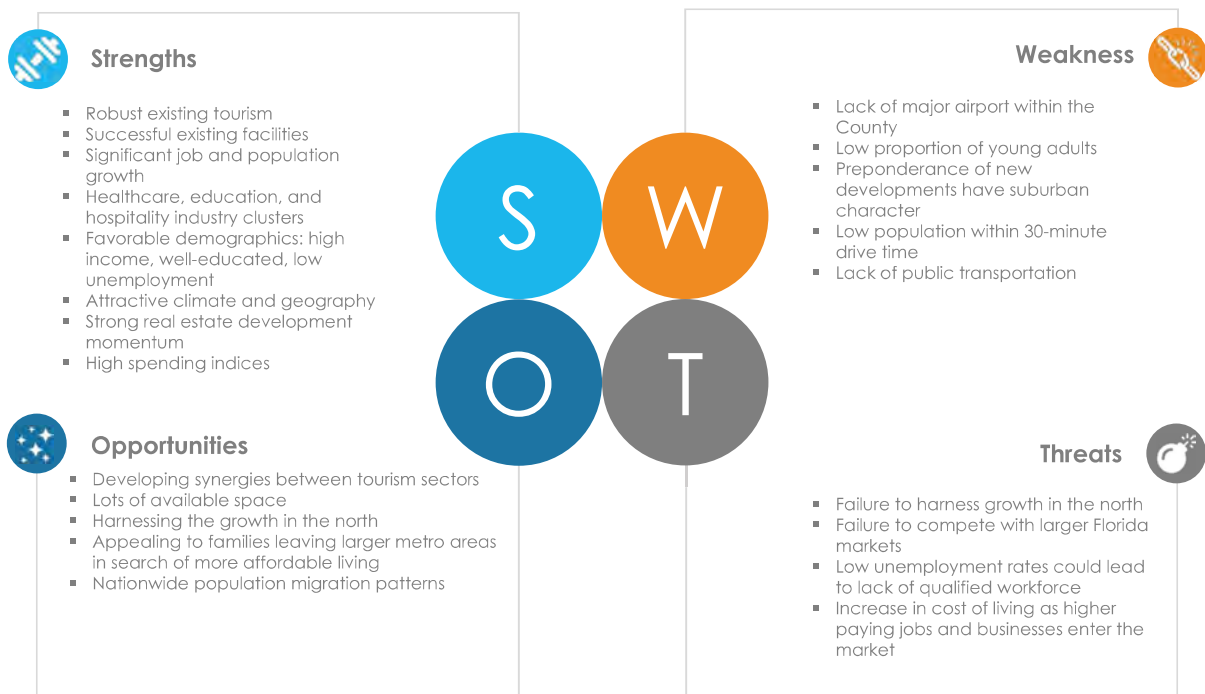
### ECONOMIC & DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

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

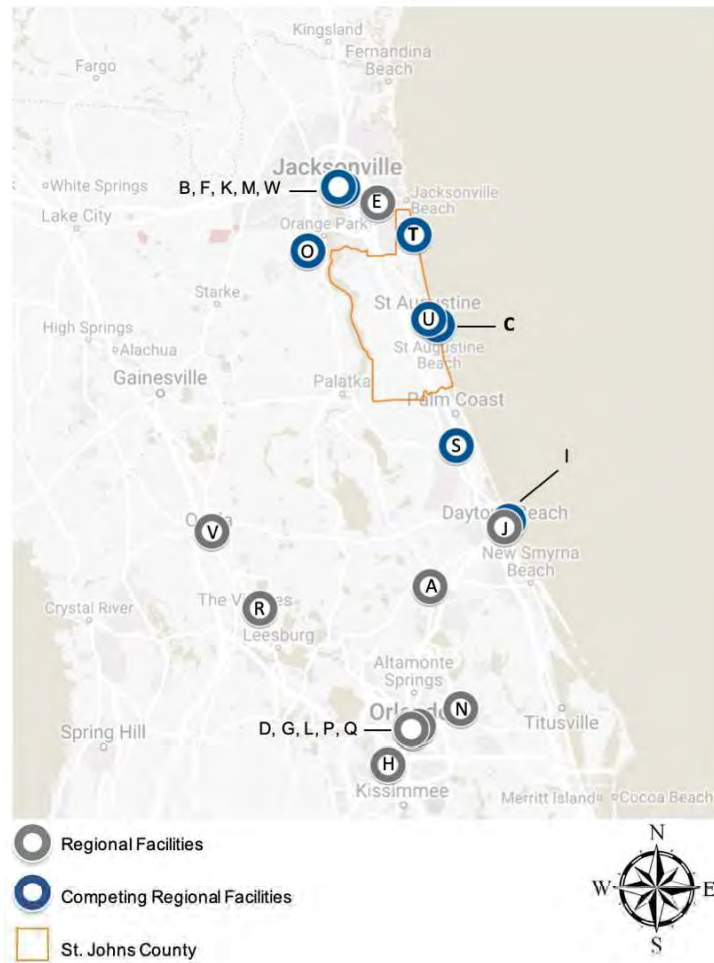
Regional Facility Inventory				
Map Key	Facility	Location	Distance to St. Johns County	Capacity
<b>Outdoor Facilities</b>				
A	Spec Martin Municipal Stadium	Deland	59	6,000
B	Daily’s Place Amphitheater	Jacksonville	36	5,500
C	<b>St. Augustine Amphitheatre</b>	<b>St. Augustine</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,060</b>
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

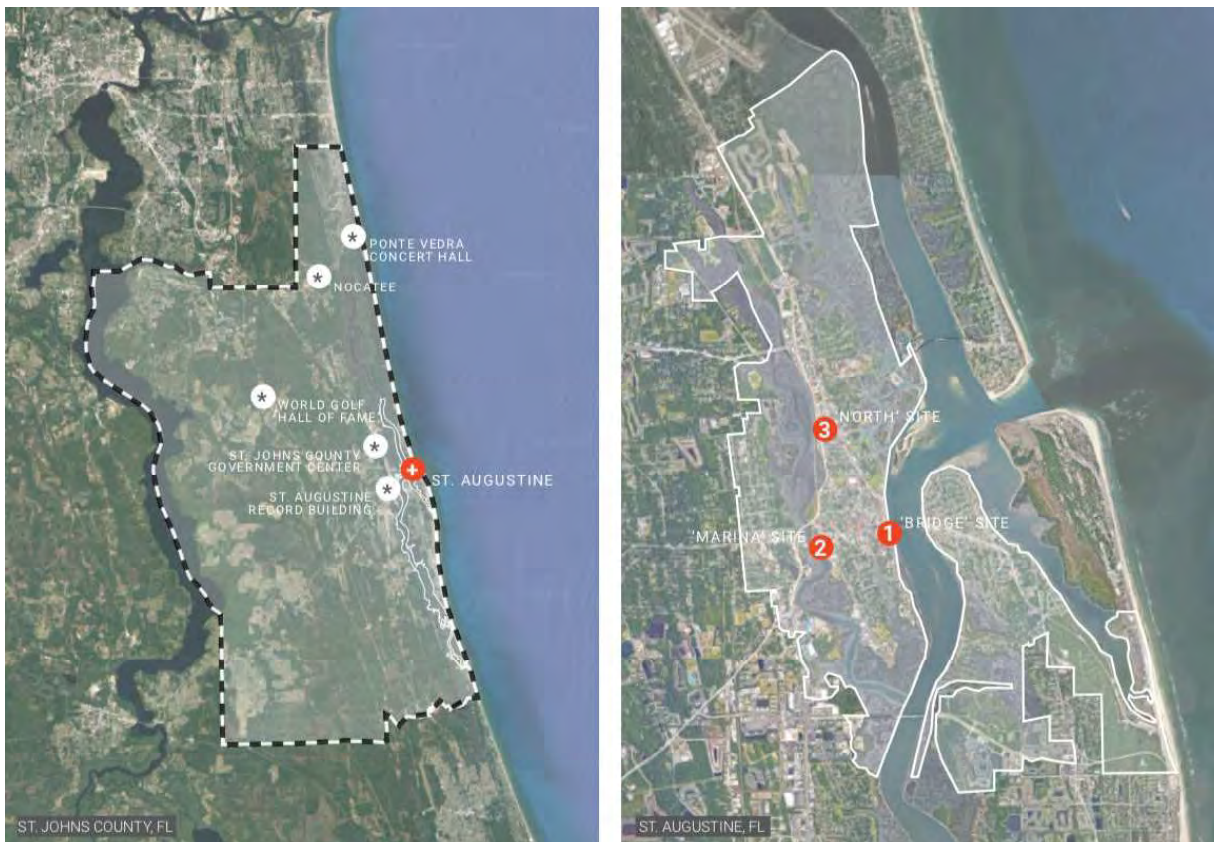
**Recommendation #2** calls for the development of a new performing arts center in St. Johns County (“SJCPAC”), to include:



- **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>			
	<b>Ponte Vedra Concert Hall Expansion</b>	<b>New Theater and Black Box Venue</b>	<b>Combined Venues</b>
<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**

<b>St. Johns County Arts &amp; Cultural Facilities PVCH Expansion and SJCPAC Summary of Combined Economic and Fiscal Impact</b>		
	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**.

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,



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**

Dionne Hoskins-Brown, Ph.D.  
Chair, Georgia

Griffin Lotson  
Vice Chair, Georgia

Dawn Dawson-House  
Secretary, North Carolina

Floyd Phillips  
Treasurer, Florida

**Commissioners**

**South Carolina**

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

**Georgia**

Josiah Watts  
Griffin Lotson  
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".

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](mailto: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

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.

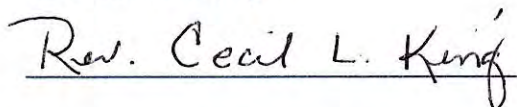
I believe that the African American Museum at the old Florida Memorial College site will be a symbol of progress and unity in our community. It will stand as a testament to our collective dedication to inclusivity, diversity, and the recognition of the vital role African Americans have played in shaping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



FORT MOSE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
COMMUNITY OF FREEDOM

ACC  RD



STETSON  
KENNEDY



JAX

Jacksonville  
International  
Airport



NORTHEAST FLORIDA  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

JAXUSA  
PARTNERSHIP

THE JACKSONVILLE REGION

AMERICAN  
LEGION



ST. JOHNS COUNTY  
EST. 1821  
FLORIDA AT FIRST SIGHT



Habitat  
for Humanity®  
of St. Augustine/  
St. Johns County  
30  
Years of  
Building Homes,  
Community, and Hope



CITY OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA

ST. JOHNS  
CULTURAL COUNCIL

ST. AUGUSTINE | PONTE VEDRA | FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®



JACKSONVILLE PORT AUTHORITY

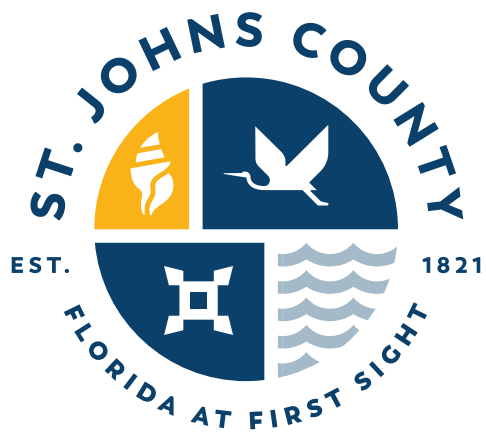


United Way of  
St. Johns County



CITY OF  
ST. AUGUSTINE™  
EST. 1565





**CONTACT**

*Tera Meeks*

*Director of Tourism & Cultural Development*

*St. Johns County*

*tmeeks@sjcfl.us*

*904-209-4428*

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
Final Location Criteria Scores  
(Top Four Scores, 4/19/2024)**

Final Scores		
Location	Average Score	Rank
St. Johns County	96.78	1
Eatonville/Orange County	95.33	2
Opa-locka	84.89	3
Sarasota	80.78	4

Location	Historic Significance (max 20 pts)	Appropriateness of Location (max 20 pts)	Regional Economy (max 10 pts)	Regional Demographic (max 10 pts)	Transportation Infrastructure (max 10 pts)	Local Funding/Other Support (max 20 pts)	Educational Resources (max 20 points)	Total (max 110 pts)
<b>St. Johns County</b>								
Butler	19	19	9	9	9	20	20	105
Holley	20	20	10	10	10	20	20	110
Jacques	20	20	5	5	5	10	5	70
Lee	20	20	10	10	10	15	20	105
Madyun	18	17	9	8	7	20	14	93
Michael	20	20	10	10	10	20	20	110
Phillips	20	20	10	8	9	17	15	99
Powell	18	15	8	8	6	15	14	84
Thompson	20	20	10	10	10	15	10	95
<b>Average Score</b>								<b>96.78</b>
<b>Eatonville/Orange County</b>								
Butler	20	20	10	10	10	20	20	110
Holley	20	15	10	10	10	20	20	105
Jacques	20	15	10	5	5	15	15	85
Lee	20	16	10	10	10	15	15	96
Madyun	18	18	10	10	8	15	15	94
Michael	12	5	8	8	10	20	15	78
Phillips	18	10	10	10	10	15	18	91
Powell	18	16	10	10	9	15	16	94
Thompson	20	20	10	10	10	15	20	105
<b>Average Score</b>								<b>95.33</b>

**Florida Museum of Black History Task Force  
Final Location Criteria Scores  
(Top Four Scores, 4/19/2024)**

<b>Opa-locka</b>								
Butler	15	11	6	6	7	13	14	72
Holley	15	15	10	10	10	15	20	95
Jacques	15	15	10	5	10	15	15	85
Lee	12	10	10	10	10	12	20	84
Madyun	18	20	10	6	10	15	14	93
Michael	15	15	10	5	5	15	15	80
Phillips	10	15	10	10	10	5	15	75
Powell	15	13	10	8	10	7	17	80
Thompson	15	20	10	10	10	15	20	100
<b>Average Score</b>								<b>84.89</b>
<b>Sarasota</b>								
Butler	17	17	8	7	9	18	18	94
Holley	20	20	10	10	10	10	10	90
Jacques	10	10	5	5	5	10	5	50
Lee	18	18	10	10	8	18	20	102
Madyun	16	15	10	8	7	17	13	86
Michael	10	7	10	9	5	15	15	71
Phillips	15	15	10	10	5	18	5	78
Powell	17	12	9	8	9	8	10	73
Thompson	15	20	10	8	10	10	10	83
<b>Average Score</b>								<b>80.78</b>

## **Appendix C: Architectural Study**



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

Florida Museum for Black History  
Task Force

Andrew Chin, Dean  
School of Architecture & Engineering Technology  
Florida A&M University

05.22.24



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*Historical Resources*

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

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QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

Competitive Requisition  
Schematic Drawings and Floorplans  
for the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force

**PURPOSE**

The Department requests written quotes for qualified vendors to produce Schematic Drawings and Floorplans for a proposed Florida Museum of Black History. Quotes will include separate line items for the schematic drawings, floorplans and virtual or in-person presentation of designs to the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force at several meetings throughout the 2023-24 state fiscal year. The Task Force will provide feedback that will be incorporated into subsequent iterations of the design and floorplans.

A project site located has not yet been selected, and no funding has been appropriated specifically for a museum design. Therefore, the Division is allocating existing budget to schematics and floorplans to satisfy the intent of the legislation and to gain feedback and consensus from the Task force on the general elements they would like to see present in the future museum building. This solicitation does not guarantee that any vendor will be selected for future work on this project.

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

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QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?





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- CRITERIA 1 Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region
- CRITERIA 2 Appropriateness of Proposed Location
- CRITERIA 3 Regional Economy
- CRITERIA 4 Regional Demographics
- CRITERIA 5 Transportation Infrastructure
- CRITERIA 6 Local Funding and Other Support
- CRITERIA 7 Educational Resources

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

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CRITERIA 1 Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

**CRITERIA 2 Appropriateness of Proposed Location**

CRITERIA 3 Regional Economy

CRITERIA 4 Regional Demographics

**CRITERIA 5 Transportation Infrastructure**

CRITERIA 6 Local Funding and Other Support

CRITERIA 7 Educational Resources

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

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QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?



Opa-Locka, Dade County



151 Perviz Avenue

Eatonville, Orange County



100 East Kennedy Blvd

St. Johns County



Tocoi Rd, Parcel # 0958300000

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

Opa-Locka, Dade County



151 Perviz Avenue

Eatonville, Orange County



100 East Kennedy Blvd

St. Johns County



Tocoi Rd, Parcel # 0958300000

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

- Lot Size
- Points of Interest
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking
- Transportation
- Land Use
- Program

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?



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**Dan Kirby**, FAIA, FAIC, NOMA  
Vice President, Cities + Places  
Jacobs  
Orlando, FL



**Stacey Boyton**, NOMA  
President South Florida NOMA  
Chapter  
Fort Lauderdale, FL



**Craig Aquart**, AIA, NOMA  
Principal  
MCHarry Associates  
Miami, FL



**Janel LeGard**, AIA, NOMA,  
Senior Design Manager  
The Haskell Company,  
Jacksonville, FL

HOW did we get here?

What was THE FOCUS of the work?

Lot Size  
Points of Interest  
Pedestrian Access  
Parking  
Transportation  
Land Use  
Program

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

QUESTIONS/ Additional Requests?





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Opa-Locka, Dade County



Eatonville, Orange County



St. Johns County



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HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

**Lot Size**

Points of Interest

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

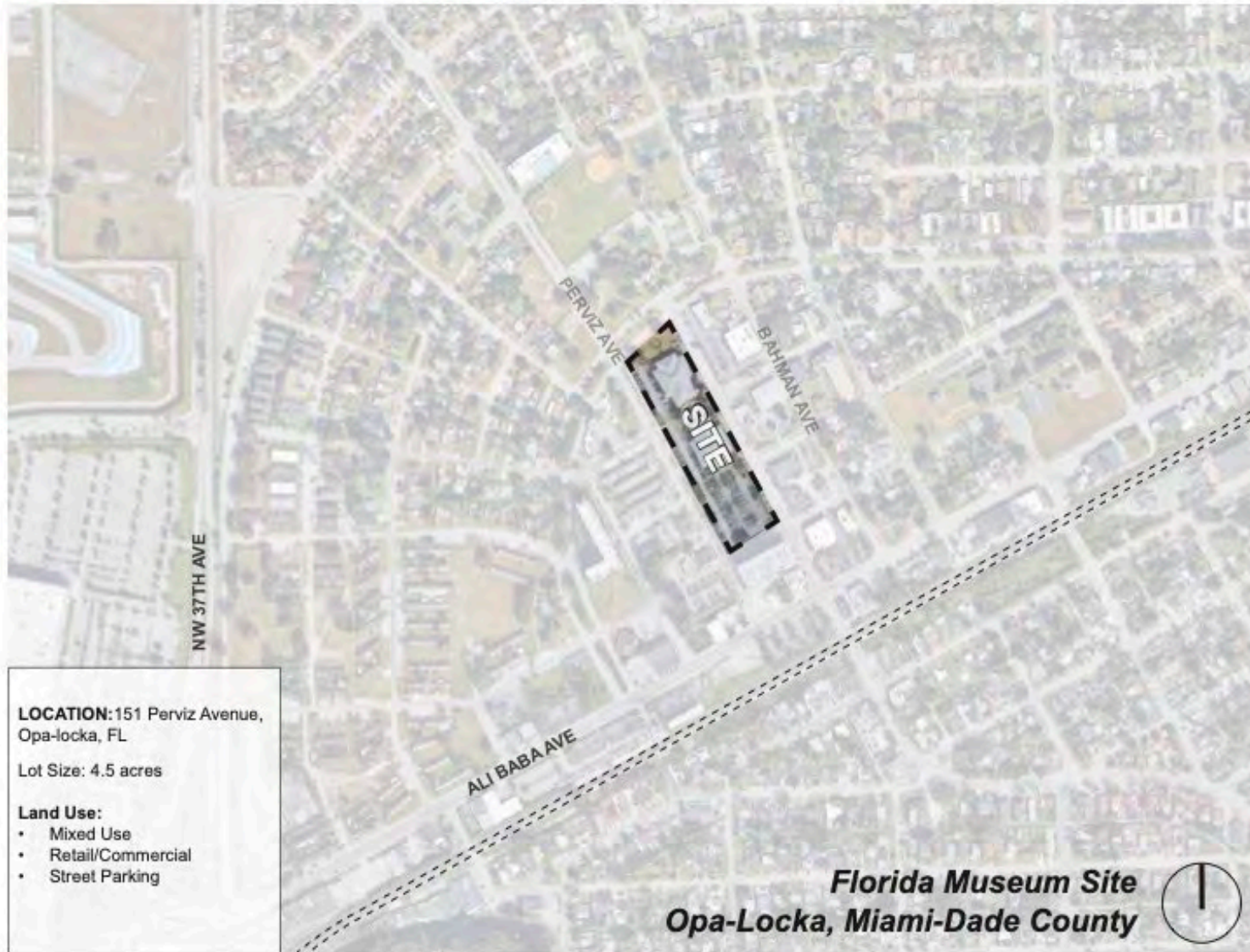
Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

LOT  
4.5 ACRES



**LOCATION:** 151 Perviz Avenue,  
Opa-locka, FL

Lot Size: 4.5 acres

**Land Use:**

- Mixed Use
- Retail/Commercial
- Street Parking

**Florida Museum Site**  
**Opa-Locka, Miami-Dade County**





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**LOCATION:** 100 E Kennedy Blvd.  
Eatonville, FL 32751

Lot Size: 10 acres

**Land Use:**

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

**Florida Museum Site**  
**Eatonville, Orange County**



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

**Lot Size**

Points of Interest

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

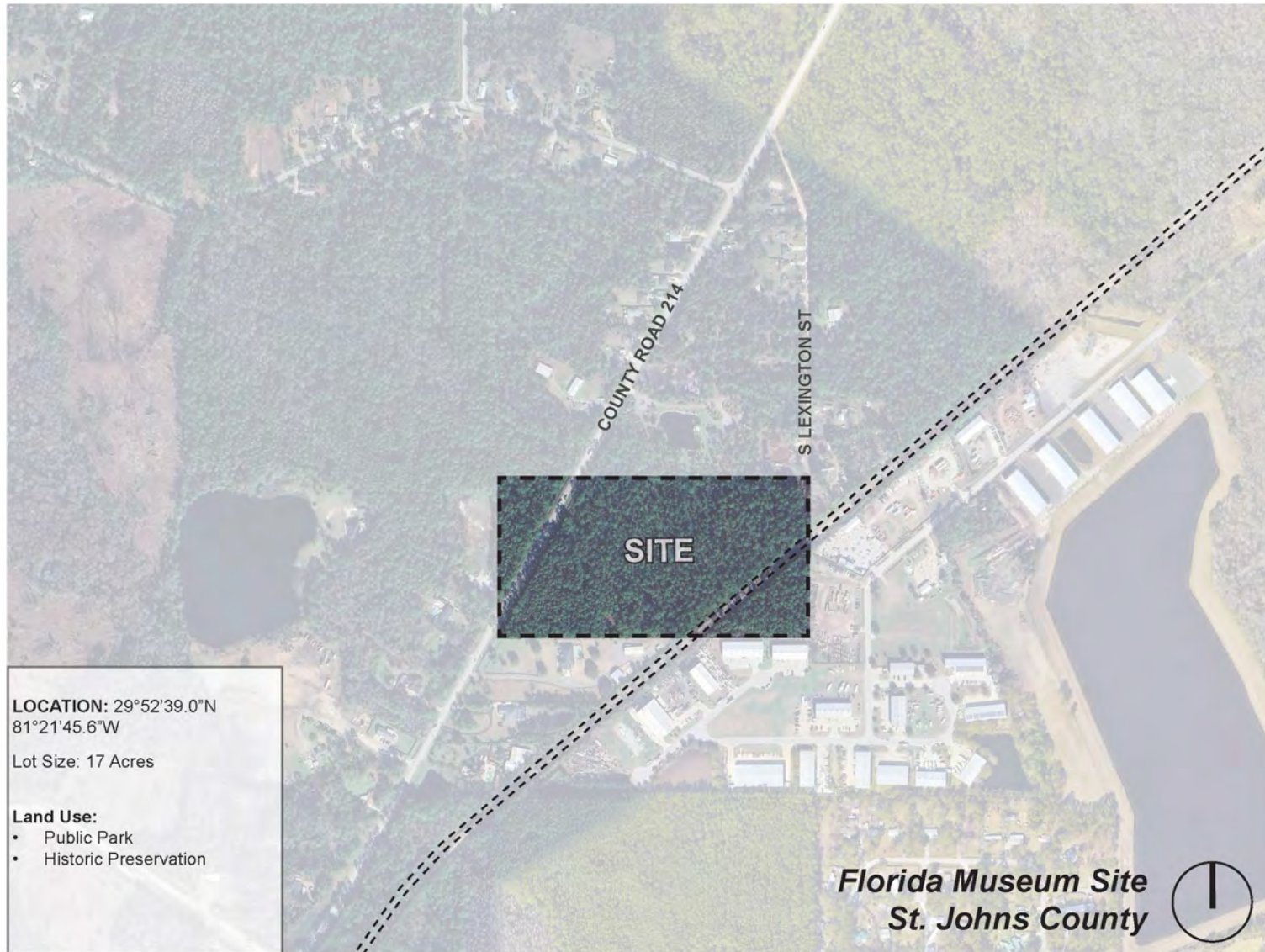
LOT  
10 ACRES





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LOCATION: 29°52'39.0"N  
81°21'45.6"W

Lot Size: 17 Acres

**Land Use:**

- Public Park
- Historic Preservation

**Florida Museum Site**  
**St. Johns County**



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

**Lot Size**

Points of Interest

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

LOT  
17 ACRES



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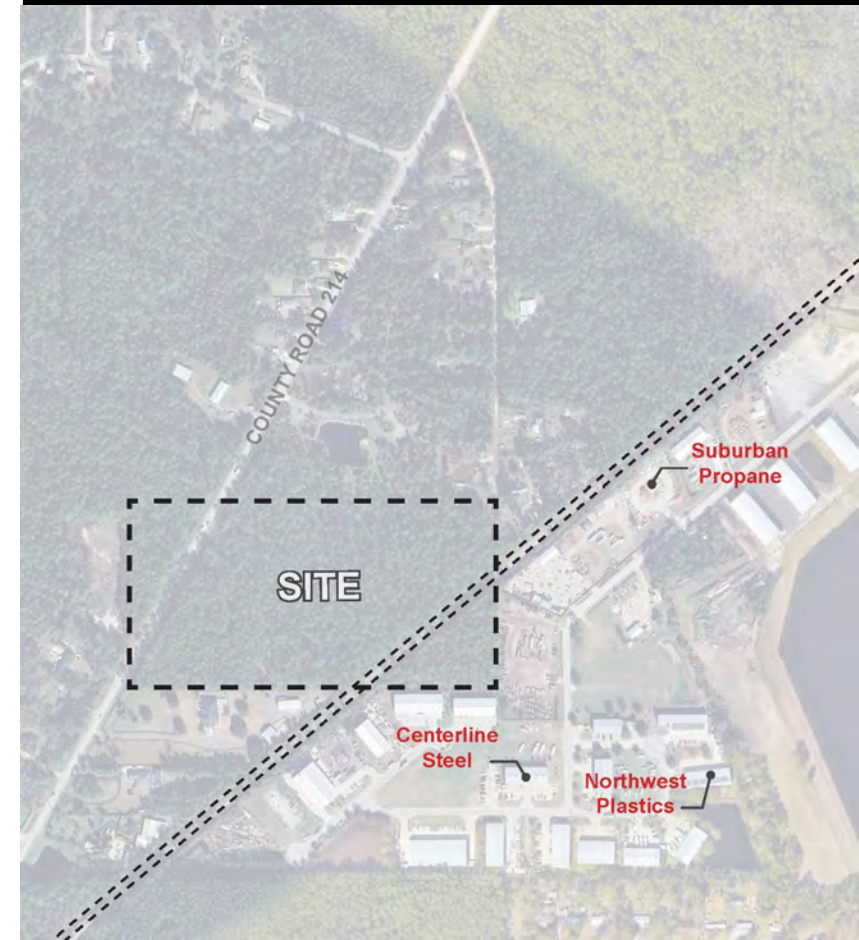
## Points of Interest



Opa-Locka, Dade County



Eatonville, Orange County



St. Johns County



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HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

**Points of Interest**

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

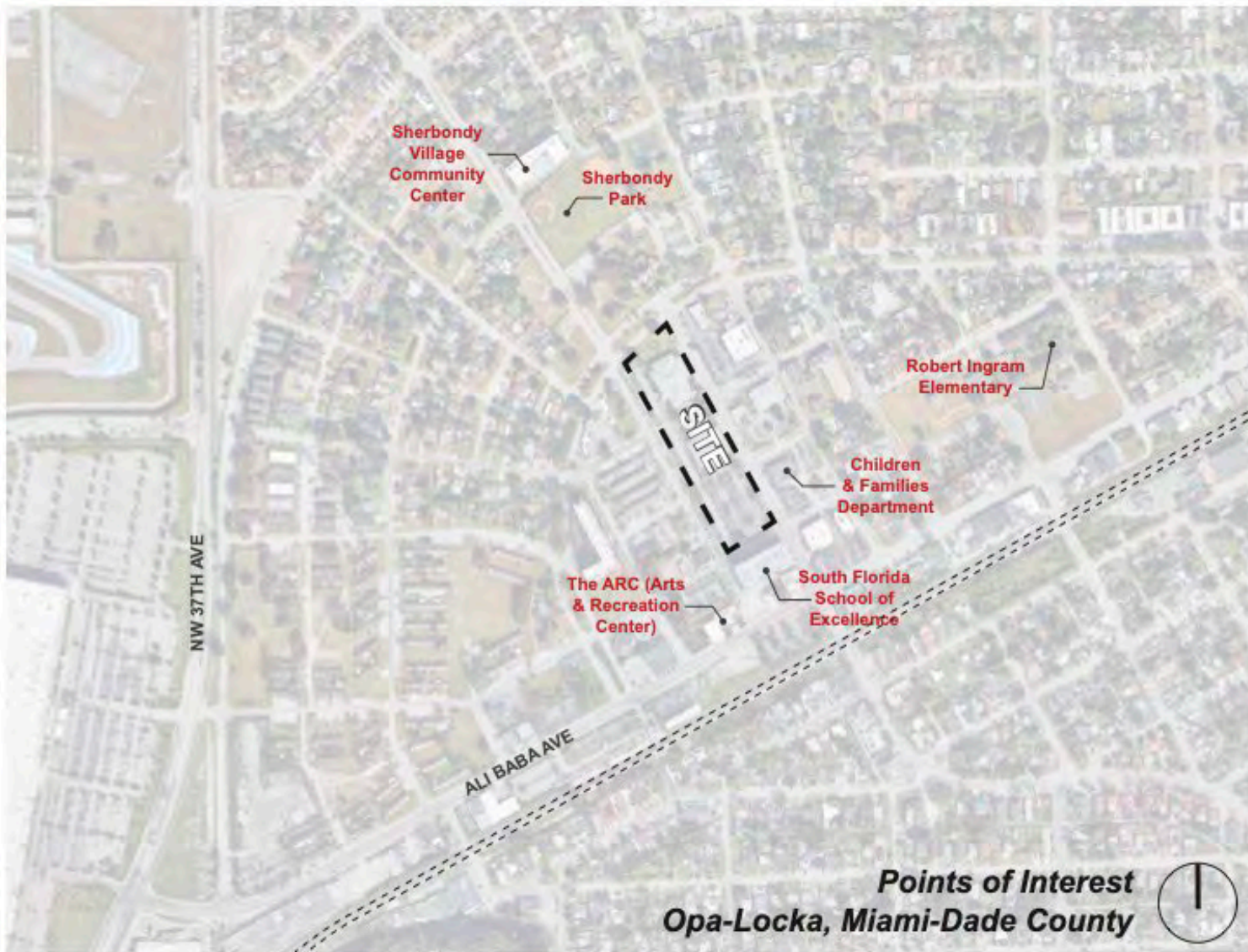
Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

Schools, Community Center, Recreation Center, City Hall, Public Park, Local businesses.



**Points of Interest**  
**Opa-Locka, Miami-Dade County**



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*Historical Resources*

HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

**Points of Interest**

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

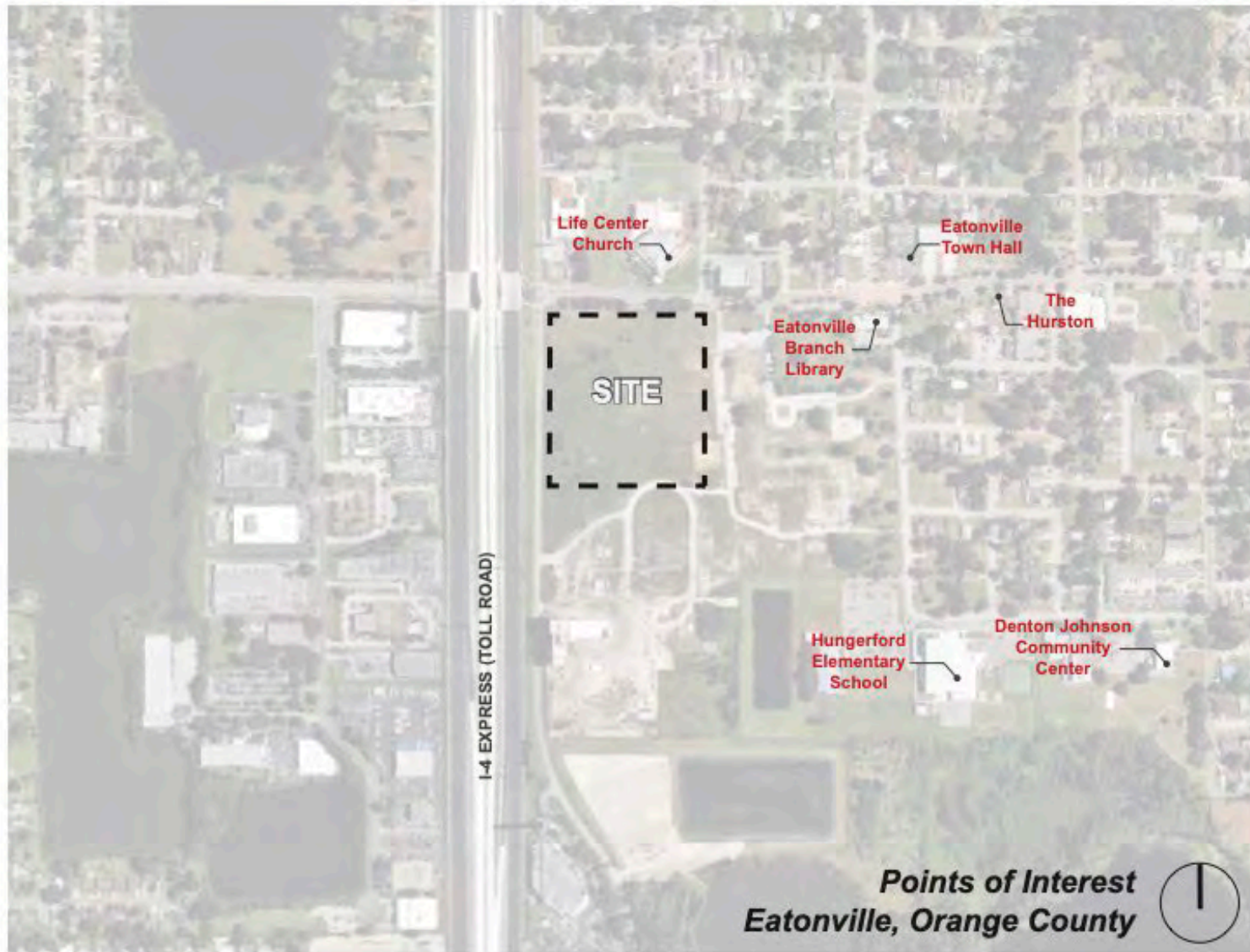
Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

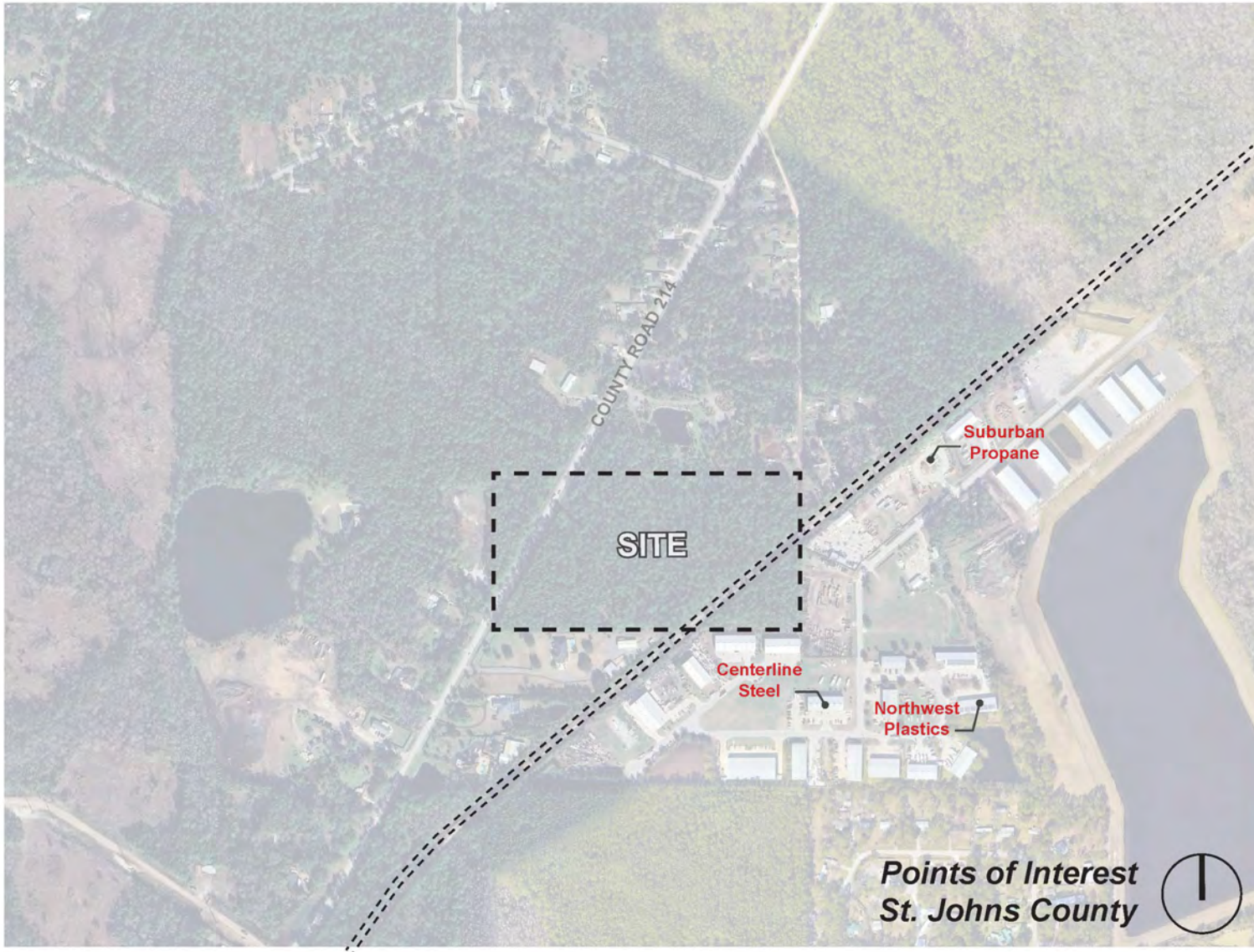
Schools, Community Center, Church,  
Library, Town Hall, and Local businesses





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HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

**Points of Interest**

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

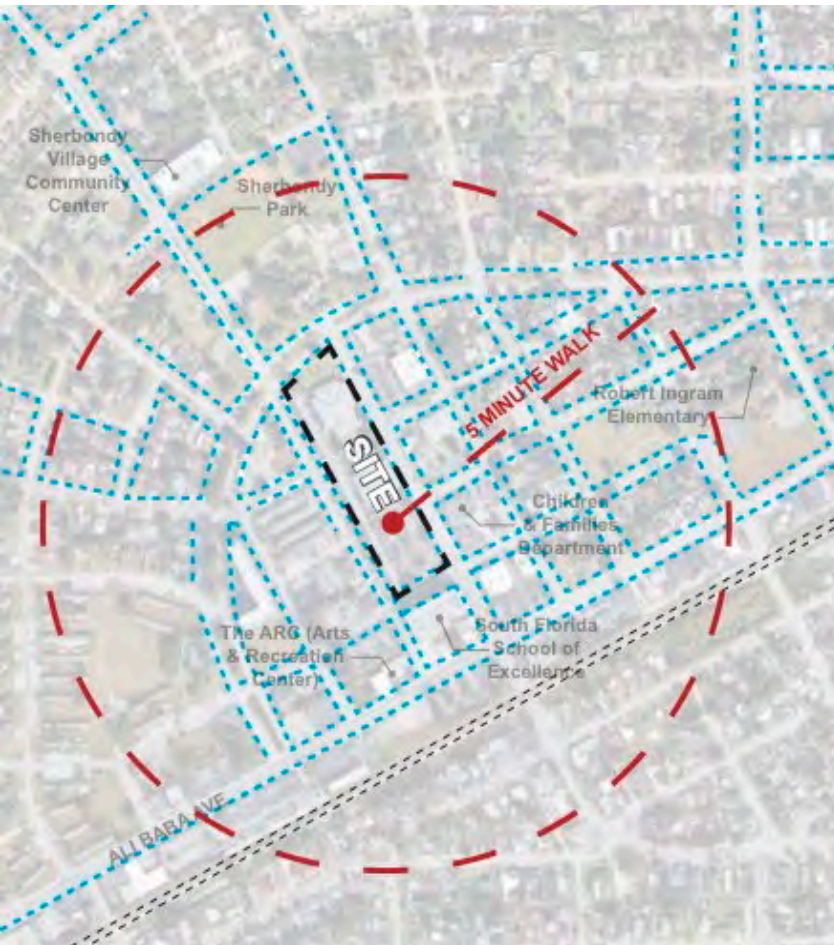
QUESTIONS

Local businesses

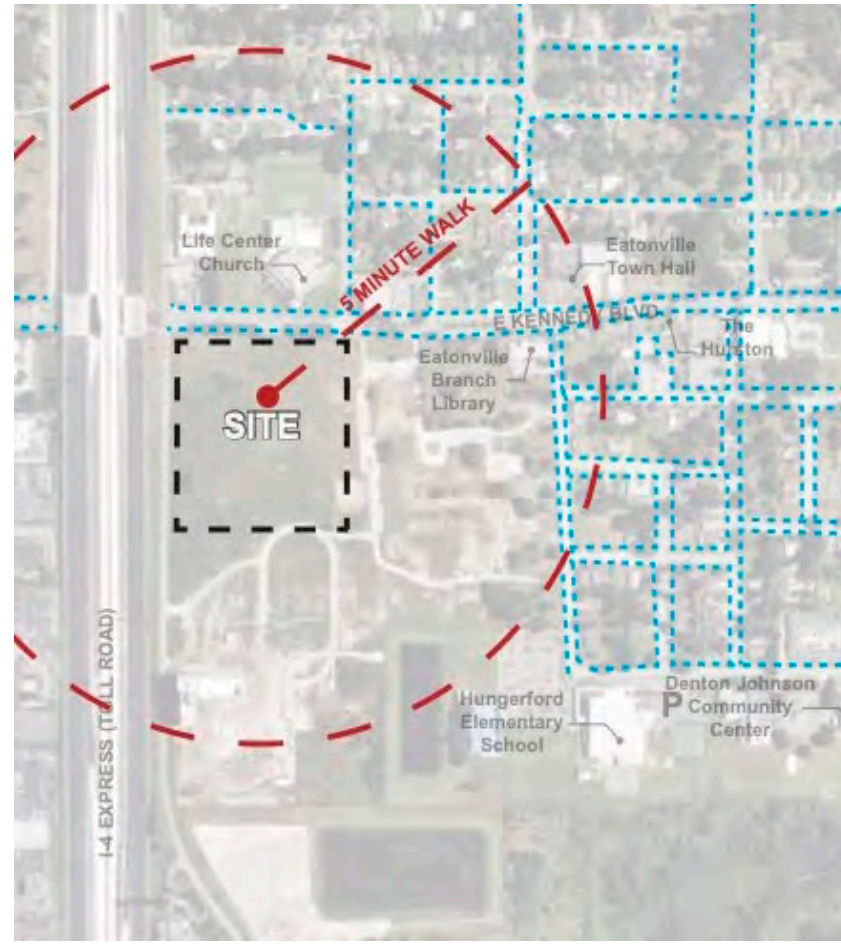


FLORIDA DIVISION OF

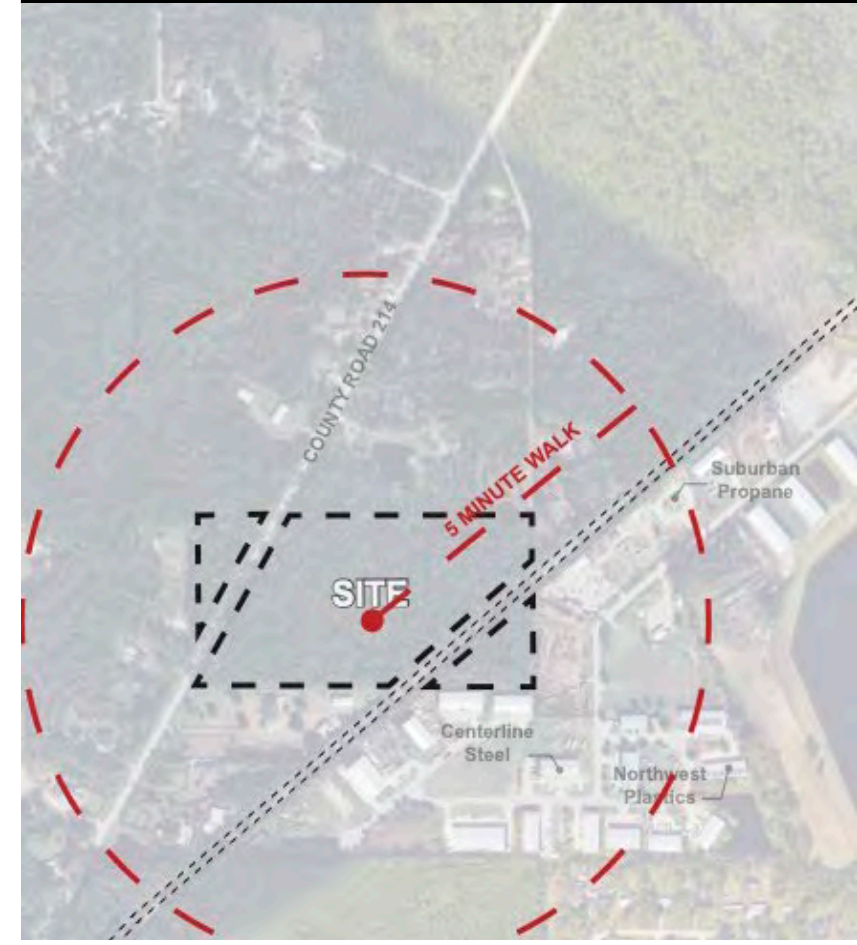
*Historical Resources*



Pedestrian Access



Pedestrian Access

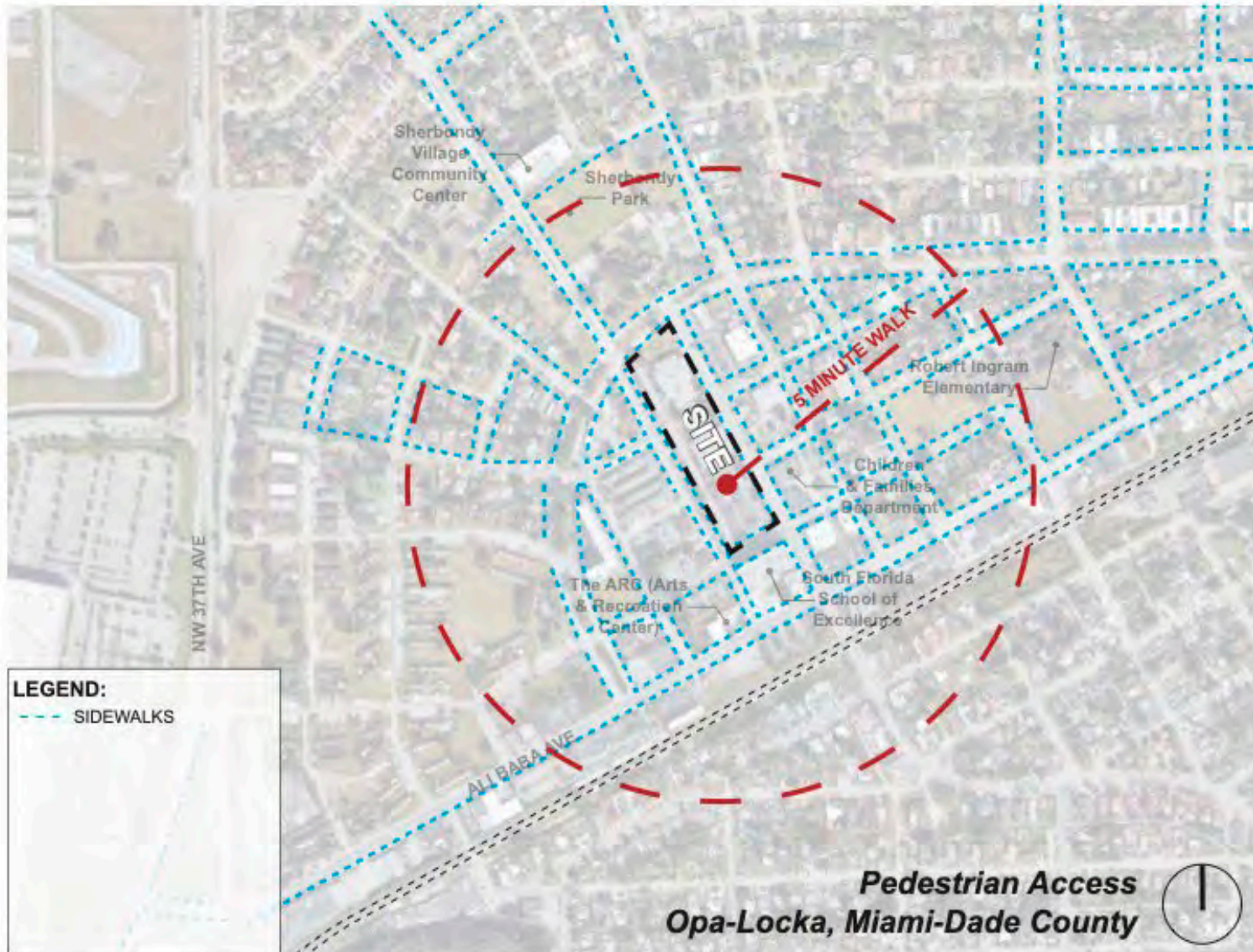


Pedestrian Access



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*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

Points of Interest

**Pedestrian Access**

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

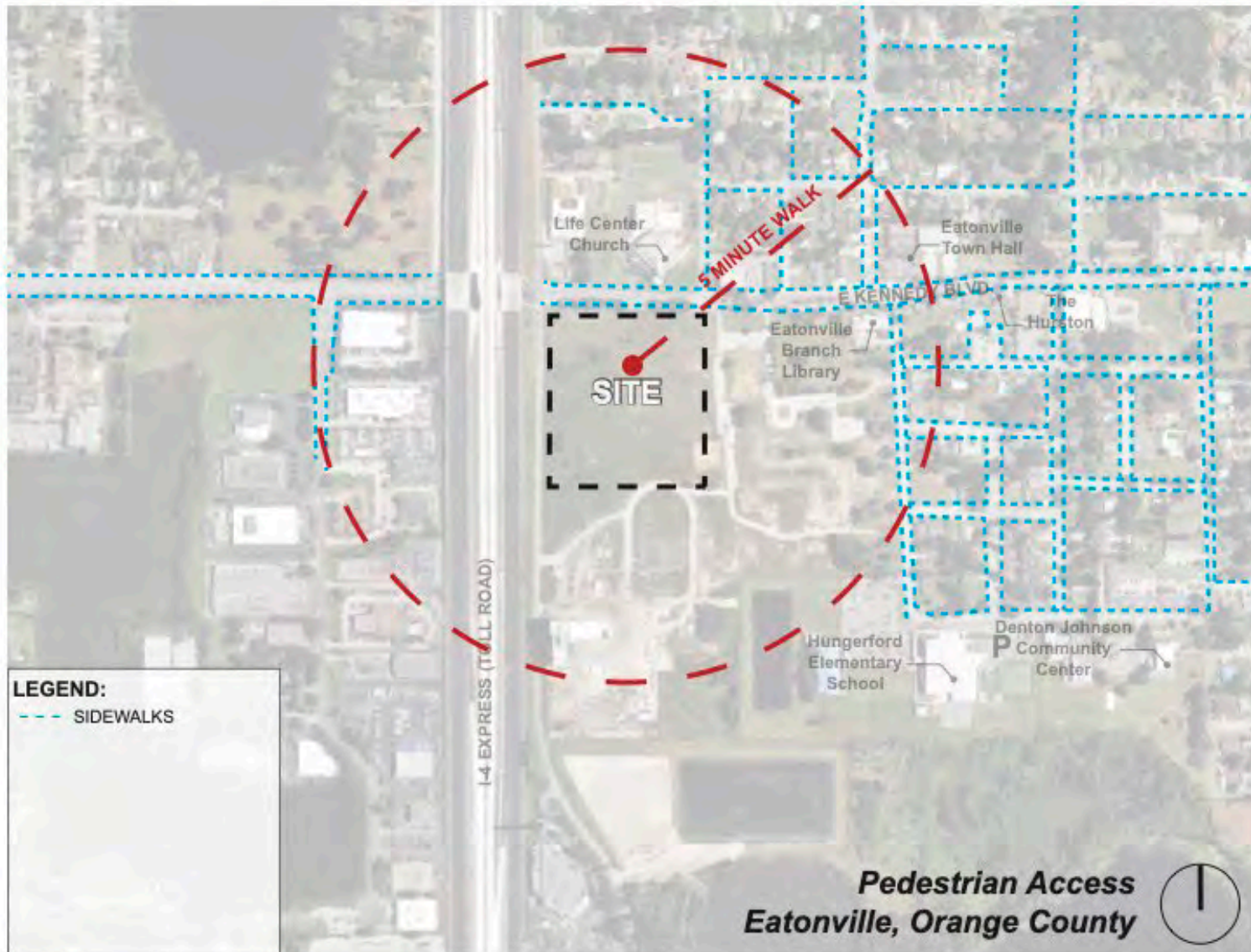
QUESTIONS

Sidewalks exist to the east, north and west of the proposed museum.



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*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

Points of Interest

**Pedestrian Access**

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

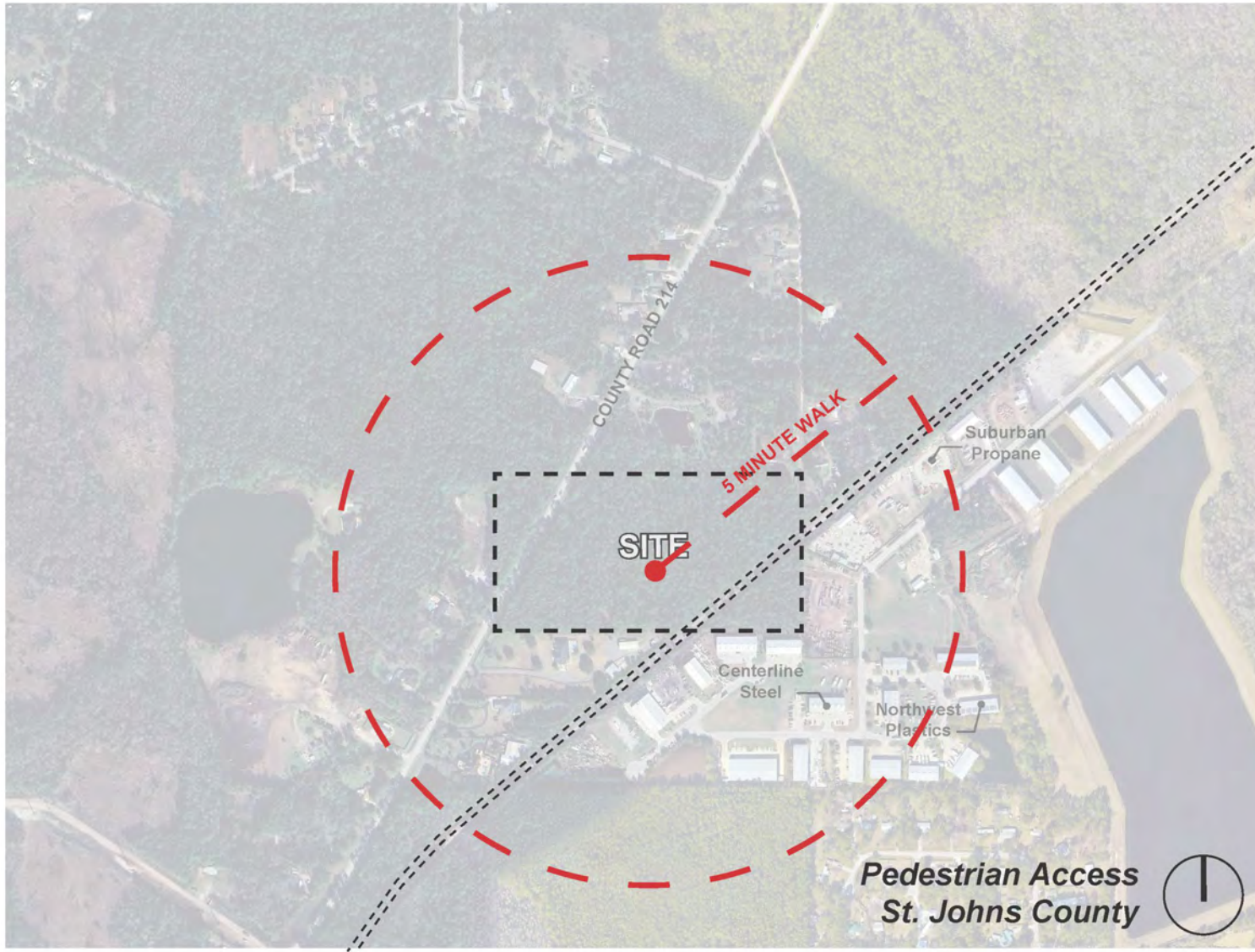
Sidewalks exist to the east and north of the proposed museum.





FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

Points of Interest

**Pedestrian Access**

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

Sidewalks do not exist at this time.



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*Historical Resources*



Parking



Parking



Parking



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*Historical Resources*

HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

Points of Interest

Pedestrian Access

**Parking**

Transportation

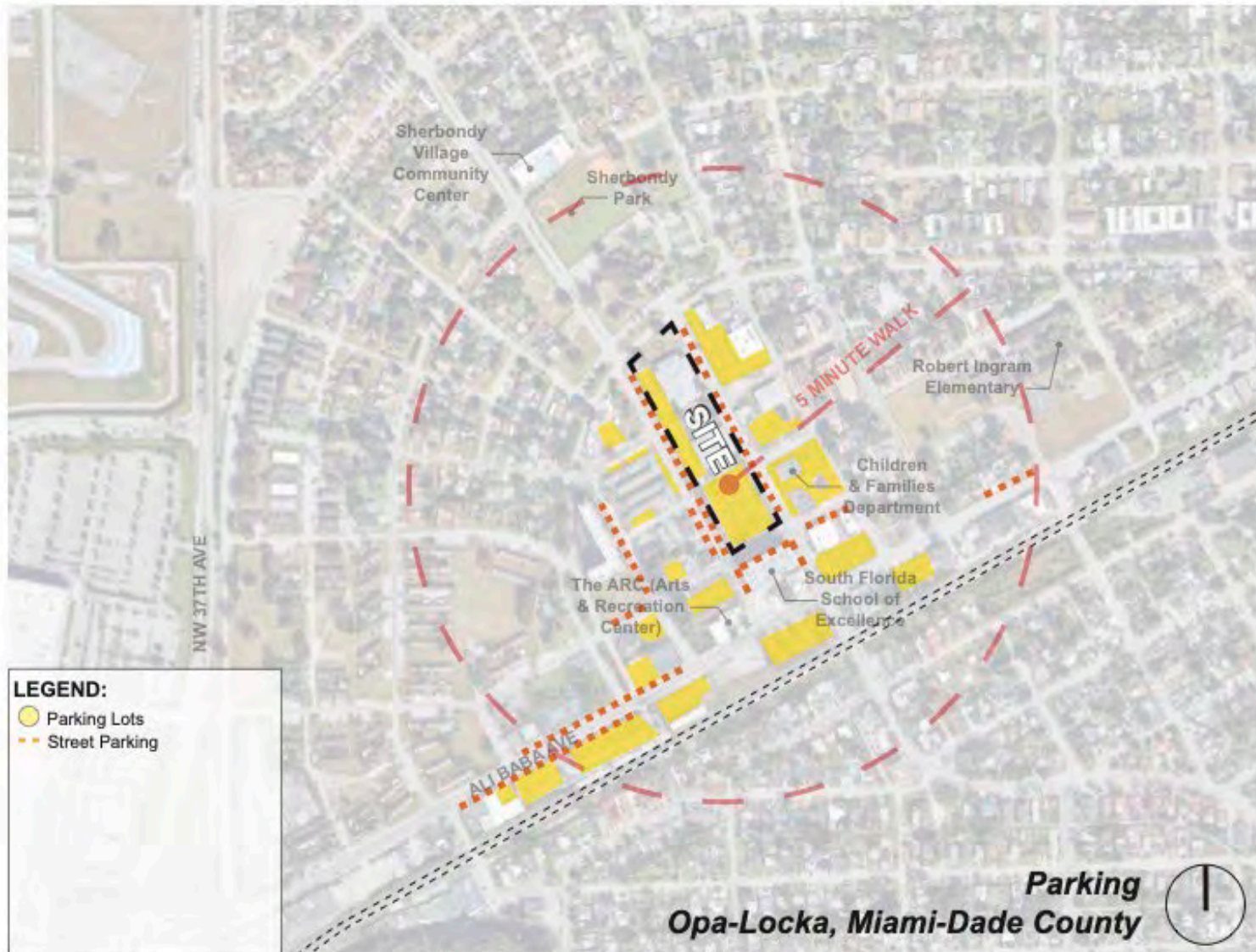
Land Use

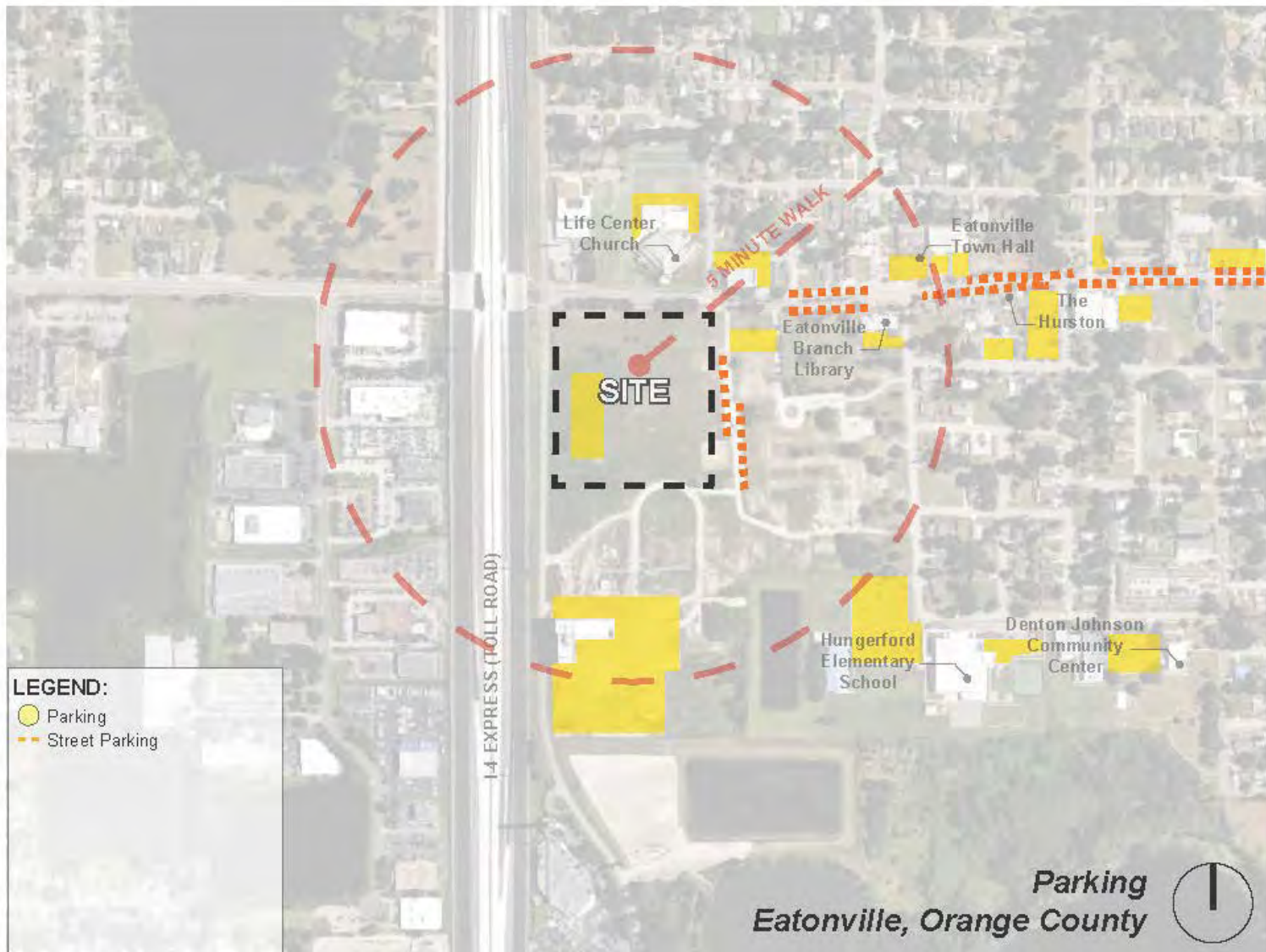
Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

A garage is proposed for the museum site. Parking lots serve the local businesses. On street parking is available.





HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size  
Points of Interest  
Pedestrian Access

**Parking**

Transportation

Land Use

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

A parking garage is proposed for the museum site. Parking lots serve the local businesses. On street parking is available.



HOW  
FOCUS

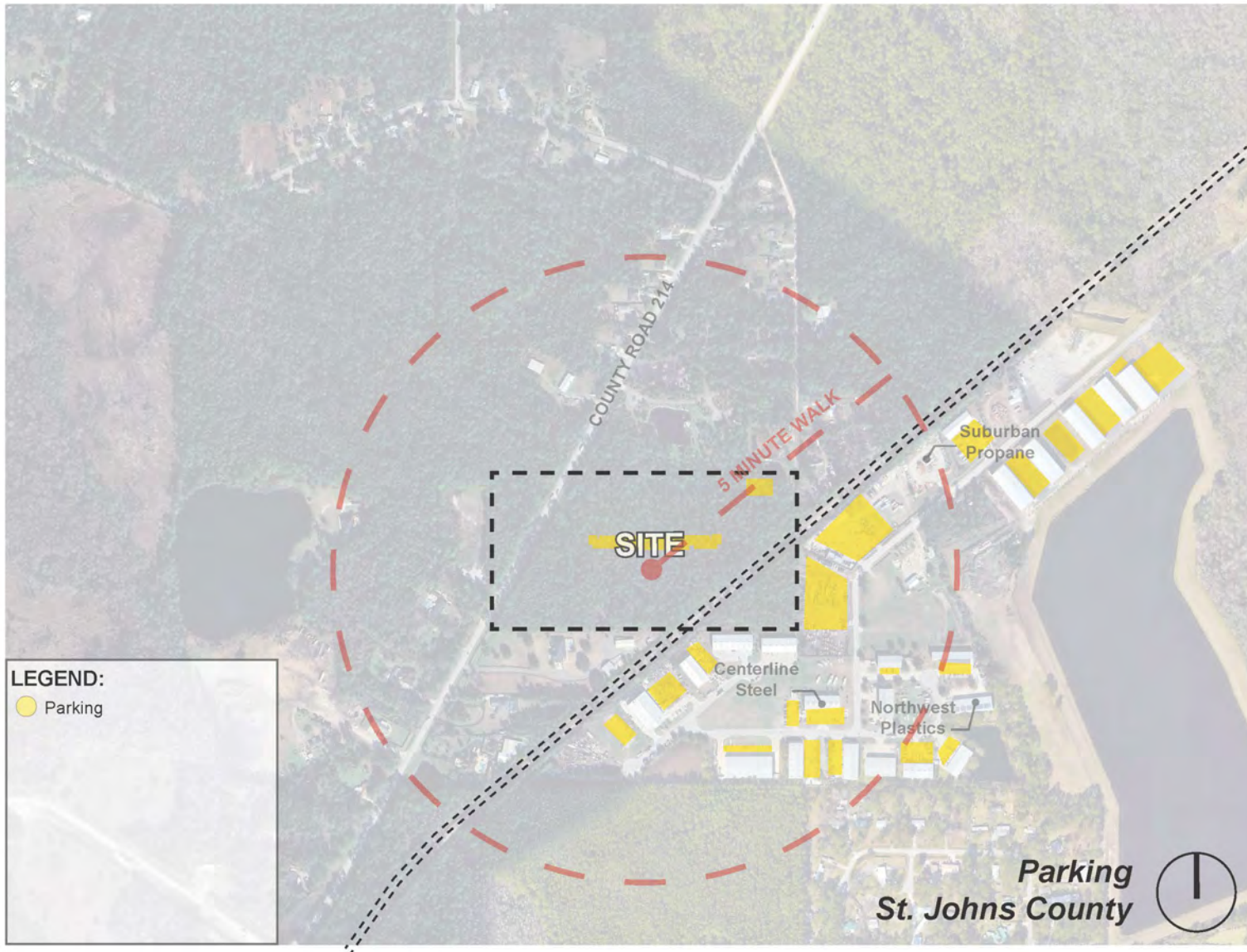
What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size  
Points of Interest  
Pedestrian Access

**Parking**

Transportation  
Land Use  
Program

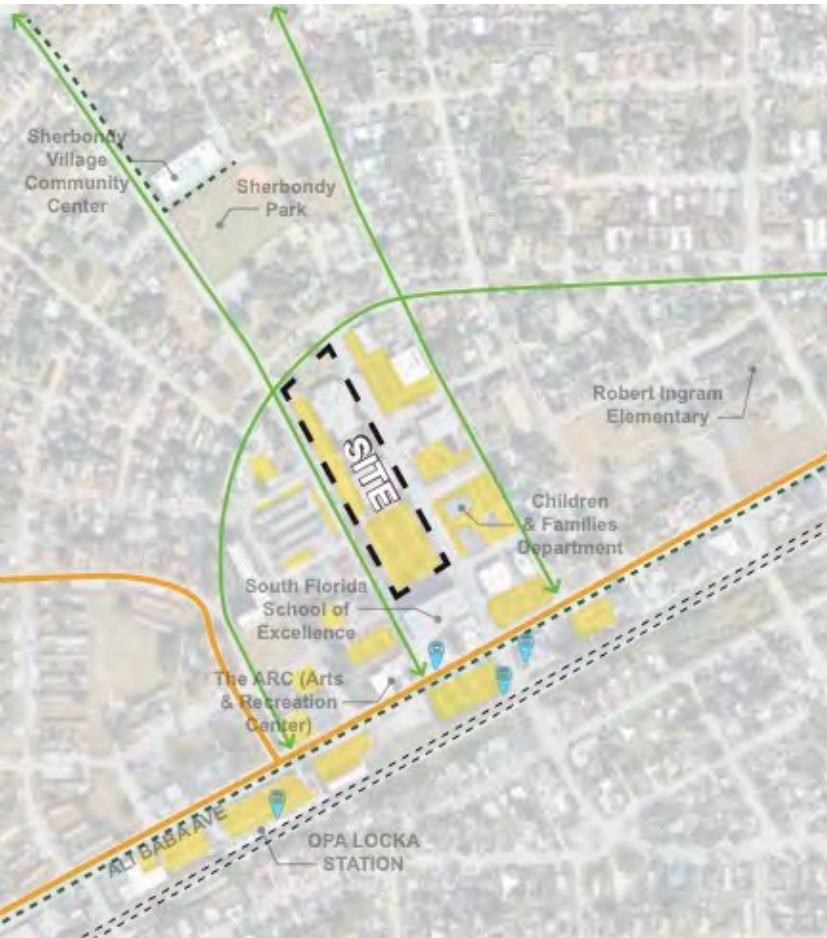
PROGRAM + SCALE  
QUESTIONS



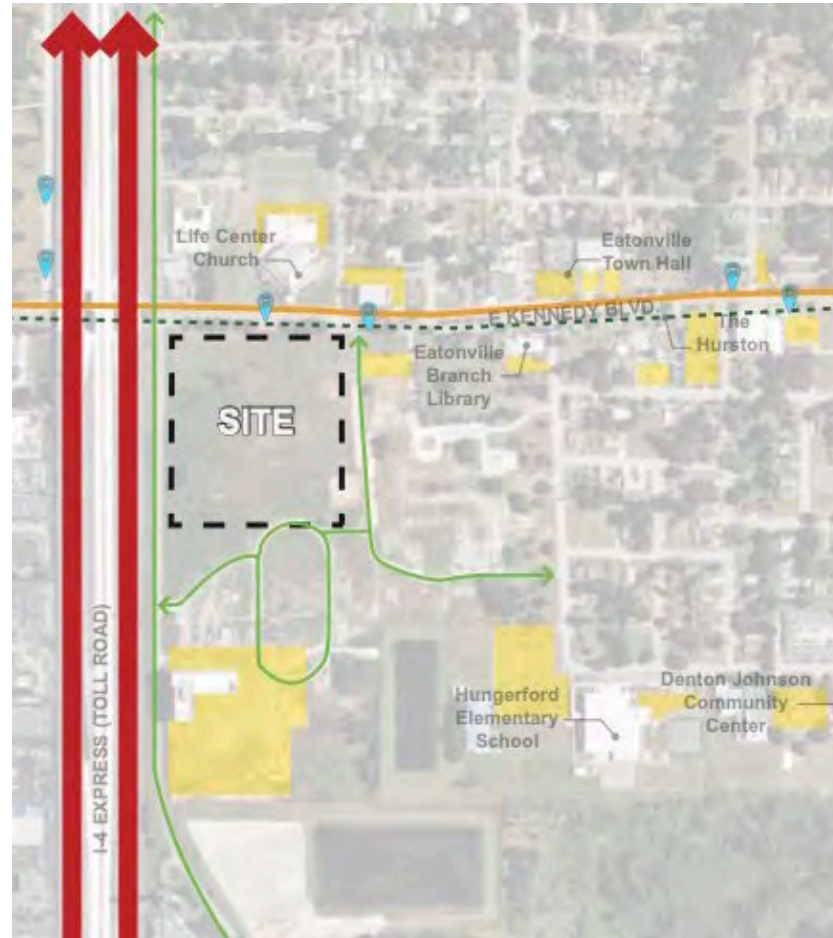
A surface parking lot is proposed for the museum property. Parking lots serve the local businesses.



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*Historical Resources*



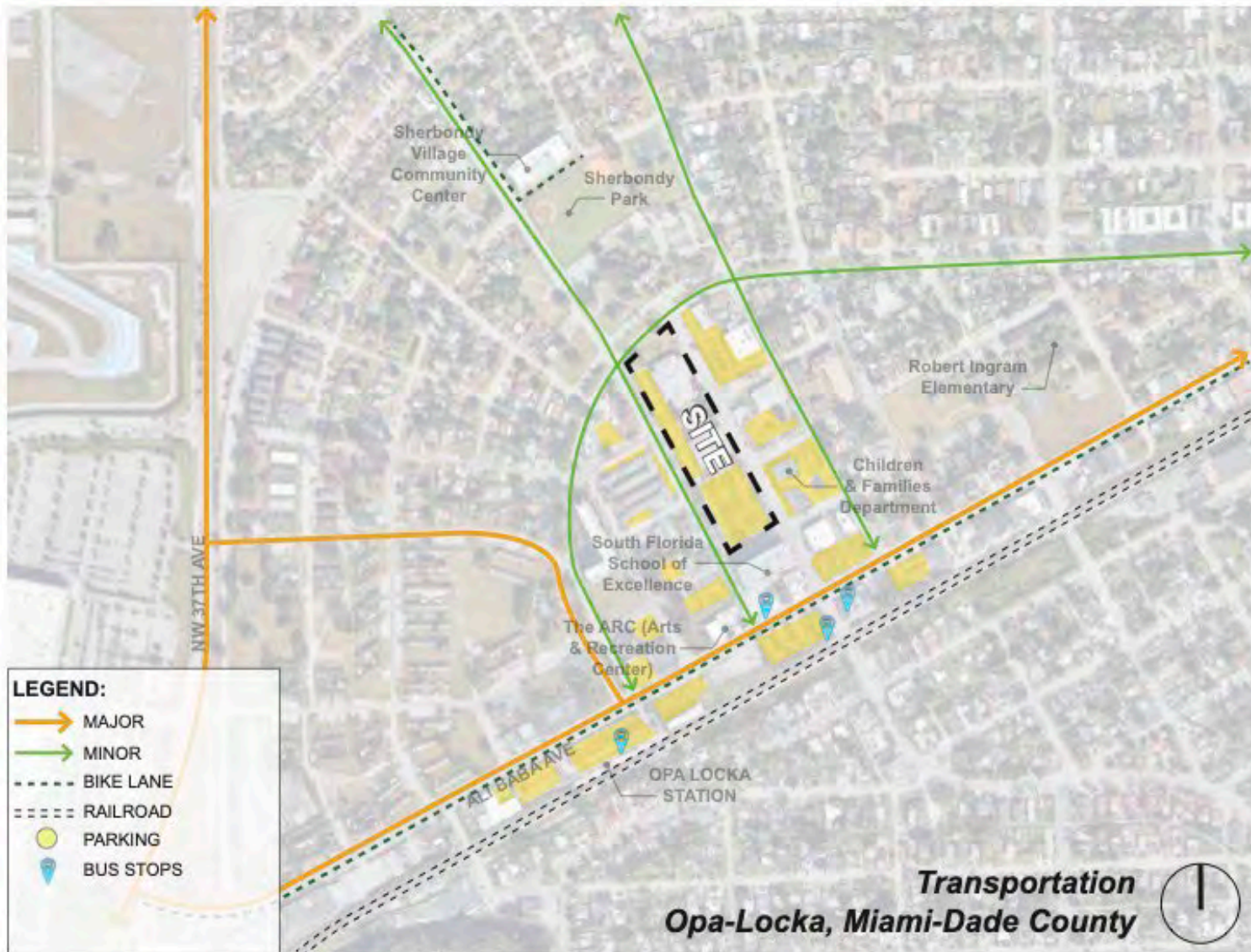
Transportation



Transportation



Transportation



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

- Lot Size
- Points of Interest
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking

**Transportation**

- Land Use
- Program

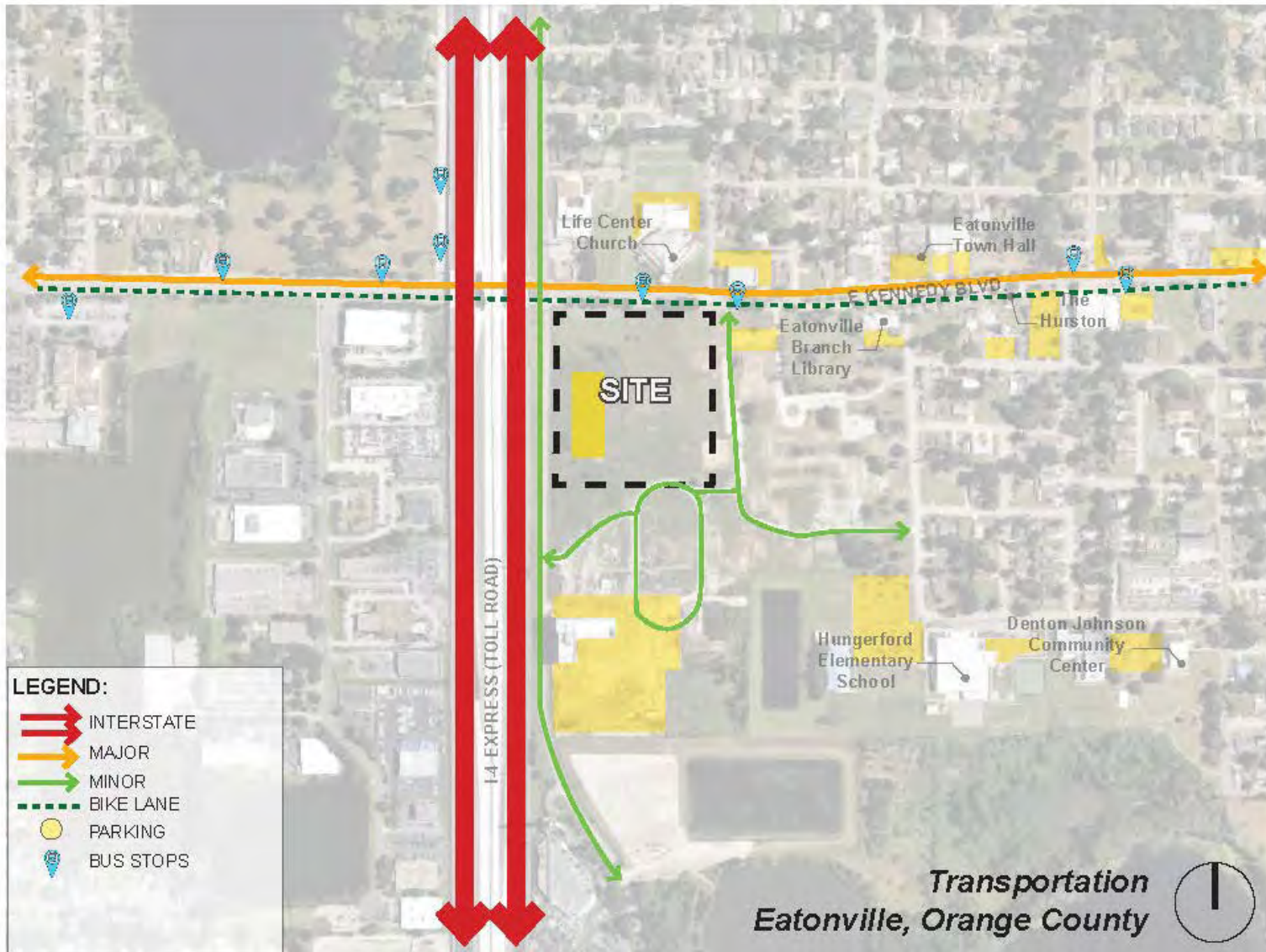
PROGRAM + SCALE  
QUESTIONS

Public transportation is provided by multiple bus stops and the Opa-Locka Station. Major roads, minor roads and a bike path also serve the site.



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

- Lot Size
- Points of Interest
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking

**Transportation**

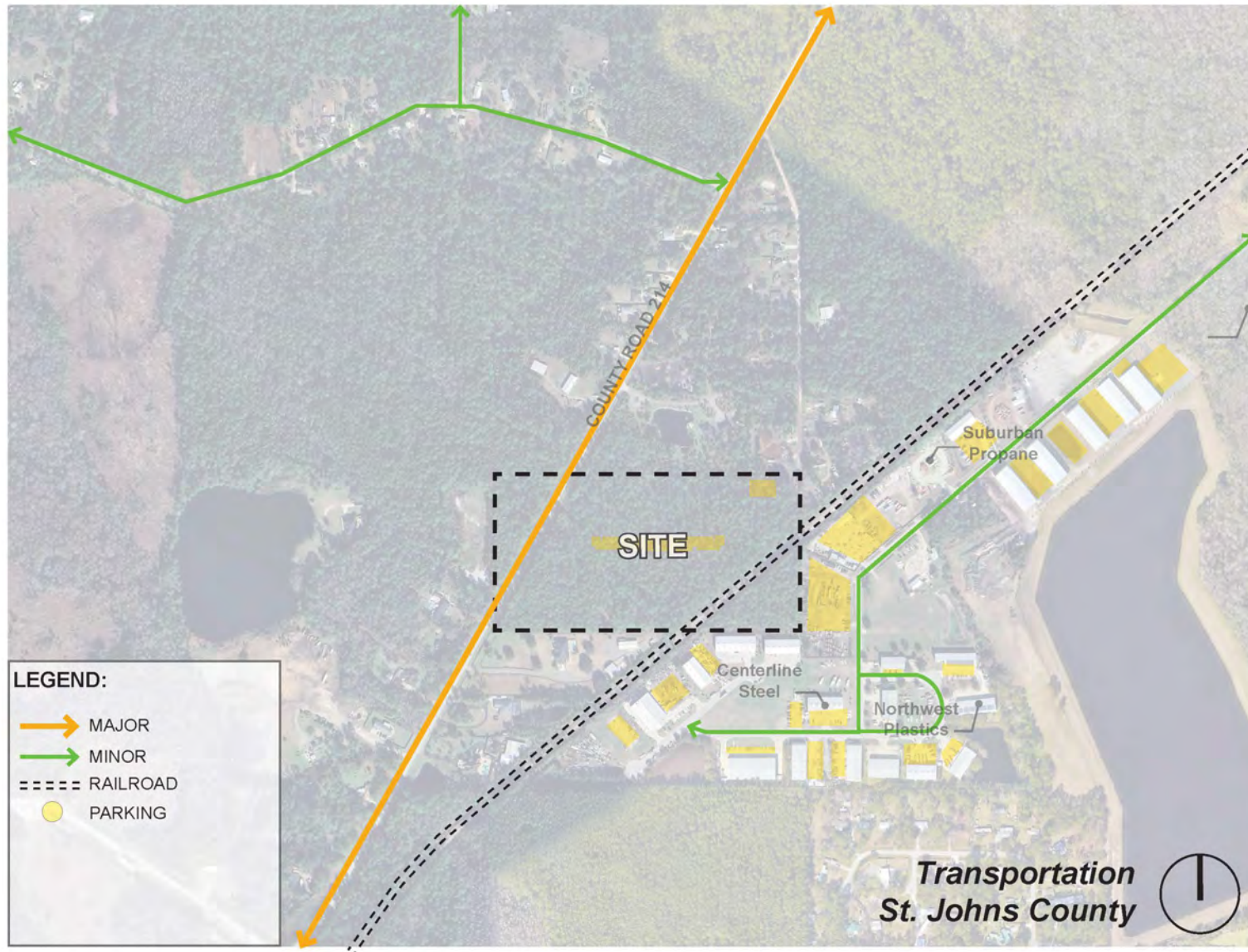
- Land Use
- Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

While the Interstate serves the area, additional major roads, minor roads, and a bike path are adjacent to the site. Public bus stops are on the northern edge of the site.





HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size  
Points of Interest  
Pedestrian Access  
Parking

### Transportation

Land Use  
Program

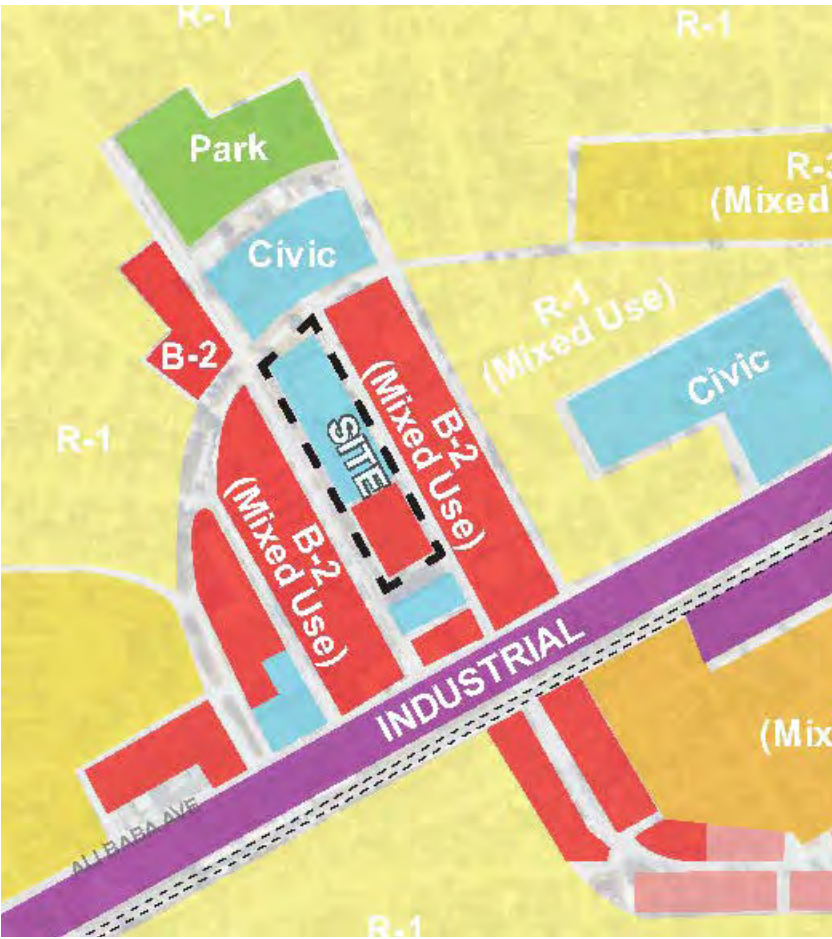
PROGRAM + SCALE  
QUESTIONS

The area is accessed by major and minor roads. A new county road is proposed. Secondary roads will be added as the adjacent land is developed.

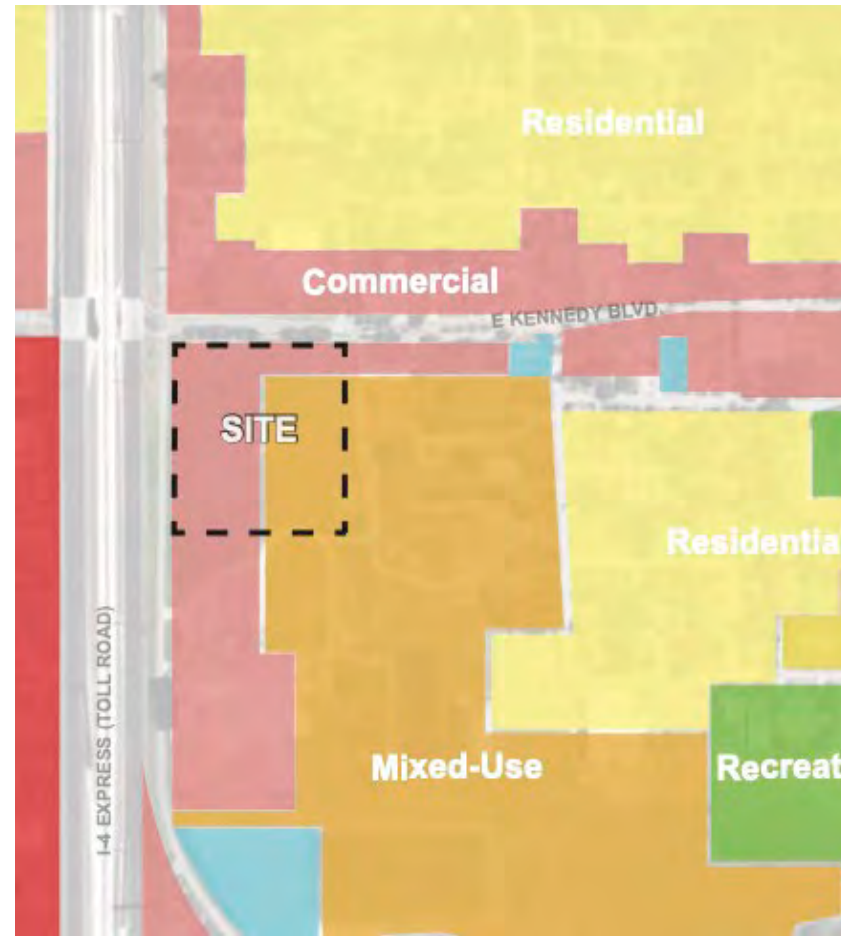


FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



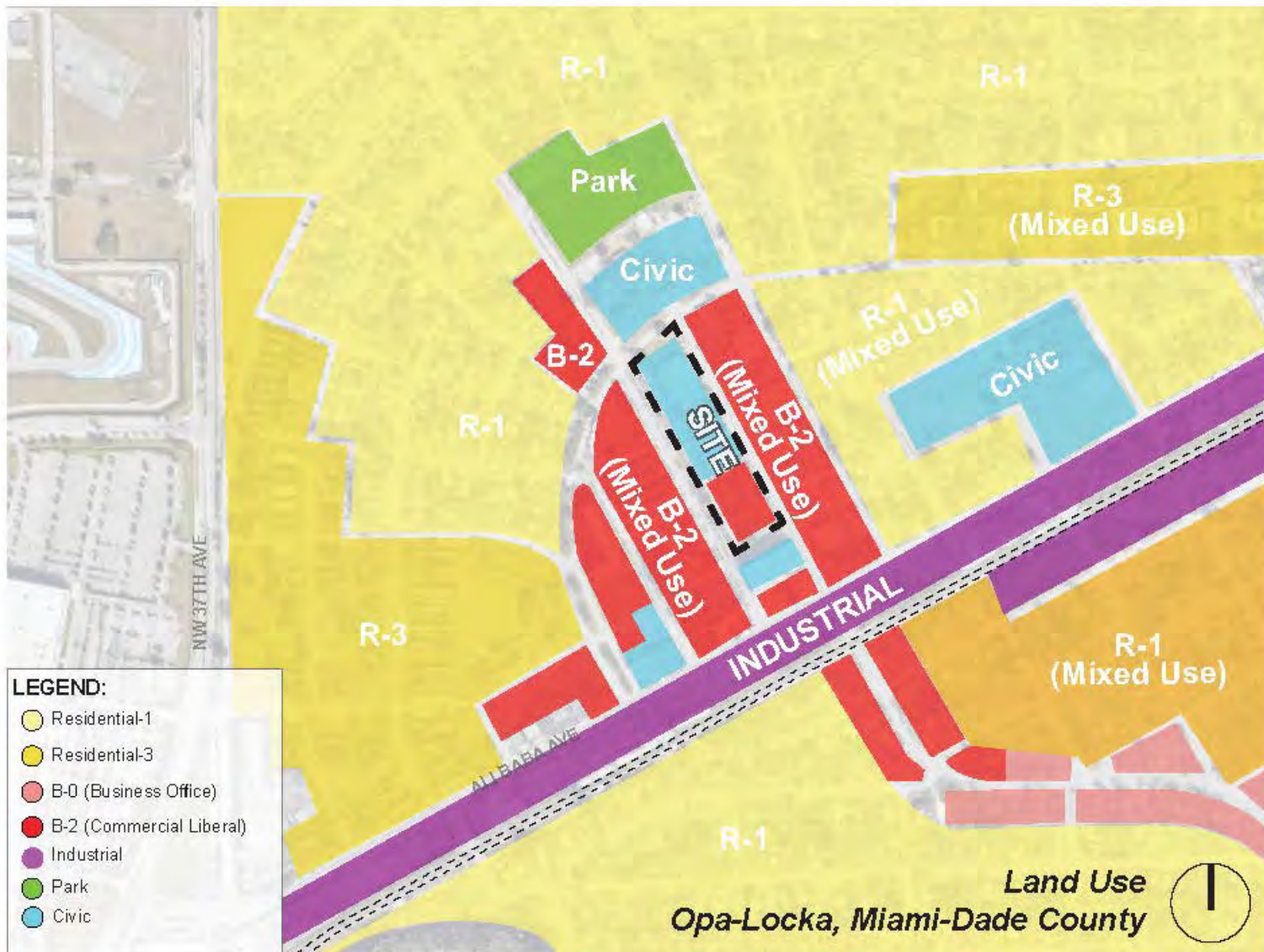
Land Use



Land Use



Land Use



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

- Lot Size
- Points of Interest
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking
- Transportation

**Land Use**

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

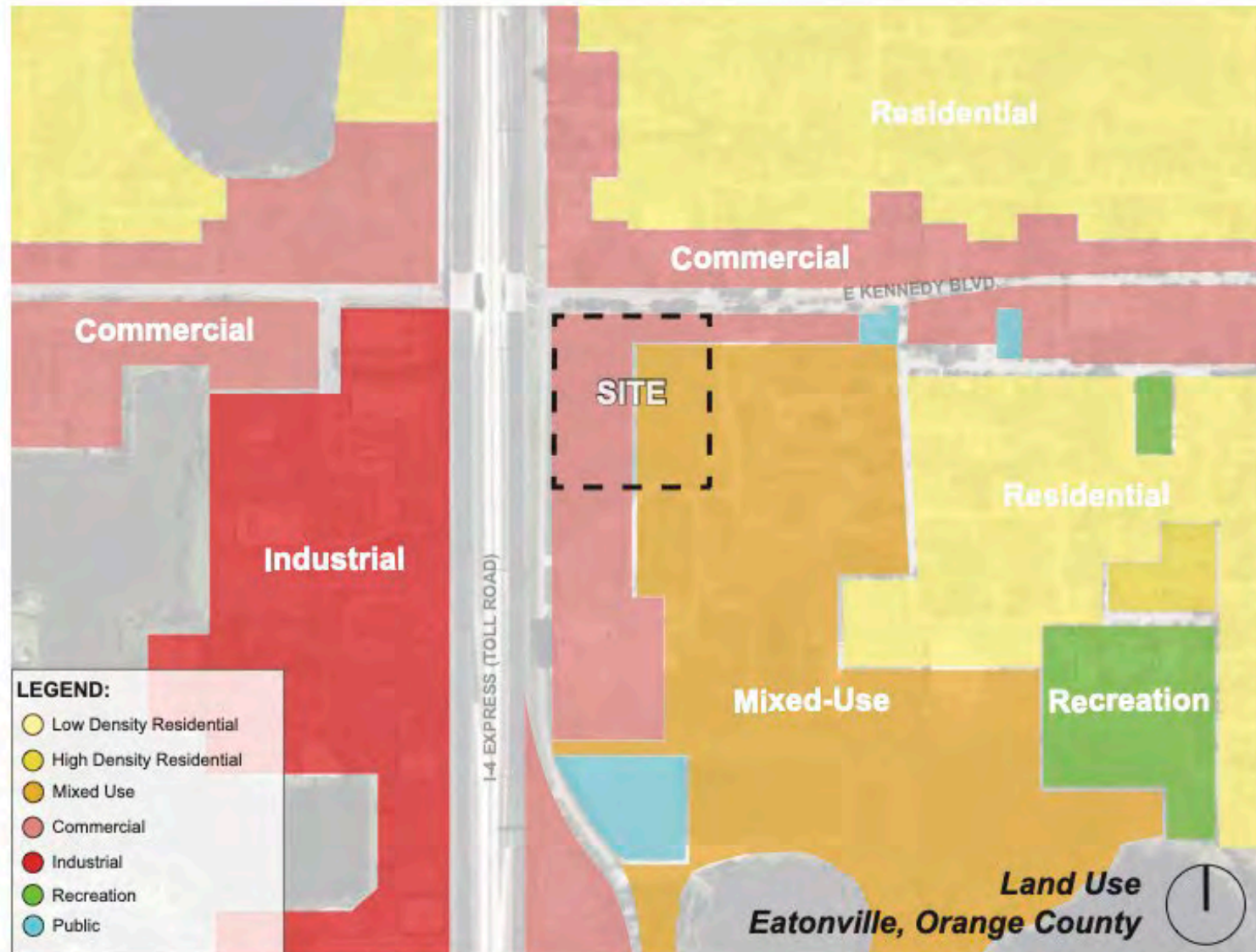
QUESTIONS

The museum site includes civic and business mixed uses. Single family and high-density residential areas surround the mixed uses.



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

- Lot Size
- Points of Interest
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking
- Transportation

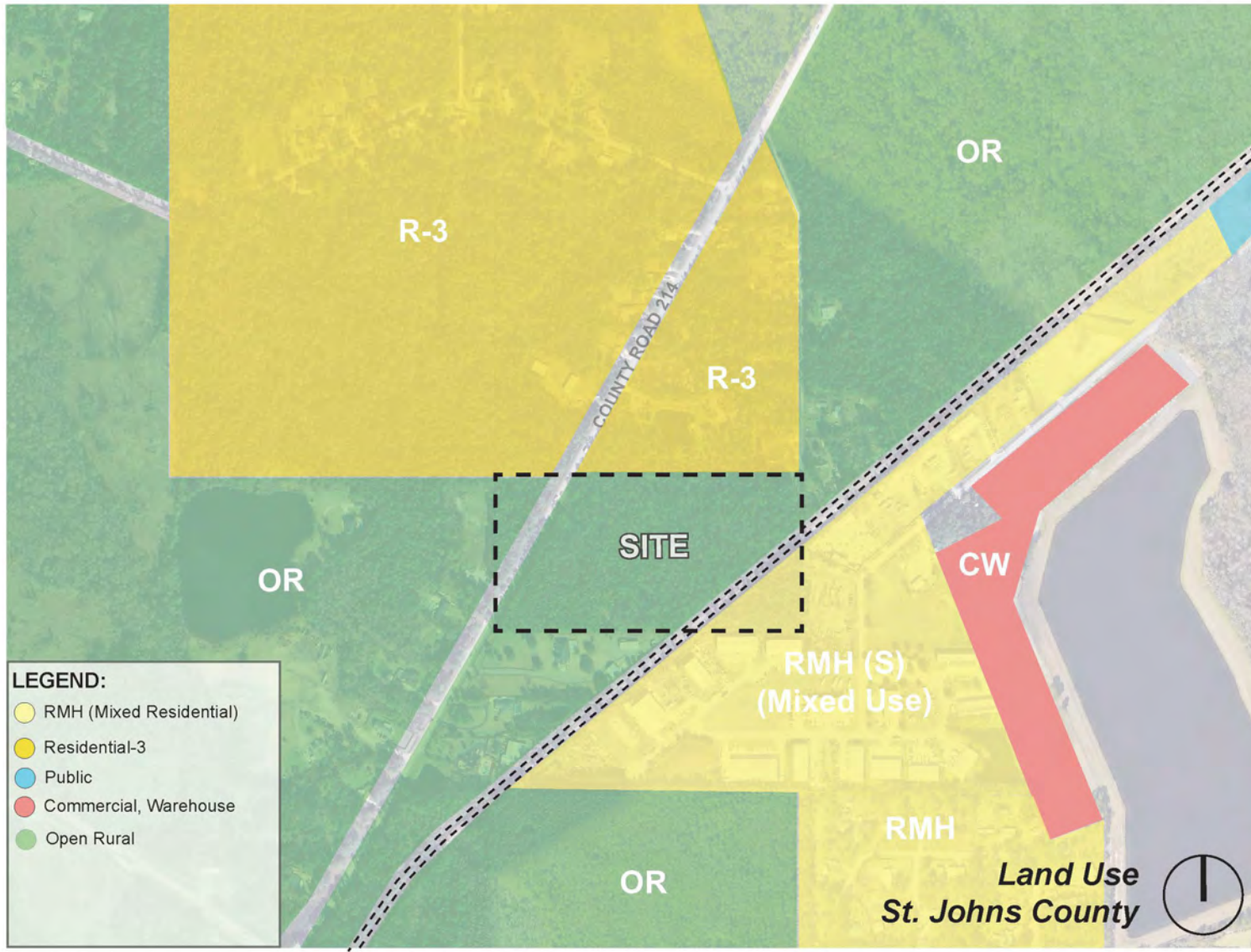
**Land Use**

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

The museum site includes commercial and business mixed uses. Single family residential areas are found to the north and east.



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

- Lot Size
- Points of Interest
- Pedestrian Access
- Parking
- Transportation

**Land Use**

Program

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

The museum site is Open Rural and it is adjacent to high density residential. More residential areas are found to the north and east.



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

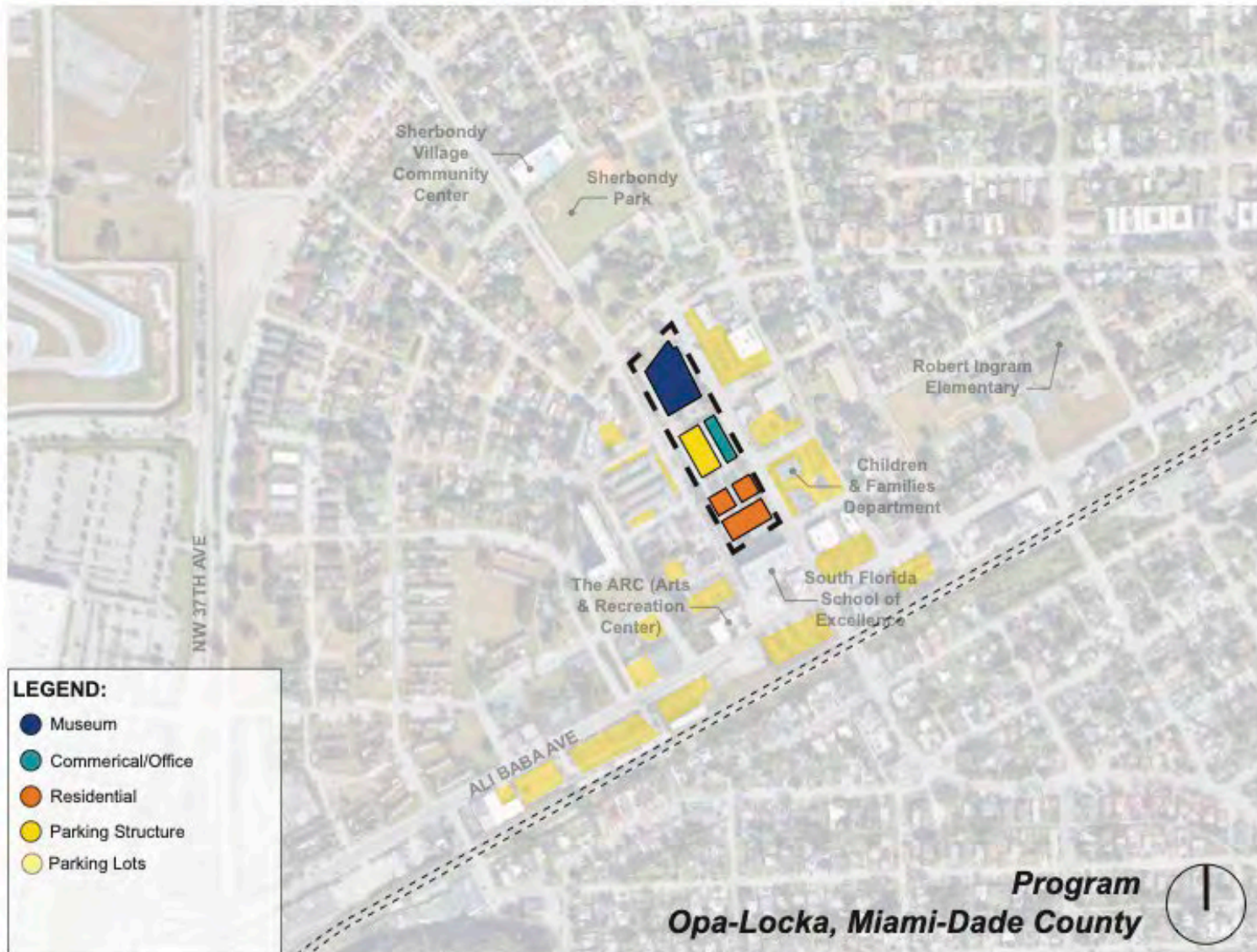


Program



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

Points of Interest

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

**Program**

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

In addition to the museum, the site will include commercial/ office space, parking lots and a parking garage.



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size  
Points of Interest  
Pedestrian Access  
Parking  
Transportation  
Land Use

**Program**

PROGRAM + SCALE  
QUESTIONS

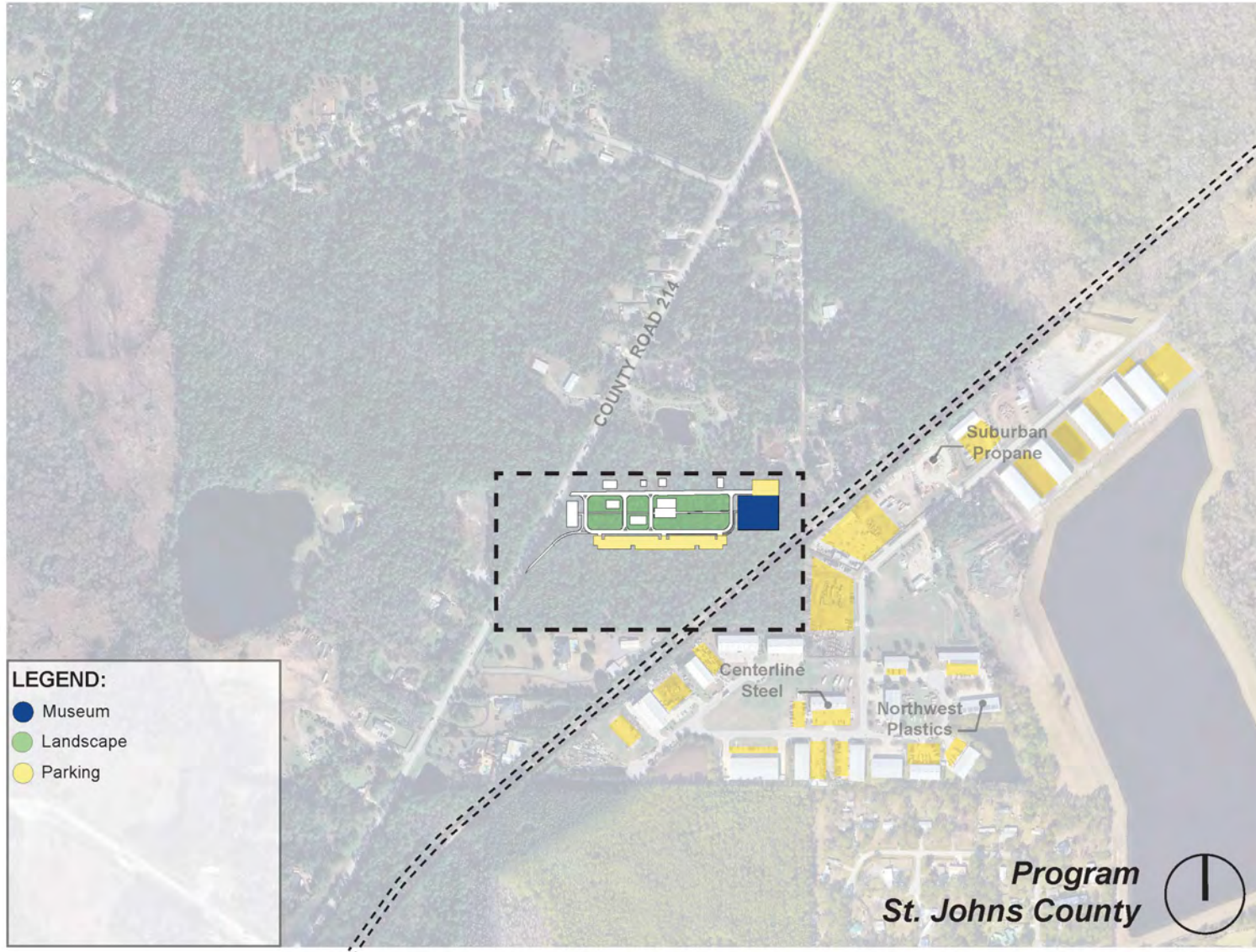
In addition to the museum, the site will include a hotel, a parking garage and a landscape courtyard.





FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

What are the SITE DIAGRAMS?

Lot Size

Points of Interest

Pedestrian Access

Parking

Transportation

Land Use

**Program**

PROGRAM + SCALE

QUESTIONS

In addition to the museum, the site will include parking, a formal walk, a water tower, and a reflecting pool.



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

## CHAPTER 2023-72

### Committee Substitute for **House Bill No. 1441**

The museum shall be a multipurpose facility capable of generating self-sustaining revenues, with archival research and storage facilities, meeting rooms, full-service banquet facilities that include a kitchen capable of serving at least 250 people at a single event, and a performing arts theater that shall be made available for private events...

HOW

FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

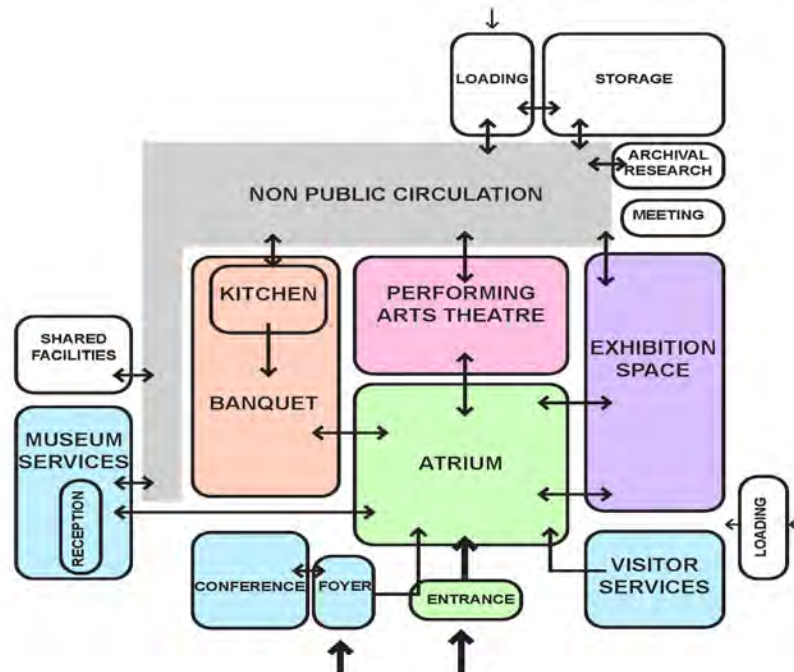
QUESTIONS



## CHAPTER 2023-72

### Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 1441

The museum shall be a multipurpose facility capable of generating self-sustaining revenues, with **archival research** and **storage facilities**, **meeting rooms**, full-service **banquet facilities** that include a kitchen capable of serving at least 250 people at a single event, and a **performing arts theater** that shall be made available for private events...



HOW

FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

QUESTIONS



Woodson African American  
Museum of Florida  
St. Petersburg, Florida



FLORIDA DIVISION OF  
*Historical Resources*

HOW

FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

Similar Museums

QUESTIONS



Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History & Culture  
Baltimore, Maryland



Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History  
Detroit, Michigan



International African American Museum  
Charleston, South Carolina



FLORIDA DIVISION OF  
*Historical Resources*

HOW  
FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

Similar Museums

QUESTIONS



FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

HOW

FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

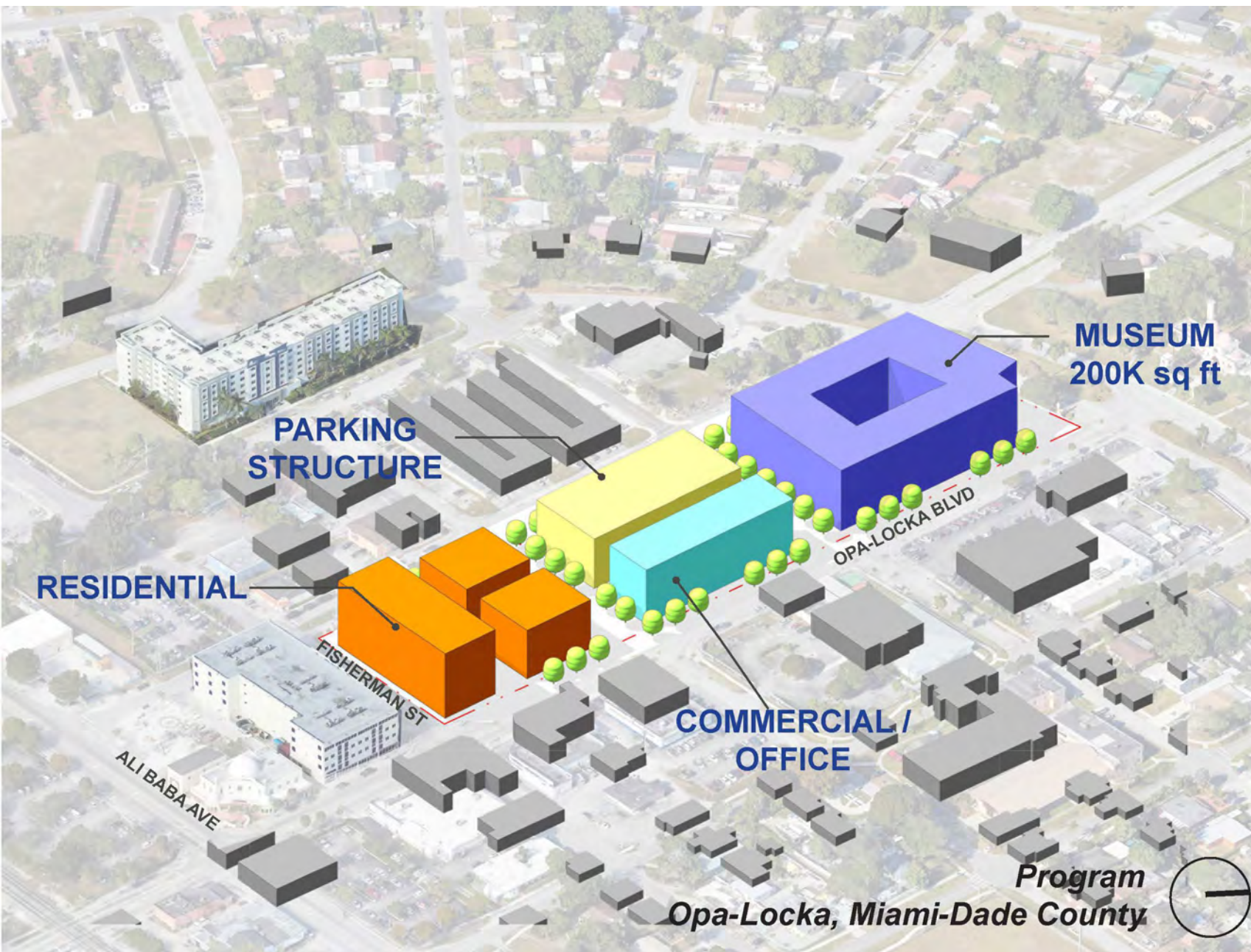
What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

Similar Museums

200K or 100K

QUESTIONS





FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*

HOW

FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

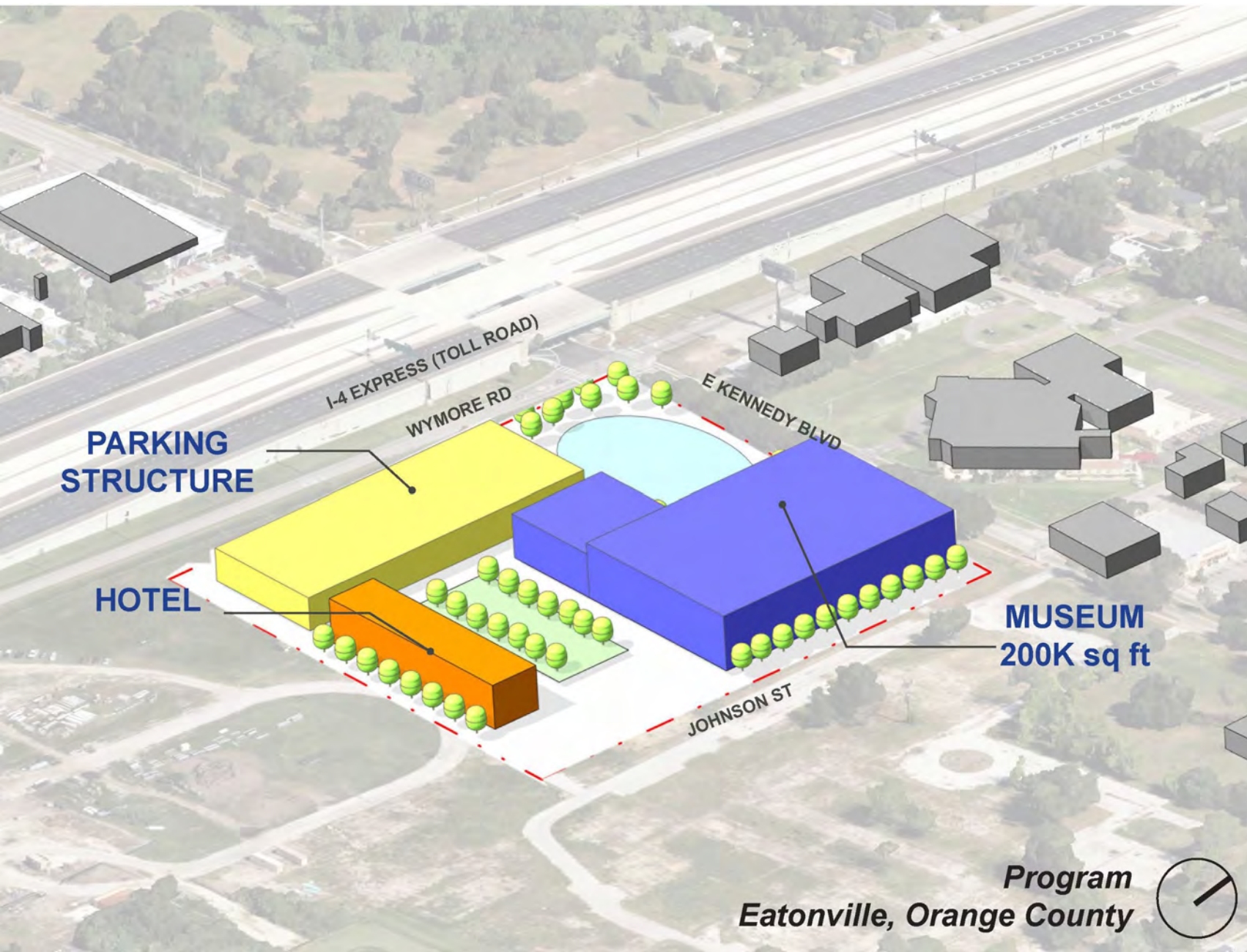
What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

Similar Museums

200K or 100K

QUESTIONS



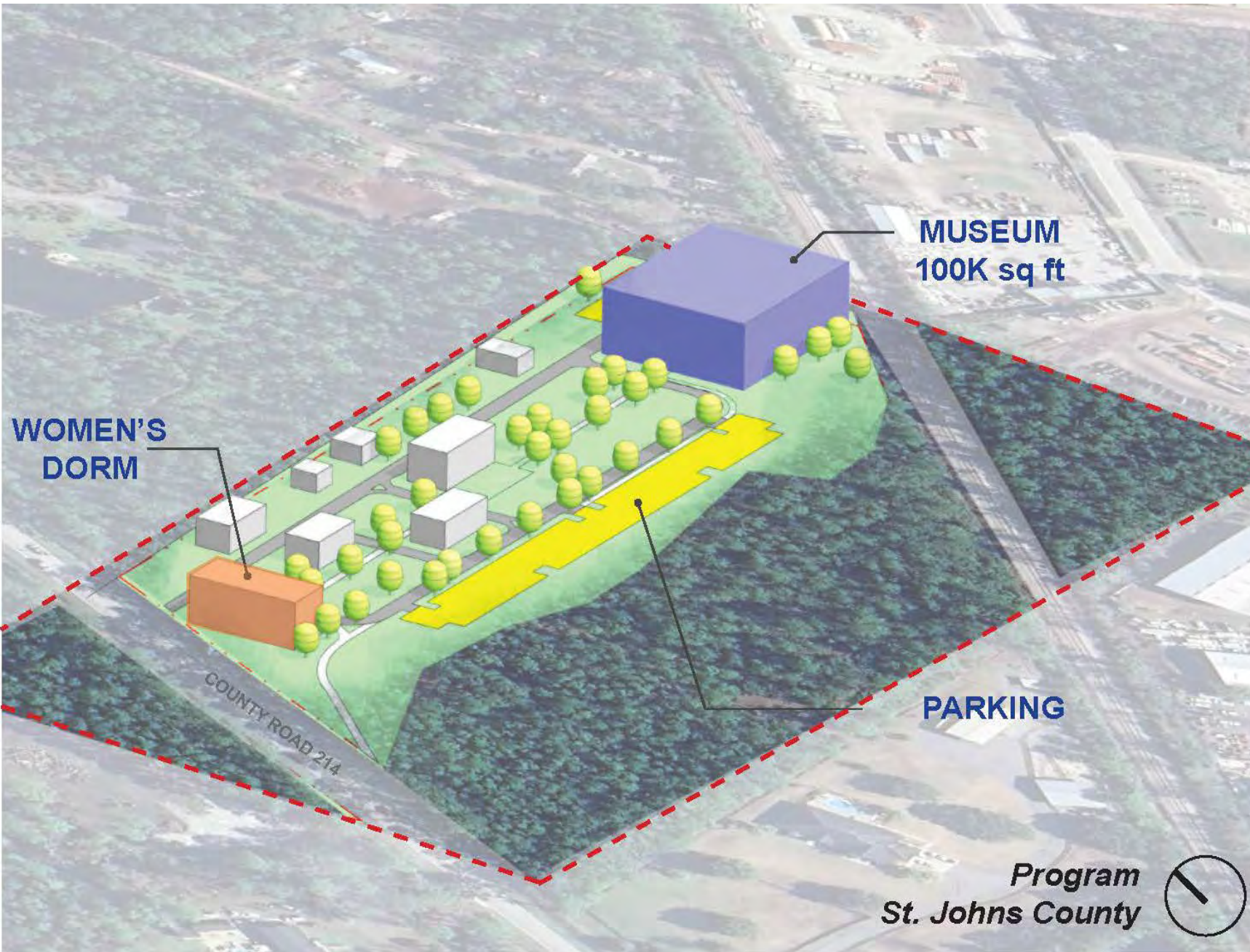
Program  
Eatonville, Orange County





FLORIDA DIVISION OF

*Historical Resources*



HOW  
FOCUS

SITE DIAGRAMS

What is the PROGRAM + SCALE?

House Bill No. 1441

Similar Museums

200K or 100K

QUESTIONS

Program  
St. Johns County







Opa-Locka, Dade County



151 Perviz Avenue

Eatonville, Orange County



100 East Kennedy Blvd

St. Johns County



Tocoi Rd, Parcel # 0958300000

Florida Museum for Black History  
Task Force

Andrew Chin, Dean  
School of Architecture & Engineering Technology  
Florida A&M University

05.22.24

## **Appendix D: Public Survey**



## Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Public Survey

### 1. Part I: Introduction

The purpose of this survey is to gather stakeholder input on the proposed Florida Museum of Black History. Survey results will be included in the Final Report of the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force. To learn more, visit:

<https://dos.fl.gov/historical/museums/blackhistorytaskforce/>.

Thank you for participating in our survey. Your feedback is important.

**Disclaimer:** Please note that Florida has a broad public records law. Most written communications to or from state officials regarding state business are considered to be public records and will be made available to the public and the media upon request. Therefore, your survey responses may be subject to public disclosure.



## Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Public Survey

### 2. Part II: Demographics

The following demographic questions are optional, but are helpful to better understand our constituency.

1. Are you a Florida resident?

Yes

No

2. What is your age group?

Under 18

45-54

18-24

55-64

25-34

65+

35-44

3. Which of the following best describes you?

- State Government Employee
- Local Government Employee
- Federal Government Employee
- Tribal Government Employee
- Marketing Professional
- Historian
- Museum Professional
- University or College Faculty/Staff
- Other (please specify)
- Non-Profit Professional
- Non-Profit Board Member
- K-12 Educator
- Student
- Elected Official
- Individual/Private Citizen
- Retired

## Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Public Survey

### 3. Part III: Priorities

Please indicate which of the following is a priority.

\* 1. The Florida Museum of Black History should serve as a hub for discussing and researching the significant issues, events, achievements, obstacles, and challenges faced by Black Floridians.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 2. The Florida Museum of Black History should serve as a place where the public can gather and engage in civil discourse about issues that impact communities and collaborate on telling the history of Black Floridians.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 3. The Florida Museum of Black History should have a dedicated section highlighting the rich history and contributions to Florida of the people of the African Diaspora, including those from the Caribbean and Latin America.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 4. The Florida Museum of Black History should have a research facility dedicated to archival and genealogical research as well as a repository for archival collections.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 5. To enhance visitors' experiences, the Florida Museum of Black History should integrate interactive technology into its exhibits.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 6. The Florida Museum of Black History should have a dedicated space for performing arts, with both indoor and outdoor venues.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 7. The Florida Museum of Black History should have a dedicated space for showcasing contemporary artwork and artists, including pieces that can be displayed outdoors or in a sculpture garden.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

\* 8. The Florida Museum of Black History should have ample green space and gardens, as well as an outdoor area with amenities to support events and programming.

Not a priority	Low priority	Medium priority	High priority	Essential
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Public Survey

### 4. Part IV: Free Response

Please answer each question with a short response. (Limit 3500 characters per response.)

1. What questions do you have about the proposed Florida Museum of Black History?

2. What kind of experiences should museum visitors have while touring galleries and exhibit spaces?

\* 3. In addition to the topics listed in [CS/HB 1441 \(Chapter 2023-72, Laws of Florida\)](#), what other topics do you want to see in the Florida Museum of Black History?

\* 4. What kind of facilities and services would you prefer to have available at the Florida Museum of Black History?

\* 5. Where in Florida do you think the proposed Florida Museum of Black History should be located?



\* 6. What are the key factors to consider while selecting a suitable site for the proposed Florida Museum of Black History?

\* 7. What would be your top three reasons for visiting the proposed Florida Museum of Black History?

\* 8. In your opinion, what are the most important factors to consider when planning for the proposed Florida Museum of Black History?

\* 9. Do you have any other questions, comments, or concerns?



## **Florida Museum of Black History Task Force Public Survey**

### **5. Survey Complete**

Thank You! We greatly appreciate you taking time to give us your input.

## **Appendix E: Marketing Plan**

# VISIT FLORIDA and The Florida Museum of Black History

VISIT **FLORIDA**<sup>®</sup>



*Melbourne Beach*

FLORIDA BUSINESS LISTINGS

MORE ARTS AND HISTORY

Here's a sampling of featured businesses. Use the search tools to find even more.

View: [Grid](#) [List](#) | Sort: [Recommended](#) [Near Me](#) [Show Map](#)

CITY

- Altamonte Springs
- Amelia Island
- Anna Maria Island
- Apalachicola
- Apopka

Show 197 more +

CLEAR FILTERS

1 - 24 of 697



Villa Zoroyda Museum

83 King St  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Calusa Nature Center & Planetarium

3450 Ortiz Ave  
Fort Myers, FL 33905

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Flagler Museum

1 Whitehall Way  
Palm Beach, FL 33480

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Museum of Discovery & Science

401 SW Second Street  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

3251 S. Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



History of Diving Museum

8299 Overseas Hwy  
Islamorada, FL 33035

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Oldest Wooden School House Historic Museum and Gardens

14 Saint George Street  
Saint Augustine, FL 32084

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



World Golf Hall of Fame & IMAX Theater

One World Golf Place  
St. Augustine, FL 32092

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Tallahassee Museum

3945 Museum Dr.  
Tallahassee, FL 32310

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Cultural Council for Palm Beach County

601 Lake Avenue  
Lake Worth Beach, FL 33460

VISIT WEBSITE

QUICK VIEW



Norton Museum of Art



IMAG History & Science Center



Art & History Museums



Young At Art Museum



Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse & Museum



## LIGHTNER MUSEUM

75 King St.  
St. Augustine, FL 32084

(904) 824-2874

X f @

VISIT WEBSITE

1/3



### ABOUT



Located in the heart of downtown St. Augustine, Lightner Museum occupies the historic Alcazar Hotel, a Gilded Age resort hotel built in 1888 by railroad magnate Henry Flagler. Founded in 1948, the museum is home to one of the premier collections of 19th- and early 20th-century fine and decorative art in the country. Furnishings, paintings, leaded glass windows, cut and blown glass, and natural history specimens from the Otto Lightner Collection are exhibited against the backdrop of the magnificent Alcazar Hotel. Visitors to the Museum are invited to participate in an immersive experience of art, architecture, and design from America's Gilded Age.

At the peak of its popularity during the 1890s, more than 25,000 guests visited the Alcazar. A major attraction of the hotel was its indoor entertainment and recreational facilities. The Alcazar boasted the world's largest indoor public swimming pool at the time, a grand ballroom, sulfur baths, a steam room, massage parlor, gymnasium, bowling alley, archery ranges, tennis courts and a bicycle academy.

The Alcazar Hotel closed during the Depression, and in 1947 the building was purchased by Otto C. Lightner to exhibit his turn-of-the-century collection of fine and decorative art. The Lightner Museum opened two years later. The building is on the National Register of Historic Places and today houses both the Lightner Museum and City government offices.

Chicago publisher Otto C. Lightner was fascinated by what people collected — a hobby that became his trademark and his passion, which is clearly reflected in the eclectic collection of late 19th-century and early-20th-century artifacts on display at the Lightner Museum. Arranged over five floors, the Museum is filled with remarkable artifacts from this dynamic period in American history. Furnishings, paintings, mechanical musical instruments, and other curiosities transport you to the heyday of the Alcazar Hotel and its wealthy visitors. Today, the Lightner Museum offers a fascinating view of how beauty and luxury were defined in Gilded Age America.

### MAP



### AMENITIES





**THINGS TO DO**

Eat & Drink

Travel Ideas

Events

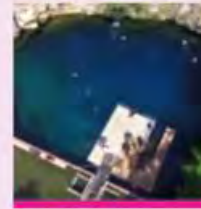
Attractions

Arts & Culture

Outdoors & Adventure

Shopping

**TRAVEL IDEAS**



Accessible Travel



Eco-Friendly Travel



African American Heritage Travel



More Travel Ideas

HERE



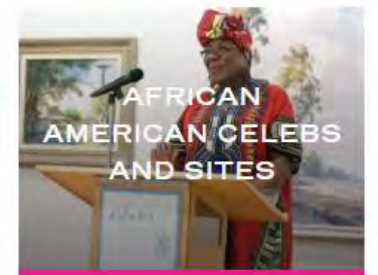
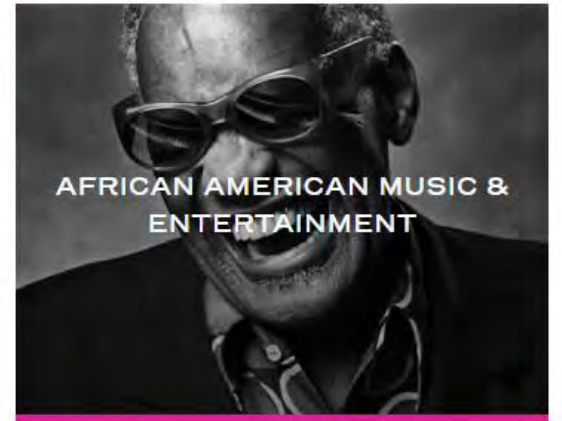
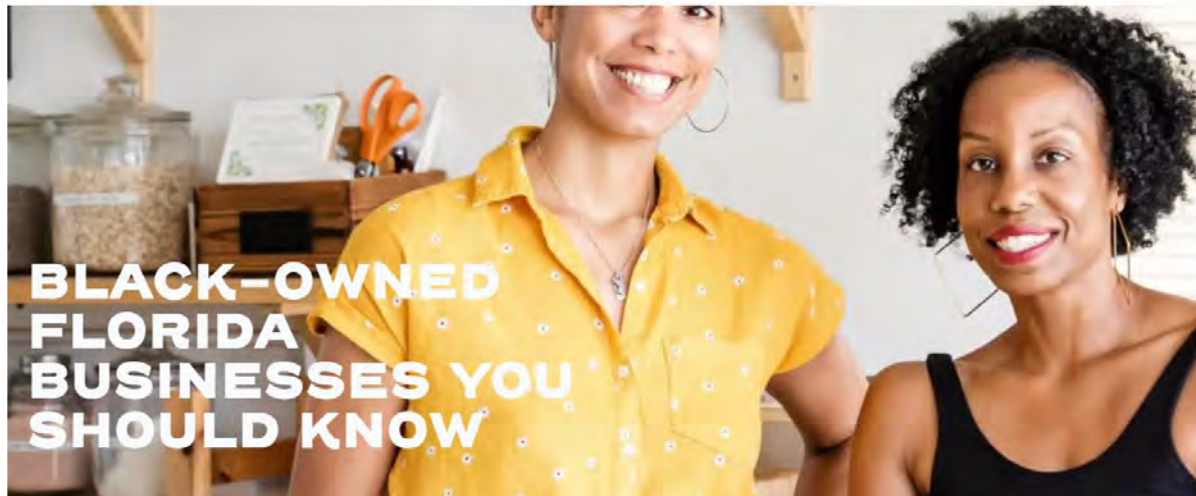
SCROLL DOWN



# Black History and Heritage Tiles

## FLORIDA'S AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE

African Americans have shaped history and culture in the Sunshine State for centuries. Here's where to discover the heritage of African American cuisine, attractions, arts, events, and the Sunshine State's Civil Right Trail locations.

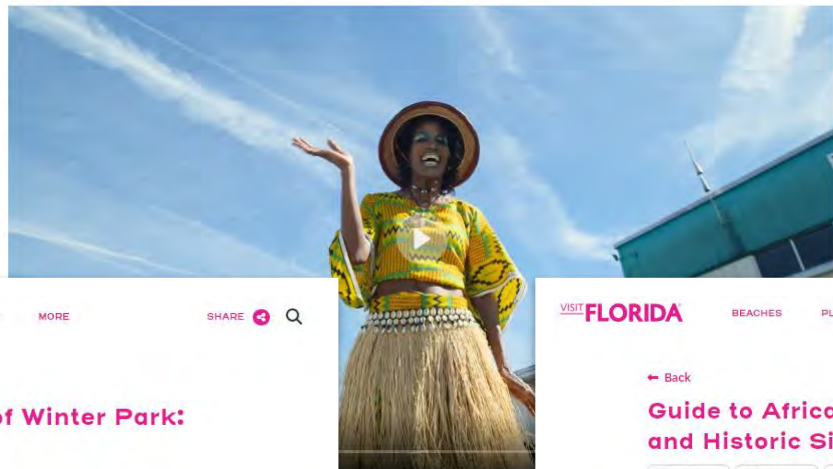






### Zora Neale Hurston's Eatonville

Share Tweet Pin Email Share



Examples of Articles on VISITFLORIDA.com

### Explore Florida's Black Heritage

Share Tweet Pin Email Share

A driving tour along the Florida Black Heritage Trail unveils some of the state's... From the earliest days of territorial exploration in the 16th century, right up to the vital part of the great struggle for dignity and equality...

#### Florida's Black History Tour: Day One

The adventure begins at Bethune-Cookman University (1886-1918-2000). In beautiful historic downtown Daytona Beach, off I-95 at exit 261A and drive east on International Speedway Boulevard (U.S. 92) to King Jr. Boulevard, and, as you cross Bethune Boulevard, you've arrived at the university library, which is opposite the Bethune Foundation and Home...

### Hannibal Square Heritage Center of Winter Park: Pride & Progress

Share Tweet Pin Email Share



The Hannibal Square Heritage Center is home to photos and personal histories of the area's residents, initially black laborers who worked for the whites in Winter Park

### Guide to African-American Heritage Landmarks and Historic Sites in Florida

Share Tweet Pin Email Share



Florida boasts a rich, diverse history, with African American landmarks and legacies throughout the state. Here's a guide to historical sites and African American Heritage Trail locations, grouped by county. While some of these sites can be visited, others are private and not open to the public.

- Alachua County | Baker County | Bay County | Brevard County | Broward County | Charlotte County | Calhoun County | Columbia County | Duval County | Escambia County | Flagler County | Franklin County | Gulf County | Highlands County | Hillsborough County | Jefferson County | Lee County | Leon County | Marion County | Miami-Dade County | Monroe County | Nassau County | Okaloosa County | Orange County | Osceola County | Palm Beach County | Pasco County | Pinellas County | Polk County | Santa Rosa County | Seminole County | St. Johns County | St. Lucie County | Sumter County | Suwannee County | Volusia County | Wakulla County | Walton County

# Official Florida Vacation Guide

## KEY TO SYMBOLS:

1 = Official State Historical Marker

### Eat, Drink & Nightlife

#### BRONSON

**Black Prong Bar & Grill**  
www.blackprong.com/BlackProng/

Featuring a full bar, live music, and outdoor seating, the Black Prong Bar & Grill welcomes you.

#### GAINESVILLE

**Covey Kitchen + Cocktails**  
www.coveykitchen.com/Menu/

Covey Kitchen + Cocktails offers hand-crafted cocktails and an elegant culinary experience.

**Gators Den Sports Grill**  
www.gatorsden.com/Menu/

Casual, relaxed atmosphere with a diverse menu and bar specials.

#### STEINHATCHEE

**Fiddler's Restaurant**  
www.fiddlers.com/Menu/

Swamp Town, Good Food, & Amazing Music!

#### TALLAHASSEE

**Bricks & Brass**  
www.bricksandbrass.com/

Contact our catering and events office today to learn more about our rental pricing!

**Proof Brewing Co.**  
www.proofbrewing.com/

Headquarters located in Tallahassee, Florida with an on-site brewery & beer garden.

### Things to Do

#### ALACHUA

**Historic Main Street Alachua**  
www.visitalachua.com/About/AboutAlachua

The heart of the City of Alachua.

#### CHIEFLAND

**Manatee Springs State Park**  
www.floridastatesparks.org/parks/manatee-springs/

Popular for snorkeling and canoeing, the headquarters of the state's first and only park for canoeing.

#### CRAWFORDVILLE

**Big Bend Scenic Byway**  
www.floridastatesparks.org/parks/manatee-springs/

Explore and experience North Florida.

#### FORT WHITE

**Paddling Adventures +**  
**Schellucknee Springs**  
www.schelluckneesprings.com/

The only lake, kayak, canoe, & stand up paddleboard rental inside Schellucknee Springs State Park.

#### GAINESVILLE

**Code Museum for Creativity & Invention**  
www.codemuseum.org/

Open creativity and invention. Hands-on activities and science.

## ATTRACTIONS

### Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation Foundation

www.carsonspringswildlife.org

Experience Wildlife Up Close & Personal!

### Cinema Verde

www.cinemaverde.org

Provides environmental education to the community through films, art, music, workshops, eco-tours.

### Dance Alive National Ballet

www.dancealive.org

Professional ballet company performing at home in Gainesville and on tour through the US.

### Depth With FreeDiving

www.depthwithfreediving.com/

Learn to breathe at Florida's freshwater springs!

### Florida Museum of Natural History

www.floridamuseum.org/

Inspiring people to care about life on Earth and make a positive difference in the future.

### Gainesville Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

www.gainesville.org/

Gainesville is proud to showcase its state park system, cultural events, and recreation activities.

### Harn Museum of Art

www.harn.org/

North Central Florida Fine Art Museum at 17-19 galleries, 3 gardens, cafe, store, free admission.

### Historic Hallie Homestead

www.halliehomestead.org/

19th-Century Historic plantation house for its taking. Walks over 12,000 acres, dating to 1820s.

### Kanapaha Botanical Gardens

www.kanapaha.org/

Come see the "Star of Attractions in Gainesville, Florida" - comprised of 24 major collections.

### Matheson History Museum

www.mathesonhistory.com/

History museum focusing on historic Florida and its surrounding regions.

### North Central Florida Blues Society

www.ncfbss.org/

A non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation, cultivation, and promotion of Blues.

### Santa Fe College Teaching Zoo

www.santafe.edu/

Open Daily 9 am - 5 pm.

### University of Florida Performing Arts

www.performingarts.ufl.edu/

We provide excellent educational opportunities to our community. Find the program that will help you.

### HAVANA

**Havana Main Street**  
www.havanainmainstreet.com/

Great food and historic Havana in Florida's Finest Food Town. Dine with comfort and local shops.

### HIGH SPRINGS

**Ginnie Springs Outdoors**  
www.ginnieoutdoors.com/

Water park located in Florida's unspoiled wilderness.

### High Springs Mercantile

www.highspringmercantile.com/

High Springs Mercantile store.

### LAMONT

**North Florida Wildlife Center**  
www.northfloridawildlife.org/

Wildlife conservation through public education, propagation, and habitat restoration efforts.

### MELROSE

**Spookerville Animal Sanctuary**  
www.spookerville.org/

Spookerville is a beautiful, calm, and compassionate refuge to over 100 rescued farm animals.

### MONTICELLO

**Aunt Louise's Farm**  
www.auntlouisesfarm.com/

Jefferson Arts Gallery  
www.jeffersonartsgallery.com/

Art gallery in Jefferson County.

### PANACEA

**Gulf Specimen Marine Laboratory**  
www.gulfspecimen.org/

History museum with connections from the North to the Gulf in both history and education.

### TALLAHASSEE

**CollegeTown**  
www.collegetown.org/

CollegeTown is the heart of Gainesville, living in a great tradition in Tallahassee!

### Florida Historic Capitol Museum

www.floridahistoriccapitol.com/

Florida's historic Capitol building houses Florida's history. Open daily, free admission.

### Goodwood Museum & Gardens

www.goodwoodmuseum.org/

Please contact the Museum for hours of operation for fees.

### LeMoyne Arts Gallery and Sculpture Gardens

www.lemoyne.org/

Contemporary art gallery with exciting exhibits, a shop, sculpture garden, & workshop.

### Mission San Luis

www.mission-san-luis.org/

Florida's Authentic Spanish Living History Museum.

### Railroad Square Art District

www.railroad-square.com/

Tallahassee's "Art District".



Spookerville Animal Sanctuary

**Carson Springs Wildlife Conservation Foundation**  
[www.carsonspringswildlife.org](http://www.carsonspringswildlife.org)  
Experience Wildlife Up Close & Personal!

**Cinema Verde**  
[www.cinemaverde.org](http://www.cinemaverde.org)  
Provides environmental education to the community through films, art, music, workshops, eco-tours.

**Dance Alive National Ballet**  
[www.dancealive.org](http://www.dancealive.org)  
Professional ballet company performing at home in Gainesville and on tour through the US.

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## **Appendix F: Additional Resources**

## CHAPTER 2023-72

### Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 1441

An act relating to a Florida Museum of Black History; creating s. 267.0722, F.S.; creating a Florida Museum of Black History Task Force within the Division of Historical Resources of the Department of State; providing for the appointment of task force members by the Governor and the Legislature; providing requirements for members of the task force; prohibiting compensation for members of the task force; providing that task force members are entitled to receive reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses; requiring the division to provide staff and expend funds as necessary to assist the task force; requiring the task force to develop certain plans and recommendations; requiring the task force to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature before a certain date; providing for the expiration of the task force; authorizing the Legislature to consider the commissioning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 267.0722, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

267.0722 Florida Museum of Black History.—

(1) There is created within the division the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force for the purpose of providing recommendations to the division for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History. The museum shall be a multipurpose facility capable of generating self-sustaining revenues, with archival research and storage facilities, meeting rooms, full service banquet facilities that include a kitchen capable of serving at least 250 people at a single event, and a performing arts theater that shall be made available for private events.

(2) The task force shall be composed of nine members. Three members shall be appointed by the Governor, three members shall be appointed by the President of the Senate, and three members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. At least three of the appointed members must have 5 or more years of experience in one of the following areas: tenured faculty in history at a Florida public or private university; historical research and publication; archival design or preservation; multi-purpose public building design or construction; the hospitality and service industry; business; finance; marketing; law; or education. All appointments shall be made no later than July 31, 2023.

(3) Members of the task force shall serve without compensation or honorarium but shall be entitled to receive reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.

(4) The division shall provide the task force with staff and expend funds as necessary to assist the task force in the performance of its duties.

(5) The task force shall develop the following:

(a) Plans for the location, design, and construction of the museum and all necessary facilities.

(b) Recommendations for the operation and administration of the museum upon completion of construction.

(c) A marketing plan that may be executed by the Florida Tourism Industry Marketing Corporation to promote the museum.

(d) A transition plan under which the museum will become financially self-sufficient.

(e) Recommendations for archival and artifact acquisition, preservation, and research; exhibits; installations; and educational materials that complement and support required instruction provided in public schools in accordance with s. 1003.42(2)(h). The recommendations must include materials relating to:

1. The role of African-American participation in defending and preserving Florida and the United States, including, by way of example and without limitation, the contributions of the residents of Fort Mose, the Tuskegee Airmen, and all African-American veterans.

2. The history of slavery in the state.

3. The history of segregation in the state.

4. Notable African Americans in this state.

5. Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, including the founding of Bethune Cookman University.

6. The history of historically black colleges and universities in this state.

7. The inherent worth and dignity of human life, with a focus on the prevention of genocide.

(6) Before July 1, 2024, the task force shall submit a report detailing its plans and recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate, and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives. Upon submission of the report, the task force shall expire.

(7) After receiving the report of the task force, the Legislature may consider legislation pertaining to the commissioning, construction, operation, and administration of the museum.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.

Approved by the Governor May 11, 2023.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 11, 2023.