



WEST PALM BEACH

YOUR WATERFRONT YOUR WAY

Downtown West Palm Beach Waterfront: Community Engagement & Visioning Initiative

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We extend our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the development of this Your Waterfront. Your Way. report. Special thanks are due to the members of the community who participated in surveys, focus groups, and public meetings, offering valuable insights and feedback. We also appreciate the dedication of city staff, local stakeholders, businesses and organizations whose expertise and support have been instrumental in shaping this project. Without the collaborative efforts of everyone involved, this comprehensive analysis and the recommendations contained within would not have been possible. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to enhancing our downtown waterfront.

- City of West Palm Beach Mayor Keith A. James
- District 1 Commissioner Cathleen Ward
- District 2 Commissioner Shalonda Warren
- District 3 Commissioner Christy Fox
- District 4 Commissioner Joseph Peduzzi
- District 5 Commissioner Christina Lambert

WEST PALM BEACH CITY DEPARTMENTS

- ArtLife WPB
- City Administration
- Communications
- Community Events
- Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA)
- Development Services
- Engineering
- Finance
- Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- Legal
- Mandel Public Library
- Mayor's Office
- Sustainability
- Parks and Recreation
- Police
- Public Utilities
- Public Works

ORGANIZATIONS AND BUSINESSES

- Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches
- Connect West Palm Beach
- Discover the Palm Beaches
- DDEC
- Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency
- Palm Tran
- Rose Trolley
- West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- WPB Downtown Neighborhood Association
- E.R. Bradley's Saloon
- Hilton West Palm Beach
- Informa Markets/ Palm Beach International Boat Show/
- Marine Industries Association of Palm Beach County, Inc.
- Related Companies

+ THOUSANDS OF WEST PALM BEACH RESIDENTS, WORKERS, BUSINESS OWNERS AND VISITORS

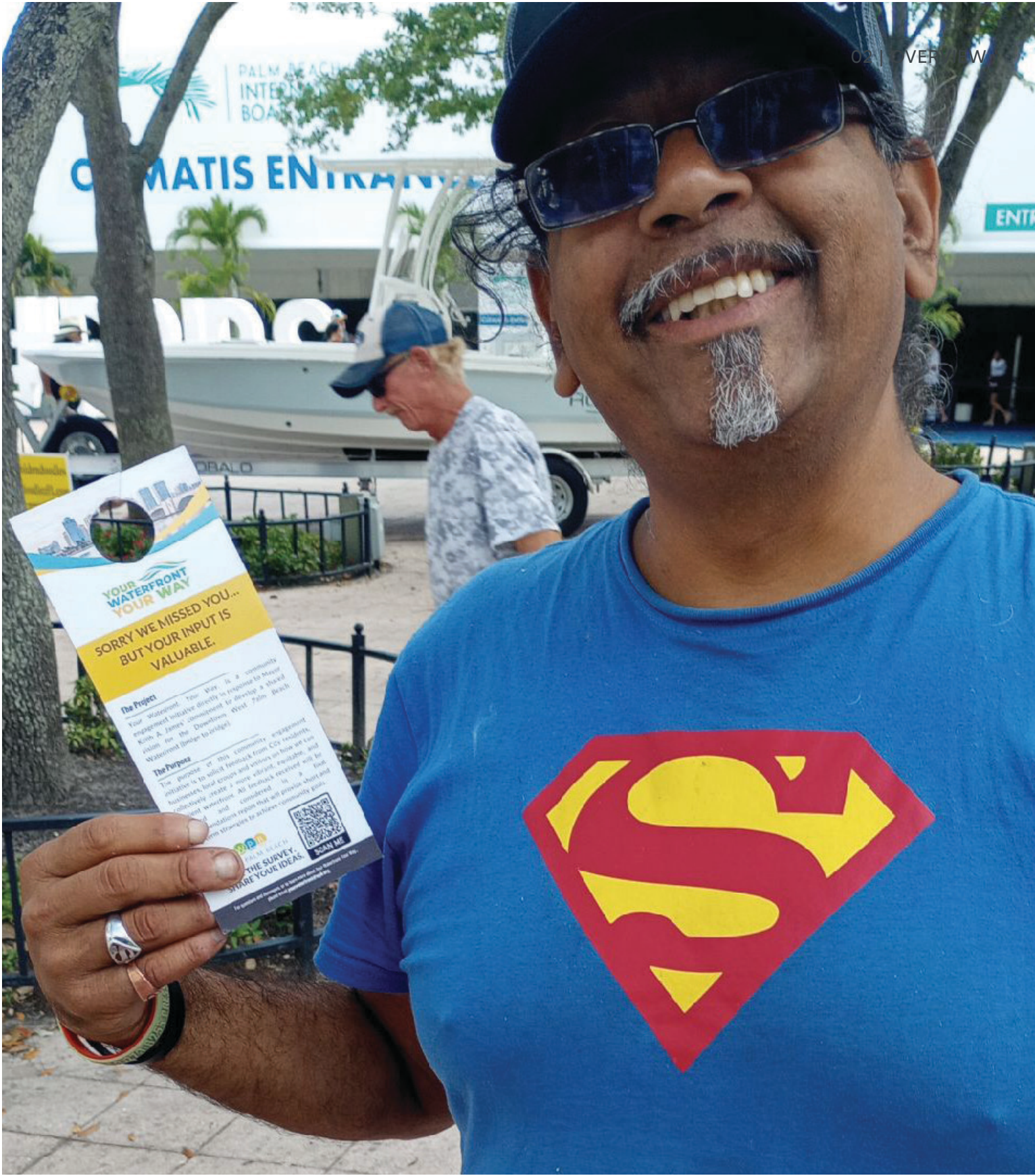


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CHAPTER 1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents key findings and recommendations from the ‘Your Waterfront. Your Way.’ community visioning initiative, which engaged residents, stakeholders, and visitors in shaping the future of the West Palm Beach waterfront. Led by the City’s Department of Housing and Community Development and supported by consultants Street Plans, Articulate Consulting, DDEC, and WGI, the initiative spanned from fall 2023 to fall 2025. It aimed to engage residents, businesses, and visitors in shaping a unified vision for the waterfront between the Flagler Memorial Bridge and the Royal Park Bridge.

The community engagement involved internal meetings with city leaders to assess successes and challenges related to the waterfront. Public feedback was gathered through door-to-door outreach, surveys, public meetings, and walkabouts, with surveys available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole to ensure broad participation.

Analysis of economic conditions and foot traffic data provided insights into visitor patterns and behaviors. This data, alongside survey and community stakeholder feedback, highlights the need for improved access, diverse programming, enhanced physical design, and effective stewardship. The integration of these insights resulted in three key themes that support a shared vision for the waterfront:

Implement Quick-Impact Initiatives focuses on immediate improvements to the waterfront, such as upgrading facilities, activating key spaces, and hosting events. These actions are designed to quickly enhance the area’s appeal, build momentum for future developments, and address current community needs.

Re-Envision the Waterfront as a Unified Premier Open Space proposes a comprehensive redesign to create a cohesive, premier space. This includes adding shaded areas, native landscaping, improved seating, public art, and interactive features. It also recommends replacing the outdated seawall with ecologically friendly elements and improving pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure on Flagler Drive through traffic calming and sidewalk enhancements.

Adopt a Waterfront Stewardship Model calls for a dedicated management framework to ensure the waterfront’s long-term health and vitality. This model will support ongoing maintenance and development, ensuring sustained community engagement.

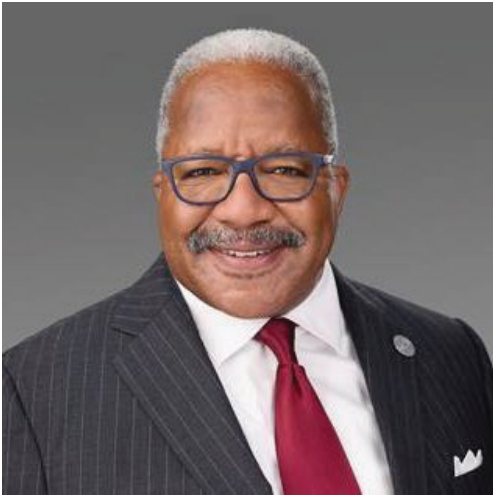


The major themes are then supported by ten “Big Ideas” that provide detailed objectives and implementation steps. This report provides a thorough overview of the community’s vision, guiding principles, exploratory concepts, and strategic recommendations. It reflects the city’s commitment to long-term stewardship and thoughtful place-making, aligning with Mayor Keith A. James’ vision for an inclusive and opportunityrich community.

VISION OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Keith A. James’ vision for West Palm Beach centers on transforming the city into a place of opportunity and inclusivity for all residents. “Your Waterfront. Your Way.” is a testament to this vision, emphasizing the importance of collaborative community engagement in shaping the future of the downtown waterfront. The initiative sought to embody the principles of long-term stewardship and thoughtful place-making, ensuring that public spaces along the waterfront reflect the collective aspirations of the community.

Under Mayor James’ leadership, the engagement process aimed to foster a vibrant and resilient waterfront by incorporating diverse perspectives and feedback. The ultimate objective was to create a downtown waterfront that not only meets the current needs of residents, businesses, and visitors but also stands as a testament to the city’s commitment to equitable and sustainable development.



"Our West Palm Beach waterfront is a waterfront for all. Through this engagement process, I hope to hear and gather feedback from as many residents, businesses, and visitors as possible from all four corners of the City to develop a shared community vision for the West Palm Beach waterfront."

- Mayor Keith A. James

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Across all our efforts – from design, to programming, to access, to stewardship, to policy – this planning process revealed a clear community vision for a West Palm Beach Downtown, establishing these Guiding Principles for this report, and to shape decision making for the future of the waterfront.

Vision for a Waterfront that is:



Vibrant and Inclusive, A Waterfront for All

- The design and programming of the waterfront should be inclusive and attractive to people of all ages, ethnicities, income levels, and physical abilities.
- The waterfront should include offerings that both local residents and global visitors can enjoy.



Accessible and connected to other areas of the City

- Improve access to the Waterfront through safe, affordable connections and transportation solutions by both land and water.



Created collaboratively between the City, community and diverse partners and stakeholders

- Planning and design efforts at the waterfront should be transparent and involve pro-active community engagement.
- The Waterfront should become a platform for partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders, local businesses, community groups and event producers large and small.



Balances new amenities with the Waterfront’s distinctive character and connection to nature

- The waterfront should balance daily activities with programmed events large and small.
- Ensure the unique identity of the waterfront is highlighted.



Environmentally sustainable and resilient

- The Waterfront is a cherished asset that should be enjoyed for generations to come.
- Programming and design efforts should be undertaken with the highest standards of environmental sustainability.
- Should plan for the long term future and resilience of the waterfront, including responding to the impacts of climate change.
- The design and programming of the waterfront should invite people to enjoy natural elements and provide areas of respite.



Adaptable and set-up for long term success through appropriate planning and investment

- Invest in enhancing existing successful features and implementing quality improvements.
- Support the long term health of the Waterfront through long term stewardship and maintenance planning and designation of appropriate resources.
- Emphasize improvements that ensure a financially secure waterfront and foster equitable opportunities for job growth, revenue generation, and the provision of public amenities.



CHAPTER 2

OVERVIEW

This chapter offers a comprehensive overview of the project area, including the goals, background, and key terms relevant to the report. It reviews previous plans and development history, as well as current demographics and economic conditions of the Downtown West Palm Beach Waterfront.

- SECTION 1 Project Context + Background
- SECTION 2 Timeline of Waterfront Planning
- SECTION 3 Site Overview and Key Locations
- SECTION 4 Demographics of the City and Project Area/Waterfront

SECTION 1

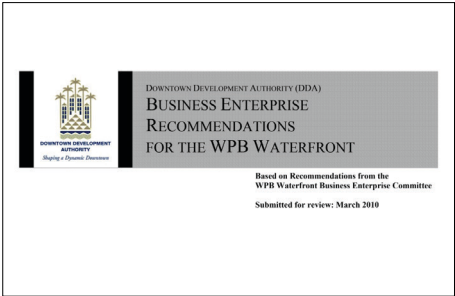
PROJECT CONTEXT + BACKGROUND

This document serves as a blueprint for the future of the West Palm Beach Waterfront. It explores opportunities and challenges regarding zoning, placemaking, transportation, urban planning, and economic development in Downtown West Palm Beach in an effort to guide stakeholders, city officials, and community members towards a shared vision of a waterfront that is both functional and inspirational.

WHY NOW?

As the city’s downtown continues to evolve, it is imperative to carefully consider and implement enhancements to the waterfront, ensuring that it becomes a thriving hub that not only reflects the community’s identity but also serves as a catalyst for economic development, cultural expression, and social connectivity.

This document draws from a comprehensive review of past and present city planning, stakeholder consultations, foot traffic and economic analysis, and extensive community feedback. By learning from previous efforts and highlighting the communities desires and goals, it aims to foster meaningful ongoing community engagement and provide both immediate actions and long-term strategies to maintain West Palm Beach’s distinct character and natural connections while advancing infrastructure for a resilient future.



KEY PLANS AND STUDIES

DDA Business Enterprise Recommendations for the WPB Waterfront
Downtown Development Authority (2010)

Developed by a committee of Downtown Waterfront Stakeholders, this plan outlines best practices, industry insights, and recommendations for revenue sources, business enterprise, comprehensive management structure and additional opportunities along the waterfront.

West Palm Beach Downtown Mobility Plan
Alta (2018)

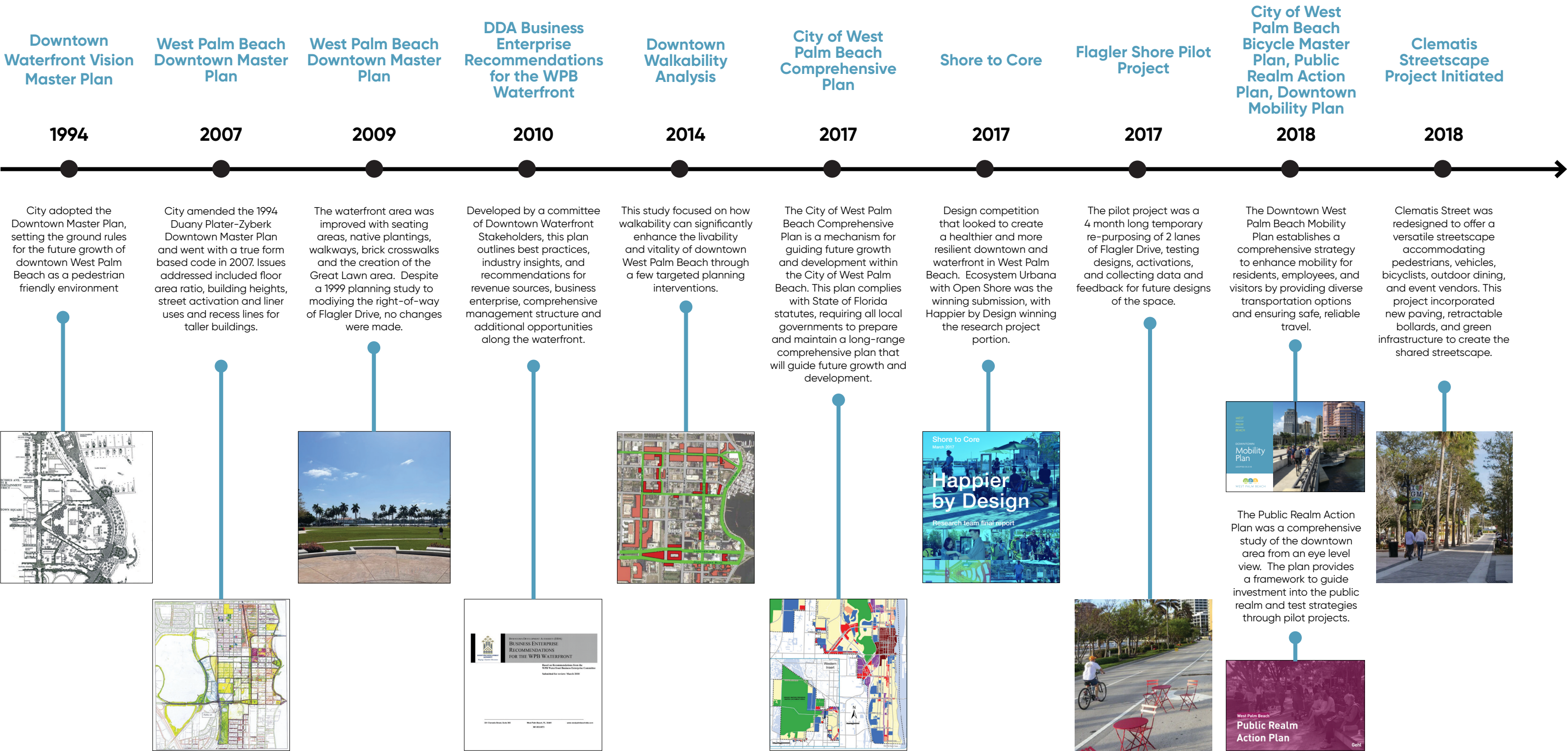
The Downtown West Palm Beach Mobility Plan establishes a comprehensive strategy to enhance mobility for residents, employees, and visitors by providing diverse transportation options and ensuring safe, reliable travel. Key objectives include supporting growth, expanding predictable and reliable travel choices for all modes, and creating safe streets for all.

West Palm Beach Public Realm Action Plan
Gehl (2018)

The Public Realm Action Plan was a comprehensive study of the downtown area from an eye level view. The plan provided a framework to guide investment into the public realm and test strategies through pilot projects.

CITED PLANS AND STUDIES				
URBAN PLANNING	• Waterfront Vision Conceptual Plan (1994)	• West Palm Beach Waterfront Park Preliminary Study, Uhlr Consulting. (2011)	TRANSPORTATION	• Downtown Mobility Plan, Alta (2018)
ZONING	• Downtown Master Plan (2022)	• City of West Palm Beach Comprehensive Plan (2017)	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	• Business Enterprise Recommendations for the West Palm Beach Waterfront. 2010.
PLACEMAKING	• Waterfront Schedule of Events (2023)	• Downtown WPB On-Site Visitors Survey (2022)	PLACEMAKING	• Waterfront Schedule of Events (2023)
RESILIENCY	• Sea Wall Pilot Program	• Vulnerability Assessment	RESILIENCY	• Stormwater Master Plan Update

SECTION 2
TIMELINE OF WATERFRONT PLANNING





SECTION 3

SITE OVERVIEW AND KEY LOCATIONS

Throughout this report, various areas of the Downtown West Palm Beach Waterfront are discussed. To ensure clarity and avoid confusion, especially since terms and location names can vary in from person to person or in differing context, the following locations are as defined below.

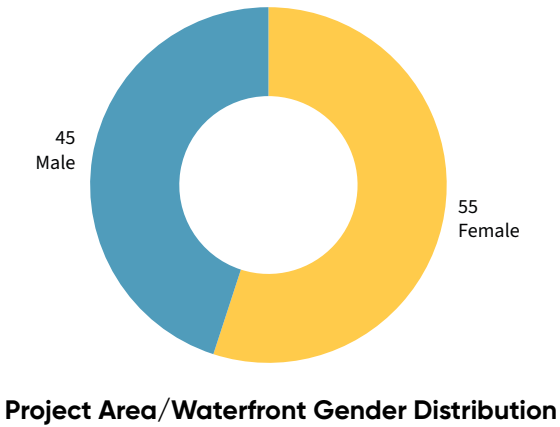
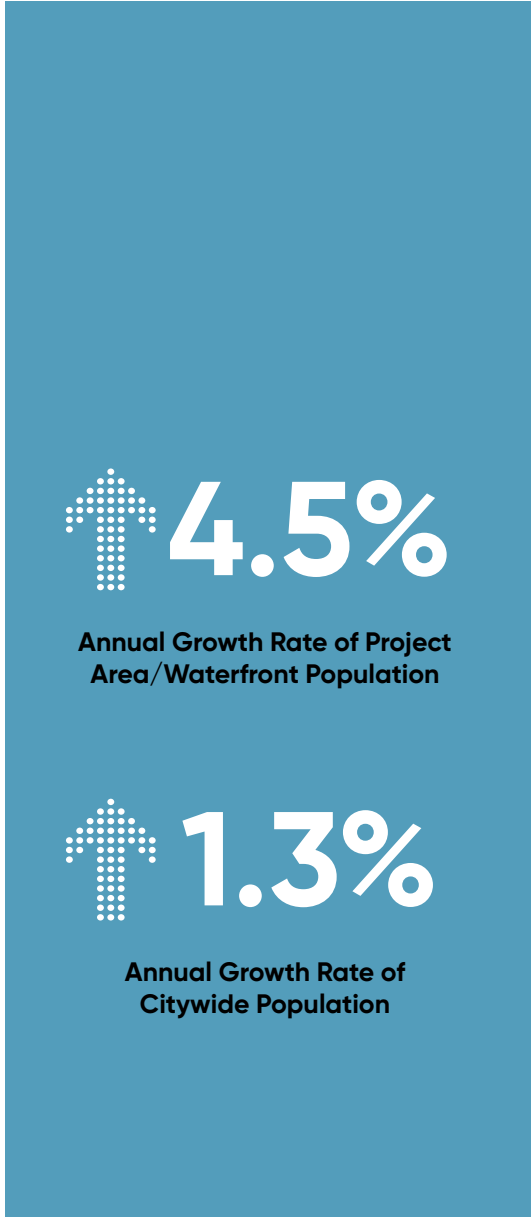
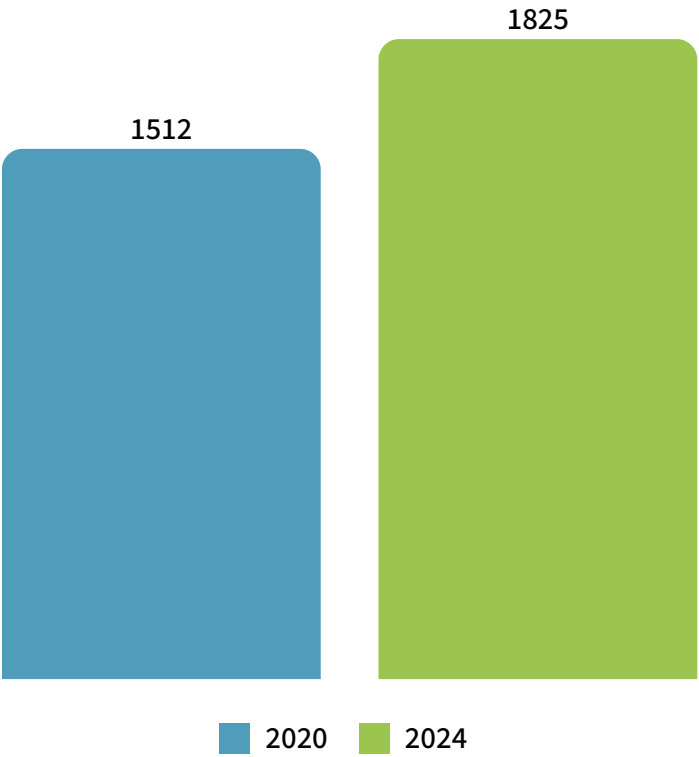
- 1 Project Area / The Waterfront:** The project area has been defined as the section of Downtown West Palm Beach bounded by the Flagler Memorial Bridge / Quadric Boulevard to the North, the Royal Park Bridge to the South, Olive Ave to the West, and the Intracoastal Waterway to the East.
- 2 Greenspaces:** This encompasses all the publicly owned and operated parkspaces within the project area. Starting from the north, this includes Jose Marti Park, the Great Lawn, Meyer Amphitheater, Post Park, and Trinity Park.
- 3 Signature Public Spaces:** The public areas identified as key programmatic zones. These may vary dependent on context, however typically will include the sections of North and South Clematis located east of Narcissus Avenue, Nancy M. Graham Centennial Square, the Clematis Splash Pad, the Great Lawn, and Meyer Amphitheater.
- 4 Flagler Drive:** The 1 mile section of North and South Flagler Drive running from Flagler Memorial Bridge / Quadric Boulevard to the Royal Park Bridge.
- 5 Waterfront Promenade:** The pedestrian walkway and associated greenspaces located between Flagler Drive and the Seawall.
- 6 Seawall:** The concrete protective structure along the waterfront promenade that stabilizes the shoreline, preventing erosion and protecting the city's waterfront from storm surges and flooding
- 7 Public Docks:** The docks are limited to the public docks at Clematis Street and Evernia Street, The publicly owned docks leased by the Palm Harbor Marina are not a part of the project scope.
- 8 Lake Worth Lagoon:** The protected waterway that separates West Palm Beach and Palm Beach.
- 9 Waterfront Edge:** Portion of the Lake Worth Lagoon directly along the seawall.
- 10 South Cove Islands:** The three man made islands to the south of the project area connected to the waterfront promenade by the boardwalk.

SECTION 4
GROWTH AND TRENDS SUMMARY

This section provides a detailed analysis of the demographic characteristics of the project area/waterfront and the City of West Palm Beach, offering a focused look at population growth, household dynamics, housing units, age distribution, income levels, and racial and ethnic composition. All data in this section was compiled utilizing Esri estimates of US Census data for 2024.

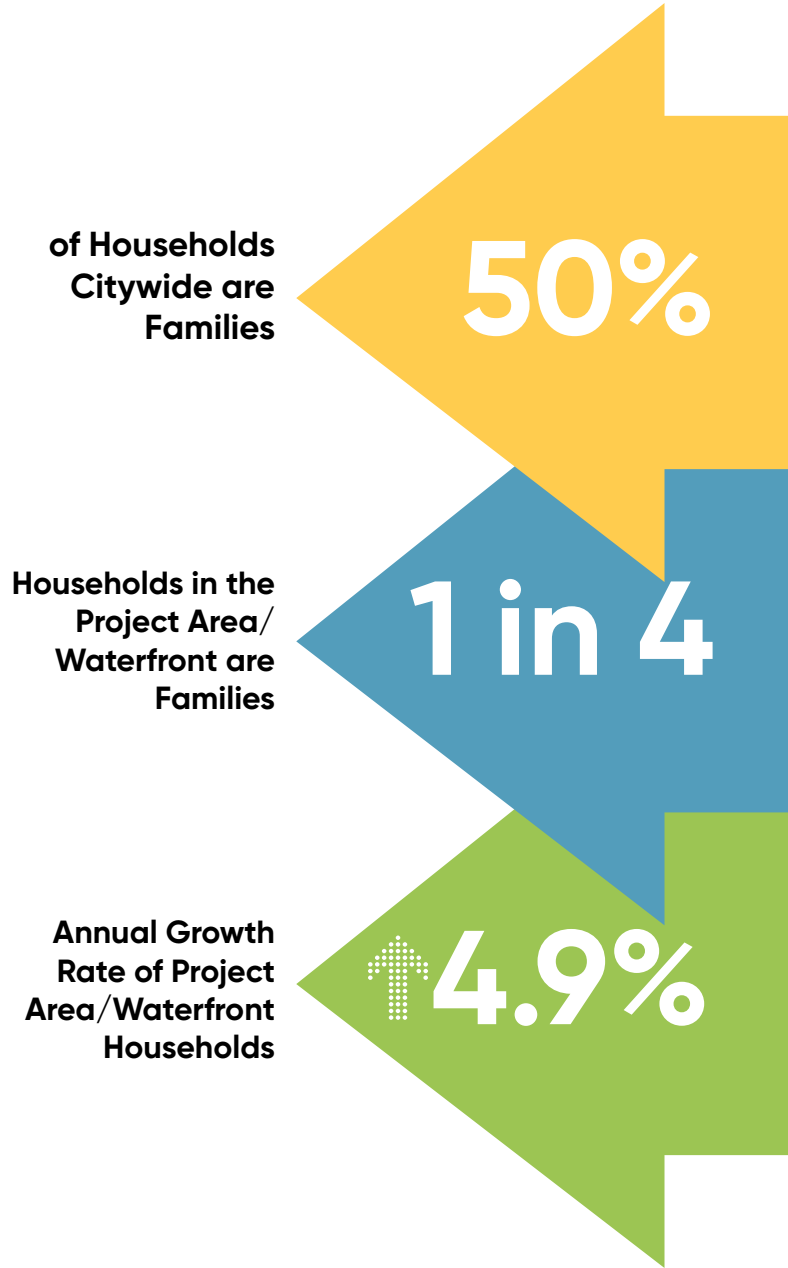
POPULATION

The estimated 2024 population of the project area/waterfront is 1,825, up from 1,512 in 2020, reflecting an annual growth rate of 4.5%. The gender distribution is 45% male and 55% female. In contrast, The City of West Palm Beach overall, with an estimated 2024 population of 123,403, saw an annual growth rate of 1.3%.



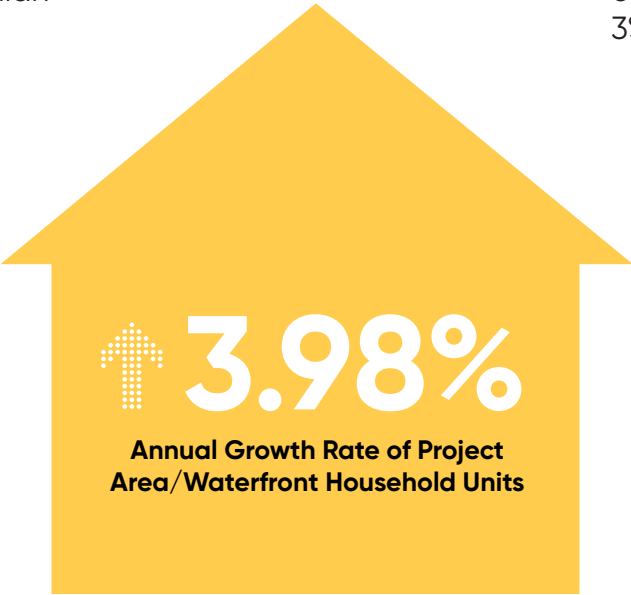
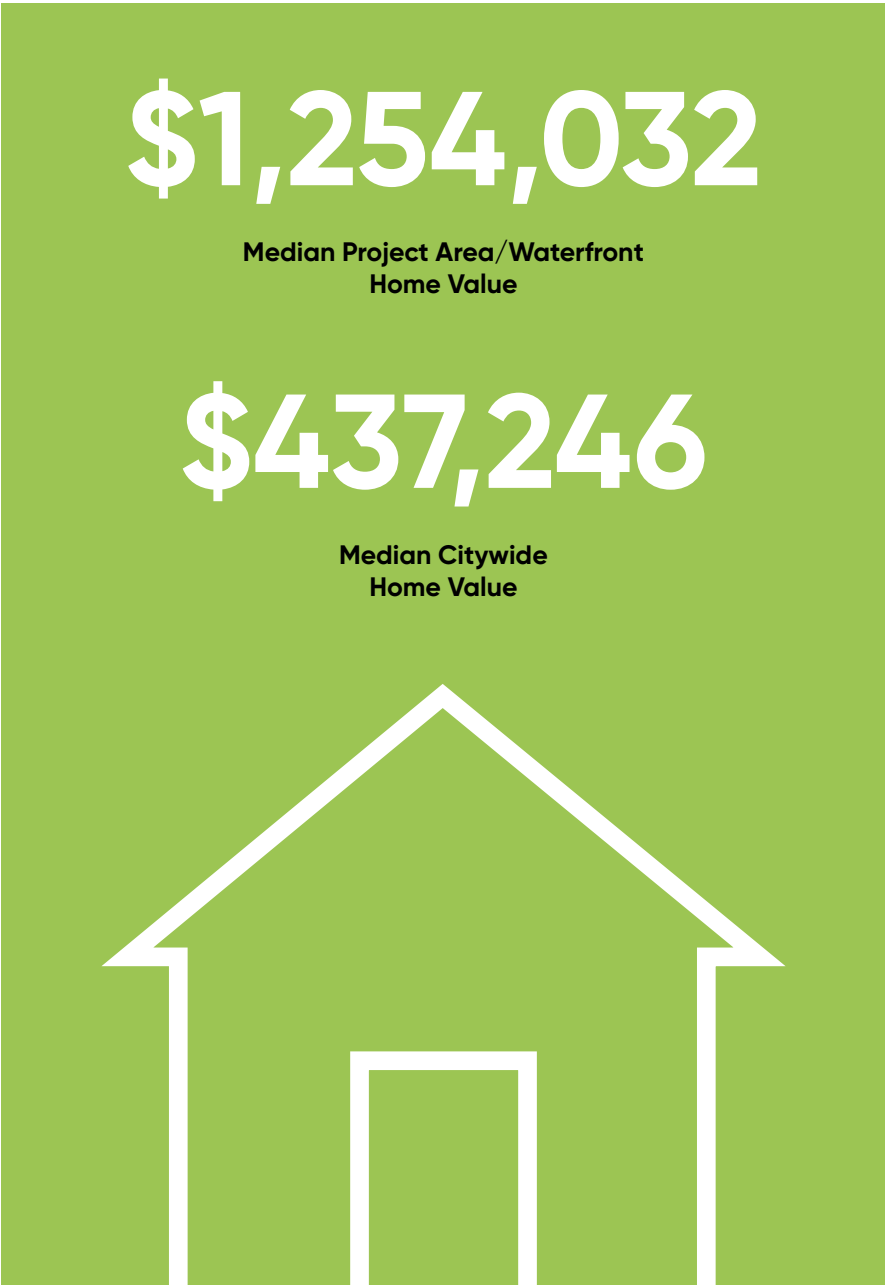
HOUSEHOLDS

The number of households in the project area/waterfront increased from 1,014 in 2020 to 1,240 in 2024, with an annual growth rate of 4.9%. The average household size is 1.37, no change from the figure for 2020. There are approximately 337 families living in the area, representing only about 1 in 4 households. The City of West Palm Beach overall has a larger average household size of 2.25 with about 50% of all households being families.

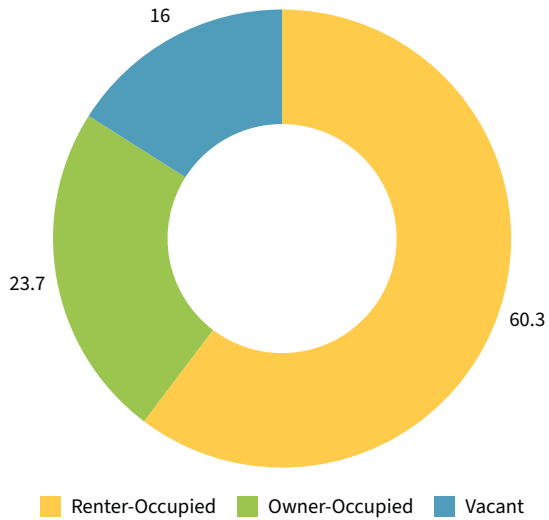


HOUSING UNITS

Out of 1,477 housing units in the project area/waterfront, 23.7% are owner-occupied, 60.3% are renteroccupied, and 16.0% are vacant. The annual growth rate of housing units since 2020 is 3.98%. The median home value is \$1,254,032, significantly higher than the median home value of \$437,246 in the City of West Palm Beach overall.

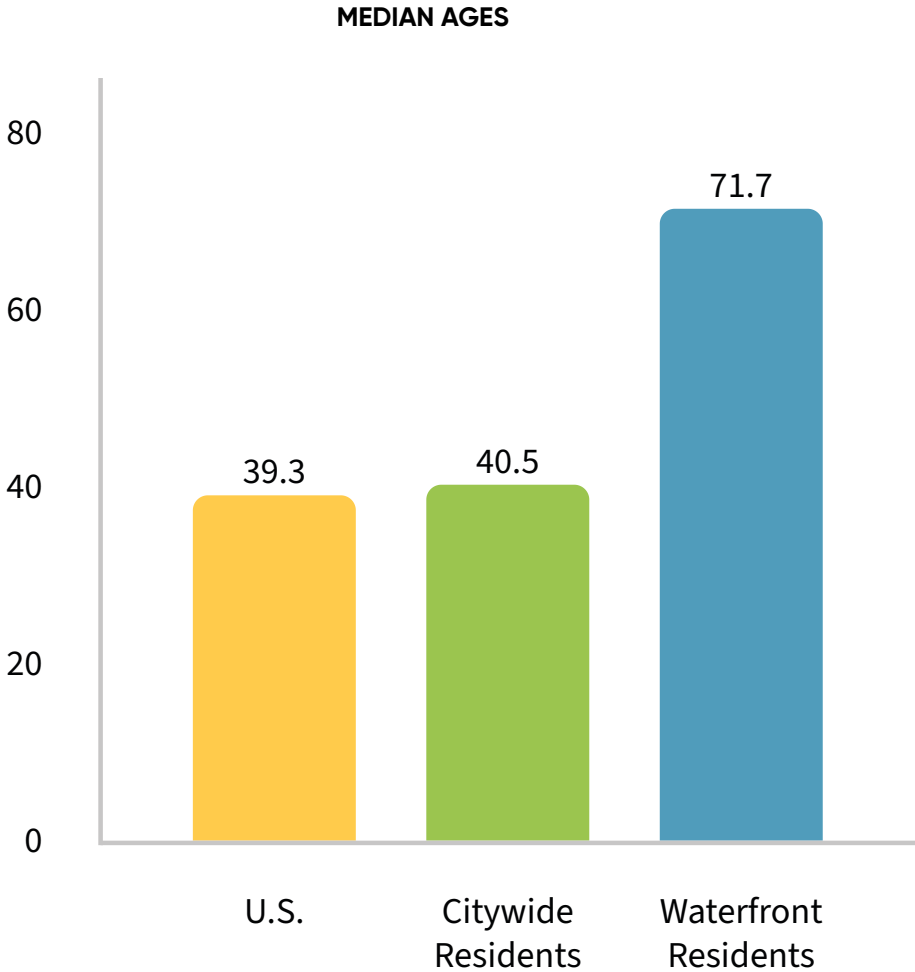


Project Area/Waterfront Housing Unit Occupancy



AGE

The median age of project area/waterfront residents is 71.7, much higher than the median age of 40.5 in the City of West Palm Beach overall and the U.S. median age of 39.3. Those aged 65 and older constitutes 64% of the population in the project area/waterfront, compared to 21% in the City of West Palm Beach overall. Children under 18 make up only 3% of the population project area/waterfront, compared to 20% in the City overall.



INCOME & NET WORTH

The median household income in the project area/waterfront is \$62,817, lower than the \$68,395 in the City of West Palm Beach overall and \$79,068 for U.S. households. However, there is higher income inequality in the project area/waterfront area, with a greater proportion of residents having household incomes at the extremes. The median household net worth in the project area/waterfront is \$84,548, lower than the \$101,805 in the City of West Palm Beach overall and \$225,545 for U.S. households.

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$62,817

Project Area/Waterfront



\$68,395

Citywide



\$79,068

U.S.



MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD NET WORTH

\$84,548

Project Area/Waterfront

\$101,805

Citywide

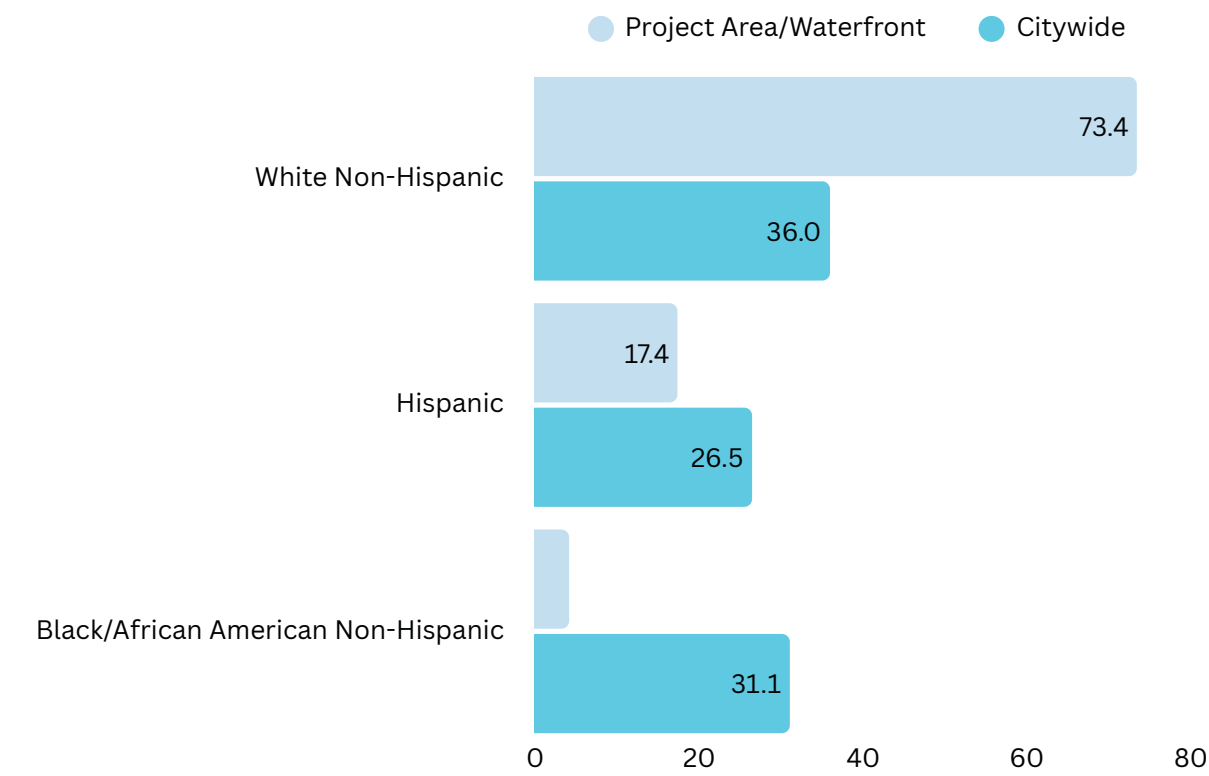
\$225,545

U.S.



RACE AND ETHNICITY

The project area/waterfront is predominantly White Non-Hispanic (73.4%), with notable Hispanic (17.4%), and smaller Black/African American Non-Hispanic (4.2%) populations. The City of West Palm Beach overall is more racially and ethnically diverse, with significant Hispanic (26.5%) and Black/African American Non-Hispanic (31.1%) populations, and a lower percentage of White Non-Hispanic residents (36.0%).



INSIGHTS

The demographic data highlights significant differences between project area/waterfront and the City of West Palm Beach overall. The project area/waterfront has a higher median age, a predominantly White population, and a higher median home value. In contrast, the City of West Palm Beach overall is more racially and ethnically diverse, with a younger population, higher proportion of families, and a broader range of income levels.





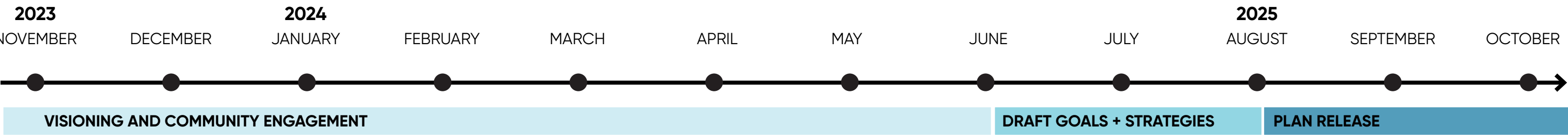
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY + DATA



The “Your Waterfront. Your Way.” initiative aimed to collaborate with residents, businesses, local organizations, and visitors to establish a shared vision for the downtown waterfront. The project team employed an extensive public input process, which included a public survey, public meetings, walking tours, and stakeholder interviews. In addition, the project team analyzed foot traffic and demographic data using census information and location intelligence software. By examining both survey data and foot traffic trends, this balanced approach allowed for a nuanced perspective, merging the detailed preferences of residents with the actual behaviors of all visitors, thereby offering a complete picture of the dynamics of the downtown waterfront.

- SECTION 1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- SECTION 2 VISITOR BEHAVIOR, FOOT TRAFFIC, AND ECONOMIC INSIGHTS
- SECTION 3 UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

SECTION 1
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



INTERNAL + EXTERNAL
STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS
NOVEMBER 2023 – APRIL 2024

The project team met with West Palm Beach City departments, major waterfront stakeholders and received letters from 27 waterfront business owners and organizations to share their vision for the future of the waterfront.

ECONOMIC DATA
FEASIBILITY STUDY
NOVEMBER 2023– JUNE 2024

A comprehensive technical feasibility analysis was performed, reviewing traffic data, existing studies, projections for future demand for mobility, and analyzing economic trends.

DIGITAL SURVEY + PUBLIC
OUTREACH
APRIL – MAY 2024

The Your Waterfront, Your Way. digital survey was available from March 4th to April 30th. It was highly promoted through various in-person and digital outreach campaigns.

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS+
WALKING TOURS
APRIL 2024

The community was invited to participate in 3 public visioning workshops in Cacti Park of the Palm Beaches, South Olive Tennis and Mandel Public Library, along with 2 walking tours of the waterfront.

DATA ANALYSIS + DRAFT
REPORT
JUNE 2024 – AUGUST 2025

Project team review, synthesis of feedback, and analysis of data received throughout the engagement phase. Development and release of the plan draft.

CITY REVIEW AND PLAN
RELEASE
AUGUST 2025

Collaboration with city agencies to review plan and further develop and strategic actions and initiatives. Final plan release.



Various images from the engagement exercises and touch-points during the community engagement period.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The Your Waterfront. Your Way. initiative used a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to understand how people experience the waterfront—and what they want it to become.

The team reviewed surveys, public meeting feedback, walkabouts, and written input. Combining this with data on foot traffic, economics, and demographics helped us look at the full picture: how the space is used, how people feel about it, and what needs to change.



Community
Survey



Public
Meetings



Walkabouts



Foot Traffic
Data



Stakeholder
Interviews



Emails and
Memos



Economic
Data Analysis



Internal Staff
Meeting



Public meeting with WPB residents

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND METHODOLOGY

The “Your Waterfront. Your Way” initiative employed a wide range of engagement strategies to encourage public participation in shaping the downtown waterfront.

ON-LINE SURVEY

A digital survey was a key component of the engagement effort, available in English, Spanish, and Creole from March 4 to April 30, 2024. The survey aimed to capture community input on the waterfront’s vision and design. Outreach included participation at various major waterfront events, such as the Green Market and the Downtown West Palm Beach Art Show, where team members promoted the survey and engaged with attendees.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Three public meetings were hosted at community venues, including CACTI Park, South Olive Tennis, and the Mandel Public Library. Each session began with a presentation outlining project goals and included interactive workshops. Participants engaged in discussions, voted on visual preference boards, and posed questions to the project team. These meetings were recorded and made accessible on YouTube to reach a broader audience.

WALKABOUTS

Two guided walkabouts allowed stakeholders and downtown community members to explore the waterfront project area in person, starting at Banyan Street and moving southward. Participants had the opportunity to observe the space firsthand, explore activation concepts, and provide immediate feedback on elements they liked and areas for improvement.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The project team conducted interviews with various stakeholder groups, gathering insights from individuals representing multiple organizations and city departments. These discussions focused on critical topics such as public space stewardship, programming opportunities, challenges related to public art, and development considerations. A presentation was also made to the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches, fostering additional dialogue and collaboration.

1,745

persons engaged with
at in-person events

698

Likes on social media

628

flyers distributed

5

published articles

3

public meetings



Public engagement with WPB residents

STAKEHOLDER MEMOS

To accommodate those unable to attend the public meetings, stakeholders were encouraged to submit feedback via email. This approach resulted in valuable insights and recommendations from a diverse range of community members, enriching the planning process.

DIGITAL OUTREACH EFFORTS

The initiative leveraged multiple digital platforms to maximize engagement. Social media channels—including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn—were actively used to promote the survey and public meetings. Targeted posts directed followers to the project’s dedicated landing page, enhancing visibility and encouraging participation. Informational videos produced by WPB-TV were shared across various platforms, providing an accessible overview of the project and its goals. Additionally, targeted emails were sent to local organizations, urging them to disseminate information within their networks to reach a wider audience.

DOOR-TO-DOOR OUTREACH

To ensure inclusivity, door-to-door outreach was conducted in neighborhoods identified as having low digital literacy due to language barriers or limited access to technology. Team members visited these communities to provide direct assistance in accessing and completing the survey. This hands-on approach fostered trust and encouraged participation among residents who may have otherwise felt excluded from the process.

Through these multifaceted engagement efforts, the initiative aimed to create an inclusive environment where community members felt empowered to contribute their visions for the downtown waterfront.

1,317

residents were visited
in door-to-door

1,512

unique webpage
visits

17

days of outreach
efforts at different
major waterfront events

50k+

emails sent



WEST PALM BEACH



SURVEY RESPONSES

The Your Waterfront. Your Way. survey reveals a community deeply engaged with this vital urban asset, characterized by frequent local visitation and a strong desire for enhancement. While a majority of respondents (54.70%) are satisfied with the current state of the waterfront, there's a significant portion (45.30%) seeking improvements. The waterfront primarily serves as a destination for dining, community events like the Green Market, and recreational activities. Key areas identified for improvement include expanding waterfront-related activities, enhancing basic amenities such as shade and seating, addressing safety concerns including pedestrian crossings and homelessness, and maintaining cleanliness.

The survey highlights a community desire to balance development with preservation, improve comfort and safety, and enhance the waterfront's role as a central hub for local activities and events.



1,605
respondents
total survey

65.2%
live within the city of
West Palm Beach

54.8%
survey respondents
from 33401 zip code

MIXED SATISFACTION

51.6%
love the
waterfront as is

48.4%
believe improvements
are needed

Residents completed surveys at events

PUBLIC MEETING AND WALKABOUTS

The Your Waterfront. Your Way. project team conducted two walkabouts and three public meetings to gather community input and assess the area firsthand. The public meetings were well-attended, with residents expressing diverse opinions and assumptions about the waterfront and marina. The project team used these meetings to inform residents, address misconceptions, and gather feedback.

At the Mandel Library, a preferential survey allowed attendees to choose their preferred activations and activities for the waterfront, providing quantifiable data on community desires. Both the walkabouts and meetings highlighted the strong community interest in the waterfront’s future and the need for balanced, inclusive development that addresses various stakeholder needs.

The walkabouts, starting at the Chamber of Commerce, revealed challenges such as difficult street crossings, lack of shade, and unclear public access to certain areas. Participants experienced issues with connectivity, comfort, and safety while exploring the route to Meyer Amphitheatre.



3
public meetings

169
attendees

477
YouTube views

2
walkabouts

24
attendees



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS AND MEMOS

The Your Waterfront. Your Way. project team conducted dozens of stakeholder meetings and interviews with external organizations and internal city departments. These interviews aimed to gather insights on specific areas of expertise: stewardship structure for public spaces, programming and activation opportunities and challenges, art in public spaces, and development. Individuals who were unable to attend the planning discussions, or wished to provide additional feedback from the public events, were encouraged to share their insights via email.

Stakeholders presented diverse perspectives, ranging from maintaining the status quo to advocating for significant redevelopment. Opinions varied among long-term residents, new residents, businesses, and tourism entities. Improved public spaces were seen as essential for enhancing quality of life, and economic development goals aligned with the emphasis on attracting visitors and businesses.

Key tensions emerged between preserving the waterfront and activating it, addressing local needs versus catering to tourists, and balancing large events with daily usability. Areas for further consideration include gathering more input from lower-income and minority residents and focusing more on resilience and climate change adaptation.

Despite differences in vision, there was clear consensus on the importance of maintenance and cleanliness, the need for a safe and welcoming environment, and a shared recognition of the waterfront’s significance to the city’s identity and economy. While broad agreement exists regarding the waterfront’s value and the need for improvements, perspectives differ on the extent and nature of those changes.



24+
stakeholder
meetings

16+
organizations and
businesses

27+
memos or emails
received

WEST PALM BEACH CITY DEPARTMENTS

- Mayors Office
- City Administration
- Police Department
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- Community Events
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- Connect West Palm Beach
- Marine Industries Association of Palm
- Beach County
- Marine Industries
- Hilton West Palm Beach
- Related Ross
- Rose Trolley
- ER Bradley’s
- Informa
- Downtown residents
- Downtown merchants

SECTION 2

VISITOR BEHAVIOR, FOOT TRAFFIC, AND ECONOMIC INSIGHTS

To understand how the project area/waterfront is used, the City analyzed mobile location data from Placer.ai, which tracks anonymized visits through location-enabled apps. A ‘visit’ is defined as a person staying in the area for more than two minutes. This dataset spans from October 2017 to October 2024, providing insights into long-term trends across seasons, timeframes, and events

To enrich the data, demographic overlays from Esri and Experian were included, capturing details on age, income, race, and consumer lifestyles. This integrated approach reveals not only how many people visit—but who they are, where they’re from, and how they engage with the space. Together, these insights inform more strategic and inclusive planning.

VISITOR VOLUME SNAPSHOT

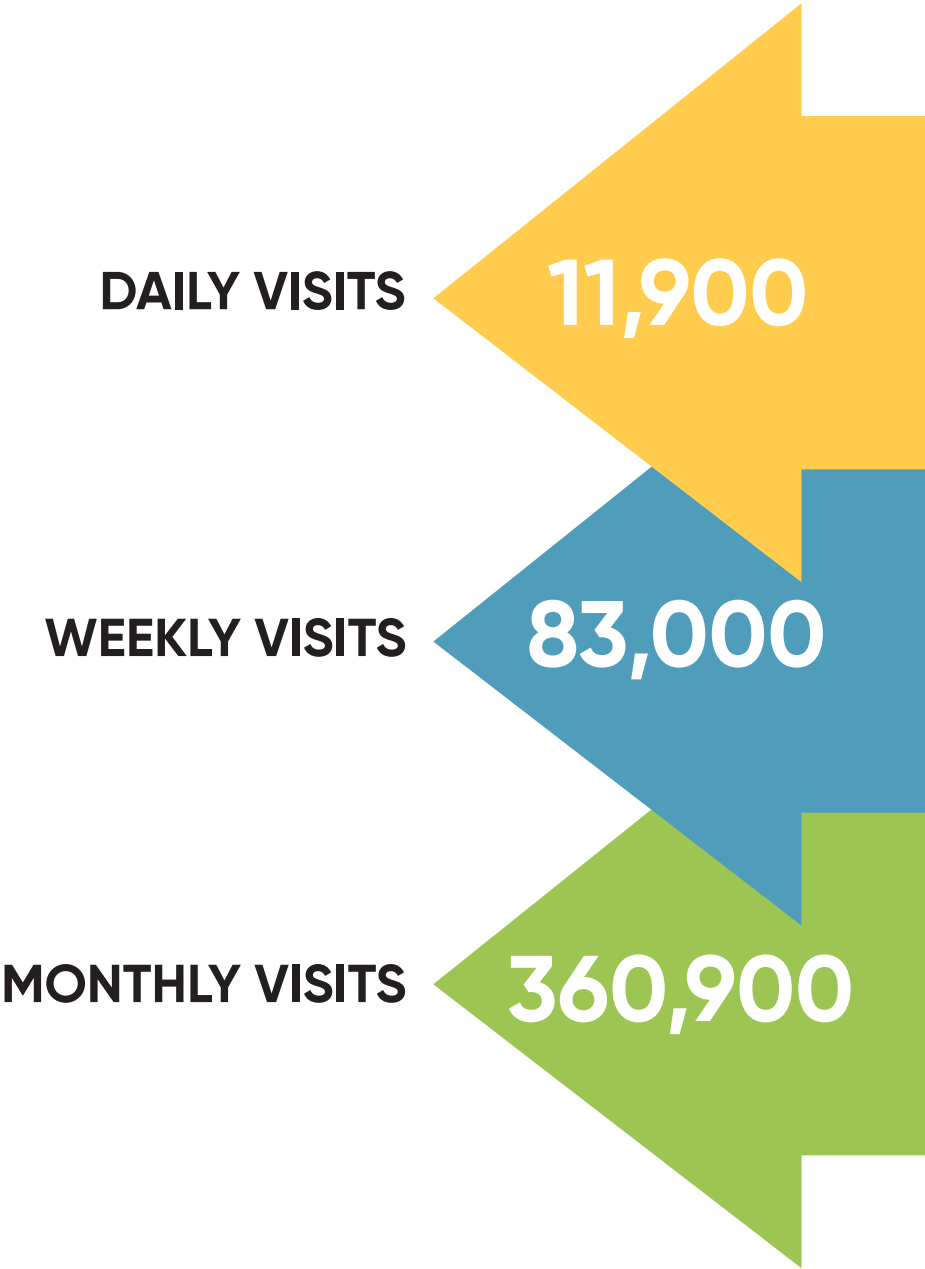
The project area/waterfront averages approximately 11,900 daily visits, 83,000 weekly visits, and 360,900 monthly visits. This steady volume highlights its importance not only as a local amenity but as a high-traffic destination within the region.

When isolating just non-resident visitors—those who travel from outside the immediate area—the numbers remain substantial: 10,700 daily, 74,000 weekly, and 325,700 monthly. This reinforces the project area/waterfront’s role as a draw for regional day-

trippers, seasonal visitors, and tourists who view it as a core part of their downtown experience.

Resident use, though a smaller share of the total, is still significant. The data reflects an average of 8,100 weekly and 35,300 monthly visits by locals. While there is insufficient data to determine daily visit patterns for residents specifically, the available figures suggest a reliable and routine presence—most likely tied to everyday activities like walking, relaxing, or meeting friends after work.

Insight: The sustained foot traffic—especially from non-residents—shows that the project area/waterfront is more than a neighborhood amenity. It’s a destination that holds regional appeal and draws steady interest throughout the week. At the same time, the recurring presence of local residents points to its value as part of daily life. These patterns highlight the waterfront’s unique ability to function both as a familiar, everyday space and as a draw for those seeking a memorable visit.



KEY DEFINITIONS

Visitors: The total number of distinct individuals who visited the project area/waterfront.

Visits: The total count of entry events in the project area/waterfront, regardless of the individual entering. One person can contribute multiple “visits” but only count as a single “visitor”.

Resident Visitors: Individuals who live in the project area/waterfront and also visit the project area/waterfront.

Non-resident Visitors: Individuals who do not live in the project area/waterfront that visit the project area/waterfront. This contains both city visitors and distant visitors.

City Visitors: Residents of the City of West Palm Beach that visit the project area/waterfront (travel between 1 and 10 miles).

Distant Visitors: Visitors from outside of city limits that visit the project area/waterfront (travel greater than 10 miles).

VISITOR DEMOGRAPHIC

Data reveals that visitors to the project area/waterfront are typically younger, more diverse, and more affluent than nearby residents. The median visitor age is 45, compared to 71.7 for residents. While 73.4% of residents identify as White, only 53.9% of visitors do. Meanwhile, visitors are more likely to identify as Black (15.9%) or Hispanic/Latino (23%). Visitors also report higher incomes, with a median of \$76,000—\$13,183 more than the resident median.

Notably, only 1 in 6 visitor households earn less than \$25,000 annually, compared to nearly 1 in 3 resident households. Approximately 40% of both groups earn over \$100,000, signaling a solid presence of high-income individuals.

Insight: Visitors to the waterfront tend to be younger, more diverse, and higher-earning than the residential population. Their motivations often go beyond leisure—they seek vibrant cultural, retail, and recreational experiences that make the waterfront feel like more than just a scenic backdrop.

VISITOR ORIGINS

Roughly 77% of visitors travel more than 10 miles to reach the project area/waterfront, and nearly one-third come from over 250 miles away. While only 1.4% live within a one-mile radius, the largest share of visits—53.9%—originates from within a 50-mile range, indicating the waterfront’s role as a strong regional destination.



VISITOR AND RESIDENT RACE/ETHNICITY

Race/Ethnicity	Visitor %	Resident %	Difference
White	53.9%	73.4%	-19.5%
Black	15.9%	4.2%	+11.7%
Hispanic or Latino	23.0%	17.4%	+5.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	<0.5%	<0.5%	N/A
Asian	3.5%	2.8%	+0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	<0.5%	<0.5%	N/A
Other	0.6%	0.1%	+0.5%
Two or more races	2.9%	2.1%	+0.9%

Source: 2024 Esri estimates of U.S. Census Bureau data; Placer.AI Mobile device location data (Oct 1, 2017 – Oct 1, 2024)

Distance	Visitors	Visitor %
0 - 1 mi	20,234	1.40%
1 - 10 mi	302,612	21.50%
10 - 50 mi	436,619	31.00%
50 - 100 mi	95,260	6.80%
100 - 250 mi	87,523	6.20%
250+ mi	464,765	33.00%

Source: Placer.AI Mobile device location data (Oct 1, 2023 – Oct 1, 2024)

Statewide patterns show that Florida continues to drive most visits (67.8%), though this share has declined in recent years as out-of-state travel increases. Notable trends include:

- **New York, NY** – 1.4% of all visitors
- **Brooklyn, NY; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, IL; Atlanta, GA** – each approximately 0.4%
- **Charlotte, NC** – gained over 1,500 new annual visitors since 2019

Within Florida:

- **West Palm Beach** still accounts for the largest single-city share (15.5%), though this has dropped by 14% over five years
- **Miami’s share** has nearly doubled, now making up 3.2% of all visitors
- **Lake Worth, Boynton Beach, and Jupiter** remain consistent contributors

Insight: Visitor origin data reveals a widening geographic footprint. While local users remain foundational, increasing numbers of guests are arriving from distant cities across the state and country. This trend affirms the project area/waterfront’s emergence as a recognized destination—not just a local asset.



City	Visitors	% of Visitors
New York, NY	20,130	1.40%
Brooklyn, NY	7,310	0.50%
Washington D.C.	5,575	0.40%
Chicago, IL	5,485	0.40%
Atlanta, GA	5,238	0.40%
Houston, TX	3,633	0.30%
Dallas, TX	3,617	0.30%
Philadelphia, PA	3,246	0.20%
Charlotte, NC	2,881	0.20%
Staten Island, NY	2,384	0.20%

Source: Placer.AI Mobile device location data (Oct 1, 2023 – Oct 1, 2024)

City	Visitors	% of Visitors
West Palm Beach, FL	218,547	15.50%
Lake Worth, FL	62,453	4.40%
Boynton Beach, FL	54,509	3.90%
Jupiter, FL	46,029	3.30%
Miami, FL	45,403	3.20%
Palm Beach Gardens, FL	45,285	3.20%
Boca Raton, FL	42,301	3.00%
Fort Lauderdale, FL	40,768	2.90%
Delray Beach, FL	33,900	2.40%
Pompano Beach, FL	27,840	2.00%

Source: Placer.AI Mobile device location data (Oct 1, 2023 – Oct 1, 2024)

VISITATION TIMING PATTERNS

Visitation patterns follow clear peaks in time and season. Evening hours between 6 PM and 9 PM—especially around 7 PM—are the most active, aligning with leisure, dining, and entertainment schedules. Saturday is the most popular day of the week across all user types.

Seasonally:

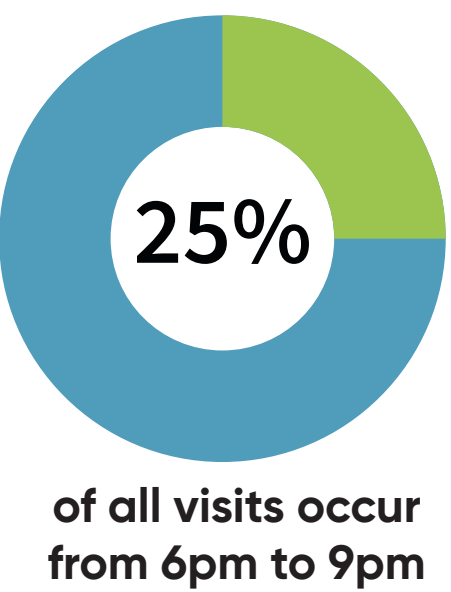
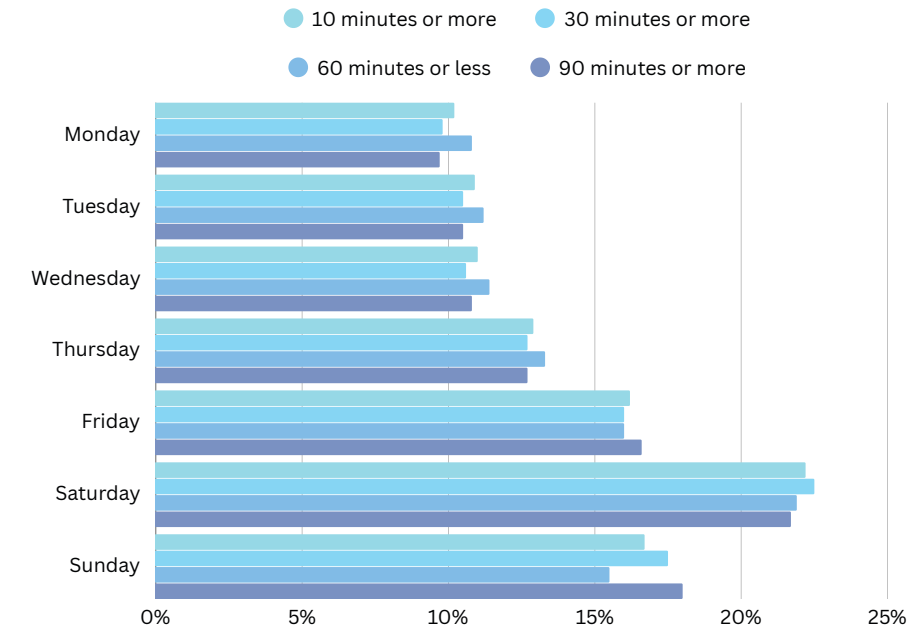
- **Summer** draws the largest share of visits (30.1%)
- Followed by **Winter** (27.4%) and **Spring** (26.5%)
- **Fall** lags behind, capturing just 15.99% of annual visits

Weekly patterns highlight the differences in user behavior:

- City and distant visitors overwhelmingly favor weekend visits
- Residents visit more evenly throughout the week, reflecting the waterfront’s integration into their daily lives

Insight: The project area/waterfront is primarily experienced as a leisure destination. Peak evening and weekend activity—particularly among non-residents—signals that people are carving out intentional time to enjoy the space, especially during warmer months and event-heavy periods.

Visitation Patterns by Duration and Day of Week



Source: Placer.AI Mobile device location data (Oct 1, 2017 – Oct 1, 2024)

IMPACT OF EVENTS ON VISITATION

Signature events play a major role in drawing large crowds to the project area/waterfront. During festivals and cultural activations, foot traffic surges well beyond baseline levels.

Key examples include:

- SunFest: 134,380 visitors (Peak: Saturday, 7–9 PM)
- Palm Beach Boat Show: 121,151 visitors (Peak: Saturday, 1–3 PM)
- HIP Sandi: 678,810 total visits across five weeks (Peak: December 30)

Beyond headline attendance, event-driven visitation creates noticeable secondary effects:

- Holiday weekends and concerts extend visitor dwell time by 20–30%
- Visitors during events are twice as likely to stop at nearby restaurants and retail locations

Insight: Large-scale programming does more than fill the waterfront with people- it creates ripple effects across the surrounding downtown. Spikes in visitation and increased spending activity reinforce the value of events not only as crowd magnets, but as key drivers of economic engagement across the district.



Palm Beach International Boat Show



SunFest 2024 – WPB Magazine



HIP Sandi – WPB



4th on Flagler – WPB

FREQUENCY OF VISITS AND RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

The data reveals important distinctions in how residents, city visitors, and distant visitors engage with the project area/waterfront—patterns that have clear implications for design, programming, and economic understanding.

- Residents are the most consistent users, visiting an average of 151 times per year—nearly three times per week—and staying for an average of 197 minutes per visit. These visits are typically integrated into daily routines, such as after-work strolls, fitness, or informal social gatherings. Saturday still leads in volume, with 16% of total visits, and 31% of all visits occur over the weekend. Residents often start and end their visits from home (54%), and many combine their waterfront stops with work-related travel either before or after their day.
- City visitors—those who live within 1–10 miles—visit less frequently, averaging 29 trips per year and staying about 77 minutes per visit. Their patterns show high participation in weekend events, with per-visit spending often higher than that of residents, particularly in food, wellness, and local retail.
- Distant visitors—who travel more than 10 miles—visit the least (10 visits/year) but tend to stay longer (111 minutes on average) and spend the most. They also show a strong repeat visitation rate, suggesting the waterfront is not just a one-time experience but a valuable stop within broader travel itineraries.

Insight: These patterns confirm that locals treat the waterfront as part of their regular rhythm, while distant guests treat it as a destination. Residents drive frequency and familiarity; distant visitors drive spending. Both play essential but distinct roles in the space’s vibrancy.

VISITOR ACTIVITIES BEFORE AND AFTER THEIR VISIT

Visitors often link their trip to the waterfront with other leisure, dining, and retail activities—making it a vital anchor in the larger downtown ecosystem.

According to the data, common post-visit destinations include home (23.7%), followed by leisure (13.5%), and dining (5.1%). For distant visitors, hotels make up a much larger share of post-visit activity (8.1%), indicating that their trips are often part of longer stays.

Key downtown destinations—such as CityPlace, Clematis Street, and Quadrille Boulevard—serve as frequent pre- and post-visit stops. These patterns highlight

a multi-purpose use of the waterfront, especially among tourists, who link the visit with multiple stops.

Insight: The waterfront isn’t just a destination—it’s a connector. People often make it one stop among many, with meals, shopping, and even overnight stays part of the experience. This makes it central not just to tourism, but to broader downtown vitality.



VISITOR SPENDING BEHAVIOR AND CONSUMER SEGMENTS

Visitors to the waterfront consistently outspend the average Florida resident in key categories – suggesting significant economic value, particularly from distant and city visitors.

Spending among visitors exceeds state averages in the following areas:

- Food & Alcohol: 8–11% more
- Entertainment: 10–13% more
- Apparel, Beauty, Wellness: 6–9% more
- Transportation: 12% more

These figures span both middle- and higher-income brackets.

Insight: The waterfront’s appeal brings high-value consumer groups who are ready to spend. Whether for a relaxing evening or a weekend getaway, visitors are helping fuel the city’s retail, food, and leisure economy.

LOCAL ECONOMIC IMPACT AND BUSINESS INTERACTIONS

The data confirms that the project area/waterfront plays an integral role in supporting nearby commercial activity. Visitor behavior patterns show a strong correlation between time spent along the waterfront and engagement with adjacent businesses—particularly during weekends and special events.

- Common post-visit activities include dining, shopping, and leisure, with high-traffic destinations such as CityPlace and Clematis Street consistently attracting follow-up visits.
- Visitors are significantly more likely to explore surrounding businesses after spending time at the waterfront, with nearly 60% of weekend visits including a stop at a neighboring commercial area.
- The most frequently visited corridors—Banyan Boulevard, Flagler Drive, Olive Avenue, and Quadrille Boulevard—offer a concentration of restaurants, bars, retail shops, and entertainment venues that align closely with waterfront foot traffic patterns.
- During major events such as SunFest and HIP Sandi, adjacent business activity rose by 40–70%, driven primarily by increased spending in food, beverage, and apparel sectors.
- Distant visitors, while a smaller percentage of the overall visitor base, are 2.3 times more likely than residents to make purchases in nearby districts, underscoring their economic value.

- Businesses that align with hospitality and experience—such as hotels, rooftop lounges, high-end dining, and waterfront-facing venues—see the highest engagement, particularly from tourists and out-of-town guests.

Insight: The project area/waterfront doesn’t just draw visitors to the shoreline- it drives broader engagement across downtown. Dining, entertainment, and retail all benefit from this momentum, especially during weekends and large events. This pattern affirms the waterfront’s role as a central catalyst in the local economic ecosystem, creating value not just through visitation volume, but through how and where those visits extend.

	Resident Visitors (live in the project area/waterfront)	City Visitors (travel 1-10 miles)	Distant Visitors (travel greater than 10 miles)
Average stay	197 min	77 min	111 min
Median stay	79 min	49 min	61 min
Average number of visits	151	29	10
Average Peak Hour of foot traffic	6pm to 9pm	6pm to 9pm	6pm to 9pm

Source: Placer.AI Mobile device location data (Oct 1, 2017 - Oct 1, 2024)

USAGE HOTSPOTS AND OPPORTUNITY AREAS

The activity at the waterfront is not evenly distributed- some areas consistently attract foot traffic, while others remain quiet or disconnected.

- Clematis Street and Banyan Boulevard continue to serve as high-energy hubs thanks to nightlife and dining.
- Flagler Drive, a scenic pedestrian corridor, attracts steady use but remains underutilized during certain times of day.

Meanwhile, zones such as the North waterfront and the South Promenade offer potential for activation. While these areas are visually attractive, they suffer from low foot traffic due to lack of connectivity, programming, or surrounding destination anchors.

Insight: Some spaces draw people naturally, others need a stronger pull. Aesthetic appeal matters- but so does context. Areas with nearby amenities and clear connections attract the most use; isolated zones will require intentional design and activation to play a more meaningful role.



STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data makes it clear that no single solution or identity will meet the needs of everyone. Instead, the waterfront must remain flexible, inclusive, and responsive- able to serve as a weekday refuge, a weekend attraction, and a tourism anchor all at once.

- Residents are the most loyal and embedded users. Their frequent and lengthy visits indicate a strong emotional connection. They use the space for everyday leisure—after work, during walks, or for spontaneous socializing. For them, the waterfront must feel safe, accessible, and comfortably familiar.
- City visitors contribute vibrancy and spending power. They come less frequently than residents, but more purposefully—often drawn by events, food, or wellness activities. Their behavior shows that they’re looking for experiences that feel fresh yet familiar. Their visits offer opportunities for curated retail, seasonal programs, and family-friendly engagement.
- Distant visitors bring the highest per-visit economic impact. They stay longer, spend more, and pair their trips with hotels, restaurants, and local attractions. Their behavior reinforces the waterfront’s role as part of a larger travel itinerary—worthy of tourism investment, cross-promotions, and standout cultural programming.

Insight: The project area/waterfront must operate as a dynamic space that serves multiple audiences without compromising the experience for any one group. Success doesn’t depend on sameness, but on intentional diversity— combining high-energy zones with areas for rest, local conveniences with visitor attractions, and daily rituals with memorable experiences. The true potential lies in how these elements converge to shape a place that reflects the character of West Palm Beach, while remaining open and engaging to all who come.

SECTION 3

UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

To fully understand the opportunities and challenges facing the project area/waterfront, the Your Waterfront. Your Way. initiative gathered input from three key vantage points: community voices, stakeholder organizations, and behavioral data. Each lens offers something different—what people feel, what leadership sees, and what visitors actually do. Together, they form a layered narrative that helps the City move forward with both vision and accountability.

1. COMMUNITY SURVEYS & PUBLIC MEETINGS

Who: Primarily local residents, especially those who live near the waterfront or regularly engage with it.

What We Heard: Residents expressed deep personal attachment to the space and a strong desire to protect its existing character. Many emphasized the importance of keeping the waterfront quiet, passive, and family-friendly. A recurring concern was the fear of over-commercialization or over-activation, particularly when it comes to late-night uses. Some called for enhancements, but on a modest scale: more shade, more seating, and better restrooms- rather than transformative change.

Tone of Engagement: Cautious. Thoughtful. Often protective. These voices reflect people who see the waterfront as a daily ritual or emotional anchor- and worry that change might interrupt what they are accustomed to.

2. STAKEHOLDER MEMOS & ORGANIZATIONAL FEEDBACK

Who: Local nonprofits, cultural institutions, neighborhood associations, civic boards, and business improvement districts.

What We Heard: Stakeholders generally support change—but want it to be strategic, intentional, and inclusive. They emphasized the need for better programming, improved public infrastructure, and stronger stewardship models. They also stressed the importance of expanding public-private partnerships and ensuring that investments support equitable access. Unlike many survey respondents, stakeholders view the waterfront as a major economic and cultural asset that is currently underleveraged.

Tone of Engagement: Optimistic but grounded. Stakeholders acknowledge concerns but are more likely to frame change as necessary and overdue. Their feedback tends to focus on long-term sustainability, organizational collaboration, and operational feasibility- not just personal experience.

The **survey** insights primarily reflect the **opinions** and preferences of local residents and frequent visitors, while the foot traffic **data** captures the **behavior** of a broader audience, including tourists and event attendees.

	SURVEY	FOOT TRAFFIC DATA
AUDIENCE FOCUS	Primarily local residents and frequent visitors interested in community development.	A broader mix of locals, tourists, and event attendees, reflecting actual behavior patterns.
TYPE OF INSIGHT	Specific preferences and concerns about local issues, detailed feedback on amenities and programming.	Real-time, behavioral insights into visitor patterns, home and work location, duration, and frequency of visits.
ENGAGEMENT LEVEL	More engaged respondents who voluntarily provide feedback.	Includes all visitors, providing a comprehensive view of waterfront usage.



3. FOOT TRAFFIC & BEHAVIORAL DATA

What It Shows: Data tells a story of high-volume use by a wide array of visitors—not just locals, but regional and out-of-state tourists. Visitors are younger, more diverse, and more affluent than area residents. They come in the evenings and on weekends, spend more than the average Florida resident, and often combine their waterfront visit with dining, retail, or hotel stays. The data reveals consistent demand for both leisure and experiential amenities— especially during major events or peak seasons.

Tone of Insight: Empirical. Unbiased. This is not what people say they want—it’s what they actually do. The data captures usage patterns that public feedback often overlooks, including how tourism, spending, and foot traffic shift by season, distance, and time of day.

Why This Matters: When viewed together, these inputs highlight a central tension: many residents value the waterfront as it is, while stakeholders and data show a growing need for it to evolve. Preserving neighborhood familiarity must be balanced with accommodating regional demand and economic potential. The strongest path forward is one that honors local sentiment but responds to clear evidence of what’s working—and what the future requires.

Key Alignments and Contrasts: Community, Stakeholders, and Data

To build a truly responsive and forward-thinking project area/waterfront, it’s essential to understand where different perspectives converge—and where they diverge. The following comparative analysis explores this across four core dimensions.



CHAPTER 4

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Existing Conditions chapter is structured around four interconnected topics, each addressing key opportunities and challenges identified through research, data analysis, and community feedback gathered during the engagement period.

TOPIC 1 | **PHYSICAL DESIGN**

TOPIC 2 | **ACCESS**

TOPIC 3 | **PROGRAMMING**

TOPIC 4 | **STEWARDSHIP**



OVERVIEW

To develop a comprehensive vision for the waterfront, and to guide the discussions, research, and community visioning process, we defined four key topics. For each topic, a set of focused questions was posed to identify essential characteristics and priorities. This approach aimed to refine our understanding and craft recommendations that align with the community’s vision for the Waterfront.



TOPIC 1 | **PHYSICAL DESIGN**

How is the Waterfront designed?

- Landscape
- Lighting
- Shade
- Hardscape
- Built Environment



TOPIC 2 | **ACCESS**

How do we get to and around the Waterfront?

- Walking + Running
- Cycling + Rolling
- Transit



TOPIC 3 | **PROGRAMMING**

How is the Waterfront used?

- Events
- Recreation
- Arts
- Play + Fun



TOPIC 4 | **STEWARDSHIP**

How is the Waterfront managed?

- Cleaning
- Security
- Branding
- Development

TOPIC 1 | PHYSICAL DESIGN

The physical design of the West Palm Beach waterfront focuses on enhancing user experience through improved shade, defining and prioritizing areas of respite and key views, physical amenities and a focus on Waterfront resiliency.

1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Public Amenities
- Signature Public Spaces
- Spaces for Respite
- Shade
- Visual Connectivity
- Access to the Water

2 UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

3 OPPORTUNITIES + CONSTRAINTS



- PUBLIC AMENITIES**
- Restroom - Public
 - Restroom - Event / Privately Owned
 - Water Fountain
 - Trash
 - Dog Waste Station

26%

of survey
respondents
prioritized
increased public
amenities

Two

number of public
restroom facilities
serving the
waterfront.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PUBLIC AMENITIES

Public amenities encompass the facilities and features provided by the community or government that support daily living and enhance community well-being. These essential infrastructural elements play a crucial role in making public spaces both enjoyable and functional. Examples include water fountains, restrooms, play areas, exercise equipment, and infrastructure for pets and waste management.

RESTROOM AND WATER FACILITIES

Existing restrooms and drinking water fountains are located at key programming locations, including the visitor center and the Meyer Amphitheater, with additional water fountains that are located along the waterfront. Facilities show signs of aging, and maintenance has not kept pace with the demands. Renovations are needed to improve functionality and aesthetics. Additionally, there is a need for manned, temporary restrooms at existing park spaces or docks to assess demand and ensure safe, clean access while permanent solutions are developed.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Trash bins are plentiful along the waterfront and throughout the Clematis core, with the recent installation of West Palm Beach branded Big Belly trash bins along the waterfront, helping reduce windblown litter and minimize misuse. Despite their availability, maintaining them effectively remains a key challenge, with bins often overflowing and waste building up along the seawall. Public feedback highlights a desire for improved maintenance and increased availability of recycling bins in the area.

“Be proud of the area. It’s still an excellent design, but it should be maintained lovingly and meticulously to elevate it to the stature of parks and scenic boulevards in other cities”



Branded trash bins, recycling and dog waste station along the waterfront

PLAY SPACES AND EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

Despite the recent increase in families moving to the Downtown area, there is a noticeable lack of play spaces along the Waterfront. The only designed play space is the Centennial Fountain at the west end of Centennial Square. A popular attraction, it benefits from shaded seating areas, nearby restrooms, food and beverage vendors, and transit options. The City completed renovations of Clematis Street which included upgrades to the Centennial Fountain in 2020. The city is currently exploring opportunities to establish a formal play lab nearby at the north end of the Great Lawn, which would provide additional much-needed recreational space for children, especially during events. The waterfront is widely used for walking, running, biking and rolling. Community outreach found the demand for formal exercise equipment is minimal.

“Downtown is missing kid friendly play areas. There are so many young families moving here. It would be nice to have a kid friendly area to walk to”

SIGNATURE PUBLIC SPACES

GREAT LAWN

The Great Lawn, a prominent downtown waterfront park completed in 2010, covers 46,000 square feet of greenspace dotted by picnic tables and crisscrossed by brick pathways, with direct views out to the Lake Worth Lagoon. Conveniently situated next to the Visitor Center, the Centennial Fountain and the Lake Pavilion, it has become one of the key locations for many major waterfront events, including Screen on the Green, the Green Market, and Clematis by Night. Despite its prime location, due to a lack of shade options, people tend to flock to the shaded edges of the lawn, with the green itself often appearing empty outside of programmed event times.

Through the Play + Art + Connect project, city officials plan to revitalize the northern part of the park. Based on ongoing community feedback, the anticipated improvements involve creating a multigenerational Play Lab, redesigning the Visitor Center’s functionality, and introducing a unique immersive art installation to serve as a focal point for the park.



Visitors watching a film on the Great Lawn during the popular Screen on the Green event.



Clematis Splash Pad offers a cooling respite from the Florida sun.



The Lake Fitness Trail in Naples, FL incorporates fitness stations along it’s 1 mile stretch.

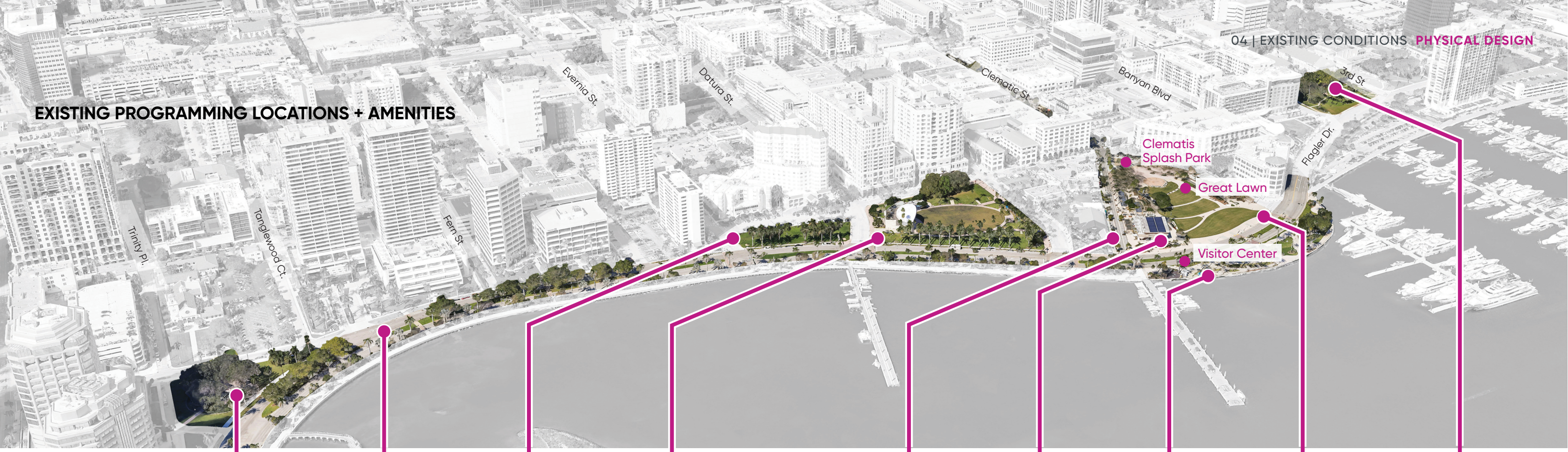
MEYER AMPHITHEATER

Inaugurated in 1996, the Meyer Amphitheater is a key open-air venue featuring 32,000 square feet of lush lawn area. It has been a central part of the local cultural scene for nearly three decades. As the amphitheater nears its 30th anniversary, it’s clear that substantial upgrades are needed. The venue requires repairs, facility enhancements, and expanded operational capabilities to continue effectively serving the community and meeting contemporary performance standards. The proposed improvements aim to address long-term operational needs. By investing in these upgrades, the amphitheater will not only extend its lifespan but also enhance the quality of experiences for performers and audiences alike. Promptly implementing these changes will help ensure the amphitheater remains a vibrant and cherished community asset for years to come.



Meyer Ampitheater bandshell and lawn.

EXISTING PROGRAMMING LOCATIONS + AMENITIES



TRINITY PARK



FLAGLER DRIVE



POST PARK



MEYER
AMPHITHEATER



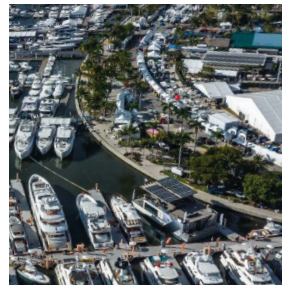
CLEMATIS STREET



THE LAKE
PAVILION



WATERFRONT
LANDING



THE SQUARE &
GREAT LAWN



JOSE MARTI PARK



Size

1 acre

5 K

.5 acres

2.4 acres

1 K

7,350 sf

1.3 acres

2.7 acres

1.2 acres

Amenities

memorial monument,
walking path, shade
trees

some shade trees,
access to waterfront,
parking, bike rental
stations, fitness
stations

shade trees, open
green space

bandstand, restrooms,
open green space,
shade trees, walking
path

seating, public art,
trash receptacles

fully equipped interior
event space, covered
terrace, kitchen,
restrooms, access to
greenspace

waterfront esplanade,
seating, shade
gardens & trees,
water features,
community buildings

splash park, seating,
green space,
restrooms, shade
structures & trees,
electrical outlets,
visitor center

playground, seating,
public art, walking
path, shade trees,
open greenspace,
monument

Programming
Intensity



Event Types

-

walking, running,
cycling events
and festivals

-

musical performances

markets

private events

festivals

festivals and markets,
movie screenings

-

Key Events

-

4th on Flagler,
LagoonFest, Bill Bone
5k

-

Sunday on the
Waterfront

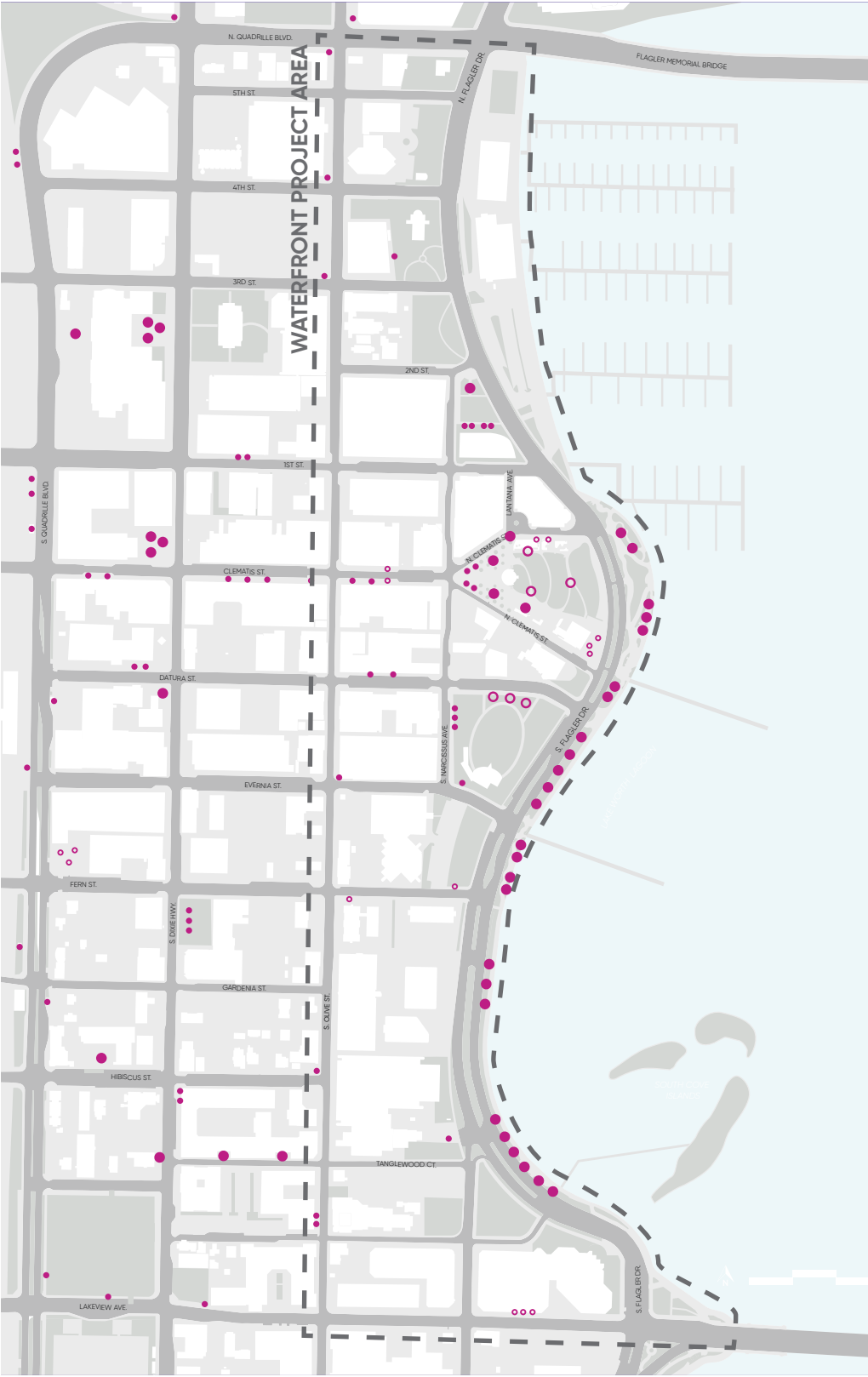
Clematis by Night,
GreenMarket, 4th on
Flagler

private events

Boat Show, Sunfest

GreenMarket, Sunfest,
4th on Flagler, Screen
on the Green

-



NOT ENOUGH SHADE
was selected as the primary area of improvement, with

38%
of survey respondents prioritized increased shade opportunities, while

20%
of survey respondents listed **INCREASED SEATING** as a priority

SPACES OF RESPITE

Most waterfront visitors spend an average of 15–30 minutes in the area, suggesting potential for more activities or amenities to encourage lingering.

Shaded areas with diverse seating options are limited, especially along the waterfront and in activated zones with food, retail and programmatic offerings. Current seating along the waterfront promenade, although prioritizing views and creating small “rooms”, lacks community cohesion and adequate shade. Several have been blocked by utility boxes and dense planting. The seawall could function as potential seating, yet sees little use, and picnic tables at the Great Lawn offer flexibility but lack human-scale placement and connection. Visit the Palm Beaches has set up picnic tables and flexible seating at the Waterfront Landing pergola yet these too are lacking shade to enhance comfort in the strong Florida sun.

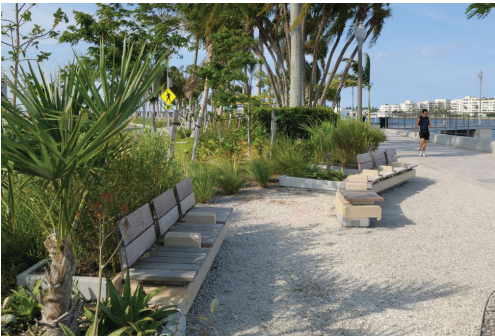
Public seating serves multiple purposes; socializing, waiting, and enjoying the environment, and requires identifying specific areas and employing flexible options to accommodate varying weather conditions, uses, and group sizes. Positioning areas of respite close to activated zones with food, retail and programmatic offerings, or in spots shielded from traffic noise and weather elements, is crucial to increasing usage.

“Could use more seating areas to eat lunch, read a book”

“It would be wonderful if the space was more shaded and suitable for relaxing and safely enjoying the beauty of the surroundings.”



A visitor taking a moment to rest along the seawall.



Plentiful seating along the waterfront, existing palms provide little shade throughout the day.



Shaded seating blocked by utility boxes near the Palm Harbor Marina.



SHADE

- Tree Canopy
- Architectural shade
- Greenspace

N 0' 150' 500'

86°
average hot season
temperature June -
September

77°
average cool
season temperature
December - March

14%
tree canopy coverage
in the WPB Downtown
neighborhood, the lowest
canopy coverage by area for
the city.

24%
Possible Planting Area (PPA)*
in the WPB Downtown
neighborhood.

**Open areas and grass without
existing tree canopy where it is
possible to plant trees.*

SHADE

Shade in public spaces can transform them from uncomfortable to inviting, especially during the hottest times of day. They are a magnet for people seeking thermal comfort and sun protection, fostering social interaction and community gathering. While the waterfront has a high percentage of trees, the canopy coverage is the lowest in the city due to the predominance of tall palms, especially along the west side of Flagler Drive. In parks, observations indicate that shaded areas along the edges attract people, while the central greenspaces remain largely unused on a daily basis.



1 | Jose Marti Park offers more shaded areas with densely landscaped deciduous trees and shorter palms as compared to nearby parks. As an underutilized parkspace, this creates a good base for future activations or physical amenities.



4 | Moving into the urban fabric from the waterfront, shade coverage increases due to multi-story buildings and apartments, varying throughout the day. Clematis supplements with shade providing street trees, verses the tall palms found on adjoining East/West bound streets.



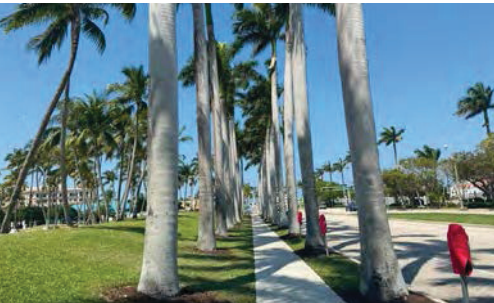
2 | The eastern sidewalk offers varied opportunities for shade from street and waterfront landscaping, featuring various palms and deciduous trees that enhance comfort for walking and gathering. Seating is strategically placed in densely shaded spots along the waterfront path to cater to all times of day.



5 | Architectural features, such as the Green Market pavilions, building awnings and the band shell at Meyer Amphitheater, provide shade options when not in use for programmed events or commercial seating.



3 | The Great Lawn has ample green-space, however is largely underutilized in the summer months due to a lack of shade opportunities. Perimeter trees and architectural features provide respite.



6 | Tall palms bring uniformity and continuity along Flagler Drive, without obstructing waterfront views. However, their planting pattern limits their effectiveness in providing reliable shade, especially on the western side where sun exposure is high.

“Build with conscience of climate change, meaning it will be hotter. So shade, trees, reflective paint, white roof, cooling hubs, EV charging.”

“Plentiful shaded areas with misters would greatly improve comfort and usability during our hot months.”

KEY VIEWPOINTS

- |||| View partially obscured (marina, dense landscaping, etc)
- View fully obscured (marina, dense landscaping, buildings, etc)
- 🔍 Coin-operated binocular by waterfront



VISUAL CONNECTIVITY

The waterfront's expansive views of the Lake Worth Lagoon are a major asset, offering a strong visual connection to this natural resource, the South Cove Islands, colorful sunrises and opportunities for wildlife observation. The slender palm trunks along Flagler Street facilitate visual access from the parks and scenic drive, enhancing connectivity and the overall scenic experience.

However, utilities along the waterfront obstruct these views, while high plantings and fences intended for beautification inadvertently block existing seating areas.

"Our current view of the open water is absolutely beautiful and soothing... The solitude, the view and sound of the water have always helped me."

"Love all the walkways by the water which are great for viewing wildlife and water."



1 | Community feedback from outreach efforts highlighted that large boats in the marina have obstructed views of the Intracoastal Waterway.



2 | At the Great Lawn, dense planting partly blocks the view on the north side, but still frames the Henry Morrison Flagler Museum across the water.



3 | The east-facing view at the marina's edge highlights how the boats form a visual barrier along the northern side.



4 | The end of the public dock provides access to see north beyond the marina to the Flagler Memorial Bridge.



5 | Topography of Meyer Amphitheater creates a bowl, enabling views of the stage, but blocking visual access to the water from the lawn.



6 | Shaded seating facing the water is blocked by high hedges and thick low plantings around utilities.



7 | Much of the walkway along the seawall offers unobstructed 180-degree views of the Intracoastal Waterway, preserving this visual connection is a priority.



8 | Viewfinder looking toward the South Cove Islands, where shorebirds, mangroves and sea grass can be seen.

ACCESS TO THE WATER

Physical access to the waterfront in West Palm Beach is currently restricted to three main areas: Palm Harbor Marina, the public docks, and the South Cove Islands.

Palm Harbor Marina is a private facility serving the yachting community, offering exclusive access to its patrons.

The public docks are free to non-commercial users, accommodating up to 48 boats between the 3 docks, 2 of which are in the project area. The Clematis Street dock, the primary pedestrian-accessible dock, features native plantings, underwater ecosystems, seating, and integrated lighting. Extending 500 feet into the waterway, this dock provides extended views and enhances the connection to the water through its floating design.

The South Cove Islands consist of three man-made islands within the 6-acre South Cove Natural Area. These islands serve as a crucial sanctuary for local wildlife. Although the islands are not accessible to people, a 556-foot boardwalk allows for a passive connection to the area, providing views and fostering an appreciation of the natural environment.

Events such as Sunfest and the Boat Show effectively utilize floating docks and barges to expand their event footprint, demonstrating the potential for such infrastructure to enhance public engagement with the waterfront.

“I love the waterfront. I was happiest when I was able to walk it every day after work, I still try to walk it a few times a week. I love the wildlife. I stop people and point out the turtles! I want to see more people enjoying it, and more spaces for everyone.”



The Palm Harbor Marina docks provide high end amenities to those docked in its slips.



Newly redesigned Clematis docks feature seating, greenery and shade elements.



Boardwalk providing view-only access to the South Cove Islands.

UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Values low-impact improvements: more shade, seating, and restrooms.
- Shows discomfort with dramatic changes to scale or scenery.
- Often equates physical upgrades with potential overdevelopment.

STAKEHOLDER MEMOS

- Support infrastructure upgrades: lighting, signage, seating, shade, and flexible-use spaces.
- Emphasize design that can accommodate events, transit flow, and cultural programming.
- Encourage design interventions that are both beautiful and functional.

BEHAVIORAL DATA

- Shows consistent congregation around well-designed areas (e.g., Clematis & Flagler, Banyan, CityPlace).
- Indicates underuse of visually attractive but disconnected spaces.
- Suggests opportunity to better align physical investment with actual use patterns.

SHARED GROUND: All three support comfort-based improvements (shade, seating, restrooms), though differ on scale.

GAPS IN PERSPECTIVE: Community wants minimalism; stakeholders and data support more dynamic, multifunctional design.

OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

PHYSICAL AMENITIES

Opportunities:

- Funding has been secured through the Play+Art+Connect program for a reimagining of the Visitor Center, a public art installation to anchor the Great Lawn, and the creation of a Play Lab to appeal to all generations.

Challenges

- Existing public restrooms and water fountains are aging and have fallen into disrepair in recent years.
- Public restroom facilities are minimal along the waterfront, and do not meet the needs of current usage.
- Stewardship is needed to ensure facilities are maintained in a safe and secure manner.
- Trash receptacles are plentiful along the waterfront, however are not emptied with the frequency required for their usage. Weather conditions, wildlife and individuals accessing trash cans to collect recyclable materials also lead to refuse along the waterfront.

SHADE + GREENING

Opportunities:

- There is a strong preference for maintaining and better utilizing green spaces and natural areas. This includes native plants, wildflowers, butterfly gardens, and minimizing hardscape features.

Challenges

- Consistently high temperatures, especially in the summer months of July and August, drive people into the limited shaded areas and off the

main green spaces of the parks and waterfront pathways.

- The iconic palm trees lining the waterfront do little to help in climate mitigation.
- Shading elements, whether they be trees with broad canopies or shade structures, may obstruct views to the water.
- Permanent fixtures decrease flexibility for larger scale events or for future waterfront needs.
- Flexible shade options, such as umbrellas, tents, or semi-permanent shade sails, require daily or seasonal storage and maintenance.
- Existing landscaping, trellises and planters have a significant maintenance cost. Any recommendations including new plantings requires exploration of lower maintenance plantings and/or programs that can support maintenance costs.

VISUAL CONNECTION

Opportunities:

- The intracoastal is the waterfront’s key amenity, featuring wildlife, views of the sunrise, and a passive connection to nature. Maintaining these expansive views should be prioritized.
- Existing shaded seating could be moved to improve sightlines and avoid obstructions caused by utilities, high plantings, and fences.

Challenges

- Much of the waterfront is not visually connected to the busier downtown areas of Clematis and lacks elements of visual interest that might encourage visitors to venture to and along the waterfront.

- Existing marina is viewed as a visual barrier to the intracoastal waterway.

WATERFRONT ACCESS

Opportunities:

- Strong community support for increased physical connection to the water.
- Clematis Dock exemplifies a successful precedent for adopting a more integrated approach to urban infrastructure. Its success highlights the potential for incorporating modular or temporary vegetated barges and programmed structures into future waterfront design.

Challenges

- Community distrust stemming from second marina plans may make larger infrastructural changes at the waterfront difficult.
- Existing zoning restrictions restricts additional commercial enterprises along the waterfront.
- Riparian ownership by the Plaza of the Palm Beaches and the Holy Trinity episcopal church prohibit any waterfront changes directly in front of their properties.

RESILIENCY

Opportunities:

- City is currently exploring funding options for studying resilience on the waterfront, has Resilience Committees in place, including the Watershed Committee.
- A state and federally funded vulnerability assessment for flooding and sea-level rise

in Palm Beach County is currently underway. This assessment will result in a Climate Risk Assessment and Action Plan that will provide a detailed roadmap for implementation.

- Seawall pilot program currently underway, reconstructing a 1,425-foot segment along Flagler between Avila Road and Pershing Way
- Infrastructure upgrades are necessary, particularly to address tidal valves and solutions for managing storm surge and groundwater intrusion.

Challenges

- Lack of a comprehensive sea wall plan addressing details such as the appropriate wall height.
- The current location of Waterfront’s sanitary sewer pump station is problematic due to aesthetic concerns and the potential need for relocation to address sea-level rise and storm surge.
- Need for waterfront easements for future planning, with a specified footprint needed for new stations.

TOPIC 2 | ACCESS

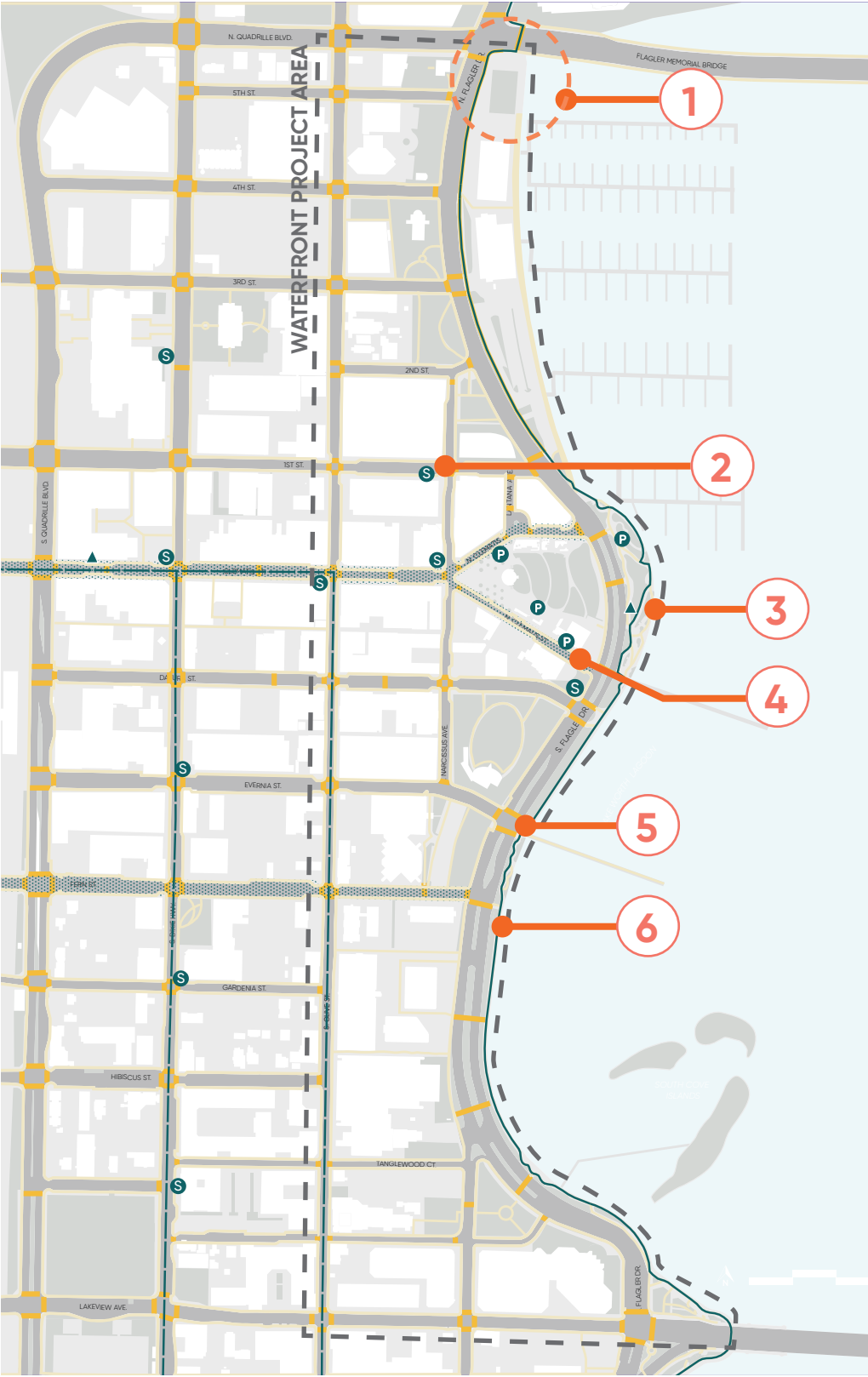
Access in the public realm encompasses the design and management of public spaces to facilitate seamless connection, navigation, and use for everyone, regardless of physical abilities or mobility needs. This chapter focuses on access to and around the waterfront, addressing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders. It explores various elements essential for an inclusive environment, including pathways, safety measures, wayfinding, and amenities for those who walk, roll, or ride.

1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Multi-modal Access
- Transit
- Flagler Drive
- Waterfront Activities and Tourism
- Water Transit + Boat Access

2 UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

3 OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES



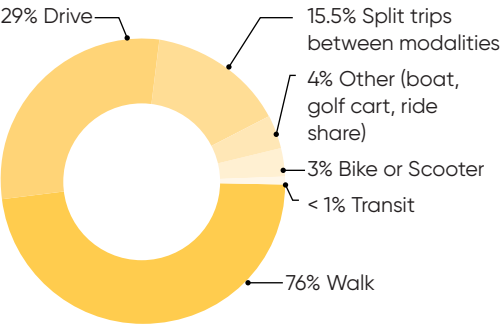
MULTI-MODAL ACCESS

- Pedestrian areas
- Crosswalk available
- Existing bike route
- Proposed bike route (WPB Trail within Eastcoast Greenway)
- Designated shared street
- Bike Parking
- BrightBike Station
- Bike repair station



Multimodal trips account for **26%** of total trips on Flagler Drive

MODES OF WATERFRONT ACCESS BY SURVEY RESPONDENTS



EXISTING CONDITIONS
MULTI-MODAL ACCESS

The Waterfront, characterized by its flat terrain, short blocks, and temperate weather, is ideally suited for multi-modal transportation. City investments, guided by the 2018 West Palm Beach Mobility Plan emphasize the development of safer, more connected, and complete streets as a key priority for the city's future. Encouraging walking, bik-ing and transit encourages active lifestyles, reduces pollution, and has the potential to reduce motorized vehicle trips, reducing single oc-cupancy vehicle parking needs and increase capacity on the road.

"Improving multi-modal access points and connectivity from neighborhoods would encourage more people to bike, walk or take transit to the waterfront instead of driving."



1 | Pedestrian Walkway is intercepted at The Connection to Flagler Memorial Bridge, where a dog run has been installed.



2 | The area includes bike lanes and a bike-sharing program (BrightBike) with 79 bikes available. A bike repair station provides basic maintenance support. The Green Market Bike Valet offers secure parking during market hours.



3 | While specific details are not provided in the image, it's noted that 4% of survey respondents use transit to access the waterfront. This suggests some level of public transportation service in the area.



4 | The majority (29%) of survey respondents drive to the waterfront, indicating significant car usage. Greenmarket Bike Valet provides complementary bike parking during market hours.



5 | The waterfront area shows potential for improving connections between different modes of transport, such as better integrating bike and pedestrian paths with RideWPB stops and parking areas.



6 | The path along the Waterway suggests potential for water-based transportation options, which could be explored as part of a comprehensive multimodal strategy.

MICRO-MOBILITY AND CYCLING ACCESS

The West Palm Beach Waterfront is a popular route for cyclists and micromobility users. Strava heat map shows a concentration of usage between the two bridges. The Downtown Mobility Plan, East Coast Greenway (ECG), and WPB Bicycle Master Plan identify Flagler Drive as a primary bicycle route, highlighting its strategic importance.

However, community feedback indicates several challenges, including the need for improved bike infrastructure and better integration with pedestrian spaces along the Waterfront Promenade. To address these concerns, there are proposals to develop separated bikeways along Flagler Drive, enhancing safety and connectivity with existing and planned bike routes. The popularity of facilities like the Greenmarket bike valet and Downtown Bike Valet pilot project at 300 Clematis Street emphasize the growing demand for secure bike parking. The BrightBike bike share program offers both locals and visitors a convenient transportation option, further enhancing multi-modal connectivity within the City.

“Flagler Dr. needs new pedestrian and bike friendly design & landscape”

“Better arrangement or indication of bikes versus pedestrian ways and direction.”

“A wider sidewalk with better pavers, and a painted section for bikers and rollerbladers would be convenient so the walkers don’t get run over.”

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Downtown West Palm Beach, particularly Clematis Street, was designed as a pedestrian-friendly area with a comprehensive sidewalk network and short, walkable blocks. However, as one approaches the waterfront, Flagler Drive’s role as a major vehicular thoroughfare creates a significant disconnect between the vibrant downtown core and the waterfront promenade.

North Flagler Drive was identified as a high injury corridor in the 2021 Vision Zero Analysis, with community outreach and crash data analysis highlighting infrastructure and high traffic speeds as safety hazards. Many pedestrian safety measures, such as flashing signs, have been removed or are in disrepair. Traffic speeds average 34MPH, exceeding the posted limit of 25MPH, increasing pedestrian traffic fatality risk from 5% to a 40% chance.

Additionally, pedestrian comfort should be considered. As discussed in the Physical Design section, improvements should include adequate shading, seating, active building edges, and sufficiently wide sidewalks to accommodate various modes of movement and enhance the overall pedestrian experience alongside safety measures.

3,500

average pedestrians per day

48%

of survey respondents walk to the waterfront

TOO MUCH SPEEDING ON FLAGLER (43%)

was the primary concern related to waterfront access by survey respondents, followed by

NOT ENOUGH SAFE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS (21.5%)

“Better pedestrian amenities like designated walk, run and bike lanes would be great. The speed of the traffic is the worst part about the waterfront.”

“Maintaining pedestrian focus is great, and never, never widen Flagler, but enhance the beauty of the drive and keep speed slowish so as to encourage much of the traffic to take other routes.”

What is MICRO-MOBILITY?

Micro-mobility refers to small, single-person wheeled vehicles for short-distance travel, powered by human, combustion, or electric propulsion.

Types of Micro-mobility vehicles include:

- Wheelchairs
- Bikes
- Scooters
- Skateboards
- Rollerskates + Rollerblades
- Golf Carts

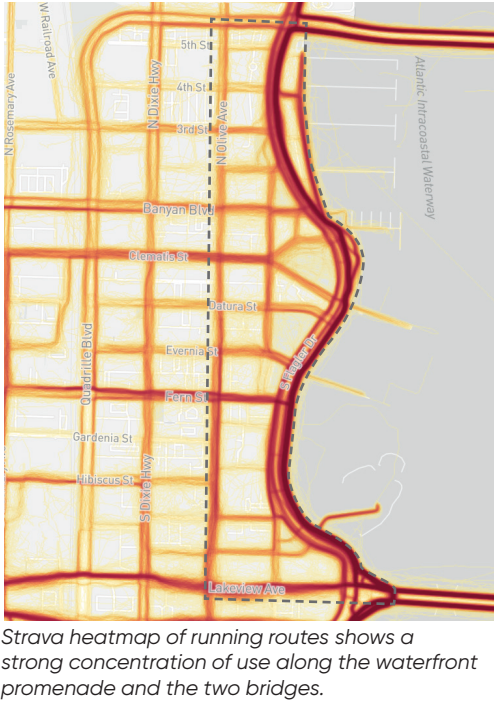
Advancements in technology and an increased focus on accessibility are giving rise to new types of vehicles.



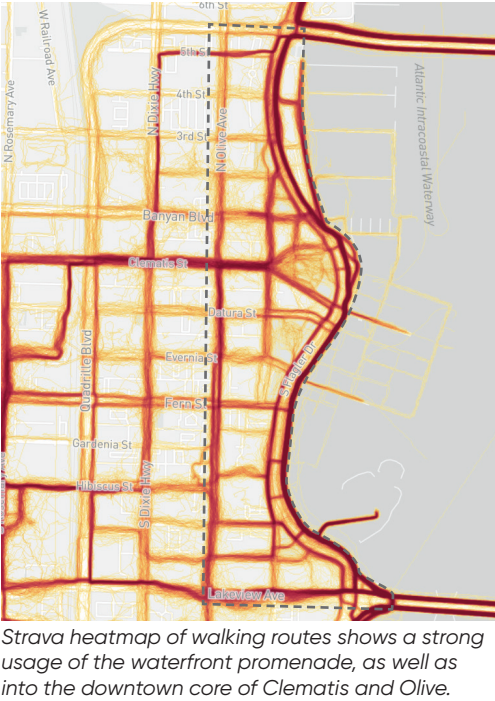
Top: Runners taking advantage of the morning sun . Bottom: A cyclist riding along the waterfront promenade



Strava heatmap of cycling routes shows a concentration of use along Flagler Drive, with moderate usage of the primary downtown thoroughfares.



Strava heatmap of running routes shows a strong concentration of use along the waterfront promenade and the two bridges.



Strava heatmap of walking routes shows a strong usage of the waterfront promenade, as well as into the downtown core of Clematis and Olive.



- TRANSIT
- Palm Tram Route 41
 - Palm Tram Route 1
 - Ride WPB Shuttle (also available on-demand)
 - Transit station (on designated route)



34.77% average loading

Route 1 (More Frequent)
Distance to Waterfront : 1/3 mile
Frequency: 20 min; 5:30am - 10pm

44.00% average loading

Route 41 (Closer/Less Frequent)
Distance to Waterfront : 1/4 mile
Frequency: 4x daily



16,200 passengers per month
(July 2024-June 2024)

Ride WBP Shuttle
Distance to Waterfront : .1 mile
Frequency: 15 min or on-demand

TRANSIT

West Palm Beach’s public transit system, Palm Tran, provides two routes near the Waterfront: Route 1 and Route 41. Route 1 offers more frequent service, operating every 20 minutes from 5:30 am. to 10 pm., making it a reliable choice for daily commuters and visitors. Route 41, while closer to the Waterfront, is less frequent, running only four times daily, which limits its utility for those needing more flexible transportation options. Additionally, the Tri-Rail and Greyhound stations, which connect visitors from across Palm Beach County, are situated nearly a mile away at Clematis Street and Tamarind Avenue. The recent upgrades to Clematis Street to a bike and pedestrian connection increases the travel reach of these stations.

Insights from recent surveys indicate a strong sense of nostalgia for the old Molly Trolleys, which were appreciated for their aesthetic charm. However, the upgraded electric fleet consistent with the City’s sustainability action plan of RideWPB addresses this by providing a free, on-demand service that enhances connectivity between Palm Tran, Tri-Rail, and Waterfront destinations. By bridging the gap between existing transit routes and popular destinations, RideWPB helps to address accessibility gaps in the public transportation network, though continued feedback and adjustments will be crucial to optimizing the system for all users.

Although no future transit route is planned for Flagler Drive, micro-transit options, such as RideWPB could expand their network, providing extended options for residents and visitors.

<p>Survey Insights:</p> <p><i>Strong community attachment to the old Molly Trolleys, appreciated for their aesthetic charm.</i></p> <p>Accessibility Gaps: RideWPB addresses connectivity issues between major transit hubs (Palm Tran, Tri-Rail) and Waterfront destinations.</p>	<p>Future Considerations:</p> <p><i>No planned transit routes for Flagler Drive, but potential for micro-transit expansion.</i></p> <p><i>Opportunity to leverage RideWPB’s popularity (as evidenced by ridership data) to further improve Waterfront accessibility.</i></p>
<p>Economic Considerations:</p> <p>Tourism Impact: The Tri-Rail, Amtrak and Grey-hound stations, located about a mile away, bring visitors from across Palm Beach County. Recent upgrades to Clematis Street for bike and pedes-trian use enhance this connection.</p> <p>Local Business Support: Improved transit options could increase foot traffic to Waterfront business-es, potentially boosting local economy.</p>	<p>Key Takeaways:</p> <p><i>Diverse transit options cater to different user needs, from frequent commuters to occasional visitors. Micro-transit solutions like RideWPB are filling gaps in the transit network.</i></p> <p><i>Economic benefits of improved transit access include potential increases in tourism, local business activity, and property values.</i></p>



RideWPB vans, carts and Tesla sedans are wrapped in bright blue with “free ride” emblazoned in the side, making them easily recognizable.



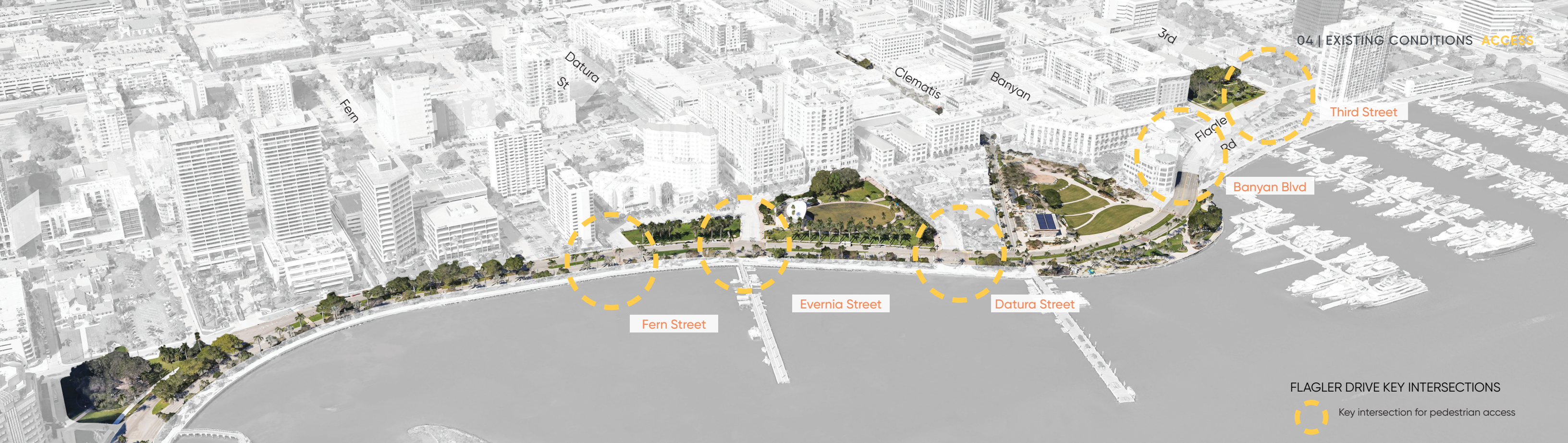
RideWPB electric vans.



Original Molly Trolleys that were phased out for the RideWPB vehicles.



Palm Tran buses



FLAGLER DRIVE

Flagler Drive functions as a vital urban collector road, connecting residential and commercial areas while linking to major arterial routes. Though not designated as an official evacuation route, it plays a crucial role in Downtown West Palm Beach, linking the two bridges from Okeechobee Boulevard to Quadrille Boulevard, and providing access to the Good Samaritan Medical Center to the north. Currently a four-lane road, Flagler Drive sees an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) of 9,900 vehicles, which is significantly below its capacity. This traffic volume has remained relatively stable, with AADT counts of 9,900 in 2018, dropping to 7,400 in 2020 (likely due to the pandemic), and returning to 9,900 in 2022.

Key intersections along Flagler Drive serve as major pedestrian crossing points, featuring brick crosswalks and traffic signals. However, survey data indicates that 43% of respondents cited "too much speeding on Flagler" as a primary concern related to waterfront access. Additionally, 21.5% of respondents noted "not enough safe pedestrian crossings" as an issue.

On the west side of Flagler Drive, metered parking is available. However, the functionality and accessibility of these parking spaces are limited, with many meters often non-functional or covered. This situation restricts parking availability in the area, potentially impacting visitor access to the waterfront.

The current road configuration presents opportunities for reimagining Flagler Drive to better serve pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists while enhancing safety and accessibility to the waterfront. Any proposed changes should consider traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and the overall user experience of this important urban corridor.

"Flagler Drive is essentially our Central Park"

"Make Flagler into much more of a promenade and take advantage of the incredible waterfront with a big parkway"

"I was a fan of the old Flagler Shore project and would like to see more efforts to implement a road diet."

EXISTING ROAD SECTION



WATERFRONT ACTIVITIES AND TOURISM

The West Palm Beach waterfront offers a variety of water-based activities that contribute to its appeal as a tourist destination and recreational area for locals. Current offerings and potential expansions include:

SIGHTSEEING CRUISES:

Hakuna Matata Cruises: Offers scenic tours of the Intercoastal Waterway, providing visitors with unique views of the West Palm Beach skyline and nearby mansions.

Potential for expanded routes or themed cruises to attract diverse audiences.

WATER TRANSIT + BOAT ACCESS

Access to the Downtown Waterfront area by water remains a contentious issue. Currently, Palm Harbor Marina accommodates luxury yachts, while the public docks provide free access for smaller, private boats. Concerns about a proposed second marina are significant, with 86% of survey respondents opposing further studies due to worries about impacts on public access, views, and water quality. The existing public docks face challenges such as tidal currents, wind, and wave conditions, which can make docking difficult and unsafe for those unfamiliar with these conditions.

Although there is resistance to expanding docking facilities, there is strong support for upgrading existing ones to better accommodate various boat sizes and improve safety for all users.



**UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES:
COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA**

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Cites concerns over limited parking, wayfinding, and safe pedestrian crossings.
- Perceives some waterfront areas as hard to reach or disconnected from neighborhoods.
- Often views increased access as a double-edged sword—welcoming outsiders, but risking local crowding.

STAKEHOLDER MEMOS

- Advocate for seamless connections between waterfront and downtown, transit, and neighborhoods.
- Recommend investment in signage, transit stops, bike lanes, and better north-south pedestrian links.
- Support universal design and ADA accessibility improvements.

BEHAVIORAL DATA

- Reveals high concentration of activity around well-connected nodes.
- Shows low foot traffic in less-visible or poorly linked areas, despite visual appeal.
- Underscores importance of intuitive flow between waterfront zones and adjacent districts.

SHARED GROUND: Desire for better access and mobility.

GAPS IN PERSPECTIVE: Community focus is on preservation of quiet zones; stakeholders and data call for expanded, active connectivity.



“A water taxi from Singer Island and other locations would benefit our waterfront ... Taking a water taxi would be part of the fun!”

“Docking for inexperienced boaters using the current dock set-up is at best inconvenient and at worst dangerous to both property and persons.”

“Please keep the public docks free and accessible to all”



The WPB Public Dock South at Evernia Street provides free docking for private boats.



Sailfish Marina Water Taxi provides shuttle service out of Singer Island, prices vary depending on destination.

OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

MULTI-MODAL ACCESS

Opportunities:

- High waterfront popularity for recreational use (walking, biking, rolling) indicates need for enhanced accessibility.
- Temperate weather and flat topography support multi-modal access year-round.
- BrightBike bike share program shows some demand, with 79 bikes available downtown.
- Integrated multi-modal corridors can connect cycling, walking, and transit modes seamlessly, improving overall connectivity.

Challenges

- Inadequate street space for bikes creates safety hazards, especially for vulnerable users.
- Lack of protected bike lanes and proper bike parking facilities.
- Limited transit options along the waterfront, with closest regular stops 0.25–0.5 miles away.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS + SAFETY

Opportunities:

- Ample space allows for wide, safe, and accessible sidewalks, encouraging walking and active transportation.
- Recent upgrades to Clematis Street improve bike and pedestrian connectivity to transit stations.

Challenges

- Designing crossings that minimize pedestrian delay while maintaining safety on a street with infrequent vehicle traffic.
- Issues with pedestrian crossing with cars

- failure to yield, not consistent crosswalk and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon not well maintained.
- Ample space allows for wide, safe, and accessible sidewalks, encouraging walking and active transportation.
 - Recent upgrades to Clematis Street improve bike and pedestrian connectivity to transit stations.

FLAGLER DRIVE

Opportunities:

- With over 140 feet of right-of-way and the current AADT of 9,900 vehicles is well below capacity, allowing for the creation of spacious sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, or even a complete street approach with separated cycling and walking paths.
- The proximity to the waterfront provides opportunities for scenic routes that encourage active transportation modes like walking, running, and cycling, boosting recreational use and tourism.

Challenges

- With over 140 feet of right-of-way and the current AADT of 9,900.
- Despite low traffic volumes, residents or businesses may resist reallocation of road space from vehicles to other modes, fearing loss of convenience or access.
- The large right-of-way presents a challenge in balancing all potential modes—pedestrians, cyclists, transit, and vehicles—while ensuring safe and efficient flow for each.
- Introducing extensive infrastructure for bikes,

pedestrians, and green spaces requires a long-term commitment to maintenance, which could strain the city’s budget or resources.

PARKING

Opportunities:

- With low traffic volumes, there’s an opportunity to reduce on-street parking and repurpose space for more sustainable transportation modes. Allowing space for pick up and drop off along the waterfront.
- Parking opportunities for alternative modalities are desired, including bike, scooter and golf carts.

Challenges

- Existing parking facilities are challenged by inadequate maintenance, with street parking meters frequently covered and non-functional.
- Parking reductions may face opposition from local businesses or visitors relying on easy vehicle access.
- Lack of parking and/or existing parking costs are viewed as a deterrent to visitation of the waterfront. Any removal of parking will have to come with increased affordable transit alternatives and education programs.

WATER ACCESS

Opportunities:

- The waterfront offers the potential for promenades or access points for recreational and water-based transport (e.g., water taxis).
- *Strong community interest in expanded water-based activities and tourism.*

Challenges

- Limited commercial use of public docks due to land lease restrictions.
- Regulatory and environmental constraints could limit development and access improvements along the shoreline.
- Safety concerns for inexperienced boaters at current public docks.
- Community opposition to additional marina designs or expanded boat parking.

TRANSIT / MICRO-TRANSIT

Opportunities:

- RideWPB provides free, on-demand service, enhancing connectivity between major transit hubs and waterfront, allows for introducing micro-transit or shuttle services, improving connectivity for short trips or last-mile solutions.
- Palm Tran Route 1 offers frequent service near the waterfront (every 20 minutes).

Challenges

- Maintaining service frequency could be challenging with limited frequency of Palm Tran Route 41 (four times daily) restricts its utility for waterfront access.
- Need for better integration of various transit options to improve overall accessibility.

TOPIC 3 | PROGRAMMING

Programming in the public realm encompasses the strategic planning and execution of activities, events, and uses designed to enhance public spaces and foster community engagement. In this context, it includes events, commercial opportunities, recreational activities, and artistic activations.

Originally intended as a versatile space for various passive uses, the West Palm Beach waterfront has primarily been utilized for large-scale events. This emphasis on major events has limited opportunities for daily use and smaller-scale activities, resulting in the waterfront being underutilized outside these significant gatherings. This chapter examines the current conditions and identifies how a more balanced programming approach could rejuvenate the waterfront, transforming it into a vibrant and actively used space throughout the year.

1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Existing Events + Programming
- Dining
- Retail
- Arts in Public Spaces

2 UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

3 OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES



EXISTING CONDITIONS

EXISTING EVENTS + PROGRAMMING

West Palm Beach has a strong baseline of successful year round programming ranging from the GreenMarket to Clematis by Night, to 5k walk/runs, to concerts, festivals and block parties. With 138 event days a year, the waterfront hosted 525 events in 2023, 250 of which occurred at Lake Pavilion.

Large events like the Boat Show and Sunfest are important parts of the economic vibrancy of the downtown, bringing over 100k people to the waterfront annually. Both play roles in the revitalization and consistent quality of the West Palm Beach waterfront, each with unique benefits and challenges. Their ability to attract large crowds, drive economic activity, and enhance the area’s reputation are key positives. However, effective management of crowds and infrastructure, along with a balanced approach to daily activity and event-specific focus, are essential to ensure sustainable revitalization. By leveraging the strengths of both events and addressing the challenges, the waterfront can continue to thrive as a dynamic and attractive destination for a wide range of visitors.

Recurring events, such as the GreenMarket and Clematis by Night, are also integral to Downtown West Palm Beach’s waterfront vitality, drawing diverse crowds and boosting economic activity. Visitors to these two events tend to stay longer, with people attending the GreenMarket enjoying the views and recreational activities, and Clematis by Night attendees patronizing local bars, restaurants, shops and alternative entertainment venues.

Repeat attendees provide opportunities to cross-market programming, incentivizing return visits outside of event times.

138
Event Days per Year

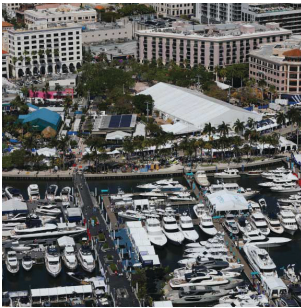
525
Events in 2023

11,900
Daily visits

6-9pm
peak visitation times

KEY EVENT ANALYSIS

BOAT SHOW



SUNFEST



GREENMARKET



CLEMATIS BY NIGHT



Overview	Major event that attracts a niche audience interested in maritime activities and luxury boating	Popular event appealing to a broad audience, including families and young adults. Significantly increases foot traffic and visitor engagement	Saturdays along Clematis Street and Flagler Avenue, draws substantial foot traffic to the waterfront	Weekly event featuring live music and entertainment, attracts diverse crowds to Clematis Street and the waterfront
Number of 2023 Attendees	121,151	134,380	100,000+	26,000+
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">High-value transactionsExtended staysEnhanced reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Diverse audienceExtended engagementCultural enrichment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased foot trafficSupport for local businessesSocial engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consistent activityComplementary activitiesEconomic benefits
Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Infrastructure strainEvent-specific focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Crowd managementTemporary Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Weather dependenceSpace utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Event coordinationMaintaining interest

RECREATION + FOOT TRAFFIC

Pilot initiatives like the Flagler Drive Pilot and free programs at the Mandel Public Library have highlighted the appeal of smaller, cost-effective programs focused on wellness and interaction with the natural surroundings. Activities such as yoga and meditation have resonated well with the community, demonstrating a strong interest in engaging more closely with the waterfront’s natural beauty.

While the stunning waterfront views are a major draw, access to the water itself is currently limited to the public dock. Visit Palm Beach currently runs numerous successful regular daily programs from the public dock, such as paddle boat and kayak rentals, snorkeling and catamaran tours. Due to bond restrictions capping private use of the waterfront to 10%, expanded permitting to private, recreational vendors are not allowed at this time, however should be revisited to meet community desire to engage with this valuable local resource.

Outside of scheduled events, the Waterfront Promenade and its signature public spaces are widely used by runners, walkers, and families who frequent the area for daily recreational activities. Ensuring that these spaces remain welcoming and accessible to all, without becoming dominated by commercial interests, is crucial for preserving their role as inclusive recreational areas.



Visit the Palm Beaches kayak tours are a favorite recreational activity by residents and visitors alike.

“While more events can activate the waterfront, I believe programming focused on connecting people to nature and creating an educational environment is most valuable. We should sponsor activities that embrace the beauty of intertwining the natural waterfront with city living.”

“Question is not more or less events. Better events or fresher events.”

The emergence of new businesses and offices in the downtown district is introducing a different demographic of consumers to the waterfront area. Daytime foot traffic in downtown and along the waterfront during off prime visitation time is primarily driven by office workers who utilize these spaces for breaks, lunch outings, and postwork relaxation. In evaluating visitor behavior, there is a noticeable peak in foot traffic during the evening hours from 6pm to 9pm, with a smaller increase observed during lunchtime from 11am to 2pm. On a daily basis, foot traffic triples on Sundays compared to weekdays, with Sundays and Fridays showing nearly double the visitation.

STORAGE + UTILITIES

Currently there is no storage on the Waterfront. There are only designated storage areas at the Visitor Center, Lake Pavilion and at the Meyer Amphitheater. Mid to large size events in this direct area are challenged with this lack of storage, having to store materials off site and/or bring in their own storage containers for the duration of their events. For events or activations elsewhere along the waterfront, new storage solutions will need to be explored, potentially in the form of kiosks or shipping containers. As seen in the Flagler Shore Pilot, shipping containers used as storage were deemed an eyesore, however, they could be an opportunity to bring additional programming, art, greenery or viewpoints to the waterfront through thoughtful activation.

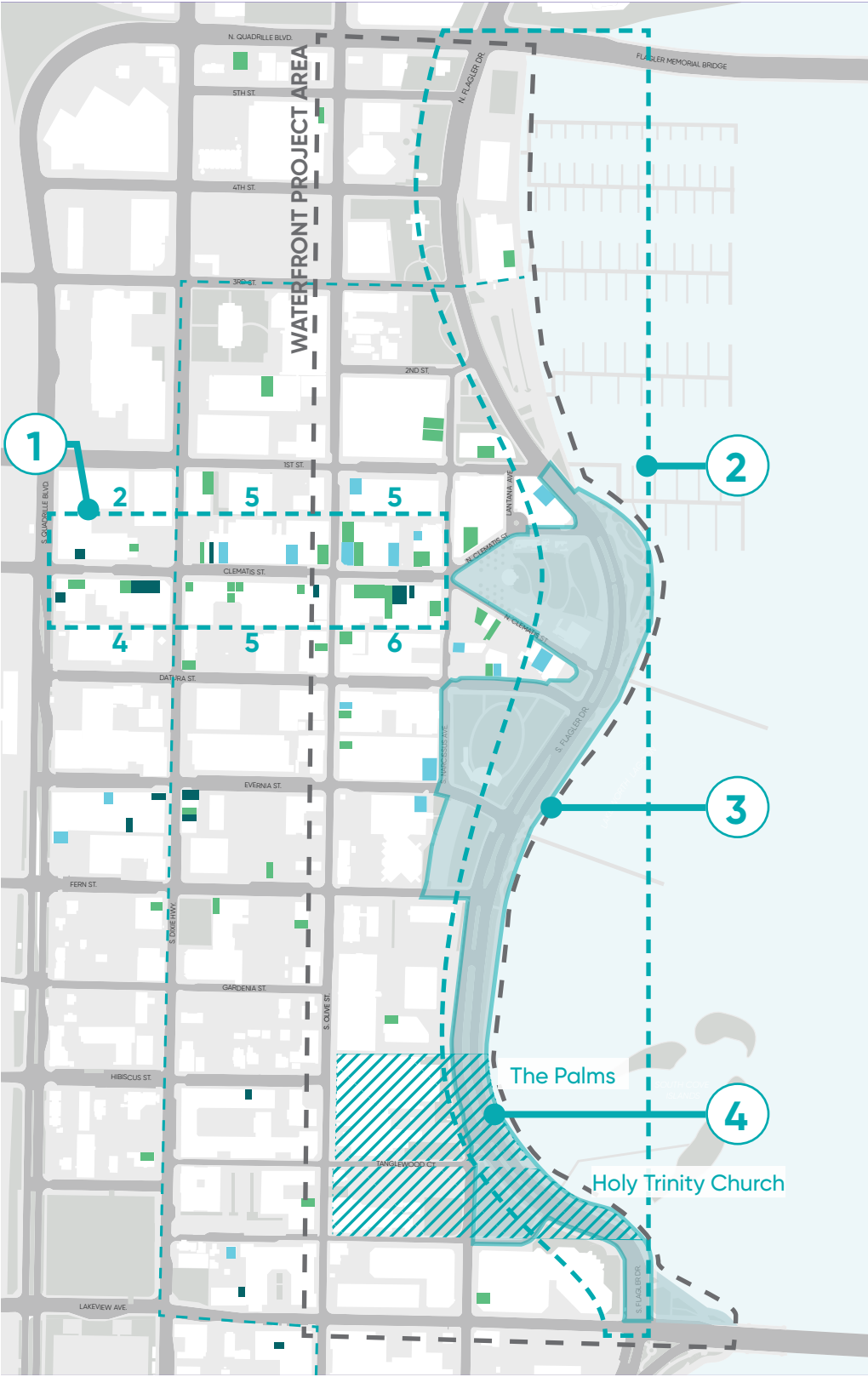
65%
survey respondents visit the waterfront for personal recreation



Runners take part in the Bill Bone 5k, racing along Flagler Drive on 4th of July.



Both signature public spaces are commonly used for yoga and meditation events.



COMMERCIAL AMENITIES

- Bar
- Dining
- Retail
- Permitted Area for Sunfest and the Boat Show
- Riparian Land Agreement Zones

DINING

The waterfront presents a unique opportunity to expand dining options for residents, workers, and visitors alike. At present, dining options predominantly consist of sit-down restaurants and bars, primarily located along Clematis Street and further into the Downtown area, which may not cater easily to diverse demographics. Over three-quarters of survey respondents visit the waterfront to visit a restaurant, with popular locations like Avocado Grill, E.R. Bradley's, and Bodega Taqueria y Tequila, which offer waterfront views and/or outdoor seating, highlight the demand for exterior and more diverse dining options.

Notably, there is a lack of food offerings within the block directly adjacent to the waterfront exclusive to Clematis, and throughout there is a noticeable absence of quick, grab-and-go food and beverage options such as coffee carts, hot dog kiosks, or food trucks, that could capitalize on the increased attendance during those periods. Additionally, shaded outdoor seating areas for comfortable dining are limited. There is strong community interest in introducing both temporary and permanent affordable dining opportunities, capitalizing on the scenic waterfront views and enhancing opportunities for lingering in the area.

1 | The three blocks of Downtown Clematis represents the densest commercial area, with 27 businesses and an average of 5 commercial businesses per block.

2 | Along the 14 blocks of the waterfront and Flagler Drive there are only 3 food and beverage establishments.

3 | Area restricted for vendor use during large scale events.

4 | Due to riparian land agreements, public amenities can not be located on these privately owned publicly accessible spaces.

77%
of survey respondents visit the waterfront to go to a restaurant

MORE SMALL SCALE FOOD AND BEVERAGE VENDORS was the top programming desire from survey respondents with **30%** requesting increased options

28%
of survey respondents visit the waterfront to go to shopping



Donuts are a popular grab-and-go treat during the Green Market, highlighting a desire for quick handheld food options.



E.R. Bradley's Saloon, located along Flagler St. is the only outdoor waterfront dining location.



The Palm Harbor Marina Deli is the only dining option directly on the waterfront, however is hidden within the Marina Offices.

RETAIL

Currently there is no retail space along the waterfront. Despite the limited number of retail businesses nearby, this sector is flourishing in West Palm Beach, with occupancy rates and rents approaching pre-pandemic levels. This strong market signals promising economic opportunities for the waterfront.

The ongoing popularity of the Green Market as a key waterfront event highlights community interest in this sector, with community feedback underscoring a strong preference for high-quality, locally crafted goods over mass-produced tourist items, as well as a desire for cohesive and well-designed retail or market stall areas. It’s crucial that any new additions complement existing businesses and offer a diverse range of products to enhance the local economy.

ARTS IN PUBLIC SPACES

West Palm Beach boasts a thriving public art program, having commissioned 68 local artists over the past 8 years through its Art Life Program. This initiative has led to 10 temporary and long-term art installations along the western edge of Flagler Drive, including sites such as the Banyan Garage, Jose Marti Park, and the Meyer Amphitheater. The program supports short-term projects as a means to test ideas for potential permanent installations, featuring a diverse range of art forms including murals, sculptures, and asphalt art on storm drains.

While the program has seen significant success in various parts of the city, the waterfront has remained largely untouched by these artistic endeavors. This has resulted in a lack of artistic engagement directly along the water’s edge. However, the upcoming extension of the program, Play + Art + Connect, launching in summer 2024, presents a promising opportunity to address this gap.

Play + Art + Connect aims to reimagine the northern section of the Great Lawn by creating a “PlayLab” that combines playful experiences with public art installations. This new initiative will involve community engagement to explore and test various artistic activations. It will also serve as a platform to learn which types of art are most successful and to involve local groups in the creation of art that could later be expanded into waterfront interventions.

“Small kiosks so people and families can picnic, enjoy the scenery and also enjoy the dining and shopping with easy and safe access to walk or bike around.”

“I’d love to see more outdoor dining concepts, and water view dining options, but in a way that doesn’t clutter the water front or over commercialize it.”



The success of the WPB Green Market demonstrates the potential for other retail opportunities at the Waterfront.



Micro-retail kiosks can provide a low risk entry point for new business owners and artisans.

UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Mixed views. Some want more community-oriented events, but many express concern about noise, crowds, and commercialization.
- Strong desire for family-friendly and passive activities (e.g., yoga, art walks, farmers markets).
- Resistance to nightlife, large concerts, or perceived “outsider” events.

STAKEHOLDER MEMOS

- Support increased and diversified programming to drive foot traffic and economic value.
- Prioritize curated cultural events, wellness offerings, and consistent activation of underused spaces.
- Emphasize aligning programming with downtown brand identity.

BEHAVIORAL DATA

- Shows highest traffic and spending during large-scale events (e.g., SunFest, Boat Show, HIP Sandi).
- Reveals peak visit times coincide with leisure hours and event scheduling.
- Indicates weekend and seasonal spikes tied to intentional activations.

SHARED GROUND: Acknowledgment that programming adds value—when aligned with audience and scale.

GAPS IN PERSPECTIVE: Community is cautious; stakeholders and data show events drive impact and engagement.



One of the 20 “Agua de Vida” murals by artist Gregory Dirr painted along North Flagler Drive and Clematis Street in 2022, calling attention to the dangers of stormwater pollution.



Codes, a sculptural installation at Flagler Banyon Square in 2019 by Creative Machines. The installation, made of glass, LED's and stainless steel, spells out a message as you move North to South along the waterfront



Ashlee Sanford's piece “Play” in Jose Marti Park, as part of West Palm Beach's ArtLife Public Arts program

OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

EVENTS + PROGRAMMING

Opportunities:

- Existing events and programs year round draw diverse demographics to the waterfront, creating a captive audience for any waterfront enhancements.
- The waterfront sees a high amount of repeat visitors as well as an increasing number of unique visitors. Improving the visitor experience will encourage people to visit more frequently, stay longer and support the economic vibrancy of the area.
- Capitalize on the influx of families to the area with increased programming and spaces for youth.
- Pilot programs have demonstrated the popularity of smaller, affordable programming with a focus on wellness and engagement with the natural areas of the waterfront, such as yoga and meditation.
- Underutilized spaces such as Jose Marti Park and Trinity Park provide an opportunity for more passive programing and design interventions.
- Visit West Palm Beach holds permits for boat cruises from the public dock and operates a successful kayak and paddleboard rental program, underscoring the community's desire for programming opportunities around water access.

Challenges

- City ordinance prohibiting mobile vendors in the downtown area, including the waterfront, unless it's part of a city-approved special event.
- Current storage locations are limited to the visitor center and a closet at the Lake Pavilion. This lack of sufficient back-of-house type storage limits the capacity to organize medium to large scale events efficiently.
- Limited power control for the waterfront, leading to potential misuse.
- Frequent street closures for large scale events impact perceived access to the waterfront, particularly on Flagler. Some suggestions include limiting the frequency of closures or finding alternative venues to reduce congestion and inconvenience for residents.

DINING

Opportunities:

- Strong community desire and existing foot traffic to support quick, grab and go type food options and retail vendors.
- The emergence of new businesses and offices in the downtown district is introducing a different demographic of consumers to the waterfront area. Opportunity to tailor strategies to engage the local business community during off-peak times.

Challenges

- Community fear that adding vendors will make the waterfront appear cluttered and over commercialized may lead to initial pushback.
- Existing multi-year agreements with large events impact waterfront programming and can be limiting. For example, in some cases, existing agreements restrict waterfront use for public and vendors during events through physical boundaries and a pay barrier during event periods.
- Public amenities cannot be constructed along the publicly accessible stretch of the waterfront directly in front of the Plaza of the Palm Beaches and Holy Trinity due to their privately held riparian rights.

ARTS IN PUBLIC SPACES

Opportunities:

- The ArtLife Program is an established arts program that has already funded multiple arts interventions in the area.
- Program has identified location for an immersive art piece with collaboration from multiple entities.
- Play Art Connect Project: has existing funding for the project at the Visitors Center rethinking its functionality.

- Explore opportunities for art installations staged on the water.

TOPIC 4 | STEWARDSHIP

Public space stewardship is the practice of managing and maintaining public spaces responsibly for the benefit of communities. It's based on the idea that public spaces are a resource that can be used to enhance neighborhoods and encourage human activity. As an umbrella term, public space stewardship may include work in areas such as: maintenance, operations, cleaning, and funding. While a stewardship organization or agency likely has a role in other areas, such as programming and community partnerships, for the purposes of this report, public space stewardship refers more narrowly to topics of maintenance, management, operations, and cleaning.

1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Patchwork of Private vs. Public Ownership
- Waterway Restrictions
- Bond Restrictions
- Maintenance of Public Spaces
- Homelessness
- Revenue Generation

2 UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

3 OPPORTUNITIES + CONSTRAINTS



photo from Downtown West Palm Beach



PUBLIC + PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

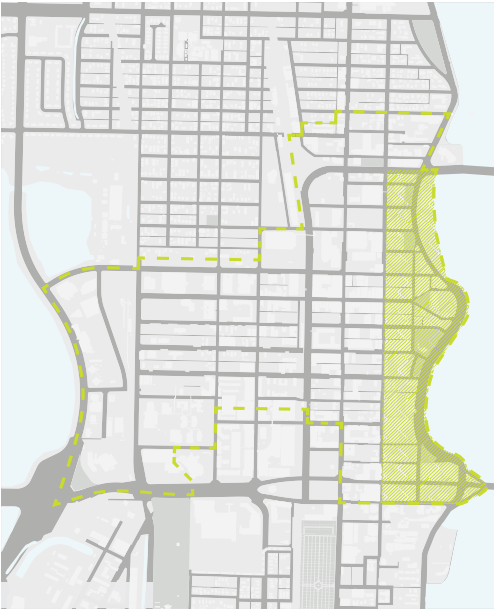
- Public Space
- City Holds Lease with Operator
- Riparian Land Agreement Areas

"Invest in good design, branding, and place high value on consistency when it comes to bringing in public art, murals, branding, way-finding, landscape design, etc. Every 'district' needs to have a decision-maker who represents that district to come together for a strategic marketing and design meeting."

EXISTING CONDITIONS

PATCHWORK OF PUBLIC + PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

West Palm Beach's waterfront is a major asset in the City's public realm and there is broad alignment around the desire for the City's waterfront public spaces to be clean and welcoming 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Within the waterfront there is a cross section of public, private, and leased properties. Due to the complexities of mix property ownership, this creates difficulties in maintaining consistent upkeep across the waterfront. While the West Palm Beach Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) district does cover key waterfront areas, the DDA has a mission to service a large downtown.



- DDA District
- DDA District Boundary Line
- Waterfront Project Area



WATERWAY RESTRICTIONS

The following current regulations/restrictions pertain to the downtown waterfront area:

- Palm Harbor Marina possesses a submerged lease area within the Lake Worth Lagoon.
- The City of West Palm Beach has also established a submerged land lease area in the same lagoon.
- In 1990, City Commission Resolution No. 53-90 instituted a restrictive covenant governing the use of waterfront park properties, mandating that these areas be dedicated solely for park purposes and for the benefit of the public. The only exceptions to this stipulation are the former Woman’s Club building and the previous municipal public library. This property is delineated by North Clematis Street to the north, Flagler Drive to the east, South Clematis Street to the south, and Narcissus Avenue to the west.
- The Trump Plaza of the Palm Beaches Condominium Association, Inc. has entered into an agreement with the City concerning their littoral rights to a portion of the submerged lands in the Lake Worth Lagoon. The City of West Palm Beach is required to involve the association in any discussions regarding future development plans for the downtown waterfront.
- In 2015, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church reached a settlement with Palm Beach County and the City of West Palm Beach, which included a payment of \$225,000 to the Church, with \$160,000 provided by the County and \$65,000 by the City. Furthermore, the County committed to obtaining a dock permit for the Church at its own expense, while prohibiting the expansion of the South Cove Project. Upon completion of all payments, the Church agreed to permit the County to connect its boardwalk to the City’s seawall, and the County would subsequently link the Church’s dock to the City’s seawall once the necessary permits were obtained.

BOND RESTRICTIONS

The development of the West Palm Beach Waterfront was financed through bond funds, with the present allocation allowing 10% of the area for private property usage.

The limited allocation for private property ensures that the majority of the waterfront remains accessible to the public. This creates a vibrant communal space and promotes recreational activities. However, this allocation poses the following challenges:

- **Limitation on Development:** The 10% allocation for private use restricts the potential for private development and investment. This limitation could impact economic growth and the potential to generate additional revenue for operating purposes.
- **Potential Funding Issues:** Relying on bond funds might limit the scope of ongoing maintenance and improvements. As public spaces require continuous upkeep, a lack of funds could result in the deterioration of the waterfront over time.

To ensure the sustained success of the waterfront, the right balance between public accessibility and private development must be reached. Planning for a future waterfront space with a flexible design that can adapt to changing needs is essential. This flexibility allows for adjustments in the allocation of private property based on the evolving requirements of the community and the economic landscape.

Conflicts may arise over the use and allocation of space, requiring careful planning, transparent communication and effective management.

MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES

Maintenance is one key aspect of stewardship, and it has a big impact on people: public spaces that are clean and well-maintained are more inviting and are typically perceived as safer. Surveys and community outreach conducted for this study reveal that people want to see the highest level of service being provided. However, the current mix of properties and levels of resources available to the City and other partners for maintenance.

Stakeholders site numerous complaints including inadequate care for facilities like restrooms, cleanliness issues, poor maintenance of landscaping, and deteriorating sidewalk infrastructure. The current state of maintenance does not match with community desires or expectations and points to a clear need for additional resources to maintain the waterfront.

HOMELESSNESS

Challenges associated with public perceptions of homelessness were cited as a key concern within stakeholder interviews and in the community survey. While perceptions of safety were voiced, the concerns most voiced were around the symptoms of homelessness, such as trash, encampments, and what was deemed “improper” use of public space such as bathing in water fountains or features, or use of power connections. Most respondents felt increased resources were needed, both from a systemic perspective; addressing housing shortages, income inequality and other structural causes, and also supporting those in need through services and outreach.

REVENUE GENERATION

While public funds will always continue to play an important role in stewardship of waterfront public spaces, creative approaches to revenue generation will be essential to enabling the highest standard of service. While commercial uses are significantly limited by bond restrictions, there are still opportunities for some revenue generation through activities that align with the amenities people want to see at the waterfront. A dedicated business plan would be required to further investigate viable revenue generation opportunities with consideration for the types of programs, amenities, and services that are desired by locals and visitors.

“We need to ensure better cleanliness and maintenance, so there needs to be a budget for ongoing maintenance that is actually a solid budget. Too often we create spaces and do not properly budget for the maintenance.”

“Perception of Public Safety is paramount to success!!”

“A lot of people in our city are homeless because they may lose their jobs, then can’t afford an apartment or lack family and slip into a nightmare.”

“The homeless population on the waterfront is a real problem. Makes the Waterfront seem dangerous and dirty (trash, personal belongings, human waste).”

HOMELESSNESS (85%) AND PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AT THE WATERFRONT RELATED TO HOMELESSNESS (39%) were the top challenges related to Waterfront stewardship voiced by survey respondents.

UNDERSTANDING PERSPECTIVES: COMMUNITY, STAKEHOLDERS, AND DATA

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Common concerns about cleanliness, trash, homelessness, and nighttime safety.
- Requests for more visible staff presence, better lighting, and consistent upkeep.
- Frustration with unclear rules and enforcement.

STAKEHOLDER MEMOS

- Call for formalized stewardship models: public-private partnerships, BID involvement, consistent maintenance staffing.
- Support placemaking efforts that include ongoing management—not just capital upgrades.
- Recommend equity-focused policies around operations and oversight.

BEHAVIORAL DATA

- Reveals underuse of areas perceived as unsafe or unmaintained after dark (e.g., South Promenade).
- Foot traffic tends to concentrate where conditions feel clean, lit, and socially vibrant.
- Declines in usage seen in areas without clear management presence.

SHARED GROUND: Universal agreement that maintenance and management matter.

GAPS IN PERSPECTIVE: Community sees it as a reactive need (fix what’s broken); stakeholders view it as proactive strategy (sustain value).



A Downtown Ambassador pushes a trash bin, part of the new partnership with the DDA and Block by Block to address trash and cleaning needs.



The Hut, located at the waterfront landing, is the only kiosk and micro business currently permitted to operate at the waterfront promenade

OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC SPACES

Opportunities:

- High public use of spaces merits increased investment in maintenance and stewardship.
- Strong public support for a clean, safe, and activated waterfront warrants exploration of the development of a dedicated waterfront stewardship/public realm management entity.
- Perceptions of safety are closely tied to the level of activity and cleanliness in a space, creating a huge opportunity to enhance people’s sense of

- safety through enhanced stewardship activities.
- Existing public facilities and infrastru cture are present to meet basic needs (restrooms, trash bins, and water fountains).

Challenges

- Current restroom and drinking water facilities are aging and in need of repair.
- Cleanliness issues can be a problem, with contributing factors being the lack of sufficient trash bins and maintenance programs for the current quantity of use.

- Existing landscaping is poorly maintained and has a significant landscaping cost.
- Waterfront refuse from fishing and boats can be a concern for area stakeholders.
- Sidewalk infrastructure is deteriorating and in need of maintenance.
- Homelessness is viewed as a significant issue affecting both safety and the aesthetic appeal of the waterfront.

CHAPTER 5

TEN “BIG IDEAS” FOR THE WATERFRONT

Grounded in extensive community feedback, this chapter provides recommendations that focus on revitalizing the city’s downtown waterfront. Grounded by three major themes and organized as ten “Big Ideas” they bridge the topics explored in the previous chapters – physical design, programming, access, and stewardship.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recommendations provided in this chapter support the Mayor’s vision under the “Your Waterfront. Your Way.” initiative as they establish a collective vision for the public spaces along the downtown waterfront and provide short and long-term strategies that seek to create a vibrant, equitable, and more resilient public realm. Grounded by three major themes, the recommendations are organized as “10 Big Ideas” designed to provide a clear and systematic approach centered by the guiding principles revealed during the community visioning process.

THEME ONE: IMPLEMENT QUICK-IMPACT INITIATIVES

The ideas under this theme focus on implementing quick-impact initiatives that deliver immediate, tangible benefits to the waterfront. These actions aim to enhance the area’s usability and appeal in the short term while laying the groundwork for more extensive, long-term improvements. By prioritizing upgrades to existing facilities, activating key public spaces like the promenade, and coordinating a well-curated schedule of events, the goal is to create a vibrant, engaging atmosphere that draws more visitors and encourages community involvement. These efforts are designed to show early success, build momentum, and address immediate needs, positioning the waterfront for continued growth and improvement.

THEME TWO: REIMAGINE THE WATERFRONT

This concept advocates for a comprehensive redesign of the waterfront to develop a premier open space that adapts to the community’s evolving needs and incorporates signature spaces. The updated design should feature expanded shade, native landscaping, enhanced seating, public art, and interactive amenities to ensure a cohesive waterfront experience. It also recommends replacing the outdated seawall with resilient, ecologically restorative elements to improve water access. Additionally, it prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists along Flagler Drive and suggests traffic calming measures and sidewalk enhancements to improve safety and accessibility.

THEME THREE: ADOPT A WATERFRONT STEWARDSHIP MODEL

This final theme and Big Idea calls for a dedicated management framework designed to manage and sustain the health, functionality, and vitality of the waterfront area.

Each of the “Big Ideas” provide detailed objectives and implementation steps. For further understanding, a map key identifies the proposal areas for each initiative. Additionally, a matrix is provided to detail key considerations including cost, timeline, and stewardship/maintenance needs.



COST
How much of an investment will the project be in labor, design, installation, and operation?

- 1. The estimated cost of the project is \$25,000 or lower
- 2. The estimated cost of the project is \$25,000 - \$100,000 or higher
- 3. The estimated cost of the project is \$100,000 or higher



TIMELINE
What is the anticipated timeline of the project? Is it temporary or a permanent visioning?

- 1. The project is event based or temporary (1 day to 1 year) in nature
- 2. The project is semi-permanent (2 years - 5 years) in nature
- 3. The project is intended as a long term strategy or permanent in nature



STEWARDSHIP/MAINTENANCE
How complex is the maintenance of the project? Has a possible steward been identified?

- 1. The project requires little (6 months-1 year) to no maintenance
- 2. The project will require infrequent maintenance (monthly) by just one entity
- 3. The project will require frequent maintenance (weekly) by more than one entity



THEME 1:
IMPLEMENT QUICK-IMPACT INITIATIVES

BIG IDEA #1:
IMPROVE AND PRIORITIZE STEWARDSHIP AND SAFETY OF THE WATERFRONT

OVERVIEW:


Public feedback emphasized the need for consistent maintenance of the existing waterfront, including regular landscaping, sidewalk repairs, and event logistics. Responsibility for these tasks often falls into unclear or competing departmental priorities. Additionally, improving safety was a top concern, with homelessness contributing to perceptions of insecurity. While this report does not address the root causes of homelessness, it focuses on managing its impact to protect public access. By implementing the proposed recommendations, the waterfront can become more vibrant, attracting diverse visitors and fostering a safer, more welcoming environment.

- OBJECTIVE:**
- Improve maintenance and cleanliness of existing facilities by ensuring that landscaping, sidewalks, and other public amenities are regularly maintained.
 - Improve waterfront safety through enhanced public safety and social service programs.
 - Enhance lighting along the waterfront paths to improve visibility

- and safety at night.
- CURRENT EFFORTS:**
- DDA’s Downtown Ambassador Program brings together cleaning, pressure washing, and safety services to enhance the downtown experience. Ambassadors will help keep our streets clean, remove graffiti, assist with events, and collaborate with the City of West Palm Beach to ensure safety and cleanliness of public spaces.
 - Under the Department of Housing and Community Development, the City has a 10 dedicated in-house staff members providing services to homeless individuals such as outreach, connection to basic needs, community resources, shelter and supportiveand permanent housing options.
 - The city has established ordinances and policies to address quality of life issues and prohibited conduct in public spaces.
 - The City of West Palm Beach Police Department has increased presence in the downtown to enforce laws where necessary while also collaborating with the City’s homeless outreach team to provide compassion and support to the homeless.

- NEXT STEPS:**
- In the short term, designate a staff member who will be responsible for overseeing all maintenance activities along the waterfront, ensuring consistent upkeep, coordinating

- between various entities, and addressing any gaps or overlaps in responsibility. By acting as the central point of contact, this individual will streamline communication between departments, vendors, and stakeholders, ensuring timely repairs, regular landscaping, and effective management of event logistics, contributing to a well-maintained and welcoming waterfront environment.
- Create an enhanced and pro-active schedule around cleaning, maintenance, and timely response to issues.
- Audit and improve trash and recycling programs at the waterfront, and consider opportunities to pair these programs with art, beautification, or educational initiatives (ex: art decorations on trash cans, collaborations with local groups on clean-ups for environmental and educational purposes, etc.).
- Implement recommendations of the West Palm Beach Lighting Study to provide proper lighting enhancements in high-priority areas.
- Raise awareness among the public about homelessness and the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Consider additional programs and/or partnerships with organizations that serve people experiencing homelessness.



COST

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TIMELINE

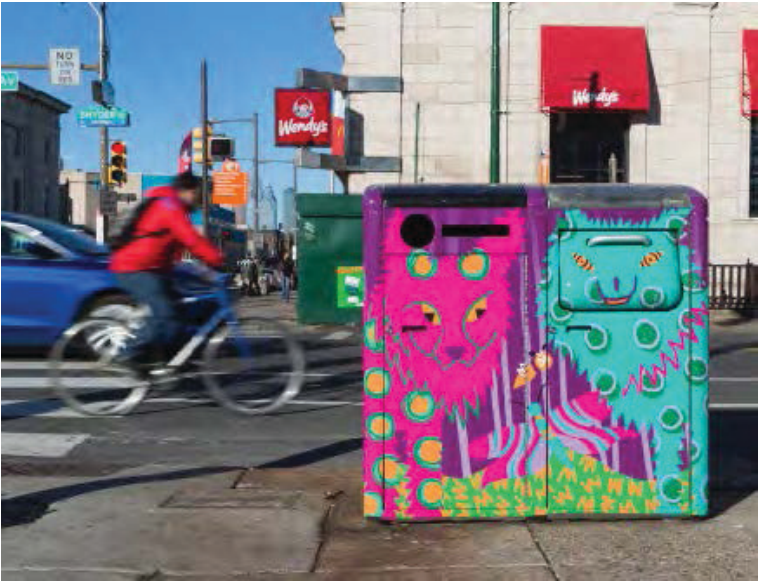
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MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case Study: Civic Center Community Benefit District (CBD) | San Francisco, CA
- Case Study: Popup Winnepeg | Manitoba, Canada
- Case Study: Green Street Program | Portland, OR
- Urban Alchemy. urban-alchemy.us
- Case Study: Civic Center Community Benefit District (CBD) | San Francisco, CA



Big Belly Trash Containers, Philadelphia, PA.
Photo by Steve Weinik



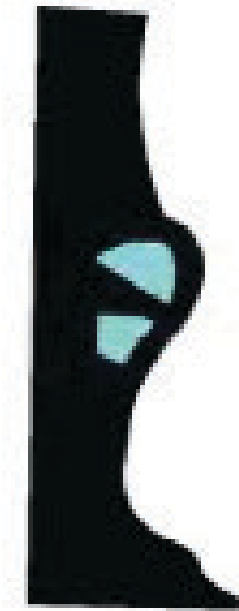
BIG IDEA #2:
SHORT TERM UPGRADES TO SIGNATURE SPACES

OVERVIEW:

Looking beyond the waterfront edge and at the signature public spaces that line the waterfront across Flagler Drive, there are surgical improvements that can be made to each to improve comfort and accessibility. These improvements should not be considered large scale redesigns of these public spaces, but rather shorter term, targeted improvements to already beloved and well used spaces and include diverse play areas, additional seating, shade structures, and improved landscaping.

OBJECTIVE:

- Create a seamless flow of activities and experiences that balance dynamic and passive uses of the space.
- Explore targeted opportunities to remove physical barriers at the edges of public spaces that obstruct clear lines-of-sight.
- Consider removable shading options, such as umbrellas, temporary pergolas, or shades sails, especially in areas where flexibility is required during larger scale events.
- Increase waterfront resiliency through native plantings. Replacing palm trees with larger tree canopies can help reduce heat island effects, while root systems mitigate soil runoff during heavy rainfall
- Integrate native, low-water trees and greenery supported by sustainable maintenance plans for long-term health and functionality.
- Develop alternative play spaces along the waterfront to cater to the growing number of families,



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- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
- Case Study: Central Delaware Waterfront Park | Philadelphia, PA
 - Case Study: Bay Park | Sarasota, FL
 - Case Study: District Wharf | Washington DC
 - Case Study: Atlanta Beltline Art Trail | Atlanta, GA

SPUN Chairs, Presidio Tunnel Tops, San Francisco, CA



Aerial of Meyer Amphitheater

- fostering joyful experiences that encourage lingering for both the young and young at heart.
- Enhance invitations to frequent and enjoy the waterfront with a range of well-maintained, accessible and attractive seating options. Work with area stakeholders to identify areas where more seating is most desired and deploy movable and playful seating options to complement existing fixed benches.
 - Leverage learnings and momentum from the Play + Art + Connect program to explore more permanent installations on the Great Lawn and throughout the waterfront.
 - Pursue capital upgrades to existing public facilities to enhance quality and accessibility.
 - Ensure Meyer Amphitheater effectively serves the community and complies with contemporary performance space standards for years to come through the identification and recommendation of structural upgrades, facility enhancements, and expansions to the venue’s operational capabilities.
 - Ensure future designs of the Great Lawn enhances the synergy between the reimagined Visitor Center, public art installation, Great Lawn, and the city’s waterfront.

CURRENT EFFORTS:

- Funding has been secured through the Play + Art + Connect

program for a reimagining of the Visitor Center, a public art installation to anchor the Great Lawn, and the creation of a Play Lab to appeal to all generations.

NEXT STEPS:

- Meyer Amphitheater Upgrades: Commit resources to assess and make necessary capital improvements including structural, electrical, plumbing, updates to the catwalks, security features, restrooms and other back of-house functions. Consider expansion of facility to include concessions and other needed facilities such as storage space. Additional upgrades include landscaping, with a focus on incorporating large canopy trees, shade, native landscaping, and other amenities.
- Great Lawn: Consider installing temporary shade structures such as retractable canopies and umbrellas to provide immediate relief. Incorporate large canopy trees and other native landscaping, where appropriate.
- Other Facility Improvements: Assess and plan for necessary improvements to bathrooms, water fountains, and other safety facilities throughout the waterfront.



BIG IDEA #3:
ACTIVATE THE WATERFRONT PROMENADE

OVERVIEW:

Residents and stakeholders uniformly expressed a love for walking along the Waterfront Promenade. At the same time, many also pointed to a need for improved shade, play, seating and other small scale active and passive forms of programming along the promenade. The recommendations in this section are to happen in the very short-term while utilizing inexpensive materials.

OBJECTIVE:

- Activate the waterfront promenade with play, shade, seating, programming and placemaking elements.
- The activation should include removable shading options, such as umbrellas, temporary pergolas, or shades sails where flexibility is required during larger scale events. Storage and ongoing maintenance will need to be considered for any flexible elements.
- Integrate native, low-water trees and greenery supported by sustainable maintenance plans for long-term health and functionality.

NEXT STEPS:

- Implement placemaking project for the waterfront promenade

that identifies locations for play structures/activities, planters, creative seating elements, and other placemaking components. The project should consider:

- Locations for micro-structures that can house small scale retail or dining opportunities;
- Additional shading in the form of native trees in large planters and/ or build shaded pergolas;
- Temporary or tree lighting; and
- A plan for regular deployment and storage of movable seating and amenities.
- Create a micro-business application program to solicit vendors for small scale retail. As part of this application, provide additional incentives to existing downtown businesses to open satellite locations along the promenade.
- Create a brand for the new waterfront promenade and conduct a marketing campaign that follows the rollout and programming.
- Address needed changes to existing lease agreements and city ordinances that prevent physical changes to the waterfront.

Alpha Bravo Charlie Installation, MASSIVart, Toronto, Ontario



COST



TIMELINE



MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case Study: Toronto Central Waterfront | Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- Paris Plages | Paris, France
- Fisherman’s Wharf | San Fransisco, CA



Paris Plage, Paris, France

BIG IDEA #4:
COMPLETE THE LAKE TRAIL LOOP

OVERVIEW:

Making it easier for people to walk and bike along the Waterfront Promenade is a central goal of this document. At a regional scale, that means recognizing that the Waterfront Promenade is part of a larger network of waterfront walking and biking paths that extend north and south, and across the Intracoastal. Notably, the Lake Trail—a premier five-mile segment of the 16-mile Palm Beach Island — offers a fully protected route featuring scenic views of the Intracoastal Waterway, architectural landmarks, and lush kapok and palm trees. Inking the Waterfront Promenade with the Lake Trail and other routes, while completing the Lake Trail Loop, represents a significant opportunity to advance the city’s mobility goals in the near term.

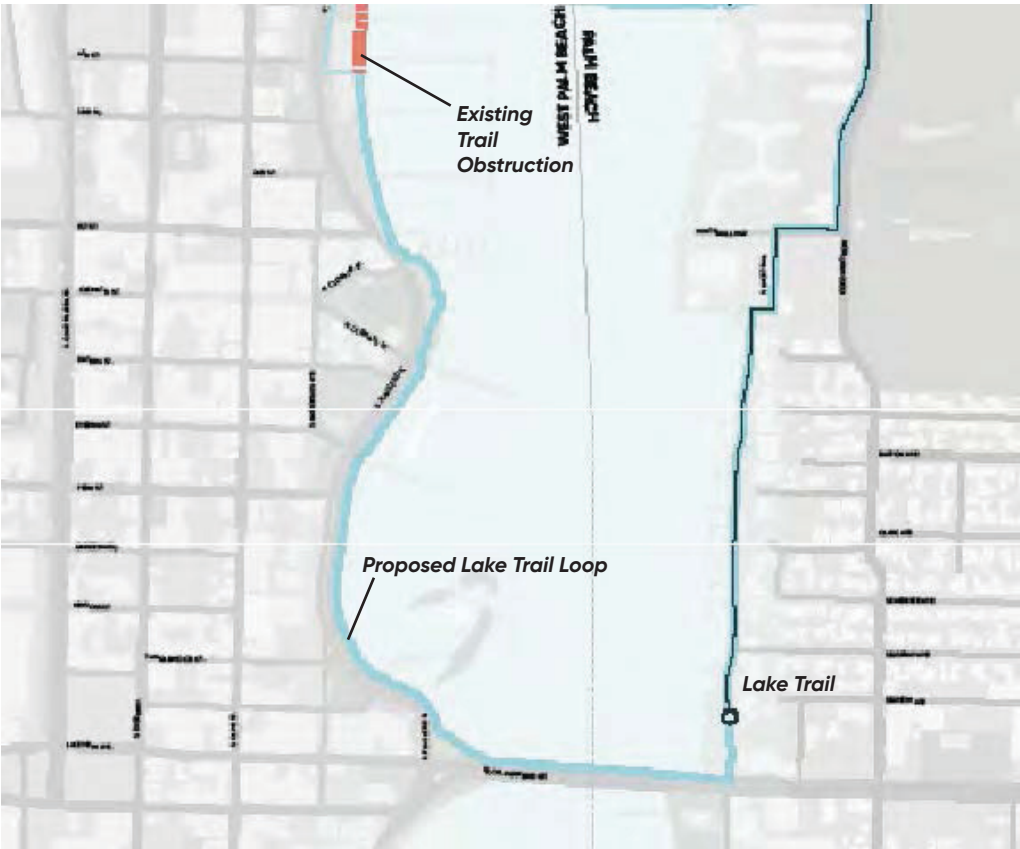
OBJECTIVE:

- Enhancing connectivity for all modalities to encourage alternative transportation methods and increase accessibility to the Waterfront.
- Reduce existing barriers to walking and biking to points north and south along the Waterfront Promenade.
- Enhance navigability and connectivity throughout the development and implementation of a comprehensive wayfinding

system for the West Palm Beach Waterfront.

NEXT STEPS:

- Create a plan for the creation of the Lake Trail Loop, to include addressing missing access to the Flagler Memorial Bridge on the north side of the Promenade and a coordinated set of wayfinding and branding throughout. Work with the Town of Palm Beach to coordinate efforts with the existing with existing South Lake Trail.
- Identify locations for bicycle parking along this route and expand BrightBike docking stations.
- Explore opportunities and build partnerships to expand the bike valet program for events on the Waterfront.
- Develop signage and wayfinding tools to facilitate navigating along the Lake Trail look and points beyond, connecting to programmatic and commercial destinations, the Waterfront, and connecting trails. Suggestions include improved directional signs to nearby attractions, with distances and travel times for both cyclists and pedestrians, learner maps, and more visible markers to guide pedestrians.



COST



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MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case Study: Toronto Central Waterfront | Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- Case Study: Central Delaware Waterfront Park (Delaware River Trail) | Philadelphia, PA
- Waterfront Park Trail | Portland, OR
- Seaside Greenway | Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Seaside Greenway, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada



BIG IDEA #5:
CREATE A CURATED + COORDINATED PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

OVERVIEW:

Residents appreciate the well-programmed waterfront, which hosts both major and numerous smaller events annually. However, there are concerns about the types of programs and the impact of larger events. Successful public spaces balance active and passive uses, catering to both local residents and visitors. Objectives include curating inclusive programming for all demographics, balancing large and small events, incorporating culturally diverse activities, increasing affordable community events, encouraging physical activity, activating underutilized spaces, improving communication about events, and creating a distinct brand for the waterfront.

OBJECTIVE:

- Curate programming at the waterfront to be inclusive and attractive to people of all ages, ethnicities, income levels, and physical abilities.
- Balance large scale and private events with smaller scale offerings with daily appeal.
- Incorporate culturally diverse and demographically sensitive programming and promote options that are inclusive of a variety of ability levels and age groups, specifically youth and elderly.
- Increase the number of community-oriented events that are affordable and accessible for all residents, workers, and visitors. Partner with local vendors to create diverse, low-cost options and amenities.
- Incorporate recreational programs and additional small-scale opportunities that encourage physical activity, connection to nature, and healthy living for visitors of all ages and abilities. Examples include



COST



TIMELINE



MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case Study: Central Delaware Waterfront Park | Philadelphia, PA
- Case Study: Bay Park | Sarasota, FL
- Case Study: District Wharf | Washington DC
- Case Study: Atlanta Beltline Art Trail |Atlanta, GA



Pop-up Food Vendors, Sparkman Wharf, Tampa FL



Atlanta Beltline Art Trail, Atlanta, GA

- yoga and fitness classes, family-friendly events, and interactive educational exhibits.
- Encourage activation of underutilized spaces, such as Jose Marti Park and Trinity Park.
 - Improved communication about events, programs and permitting processes to increase community participation and awareness of potential disruptions.
 - Creation of a distinct brand and identity for the Waterfront to enhance community connection, emphasize its unique features, attract investment and support in consistent communication efforts.
 - Integrate art as a dynamic and inclusive programming tactic. Establish opportunities for both permanent and temporary art installations that activate spaces and provide visual stimuli across the Waterfront.
 - Provide economic opportunities for small businesses through micro-retail at strategic locations along the Waterfront.

NEXT STEPS:

- Programming Plan: Collaborate with Community Events under Parks and Recreation Department, DDA, and private sector to create a comprehensive plan that combines existing and new programs. Engage the community to identify additional art,

- play, fitness, performance, micro-retail/pop-up options, and other educational programs.
- Marketing Strategy: Develop a marketing strategy to promote the waterfront brand across digital platforms, events, and partnerships. This should include a name and logo for the Waterfront, standardized visual elements, and a defined brand voice.
 - Vendor Standardization: Create a cohesive look for vendors, including a WPB Waterfront Decal logo to identify permitted vendors.
 - Event Collaboration: Work with large event organizers to design agreements that balance the needs of special events with daily or smaller-scale programming activities. This should align with the broader physical space needs, new amenities, and other components of the strategic framework.

District Wharf, Washington DC



Public Salsa Classes, Downtown Brooklyn, New York City, NY

THEME 2:
REIMAGINE THE WATERFRONT

BIG IDEA #6:
REDESIGN THE WATERFRONT AS UNIFIED PREMIER OPEN SPACE

OVERVIEW:

While the Waterfront and its many public spaces are beloved, the current design was originally planned in 2004 and finished onstruction in 2010. In the 20 years since it was originally designed, the built and social context of the Waterfront has changed. With thousands of new residents and visitors to the Waterfront, there is a greater need for shade, amenities, and other public space components that were not originally envisioned in the current plan. At the same time, the practice of waterfront public space design has changed during that time. There is a greater emphasis today more than ever on resilient, nature-centered design with regard to waterfront public spaces. The Waterfront is due for a comprehensive redesign that addresses the shortcomings of the current design, while also incorporating best practices that have been developed since its original planning.

OBJECTIVE:

- Create an updated plan for the Waterfront that includes a full redesign of all public space components, including shade, tree canopy, native landscaping, coordinated seating, placemaking, amenities, structures, play, art and other components to create

- a unified waterfront. The plan should include all the major public spaces, and may either include or run in parallel to other efforts outlined in this document, including the Waterfront Edge (Big Idea #8) and Flagler Drive (Big Idea #7).
- Incorporate learnings from previous planning efforts, including Shore to Core, the Downtown Public Life Study, and others.
 - Minimize micro-climate issues and the resulting impact on human comfort and plant life through incorporating climate control methods through shade, nature based amenities and physical design standards.
 - Explore the use of tensile systems along pathways, and consider how incorporating color, lighting, or art can enhance the space.
 - Use of light colored or reflective surfaces on roofs to maximize heat reflection and reduce the amount of heat absorbed from the sun.
 - Incorporating water elements, such as misters, to aid in evaporative cooling.

NEXT STEPS:

- Create a long term public space and landscape plan for the Waterfront that significantly increases shade trees, and that unifies all of the waterfront spaces into one both along the waterfront promenade, along Flagler Drive, and the various public

spaces along the waterfront. The plan should provide for a palm tree replacement plan and be supported by a licensed arborist. Assess quality and health of waterfront canopy connecting trails. Suggestions include improved directional signs to nearby attractions, with distances and travel times for both cyclists and pedestrians, learner maps, and more visible markers to guide pedestrians.



Penns Landing, Delaware River Waterfront Park.



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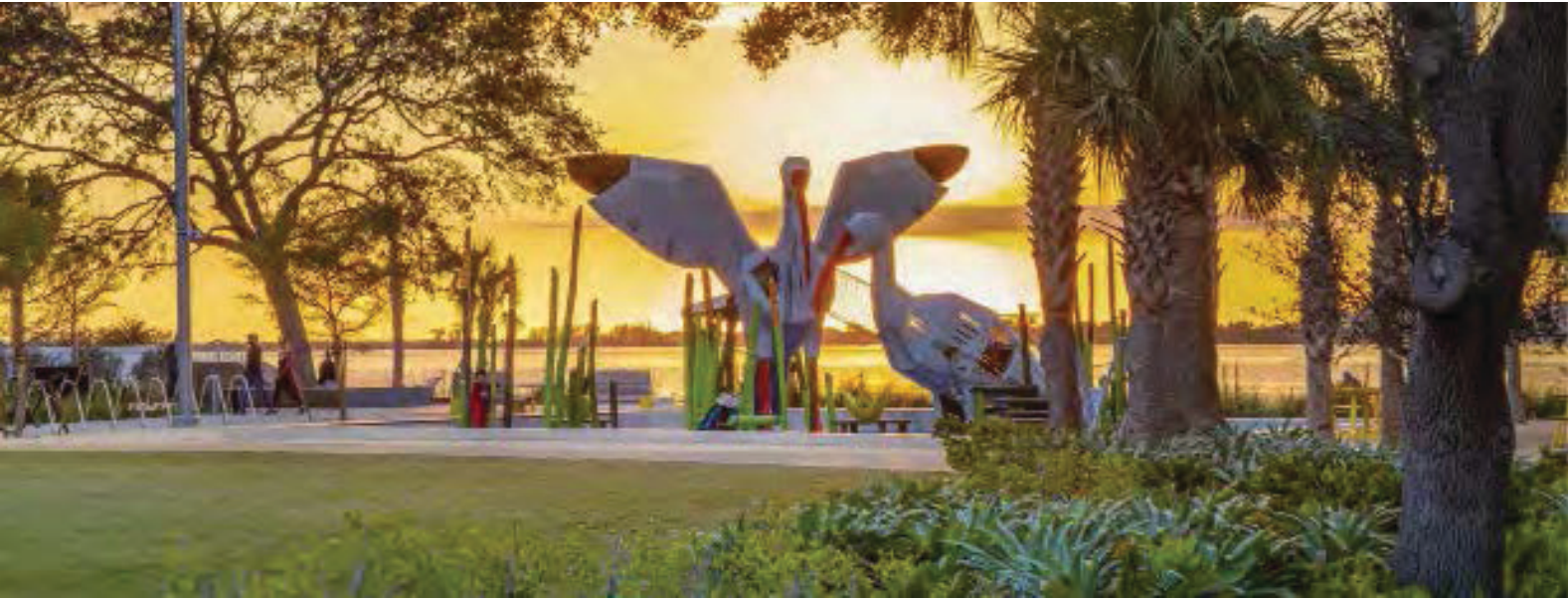
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- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**
- Case Study: Toronto Central Waterfront | Toronto, Ontario, Canada
 - Case Study: Bay Park | Sarasota, FL
 - Case Study: Central Delaware Waterfront Park | Philadelphia, PA
 - Case Study: District Wharf | Washington DC



Bay Park, Sarasota, FL

BIG IDEA #7:
REDESIGN FLAGLER DRIVE AS A COMPLETE STREET

OVERVIEW:

In many ways, Flagler Drive is one of the most important public spaces along the waterfront. It is both a mobility corridor, and also the critical connection between the Waterfront Promenade and the signature public spaces beyond. As the data shows, the current design of the corridor provides excess capacity for cars that is not fully utilized. The space dedicated to cars is much wider than it needs to be and its current design is a barrier to people accessing the waterfront promenade. Flagler Drive should be redesigned to minimize the car-related footprint, to provide for an expanded waterfront promenade, and to make it easier and safer for people to walk and bike.

OBJECTIVE:

- Redesign Flagler Drive to improve waterfront access for people using all transportation modes and integrate resilient infrastructure best practices.
- Implement traffic calming strategies to enhance pedestrian safety and improve the overall walking experience.
- Improve sidewalk maintenance in service of improved access and walkability.
- Promote Flagler Drive as a scenic byway vs a commuter route.

NEXT STEPS:

- Initiate a study to redesign the intersections along Flagler Drive listed below, with a focus on making it easier to cross the street by slowing traffic. A key focus of this study should be to build on previous



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MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP



- ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**
- Case Study: Toronto Central Waterfront | Toronto, Ontario, Canada
 - Case Study: Green Street Program | Portland, OR
 - Boston Complete Streets Guide, boston.gov



Boston Complete Streets Guide



The Quay to the City Prototype Event, Toronto Waterfront, British Columbia, Canada. Photo by West 8.

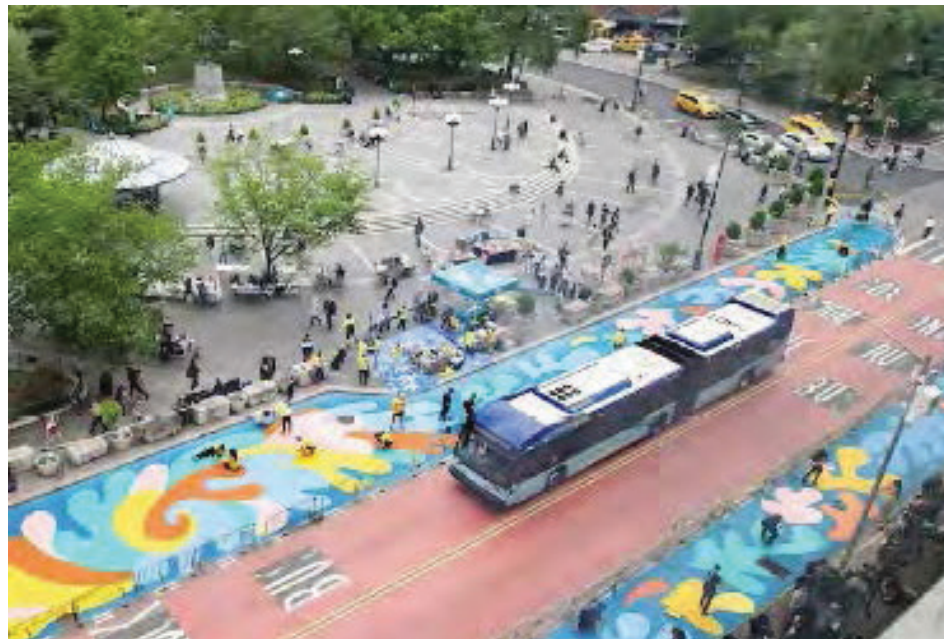
studies that have shown the ability to transition from traffic signals to the alternative traffic control devices minimizing the need for maintenance and creating safer conditions for pedestrians. This study can be done independently, or as part of the initial redesign of Flagler Drive as described below.

- Fern Street : All-way Stop Control
- Evernia Street: Minor Road Stop Control
- Datura Street: Minor Road Stop Control
- Banyan Street: All-way Stop Control
- 3rd Street: Minor Road Stop Control
- Within the context of the study mentioned above, include curb extension at the intersection of Banyan Street and Flagler Drive.
- Implement a prototype based on the study through the use of quick-build strategies to evaluate effectiveness.
- In the first year of adoption of this plan, lower the posted speed limit along Flagler Drive from X to 25MPH and establish a regular review process to monitor traffic speeds and safety incidents, adjusting strategies as needed to enhance road safety continuously.
- Address near-term roadway surface and paving issues by initiating a short term maintenance plan with the Department of

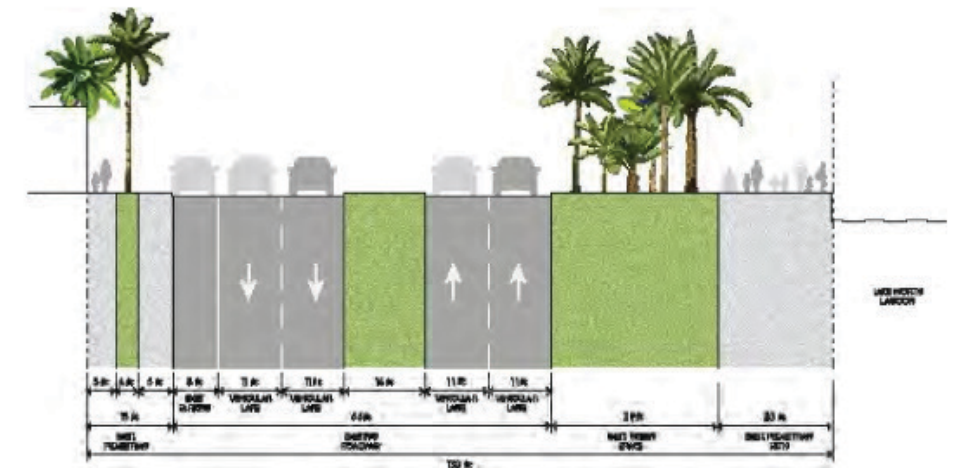
Engineering.

- Within the first year of this plan's adoption, initiate a short-term design and capital improvement project to upgrade Flagler Drive with a focus on expanding the waterfront promenade and making it easier and safer for people to cross Flagler Drive. The plan should include the reallocation and realignment of the street to provide more space for the Waterfront Promenade, and less space for car traffic. The plan should rely on quick-build materials and be implementable within two years following the completion of the study. This redesign should be considered a precursor to the larger redesign of the entire Waterfront envisioned by Big Idea #6.
- Within the context of the larger redesign of the Waterfront (Big Idea #6), Flagler Drive should be designed as a two lane street, with limited turn lanes and crossing distances for pedestrians. The ultimate redesign of the street should address aging infrastructure, raising roadways, repaving, drainage, and other roadway issues. The process should include robust community outreach with emphasis gathering feedback and prioritize safety concerns, and soliciting feedback from the greater West Palm Beach community.

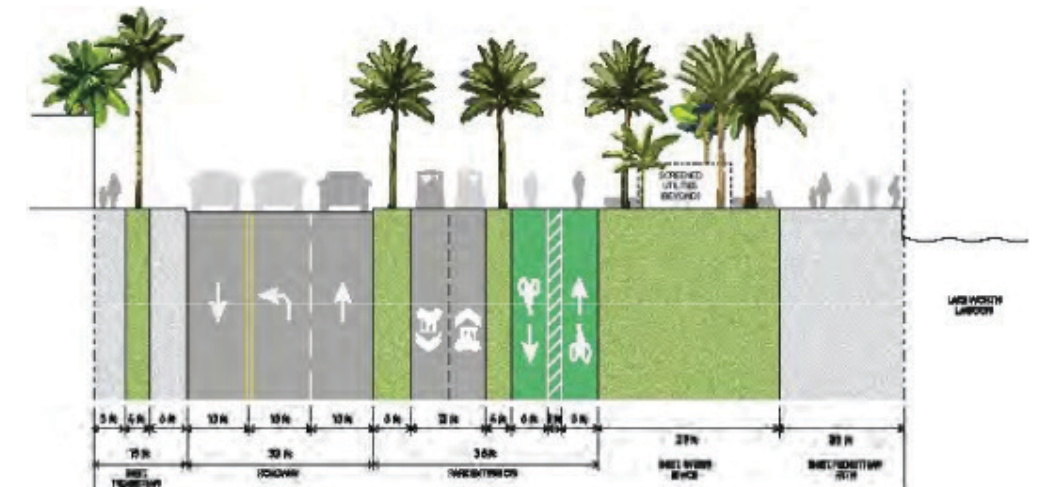
Union Square BID, New York City, NY. Photo by Street Plans



SECTION OF FLAGLER DRIVE TO THE LAKE WORTH LAGOON (EXISTING)



SECTION OF FLAGLER DRIVE TO THE LAKE WORTH LAGOON (PROPOSED*)



*The proposed section illustrates a potential long-term solution based on current and projected traffic data. However, additional in-depth analysis and comprehensive community engagement are necessary before final recommendations can be made.

BIG IDEA #8:
REDESIGN THE EDGE OF THE WATERFRONT + ACCESS TO WATER

OVERVIEW:

One of the things that people love about the existing waterfront is being able to enjoy nature in an urban setting, but the community has little direct access to the water itself. The city should leverage what is currently working about the waterfront experience – enjoyment of nature and the water – and make community access and enjoyment of the Lake Worth Lagoon primary in the redesign of the waterfront edge. As the existing seawall ages, there is an opportunity to rethink how the waterfront edge is designed and built to incorporate more natural areas and creative ways of interacting with the water. The edge of the waterfront can and should be more than a seawall and should support green and resilient infrastructure practices and creative approaches to accessing the water. Although these recommendations are part of the longer-term vision outlined in Big Idea #1, several of the items are designed for near-term implementation. They are intended to complement and support the broader Waterfront design as it evolves.

OBJECTIVE:

- Replace the seawall and waterfront edge with a combination

of natural and built edges that support access, resiliency and beautification

- Explore opportunities for insertion of more native flora, such as mangrove trees, creating natural shoreline stabilization and storm surge resilience, particularly at areas that are in need of repair. Floating gardens mimicking natural wetlands could be inserted along the waterfront, expanding the natural edge and creating habitats for fish and wildlife.
- Exploring solutions that allow people to touch and feel the water. Potential opportunities may include steps along the seawall to the water’s edge, public swimming or wading areas, or floating walkways.
- Improve access for small human-powered watercrafts.
- Create moments that enhance and elevate the experience of viewpoints. Examples are seating with natural views of the water, focused photographic moments, and elevated viewpoints. Preserve and enhance publicly accessible waterfront activities, exploring expanding partnerships and programs that connect people to nature, including educational initiatives, walking tours, kayaking, and facilities for non-motorized water sports.
- Ensure that waterfront activations and programming is designed to protect and supplement local ecosystems, avoiding potential negative impacts to flora, fauna and water quality.

Wild Mile, Chicago, IL. Photo from SOM



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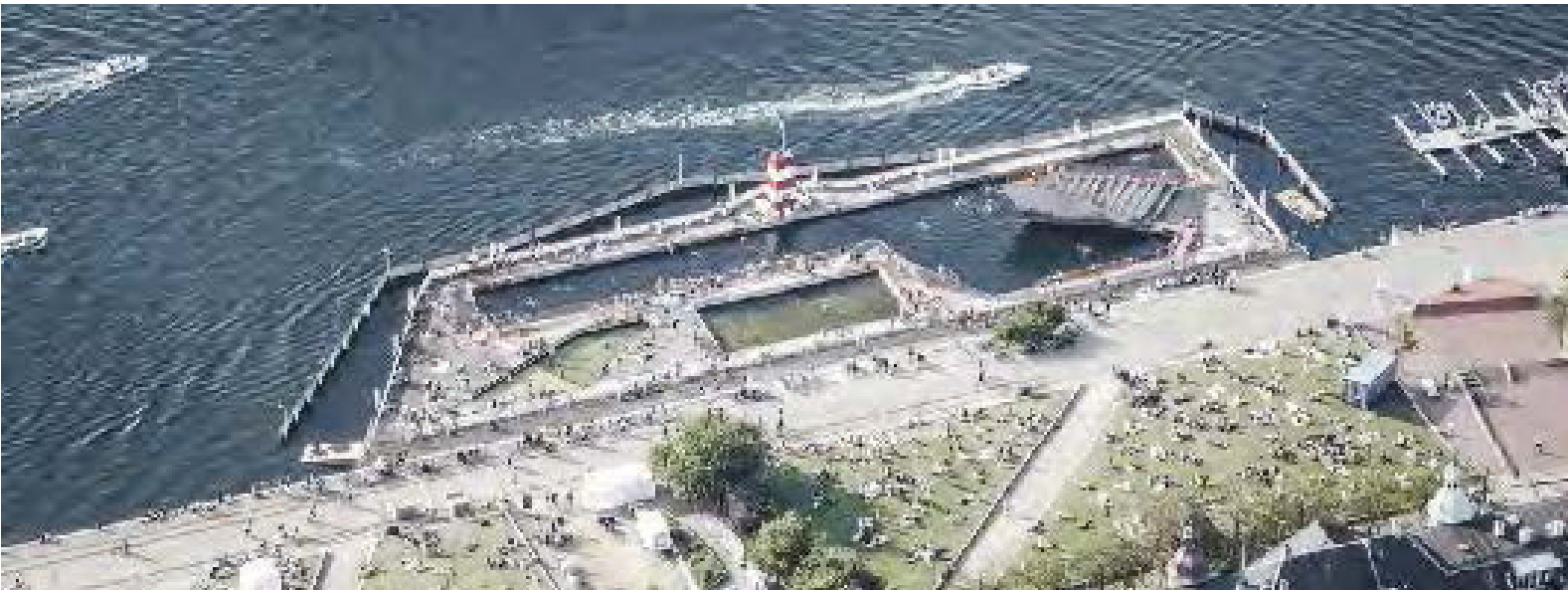


MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- *WEDG (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines)
- City of Copenhagen, Waterfront Design Catalogue
- Case Study: Wild Mile | Chicago, IL
- Case Study: Copenhagen Harbor Baths (Copenhagen Brygge) | Copenhagen, Denmark
- Case Study: Bay Park | Sarasota, FL



Copenhagen Harbor Baths (Copenhagen Brygge), Photo from BIG

- Integrate interpretive elements that educate people who come to the waterfront about local flora and fauna, as well as efforts to protect marine life and water quality. Suggested tactics include signage highlighting native plants and educational programs on water conservation, or integration of educational elements in public art.
- Enhance invitations to frequent and enjoy the waterfront with a range of well-maintained, accessible and attractive seating options.

NEXT STEPS:

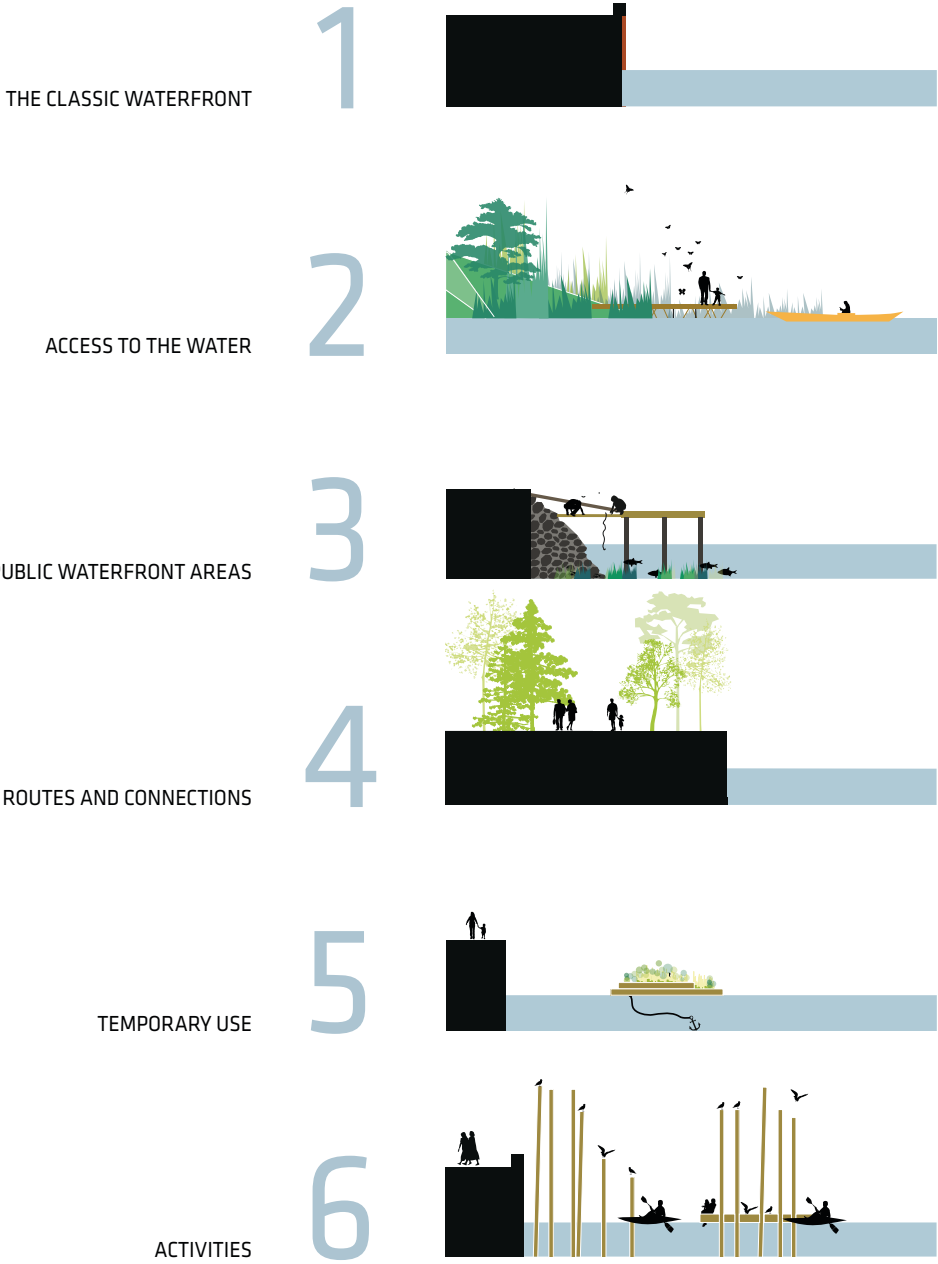
- In the short term, work with the Marine Industries and the community to create an action plan that identifies ways of increasing access for a variety of smaller watercraft and activities, including dinghies, kayaks, paddle boards and fishing. The plan should identify improvements to maintenance and management of existing public dock facilities, including addressing safety concerns around public dock design and waterway conditions, such as currents, wind and wave conditions.
- Revisit waterfront pollution regulations and enforcement mechanisms so that it is safe to swim in the lagoon.
- Initiate a study of the sea wall and waterfront edge with an eye toward a capital replacement of the seawall that introduces more ‘green’ edges and creative waterfront access. The study should be

drafted by a multidisciplinary team of professionals experienced in waterfront development that can advise on design, construction, and maintenance. The team should include, at a minimum, a biologist or environmental professional; coastal, civil, or geotechnical engineer; and a landscape architect or architect. While at least one engineer on the project must have flood protection experience, the ideal team will have broad experience with resilient design. Include a WEDG® (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines) Associate on the project team. The plan should include specific capital improvements, costs, and operational and maintenance needs. This can be done independently, or within the framework of the larger Waterfront Plan (Big Idea #6).

- Reference the “Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines,” written by the non-profit Waterfront Alliance in the creation of the new waterfront edge plan.
- Conduct a study tour or training with peer cities, like the City of Copenhagen, that have already conducted Waterfront Edge Design exercises.
- Seek WEDG certification.



Bay Park Mangrove Bayou, Sarasota, FL



WATERFRONT DESIGN CATALOGUE · p7

City of Copenhagen, Waterfront Design Catalogue

BIG IDEA #9:
CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE RESILIENCE OF THE WATERFRONT

OVERVIEW:

The downtown Waterfront is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, severe storms, and flooding. The downtown Waterfront is crucial for tourism, recreation, development, and hurricane protection, making it essential to implement both short-term and long-term strategies for resilience. While residents are accustomed to managing extreme weather, such as hurricanes and heat, the region is increasingly facing more frequent and intense climate events. To protect its infrastructure, ecosystems, and communities, the city must integrate long-term climate risks into its planning and decision-making processes.

OBJECTIVE:

- Actions should address both immediate and longterm climate threats, such as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation, ensuring that the city's waterfront remains a vibrant, sustainable space for residents and visitors.

CURRENT EFFORTS:

- The City has made significant strides in addressing waterfront climate resilience through planning efforts such as the Vulnerability Assessment (2023), Resilient Waterfront Adaptation Plan, Watershed Management Plan, and Stormwater Master Plan.
- Infrastructure improvements have been underway, including the installation of tidal valves, and upgrading seawall.
- Other efforts include policy development and community engagement particularly through the Office of Sustainability.

NEXT STEPS:

- Reference other City plans when developing and designing future waterfront projects, such as Vulnerability Assessment (2023), Watershed Management Plan, and Stormwater Master Plan.
- Implement comprehensive flood protection and coastal protection systems by expanding flood protection infrastructure, including raised seawalls, tidal valves, and stormwater retention basins.

- Enhance green infrastructure by investing in natural systems that buffer the waterfront, such as mangroves, wetlands, and dunes. These ‘green’ infrastructures not only protect against flooding but also improve water quality and biodiversity. Incorporate a Shoreline Ordinance as part of the Resilient Waterfront Adaptation Plan to further strengthen coastal resilience.
- The renovation of Currie Park can be used for inspiration on future development plans for the waterfront. The park focuses on enhancing climate resilience by improving flood management, coastal protection, and green infrastructure. Key upgrades include stormwater management systems, the use of native vegetation, and elevated structures to address rising sea levels and flooding. The park will also promote biodiversity, provide cooler green spaces to combat urban heat, and encourage sustainable transportation.
- Adopt climate-resilient building codes by updating zoning laws and building codes to require climateresilient designs for new and renovated structures near the waterfront. This should include considerations for wind resilience, elevated foundations, and energy-efficient materials.

- Prioritize community-driven decision making by continuing to engage the local community in decision-making processes, particularly in relation to how to balance waterfront development and conservation. Create accessible platforms for residents to contribute to resilience strategies.
- Consider City properties that could be utilized as rain gardens.
- Create waterfront revitalization with a resilience focus by continuing to implement the Rethink Paradise: Sustainability Action Plan with an emphasis on sustainability and resilience on the waterfront. Incorporate green spaces, trees, and shaded areas into public spaces to promote community health, reduce urban heat, and enhance carbon dioxide sequestration, all while protecting the environment and improving quality of life.
- Invest in climate data and monitoring systems by establishing a comprehensive monitoring system that provides real-time data on sea-level rise, storm surges, and other climate impacts. This can guide the city's responses to extreme weather events and better inform long-term planning.



COST



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MAINTENANCE/STEWARDSHIP



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case Study: Living Breakwaters | Staten Island, New York
- Case Study: Embarcadero Seawall | San Francisco, CA
- Currie Park Redesign | West Palm Beach , FL



Living Breakwaters, Staten Island, New York



Currie Park Redesign ,City of West Palm Beach, FL

THEME 3:

ADOPT A WATERFRONT STEWARDSHIP MODEL

BIG IDEA #10:

ADOPT A WATERFRONT STEWARDSHIP MODEL

OVERVIEW:

One of the major themes conveyed by the public was the need for consistent and ongoing stewardship of the waterfront, along with a sense of planning fatigue with regard to its future. Currently, no single organization is accountable for the waterfront; instead, a patchwork of departments engage in disconnected efforts with no central coordination. Despite decades of planning, there is no designated department or entity overseeing implementation and continuity, resulting in a constant cycle of replanning. Given the waterfront’s status as the premier public space in the city, it is essential to establish a dedicated stewardship entity responsible for executing the vision outlined in this framework, as well as for ongoing planning, programming, and maintenance. This could be an existing department or a new one, but a clear, accountable body must be assigned to manage this valuable asset.

OBJECTIVE:

- Identify a department, entity or non-

profit management structure that is wholly responsible for planning, fundraising/revenue generation, stewardship and programming of the Waterfront. Specific responsibilities should include:

- Maintenance activities to care for public spaces
- Management of potential business and public realm assets including: small-scale retail, recreational, and food/beverage amenities; movable furniture; placemaking amenities; arts program.
- Provision of Ambassador-style services to facilitate a daily presence of friendly, professional stewards who assist with light cleaning and provide a sense of security when needed.
- Executing public realm planning and improvement projects.
- Marketing and communications on behalf of the waterfront under a unified brand identity.
- Management and execution of public programming calendar (Big Idea #5).
- Ensure effective implementation of the

recommendations outlined in this report.

- Ensure that concurrent and future planning and capital improvement plans that include or address Waterfront-specific needs reflect this framework.
- Improve maintenance and cleanliness of existing facilities serving basic needs (water fountains, restrooms, etc.).

CURRENT EFFORTS:

- The DDDA successfully launched a comprehensive Ambassador Program in partnership with Block by Block. Rolled out in three phases, the program began on July 1, 2024 with enhanced cleaning and trash removal services, pressure washing, and hospitality and public safety support. Now fully operational, the program employs nearly 40 Ambassadors and centralizes key public realm services under one management structure.

NEXT STEPS:

- Designate a dedicated staff member to oversee all waterfront-related activities, including planning, maintenance, and implementation.
- Initiate a formal study to evaluate long-term

stewardship models for the project area/waterfront.

- Convene a “Friends of the Waterfront” working group of internal and external stakeholders to coordinate efforts, review case studies, advise on governance, and recommend a long-term stewardship model.
- Conduct tours of successful waterfronts to learn from stewardship organizations and gather management best practices.



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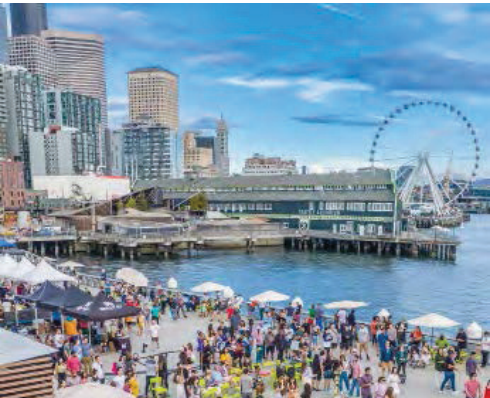


ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Case Study: Friends of Waterfront Park | Seattle WA
- Case Study: Civic Center Community Benefit District (CBD) | San Francisco, CA
- Friends of the Highline | New York City, NY
- Waterfront Partnership of Baltimore | Baltimore, MD



Marvin, from the Civic Center Stories, San Francisco, CA



Waterfront Park – Seattle, WA

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDIES

This chapter offers concise overviews of various urban projects referenced in Chapter 5, “Ten Big Ideas for the Waterfront.” These case studies illustrate how intentional design and stewardship can significantly enhance community engagement, support local ecosystems, and address environmental and social challenges with a variety of flexible temporary solutions, and long-range planning. Each project provides key learnings that are directly applicable to the development and future vision of the West Palm Beach Waterfront, offering practical insights for creating vibrant and resilient urban spaces.

Photo by Esben Bruun

FRIENDS OF THE WATERFRONT PARK | SEATTLE, WA

KEY PARTNERS: The City of Seattle designed and is constructing Waterfront Park; Friends of the Waterfront Park is responsible for fundraising, stewarding, and programming.

SCALE: 20 acres of waterfront connecting the downtown core and surrounding neighborhoods.

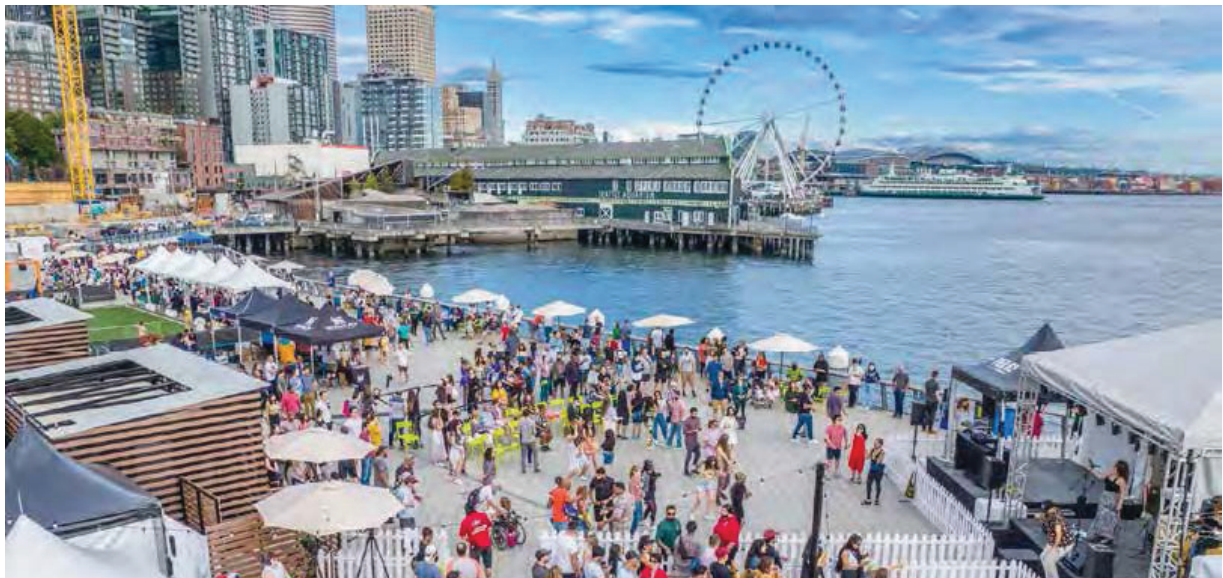
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: In 2009, Seattle launched the Central Waterfront Committee with the mission of revitalizing the city's deteriorating waterfront into an inviting park for both residents and tourists. The Friends of the Waterfront Park (Friends) was established in 2014 as a self-funded non-profit partner with the City, tasked with fundraising, programming, and longterm stewardship of the park. The park began opening in phases in 2020 and is expected to be completed by 2025.

Friends teamed up with the City to develop a threepronged strategy for managing the park:

1. **Diverse Programming:** To keep the park vibrant and engaging, Friends administers a variety of free and low-cost cultural, recreational, and educational programs year-round.
2. **Safety and Security:** The Safety Team was established upon the park's initial opening, providing 24/7 security to foster a welcoming and secure environment for visitors.
3. **Social Needs Support:** An Outreach Care Coordinator manages a successful outreach program that delivers services to individuals experiencing homelessness or substance abuse issues along the waterfront.

As the park continues to develop, Friends is committed to strategic visioning and planning to promote inclusivity and racial equity. To support these goals, three Community Partnership Committees have been created to provide insights and feedback on engaging Indigenous tribes, BIPOC communities, and individuals with disabilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Friends of the Waterfront Park.
waterfrontparkseattle.org



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Forming an independent, community led management body from the project's outset ensures continuity in project goals.
- Developing Community Partnership Committees to include diverse voices—such as Indigenous tribes, BIPOC communities, and people with disabilities—can enhance inclusivity and racial equity in park planning and programming.
- Ongoing visioning and planning are critical for the park's success, ensuring it continues to meet the evolving needs of the community.
- Proactive and compassionate outreach programs are effective in supporting vulnerable populations and integrating their needs into park management.

CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY BENEFIT DISTRICT | San Francisco, CA

KEY PARTNERS: CMG Landscape Architecture created the master plan for long-term capital upgrades at the site; stewardship and near-term activation efforts led by the City of San Francisco, the Civic Center Community Benefit District (CBD), and area stakeholders.

SCALE: 3 linked public spaces spanning 0.3 miles of urban space.

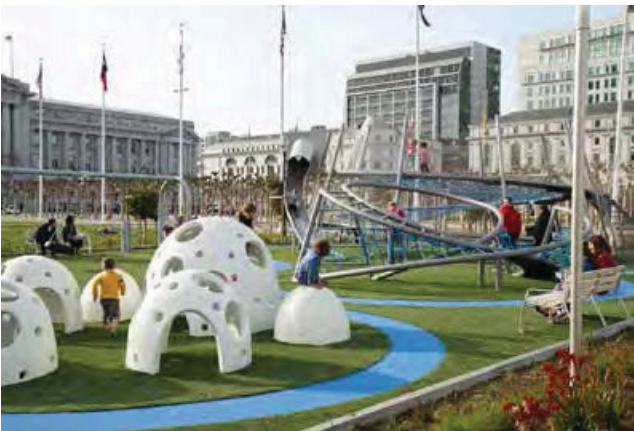
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: In 2017, the City of San Francisco launched a Mayoral initiative to improve conditions in the three large public spaces linking San Francisco’s City Hall to Market Street – a major transit and retail street running through the City’s downtown. Dubbed the Civic Center Initiative, the program provided a platform for the many public and private partners to work together to advance four core strategies:

1. Create daily attractions that spark curiosity and connection
2. Improve cleanliness and safety so all feel welcome
3. Create a cohesive identity that becomes a source of local pride
4. Build a strong team for long-term stewardship

The Initiative was launched in response to a growing recognition that Civic Center’s public spaces, while activated periodically for major civic and private events, were not providing enough benefits to serve the daily public space needs of residents. One critical step in this project was adjusting existing boundaries of two property-based assessment districts to designate the Civic Center Community Benefit District as the sole non-profit organization that would oversee management and stewardship of all three public spaces and in partnership with the City.

Additionally, the City provided an initial investment to launch a daily ambassador program at the site, through a workforce development partnership that hired formerly incarcerated individuals to provide site stewardship and outreach to people experiencing homelessness..

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Civic Center Initiative. SF Civic Center. sfccivcenter.org/civic-center-initiative



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Establishing a dedicated stewardship and management organization is a critical first step in delivering cohesive and consistent management.
- Ambassador programs provide an excellent opportunity for workforce development collaborations and can be a key part of a compassionate outreach campaign to support people experiencing homelessness.
- Iconic public spaces can, and must, balance major civic and private events with daily amenities for residents.
- Incremental steps in stewardship and placemaking can build momentum for longterm capital upgrades.

POP-UP WINNIPEG | WINNIPEG, CANADA

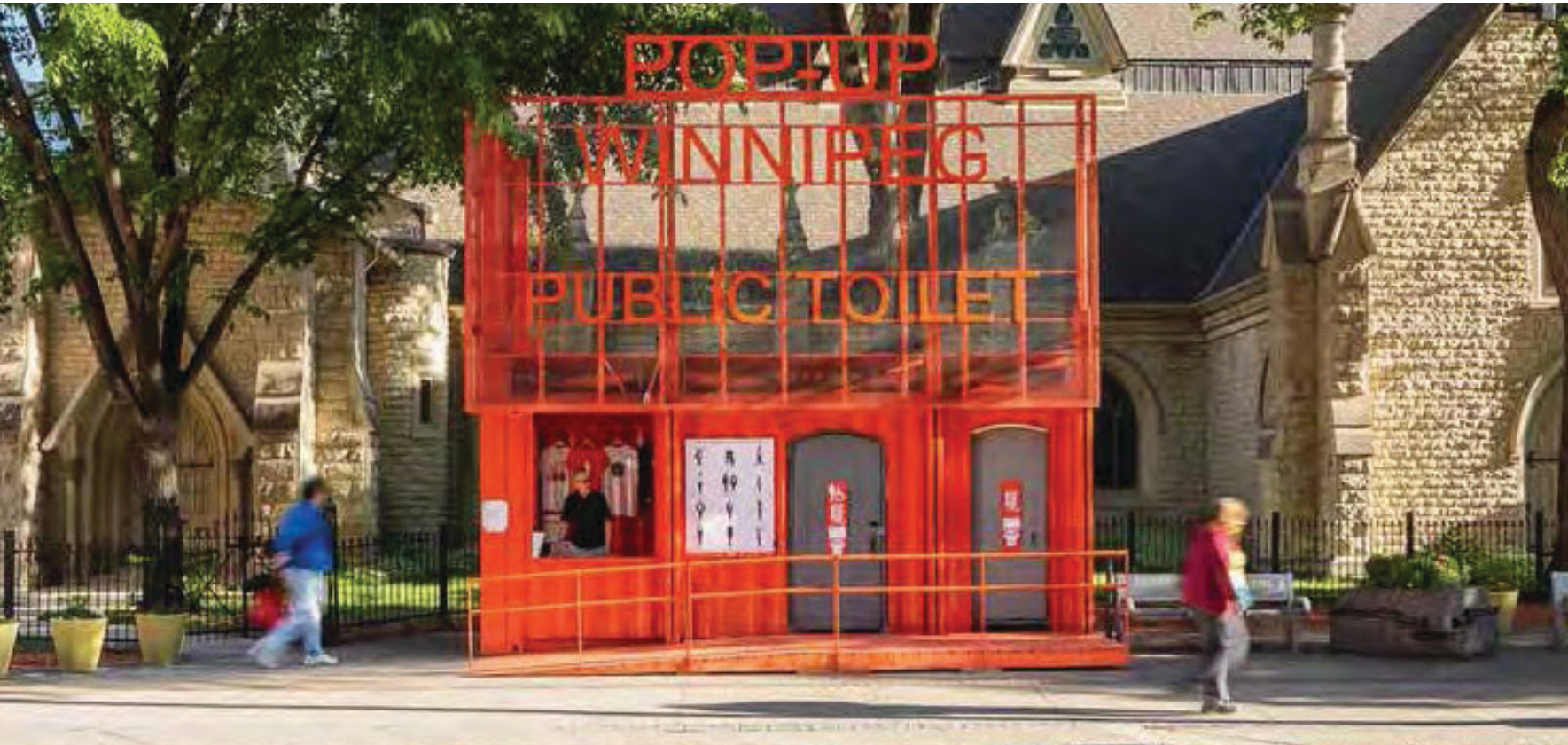
KEY PARTNERS: A cross-sectoral partnership between Bridgman Collaborative Architecture, the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, and Siloam Mission, a local charity.

SCALE: One 20'x 8' shipping container that was moved throughout Winnipeg to four different public space locations

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: In the summer of 2018, the Pop-up Winnipeg Public Toilet Initiative was funded by the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ to answer the need for accessible washrooms in Winnipeg's downtown core. The temporary restrooms were built out of a brightorange shipping container and migrated to one of four sites every month to heighten downtown visibility. Through a partnership with the Siloam Mission's employment-readiness program, the public toilets were maintained during open hours, offering safe and clean facilities as well as providing jobs for people experiencing poverty or homelessness. The goal of the initiative was to generate support for permanent public toilets through consciousness-raising about human dignity and access to public restrooms, as well as general public support. The pop-up pilot included a social enterprise kiosk attached to the facilities that sold items like newspapers, water, t-shirts, and other items,with the proceeds going to support Siloam's programs. In the program's second iteration, the kiosk was used as a harm-reduction site aimed at helping the city's most marginalized people, partnering with Main Street Project to offer needle exchange, distribute condoms, and direct people to services for food, clothing, or counseling. Although the Pop-Up toilet was a low-cost, temporary project, it offers a model for permanent, clean, and well-maintained public washroom facilities.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Pop-Up Winnipeg Public Toilet. Bridgman Collaborative. www.bridgmancollaborative.ca/popup-winnipeg-public-toilet.html
- A Public Calling. Bridgman Collaborative. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.bridgmancollaborative.ca/uploads/9/4/6/5/9465877/pop-up_public_toilet_-_bridgman_-_canadian_architect_2018.pdf



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Utilizing a dynamic, temporary facility as a marketing tool to raise awareness about human dignity and access to public restrooms, while also generating support and funding for the development of permanent public toilet facilities.
- Low-cost pilot projects can spark conversation and support for long-term improvements.
- Incorporating alternative and complementary programming into basic amenities can increase vibrancy.
- Partnering with local organizations can provide both jobs for people experiencing poverty or homelessness, as well as ensure safe and clean facilities for all
- Public toilets create a better pedestrian experience, attract tourists and shoppers to the sidewalks, and improve neighborhood cleanliness.

HARBOR BATHS | COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

KEY PARTNERS: Islands Brygge was designed by BIG and JDS Architects; Kvaløbod Waves was designed by JDS Architects and Urban Agency

SCALE: Islands Brygge is 17,000 square feet; Kvaløbod Waves will be 45,000 square feet

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Copenhagen’s Islands Brygge is an iconic harborfront area that provides waterfront access for a variety of recreational activities. Its famed Harbor Bath is an outdoor swimming facility with a terraced landscape that extends over the water, consisting of wooden docks, piers, boat ramps, and playgrounds. It features five pools for different age groups that are checked consistently for water quality, as well as several diving towers. The waterfront access also includes facilities for boating and water sports. The design includes green lawns offering space to sunbathe, picnic, and play. Stretching along the harbor are promenades and walking paths that offer scenic views of the water and cityscape.

Kalvebod Waves is another waterfront area situated directly across Islands Brygge that also offers a range of water activities. Its design focuses on urban continuity and utilizing the sun to prioritize shadow-free zones. It features two piers that act as active ‘islands’ on the water, connected to the surrounding city infrastructure with two bridges. The pier to the south provides a flexible public space on the water with facilities to hold events. The second pier provides direct access to the water for swimming and kayaking and even has a kayak slide.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Copenhagen Harbor Bath. BIG. big.dk/projects/copenhagen-harbor-bath-1525
- Kal/Kalvebod Waves. JDS Architects. jdsa.eu/kal/



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Incorporate recreational facilities that foster social interaction, play and appeal to families and people of all ages.
- Explore elements that foster physical connectivity with the water, such as public swimming, wading pools and human powered crafts.
- The use of topographical elements provides alternative seating, views, and moments for social interaction.
- Using the water for human bathing demands a high level of water quality, and can be a powerful driver for sustainability and water quality improvements.
- Incorporating flexibility into the programming, facilities can have multiple functions, acting as a recreational facility or an event space.

WILD MILE | CHICAGO, IL

KEY PARTNERS: The Wild Mile is a collaborative endeavor, led by Urban Rivers along with a coalition of partners including the City of Chicago, Shed Aquarium, the Near North Unity Program, Neighborspace, and many more

SCALE: 1 mile along the North Branch Canal of the Chicago River

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Wild Mile is a groundbreaking urban revitalization initiative aimed at transforming a segment of the Chicago River’s North Branch into a dynamic wildlife sanctuary. This project seeks to create sustainable, immersive nature experiences within an urban setting, blending ecological functionality with public engagement.

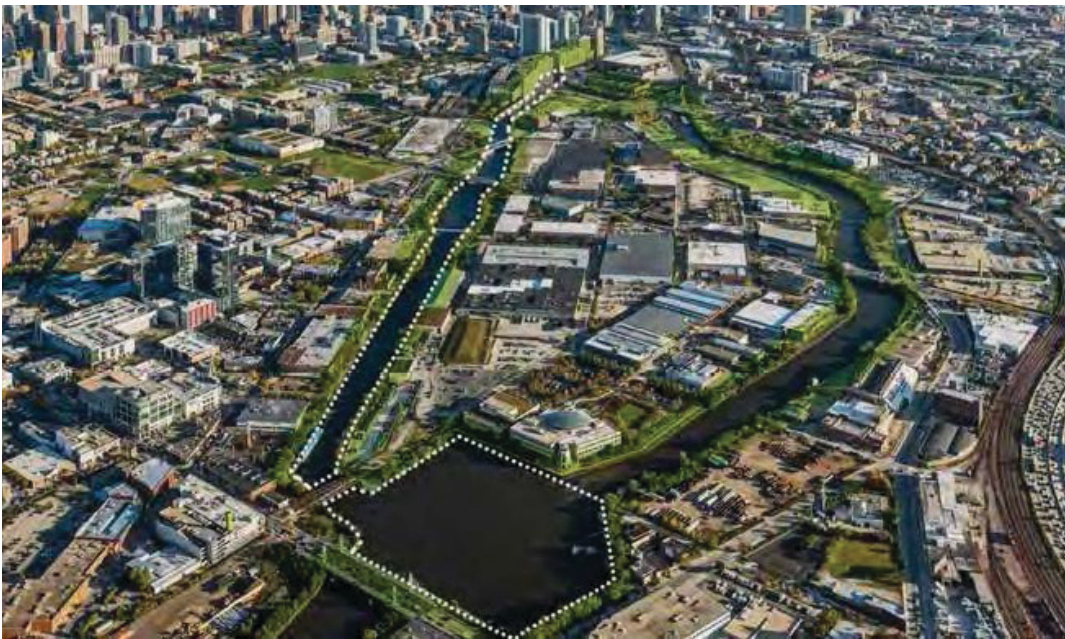
The park introduces floating habitats along the riverfront, designed to mimic natural wetland ecosystems. These habitats are planted with native Illinois species that support local insects, birds, and mammals. The floating gardens allow plant roots to extend directly into the river, fostering new habitats for aquatic life. Visitors can explore the park via ADA-accessible boardwalks and floating pathways. Viewing platforms provide opportunities to observe local fauna, participate in educational classes about the ecosystem, and engage in interactive experiences.

The floating gardens are modular, allowing sections to be connected, relocated, or reconfigured to accommodate various events and activities. This flexibility supports both ecological goals and community needs.

Certain areas of the Wild Mile feature underwater environments that replicate natural river floors, providing a habitat for endangered freshwater mussels. These mussels play a crucial role in water filtration, each filtering up to ten gallons of water daily.

The design accommodates fluctuating water levels by integrating with both the river floor and the seawall. This adaptability has proven effective in managing major flood events.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Wild Mile Chicago. Wild Mile. wildmile.org



KEY LEARNINGS:

- The use of modular design allows for the temporary relocation of garden sections to accommodate events, future modifications, reconfigurations, and responses to changing conditions or community needs.
- The incorporation of native plants and underwater habitats provides significant ecological benefits, including supporting local wildlife, enhancing water quality through natural filtration, and creating new habitats for aquatic species.
- The introduction of underwater habitats for endangered freshwater mussels underscores the role urban parks can play in conservation efforts, demonstrating how public spaces can contribute to the protection of vulnerable species.
- Providing accessible pathways, viewing platforms, and educational opportunities fosters public engagement with the environment, encouraging a deeper connection to and understanding of local ecosystems.
- The design’s ability to accommodate fluctuating water levels and its success during major flood events highlight the importance of considering climate resilience and adaptive strategies in waterfront projects.



GREEN STREET PROGRAM | PORTLAND, OR

KEY PARTNERS: The City of Portland’s Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) partners with property owners, local public agencies, and the federal government for project design, funding, and implementation.

SCALE: Several projects throughout the city

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Portland’s Green Street Program is a strategic initiative aimed at enhancing urban resilience by integrating effective and visually appealing stormwater management systems into city streetscapes. Launched in 2005, this program incorporates vegetated infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff at its source.

The Green Street Program has significantly contributed to:

- Reducing polluted stormwater flowing into Portland’s rivers.
- Alleviating pressure on the city’s sewer system.
- Lowering the costs associated with constructing traditional pipe systems.

Beyond environmental benefits, Green Streets enhance urban areas by increasing green space, improving pedestrian and bicycle safety, and mitigating urban heat. Maintenance of these green facilities requires ongoing care to ensure their functionality and aesthetic appeal, managed by Portland’s Environmental Services.

The program also features educational elements, including signage, tours, art displays, outreach events, and school lessons, to promote awareness and appreciation of green infrastructure’s benefits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Portland’s Green Street Program. City Parks Alliance. <https://cityparksalliance.org/resource/portlandgreen-street-program/>
- Portland Green Street Program. re:Streets. <https://www.restreets.org/case-studies/portland-greenstreet-program>



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Although green streets involve initial investment and ongoing maintenance, they can be more cost-effective compared to traditional projects that require upsizing and replacing pipes.
- Development of sample designs, standard details, policy, and technical guidance documents support implementation by the private sector.
- Green streets enhance the pedestrian environment, reduce summer air temperatures, and replenish groundwater aquifers.
- Use of native plantings can reduce maintenance and water requirements while providing wildlife habitats.
- Green streets are an important part in managing stormwater resiliency – filtering pollutants and reducing trash from entering waterway and, reducing demand on infrastructure.
- Green streets act as a buffer between vehicles, enhancing pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Public education and encouraging private participation in the program is key to its development and long-term success.

TORONTO CENTRAL WATERFRONT | TORONTO, CANADA

KEY PARTNERS: Designed by West 8 for the Waterfront Initiative

SCALE: The Central Waterfront extends 2.2 miles along Lake Ontario through the downtown corridor of Toronto

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Since 2006, the Toronto Central Waterfront has seen a series of integrated public space projects to improve the community's lakefront access and create physical cohesion along the water's edge. Through extensive public realm improvements, the waterfront is being transformed into a dynamic mixed-use community. The revitalization of Toronto's waterfront demonstrates how strong prototyping efforts can lead to long-term infrastructural upgrades. The East Bayfront Water's Edge Promenade is a two-mile-long route along the water's edge that lacked vibrancy and a strong destination appeal. Toronto-based designers CKJJ were hired by Waterfront Toronto to activate the site with a creative placemaking intervention. Their project, Alpha Bravo Charlie, was inspired by the nautical alphabet and transformed the international maritime signal flags into three-dimensional, occupiable decks that served as seating or games. This award-winning activation increased foot traffic by 22% and encouraged people to spend more time at the site by sitting, eating, and interacting with the decks. Due to its success, the project was brought back to other parts of the promenade, and the Waterfront's public spaces were further enhanced with playful elements like chess boards, little free libraries, and more inviting public seating.

Additionally, a temporary landscape intervention on Queen's Quay Boulevard led to extensive improvements and below-grade infrastructure upgrades. A 10-day event was held to allow the public to experience new proposals for the street and give the design team a chance to prototype the street reconfigurations. For 10 days, traffic on the lakeside boulevard was replaced with bicycle lanes, a kilometer-long stretch of 12,00 red geraniums, public seating and activities, and a sculptural arch built with 600 bicycles. Queen's Quay is now a prominent civic place that links pedestrians and cyclists to major destinations along the waterfront.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- *Toronto Waterfront.* West 8. www.west8.com/projects/toronto-central-waterfront
- *Public Art Installation featuring local call-to-artists at Waterfront BIA.* MASSIVart. <https://massivart.com/project/toronto-waterfront-creative-placemaking/>



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Prototyping through the use of quick-build strategies is an effective strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of long-term street redesigns and interventions.
- The use of temporary, creative interven-tions allows for real-world testing and refinement of design concepts.
- Creating unique and iconic moments with quick-builds heightens community excitement and engagement for future project visioning.
- Adequate and safe pedestrian and cycling routes connecting to city infrastructure are key to increasing accessibility and usability the Waterfront.

ATLANTA BELTLINE ART TRAIL | ATLANTA, GA

KEY PARTNERS: Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (City of Atlanta’s implementation agency); and Atlanta BeltLine Partnership (non-profit organization)

SCALE: 13 linear miles along the BeltLine

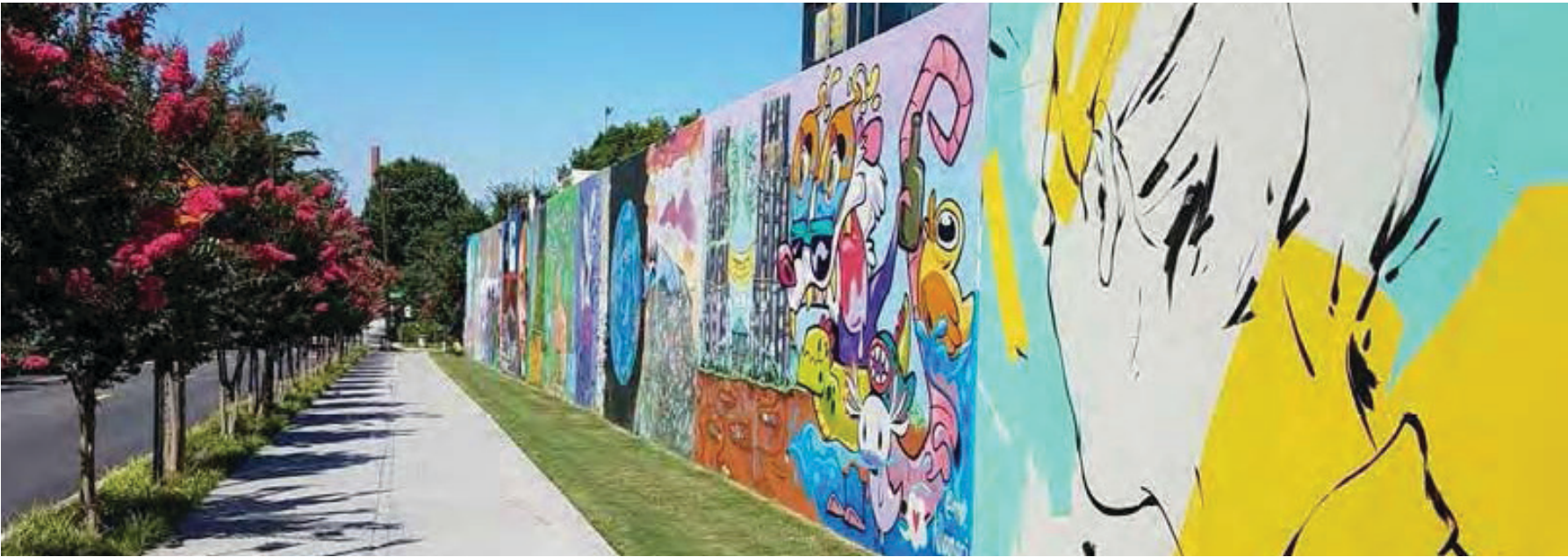
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Art on the BeltLine is a multifaceted public art and residency program on the BeltLine trail system that expands community access to arts and culture. Spanning 13 miles of permanent or unpaved trails, Art on the BeltLine is considered to be the largest temporary public art exhibit and linear gallery in the United States. Exhibition components are organized according to a series of categories:

- BELTLINE WALLS invites Muralists from Atlanta and beyond to paint select locations around the trail corridor.
- BELTLINE FLOW is the performance component of the exhibition, which comprises pop-up style events, immersive interactions, and activations.
- BELTLINE SPACES is the sculpture element of the exhibition, featuring works that are on display for two years.
- The CONTINUING COLLECTION features works of art that carry over beyond the temporary exhibition period to have a longer stay. Typically, these pieces include murals and sculptures that have a lifespan that can survive an outdoor environment.

As a complement to the public art program, Atlanta BeltLine also has a multi-track residency program to hire curators-in-residence that support the program’s annual temporary art exhibition, as well as artists-in-residence that develop a portfolio of work, culminating in a solo exhibition along the Atlanta BeltLine corridor. Art pieces and programs along the trail are always free and accessible to all. Major events along the BeltLine Trail – including BeltLine After Dark and the annual Lantern Parade – serve to engage huge numbers of people in celebrating and using the trail together. Additionally, the Arts and Culture team at Atlanta BeltLine engages neighbors in smaller-scale events to provide opportunities for creative expression of their own through family paint days and other neighborhood-based creative partnerships.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Visit the Atlanta Beltline. Beltline. <https://beltline.org/visit/>
- Atlanta BeltLine arts and culture exhibition and programming. Beltline. <https://beltline.org/art/>



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Incorporate art as a dynamic and inclusive programming strategy by creating opportunities for both permanent and temporary art installations.
- Ephemeral elements or performance based pieces should also be considered as part of a robust arts program.
- Art installations should activate various spaces along the waterfront and offer engaging visual stimuli for visitors.
- Art should be thought of in multiple dimensions
 - ground, walls, overhead, in water
 - provides an unlimited canvas and enhances moments of joy and discovery.

CONFETTI | MADRID, SPAIN

KEY PARTNERS: Commissioned by the Madrid City Council; designed by architect Sergio Sebastian Franco

SCALE: 18,000 ft2 plaza

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: From 2004 to 2008, the City of Madrid installed an urban lighting system during the Christmas season in Chueca Square, a lively plaza in the city's center. Confetti utilized a tensile system of LED lights and circular pieces of recycled plastic to stimulate the appearance of floating confetti, adding a festive atmosphere to the square. The installation provided an immersive experience 24 hours a day. In the daytime, brightly colored dots scattered the ground to produce a playful environment and give shade. At night, the lights diffused to create a carpet of colors and a luminous ceiling, improving the plaza's lighting. The installation provides a model for integrating art into public spaces to promote social gatherings and enhance the traditional urban experience.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Confetti. Sergio Sebastian. www.sergiosebastian.es/storm



KEY LEARNINGS:

- The incorporation of artistic partnerships can breathe new life into mundane structures.
- Street lights and shade elements can be transformed into iconic and playful installations that promote visitor interaction.
- Shading elements don't need to be static. The use of transparencies, color, pattern and movement can transform and define space in both day (shade + joyful colors) and night (lighting).
- Establishing opportunities for permanent and temporary art installations is a key strategy for public realm improvements.
- The use of a tensile system makes installations easily removable for seasonal weather or large events.

SPRUCE STREET HARBOR PARK | PHILADELPHIA, PA

KEY PARTNERS: Developed and managed by the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation; designed by Groundswell Design Group.

SCALE: 2.8 acres.

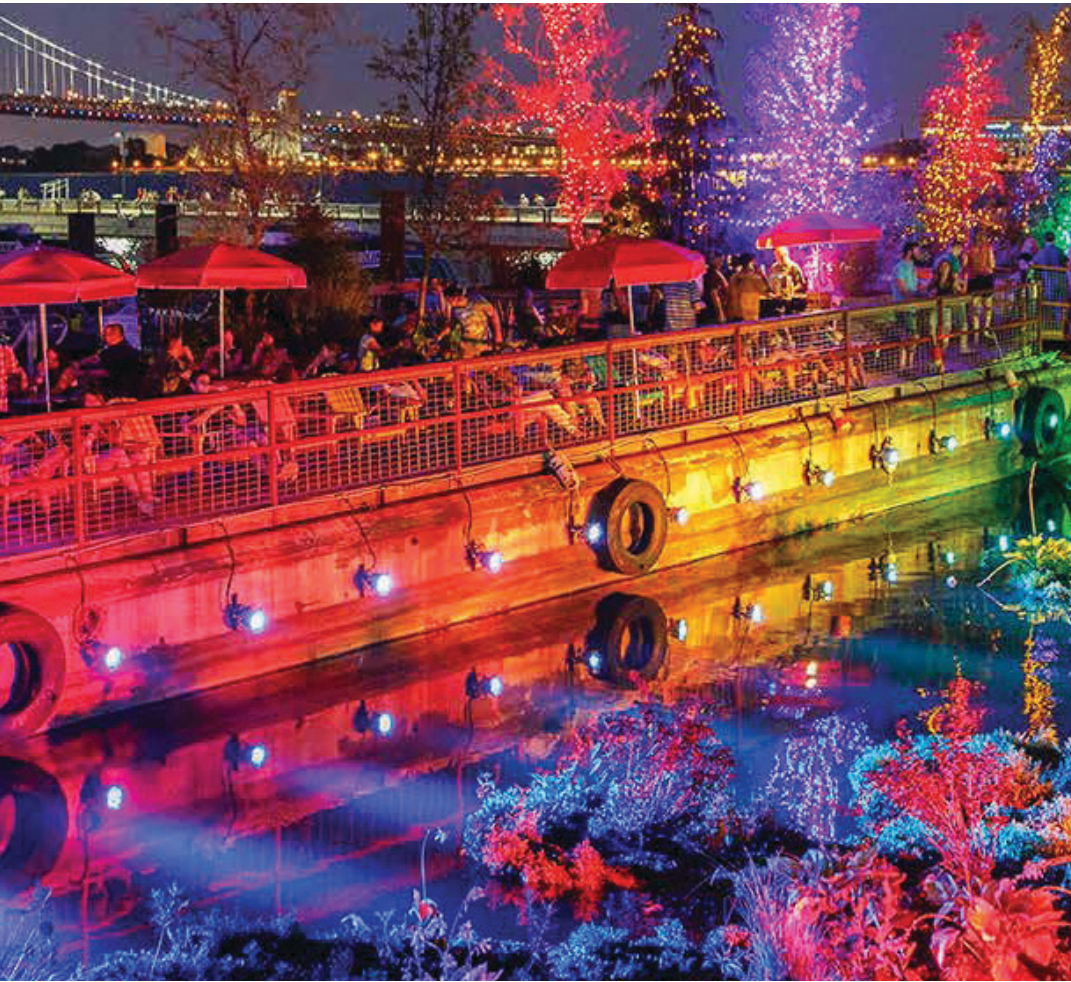
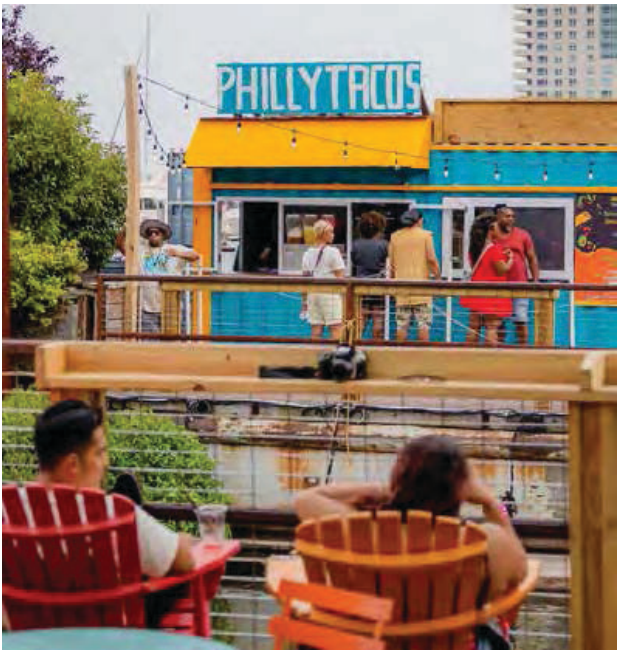
PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Opened in 2014, Spruce Street Harbor Park (SSHP) is a key initiative in Philadelphia’s citywide effort to enhance waterfront accessibility. Situated along the Delaware River, this seasonal park operates from May to September, transforming what was once an isolated marina into a vibrant summer destination filled with games, concerts, food, and various amenities.

The park’s design emphasizes relaxation and social interaction. It extends onto the river with three commercial barges arranged in a “U” shape, featuring an aquatic garden in between. These floating decks add 7,200 square feet of space and include innovative seating options such as a cantilevered net that allows visitors to lounge four feet above the water.

The park creatively utilizes existing land by incorporating over 50 colorful hammocks suspended from trees in the grassy area, complemented by hundreds of LED drip lights in the canopy. The popularity of these hammocks has led to the introduction of private riverside hammock lounges available for rental.

SSHP also serves as a platform for local entrepreneurs, with several shipping containers converted into food and beverage pop-ups, including two on the barges. The park hosts a weekly market featuring a rotating lineup of vendors, contributing to the local economy.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Spruce Street Harbor Park. Delaware River Waterfront. www.delawareriverwaterfront.com



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Although the hammock rentals are a good idea from an economic point of view, maintaining the waterfront as a free asset and avoiding over-commercialization should be prioritized.
- Locating diverse shaded seating options that accommodate different group sizes near activated zones attracts people to spaces that otherwise see little use.
- Flexible and semi-permanent retail options are key to filling commercial gaps in waterfront spaces.
- Temporary measures at the waterfront edge, such as floating vegetated islands, barges, and suspended hammocks, allow for inexpensive but effective ways for people to experience the water in unique ways.

SPARKMAN WHARF | TAMPA, FL

KEY PARTNERS: Designed by BDG Architects and Groundswell for Strategic Property Partners

SCALE: One acre.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Located in downtown Tampa, Sparkman Wharf is a dynamic waterfront park that integrates dining, shopping, and entertainment within a vibrant public space. The park features:

- **Dining Garden:** An outdoor food hall comprising 10 restaurants housed in repurposed shipping containers, offering a diverse array of cuisines, from seafood and burgers to desserts. The food hall is visually enriched with murals that celebrate Florida's natural beauty.
- **Permanent and Pop-Up Dining:** In addition to the food hall, the Wharf includes permanent restaurants and bars with scenic waterfront views, and a covered beer garden that emphasizes Tampa Bay's craft-beer culture. This space is equipped with shade, televisions, and cooling misters to enhance visitor comfort.
- **Recreational Lawn:** The expansive lawn serves as the venue for most of the park's events. It features comfortable seating with patio umbrellas, interactive elements like adult-sized swing sets, cornhole, and giant chess, fostering a relaxed and engaging environment.
- **Event Programming:** Sparkman Wharf hosts a variety of free events, including trivia nights, fitness classes, and activities for children. An LED video screen and a stage support community watch parties and live music performances.
- **Retail Expansion:** Plans are underway to add retail space, further enhancing Sparkman Wharf's appeal as a comprehensive waterfront destination.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Sparkman Wharf. sparkmanwharf.com
- Sparkman Wharf. Groundswell Design. <https://www.groundswelldesigngroup.com/portfolio/sparkman-wharf/>



KEY LEARNINGS:

- The combination of permanent restaurants, bars with waterfront views, and pop-up dining options creates a dynamic and flexible food and beverage environment.
- Adding interactive elements like adult-sized swing sets, cornhole, and giant chess, encourages active and casual engagement in a relaxed setting.
- Improving visitor comfort with comfortable seating, cooling misters, and shade encourages longer stays.
- Offering a diverse range of activities—such as dining, shopping, recreation, and relaxation—boosts foot traffic and usage during off-peak hours.

DISTRICT WHARF | WASHINGTON, D.C.

KEY PARTNERS: The Wharf is led by developers Hoffman-Madison Waterfront LLC. Perkins Eastman led the design and implementation.

SCALE: 27 acres.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The District Wharf is a vibrant waterfront neighborhood that encompasses a wide range of commercial, recreational, and public uses along the water’s edge. With four expansive piers, promenades, and venues, the Wharf provides a variety of free programming on and off the water throughout the year.

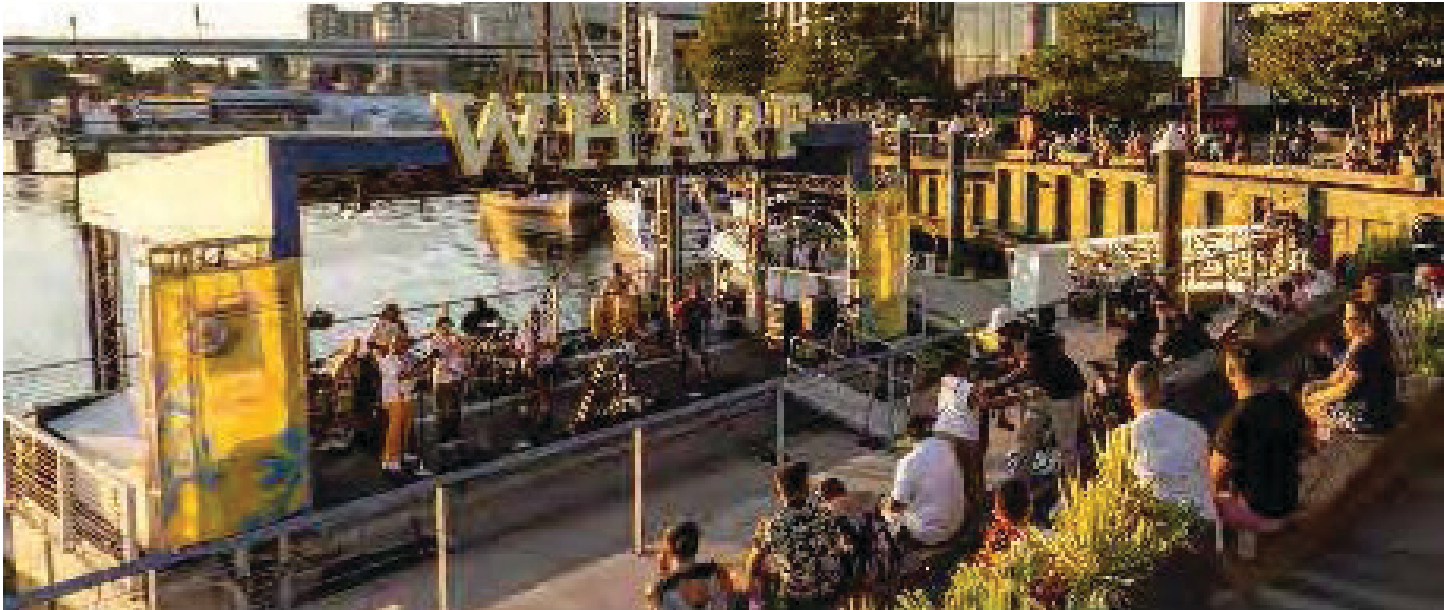
The Transit Pier Floating Stage stands out as a unique music venue situated on the Potomac River that hosts free concerts year-round, including every Wednesday during the summer months. Extending over the water, the stage offers a visually striking backdrop for free entertainment and contributes to the lively atmosphere at the Wharf. People on the water can tie their boat to the nearby dock and enjoy the sounds of the stage. The Transit Pier has an ever-changing array of free activities, including yoga classes on Saturdays, giant games of Connect Four, and Sunset Cinema nights that show free outdoor movies on their pier. Programming at the Wharf also includes several festivals and parades.

District Pier, the largest pier at the Wharf, hosts festivals and international celebrations such as Oktoberfest, the annual Running of the Chihuahuas, and Pride.

Moreover, visitors of the Wharf have direct access to the water at the Recreation Pier, where kayaks and paddle boards are available to rent and people can dangle their feet in the water or swing on the adult-sized swing sets. The Wharf also offers a variety of dining and retail areas on the waterfront.

Wharf Street is a promenade of restaurants and cafés overlooking the Washington Channel, but bar food and casual eateries are also available on the piers. Additionally, the Wharf provides several opportunities to take a ride on the river. The Wharf Jitney is a free boat service that ferries passengers between Recreation Pier and East Potomac Park; visitors also have a variety of water tours or boat rental options. At the Wharf, there’s something for everyone at every price point.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The Wharf: Where DC Meets. District Wharf. www.wharfdc.com



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Providing a wide range of programming attracts a broad audience and keep the space lively throughout the year.
- Prioritize community-oriented programming that is affordable and accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Partner with local businesses to create free or low-cost options and amenities supports the existing local economy and encourages prolonged stays and repeat visitation.
- The use of temporary and permanent features creates a dynamic public space that can adapt to programming and seasonal needs.

THE BAY | SARASOTA, FL

KEY PARTNERS: The Bay Park Conservancy (BPC) is responsible for designing and implementing the Master Plan for the site approved by the Sarasota City Commission.

SCALE: When completed, the park will be 53 acres.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The Bay in Sarasota, FL, is an ambitious project aimed at transforming 53 acres of land along Sarasota Bay into a sustainable bayfront park. The redevelopment focuses on enhancing sustainability and resilience, with significant efforts to preserve natural habitats and connect the community to nature. Key features of the park include:

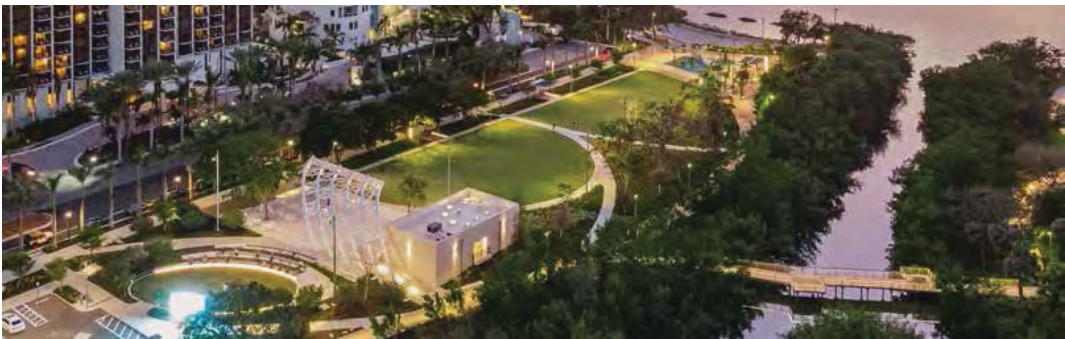
- **Resilient Shoreline:** Plans to convert a mile of bayfront into a living shoreline designed to withstand Florida’s flooding and storm surges
- **Habitat Restoration:** Removal of three inches of pollution from the Mangrove Bayou to restore the habitat for native flora and fauna.
- **Mangrove Walkway:** A half-mile pedestrian path that incorporates ecological placemaking with features such as seating areas within oak groves and a pedestrian bridge over the bayou.
- **Visitor Amenities:** Passive seating and viewing areas throughout the park encourage relaxation in nature, including the Sunset Deck for sunset views and the outdoor Reading Room for quiet reading.

Phase 2 of the park development, currently in progress, aims to enhance waterfront accessibility. This phase includes:

- **ADA-Accessible Paddle Launch:** Provides direct access to the bayou and bay for kayakers.
- **Sunset Pier:** A marine-friendly structure for sunset viewing, fishing, and wading.

The Bay redevelopment emphasizes ecological stewardship and community engagement, creating a resilient and inviting natural space for residents and visitors.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION : The Bay Sarasota. www.thebaysarasota.org



KEY LEARNINGS:

- Integrating intentional self programmed and passive spaces demonstrate how blending functional amenities with natural elements can enrich the visitor experience and encourage connection with nature.
- Using natural systems to manage flooding and storm surges, create resilient shorelines and enhance long-term sustainability while also creating recreational opportunities.
- Focusing on the qualities of a resilient parkspace from the outset can create an urban environment that is both a heightened experience of nature, and highly functional programmed event space.