

ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN FOR TRUMAN WATERFRONT PARK

Key West, Florida



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FEBRUARY 2019



27 FEBRUARY 2019

DEAR NEIGHBORS AND LEADERS OF OUR KEY WEST COMMUNITY –

The prestigious “Our Town” grant from the National Endowment for the Arts that made the finished report before you possible was also the impetus for months of conversations between community members, City of Key West staff, arts organizations, artists, and visitors to our beautiful island. Under the stewardship of the planning team CivicMoxie, our goal in those conversations was never to tell Key West what to do, but to *listen* to what you wanted to do. You’ll hear your voices throughout these pages, and in a very real sense, this is *your* plan. We just wrote it down.

What you told us was that you wanted a space that would reflect the rich cultural and historic legacy of Key West, of the neighborhoods around the Park, and of the ground the Park itself sits on. You wanted a space that was active and welcoming, with community programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. And you wanted beautiful green space, free and open, made even more beautiful with artwork that was fun, engaging, and creative.

The very same conversations that articulated this wonderful vision also planted seeds for the partnerships that will be required for it to succeed. Neighbors and nonprofits, artists and city leaders; we’re all going to have to work together. Creativity will be needed, but resources as well. Key West has made a once-in-a-generation investment in the Truman Waterfront Park, and although the end is in sight for the planned construction, the real work of creating a shared community space is just beginning. Fortunately, that’s also the fun part, and there’s no shortage of ideas.

CivicMoxie has done a brilliant job in these pages of gathering those ideas – both the ones generated here over the last few months, and ones from around the country in communities similar to ours. The potential and the possibilities are almost endless, and risk being overwhelming, so they’ve also laid out a roadmap for getting it done, and getting started. There are best practices to follow, and common mistakes to avoid. Our park will be like no other in the country – this is Key West, after all – but we don’t need to reinvent the wheel.

As the lead partnering organizations, we want to thank everyone who attended one of our community meetings, focus groups, had an interview or completed an online survey. We also want to thank our new friends at CivicMoxie; the work you’ve done far exceeded our hopes and expectations. Key West is incredibly fortunate to have received this magnificent waterfront property, and we owe a particular debt of gratitude to the many, many people who dedicated their time and talent to design, fund and build this wonderful Park for us all to enjoy.

It will take an equal level of commitment, collaboration, and leadership to ensure that the Truman Waterfront Park fulfills its potential, and lives up to that investment. The Park has great bones, and we now have a great plan. If you are reading this right now – whether you were part of its creation or are seeing it for the first time – you’re part of that plan, and we look forward to seeing you at the Park.

Elizabeth Young

Executive Director

Florida Keys Council of the Arts

Jed Dodds

Executive Director

The Studios of Key West

Kätchen Duncan

Executive Director

Bahama Village Music Program

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over 1,000 Key West residents and visitors contributed to this Arts & Culture Master Plan, demonstrating tremendous support and enthusiasm for the future of the Truman Waterfront. As much as possible, the project team worked to incorporate stakeholder feedback into the pages within this document and lay the groundwork for further community contributions through public art, cultural events, and additional creative endeavors at the new waterfront park. We look forward to seeing the vision outlined in this plan and specific recommendations come to fruition as Truman Waterfront Park becomes more and more of a community cornerstone. Special thanks to the following individuals, as well as to the staff of the USCGC Ingham, Douglass Gym, The Studios of Key West, and the Florida Keys Council of the Arts for allowing us to use their facilities.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Teri Johnston - *Mayor*, City of Key West
Jimmy Weekley - *Commissioner*, District I
Samuel Kaufman - *Commissioner*, District II
Billy Wardlow - *Commissioner*, District III
Gregory Davila - *Commissioner*, District IV
Mary Lou Hoover - *Commissioner*, District V
Clayton Lopez - *Commissioner*, District VI

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Bert Bender - *Member*, Historic Architectural Review Commission
Lucy Carleton - *Member*, Sustainability Board
Robert Cintron, Jr. - *Chair*, Truman Waterfront Advisory Board
Jim Gilleran - *Member*, Truman Waterfront Advisory Board
Matthew Helmerich - *Member*, Art in Public Places Board
Richard Tallmadge - *Chair*, Art in Public Places Board

CITY OF KEY WEST STAFF

James Scholl - *City Manager*
Greg Veliz - *Assistant City Manager*
Jim Bouquet - *Engineering Director (former)*
Marcus Davila - *Director of Community Services*
Karen DeMaria - *Urban Forestry Manager*
Kelly Perkins - *HARC Assistant Planner*
Michael Turner - *Deputy Director of Community Services*
Patrick Wright - *Director of Planning*

FUNDING PROVIDED BY



KEY WEST PROJECT TEAM

Jed Dodds - *Executive Director*, The Studios of Key West
Kätchen Duncan - *Executive Director*, Bahama Village Music Program
Alison Higgins - *Sustainability Coordinator*, City of Key West
Carolyn Sheldon - *Senior Grants Administrator*, City of Key West
Elizabeth Young - *Executive Director*, Florida Keys Council of the Arts

CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Dennis Beaver and Bert Whitt - *Founders*, Tennessee Williams Museum
Clinton Curry - *Director of Attractions in Key West*, Historical Tours of America
Nance Frank - *Owner*, Gallery on Greene
Jeanna Garrido - *Deputy Director and Development Coordinator*, Harry S. Truman Little White House
Patrick Garvey - *Initiative Founder and Advisory Member / Grimal Grove*, Growing Hope Initiative
Greg Gerwin - *Curator*, Key West Aquarium
Michael Gieda - *Executive Director*, Key West Art and Historical Society
Nadene Grossman Orr - *President and CEO*, We've Got the Keys
Veronica Guy-Stafford - *Editor-in-Chief*, Bahama Village Voices
Karen Ludwig-O'Leary - *Director*, Tree Preservation, Growing Hope Initiative
Holly Merrill - *Board Member*, Dogwood Foundation and CFFK
Stacey Mitchell - *Executive Director*, Tourist Development Council of Monroe County
Virginia Panico - *President*, Key West Chamber of Commerce
Michael Shields - *Board Member*, Key West Art and Historical Society
Bunnie Smith - *Chair*, Cultural Umbrella Committee for TDC
Ken Sullivan - *President*, Coral City Elks Lodge
Bill Verge - *Executive Director*, USCGC Ingham Maritime Museum
Craig Wanous - *Executive Director*, Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center

PREPARED BY



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PARK ARTS VISION TEAM

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INTRODUCTION

The Truman Waterfront Park in Key West, Florida, is a former U.S. Navy base with 2,300 linear feet of waterfront bulkhead overlooking a 46-acre marine basin. Located in Key West's Historic Old Town community, the park is adjacent to key cultural destinations – the USCGC Ingham Maritime Museum, Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center, and Fort Zachary Taylor State Park – in addition to sharing boundaries with Bahama Village, Truman Annex, and the Naval Air Station. The current development of this 28-acre parcel into a world class urban park, named after President Harry S. Truman, offers residents and visitors breathtaking views of the Gulf of Mexico, an outdoor amphitheater, green space, a splash pad and playground, shade trees and landscaping, and a fitness trail. By 2020, the park will also include a native fruit tree grove, multi-use recreation field, and a dog park, which will all be completed as Phase 1b of the project.

In 2015, the City of Key West was awarded a \$150,000 [National Endowment for the Arts](https://www.arts.gov/)¹ (NEA) [Our Town grant](https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town)², which funded this Arts & Culture Master Plan for Truman Waterfront Park, in addition to contributing towards Art in Public Places (AIPP) funding for public art and cultural demonstration projects in the park (planned for spring 2019).

It is important to note however, that this plan is about much more than public art in the park. Today's urban parks act as neighborhood gathering places, showcases for community activities, world class destinations and economic development engines. The current state of innovative park planning in this country and the world is to plan, program, and manage parks within the larger social, physical, and economic systems of the cities in which they are located. Because of this, the plan addresses issues of park integration into the surrounding neighborhoods, highlights opportunities for economic development, and seeks to strengthen Key West's Historic Old Town community through public art and creative placemaking.

The six-month planning effort looked at existing arts and cultural organizations and events in the city and

assessed the needs and desires of residents, visitors, and organizations as related to Truman Waterfront Park. The project team worked with local partners to assess existing conditions, seek public input, and identify priorities and collaborators to ensure the park serves as a true community anchor that integrates public art, local culture, ecological principles, and the community. While the location of Truman Waterfront Park is not without its challenges, the opportunity to create a cohesiveness on site that brings all the neighboring residents and cultural institutions together is clear.

Over the last ten years, the City of Key West and its citizens have made a historic investment of time and money into Truman Waterfront Park. This plan is intended to ensure that their investment is rewarded, with a vital public space that reflects its historic and community context. Public art and events play a critical role in this regard and can help unite sometimes fractured communities. The potential of Truman Waterfront Park is exciting and this plan presents a path forward to ensure that it will flourish into the future as a common ground where everyone in Key West comes together.



Truman Waterfront Park is located in Key West's Historic Old Town community and is bound by the Truman Annex and Bahama Village neighborhoods, the Naval Air Station, Fort Zachary Taylor State Park, and the Naval Marine Basin.

¹ <https://www.arts.gov/>

² <https://www.arts.gov/exploring-our-town>

OUTREACH SUMMARY

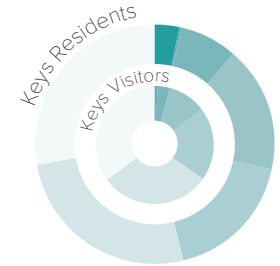
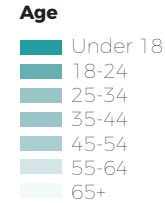
To ensure that this plan reflects the collective vision of the greater Key West community, engaging a wide range of residents and visitors was crucial to shaping final recommendations of the plan that align with the wants and needs of the people that live, work, and play in the city. Throughout the planning process, a robust public engagement schedule allowed the project team to engage with residents, visitors, public officials, board and committee members, local artists, creatives, and various stakeholders, representing a diverse cross section of neighborhoods, age groups, and identities. Outreach included meetings in the Bahama Village neighborhood and involved the active participation of three cultural partners – the Bahama Village Music Program, the Studios of Key West, and the Florida Keys Council of the Arts – as well as ten members of the Park Arts Vision Team who are local artists selected to offer feedback to the planning team.



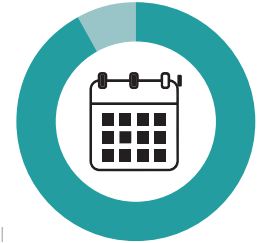
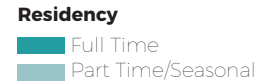
Outreach efforts surpassed the initial goal of 400 residents and 200 visitors required by the NEA Our Town grant terms, by incorporating a variety of engagement methods across various locations. The project team was able to engage with over 1,000 people – an extraordinary figure given the size and scope of the plan, and relatively limited timeframe of engagement.

ONLINE SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

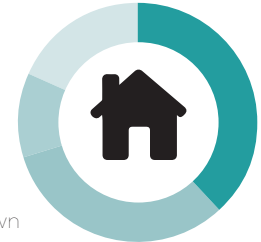
816
Total responses



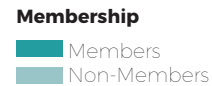
90%
Resident responses



73%
have lived in the Keys for over 10 years



46%
are members of local Arts & Cultural Organizations



VISION STATEMENT

“Truman Waterfront Park is a vibrant gathering space that reflects the compelling histories, extraordinary ecosystems, and diverse communities of Key West through public art, events, and programming, and serves as a community cornerstone where all are welcome to delight in the easy-going culture and natural beauty of the Florida Keys.”

GOALS THAT SUPPORT THE VISION

The vision for Truman Waterfront Park, as created from robust public input, is supported by four far-reaching goals, each of which is detailed in its own section in the full master plan.

There are many strategies and recommendations to achieve each goal in the master plan. The pages that follow include some selected recommendations from the master plan and a step-by-step guide for implementation (included on pages 10-11 of the executive summary). Not all recommendations have the same priority and those outlined under Step 1 will be critical to allowing all further strategies to be implemented.

In order for TWP to evolve into a genuine community cornerstone, it will require a designated management structure to coordinate the ongoing operations, scheduling, marketing, and fundraising needed for a park of this size and prominence. In addition to creating and hiring a dedicated park manager (an idea strongly supported by City of Key West staff), the City and its partners should assemble a park management advisory team to coordinate decision-making and a “Friends of TWP” non-profit to assist in marketing, fundraising, programming, and stewarding the park. The construction of the Admiral’s Cut Bridge will also be essential to the vitality of Truman Waterfront Park by establishing a connected waterfront and is also listed as a priority action.

GOAL 1

Foster the Truman Waterfront as a vibrant community gathering place

GOAL 2

Elevate local history and culture through events, education, and programming

GOAL 3

Integrate interactive, high-quality public art in designated areas of the Park

GOAL 4

Enhance physical connections between the Park and surrounding neighborhoods

SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

"Truman Waterfront park is a centerpiece for the City; make it pop out at people - needs to include some outstanding art, but nothing that detracts from the beauty of the setting."

- Interviewee



2.2-A ESTABLISH A CULTURAL TRAIL IN THE PARK THAT EXTENDS TO OTHER AREAS OF DOWNTOWN

The quay offers an incredible opportunity to serve as a main section of the cultural trail, with historical vignettes and signage painted on or embedded into the concrete so it does not limit use. The cultural trail would honor the varied history of Key West, its residents and their occupations, including: ship carpenters and boat builders; Jewish cigar factory owners; Cuban cigar makers; Chinese laundry owners; Bahamian spongers, wreckers, and fishermen; Navy SEALs; and traditions like Junkanoo and the Welters Coronet Funeral marching band.



1.7-A INCREASE AMOUNT OF SHADED AREAS THROUGH PUBLIC ART AND PLANTINGS



3.4-B CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SMALL-SCALE AND FUNCTIONAL ART THROUGHOUT THE PARK



4.1-A CONSTRUCT ADMIRAL'S CUT BRIDGE



"Shade is vital in this climate! Could be sculptural."

- Survey Respondent

"Share information about the cultural influence - the origins, legacies, and how certain Key West traditions came about."

- Community Workshop Attendee

"Artwork that is interactive and functional, and even a community garden. I would like to see fruit trees planted and eatable gardens"

- City of Key West staff member

"Admiral's Cut bridge needs to happen to allow people to continue walking the waterfront."

- City of Key West staff member



Arts and Culture Vision Map for Truman Waterfront Park

STEP-BY-STEP ACTION GUIDE

STEP 1

FIRST THINGS FIRST: PRIORITY ACTIONS TO GET THINGS UP AND RUNNING

- 1.1-A** Designate a person, organization, or business to coordinate marketing, events, and scheduling of the park
- 1.1-B** Create a park management advisory team
- 1.1-C** Found a non-profit partner to assist with special fundraising and advocacy (Friends of TWP)
- 4.1-A** [start planning to] Construct the “Admiral’s Cut” bridge

STEP 2

GROUNDWORK AND MARKETING NEEDED TO SUPPORT PARK VISIBILITY AND SUCCESS

- 1.1-E** Create a marketing strategy, park webpage, and unified calendar of events
- 1.1-F** Update online content to reflect current status
- 1.1-G** Work with GIS department to add boundaries to digital mapping platforms
- 1.1-H** Coordinate with local and regional tourism agencies
- 4.1-B** Install additional signage at key park entrances

STEP 4 (ONGOING)

PROGRAMS, PLACEMAKING, PARTNERSHIPS, AND USES TO ACTIVATE THE PARK

- 1.6-B** Construct a kiosk with a snack bar and/or space for a temporary pop-up restaurant
- 1.7-A** Increase amount of shaded areas through public art and plantings
- 1.7-B** Add basic infrastructure for outdoor games
- 1.7-C** Install picnic tables and charcoal grills
- 1.8-A** Install fitness equipment for adults adjacent to playground and splash pad
- 1.8-B** Integrate public Wi-Fi and charging stations
- 1.9-A** Create or host a program of adult sports leagues
- 1.9-B** Expand fitness trail to extend beyond McCoy Gardens
- 1.9-C** Construct new infrastructure to support alternative forms of activity
- 2.1-A** Expand public use of the Amphitheater to include more local performance groups.
- 2.1-B** Collaborate with local partners to create new opportunities for music.
- 2.2-A** Establish a cultural trail in the park that extends to other areas of downtown
- 2.2-B** Create a food-based education program focused around local cuisines and ingredients.
- 2.2-C** Identify opportunities for interactive learning through art and design
- 3.2-A** Establish a sidewalk chalk event
- 3.2-B** Reimagine Sculpture Key West as a rotating art installation throughout the year
- 3.2-C** Provide opportunities to feature a quarterly “artist spotlight”
- 3.2-D** Install a mural wall or other collective community artwork
- 3.4-A** Use a rotating “artist spotlight” to highlight the work of local artists
- 3.4-B** Create opportunities for small-scale and functional art throughout the park
- 3.6-A** Create evening gathering places through the use of light
- 3.6-B** Allow public art that utilizes light as a medium



STEP 3

BEST PRACTICES FOR A DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT AND DECISIONS FRAMEWORK

- 1.1-D** Actively manage and program the Amphitheater
- 1.2-A** Create a checklist for decision-making at TWP (ecological focus)
- 1.3-A** Consider urban design effects on security
- 1.3-B** Limit use of fencing and barriers
- 1.3-C** Employ friendly, approachable security staff
- 1.5-A** Ensure public art has minimal impact on existing open space
- 1.5-B** Limit events and temporary uses in open spaces and grassy fields
- 1.6-A** Allow food trucks and pop-up events to utilize the park on a scheduled basis
- 3.1-A** Create goals and standards for public art
- 3.5-A** Collaborate with artists in the creation of new wayfinding and educational signage
- 3.5-B** Collaborate with artists/creatives in the design and construction of new park elements
- 4.2-A** Clarify parking policy in signage and park promotional materials

STEP 5

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CITY INITIATIVES AND GOALS

- 1.4-A** Encourage community uses and spaces that are complimentary of the park (Diesel Plant).
- 2.3-A** Integrate programming with nearby arts and cultural partners
- 2.3-B** Move some existing street fairs to the park
- 3.3-A** Create a long-term permanent public art program
- 3.3-B** Initiate the Florida Keys Sculpture Trail at TWP
- 3.3-C** Include environmental and landscape sculptural art in the permanent public art program
- 4.2-B** Establish dedicated shuttle stops at the park
- 4.2-C** Ensure bicycle infrastructure is adequate and advertised
- 4.3-A** Encourage active uses at park periphery
- 4.3-B** Develop design guidelines for adjacent development
- 4.3-C** Apply creative placemaking efforts in adjacent neighborhood

