About The Bay

The Bay is a signature public park along Sarasota Bay designed to be "one park for all" – open and accessible, free and welcoming for everyone to enjoy. This beloved gathering place is transforming 53 acres of precious city-owned land into a blue and green oasis – revitalizing what was once a parking lot into a dynamic public park.

Touchstones of The Bay

Since the beginning, the Guiding Principles and the Master Plan serve as "Touchstones" that inform every decision and action at The Bay.

Guiding Principles

- One Park for All: Is open and accessible, free and welcoming to the full and rich diversity of the community... now, and for generations to come.
- Transformation: A living learning laboratory that is transforming a parking lot into a signature public park along Sarasota Bay.
- Blue & Green Oasis: Conserves & restores 53 acres of precious bayfront into a blue & green oasis, beginning with the first & best use of the land and water.
- A Gathering Place: A beloved and sustainable gathering place for family, friends and fun.
- Sustainable in Every Way: Is financially feasible, operationally doable, and environmentally sustainable for long-term success.
- A Community of Partnerships: Enables aspirations to be realized at The Bay every day.

The Bay Park Master Plan

- A Master Plan is a conceptual design that shows a plan of park guest possible uses.
- The original Master Plan for the 53-acre site was unanimously approved the Sarasota City Commission in Sept '18.
- In November '23, an updated Master Plan reflecting additional learning and community feedback was approved.
- The completed park in total will cost an estimated $175-200 million and will take approximately 8-10 years to complete over four or more phases.
- Phase 1 of the park -- 10+ acres of green space and gathering places -- opened in October 2022. (Cost: $30 million -- 90% Private, 10% City/ Gov't Grants)
- Phase 2 -- the next 14-acre $65 million development -- is underway. Expected Completion: 2027. (Funding: 74% TIF City-backed bond (50/50 City-County), 26% Gov't Grants/ Private)

Quick Facts

- 1.2+ million guests since the park opened in Oct 2022 (97% will return).
- 60K+ guests participate in 800+ FREE events annually. (92% rate Excellent/ Very Good).
- 5 million cumulative Connections with the public made to date.
- 10+ Global, National, State and Regional Design Awards. and 10+ People's Choice Awards.
- 2025 Sarasota Chamber Community Impact Award
- 2021 Time Magazine "100 World's Greatest Places."
- Network of 70+ Non-Profit partners
- Every year, the current park treats 40+ million gallons of polluted stormwater before entering Sarasota Bay.
  - Once complete, the entire 53-acre site will treat 300 million gallons of stormwater annually.
- 4K+ cubic yards of polluted sediment removed from the Bayou and Canal Basin floors improves tidal flow & habitat health.
- Phase 2 extends restoration of 1 mile of contiguous natural resilient shoreline.
- The current 10-acre park features:
  - 4 Buildings on Nat'l Register of Historic Places.
  - Walkways & Bayfront Promenades
  - Golf-course quality Lawns
  - Dozens of rescued trees, 1,000's of Florida-friendly plants
  - Botanical Gardens
  - Small natural beach
  - Larger-than-life Ibis Playground
  - Architectural Shade Structure

Scan to learn more about The Bay

The Bay Park Conservancy (BPC) is a 501c3 non-profit responsible for designing and implementing the Master Plan approved by the Sarasota City Commission. The BPC entered into a long-term 15-year Public-Private Partnership with the City to help fund, develop, operate, maintain and program The Bay park for the benefit of the community... now, and for generations to come.

Environmental Sustainability at The Bay

GOAL: Transform what was mostly parking lot into a signature sustainable public park.

- The Bay converts 53 acres of precious city-owned bayfront land from what was ~20% green space into a blue-and-green oasis in downtown Sarasota.
- **The Blue and Green Oasis Approach at The Bay**
  - **Clean Up** (e.g., dredging, mangrove windowing, invasive plant removal)
  - **Improve Stormwater Management** (300 million gallons flow through the site each year)
  - **Make More Resilient** (e.g., improve elevation, Florida-friendly/ native plantings)
  - **Restore, preserve, sustain** and **add Green Space** (transform gray to green)
  - Add **Park Features and Amenities** that delight!

Learn more: Environmental Improvements at The Bay

GOAL: Protect Sarasota Bay from the City... and the City from Sarasota Bay.

Protect Sarasota Bay from the City | Improve Water Quality

- The Bay is the last line of defense for 300 million gallons of annual polluted urban stormwater runoff before it flows into Sarasota Bay.
- The current 10-acre park:
  - Improves water quality of 40+ million gallons of polluted stormwater that flows through the park's built-in "treatment train" -- removing silt, pollutants and other debris along the way.
  - Includes removal of 4K+ cubic yards of polluted silt from the Mangrove Bayou and Canal Basin floors which helped restore better tidal flow, facilitated sea grass growth, and improved the habitat for many native plant and animal species.

Protect the City from Sarasota Bay | Improve Resilience

- The Bay is converting 1-mile of hardened shorelines into resilient shorelines enabling nature to handle and endure the flooding and storm surges that are inherent parts of tropical storms and hurricanes.

Learn More: Environmental Resilience at The Bay

Accolades & Awards

Design

- **2026 AIA** | Regional & Urban Design Award | The Bay Park
- **2026 AIA Florida** | Restoration Honor Award | Chidsey Library Rehabilitation
- **2026 Florida Trust for Historic Preservation** | Award for Renovation, Rehabilitation and Adaptive Use | Chidsey Library Rehabilitation
- **2025 AIA Gulf Coast** | New Work Excellence Award | The Nest
- **2025 AIA Florida People's Choice** | Second Place | The Nest
- **2025 Architizer A+** | Public Parks and Green Spaces Finalist | The Nest
- **2024 World Landscape Architects** | Shortlist: Large Landscape Design of Built Projects
- **2024 AIA Florida** | New Work Excellence Award | The Nest
- **2024 ASLA** | Design Honor Award
- **2023 ASLA Florida** | Award of Excellence & Prestigious Frederic B. Stresau Award
- **2023 American Planning Association Florida** | Implementation Merit Award
- **2023 Boston Society of Landscape Architects** | Design Merit Award
- **2021 ASLA Florida** | Design Award
- **2021 Boston Society of Landscape Architects** | The Bay Master Plan Merit Award
- **2020 AIA Gulf Coast** | Unbuilt Work Merit Award | The Nest

AIA = American Institute of Architects ASLA = American Society of Landscape Architects

Learn More: Accolades & Awards

People's Choice/ Other

- **SRQ Magazine Best of SRQ Local Reader's Competition |** Best Public Space, Best Park for Kids, Best Children's Attraction (Ibis Playground), Best Live Music Venue, Best Local Festival ('25 Best of The Bay Music Fest, '23 The Bay Turns One!)
- **Sarasota Chamber Small Business Awards |** Community Impact ('25 Winner), Hospitality Award ('24 Finalist)
- **2023 Sarasota Magazine Editor's Pick Award |** Best Park for Kids, Kayaking and Anything, Really!
- **2021 Time Magazine's "100 World's Greatest Places"**

Learn More: TheBaySarasota.org
Click here to Register for The Bay Weekly Newsletter

one park for all

Jun 2026