

# the Bay

SARASOTA



## 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 – transforming 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:** Transforms a parking lot into a signature public park.
- **Blue & Green Oasis:** Preserves, restores and transforms 53 acres of precious city-owned land along Sarasota Bay into a blue & green oasis.
- **A Gathering Place:** An enlivened destination for family, friends and fun.
- **Sustainable in Every Way:** Is financially feasible, operationally doable, and environmentally sustainable.
- **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 by 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 fully funded and underway, with expected completion in 2026. (Funding: 74% TIF City-backed bond, 26% Gov't Grants/ Private)

### Quick Facts

- 600K guests in the first 2 years (97% will return).
- 50K+ guests participate in [500+ FREE events annually](#). (92% rate Excellent/ Very Good).
- 3.2+ million cumulative Connections with the public made to date.
- 9 Global, National, State and Regional Design [Awards](#).
- 10 People's Choice [Awards](#).
- 2021 Time Magazine [“100 World's Greatest Places.”](#)
- Every year, current park treats 70+ million gallons of polluted stormwater before entering Sarasota Bay.
  - Once complete, the entire 53-acre Bay park site will treat 300 million gallons of stormwater annually.
- 2-3 ft of polluted sediment removed from Bayou floor improved tidal flow & habitat.
- 3,000+ cubic yards of polluted sediment was removed from the Canal.
- [Phase 2](#) extends restoration of 1 mile of contiguous natural resilient shoreline.
- The current 10-acre [park features](#):
  - 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 current 10-acre park includes:
  - A 1/2-mile, 10-foot wide Mangrove Bayou walkway around coastal wetlands.
  - 10 acres of golf-course quality lawns.
  - Dozens of rescued trees, thousands of Florida-friendly plants.
  - A small natural beach.
  - Botanical gardens.

[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

- 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 70+ million gallons of polluted stormwater that flows through the park's built-in "treatment train" -- removing silt, pollutants and other debris along the way.
  - Included removal of 2-3' of polluted silt from the Mangrove Bayou floor 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

- 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

- **2024 World Landscape Architects Shortlist** | Large Landscape Design of Built Projects
- **2024 American Society of Landscape Architects** | Design Honor Award
- **2023 American Society of Landscape Architects 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 American Society of Landscape Architects Florida** | Design Award
- **2021 Boston Society of Landscape Architects** | The Bay Master Plan Merit Award
- **2020 American Institute of Architects Gulf Coast** | Unbuilt Design Merit Award

### People's Choice/ Other

- **2024 SRQ Magazine Best of SRQ Local Reader's Competition** | Best Public Space, Best Park for Kids, Best Children's Attraction (Ibis Playground & The Nest), Best Local Festival (The Bay Turns One! 1st Anniversary Community Celebration)
- **2024 Sarasota Chamber Small Business Awards** | Hospitality Award Finalist
- **2023 Sarasota Magazine Editor's Pick Award** | Best Park for Kids, Kayaking and Anything, Really!
- **2023 SRQ Magazine Best of SRQ Local Reader's Competition** | Best Public Space, Best Park for Kids, Best Children's Attraction (Ibis Playground)
- **2021 Time Magazine's "100 World's Greatest Places"**

Learn More: [TheBaySarasota.org](https://TheBaySarasota.org)  
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*one park for all*