

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force
Museum Location Criteria for

OPA-LOCKA, Florida

Miami-Dade County

March 15, 2024



Prepared By



CRITERIA 1

Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

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

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

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

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



CRITERIA 1

(Continued)

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

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



CRITERIA 2

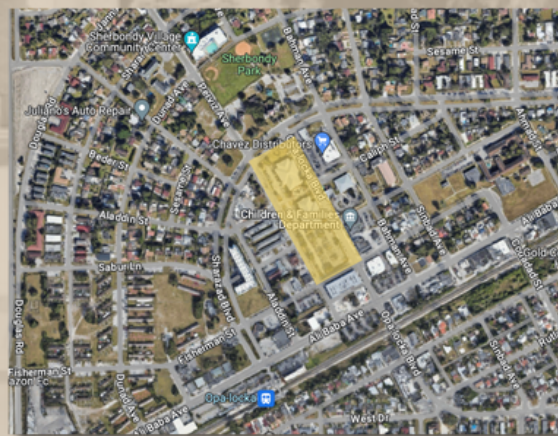
Appropriateness of Proposed Location

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

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

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

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



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

CRITERIA 2 (Continued)

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



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

CRITERIA 3

Regional Economy

Opa-locka's centrality within Miami-Dade County and also in its short distance to bordering Broward County makes it an appealing gateway to many industries, modes of transportation, educational institutions, and tourism draws.

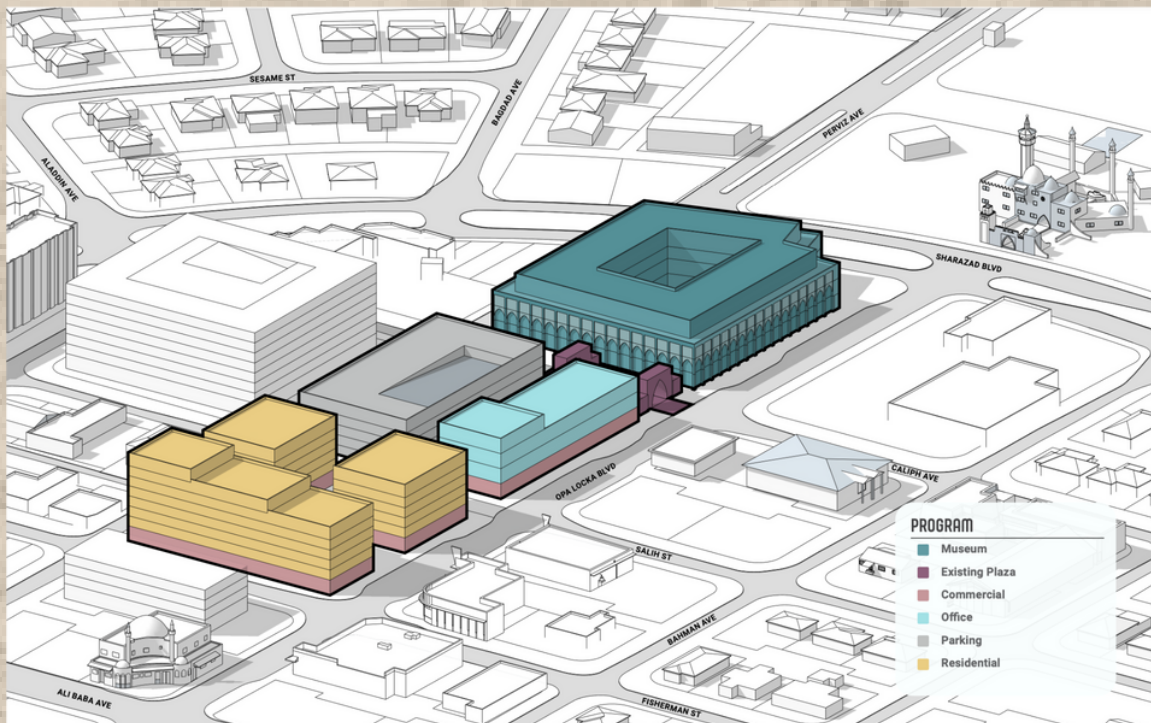
Miami-Dade County

As of 2023 and according to the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, Miami-Dade County welcomed more than **26.5 million visitors in 2022**, generating over \$20.8 billion, an increase of 8% in tourism revenue over 2021. Of Florida Resident Overnight Visitors to the area, 21% were to visit museums. The county welcomes major sporting events, including the Miami Open, Formula 1 Racing, and the World Cup in 2026, which all take place within 10 minutes from Opa-locka at the Hard Rock Stadium.

The region is host to countless world-class cultural and entertainment showcases and festivals on a year-round basis, such as Ultra, Jazz in the Gardens, SoBe Food and Wine Festival, the Miami Film Festival, Art Basel, and much more.

Broward County

Just north of Opa-locka in Broward County, Visit Lauderdale reported for **\$1.36 billion in hotel revenue and \$99.9 million in tourist development tax collections in 2021**.



Aerial schematic showing possible development outcomes

CRITERIA 3

(Continued)

Opa-locka

Opa-locka is within very close proximity to many of the renowned event and sporting venues that host some of the aforementioned seasonal highlights. These include the Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Gulfstream Park in Hallandale, the Marlins and Miami Heat Stadiums in Miami, soon-to-come InterMiami Stadium, and much more.

Nearby, higher education institutions like Florida Memorial University, St. Thomas University, Barry University, and Miami-Dade College North Campus are within a stones throw away. Not far to the south are the University of Miami and Florida International University, and to the north there is Florida Atlantic University, Nova Southeastern, and Broward College, to name a few.

Opa-locka's government consists of 12 departments and over 130 employees. The city also has its own police department, has three public parks and programming primarily geared to youth and seniors. Opa-locka is also designated a Florida Main Street community and has an established Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA).

The city's financial position is the strongest it has been in nearly a decade, according to an analysis conducted by the Opa-locka Finance Department for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2022. The net position of Opa-locka was set \$52.4 million, an increase of 21% from the year prior. The estimate for active capital improvement projects in the City of Opa-locka as of March 14, 2024 is \$32,750,00.00.

The primary industries of Opa-locka are comprised of industrial, manufacturing, and logistics with the most notable businesses of which is the Amazon Fulfillment Center and the Opa-locka Executive Airport.

The current millage rate is 9.35%, and as of February 2024 the average home is valued at \$419,900.00, a 3.7% year-over-year increase according to Realtor.com, and consistent with the housing trends across Miami-Dade County.

The city will expect to bring significant tax increases in the coming years with the welcoming of major housing projects, most notably Ten North Group's City Terrace. The project, to be constructed in the area immediate blocks surrounding the proposed site for the museum, will consist of two phases, and in a five-to-ten-year pipeline.

CRITERIA 3 (Continued)



City Terrace Phase I artist rendering subject to change

CRITERIA 4

Regional Demographics

Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties

As the **largest population in the State of Florida, Miami-Dade County has an estimated 2,701,767 residents as of the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau.** Following this, and from the same year, neighboring Broward County has approximately 1,944,375 residents, and Palm Beach County with 1,492,191. Opa-locka is at the nexus of tapping into all of these audiences, as well as the entire state, conveniently connected to the entire tri-county region, both in highways and reliable public transit systems.

Opa-locka

Referencing the 2020 U.S. Census Bureau statistics, and within the 4.2 square miles of the city's limits, Opa-locka has a population of 16,463, of which 8,558 persons identify as Black/African American. The city is also within very close proximity to other notable historically Black communities such as Lemon City, Brownsville, Liberty City, Overtown, and Coconut Grove.

The median household income is \$30,101.00, and those with a Bachelor's Degree or higher is 7.6%. Total households came to 6,231.

Unemployment was at 54.3 %, and those without health care coverage was 23.3%. The area has a ready workforce for the museum and will bring economic impact to the community.

Additional demographic statistics include: Hispanic/Latino - 7,604; White - 2, 244, American Indian and Alaska Native - 38; Some other race - 1,864.

CRITERIA 5

Transportation Infrastructure

Opa-locka is a strategic choice to establish a State-wide cultural institution that would be nestled in the heart of South Florida, it is connected to all major transportation systems.

The city has an active railroad that goes through the downtown core. Additionally, AmTrak utilizes the line and ending just south of the city, and the active Opa-locka Tri-Rail Station within a short walk of the proposed museum location, as well as other historic landmarks. Riders currently are venturing down from as far as West Palm Beach on the Tri-Rail to join historic walking tours of Opa-locka, presented by the Opa-locka Preservation Association, and the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) has opened a connector rail that **now joins Tri-Rail with the new downtown Miami Central Station, which houses Brightline.**

Miami-Dade County plans to extend the above-ground Metro Rail system to include the North Corridor in the next phase of its expansion. This would take the 25-mile system from Liberty City upwards on 27th Avenue to the Hard Rock Stadium, the county line, with a stop being placed in Opa-locka at Ali Baba Avenue. This would expand yet another public transit system another 10 miles, making Opa-locka yet another focal point for visitors to the area as well as residents in this rapidly developing Transportation-Oriented Development (TOD). Opa-locka is located next to significant highway systems, including 826, I-95, the Florida Turnpike, and I-75's Alligator Alley connecting to West Florida.

Adding to this, Opa-locka features the county's oldest-operating airport and the State's busiest general aviation airport, Miami-Opa Locka Executive (OPF), established by Glenn Curtiss in the early 1920s and today remains the primary choice for high-profile clientele and terminals, including FountainBleau Aviation, Atlantic Aviation, Embassair and Signature. Aside from a more exclusive audience, Opa-locka is within 30 minutes of both Miami International Airport (MIA) and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL). Both airports are connected to Tri-Rail, connecting to Opa-locka.



CRITERIA 6

Local Funding and Other Support

The most compelling proposition for the economics of the decision to choose Opa-locka rests in the value of City-owned/State-managed property at 151 Perviz Avenue.

Given the existing property of 4.5 acres and sizable structures upwards of 42,000 square feet are unencumbered, the repurposing of this site has a significant quantifiable value, one that lessens the financial capital outlay. Thereby foregoing the cost of land acquisition and provides options for development phasing and scale.

Direct support and interest to further the capital development of this project include participation from: City of Opa-locka, Opa-locka CRA, Ten North Group, and Miami-Dade County. Additional partners include: Arts Council, the Beacon Council, Knight Foundation, The Miami Foundation, The Children's Trust and others.

This proposal also includes letters of support from District 109 House of Representative Ashley Gantt, as well as District 34 Senator Shevrin Jones. Additional discussions and capital fundraising would occur should Opa-locka be chosen.



CRITERIA 7

Educational Resources

Miami-Dade County

Opa-locka is based in a county that certainly is not without an abundance of renowned cultural institutions that bring in resources and cultural presentations from all over, a fitting addition would be the Florida Museum of Black History. These include the Smithsonian-affiliate HistoryMiami, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, the Black Archives at the Lyric Theatre, the Historic Hampton House, a Green Book motel, and several art museums such as the The Wolfsonian, Perez Art Museum, Rubell Museum, Coral Gables Museum, The Bass, and much more.

Other institutions such as the Greater Miami Convention & Visitor's Bureau, the Children's Trust, as well as Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs, have given and expressed their support to the organization and initiatives being pursued in partnership with the City.

Opa-locka

In the last five years, Opa-locka has begun its evolution to housing a burgeoning arts and culture landscape, much of which can be attributed to the growth and scale of the services and activities from Ten North Group.

In the 43 years since the non-profit was founded, Ten North Group, formerly the Opa-locka Community Development Corporation (OLCDC) has made its mission to bridge economic gaps and provide resources to the underserved and disenfranchised Black and Brown communities of Opa-locka and the region. Having served thousands of families and children through the family services division, to the Community Fund offering low-interest business loans and workshops, the organization has been steadfast in being part of growing a more prosperous community for all.

Ten North Group has directly served as a key component in the community education space as both a provider and as an a community partner and connector.

Ten North has evolved its business model to take full advantage of assets, partnerships. and financial resources to maximize the opportunities for building a strong ecosystem of art, culture and creative place-making . Ten North Group is a community builder offering a host of arts programs for children, youth, and adults that support all art forms. These programs are done in collaboration with community partners like the Miami-Dade Public School System, CareerSource serving the public including children and youth, entrepreneurs, academics and creatives alike.

CRITERIA 7 (Continued)

Through the arts and culture services, the power of art in revitalizing communities has been proven time and time again. Since 2010, there has been a vigorous commitment to the arts by educating, advocating, and integrating the African Diaspora cultural and historic experience as part of revitalizing Black and Brown communities. This has led to multiple collaborations and initiatives. Year-round programming has been established providing arts and culture opportunities to the community; 57 exhibitions and activations since 2016. Additionally thousands of local, state-wide, national and international tourists as well as hundreds of curators, artists, scholars come to Opa-locka to the Ten North Group campus and downtown areas which are adjacent to the proposed museum site.

Uniquely and remarkably, Ten North Group is an invited satellite location of the international art fair, Art Basel. Additionally, Ten North Group has relationships with art fairs who are expanding to the campus, Also Known As Africa (AKAA) and 1-54. Both are the largest art fairs representing the continent of Africa. Additionally, the Museum of Black Civilization (Dakar, Senegal), the largest museum on the continent, has a partnership with Ten North including working with the same chief curator. The Art of Transformation held during Art Basel Miami, Miami Art Week and Greater Miami Convention and Visitor's Bureau's Art of Black Miami alone welcomes over 2,000 visitors to the Opa-locka area that is adjacent to the proposed site. The "A-List" of the "Who's Who" in the African and African Diaspora Art world in addition to the local community attend. The immersive installations, performances and cross-cultural programs add an innovative layer to the successes achieved.

Through the family services, educational, care coordination, wraparound services and youth programming are provided. In the past year alone, more than 800 children were serviced in partnership with the Florida Education Fund (FEF). The programs offered a high quality, and innovative evidence-based school year and summer enrichment programs exploring STEM, life skills, postsecondary and career planning for students in grades 6-12

Through Financial Empowerment, education and technical assistance was provided to 266 community clients that received business support and guidance, through individual support, group workshops, programs and matching technical assistance grants. Since inception five years ago, this educational and support program has served approximately 2,000 technical assistant participants through 114 workshops and over 450 hours of one-on-one technical assistance.

CRITERIA 7

(Continued)

Additionally, the Opa-locka Preservation Association, whose mission it is to preserve and promote the built and natural environments of the community, gives free walking and bike tours of the downtown area, and produced the Opa-locka Heritage Trail, a 15-station interpretive trail that shares never-before-seen images and stories of the city's founding history. The Trail project was funded by Ten North Group and supported by the City of Opa-locka, with an official unveiling date of April 13, 2024. Following this unveiling, a day-long cultural mini festival, MENA Fest, will take place, celebrating the history of the city and its connection with the architectural identity of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The event will be a co-production of Ten North Group and the City of Opa-locka.

Ten North Group has generated great interest and support for its arts collection, programs, and services from stakeholders and partners from all over the world. With close partnerships to the aforementioned cultural institutions, to international partners at the Museum of Human Civilization in Dakar, Senegal, as well as countless art galleries focused on the curation of African art, exposure for Opa-locka and this growing arts district has begun.

Ten North Group has amassed the largest collection of art of the African diaspora. Its mission is to ensure access and to provide exposure to the arts.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT



THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

COMMITTEES:

Appropriations Committee on Education, *Vice Chair*
Commerce and Tourism
Education Postsecondary
Education Pre-K -12
Finance and Tax
Fiscal Policy
Regulated Industries
Rules

SENATOR SHEVRIN D. "SHEV" JONES

District 34

February 13, 2024

Dear Chair and Members
Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair
Mr. Tony Lee, Ed.D.
Rep. Kiyon Michael
Ms. Gayle Phillips
Sen. Bobby Powell

Dear Chair and Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic endorsement to locate the Florida Museum of Black History in Opa-Locka, Florida. As set forth more fully in this letter, my support of Opa-Locka becoming the chosen site for establishing this Museum is based on location, historical significance, and the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets.

First, as to the location, Opa-Locka is strategically situated in the heart of South Florida. It is the ideal location for this significant cultural institution. Opa-Locka is not only minutes away from several higher education institutions but is also at the epicenter of the urban core tri-county region, with connections to: major highways, rail, and airports. A transportation-oriented city such as Opa-Locka is aggressively pursuing a revitalized downtown core, with several projects that will soon welcome a level of density and economic drive that has yet to be seen. One of these development projects, being the Opa-Locka City Terrace, is a transformative multi-family, mixed-use development. Such a project is promising to bring: 1,000 units, 100,000 square feet of commercial space, accessible and activated community cultural spaces, as well as beautifully designed streetscapes and parks.

The second is historical significance. Opa-Locka boasts a rich Black history, as it was the first community in Northern Miami-Dade County known to integrate, and one of the last remaining

REPLY TO:

□ Capitol Office, 218 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 • (850) 487-5034
□ District Office, 606 NW 183rd Street, Miami Gardens, FL 33169 • (305) 493-6002

Website: www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S34

KATHLEEN PASSIDOMO
President of the Senate

DENNIS BAXLEY
President Pro Tempore

predominantly Black neighborhoods in the county. Moreover, the City's racial and ethnic diversity (boasting large numbers of Black and Hispanic/Latino residents and business owners) makes it an ideal setting to showcase the positive effects of diversity and inclusion in our State. Just as importantly, the City features an incredibly unique and valuable backdrop of Moorish Revival architecture, one that is inextricably linked to the Moors of North Africa and was built by founding members of the Black community in 1926.

Third is the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets. At the local level, the City of Opa-Locka has already expressed its unwavering support for this proposal and backed that support with a promise to be the State's full partner in making the Museum a reality. Indeed, the City of Opa-Locka has already expended significant resources in the promotion of its unique cultural heritage, including the City-led restoration of its Opa-locka Historic City Hall (which is more than halfway completed), and the non-profit-led restoration of the historic Hurt Building and Opa-locka Seaboard Air Line Station (both of which are routinely activated for cultural programming and exhibitions). All three brilliant beacons of the Moorish identity are proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places, part of a federally recognized Thematic Resource Area that the City's Historic Preservation Board led. Additionally, Miami-Dade County is also committed to bolstering the success of the Florida Museum of Black History in Opa-Locka.

Lastly, the "game-changer" in all of this is the fact that there is a state-controlled complex located at 151 Perviz Avenue, in the heart of Opa-Locka's historic downtown, which is the ideal place to situate the Museum. Indeed, I understand that 151 Perviz Avenue, a regional service center, is a City-owned property that has been leased, on a long-term basis, to the State of Florida for \$1.00. This location affords the project 46,770 square feet of existing space, comprising two large structures and a connecting plaza with a grand Moorish design. As an additional benefit, the property is surrounded by vacant land prime for future development that will further enhance the sustainable framework of our downtown.

I have had the opportunity to review the drawings for the re-imagined 151 Perviz Avenue, which the organizations pushing forward this proposal have taken the time and expended the resources to create, and I am blown away. The drawings show not only the full potential of this Museum to be a symbol of our State's cultural richness and its appreciation of its history but also a place where future generations of Floridians can draw pride, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

I appreciate your dedication to this vital cultural endeavor. I look forward to witnessing the success and growth of the Florida Museum of Black History, and I wholeheartedly believe this cultural gem belongs in Opa-Locka, Florida. Thank you very much for considering this matter.

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President Pro Tempore

Your partner in making a difference,



Shevrin D. "Shev" Jones
Florida State Senator – Senate District 34

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Florida House of Representatives

Representative Ashley V. Gantt

District 109

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Email: Ashley.Gantt@myfloridahouse.com

Chair and Members
Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0250

Sen. Geraldine Thompson, Chair
Mr. Tony Lee, Ed.D.
Rep. Kiyon Michael
Ms. Gayle Phillips
Sen. Bobby Powell
FLHeritage@DOS.MyFlorida.com

Subject: Unconditional Endorsement and Support for the Florida Museum of Black History To Be Located in Opa-locka, Miami-Dade County, Florida

Dear Chair and Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce,

I am writing to express my endorsement of the proposal submitted to your esteemed Taskforce, to locate the Florida Museum of Black History, in Opa-locka, Miami-Dade County (the "Proposal"). As set forth more fully in this letter, my support of Opa-locka becoming the chosen site for the establishment of this very important Museum is based on location, historical significance, and the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets.

First, as to location. Opa-locka is strategically situated in the heart of South Florida. It is, in my view, the ideal location for this significant cultural institution. Opa-locka is not only minutes away from several higher education institutions but is also at the epicenter of the urban core tri-county region, with connections to major highways, rail, and airports. Indeed, as a transportation-oriented development (TOD), the City of Opa-locka is aggressively pursuing the revitalization of its downtown core, with several projects that will soon welcome a level of density and economic drive never previously achieved. One of these development projects, Opa-locka City Terrace, a transformative multi-family, mixed use development, is promised to bring 1,000 units, 100,000 square feet of



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commercial space, and will feature accessible and activated community and cultural spaces, as well as beautifully designed streetscapes and parks.

Second, its historical significance. Opa-locka boasts a rich Black history, as it was the first community of Northern Miami-Dade County known to integrate, and is one of the last-remaining, predominantly Black neighborhoods in the County. Moreover, the City's racial and ethnic diversity (boasting large Black and Hispanic/Latino residents and business owners), makes it an ideal setting to showcase the positive effects of diversity and inclusion in our State. Just as importantly, the built landscape features an incredibly unique and valuable backdrop of Moorish Revival architecture, one that is inextricably linked to the Moors of North Africa and was built by founding members of the Black community in 1926.

Third is the unique opportunity to leverage State and local assets. At the local level, it is my understanding that the City of Opa-locka has already expressed its unwavering support for the Proposal and backed that support with a promise to be the State's full partner in making the Museum a reality. Indeed, the City of Opa-locka has already expended significant resources in the promotion of its unique cultural heritage, including the City-led restoration of its Opa-locka Historic City Hall (which is more than halfway completed), and the non-profit led restoration of the historic Hurt Building and Opa-locka Seaboard Air Line Station (both of which are routinely activated for cultural programming and exhibitions). All three of these brilliant beacons of the Moorish identity are proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places, part of a federally recognized Thematic Resource Area that was led by the City's Historic Preservation Board. Additionally, Miami-Dade County is also committed to bolstering the success of the Florida Museum of Black History in Opa-locka.

Lastly, the "game-changer" in all of this is the fact that, as I understand it, there is a state-controlled complex located at 151 Perviz Avenue, in the heart of Opa-locka's historic downtown, that is the ideal place to situate the Museum. Indeed, it is my understanding that 151 Perviz Avenue, which is currently a regional service center, is a City-owned property which has been leased, on a long-term basis, to the State of Florida for \$1.00. This location affords the project 46,770 square feet of existing space, comprising two large structures and a connecting plaza with a grand Moorish design. As an additional benefit, the property is surrounded by vacant land prime for future development that will further enhance the sustainable framework of our downtown.



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Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Ashley V. Gantt

Honorable Ashley V. Gantt
Florida State Representative – District 109

Chair and Members of the Florida Museum of Black History Taskforce
March 3rd 2024
Page 2.

Historical research demonstrate that Opa-locka boasts a rich Black history, as it was the first community of Northern Miami-Dade County known to integrate. It will also reveal that it is one of the last-remaining, predominately Black neighborhoods in Miami Dade County. Moreover, the City's racial and ethnic diversity (boasting large Black and Hispanic/Latino residents and business owners) makes it an ideal setting to showcase the positive effects of diversity and inclusion in our State.

Just as importantly, the built landscape features an incredibly unique and valuable backdrop of Moorish Revival architecture, one that is inextricably linked to the Moors of North Africa and was built by founding members of the Black community in 1926.

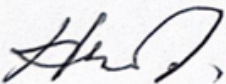
At the regional level, I understand that the City of Opa-locka has already expressed its unwavering support for the Proposal and backed that support with a promise to be the State's full partner in making the Museum a reality. Indeed, the City of Opa-locka has already expended significant resources in the promotion of its unique cultural heritage, including the City-led restoration of its Opa-locka Historic City Hall (which is more than halfway completed), and the non-profit-led restoration of the historic Hurt Building and Opa-locka Seaboard Air Line Station (both of which are routinely activated for cultural programming and exhibitions). All three brilliant beacons of the Moorish identity are proudly listed on the National Register of Historic Places, part of a federally recognized Thematic Resource Area that the City's Historic Preservation Board led.

We have had the opportunity to review the impressive drawings for the re-imagined 151 Perviz Avenue, which the organizations pushing forward the Proposal have taken the time and expended the resources to create. These drawings show not only the full potential of this Museum to symbolize the State of Florida's cultural richness and appreciation of its history, but also a place where future generations of Floridians can draw pride, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

We appreciate your dedication to this vital cultural endeavor and look forward to witnessing the success and growth of the Florida Museum of Black History. We wholeheartedly believe this cultural gem truly belongs in Opa-locka, Florida.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter. Should you have any questions or need more information, I can be reached at (011) 221 776 370 097.

Sincerely,



Pr. Hamady Bocoum, Directeur Général,
Musée des Civilisations Noires Dakar Sénégal