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2525 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach, Fla. 33931

## **August 30 is the ribbon cutting to open the newly-renovated Bayside Park in the Downtown District**

**Town of Fort Myers Beach, FL** – Bayside Park at the end of Old San Carlos at First Street in the Downtown District has been undergoing renovations for the past several months that are now complete.

The ribbon cutting to officially open the park will be Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. The event will feature Mayor Ray Murphy with Vice Mayor Rexann Hosafros and Town Councilors Dan Allers, Jim Atterholt, and Bill Veach. FMB's own singer/songwriter Ms. Sheena Brook will also appear as the event's musical guest.

The newly-redesigned park includes several enhanced features such as a shaded platform for entertainers, shade sails, a ground covering of environmentally-friendly turf and refurbished brick pavers, benches and a small brick wall for seating. It also includes drinking water fountains for people and dogs as well as a filling station for water bottles, and multicolored changeable lighting.

A rain garden with native plants and shell ground coverings is prominent at the front of the park, and new trees are along the sides. The Town's new logo is reflected in the colors of the shade sails and etched on the metal trash cans and tree grates.

This project is the first of three major redesign projects in the Town to be completed by 2024. The other two projects are Times Square and Bay Oaks Recreational Campus. Construction on Bay Oaks is expected to begin later this year with construction on Times Square expected to start in late spring of 2023. Read about these and other projects on the Town's website at

[www.fmbgov.com](http://www.fmbgov.com) > About FMB > Projects Around Town.

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The design firm DRMP, Inc., was contracted by Town Council in 2019 to design improvements to the park. Designs underwent several revisions based on feedback from Town Council and community members. Town Council voted to approve the design that was presented by DRMP in January of 2021.

The rain garden in the front of the park is flexible space that could be allocated for a veteran's tribute in the future, as was discussed during the community input meetings.

In November 2021, authorization was given by Town Council to the Town Manager to execute contract documents with Wright Construction to perform the redevelopment work. The project cost is about \$950,000. In January 2022, Public Works staff kicked off the project by removing the brick pavers and pressure washing them for re-use and performing other site-clearing work.

Bayside Park faces the part of Estero Bay known as Hurricane Pass and, according to the FMB Historical Society's webpage, figures prominently in the history of Fort Myers Beach. It's where what was commonly known as the swing bridge, the Island's second drawbridge, was located. The swing bridge was built after a 1926 hurricane washed away the Island's first bridge and created San Carlos Island by opening the aptly named Hurricane Pass.

The park now sits in the shadow of the iconic Matanzas Pass Bridge, dubbed the skybridge, that was built in 1978 to replace the swing bridge.

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