



2020 VISION STATEMENT VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAYNE

We, the residents of the Village of Key Biscayne in 2005, create this Vision Statement to describe aspirations for our community through 2020. Our “2020 Vision” focuses on opportunities and challenges that we have identified, and on the positive, enduring qualities of the Village that we value and seek to perpetuate.

Key Biscayne in 2005: What We Value

Surrounded by parks, Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, the Village of Key Biscayne enjoys outstanding natural beauty, a compelling sense of place, lush landscaping, and a unique small-town ambiance that leads many residents and visitors to call it “Island Paradise”. Our close proximity to metropolitan Miami-Dade County allows us to enjoy the best of both worlds: a sense of separateness as a serene, secure island sanctuary coupled with convenient access to services, activities and amenities on the mainland.

Our relaxed island style is evident in our people, our active lifestyles, and our shared enjoyment of living “across the bridge” in a close-knit, nurturing community. The Village is a vibrant and interactive place made more interesting by our cultural diversity, neighborliness and commitment to fellowship and community spirit.

The Past as Prologue: Aspirations and Accomplishments

The Village of Key Biscayne was incorporated on June 23, 1991 to provide for local control over development, improved infrastructure and services, and better governmental process. We adopted a charter, elected our first Village Council (then called the Board of Trustees), hired a manager, and built our local government from scratch. In turn, we established fire-rescue, police and other departments and adopted zoning and other municipal codes.

In 1995, after years of public education and participation, we adopted our first Comprehensive Plan (also called Master Plan). Our Master Plan identified deficiencies and provided for many needed or desired improvements. Because of our early vision, planning and follow through, we now enjoy excellent fire-rescue and police services, a debt-free Village Green, an architecturally distinguished Civic Center complex including a well-used Community Center, more local parks, a renourished beach with protective dune system, a vastly improved stormwater drainage system, an expanded K-8 public school, street-by-street tree plantings and landscaping, street lights and pavers, sidewalks, landscaped traffic calming devices, reduced Village-wide speed limits, and the lowest millage rate of any municipality in Miami-Dade County.

2020 Vision Statement: Keeping The “Village” in Our Village

Now, a decade after adopting our Master Plan, we are developing our first Master Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report, as required by law. As an interconnected exercise, we also are developing this Vision Statement as the first part of a Vision Plan for 2020. Recognizing that the 1995 Master Plan benefited from prior years of study, visioning and community participation, we sought extensive public input for our 2020 Vision, engendering lively debates.

We speak about “Keeping The ‘Village’ in Our Village”. This means that we wish the Village to retain the intrinsically positive qualities described herein. Our 2020 Vision is meant to supplement our Master Plan by communicating our values and goals and by suggesting strategies and actions to achieve those goals. By implementing our Vision Plan, in the ensuing years through 2020 we will have:

Community Character and Quality of Life

- Maintained our small-town, island character by managing the scale and density of development on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis.
- Enhanced our streetscapes, parks, civic realm and open spaces with a well-maintained subtropical plant palette suited to our island.
- Practiced responsible stewardship of our natural environment by protecting our tree canopy, natural habitats, beaches, dunes, and nearshore water quality.
- Expanded our array of passive parks, open spaces and active recreation facilities through carefully directed property acquisition and redevelopment, to include small-scale neighborhood parks, a restored, protected Calusa Park with improved pedestrian access, additional playing fields and bikeways and trails.
- Enhanced local high-quality education from early childhood programs to lifelong learning for adults, in close coordination with public and private schools.

- Expanded our cultural facilities, activities, special events and historic preservation efforts, and provided a physical setting for a cultural center, theater and local history museum.
- Maintained extremely high levels of quality and responsiveness in our government departments, including police, fire and emergency medical services.
- Worked effectively with the State of Florida, Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami to influence and mitigate the impact of new development on Virginia Key and of visitors to the regional attractions and parks that surround the Village.
- Expanded and improved visual and physical access to Biscayne Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.
- Recognized the positive economic impact of tourism and the role of hotels in providing amenities to residents and as community partners.

Sustainable Community Structure

- Encouraged redevelopment of outdated commercial areas to preserve and expand local-serving retail and professional businesses and services in well-designed, accessible and interconnected centers.
- Attained safe, pleasant and convenient pedestrian and cycling linkages between neighborhoods, schools, parks, civic and recreational sites and commercial properties.
- Established a well-integrated vehicular transportation system that:
 - provides for maximum safety considerations;
 - successfully manages traffic congestion from residents, day visitors, workers, and special events;
 - reduces local use of automobiles by encouraging pedestrian, bicycle and golf cart transport;
 - expands transit use, including off-island bus routes and on-island shuttles;
 - incorporates well-designed and constructed traffic calming applications;
 - improves local access to Crandon Boulevard commercial areas from Fernwood Road; and
 - includes a proactive street maintenance program.
- Upgraded our infrastructure where feasible and affordable by expanding sewer service in areas formerly served by septic systems, by replacing antiquated water pipe systems, and by burying overhead utilities.

People and Relationships

- Encouraged volunteerism and community involvement, and included citizens as active participants in civic affairs and community service.
- Provided our multi-generational community with rich civic, cultural, recreational, and educational opportunities for children, youth, adults and seniors.
- Promoted effective and respectful communication among residents who have different opinions.
- Encouraged and provided programs and solutions by which young adults and senior citizens can remain residents of the Village.

Governance

- Operated our government in a transparent, respectful, responsive and efficient manner, using innovative communication methods to raise citizen awareness.
- Managed judiciously our tax revenues, public spending, debt and capital projects, and identified clear criteria for spending priorities.
- Provided excellent public safety services for our residents and visitors.
- Maintained Village property and landscaping at high levels of excellence.
- Effectively engaged the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County and the State of Florida on regional issues that influence the quality of life in the Village.
- Partnered with the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County to implement a Virginia Key Master Plan that ensures environmentally sensitive development, a new high school, lighted playing fields, and traffic mitigation along the Causeway.

Conclusion: Changes, Opportunities and Challenges

Our 2020 Vision Statement is being drafted at a time of continued change in the Village of Key Biscayne. The commercial properties at our Village entrance, the oceanfront Silver Sands Motel, and various apartment and condominium properties are susceptible to near-term redevelopment. The ultimate use of the Village owned property facing Crandon Boulevard and the Civic Center is undetermined. Starting in 2006, the existing Sonesta Beach Resort will be demolished and rebuilt. Comprehensive new development is planned for Virginia Key and must be closely monitored to assure compatible uses and manageable Causeway impacts.

Without foresight and planning, many improvements we value and even take for granted today may not have come about. We recognize the successes that came from our previous planning efforts and we will continue to plan and act for our best future. The attention we give to the future strengthens our community today and helps instill in our children and neighbors a valued ethic of citizenship. These are worthy goals in themselves.

Change is both inevitable and not entirely predictable, and “Keeping The ‘Village’ in Our Village” is not necessarily assured. With this in mind, we hope the vision and planning contained in this document will be of lasting value to the Village by informing the decisions, and guiding the actions, of future residents and Village Councils. Above all, we mean to preserve those values, standards and ideals that define our vision of Island Paradise.