

1.1 Background

The Key West Naval Complex is located in the Lower Florida Keys (Monroe County, Florida), approximately 156 miles (251 kilometers [km]) southwest of Miami, Florida and 90 miles (145 km) north of Havana, Cuba. The Complex covers approximately 6,389 acres (2,556 hectares [ha]) distributed among 20 different areas, primarily on the islands of Key West and Boca Chica Key (U.S. Navy 1993).

Naval Air Station (NAS) Key West is the Host Activity. Its mission is to maintain and operate facilities and to provide services and material to support operations of aviation activities and units of the operating forces of the Navy and other activities and units, as designated by the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).

On July 1, 1995, NAS Key West was designated for realignment by the Secretary of Defense Commission on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) pursuant to the Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-510). On May 2, 1996, the Department of the Navy (Navy) declared eight properties at NAS Key West as surplus, including Truman Waterfront. All of the eight surplus properties are located on the island of Key West (see Figure 1-1). These properties are available for use by non-federal public agencies for public benefit purposes, by eligible non-profit groups, and by homeless provider groups, pursuant to the Base Closure Community Redevelopment Assistance Act of 1994. The City of Key West Naval Properties Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA) was created in 1996 to produce a plan to reuse these properties.

This Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in compliance with BRAC, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Chief of Naval Operations Instruction (OPNAVINST) 5090.1B, *Environmental and Natural Resources Program Manual*, to address disposal and reuse of the Truman Waterfront property.

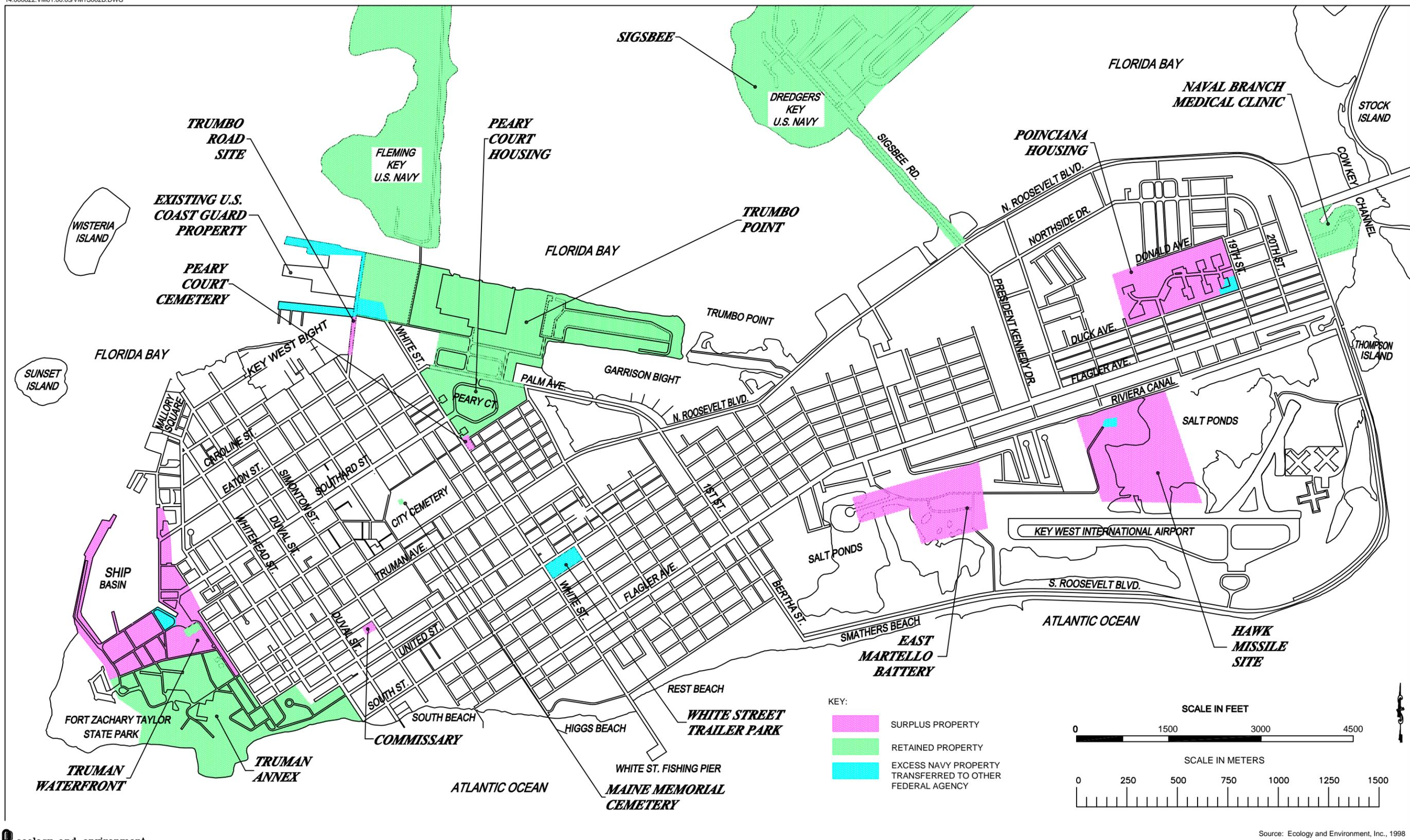


Figure 1-1 MAJOR NAVAL REAL ESTATE PARCELS TO BE RETAINED AND SURPLUSED, KEY WEST, FLORIDA

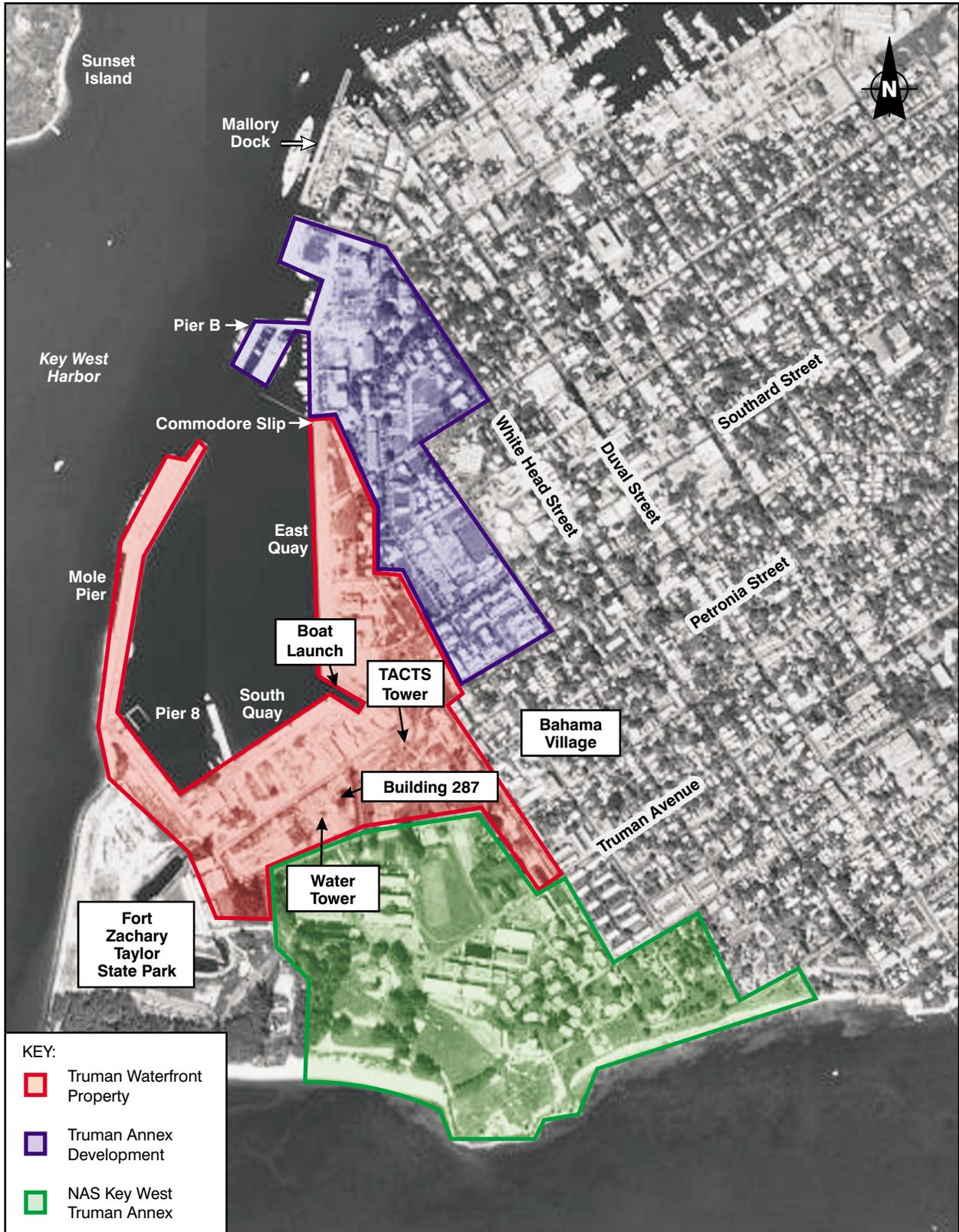
1.2 Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is disposal and reuse of a portion of the NAS Key West Truman Annex (Truman Annex) in accordance with the preferred alternative for this property, as identified in the Key West Chapter 288 Military Base Reuse Plan prepared by the LRA and adopted by the City of Key West as the approved Reuse Plan on September 8, 1999.

The portion of Truman Annex to be disposed is known as the Truman Waterfront and comprises 41.4 acres (16.6 ha) of land (see Figure 1-2). The property consists entirely of filled land, including a 7.6-acre (3.0-ha) Mole (a massive seawall used as a breakwater) that encloses a 50-acre (20-ha) harbor. The Mole, or Mole Pier, as it is known, contains berthing and wharf space, paved roads, utility infrastructure, and two buildings totaling 1,679 square feet (ft²; 156 square meters [m²]). The remaining 33.8-acre (13.5-ha) portion of the property contains 10 storage buildings (approximately 74,867 ft² [6,955 m²]) and eight other structures (approximately 45,000 ft² [4,180 m²]), including a dining facility, fire station, port operations building, and Naval Exchange Branch.

The proposed Reuse Plan incorporates the following land use activities:

- Recreation and open space areas linked by multi-modal greenways with uninterrupted public access to and along the waterfront;
- Berth for calling cruise ships along the Mole Pier;
- Professional marina along the west quay and a public marina along the east quay ;
- Ferry terminal operation center at the small docking facility along the south quay ;
- Mixed use development of affordable housing, neighborhood retail, and social service uses as an extension of the Bahama Village neighborhood;
- Preservation and enhancement of historic and archeological features, including Fort Zachary Taylor;
- An interagency visitor and educational center staffed by representatives of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Parks Service (NPS), and other agencies; and
- Port-related, non-cargo use of portions of the south waterfront for possible light industrial and manufacturing, warehouse operations, and service or repair establishments.



SOURCE: USGS Aerial Photograph, 1996.

Figure 1-2 TRUMAN WATERFRONT PROPERTY AND VICINITY, KEY WEST, FLORIDA

1.3 Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The purpose of the proposed action is to comply with BRAC; President Clinton's Five-Part Plan, "A Program to Revitalize Base Closure Communities" (July 2, 1993); the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 (Title XXIX, Subtitle A - Base Closure Community Assistance); and the interim final rule promulgated by the United States Department of Defense (DoD; 32 CFR Parts 90 and 91 - Revitalizing Base Closure Communities and Community Assistance).

The 1995 BRAC Commission recommended that the Secretary of Defense "realign Naval Air Station Key West to a Naval Air Facility and dispose of all property not required to support operational commitments, including certain portions of Truman Annex and Trumbo Point (including piers, wharves, and buildings)" (Commission Findings and Recommendations 1995). The installation is being realigned for the purpose of reducing military infrastructure and saving operation and maintenance costs over the long term. Disposal of the Truman Waterfront property is needed so that the Navy does not continue to incur costs to maintain the facility after it has closed.

1.4 Public Involvement/Agency Coordination

Since 1996, a series of public forums and workshops were held in Key West to solicit public comment on the reuse of surplus Naval properties, inform citizens of the planning process, and facilitate development of the Base Reuse Plan.

Public comments incorporated into the City of Key West reuse planning documents were referenced in preparation of this EA. Other issues and concerns were identified from conversations with representatives of local, state, and federal agencies and from correspondence solicited from agencies and non-governmental organizations during the data collection phase of the project. Table 1-1 lists the issues and concerns identified by these agencies and organizations, along with the section of the EA where each is addressed.

The Navy will distribute the draft EA to all interested parties for review and comment. Public comments on the draft EA received during a 21-day public review period will be considered in the final EA.

Table 1-1**ISSUES AND CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS,
TRUMAN WATERFRONT, KEY WEST, FLORIDA**

Commenting Agency and Organization	Issues and Concerns	Section Addressed	Notes
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Big Pine Key, Florida	Impacts of increased user traffic to the Key West National Wildlife Refuge.	4.7	
	Use of native plants in landscaping.	4.6	
	Water quality degradation resulting from increased boater and cruise ship traffic.	4.3.2	
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Vero Beach, Florida	Potential impacts to federally-listed species.	4.8	
National Marine Fisheries Service, St. Petersburg, Florida	Water quality issues such as point and non-point source pollution, pollution abatement plans, oil spill response plans and control of marine debris and trash.	4.3.2	
	Increased groundings and effects on submerged habitats.	4.7	
	Increased collisions with protected marine mammals and sea turtles.	4.7, 4.8	
U. S. Coast Guard, Miami, Florida	Environmental impacts associated with marine fuel and oil spills and dumping of sewage, garbage and plastics into area waters.	4.3.2	
	Adequacy of port mooring infrastructure for the size vessels proposed.	NA	This is not an environmental issue applicable to this EA.
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, Marathon Florida	Water quality and damage to biological resources (i.e., seagrass beds and hard bottom habitat) resulting from turbidity plumes from ships and dredging.	4.3.2, 4.7	
	Increased vessel groundings resulting from increased vessel traffic.	4.3.2, 4.7	
	Disposal of wastewater from docked vessels.	4.3.2	
	Toxic and hazardous waste in stormwater runoff from service and repair establishments and fueling facilities.	4.3.2	

Table 1-1

**ISSUES AND CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS,
TRUMAN WATERFRONT, KEY WEST, FLORIDA**

Commenting Agency and Organization	Issues and Concerns	Section Addressed	Notes
Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Tallahassee, Florida	Impacts on the municipal sewer system and the Key West Wastewater Treatment Plant.	4.13	
	Stormwater and hazardous materials management.	4.3.2, 4.13	
	Impacts to water quality (i.e., turbidity) resulting from dredging and added ship activity.	4.3.2	
Florida Department of Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida	Adverse impacts to sea turtles, reefs, sea grasses, or other aquatic beds from potential future cruise ship berth.	NA	Plans for a second cruise ship berth were later eliminated from the reuse plan.
	Impact of proposed activities on the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) and the requirements of the FKNMS Management Plan.	5.1	
	Consistency with the Florida Coastal Management Program.	4.11.3, 5.2	
	Potential conflicts with the City of Key West Comprehensive Land Use Plan.	4.11.3, 5.3	
Florida Department of State, Division of Historic Resources, Tallahassee, Florida	Adverse effects on historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register.	4.9	
South Florida Regional Planning Council, Hollywood, Florida	Cumulative impacts to native plants and animals, wetlands, and fisheries.	4.7, 4.8	
	Consistency with the goals and policies of the <i>Strategic Regional Policy Plan for South Florida</i> .	5.3	
South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach, Florida	Existing contamination within and adjacent to the Truman Waterfront property. Detailed information should be provided regarding the extent of contamination as well as remediation activities proposed.	3.5, 4.5	

Table 1-1

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TRUMAN WATERFRONT, KEY WEST, FLORIDA**

Commenting Agency and Organization	Issues and Concerns	Section Addressed	Notes
South Florida Water Management District, West Palm Beach, Florida	Re-suspension of pollutants in the marina sediments following dredging, pier construction, or other sediment-disturbing activity.	3.3.2, 4.3.2	
	Adverse impacts to listed species, including manatees and sea turtles from proposed marina facilities.	4.8	
Reef Relief, Key West, Florida	Ecological health of both marine and land based habitats.	4.6, 4.7, 4.8	
	Cleanup of Installation Restoration (IR) and solid waste management unit (SWMU) sites.	3.5, 4.5	
	Stormwater runoff.	3.3.2, 4.3.2	
	Potentially harmful discharges from marina and cruise ship facilities must be eliminated.	4.3.2	
	Impacts of vessel propwash on seagrasses, patch reefs, and other bottom habitats.	4.7	
	Impact from increased traffic, leakage or other incidents adversely affecting the health of surrounding marine habitats.	4.7	
	Preservation of sufficient greenspace.	4.11	
	Pesticide and fertilizer use in green areas.	4.3.2	
Key West Bar Pilots Association, Inc.	Potential operational conflict between professional marina and ferry terminal.	NA	This is not an environmental issue applicable to this EA.
	Limiting public access around large vessels moored on the outer Mole berth to maintain public safety.	NA	This is not an environmental issue applicable to this EA.