

# Miami River Commission

## Annual Report 2023



**In 2023** evidence of the continuing revitalization of the Miami River District was found in construction of another 10 sections of the public Miami River Greenway at the Miami River Special Area Plan featuring 1,670 residential units, “Aston Martin Residences” featuring 384 units, “Baccarat Residences” featuring 1,200 units and 200 5-star hotel rooms, “One Brickell Riverside” featuring 784 units, “Riverside Wharf” featuring the Dream Hotel, “10x Miami River” Phase 2 featuring 350 units, and 5 riverfront restaurants. In addition, renovations completed at Norseman Boatyard, and will commence at Hurricane Cove Marina & Boatyard in 2024.

For 25 years, the Miami River Commission (MRC) has worked tirelessly to substantially improve the Miami River District, including construction of 6.8 miles of the public riverwalk, maintenance dredging of the Miami River, Seybold Canal and Wagner Creek, etc. The MRC thanks the State of Florida, City of Miami, and Miami-Dade County for increasing funding in 2023 to clean the Miami River.



HORACIO  
STUART  
AGUIRRE

Chair's Report

**KEEPING THE BALANCE** of uses along the historic mixed-use Miami River District is amongst the most important and challenging successes of the Miami River Commission. The proof is in the numbers. The Miami River's shorelines feature public riverwalks, 9 major parks, over 9,770 new residential units (additional 9,270 approved units), 5 major hotels (additional 7 planned hotels with 1,700 new rooms), 21 operating restaurants (additional 27 planned restaurants), 16 historic sites, 25 boatyards and marinas, over a dozen International Shipping Terminals, and other job-generating marine industrial businesses operating along "Port Miami River". International Shipping Terminals provide vital international trade to our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America. Recreational boatyards, marinas, commercial fishing and tug boat basins are highly active. The river is used daily by international shipping vessels, yachts, manatees, dolphins, marlins, and other marine life. This critical balance of uses makes the beautiful Miami River the ideal place to live, work and play in the heart of the City of Miami.

**THE MIAMI RIVER DISTRICT** features wonderful multi-cultural neighborhoods in Downtown, Little Havana, Spring Garden, Overtown, Grove Park, Allapattah, Durham Park, etc. The Miami River District's nine major parks offer every type of recreation including a boat ramp, kayak and paddleboard launch, pools, new playgrounds, barbeques, picnic tables,

basketball, tennis and racquetball courts, baseball diamonds, football stadium, track, weights, gym, community centers, riverwalks for running, walking, biking and fishing, and historic sites such as the 2,000 year old Miami Circle, 1844 Fort Dallas, and the oldest standing home in Miami-Dade County, the 1856 Wagner Homestead.

**THE MRC THANKS THE FOLLOWING** Fiscal Year 2023 funding providers: State of Florida (\$600,000) Miami-Dade County (\$200,000), City of Miami (\$200,000), and private sector advertisers in the MRC's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Miami River Map and Guide and the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Miami River Calendar. This funding allows the broad based MRC to continue its work partnering with the public and private sectors to bring significant improvements to the Miami River District. In addition, the MRC thanks board members, Sallye Jude, Sandy O'Neil, Tom Kimen, David Maer, David Hardin, and Mercedes Rodriguez for their volunteer service. The MRC welcomes our newest volunteer board members Eileen Broton, Theodora Long, and Gus Barrera.

**I INVITE YOU TO BRING** family and friends to the Miami River District and enjoy the experience. The Miami River Commission promises that regardless of your individual interests, age, gender, race, or income level, you will find something special to enjoy.

**Horacio Stuart Aguirre**  
Chairman, Miami River Commission

## Awards

- "BEST OF MIAMI 2016" awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau –Miami Today
- "BEST OF MIAMI 2015" awarded to MRC Urban Infill Subcommittee Chairman Jim Murley –Miami Today
- "BEST OF MIAMI 2014–UNsung HERO" awarded to MRC Member Ernie Martin–Miami Today
- "PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION" for volunteer Miami River Greenway beautification events– City of Miami, 2013
- "PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION" for volunteer Miami River Greenway beautification events – City of Miami, 2012
- "PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION" for volunteer Miami River Greenway beautification events – City of Miami, 2011
- "BEST OF MIAMI 2011 – TURNING GREEN" awarded to MRC member Sandy Batchelor–Miami Today
- "BEST OF MIAMI 2011–VISIONARY" awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau –Miami Today
- "SUSTAINABLE SOUTH FLORIDA AWARDS, GREEN EDUCATION & OUTREACH AWARD" 2011 FINALIST–Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
- "PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION" for volunteer Miami River Greenway beautification events –City of Miami, 2010

- "BEST OF MIAMI – BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE" awarded to Eric Buermann and Brett Bibeau –Miami Today, 2008
- "AWARD OF MERIT" awarded to the MRC for its Multimodal Transportation Plan – American Planning Association, 2007
- "THE NEWSMAKER" awarded to MRC Chair Eric Buermann –Miami Today, 2007
- "BEST BACKSTAGE LEADER" awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau who was then included in the "Book of Leaders" –Miami Today, 2007
- MIAMI IMAGE AWARD OF 2006 awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau –Realtor Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches
- "BEST OF MIAMI – IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE" awarded to former MRC Chair Irela Bagué –Miami Today, 2006
- "THE ACHIEVER – MIAMI RIVER'S RENAISSANCE MAN" awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau – Miami Today, 2006
- "COMMUNITY STEWARD AWARD" awarded to MRC–1,000 Friends of Florida, 2005
- "BEST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION" awarded to MRC – Miami Today, 2004
- "MOST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT" for the Miami River Greenway, Urban Environment League, 2004
- EXCELLENCE AWARD for the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan, American Landscape Architects, 2003



Restaurant under construction, featuring the public Riverwalk



In 2023 construction continued on a new restaurant featuring the public riverwalk in Little Havana.



Miami River Special Area Plan continued construction in 2023.

## TESTIMONIALS

“For the past 25 years Sightseeing Tours Management has witnessed the Miami River Commission’s leadership role in directly improving and advocating for the Miami River. I applaud the MRC’s successful efforts to maintain the important balance of uses along the mixed-use Miami River, including job generating marine industrial businesses, public parks, restaurants, high and low density residential, historic sites, etc.”  
– Mike Simpson, Owner of Sightseeing Tours Management

“The City of Miami sincerely appreciates our strong partnership with the effective Miami River Commission (MRC). Together we are directly addressing climate change and sea level rise via numerous initiatives, including but not limited to the Resilient Waterfront Enhancement Plan, Vulnerability Assessments, clean-up of outfall systems to the Miami River, and the Army Corps of Engineers / Miami Dade County Back Bay Study. The MRC thankfully facilitates the important Public / Private partnership which is critical in improving the Miami River.”  
– Sonia Brubaker, City of Miami Chief Resilience Officer

The Miami River Commission has been the champion for the creation of what we call “River Life” – the economic revitalization of the Miami River. I have enjoyed working closely with the helpful and supportive Miami River Commission since 2015, when Urban-X Group started working on our vision for the Mid-River District anchored by River Landing Shops & Residence. Next River Landing is excited to start construction of the beautiful public Mid River Greenspace in 2024, which we hope will be a focal point for relaxation for the entire community. – Andrew Hellinger, Urban-X Group, LLC

“Residents from the 199-unit Neo Lofts appreciate the Miami River Commission’s long term positive impacts in the Miami River District. The MRC thankfully provides maintenance services along the public Miami River Greenway, coordinates when needed with the City of Miami Homeless Assistance and Police Departments, and supports businesses along the Miami River. The Miami River District is lucky to have the MRC working hard for the area everyday.”  
– Jorge Torres, Neo Lofts Property Manager, SF Residential

# Subcommittee Reports

## MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY

**IN 2023 THE MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY** continued construction, featuring a public pedestrian & bicycle pathway, landscaping, decorative lights, way-finding signage, historic markers, informational kiosks, benches, art installations, and other amenities. In 2023, another 10 sections of the public Riverwalk were under construction by the private and public sectors. Over 6.8 miles of the public Miami River Greenway have been constructed, with an additional planned 3.2 miles to complete.

The MRC appreciates the mutual efforts to implement the Miami River Greenway Action Plan, and the cost shares provided to date from multiple public and private funding sources including Congress, State of Florida, Florida Department of Transportation, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Inland Navigation District, City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Downtown Development Authority, and numerous private sector developments.

The MRC thanks the City of Miami and its residents for voting to include the Miami River Greenway in two referendums for the redevelopment of the “Miami Riverbridge,” and “Riverside Wharf”.

## STORMWATER

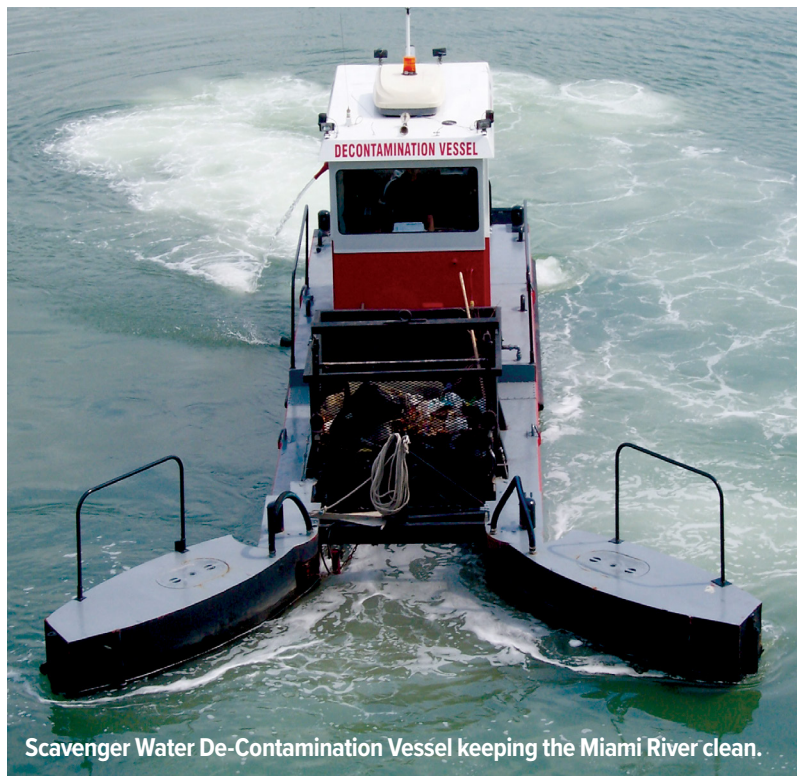
**THE STORMWATER SYSTEM** is the leading source of pollution into the Miami River. The Miami River water basin includes a 69-square-mile area of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the State of Florida. All stormwater from this area drains into the Miami River through over one hundred outfalls. The Miami River Commission appreciates Commissioner Eileen Higgins and the Board of County Commissioners for renewing \$180,000 for the Scavenger Water Decontamination vessel’s services in the Miami River. In addition to removing floating debris and hazards to navigation, the Scavenger Vessel significantly improves water quality by decontaminating 600,000 gallons of water per hour and injecting 150,000 liters of oxygen per hour into the Miami River. In addition, a State grant funded vacuum truck cleaning of the Miami River’s stormwater system in 2023.

## URBAN INFILL

**THE MRC’S URBAN INFILL SUBCOMMITTEE** continued efforts to assist implementing various adopted and award-winning plans, including the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan, Miami River Corridor Multi-Modal Transportation Plan, Miami River Greenway Action Plan and others, all available for downloading at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMERCE

**IN 2023, CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED** at the “Miami River Special Area Plan” featuring 1,670 residential units, “Aston Martin Residences,” featuring 384 units, “Baccarat Residences” featuring 1,200 units and 200 5-star hotel rooms, “One Brickell Riverside” featuring 784 units, “Riverside Wharf” featuring the Dream Hotel, “10x Miami River” Phase 2 featuring 350 units, and 6 riverfront restaurants. In addition, the important job generating marine industry on Port Miami River is improving with a sizeable expansion of Norseman Boatyard, and Hurricane Cove Marina and Boatyard’s new dockmaster, marine retail building and piers commencing construction soon.



Scavenger Water De-Contamination Vessel keeping the Miami River clean.

# Subcommittee Reports



Antillean Marine international shipping vessel.

## VOLUNTARY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

**THE MIAMI RIVER VOLUNTARY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (VIP)** identifies and encourages public and private sector riverfront parcels to address various riverfront issues which are potentially detrimental to operations on the River, the environmental quality of the River, and the River's attraction as a destination for residents, tourists and businesses. In 2023 alone, the Miami River "VIP" resulted in 14 Miami River Greenway Beautification volunteer events featuring removal of illegal dumping, invasive species, and graffiti along several sections of the Miami River, removing derelict vessels, repairing Riverwalk lights, unclogging stormwater drains, removing a floating hazard to navigation and oil sheen, found and corrected sources of contamination etc. The MRC thanks Miami-Dade County, City of Miami, FIND, FDOT, private sector, and the fantastic volunteers for their hard work bringing these River improvements to fruition.



RMK Merrill-Stevens

### UPPER RIVER

**Shipping and Marine Industrial Zone:** Center of Port Miami River's trade and industry. The Miami Intermodal Center links rail, air, freight, transit, pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

### MIDDLE RIVER

**Residential / Mixed Use Zone:** Includes River Landing historic neighborhoods, marine-industrial businesses, parks, etc.

### LOWER RIVER

**Downtown Zone:** High-density residential, offices and restaurants. Riverwalks link historic landmarks and parks along river.



MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY'S TIMELINE

Map © 2001 Richard Troutner. All rights reserved.

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| <p><b>1897</b><br/>Henry Flagler opens six-story Royal Palm Hotel, including first greenway</p> <p><b>1910</b><br/>Lummus Park created on Miami River</p> | <p><b>1972</b><br/>Parks For People bond issue passed by voters, funds portions of the Miami River Greenway</p> | <p><b>1980s</b><br/>Miami River Greenway section constructed along north shore from Biscayne Bay to NW 2 Avenue</p> | <p><b>1998</b><br/>Florida Legislature creates Miami River Commission as a watchdog, advocate and clearinghouse for the river. Miami Circle site discovered</p> | <p><b>2000</b><br/>Florida Legislature passes Miami River Improvement Act</p> | <p><b>2001</b><br/>With the Trust for Public Land, the MRC, City of Miami and Miami-Dade County unanimously approve Miami River Greenway Action Plan</p> | <p><b>2002</b><br/>Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> <p><b>2003</b><br/>Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> | <p><b>2004</b><br/>Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> <p><b>2005</b><br/>Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> | <p><b>2006</b><br/>City of Miami adopts "A Vision for Miami's 21st Century Parks &amp; Public Spaces" recommending completion of the Miami River Greenway • MRC hosts Greenways summit • Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> | <p><b>2007</b><br/>Miami River Corridor Multi-Modal Transportation Plan created by Metropolitan Planning Organization and MRC recommending completion of the Miami River Greenway • Greenway construction continues</p> | <p><b>2008</b><br/>Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> | <p><b>2009</b><br/>City Bicycle Master Plan adopted recommending completion of the Miami River Greenway<br/>• Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed and additional sections funded and designed for construction in 2010-2011</p> | <p><b>2010-2023</b><br/>Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed</p> |
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# Get Involved!

The Miami River Commission invites groups and individuals from the community to get involved in improving your Miami River District, and the private sector to help us as sponsors of events. To learn more about what you can do, visit our website at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org) for updates.

The Miami River Commission thanks all of the incredible volunteers of all ages and walks of life who picked up litter along the riverwalk during 14 volunteer beautification events in 2023.

All MRC and subcommittee meetings are publicly noticed. Public participation is encouraged.

## Miami River Commission Members

Learn more about the Miami River's past, present and future, view reports, plans, public meeting minutes, agendas and more at the informative, [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org)

**CHAIR: HORACIO STUART AGUIRRE**  
Representative from environmental or civic organization appointed by the Governor

**FLORIDA GOVERNOR: RON DESANTIS**  
Designee: Ms. Patricia "Patty" Harris

**SENATOR ANA MARIA RODRIGUEZ**  
Chair, Miami-Dade Delegation  
Designee: Senator Ileana Garcia

**MAYOR DANIELA LEVINE CAVA**  
Mayor of Miami-Dade County  
Designee: Mr. James Murley

**MAYOR FRANCIS X. SUAREZ**  
Mayor of the City of Miami  
Designee: Ms. Megan Kelly

**Mr. LUIS GARCIA**  
Member-at-Large Appointed by the Governor  
Designee: Mr. John Michael Cornell

**Commissioner EILEEN HIGGINS**  
Miami-Dade County Commissioner  
Designee: Mr. Eddie Marti Kring

**City of Miami Commissioner**

**KATHERINE FERNANDEZ-RUNDLE, Esq.**  
Miami-Dade State Attorney

**Mr. CHAUNCEY GOSS**  
Chair, South Florida Water Management District  
Designee: Mr. Scott Wagner, Esq.

**Mr. BRUCE BROWN**  
Chair, Miami River Marine Group  
Designee: Mr. Richard Dubin

**Ms. CHRISTINA CRESPI**  
Downtown Development Authority  
Designee: Mr. Neal Schafers

**Mr. ALFRED SANCHEZ**  
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce  
Designee: Mr. Augustin Barrera

**Ms. EILEEN BROTON**  
Neighborhood Representative appointed by the City of Miami Commission

**Ms. THEODORA LONG**  
Neighborhood Representative appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission  
Designee: Mr. Barrett Long

**Mr. PHILIP EVERINGHAM**  
Designee of: Mr. Michael Karcher  
Chair of Marine Council

**Ms. SARA C. BABUN**  
Member-at-Large appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission  
Designee: Mr. Alvaro Coradin

**Mr. T. SPENCER CROWLEY III**  
Member-at-Large appointed by the City of Miami Commission  
Designee: Mr. Mike Simpson

**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:**  
Congresswoman  
**MARIA ELVIRA SALAZAR**

**CAPTAIN Chris Cederholm**  
United States Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port of Miami

**Managing Director:**  
**Mr. BRETT BIBEAU**

### MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION

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