

# ONE VOICE *for the river*

**In 2003,** the Miami River Commission's planning produced tangible results in the heart of the City of Miami.

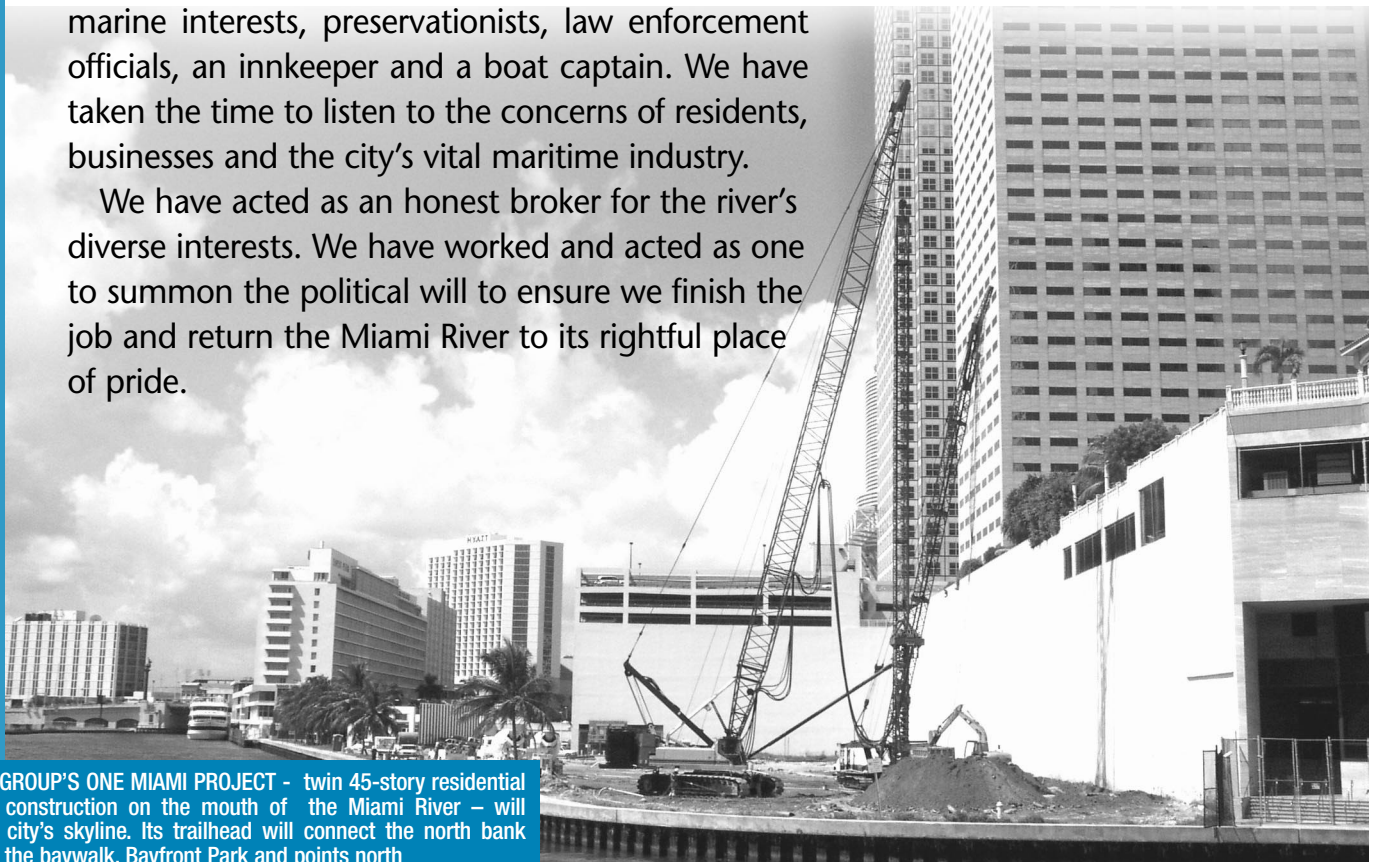
Tree-canopied riverwalks and more than 7,000 residences are under construction or getting permits. Parks are undergoing major facelifts. The river is cleaner, its environs safer, its residents growing more organized as historic neighborhoods reclaim their identities.

**BY MID-2004, THE RIVER'S LONG-AWAITED DREDGING** will begin as new apartments, townhouses and lofts open and fill with people. Cafes, restaurants and stores are in the works for 2004 and 2005 as the river's revival takes hold. Soon, recreational boats and water taxis will shuttle along the river to the bay, as dredging cleanses the river and cargo vessels trade with 100 Caribbean ports amid significantly increased security.

Yet neither rivers nor cities transform overnight. Creating a world-class riverfront in an international city takes smart planning and coordination.

**IN JUST A FEW YEARS, THIS COMMISSION** appointed by the Florida Legislature has accomplished more than anyone imagined a decade ago. The commission's members include elected and appointed officials from the city, county and state, residents, businesses, marine interests, preservationists, law enforcement officials, an innkeeper and a boat captain. We have taken the time to listen to the concerns of residents, businesses and the city's vital maritime industry.

We have acted as an honest broker for the river's diverse interests. We have worked and acted as one to summon the political will to ensure we finish the job and return the Miami River to its rightful place of pride.



THE RELATED GROUP'S ONE MIAMI PROJECT - twin 45-story residential towers under construction on the mouth of the Miami River - will transform the city's skyline. Its trailhead will connect the north bank riverwalk with the baywalk, Bayfront Park and points north

# The City of Miami grew up along the

Miami River, the cradle of the first proven human settlement more than 2,000 years ago at the Miami Circle site just east of the current Brickell Avenue bridge.

To reverse a century of neglect, the Florida Legislature in 1998 created the Miami River Commission to improve the 5.5-mile river and its surroundings, including the 69-square-mile river basin that includes much of the City of Miami and part of Miami-Dade County.

The commission immediately went to work to create, maintain and harness the political will to improve the river, and coordinate efforts among the more than 30 local, state and federal agencies that share responsibility for the river and its surroundings.

Two legislative acts govern the commission:

■ The 1998 act (F.S. Chapter 163.06) established the commission as “the official coordinating clearinghouse for all public policy and projects related to the Miami River.” The act charges the commission with uniting government agencies, businesses and residents to “speak with one voice” on river issues and “to develop coordinated plans, priorities, programs, projects and budgets that might substantially improve the river area.”

■ The 2000 Miami River Improvement Act (F.S. Chapter 163.065) authorized the commission, Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami to

develop a comprehensive plan for the river with “a range of varied components essential to a health urban environment, including cultural, recreational, economic and transportation components.”

**WE HAVE MET AND TRIED TO EXCEED** the mandate of the 2000 act by putting into action the comprehensive Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan, adopted as the strategic plan for the river in September 2002. In one year, developers and governments have incorporated the plan into planning \$2.65 billion in new developments, including 7,000 planned residential units.

In June 2003, the plan won an “Award of Excellence” from the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Its recommended improvements to the natural environment are going into effect. This work includes dredging, stormwater retrofitting, cleanup vessels, increased tree canopy and greenspace, derelict vessel removal and environmental education.

Realizing the commission’s work is ongoing, the Florida Legislature in 2003 unanimously voted to repeal the five-year “sunset” provision, allowing the commission to continue its work and make Miami and Florida a better place to live and work.

We have created an approachable, transparent governmental body dedicated not merely to discussion, but to providing assistance and producing results.

Last year, Sen. Bob Graham, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Miami-Dade Mayor Alex Penelas and City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz testified about the commission’s importance. This year, we hear from people who live or work near the river every day:

**“ KEVIN REILLY, DEVELOPER OF LATITUDE ON THE RIVER, A 42-STORY CONDO AND 22-STORY MIXED-USE COMPLEX: “I have been impressed with both the soundness of their plan and their stewardship – you can feel their hand guiding the entire process. I have no doubt that as a result of their involvement, the future development of the Miami River corridor will serve as a model of something done right.”**

**ANN STETSER, RIVER RUN RESIDENT: “Everybody has a different idea for the river, and the commission has worked hard to be fair to everyone and come up with a common vision for the benefit of all the people, from shipping companies to residents. They keep everyone’s best interest in mind.”**

**OFFICER WILLIAM CLAYTON, CITY OF MIAMI ALLAPATTAH NEIGHBORHOOD ENHANCEMENT TEAM: “Without the Miami River Commission, a lot of things that need to get done along the waterfront wouldn’t get done. There are issues that have been around 15 years and the commission is making sure people are doing something about them.”**

**ANN FREMONT, DURHAM PARK HOMEOWNERS’ ASSOCIATION: “The Miami River Commission has done an excellent job with very little funding. They have provided an Urban Infill Plan that our neighborhood believes would be a good plan for the City of Miami to adopt.”**



# While 2002, was a year of planning, 2003 was a year of action.

That tempo will accelerate in 2004. You will see even more construction cranes, river barges and tree-planting crews along the river in the next year. New people will start moving into the vibrant developments up and down the river corridor, as historic neighborhoods continue to come to life. Within five years, the Miami River – already changed for the better – will be a much different and better place.

**SINCE THE MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION** was formed in early 1998, we have aimed to remake the river as a great place to live, work and play – a center for Miami, a destination for nightlife, restaurants and entertainment, a hub of commerce and Caribbean trade, and a friendly venue for recreational boaters. We have spruced up the neighborhoods, connecting revived parks through riverwalks and pathways.

**WORK HAS STARTED ON GREENWAYS** and riverwalks with provisions for dockage. Riverfront parks large and small are undergoing major renovations, including new playing courts, site furnishings, landscaping and a recreational center. This makes the river more desirable for residents and businesses. The proof: some large developments have nearly sold out their units before construction even started.

**WE HAVE SOUGHT TO PROTECT** and encourage the river's vital shipping and trade business, while making the river more accessible to recreational boaters from kayakers to megayacht owners. By summer 2004, dredging will start on the river's western end to restore the designated Federal Navigation Channel to its allotted depth of 15 feet to make trade easier for boats that serve 100 ports throughout the Caribbean.

## MRC ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2002-2003

- Implemented Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan
- Implemented Miami River Greenway Action Plan
- Implemented Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Report
- Completed final preparatory work for dredging
- Promoted outreach

**THE REASON THE RIVER IS COMING AROUND IS SIMPLE.** Officials from Washington to Tallahassee to Miami have mustered the political will to change things. Until the last few years, that will simply didn't exist. And the Miami River Commission made sure that things got done. It took hard work, persistence, and optimism in the face of skeptics, delays and untangling the occasional bureaucratic knot.

**THE ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE** of the river's vital maritime industry is central and too often overlooked by those of us who see the river mostly from highway overpasses. Fact is, the Miami River handles \$4 billion valued in cargo a year, vying with Tampa as the equivalent to the state's fourth largest port. No other port so perfectly accommodates the shallow-draft vessels that serve 100 ports around the Caribbean Basin. The Miami River's marine industry provides thousands of jobs to working families in a city that desperately needs them. We are committed to preserving and building upon the river's century-old importance as a center of commerce and maritime industry. We are equally committed to enhancing the river's lure to recreational boaters.

**WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ALL THIS** with a staff of two and a budget of \$200,000 a year. It bears repeating that this is one of the great bargains in Florida government. Without the commissioners, the Miami River wouldn't be where it is today.

**WE ARE THANKFUL TO COMMISSIONERS** who have worked hard, the lawmakers who have supported us, the dedicated public servants who treat their jobs as missions rather than tasks, and residents and business people who have cared enough to bring their concerns to the commission. We are listening and acting, and you have made our work worth it.

Robert Parks Esq.  
Chair



Robert Parks

# Chair's Report

## Our team: Working & changing

The Miami River Commission has required teamwork. CAPTAIN DAVID MILLER'S hard work, efficiency and superb interpersonal skills won him many friends along the river, and he has been critical to the commission's success. He has chosen to move for family reasons, and we hate to lose him. We thank him for a job well done and will miss his companionship, good humor and persistence in overcoming challenges that would have defeated others. We wish him Godspeed.

We welcome BRETT BIBEAU as the new managing director, and ADRIANA CABRERA as assistant managing director. Brett knows the river well, having served as assistant managing director for the last three years. He has mastered details, secured grants, saved taxpayers money where possible and proven integral to accomplishing the commission's goals. Adriana recently received a Master of Arts in Marine Affairs and Ocean Policy at the University of Miami and has been involved with river-related affairs for three years.

**URBAN  
INFILL  
WORKING  
GROUP**  
(formerly  
Quality  
of Life)

**James  
Murley,  
Chair**

# Group Reports

The Miami River Commission adopted the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan in September 2002, with 64 specific proposals to improve the river's neighborhoods, reduce pollution and promote jobs. One third of those projects have either been completed or met with significant progress.

In June 2003, the plan won an "Award of Excellence" by the Florida Chapter of Society of Landscape Architects.

After little more than a year, the group is fast realizing its objectives. Public and private sectors alike rely on this blueprint in planning \$2.65 billion in new developments, some of which are described in our Economic Development and Commerce Report below.

Many of the recommended improvements – including dredging, clean-up vessels, a larger tree canopy and green spaces – are already coming true. The following areas of outreach, greenways, developments and stormwater retrofitting are all components of the Urban Infill Plan.

## GREENWAYS GROUP

**Dr. Ernest  
Martin,  
Chair**

**GREENWAYS AND  
PARKS:** The Greenways Group is implementing the Miami River Greenway Action Plan, unanimously adopted by the city and county

commissions in 2001. The Riverwalk is under development in Lummus and Jose Martí parks.

In partnership with the City of Miami, the Trust for Public Land hired engineering consultants, who are already preparing final construction documents for the next greenway development phase.

**EVERY CITY NEEDS** its places for rest, repose and renewal. Fortunately, the Miami River's revival provides a timely

opportunity to burnish its historically neglected necklace of parks through links of greenways. Jose Martí Park, Sewell Park and Curtis Park have all received facelifts. Work has started on the Miami River Rapids, Curtis Park, Fern Isle and Lummus Parks, and three new pocket parks have been created.

Improvements include new playing courts, tracks, a recreational center, riverwalks and historical signage.

## Outreach

The Miami River won a starring role in "Of Time and River", a half-hour film produced by Tom Glennon and scheduled for its debut on public television stations Dec. 28. The seventh annual Miami Riverday in Jose Martí Park attracted thousands, showcasing the river's revival, with the eighth Riverday scheduled at Jose Martí Park, SW 4 Avenue and SW 4 Street, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, April 10, 2004. The commission provided students and community organizations with environmental and historic educational riverboat tours.



**CONSTRUCTION PROCEEDS ON LUMMUS LANDING** in the riverfront section of historic Lummus Park on the river's north bank on the west side of downtown Miami. This project includes a riverwalk and boat slips.

# The Scavenger 2000 Depollution Vessel

One of the Miami River's most welcome additions is the **SCAVENGER 2000 DEPOLLUTION VESSEL**, a 35-foot boat that trawls the river and shorelines, scoops up trash, removes oil and bacteria from the water, and pumps 10,000 gallons of clean oxygen per minute back into the river, eight hours a day, four days a week. It also can fight fires with its water cannon. The Scavenger has been operating under a \$200,000 demonstration project run by the Miami River Commission and funded by the City of Miami, the FEFC and the South Florida Water Management District. The Scavenger is the only boat of its kind, and integral to the river's cleanup, along with dredging and stormwater improvements. From June to August 2003 alone, the Scavenger removed 2,126 cubic feet of trash and 133 hazards to navigation and treated 123.6 million gallons of water.



## DREDGING GROUP

**Richard Bunnell and Scott Mitchell, Co-chairs**

Dredging of the river will begin between March and July 2004. The Army Corps of Engineers closed bidding on their Miami River Dredging Project Request for Proposals.

Dredging will start on the upper end of the river near the salinity dam and

proceed towards the river's mouth at Biscayne Bay. Dredging will take two-three years.

**THIS IS A \$72 MILLION JOB.** Of this, the federal government will pay 80 percent, the state 10 percent, the Florida Inland Navigational District 5 percent, and Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami 2.5 percent each.

This dredging – the river's first since the early 1930s – was possible only because the Miami River Commission helped persuade the Army Corps of Engineers in 1999 to reduce state and local government's financial responsibility for the dredging from 80 percent to 20 percent. The Inland Navigational District's involvement halved the state and city contributions again.

## STORM WATER GROUP

**Irela Bague, Sallye Jude, and Arsenio Milian Co-Chairs**

Stormwater runoff is the primary source of pollution in the Miami River and Biscayne Bay, and one cannot truly address the cleanup of river and bay without solving stormwater runoff from throughout the 69-square-mile Miami River basin. At least 200 stormwater drains go into Wagner Creek tributary alone, impeding efforts to reverse pollution in the river and Biscayne Bay.

**THE STORMWATER GROUP HAS** worked to implement the Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Report. In 2003, the Little Havana and Downtown Phase I storm sewer-rebuilding programs were completed, and the Wagner Creek dredging project proceeded through planning and permitting. This deep-seated problem stems from Miami's earliest days, when people dumped raw sewage into the river. Stormwater is of critical importance to the commission, the City of Miami and South Florida, and will take center stage in our efforts in the coming year and beyond.

The Commission secured nearly \$1.2 million in grants this year. The largest share of this was \$1 million from the Florida Department of Transportation for the City of Miami to develop the East Allapattah Greenway, in addition to the \$1 million from 2002 to develop the East Little Havana Greenway. Of the remaining amount, \$100,000 came from the South Florida Water Management District for the Scavenger 2000 Cleanup Vessel and for testing and environmental remediation in Wagner Creek. Other grant moneys went to stormwater efforts, creation of pocket parks and outreach programs such as Miami Riverday, environmental educational boat tours and the marine-industrial business symposium.

# Grants

The Federal Maritime Port Security Act in early 2003 imposed some rigid requirements for port safety and security on all ports. The Miami River moved much closer to a 24-hour, seven-day law enforcement presence this year, thanks largely to the Miami River Marine Group, a group of shipping and maritime interests along the river.

**IN SEPTEMBER**, the Group secured a \$1.066 million grant from the federal Transportation Security Administration for a camera system for the river's entire length that can be directed to a police department, police cars or law enforcement marine vessels. The cameras will be installed and the police trained by next spring. The commission is working with the Miami River Port Security Committee in creating the River's Port Security Plan, which will be fully implemented by July 2004.

**TWO OTHER GRANTS** are pending: a \$2 million grant to buy marine patrol boats and provide equipment for exclusive use along the river, and a \$1.5 million grant to provide security upgrades for terminals along the river.

**OVERALL, THE MIAMI RIVER** Marine

Group and the commission are trying to create a model of integrated security that can be a model for ports across the country.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE GROUP

Megan Kelly,  
Cleve Jones,  
Co-Chairs

The Miami River has been, is and will remain a working river. As residential and commercial developments and greenways arise along its banks toward the river's central and eastern sections, the

Economic Development and Commerce Group is turning its attention to shipping, water and marine-dependent businesses in the western portion of the river.

**IN SPRING 2004**, the group will organize and host a marine industrial business symposium to convey the merits of the river's dredging, and to encourage a mix of shipping, industrial, commercial and recreational marine uses in the appropriate sections of the river.

The commission considers the marine industry a vital contributor to the City of Miami's economy, as the marine industry and related



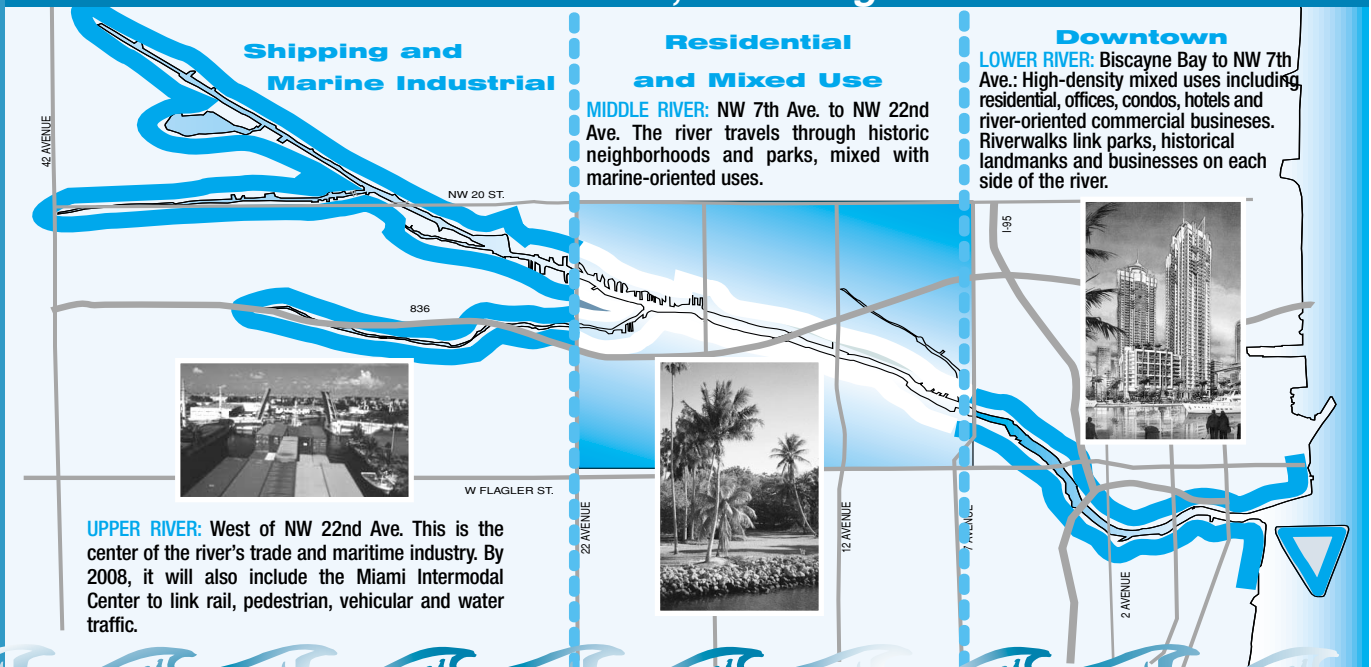
**LATITUDE ON THE RIVER** is a planned mixed-use development on the south bank near the SW 2nd Avenue Bridge, with a 42-story residential condo and a 22-story office condo, including retail space and a restaurant overlooking the riverwalk.

businesses employ 8,000, with average pay of more the \$30,000 a year – a major consideration in a city with one of the lowest per capita incomes of any major city in the United States.

**THESE DEVELOPMENTS** have either broken ground in the river's eastern portion or acquired major use special permits. All these developments include publicly accessible riverwalks with connecting restaurants:

■ The One Miami project's twin 45-story residential towers, with 896 units, developed on the river's mouth by Related Group of Florida

## The river consists of three distinct, coexisting zones:



and designed by Arquitectonica, ground in July 2003.

■ Neo Lofts, a 199-unit condominium project for working professionals just west of I-95, developed by Lissette Calderon and Neo Concepts, is now nearing completion.

■ Brickell on the River, a 700-unit, two-tower project developed by Michael Bedzow at 25 SE 5th Street, broke ground on Phase I in October 2003 (see rendering on map on page 6).

■ Neo Vertika, a 443-unit tower near the Big Fish restaurant in Brickell Village, is already more than 85 percent pre-sold. Both Neo Lofts and Neo Vertika units start below \$200,000.

■ Latitude on the River and Miami River Village, with renderings in this report, have just received major use special permits from the City of Miami – a vital step toward groundbreaking.

## Bridges & tunnels

In September 2003, the new four-lane Second Avenue bascule bridge in downtown Miami was completed as the third largest drawbridge in the U.S. and the fourth largest in the world. The \$45 million project was constructed by the Gilbert Southern Corp. to alleviate vehicular traffic and nearly double the bridge's height for vessels passing through.

**THREE OF THE MIAMI RIVER'S** remaining 14 bridges are older than their allotted 70-year life spans. The Fifth Street Bridge has a 73-foot wide horizontal clearance on a 150-foot channel and provides the most restrictive point on the river. The Florida Department of Transportation has allocated funding to replace the bridge.

**THE DOWNTOWN TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN** adopted by the City Commission in May 2003 set as a priority a downtown River Tunnel. The Miami River Commission conducted a cost analysis for the SW 12th Avenue and SW 27th Avenue bridges, that concluded that over a 70-year cycle, the tunnel options were \$1.46 million less expensive than bridges.



**Top:** Construction continues on Brisas Del Mar, a residential complex developed by the Gatehouse Group, while work proceeds on Neo Lofts, background.



**Left:** After an October groundbreaking on the Brickell on the River project, construction is already in full swing.

**Below:** Miami River Village, on the river's north bank just west of the Miami Avenue Bridge, is planned with 1,300 residential units in four stages.



## Miami River Commission Consolidated Budget

July 1, 2003-June 30, 2004

This projected budget is based on the Legislature's continuing allocation of \$200,000 to support the operations of the Miami River Commission

**OFFICE SPACE:** Lease: \$3,600  
Liability insurance: \$1,200

**ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES:** Audit fees: \$9,500  
Legal fees/consulting: \$8,000  
Accounting/Tax Preparation: \$1,200  
Office supplies: \$5,000  
Telephone/Fax: \$2,400  
Copier costs: \$3,600  
Recording secretary: \$900  
Postage: \$3,000  
Officers' and director's insurance: \$1,200

**PRINTING:** Letterhead/envelopes: \$1,500

**EXPENSES:** Brochures: \$6,000  
Reports/plans: \$15,000

**OFFICE EQUIPMENT:** Software: \$500  
Office furniture: \$800

**TRANSPORTATION:** Tolls/parking/mileage: \$2,400

**PAYROLL EXPENSES:** Salaries: \$85,000  
Payroll taxes (Social Security and Medicare): \$40,000

**EDUCATION AND PROMOTION:** Riverday: \$5,000  
Dues, events, seminars: \$1,400  
River tours: \$3,200

**TOTAL:** \$200,000

Budget

ONE VOICE for the river

**CHAIR: ROBERT L. PARKS, ESQ.**

Member at Large appointed by Governor

**VICE CHAIR: MR. MICHAEL KARCHER**

Chair of Marine Council  
*Designee: Phil Everingham*

**FLORIDA GOV. JEB BUSH**

*Designee: Dr. Pamella J. Dana*

**REP. RENE GARCIA**

Chair, Miami-Dade Delegation  
*Designee: Ms. Debra Owens*

**MAYOR ALEX PENELAS**

Miami-Dade County Mayor  
*Designee: Mr. Henry Sori*

**MAYOR MANUEL DIAZ**

Mayor of the City of Miami  
*Designee: Mr. Otto Boudet Murias*

**MR. BRUNO BARRIERO**

Miami-Dade County Commissioner  
*Designee: Mr. Alfredo Gonzalez*

**MR. JOE SANCHEZ**

City of Miami Commissioner  
*Designee: Mr. Steve Wright*

**NICHOLAS J. GUTIERREZ, JR.**

Chair, Governing Board, South Florida Water Management District  
*Designee: Ms. Irela Bague*

**KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, ESQ.**

Miami-Dade State Attorney  
*Designee: Gary Winston, Esq.*

**MR. CHARLES "BUD" MORTON**

Chair, Miami River Marine Group  
*Designee: Mr. Richard Bunnell*

**MR. DANA NOTTINGHAM**

Executive Director  
Downtown Development Authority  
*Designee: Mr. Adam Lukin*

**MR. ISILIO ARRIAGA**

President, Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce  
*Designee: Ms. Megan Kelly*

**DR. ERNEST MARTIN**

Neighborhood Representative appointed by the City of Miami Commission  
*Designee: Mr. Michael Cox*

**MS. SALLYE JUDE**

Neighborhood Representative appointed by Miami-Dade County Commission  
*Designee: Ms. Jane Caporelli*

**MS. SARA C. BABUN**

Member at Large appointed by Miami-Dade County Commission  
*Designee: Mr. Eddie Rodriguez*

**MS. JANET McALILEY**

Representative from environmental or civic organization appointed by the Governor  
*Designee: Ms. Theo Long*

**MR. CLEVE JONES, JR.**

Member at Large appointed by City of Miami Commission  
*Designee: Capt. Beau Payne*

Managing Director  
**MR. BRETT BIBEAU**

Assistant Managing Director  
**MS. ADRIANA CABRERA**

**PREPARED BY:**  
Mark Sell Communications, Inc.

**DESIGNED BY:** Toni Kirkland

Learn more about the river's history, view records of our meetings, download all our major reports at our web site at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org) – a great resource for what's happening on and near the river.



**MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION**

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