

ONE VOICE for the river

Fall 2002 Report

This year, the Miami River Commission shifts its focus from planning to action. We are producing solutions to reverse pollution, cleanse the river and Biscayne Bay, and create greenways and riverwalks for the public to enjoy.

We have done our part to bring about the river's first dredging in 70 years to make it cleaner and more navigable for the ships that move \$4 billion in goods a year between Florida and the Caribbean.

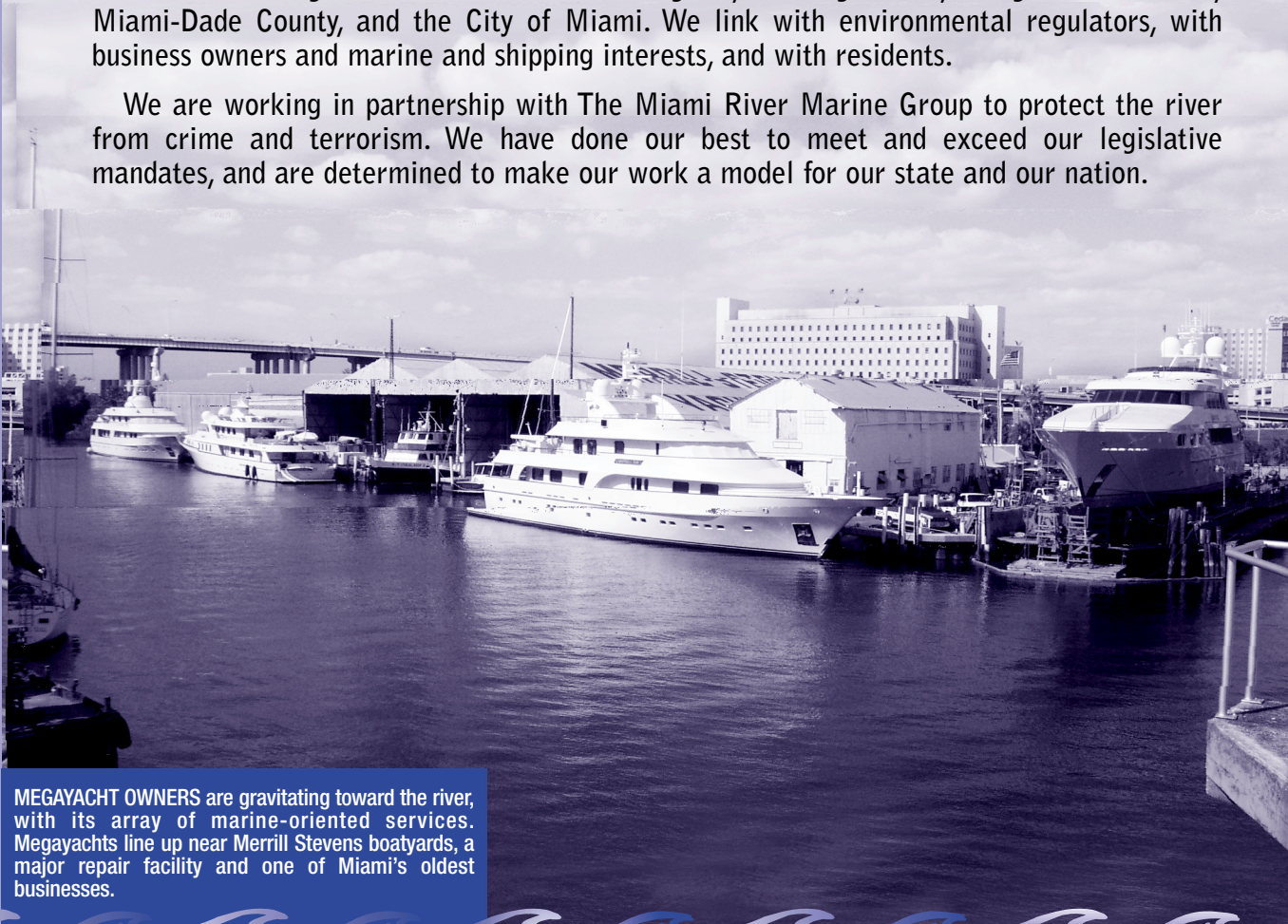
We have completed the river corridor's most comprehensive plan ever and are putting it to work. We are working with elected officials, government agencies, businesses, developers and residents to create a better place to live, work and play.

These three big tasks – dredging, greenways, and implementing the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan – form the core of our mission.

We are working to preserve and create jobs. Not only is the river Biscayne Bay's biggest tributary; it vies with Tampa as the equivalent of the state's fourth largest port.

Now that we have harnessed the river's diverse interests to speak as one, we are acting as one. We have forged common cause with Congress, the Legislature, the governor's office, Miami-Dade County, and the City of Miami. We link with environmental regulators, with business owners and marine and shipping interests, and with residents.

We are working in partnership with The Miami River Marine Group to protect the river from crime and terrorism. We have done our best to meet and exceed our legislative mandates, and are determined to make our work a model for our state and our nation.



MEGAYACHT OWNERS are gravitating toward the river, with its array of marine-oriented services. Megayachts line up near Merrill Stevens boatyards, a major repair facility and one of Miami's oldest businesses.

The river and our mission

In 1998, The Florida Legislature formed the Miami River Commission to improve the Miami River and its surroundings. Specifically, the commission is operating under two legislative acts:

■ **THE ACT** (Chapter 98-402, Sec. 5-8) establishing 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.

■ **THE 2000 MIAMI RIVER IMPROVEMENT ACT** (Chapter 163.065), which authorizes 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 healthy urban environment, including cultural, recreational, economic, and transportation components."

THE COMMISSION HAS accomplished both these tasks. It has formed common cause among elected officials, shipping and marine interests, small businesses and residents, environmentalists, and civic leadership. Thanks to the commission's work and persistence, the federal government made dredging feasible for the first time in 70 years. This year, the commission completed the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan in cooperation with the city and county, with 68 proposals to improve the river and the neighborhoods in the heart of Miami.

TODAY, THE RIVER AND its neighborhoods are three years into a dramatic rebound. Crime is down. Historic residential neighborhoods such as Allapattah, Spring Garden, East Little Havana and Overtown are in various stages of revival.

IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA, land values are climbing sharply. The river has started its evolution into one



SHOWING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT at a January 2002 news conference on a Miami Circle initiative, l. to r.: City of Miami Mayor Manuel A. Diaz, U.S. Rep. Carrie Meek, Sen. Bob Graham, U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Florida Secretary of State Katherine Harris. The group supports a study to incorporate the riverfront historic site into Biscayne National Park.

of the hottest residential and commercial centers in the Southeast. Developers have broken ground on a host of projects, with more than 15,000 mid- and high-rise housing units projected in the river's downtown area alone. Dredging is about to begin and work has started on greenways, parks improvements, and stormwater and drainage enhancements.

THE REVIVAL IS STILL in its early stages. Generations of neglect, urban decay, crime and pollution take years to reverse. As far back as 1972, the late Rep. Claude Pepper introduced legislation to dredge the Miami River. Undredged sediments from old stormwater systems and other sources continue to pollute the river and Biscayne Bay and restrict navigation. Yet 30 years on, solutions are at hand. The Miami River Commission is determined to seize this opportunity to see the river's new renaissance through to a successful outcome.

What our elected officials say...

SEN. BOB GRAHAM:

"Thanks to the persistence and hard work of the Miami River Commission and its friends – along with federal, state and local entities – the Miami River is well on its way to becoming a great community destination as well as a critical resource for Caribbean trade."



U.S. REP. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN:

"I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the Miami River Commission for the hard work and dedication that is so vital for the success of this project."



MIAMI-DADE MAYOR ALEX PENELAS:

"I am proud to serve on the Miami River Commission, which has proven itself indispensable in uniting Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, the State of Florida, and the federal government to make great things happen along the river!"



CITY OF MIAMI MAYOR MANNY DIAZ:

"Largely because of the Miami River Commission, the river corridor is now critical to all our plans for Miami's downtown and much of the central city. The river's renaissance is one of the most exciting things happening in the City of Miami."



Dramatic improvements are bringing new life to the Miami River, and we as a commission are determined to make them last well into the new century. Here is an update of the commission's work:

THIS YEAR, THE Miami River Commission completed its Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan. This is not a study destined for the shelves, but a new "call to action" with 68 specific proposals to improve the river's neighborhoods, to significantly reduce pollution, and to promote jobs, trade and security. We envision: a robust Caribbean trade center in its western part, thriving historic neighborhoods in the middle, and a 24-hour destination for residents and visitors downtown. This plan is a blueprint for everything we are doing, including ways to pay for it. We are setting priorities to make sure this work gets done. Details are elsewhere in this report, and the full plan is on our website at www.miamirivercommission.org.

DREDGING REMAINS OUR TOP priority. The commission worked successfully with Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, the Army Corps of Engineers, the Florida Inland Navigation District and Florida Department of Environmental Protection to make this project happen. While we had anticipated the project to start by now, we are awaiting the Army Corps of Engineers' final word before work can begin, most likely in spring or summer 2003. This is a big, \$80 million operation, and a must for cleansing the river, improving Biscayne Bay, and aiding navigation. Because of silt buildup, freighters and tugboats must wait for high tide to travel to and from the Bay. We are optimistic work will quickly proceed, as this is the very foundation of our task.

We have made exciting progress with the Miami River Greenway, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land. Funds are in place, and the City of Miami is letting out bids for greenways in various areas from NW 12th Avenue to the river's mouth. The new Greenways System will be a signature for downtown Miami, and a new center of activity.

WE RELEASED THE MIAMI River Basin Water Quality Improvement Report, with 33 specific proposals to remove pollution, control stormwater runoff and improve the water quality of the river and Biscayne Bay. The report – also on our website – aims to attack root causes of pollution in the river and its tributaries. The county and city are well along putting the recommendations to work.

TERRORISM HAS MADE SECURITY a matter of the highest urgency. Answering Sen. Bob Graham's call for a review of our nation's shores, Trident Group Inc., in September 2002 produced a Port Vulnerability Assessment for the Miami River Marine Group, to assess the river's risk

from a terrorist threat and to propose solutions. The report recognizes the diversity of Miami River's trade and businesses and makes strong – and doable – recommendations for improvement. The commission will do its utmost to make the river and the State of Florida more secure.

Along the river, other improvements continue, with visible results. Riverfront developers not only include greenways in their plans; they embrace the idea and are coming to share our vision of a river friendly to pedestrians and boaters alike.

JOBS ARE OF CRITICAL INTEREST not only to the river, but also to a community with the lowest per capita income of any major American city. The marine industry and related businesses employ more than 8,000; marine industry jobs alone pay an average of more than \$30,000 a year.

Some of these businesses have created jobs and taxpayers for more than a century.

FOR OUR PROGRESS, we are grateful for support across party lines, from Washington to Tallahassee to Miami. We are particularly thankful to Gov. Jeb Bush, Sen. Bob Graham, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Rep. Carrie Meek, County Commissioner Bruno Barreiro and invaluable bipartisan backing from the Florida Legislature.

We have sought to make the commission a model of transparency, integrity and efficiency. We operate with a total administrative budget of just \$200,000 a year – including salaries, benefits and office costs. Managing Director David Miller and Assistant Managing Director Brett Bibeau have saved taxpayers that much and more through aggressive, successful pursuit of grants and through finding greater efficiencies. We believe taxpayers are getting a bargain.

OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE REAL, but our work is far from done. We are therefore asking the Legislature to remove that statutory language sunsetting the commission in July 2003 so we can finish the job we started at the request of the State of Florida.

Robert L. Parks, Esq.
Chair



Robert Parks

Chair's Report

MRC ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2001-2002

- Completed, adopted and started to implement Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan
- Completed and started to execute the Water Quality Improvement Report
- Secured or helped obtain more than \$1 million in grants to improve river
- Worked to secure pre-bid and permitting work for dredging
- Promoted outreach through RiverDay festival and river cleanups with Hands On Miami volunteer group

THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT of the Miami River Commission this year was the 140-page Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan, approved by the commission in September 2002 and spearheaded by James Murley, former Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs. This two-year project authorized by the Florida Legislature is the result of nine public workshops, hundreds of hours of staff work from the city and county, extensive public involvement, and assistance from consultants Kimley-Horn and Associates, hired with \$162,000 in grants and public funds.

The six major themes for the plan include:

VISION FOR THE RIVER. The Miami River has been and will remain a working river, where tugboats, freighters, yachts and sailboats mingle. This colorful riverscape is unique in North America. We are proceeding with our vision to attract residents, restaurants, and parks to the riverbanks, with broad tree canopies, riverwalks, bikeways and water taxis. We believe the vibrant riverfront neighborhoods can coexist with,

and even enhance, a robust marine, trade and shipping industry.

INVESTMENT ALONG THE RIVER. The plan proposes a redevelopment stimulus package for financial incentives to spur private development and investment. The plan recommends creation of one or more Tax Increment Financing Districts within the corridor, a concept with wide support among the businesses serving the area. Public investment in design of public buildings and spaces will enhance already rising property values along the corridor. The commission has worked to promote businesses by expanding the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) and Enterprise zones.

OUTREACH

The seventh annual – and greatly expanded – Miami RiverDay shifted to Jose Martí Park in April 2002, showcasing the river revival in partnership with Antillean Marine, Miami-Dade County, City of Miami Neighborhood Enhancement Team and Citizens for a Better South Florida. The commission worked with Miami-Dade public schools to develop and teach a curriculum focusing on the river and its environment, including riverboat tours to enlighten the students. The volunteer group Hands on Miami now includes monthly river cleanups in its program. The first annual Miami River Fishing Tournament was held this year near Lummus Park, a successful family-oriented event and a big step in making the river a friendlier place for everyone.

bridges, three of which are more than 70 years old and past their allotted lifespans.

NEIGHBORHOODS ALONG THE RIVER. The historic, multicultural neighborhoods along the river need protective zoning to preserve their structures and community

TRANSPORTATION ALONG THE RIVER. The plan's vision for multi-modal transportation along the river includes 5.5 miles of waterway, 11 miles of roadway, and 11 miles of greenway, combined with existing Metromover, bus lines and the future Miami Intermodal Center. The plan outlines specific ways to improve pedestrian mobility, provide traffic calming and study potential roadway realignments. Tunnels should be properly analyzed as alternatives to



GREENWAYS LIKE THE ONE ON THE LEFT will soon line much of the river from its mouth to NW 12th Avenue. Builders in the current development explosion are including tree-shaded greenways with 20-foot walkways in their projects to bring residents and visitors to the river and boater into the city. The newly refurbished Second Avenue Bridge, right, is scheduled for completion in October 2003.

THE COMMISSION SECURED NEARLY \$168,000 IN GRANTS

this year, and helped obtain more than \$1 million additionally for the City of Miami. Most of these grants will go toward greenway development, but other major purposes include re-activation of a Miami River Clean-Up Vessel and community outreach efforts through RiverDay and educational programs. Major contributors include the Florida Department of Transportation, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Villagers Inc., and many more.

Detailed information is available at www.miamirivercommission.org



THE FIFTH STREET BRIDGE – only 74 feet wide on a 150-foot channel – is the most restrictive point on the river, a hazard for navigation, and a common site for collisions. Freighters have struck the bridge 12 times in 10 years, twice knocking out service for eight months. We urge the Florida Department of Transportation to replace this unsafe bridge promptly. Three of the river's 15 bridges are more than 70 years old and in urgent need of replacement. The commission recommends aggressive study of tunnels as an alternative to bridges.

fabric. The plan proposes new Neighborhood Conservation and Historic Preservation district designations, with continued support for Gov. Bush's "Operation Riverwalk" to reduce crime and the City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz's "Clean Up Miami" campaign.

THE RIVER ENVIRONMENT. Seventy years of contaminated sediment buildup along the river's channel has hampered navigation and fouled the waters. Only dredging can remove it. Undoing and preventing environmental damage from stormwater runoff are big priorities (see Stormwater section further on). The Miami River cleanup vessel is being reactivated. Derelict vessels, once common, are now rare and promptly removed when found. The plan recommends continued protection of manatees, and urges creation of more parks along the river corridor.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES. The Miami River Commission has adopted the Urban Infill Plan as its strategic plan for the corridor's development, with a five-year integrated financial plan. The city and county commissions will soon consider the plan for adoption.

GREENWAYS AND PARKS: More than \$11 million in public and foundation money is now available for Greenways. Much of this success is due to the efforts of Brenda Marshall and Lavinia Freeman

of the Trust for Public Land, who have worked in close partnership with the commission. The Knight Foundation has provided the largest share with \$2.5 million, with other major contributions coming from the City of Miami, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the federal government. The city is letting out bids for greenways, and construction has started in some privately built sections. Greenways and walkways will emerge as big downtown attractions along the river over the next two to five years, as developers include riverwalks with restaurants, cafes and public art. The 45-story One Miami residential project on the north bank of the river's mouth, scheduled to break ground in March 2003, will link the Riverwalk with the Baywalk along Biscayne Bay.

URBAN INFILL: The MRC is working with the Florida Department of State, Miami-Dade County and the Miami Circle Planning Group to implement \$525,000 in improvements and allow public access to the 2,000-year-old Miami Circle site. The November 2001 City of Miami Homeland Defense/Neighborhood Improvement Bond Issue will accelerate landscaping and development of the corridor's greenways and parks. The commission staff is also implementing a grant for an Adopt-A-Tree program to increase

tree canopies along the Miami River Greenway and surrounding neighborhoods.

STORMWATER: Unchecked stormwater runoff has been the biggest single pollution culprit in both the Miami River and Biscayne Bay. In early 2002, The Miami River Commission released its Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Report, a project in the works since 1994 under the commission's predecessor, the Miami River Coordinating Committee. The report focuses on results on Wagner Creek – a tributary into the Miami River and one of the most polluted bodies of water in Florida – documenting improvements in water quality there since 1996. Based on the Wagner Creek project, the report includes 33 proposals to improve water quality throughout the 69-square-mile river basin, at an estimated total capital cost of \$18 million, more than \$15 million of that for stormwater relief. Since the report's release, local agencies have acted on the recommendations, completing \$4 million in stormwater system retrofitting so far.

DREDGING GROUP

Richard Bunnell and Scott Mitchell, Co-chairs

Group Reports

DREDGING THE RIVER is critical to reverse environmental damage and to undo 70 years of silting that restricts navigation. Congress has appropriated more than \$21 million for this project since 1993, not including recommended appropriations for fiscal 2003 of \$5.5 million from the Senate and \$8 million in the House bill. The State of Florida has appropriated \$6.375 million since 1999. Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami have passed resolutions pledging to pay \$5 million each. Local governments have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars working with the Corps, and utility companies have spent hundreds of thousands relocating their lines in preparation for dredging. The Miami River Commission has done its part to make the project happen, and awaits only final word from the Army Corps of Engineers, which anticipates letting out bids no later than January 2003, with work starting before the middle of the year.



ONE RIVERVIEW SQUARE, an office complex with a planned restaurant fronting the greenway, is one of a growing number of projects well under construction along the river, now undergoing the biggest building boom in decades.

PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP

Capt. Jim Watson, U.S.C.G., and Gary Winston, State Attorney's Office

SECURITY – ALWAYS A VITAL CONCERN – moved to top priority after Sept. 11, 2001. Like all waterfront ports and private terminals, the Miami River is a point of entry and a potential target for terrorist attack.

In accordance with a request from Sen. Bob Graham as chair of the Senate

Intelligence Committee, the

Miami River Marine Group commissioned the Trident Group to conduct a Port Vulnerability Assessment (PVA), completed in September 2002.

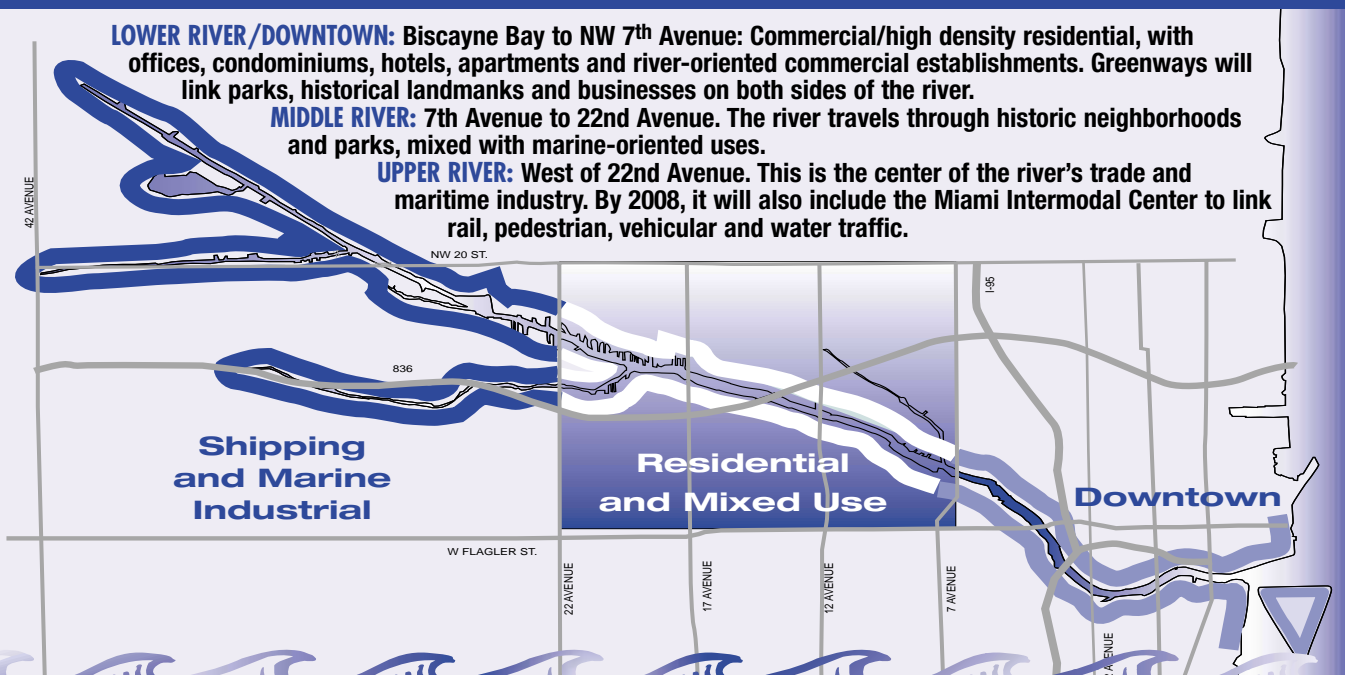
The PVA assessed the river's vulnerability to a variety of security threats and noted the lack of visible law enforcement patrols on river. It reported that Miami River terminals are "grossly overlooked" and overshadowed by the nearby Port of Miami. The study found security standards for Miami River terminals ranging from "outstanding" (in the cases of

The river consists of three distinct, coexisting zones:

LOWER RIVER/DOWNTOWN: Biscayne Bay to NW 7th Avenue: Commercial/high density residential, with offices, condominiums, hotels, apartments and river-oriented commercial establishments. Greenways will link parks, historical landmarks and businesses on both sides of the river.

MIDDLE RIVER: 7th Avenue to 22nd Avenue. The river travels through historic neighborhoods and parks, mixed with marine-oriented uses.

UPPER RIVER: West of 22nd Avenue. This is the center of the river's trade and maritime industry. By 2008, it will also include the Miami Intermodal Center to link rail, pedestrian, vehicular and water traffic.



The

Miami River is a natural regional port for the Caribbean, an emerging center for megayacht owners and recreational boaters, and an up-and-coming destination for restaurants, clubs, offices, hotels and housing. A dredged, cleaner Miami River promotes all of these goals.

As the main tributary of Biscayne Bay, the Miami River will remain an environmental link between the Everglades and the bountiful resources of the bay and the Atlantic Ocean beyond.

The river stands only to gain in prominence in Caribbean trade upon Cuba's eventual and inevitable release from Communism and re-emergence as a free nation with free markets. We are certain the river can flourish as a trade engine in conjunction with a system of greenways, walkways, and parks for pedestrians and "blueways" for recreational boaters. The river's array of tugboats, freighters and megayachts attracts residents, office workers, café patrons and strollers. The commission is dedicated to ensure that the river develops to the best possible benefit for all the citizens of the state, and the visitors on whom we depend.

Antillean Marine and Sea Terminals) to "practically non-existent." It reported that terminal owners have a strong desire for improved and better-coordinated security.

The Miami River Commission supports the Marine Group's efforts and is determined to help coordinate law enforcement efforts to make the river, the City of Miami, and the State of Florida, more secure from terrorists.

In addition, Gov. Jeb Bush's multiyear Operation Riverwalk continues as a comprehensive program to address river area issues, particularly drug trafficking, preventive programs, regulatory enforcement and economic development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE GROUP

Megan Kelly, Cleve Jones, CO-CHAIRS

THE DOWNTOWN SECTION of the river will soon house thousands more. Three years into one of its biggest building booms ever, the downtown river area is on its way to becoming a 24-hour destination. While the One Miami project will dominate the landscape on the north bank of the river's mouth, other big developments are already under construction, including: the 34-story Courts Brickell Key, the innovative 199-unit Neo Lofts residential project, and a new Publix Supermarket for East Little Havana and downtown. A 14-story mixed-income rental tower near Lummus Park was recently completed and several historic homes were relocated and restored. Many other plans are on the books, and some are going through permitting as of this writing.

The marine and shipping industry remains central to the river's economy. The commission is working to encourage development of megayacht facilities, warehouses, customs inspection facilities and marine-related businesses to serve shipping, fishing, and recreational marine purposes.

As river improvements continue, megayacht owners are gravitating toward the river and recognizing its value. The commission encourages aggressive expansion into this area, as the river is superbly equipped to serve this business. More broadly, businesses are already starting to benefit from incentives that come from expanded Enterprise and HUB zones.

Miami River Commission Consolidated Budget

July 1, 2002-June 30, 2003

OFFICE SPACE:	Lease: \$3,600 Liability insurance: \$1,200
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES:	Audit fees: \$2,500 Legal fees/consulting: \$20,880 Office supplies: \$2,500 Telephone/Fax: \$2,400 Copier costs: \$1,200 Recording secretary: \$900 Postage: \$2,700 Officers' and director's insurance: \$1,000 Worker compensation insurance: \$1,350
PRINTING EXPENSES:	Letterhead/envelopes: \$750 Brochures: \$5,000 Reports/plans: \$8,000
OFFICE EQUIPMENT:	Computer and printer: \$1,200 Software: \$500 Office furniture: \$750
TRANSPORTATION:	Tolls/parking/mileage: \$1,750 Travel: \$3,000
PAYROLL EXPENSES:	Salaries: \$104,000 Payroll taxes (Social Security and Medicare): \$7,800
PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:	Outside services: \$18,720
EDUCATION AND PROMOTION:	Riverday: \$3,700 Dues, events, seminars: \$1,400 River tours: \$3,200
TOTAL:	\$200,000

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. Pamela J. Dana

REP. RENE GARCIA

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

MAYOR ALEX PENELAS

Miami-Dade County Mayor
Designee: Ms. Sandy O'Neil

MAYOR MANUEL DIAZ

Mayor of the City of Miami
Designee: Mr. Javier Fernandez

MR. BRUNO BARRIERO

Miami-Dade County Commissioner
Designee: Mr. Alfredo Gonzalez

MR. JOE SANCHEZ

City of Miami Commissioner
Designee: Mr. Robert Parente

MS. TRUDI J. WILLIAMS

Chair, Governing Board, South Florida Water Management District
Designee: Mr. Gerardo Fernandez

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. ALONSO MENENDEZ

Executive Director
Downtown Development Authority
Designee: Mr. Adam Lukin

MR. WILLIAM O. CULLOM

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. Tom Parker

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
CAPT. DAVID MILLER

Assistant Managing Director
MR. BRETT BIBEAU

PREPARED BY:

Mark Sell Communications, Inc.

DESIGNED BY: Toni Kirkland

Learn more about the river's history, view records of our meetings, see all our major reports at our web site at www.miamirivercommission.org – a great resource for what's happening on and near the river.



MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION

c/o Rosenstiel School

4600 Rickenbacker Cswy, Miami, FL 33149

OFFICE: 305-361-4850 **FAX:** 305-361-4755

E-MAIL: mrc@rsmas.Miami.edu

WEBSITE: www.miamirivercommission.org

