

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes July 14, 2025

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, July 14, 2025, in the Downtown Library Auditorium, 101 W Flagler. Sign in sheets are attached.

Miami River Commission (MRC) Policy Committee Members and/or Designees attending:
James Murley, Vice-Chairman, designee for Miami-Dade County Daniela Levine Cava
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for County Commissioner Eileen Higgins
Betty Hermida, designee for City of Miami Commissioner Mike Gabela
Spencer Crowley, Member at Large Appointed by the City of Miami Commission
Theo Long, Neighborhood Representative appointed by Board of County Commissioners
Richard Murphy, designee for Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Richard Dubin, designee for the Miami River Marine Group
Tere Garcia, designee for Member at Large Appointed by the County Commission
Raffaele Mandis, designee for Member at Large Appointed by the Governor
William Gonzalez, designee for State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

I) Chair's Report and "Voluntary Improvement Plan" (VIP) Update

MRC Vice Chairman Murley provided the following report:

MRC Chairman Aguirre will lead our next meeting, and today I will conduct the meeting as our Vice Chairman.

Luis Garcia's MRC designee is a regular attendee, John Michael Cornell, Hurricane Cove Marine and Boatyard, is out of town today, which is not our regular 1st Monday of the Month meeting date. Luis Garcia has appointed Raffaele Mandis to serve as his MRC designee today. I welcome Rafa, thanks for your time today which assists us with quorum as we discuss the Manatee Protection Plan, something you are very familiar working for Hurricane Cove.

A Memo from Miami-Dade County Mayor Cava regarding DERM was distributed.

Please note similar to the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County, the Miami River Commission does not host public meetings in August. Due to Labor Day, the next MRC meeting will be here at noon on September 8. In October the MRC will resume its regular meeting schedule of the 1st Monday of the month here at noon.

The Miami River Commission has been actively assisting the efforts of the City, County, State, and private sector to clean up the Miami River District. The MRC pays professional maintenance

companies every day to remove litter, invasive plant species, graffiti and provide landscaping, pressure washing, and Scavenger Water Decontamination Vessel services along the Miami River. In addition, the MRC thanks the Hands-on-Miami volunteers whom picked up garbage along the Miami River in Sewell Park on June 22 and in Curtis Park on June 1 and July 6.

II) FDOT Contract Renewal

The Miami River Commission adopted a unanimous resolution authorizing its Managing Director, Mr. Brett Bibeau, to execute the distributed contract renewal form on behalf of the Miami River Commission for FDOT Contract No. AT156 / Financial Project No. 445054-3-78-01 which provides once a week garbage removal, landscaping every 20 days, and coordination with the City of Miami's Homeless Assistance and Police Departments at all FDOT Bridges over the Miami River.

III) Manatee Protection Plan

The following documents were emailed on the MRC website prior to the MRC meeting:

- DERM's Proposed Track Changed Amendments to the Manatee Protection Plan
- DERM's PowerPoint Presentation
- Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee Recommendations
- Manatee Mortality Data
- MRC Economic Development and Commerce Subcommittee's 2/15/24 Public Meeting Minutes
- MRC 3/4/24 Public Meeting Minutes
- MRC Subcommittee's 6/9/25 Public Meeting Minutes

Rockell Alhale participated on behalf of DERM.

The MRC adopted the following unanimous resolution:

The Miami River is a distinct waterway covered by the Countywide Manatee Protection Plan. Port Miami River is one of three Congressionally authorized navigation channels in addition to Government Cut and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. While the proposed amended plan breaks out information, e.g., Marine Operating Plans, etc., specifically for the Miami River, the jurisdiction and responsibilities of the MRC are not delineated in the proposed Plan. The MRC recommends that the final adopted plan clearly indicate those portions applicable to only the Miami River and specifies the coordination role of the MRC set out in state legislation.

The Miami River Commission unanimously voted to respectfully recommend the following revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan:

- 1) Create a Manatee Protection Fund dedicated to manatee habitat & law enforcement enforcing the Miami River's idle no wake speed zone, enforcement against illegal operations, and code compliance against illegal charters. This was the Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee's adopted "Motion 22". This revision should be made on page 107-110 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan. The County's previous Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee made specific recommendations about funding for a range of actions, including significant increases in enforcement, and that the existing plan and any future amended plan will only be successful if accompanied by a funding increase.
- 2) Increase fines for violation of the idle no wake speed zone, and escalate fines and consequences for repeat offenders. This was the Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee's adopted "Motion 1". This revision should be made in the policies goals and objective section starting on page on page 112 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.
- 3) Keep the Manatee Protection Plan's current "For the purposes of application of Marine Facility Siting Criteria for manatee protection to permitting of such facilities, an 'existing marine facility' is one that has been in use and possesses all required environmental approvals at any time since October 28, 1984." This was the Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee's adopted "Motion 10". (DERM 's proposed track changed revisions page 16 proposes to revise that date to become, "Existing marine facility—for the purposes of this plan, the definition of an existing boat facility is one which is operating with all required authorizations and is currently producing boat traffic, or has recently produced boat traffic in the past five years"). This revision should be made on page 16 to the definition of Existing Marine Facility in DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.
- 4) Allow slip transfers from 1 property to another property in either direction on the Miami River and its tributaries. This was the Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee's adopted "Motion 5 & 6". This revision should be made on page 104 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

- 5) Currently Waterborne Transportation / Water Taxi is allowed on the Miami River up to the 5 ST Bridge. Revise the Manatee Protection Plan to allow Waterborne Transportation / Water Taxi on the entire Miami River and its tributaries, which is currently allowed in the Broward County Manatee Protection Plan (Fort Lauderdale's "New River") and the Palm Beach Manatee Protection Plan, which were both approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. This was the Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee's adopted "Motion 9". This revision should be made on page 98 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

- 6) On the Miami River revise the Plan to remove "Waterborne Transportation / Water Taxi", vessels visiting parks and restaurants from the "Transitory Boat Slip" category / definition. Similar to other counties, do not count transitory slips towards the slip count. This was the Manatee Protection Plan Review Committee's adopted "Motion 9". This revision should be made to the definition of "Transitory Boat Slip" found on page 19 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

- 7) In City of Miami Riverfront properties zoned D3 Marine Industrial and in Unincorporated Miami Dade County's portion of the Miami River (west of 27 Ave), allow increased boat slips in order to attract job generating marine industrial businesses. This revision should be made on page 112 forward of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

- 8) On the Miami River allow increased flexibility and slip counts for dry stack storage. This revision should be made on page 112 forward of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

- 9) On the Miami River revise the vessel to linear feet of shoreline ratio in Parks and Residential to 1 vessel per 50 feet. This revision should be made on page 87, under "new facilities" in DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

- 10) A revision to the Manatee Protection Plan on the Miami River do not count vessels over 100' towards the allowable slip count, as currently done in other portions of Miami-Dade County. For example, if a Marine Industrial zoned site with 500 linear feet located west of 27 Ave has a Marine Operating Permit which allows 8 slips, they could have 8 slips in dry stack plus 5 x 100' vessels along the shoreline. This revision should be made on page 95 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.
- 11) Insert working with Miami River Commission to help Manatee's. This revision should be made on page 110 of DERM's track changed draft revisions to the Manatee Protection Plan.

Going forward, the MRC respectfully recommends that Miami-Dade County engage the MRC and Miami River stakeholders in any proposed changes to the Plan impacting the Miami River. The MRC cordially invites Miami-Dade County to please participate in the MRC's subsequent public meeting with this item on the agenda again September 8, noon, 101 W Flagler, in the library's auditorium, and other future public MRC meetings to continue providing a public forum. Open discussion in publicly noticed meetings provides the best opportunity that when this revised legislation is eventually filed with the Miami-Dade County Commission for consideration, it will be successfully adopted.

IV) Subcommittee Reports

- a. The MRC Urban Infill & Greenways Subcommittee's June 9, 2025 public meeting minutes were distributed.
- b. The MRC Stormwater Subcommittee's July 2025 public meeting minutes were distributed.

V) New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

July 14, 2025 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

Name

Organization

Telephone

Email

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July 14, 2025 – 12:00 PM

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