

**Miami River Commission
Public Meeting Minutes
May 4, 2026**

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, May 4, 2026, in the Downtown Library Auditorium, 101 W Flagler. Sign in sheets are attached.

Miami River Commission (MRC) Policy Committee Members and/or Designees attending:

Horacio Stuart Aguirre, Chairman, Appointed by the Governor
Jim Murley, designee for Miami-Dade County Mayor Cava
Eddie Marti Kring, designee for City of Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins
Philip Everingham, designee for Miami Marine Council
Eileen Broton, Neighborhood Representative Appointed by City of Miami Commission
Richard Murphy, designee for Eileen Broton
Gary Gunness, Miami River Marine Group
John Michael Cornell, designee for Member at Large Appointed by the Governor
Janet Mestril, designee for Miami-Dade County Member at Large
Neal Schafers, designee for Downtown Development Authority
Theodora Long, Neighborhood Representative Appointed by the City of Miami

MRC Staff:

Brett Bibeau, Managing Director

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

MRC Chairman Horacio Stuart Aguirre provided the following report:

The Miami River Commission unanimously adopted the MRC's March public meeting minutes, which were emailed in advance of today's meeting.

Before you is a rotating PowerPoint of beautiful pictures taken at the phenomenal free 27th Annual Miami Riverday held April 11, 2026, in Lummus Park featuring free boat rides, live music, environmental education, historic reenactors, children's activities, food and drinks. As shown in the pictures, many of our generous sponsors received their plaques of appreciation on stage at Riverday from Honorable Mayors Cava and Higgins, County Commissioners Lopez and Regalado, City Commissioners King, Gabela, and Gabela, County Tax Collector Fernandez, and County Property Appraiser Regalado. Today we would like to invite up the following sponsors whom were unable to receive their plaques of appreciation at Riverday:

John Michael Cornell, Hurricane Cove
Mark Hellinger, River Landing
Javier Cuardos, Lofty
Ken Bryan, Rails to Trails
Piero Gardenali, FIU

Melissa Tapanes, Bercow, Radell, Larkin and Tapanes
Paulina Prada, SCS Engineers

In addition, before you is the 23rd Annual Miami River Map and Guide, released at Riverday. Thank you to all the advertisers in the Miami River Map and Guide which shows the public Riverwalk route, Miami River District parks, businesses, neighborhoods, historic sites, and more.

MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murley provided the following Voluntary Improvement Plan (VIP) Update:

The Miami River Commission has been actively assisting the efforts of the City, County, State, and private sector to keep the Miami River District clean. 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. We remove 3 large 30 cubic yard dumpsters full of garbage every week.

In addition, the MRC thanks the wonderful Hands on Miami Volunteers for picking up garbage along the shoreline in riverfront Curtis Park on March 15 and April 26, and in Sewell Park on March 8 and April 12.

1) Presentation of Process to Update the DDA Master Plan

Neal Schafers, DDA, and Leslie Del Monte, Zyscovich, distributed and presented the “Master Planning Services for 2025 Downtown Miami Master Plan Update (CBD Focus)”

DDA Master Plan Vision and Phasing

- **Legacy Plan Review:** The 2005–2008 Zyscovich Master Plan Study (Omni, CBD, Brickell) was revisited (*please note this document is different than the final 2050 Downtown Miami Master Plan, which was adopted in October 2009*).
- Many priorities, such as economic development, land use, mobility, and housing, remain relevant from the Master Plan Study and will help inform the 2050 update.
- **Phase One – CBD Focus:** Current efforts prioritize CBD visioning, as directed by the DDA Board. Future phases should address the A&E District and Brickell District.

Miami River District and Riverwalk Connectivity

- **Prior Proposals (2009):** Concepts included ramp reconfigurations and up to nineteen (19) acres of new open space through under-highway park and water management uses.
- **Boundary Adjustment:** Recommend extending the River Subdistrict to include new riverfront developments (e.g., One Miami) to align with Riverwalk continuity.
- **North–South Connectivity:** Improving crossings remains a long-term priority. Options discussed included water taxis and pedestrian bridge concepts, though Coast Guard

constraints limit the feasibility of the latter. Near-term focus: enhance existing crossings for pedestrian and bicycle use and connect to systems like the Underline.

- **Flagler Street Gap:** Current improvements stop short of the river. A failing seawall at a city-owned parcel creates a Riverwalk dead end; prior grant funding was lost due to inaction.

Fort Dallas Park and Flagler Worker's House

- **Restoration Needs:** What is the latest from the City regarding funding for stabilization and restoration of the park itself and the historic Flagler Workers House. That structure has been neglected for over 15 years and is at risk of demolition by neglect.
- **Development Pressure:** Adjacent redevelopment increases urgency, given prior acquisition interest.
- **Park Funding:** Millions were committed to renovate Fort Dallas Park as part of the Miami River Bridge redevelopment (Hyatt), but that funding is tied to a future building permit, delaying availability.

Trail System, Maintenance, and Public Safety

- **"Mighty Loop" Concept:** A connected trail system (Underline + Riverwalk) linking Overtown to the Health District is envisioned, though complex to implement.
- **Safety Concerns:** Increased use of unregulated electric bikes presents new risks.
- **Riverwalk Conditions:** Sections (notably near the Hyatt) are deteriorated and hazardous. Current once-weekly cleaning is inadequate; increased frequency is recommended.
- **Miami Circle Site:** Requires updated signage and security presence due to ongoing misuse (illegal parking, encampments, etc.).
- **Homelessness Impact:** Sanitation challenges are closely tied to a lack of shelter capacity. Coordination with the Homeless Trust is needed to address bed availability and service gaps

Water Taxi Service and Funding

- **Service Expansion Opportunity:** A Miami Beach-funded water taxi system creates an opportunity to extend service to and along the Miami River.
- **Implementation Model:** The City can authorize private operators to utilize existing City-owned dock facilities, by applying for marine operating permits, and then let the private operators proceed with options for subsidized or fare-based service.

Next Steps/Considerations/Recommendations:

- Share 3D Downtown Development Map with MRC staff.
- Review prior River Greenway update (Aug 25, 2025) for identified gaps.
- Define water taxi implementation strategy (operator model, procurement process, timeline, funding triggers).
- Advance near-term improvements for pedestrian and bike connectivity across the Miami River.
- Extend and enhance Flagler Street improvements to the Riverwalk from W 1st Ave three blocks west to the Flagler dead-end.

- W Flagler Street dead-end: push the City to repair the collapsing seawall and renovate the open green space. This will also force Casa Neos to open up their Riverwalk section.
- Coordinate with the Homeless Trust and other homeless entities on funding additional shelter capacity and CBD-focused strategies.
- Reassess Riverwalk maintenance standards and service frequency.
- Fort Dallas Park
 - Push the City to advance the historic preservation studies and the work that was done to renovate the historic Flagler Workers House.
 - Prioritize the renovation and activation of the park.
 - Push the City to rebuild the existing docks that were destroyed by Hurricane Irma.

When the DDA's updated Master Plan is drafted, it will be presented to the MRC.

II. Alta Development Presentation Regarding "Harbor Vista Residences" at 555 NW South River Drive

Chairman Murley stated he previously met with Henry Pino, Alta Development, regarding "Harbor Vista Residences" at 555 NW South River Drive which does not require any land use nor zoning amendments. Mr Pino had accepted the invitation to present, but was unable to attend. Attendees reviewed and discussed the Harbor Vista Residences handout which Alta Development distributed to the public from their informational booth at the Free 27th Annual Miami River Riverday. The handout includes illustrative drawings depicting a 12-story residential building. Attendees noted Miami Zoning Code Section 3.11 Waterfront Standards requires a publicly accessible Riverwalk when this site is developed. The handout states, "Marina access for private dockage along 650' feet of boardwalk".

Chairman Murley stated Mr Pino will present detailed plans to the MRC when ready.

III. Update Regarding the "What Up Bridge" App

The "What Up Bridge" App warns users of bridge openings so they are aware not to get stuck in traffic and the best alternate routes depending on the direction of the vessel requiring the opening. The App creator, Allyn Alford, had emailed confirmation of his presentation to the MRC, but wasn't present.

IV. Subcommittee Reports

- a. The Miami River Commission Urban Infill and Greenways Subcommittee's April 22, 2026 public meeting minutes were distributed.
- b. The Miami River Commission Stormwater Subcommittee's March 4, 2026 public meeting minutes were distributed. The MRC watched a Channel 10 News story regarding the following which MRC Chairman Aguirre explained:

Wagner Creek is a canal owned by the City of Miami in both Commissioner Gabela's District in Allapattah and the Health District, and Chairwoman King's District in the historic Spring Garden neighborhood.

Unfortunately, Wagner Creek is amongst the most polluted waterways in the State of Florida. For decades the Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resource Management (DERM) has taken monthly water quality samples from three locations in Wagner Creek, which the overwhelming majority of the time showed massive unhealthy exceedances of Bacteria.

DERM's quarterly report to the Miami River Commission, featuring DERM's monthly water quality sample results. The maximum highest possible bacteria reading on the testing scale is 24,196, and in July, August, and September 2025 there were 6 separate test results with the scale's maximum 24,196 bacteria count, the State of Florida's safe Bacteria standard is not to exceed 130 (*cfu/100mL*) (*colony forming units per 100 ML of water*).

In April, May, and June 2025 there were 4 separate test results of the maximum 24,196 bacteria count, when only 130 is the safe state standard.

In October, November, and December 2024 there were 4 separate test results of the maximum 24,196 bacteria count, when only 130 is the safe state standard.

For decades DERM, the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County Water and Sewer Department, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, etc. have searched for the sources of this excessive bacteria contamination in Wagner Creek via smoke testing, dye testing, 2 multi-agency physical searches, and more, while we continue receiving DERM's monthly water quality sample massive failure results, months after the water samples are actually taken.

While the City of Miami's contracted Scavenger Water Decontamination Vessel provides excellent services along the Miami River and Biscayne Bay, it is unable to navigate beneath Wagner Creek's low fixed Bridges at NW 11 ST, etc., therefore is unable to provide services in the subject area.

Fast Cleaning Solutions LLC (FCS) owns and operates the Bacterial Cleaning Water Machine (BCMW). The BCMW oxygenates the water with ionized air and uses various filters, killing bacteria which makes the water quality safer for both the public and marine life. In addition, separate water quality testing devices sample for six parameters, with results available real time online.

Thankfully Fast Cleaning Solutions LLC operated one BCMW device free of charge for an entire year, from April 2024 to March 2025, in the general area of DERM's Water Quality testing location Wagner Creek 2 (WC02). This Table shows DERM's water quality testing results from location WC02 every month from April 2023 – March 2024, which was before the BCMW device was operating, next to DERM's water quality testing results from the same location every month

from April 2024 – March 2025, while the BCMW device was operating. The E-coli Bacteria reduced by 82%, while the Enterococci Bacteria reduced by 76%.

Thanks to Commissioner Gabela, the City of Miami is considering taking direct action to provide desperately needed direct reduction of unhealthy bacteria violations in Wagner Creek by paying the MRC to deploy 7 BCMW devices in Wagner Creek, plus 2 additional BCMW devices and 3 water quality testing devices, which would cost \$360,000 for 1 year.

V. New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

May 4, 2026 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

Name	Organization	Telephone	Email
William KEDDELL		786 484 4115	wkeddell@gmail.com
Austin Sparber	SFWMD	728-229-7105	asparber@sfwmd.gov
B. Wilson		305.528.2061	Waverace1000@gmail.com
Mark Hellingor	River Landring	305-442-3108	info@Riverlandringmiami.com
Gileno Braton	Spring Garden	3790-4284	on file
Richard Murphy	MRC Spring Garden	786.225.5353	on file
Janet Mestri	Antillean Marine	305-303-6230	janestri@antillean.com
Judith Paul	Spring Garden resident		jpaul703@bellsouth.net
JASON LOPEZ	CLEAN MARINE MANAGEMENT INC	786-399-4044	js2@CLEANMARINEMANAGEMENT.COM
Ken Bryan	Rails to Trails Conservancy	850-264-3067	Ken@rails-to-trails.org
PHIL EVERINGHAM	MRC/MARINE COUNCIL	305 951-9096	pbemsdd@hotmail.com
Jim Murtagh	MRC/Maya Cava	305 568 4881	Jamesmurtagh@mayacava.com
Gabriel Lopez	The Lopez Companies	954-666-924	Gabriel@TheLopezCompanies.com
ARIEL Lopez	The Lopez Companies	3-542-6221	ariello@thelopezcompanies.com

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

May 4, 2026 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

Name	Organization	Telephone	Email
Theodora Long	MRC	3/401-4595	riveroak901@gmail.com
JOHN CORNELL	MRC	(530) 214-1475	johncornell@earthlink.net
Eddie Marti King	Comt Meyers dtaa	305- 67 ⁸⁴⁸ -6884	mayer@miam.gd
Neal Schafers	Miami DDA	305-379-6675	schafers@miamidda.com
GARY GUNNESS	MRMG PCPM	305-924-2847	SERVICE@SOMEONE TODO IT.COM
LESLIE DEL MONTE	ZYSCOVICH	305.450.5307	leslie.delmonte@stratussteam.com
Daniel Guerra	Fortune	305-338-0126	DS@DanielGuerraTeam.com
Paulina Prada	SCS Engineers	786-300-9262	pprada@scsengineers.com
Brett Bibeau	MRC	305 644 0544	brettbibeau@mianirivercommission.org
Horacio Stuart Aguirre	MRC		