

Miami River Commission Public Meeting Minutes July 13, 2026

The Miami River Commission's (MRC) public meeting convened at noon, July 13, 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
Jon Fernandez, designee for City of Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins
William Gonzalez, designee for State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle
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
Esther Evora, designee for Miami-Dade County Member at Large
Phil Everingham, designee for the Marine Patrol
Neal Schafers, designee for Downtown Development Authority
Spencer Crowley, Appointed by City Commission Member at Large
Theodora Long, Appointed by the City Commission Neighborhood Representative

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:

Similar to the City and County, the Miami River Commission does not host public meetings in August. Due to Labor Day, the next public MRC meeting will be held here at noon on September 14.

Eileen Broton commended MRC Director Brett Bibeau, Commissioner Gabela, and the MRC for the funding recently secured to operate 12 machines in Wagner Creek to improve water quality. In addition, Ms Broton applauded Director Bibeau's successful efforts to mobilize residents to speak in favor of Miami River enhancements at recent City Commission meetings.

MRC Vice Chairman Jim Murley provided the following update of the MRC's Voluntary Improvement Plan (VIP). The MRC 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.

The MRC thanks Honorable County Commissioner Bastien for joining us for a cleanup of the County owned property just west of 27 Ave. The MRC watched a video of the Channel 7 News story.

The MRC thanks Commissioner Gabela for joining us for a cleanup in Curtis Park last Thursday July 9. At the next MRC meeting the Channel 77 News Story will be aired.

The MRC thanks the wonderful Hands on Miami Volunteers for picking up garbage along the shoreline in riverfront Curtis Park on June 7, and in Sewell Park on June 14.

II) Discussion Regarding Illegal Charters on the Miami River

The MRC Subcommittee's minutes were distributed stating in part:

"Captain Bob Bijor, Sightseeing Tours Management, stated charters are regulated under Federal Register 33. Currently there is a "Port Miami Harbor Safety Committee", whose next quarterly meeting is May 14 featuring an agenda item "Miami River Congestion". On May 11 Captain Bob hosted a virtual meeting with the U.S. Coast Guard, Port Miami, and The Harbor Safety Committees from Chicago, Portland, California, Centauri Transport and the Miami River Commission. Captain Bob distributed a draft "Miami Harbor Safety Committee Charter and Bylaws which would now include Port Miami River in addition to Port Miami. The draft needs to be voted on and approved by the current Port Miami Harbor Safety Committee.

MRC Director Brett Bibeau stated charters are not allowed to pickup and drop off passengers from properties zoned single family residential, and there are over a dozen riverfront single family homes acting as illegal marinas for illegal charters. Currently DERM does not regulate single family homes, and City and County Code Enforcement should assist with enforcing no illegal marinas operating out of single-family homes. Eddie Enis, riverfront resident in Spring Garden, stated illegal charters hurt riverfront residents quality of life with noise, illegal dumping, illegal parking, etc. in single family residential neighborhoods.

Director Bibeau stated the County Sheriff's office is communicating with Hurricane Cove Marina & Boatyard, regarding accepting the offered free boat slip, and the MRC is advocating for the City Marine Patrol to assign a supervisor needed to fully utilize the free marine patrol slip and office at RMK Merrill Stevens."

City of Miami Police Department Marine Patrol LT Correy Couto, attendees and the MRC reviewed numerous pictures and videos clearly showing the public safety and quality of life problems with illegal charters on the Miami River resulting in 4 fatalities over 2 years, boat accidents, damaged boats, docks and shorelines, increased Manatee threats, 24/7 noise, illegal parking and fights in single family residential neighborhoods, etc.

Frank Visconti, Centauri Transport, stated there were so many illegal charters over Ultra weekend that one crashed into his international shipping vessel under tow, and then due to continued hazards to navigation in Port Miami River the tug boat company refused to move any additional vessels for three days until Ultra ended and the dangerous illegal charter traffic reduced, costing several businesses and clients hundreds of thousands of dollars.

III) Discusssion Regarding Miami River Drawbridge Operations

The following documents were reviewed and discussed:

Federal Register establishing the law which regulates Miami River Drawbridge operations

The MRC's following summary of the Federal Register:

“Monday-Friday

Brickell Bridge:

Morning Rush Hour lockdown, 7:35 – 8:59

Lunch Hour lockdown, 12:05 – 12:59

Evening Rush Hour lockdown, 4:35 - 5:59

In between three lockdown periods, bridge opens only if needed on the hour and half hour (7am – 7pm)

Least likely openings:

7:05 – 7:29

7:35 – 8:59 (Morning Rush Hour lockdown)

9:05 – 9:29

9:35 – 9:59

10:05 – 10:29

10:35 – 10:59

11:05 – 11:29

11:35 – 11:59

12:05 – 12:59 (Lunch Rush Hour lockdown)

1:05 – 1:29

1:35 – 1:59

2:05 - 2:29

2:35 – 2:59

3:05 – 3:29

3:35 – 3:59

4:05 – 4:29

4:35 – 5:59 (Evening Rush Hour lockdown)

6:05 – 6:29

6:35 – 6:59

More likely openings:

7:30

9

9:30

10

10:30

11

11:30

noon

1

1:30

2

2:30

3

3:30

4

4:30

6

6:30

7

South Miami Ave and SW 2 Ave Bridges:

Morning Rush Hour lockdown, 7:35 – 8:59

Lunch Hour lockdown, 12:05 – 12:59

Evening Rush Hour lockdown, 4:45 - 5:59

SW 1 ST, Flagler, NW 5 ST, NW 12 Ave, NW 17 Ave, NW 22 Ave and NW 27 Ave Bridges:

Morning Rush Hour lockdown, 7:35 – 8:59

Evening Rush Hour lockdown, 4:45 - 5:59

“Public vessels of the U.S., tugs, tugs with tows, and vessels in a situation where a delay would endanger life or property are exempt” (33CFR117.305)

The Miami River’s Federal navigable channel is amongst the largest Ports in the State, featuring numerous marine industrial businesses including International shipping, recreational boatyards, marinas, commercial fishing, tug boats, etc., which generate local jobs and international trade.”

The MRC’s previously adopted “Brickell Bridge Action Items - 5/19/17” was reviewed and discussed:

- 1) Strictly enforce the existing Federal Bridge Opening Regulations and enforce all submitted unnecessary opening forms.
- 2) Install pedestrian gates and utilize “white glove” security officers to reduce unnecessarily long openings created by pedestrians who insist on continuing to cross the bridge after the warning signals light up, thus creating longer vehicular traffic delays. Currently the first operational step in opening the bridge for a vessel is closing the vehicular safety gates to stop traffic. After the gates close and before the bridge opens for the vessel, numerous pedestrians and bicycles are knowingly going beneath or over the closed safety gates, and cross the bridge because they don’t want to wait a few minutes for an opening, and in doing so put themselves at risk. This happens during the majority of bridge openings, and the Bridge tender whom must remain in the Bridge house tells violators over a loudspeaker not to cross the bridge which is trying to open, but they continue to cross regardless. The actual time needed for the bridge to be open for the vessel to pass could be equivalent to a long red light, but the dangerously crossing pedestrians and bicycles are doubling the time the cars are stopped for a bridge opening, therefore essentially doubling the resulting vehicular traffic. In addition, place USCG or Marine Patrol Vessels at Brickell Bridge to assist Bridge tenders avoiding and enforcing unnecessary openings.
- 3) Restore the vehicular traffic lanes which FDOT recently removed from the Brickell Bridge. Following a bridge opening, having these vehicular lanes returned would improve flushing through the traffic backup generated during the bridge’s temporary opening.
- 4) Do not allow hotels on the north side of Brickell Bridge to illegally block vehicular traffic lanes in the street for “Valet Parking”, which eliminates 2 needed vehicular lanes and forces all traffic to merge into only one vehicular lane, which creates traffic jams.

- 5) Synchronize the signal light timing and synchronization with Bridge operations, so that after the bridge opens and closes, the adjacent traffic lights should be “green” to facilitate clearing out the vehicular backup.
- 6) Install “Smart Signage,” warning drivers of upcoming bridge openings before they are in bumper-to-bumper traffic, and suggest best alternate routes depending on the direction of vessel on the river. For example, please note the fixed I-95 Bridge ramps ingress and egress is at the same location as the bascule Brickell Bridge.
- 7) Provide final permit for the “What Up Bridge” software application, which provides Bridge opening notifications (emails and or texts). If drivers are aware of a bridge opening, they may take other appropriate actions. FDOT granted a temporary 1-year permit for a successful pilot program, and now a final permit is needed for its continued operations.

The Langam Engineering report on a completed pilot program was conducted and the distributed traffic analysis confirmed that the previously recommended #2 significantly reduces traffic.

The Miami River Commission’s and Representative Diaz letters to FDOT asking to restore the 2 removed vehicular lanes were reviewed (previously recommended #3).

IV. Subcommittee Reports

- a. The Miami River Commission Urban Infill and Greenways Subcommittee’s June 9, 2026 public meeting minutes were distributed.
- b. The Miami River Commission Stormwater Subcommittee’s June 3, 2026 public meeting minutes were distributed.

V. New Business

The public meeting adjourned.

Miami River Commission

Public Meeting

July 13, 2026 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

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July 13, 2026 - 12:00 PM

101 W Flagler, Miami FL - Main Library Auditorium

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