

# **Miami River Commission**

## **Annual Report 2018**



**In 2018 voters overwhelmingly approved another section of the public riverwalk to be constructed by the private sector at no cost to the taxpayers. Recent successes in the Miami River District include construction along another 4 sections of the public Miami River Greenway at “River Landing” featuring 420,000 square feet of retail and 506 residential units, at “One River Point” featuring 402 residential units, 20 hotel rooms and rooftop restaurant, at “Aston Martin Residences” featuring 384 residential units, and at “Miami River Walk” featuring 698 residential units. In addition, renovations are under construction at RMK Merrill-Stevens Boatyard, including a new seawall new infrastructure and a new ship lift.**

**The Miami River Commission approved the following plans in 2018:**

- **Mixed-use redevelopment of the “Miami Riverside Center” featuring the public riverwalk, residential, office, retail and riverfront restaurants**
- **Mixed-use redevelopment featuring public riverwalk, a new hotel, residential, retail and riverfront restaurants**
- **Mixed-use redevelopment on a vacant site in East Little Havana, featuring the public riverwalk, hotel and a riverfront restaurant.**





**HORACIO  
STUART  
AGUIRRE**

# Chair's Report

**KEEPING THE BALANCE** of uses along the historic mixed-use Miami River District is amongst the most important and challenging successes of the Miami River Commission. The proof is in the numbers. The Miami River's shorelines feature public riverwalks, 9 major parks, over 8,612 new residential units (additional 6,757 approved units), 5 major hotels (additional 5 planned hotels with 1,200 new rooms), 21 operating restaurants (additional 23 planned restaurants), 16 historic sites, 25 boatyards and marinas, over a dozen International Shipping Terminals, and other job-generating marine industrial businesses operating along "Port Miami River". International Shipping Terminals provide vital international trade to our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America. Recreational boatyards, marinas, commercial fishing and tug boat basins are highly active. The river is used daily by international shipping vessels, yachts, manatees, dolphins, marlins, and other marine life. This critical balance of uses makes the beautiful Miami River the ideal place to live, work and play in the heart of the City of Miami.

**THE MIAMI RIVER DISTRICT** features wonderful multi-cultural neighborhoods in Downtown, Little Havana, Spring Garden, Overtown, Grove Park, Allapattah, Durham Park, etc. The Miami River District's nine major parks offer every type of recreation including a boat ramp, kayak and paddleboard launch, pools, new playgrounds, barbeques, picnic tables, basketball, tennis and racquetball courts, baseball diamonds, football stadium, track, weights, gym,

community centers, riverwalks for running, walking, biking and fishing, and historic sites such as the 2,000 year old Miami Circle, 1844 Fort Dallas, and the oldest standing home in Miami-Dade County, the 1856 Wagner Homestead.

**THE MRC THANKS THE FOLLOWING** Fiscal Year 2019 funding providers: Miami-Dade County (\$200,000), City of Miami (\$50,000), and private sector advertisers in the MRC's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Miami River Map and Guide, 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Miami River Calendar, and 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Miami Riverday. This funding allows the broad based MRC to continue its work partnering with the public and private sectors to bring significant improvements to the Miami River District. In addition, the MRC thanks long standing board members and Miami River Champions Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, County Commissioner Bruno Barreiro, Daniel O'Keefe, and Roselvic Noguera for their years of volunteer service. The MRC welcomes our newest volunteer board members Governor Ron DeSantis, South Florida Water Management District Chairman Federico Fernandez, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Eileen Higgins, and City of Miami Commissioner Wifredo "Willy" Gort.

**I INVITE YOU TO BRING** family and friends to the Miami River District and enjoy the experience. The Miami River Commission promises that regardless of your individual interests, age, gender, race, or income level, you will find something special to enjoy.

*Horacio Stuart Aguirre*  
**Chairman, Miami River Commission**

## Awards

**"BEST OF MIAMI 2016"** awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau –Miami Today

**"BEST OF MIAMI 2015"** awarded to MRC Urban Infill Subcommittee Chairman Jim Murley –Miami Today

**"BEST OF MIAMI 2014-UNsung HERO"** awarded to MRC Member Ernie Martin –Miami Today

**"PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION"** for volunteer Miami River Greenway beautification events– City of Miami, 2013

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**"BEST OF MIAMI 2011 – TURNING GREEN"** awarded to MRC member Sandy Batchelor –Miami Today

**"BEST OF MIAMI 2011-VISIONARY"** awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau –Miami Today

**"SUSTAINABLE SOUTH FLORIDA AWARDS, GREEN EDUCATION & OUTREACH AWARD" 2011**

**FINALIST** –Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

**"PROCLAMATION OF APPRECIATION"** for volunteer Miami River Greenway beautification events –City of Miami, 2010

**"BEST OF MIAMI – BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE"** awarded to Eric Buermann and Brett Bibeau –Miami Today, 2008

**"AWARD OF MERIT"** awarded to the MRC for its Multimodal Transportation Plan – American Planning Association, 2007

**"THE NEWSMAKER"** awarded to MRC Chair Eric Buermann –Miami Today, 2007

**"BEST BACKSTAGE LEADER"** awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau who was then included in the "Book of Leaders" –Miami Today, 2007

**MIAMI IMAGE AWARD OF 2006** awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau –Realtor Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches

**"BEST OF MIAMI – IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE"** awarded to former MRC Chair Irela Bagué –Miami Today, 2006

**"THE ACHIEVER – MIAMI RIVER'S RENAISSANCE MAN"** awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau – Miami Today, 2006

**"COMMUNITY STEWARD AWARD"** awarded to MRC–1,000 Friends of Florida, 2005

**"BEST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION"** awarded to MRC –Miami Today, 2004

**"MOST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT"** for the Miami River Greenway, Urban Environment League, 2004

**EXCELLENCE AWARD** for the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan, American Landscape Architects, 2003





*In 2018, RMK Merrill-Stevens historic shipyard constructed significant renovations including a new seawall, new sheds, new shiplift, etc. which will be completed in 2019.*



*Aston Martin Residences featuring public riverwalk under construction*



*River Landing under construction, featuring public riverwalk, 420,000 sq ft of retail and 503 residential units.*

## TESTIMONIALS

“ It has been my honor and privilege to serve as a volunteer Miami River Commission board member for the past twenty years. In partnership with the public and private sectors, our team successfully completed major maintenance dredging and environmental cleanup projects in the Miami River, Seybold Canal, Wagner Creek, constructed 6.5 miles of the public Miami River Greenway, and made new riverfront parks.”  
- Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

“I’m very proud to have helped create the Miami River Commission when I was a State Legislator, and then volunteered as a board member for the past over 18 years as a County Commissioner. The Miami River Commission has a proven track record for improving the natural environment, generating jobs, and supporting the mixed-use Miami River District towards achieving its full potential.”  
- Bruno Barreiro

“Rails-to-Trails Conservancy strongly supports the Miami River Commission and its dedication to protecting and enhancing the river. Together, with the City of Miami, Mr. Bibeau and the Commission have quietly pieced together 65 percent of the planned 10-mile greenway along the river. The riverwalk is at the front-line of sea level rise efforts, active transportation, economic development and an important component of the Miami Loop. We appreciate our partnership and shared commitment to enhancing Miami through trails and stewardship.”  
- Keith Laughlin, President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

“I thank the Miami River Commission and the residents of the City of Miami for overwhelmingly voting to approve the mixed-use redevelopment of the Miami Riverside Center, featuring the public Riverwalk, residential, retail, riverfront restaurants, and new income for the City of Miami. The Miami River Commission provided an excellent and fair public forum for the development team, City of Miami, and general public to communicate and plan the best possible project, which directly benefits the entire community.”  
- David Adler, President, Adler Group



## MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY *Dr. Ernest Martin, Chair*

**IN 2018 THE MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY** continued construction, featuring a public pedestrian & bicycle pathway, landscaping, decorative lights, way-finding signage, historic markers, informational kiosks, benches, art installations, and other amenities. In 2018, another 4 sections of the public Riverwalk were under construction by the private sector. Over 6.5 miles of the public Miami River Greenway has been constructed, with an additional planned 3.5 miles to complete.

The MRC appreciates the mutual efforts to implement the *Miami River Greenway Action Plan*, and the cost shares provided to date from multiple public and private funding sources including Congress, State of Florida, Florida Department of Transportation, South Florida Water Management District, Florida Inland Navigation District, City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Downtown Development Authority, and numerous private sector developments.

The MRC thanks the City of Miami and its residents for voting to include the Miami River Greenway in the approved Miami Forever Bond Issue, and the redevelopment of the “Miami Riverside Center.”

## STORMWATER *Sallye Jude, Chair*

**THE STORMWATER SYSTEM** is the leading source of pollution into the Miami River. The Miami River water basin includes a 69-square-mile area of the most densely populated neighborhoods in the State of Florida. All stormwater from this area drains into the Miami River through over one hundred outfalls. The Miami River Commission appreciates Commissioner Eileen Higgins, Mayor Carlos Giménez and the Board of County Commissioners for appropriating \$140,000 for the Scavenger Water DeContamination vessel's services in the Miami River. In addition to removing floating debris and hazards to navigation, the Scavenger Vessel significantly improves water quality by decontaminating 600,000 gallons of water per hour and injecting 150,000 liters of oxygen per hour into the Miami River.

## URBAN INFILL *James Murley, Chair*

**THE MRC'S URBAN INFILL SUBCOMMITTEE** continued efforts to assist implementing various adopted and award-winning plans, including the *Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan*, *Miami River Corridor Multi-Modal Transportation Plan*, *Miami River Greenway Action Plan* and others, all available for downloading at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org).

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMERCE

*Philip Everingham, Chair*

**IN 2018, CONSTRUCTION CONTINUED** at River Landing featuring 420,000 square feet of retail, 506 residential units, and the public riverwalk, construction continued at Aston Martin Residences featuring 384 residential units and the public riverwalk, construction commenced at Miami River Walk Apartments featuring 698 units and the public riverwalk, and renovations are under construction at RMK Merrill-Stevens shipyard, featuring a new seawall, and new ship lift. In addition, the MRC favorably received FDOT's “Miami River Freight Improvement Plan”. Therefore the Miami River District is ripe with mixed-use economic development, commerce and jobs.



*Scavenger 2000 Water De-Contamination Vessel keeping the Miami River clean.*



Free boat rides from Lummus Park's public riverwalk during the 22nd Annual Miami Riverday.



**VOLUNTARY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  
 Frank Balzebre, Chair

**THE MIAMI RIVER VOLUNTARY IMPROVEMENT PLAN** identifies and encourages riverfront parcels to address issues which are potentially detrimental to the River, the environmental quality of the River's attraction as a destination for residents and businesses. In 2018 alone, the plan resulted in 23 major Miami River cleanup volunteer events featuring projects such as litter dumping, invasive species removal, and repairing Riverwalk lights, among others. The MRC thanks Miami-Dade County, the FDOT, private sector, and the public for their hard work bringing these Riverfront areas back to life.

**UPPER RIVER**

**MIDDLE RIVER**

**Shipping and Marine Industrial Zone: Center of the river's trade and industry.**  
 The Miami Intermodal Center links rail, air, freight, transit, pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

**Residential / Mixed Use Zone:** A mix of residential and marine-industrial uses.



**MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY'S TIMELINE**

- 1897**  
Henry Flagler opens six-story Royal Palm Hotel, including first greenway
- 1910**  
Lummus Park created on Miami River
- 1972**  
Parks For People bond issue passed by voters, funds portions of the Miami River Greenway
- 1980s**  
Miami River Greenway section constructed along north shore from Biscayne Bay to NW 2 Avenue
- 1980s**  
Miami River Greenway section constructed along north shore from Biscayne Bay to NW 2 Avenue
- 1998**  
Florida Legislature creates Miami River Commission as a watchdog, advocate and clearinghouse for the river. Miami Circle site discovered
- 2000**  
Florida Legislature passes Miami River Improvement Act
- 2001**  
With the Trust for Public Land, the MRC, City of Miami and Miami-Dade County unanimously approve Miami River Greenway Action Plan
- 2002**  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed
- 2003**  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed



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## RY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (VIP)

public and private sector address various riverfront issues from environmental to operations on the quality of the River, and the recreation for residents, tourists and boaters. The Miami River "VIP" River Greenway Beautification Program includes: tree plantings, removal of illegal parking and graffiti along several miles of river, removing derelict vessels, unclogging stormwater drains, improving navigation and oil sheen, and addressing issues of contamination etc. The Miami-Dade County, City of Miami, FIND, and the fantastic volunteers for their hard work and river improvements to fruition.



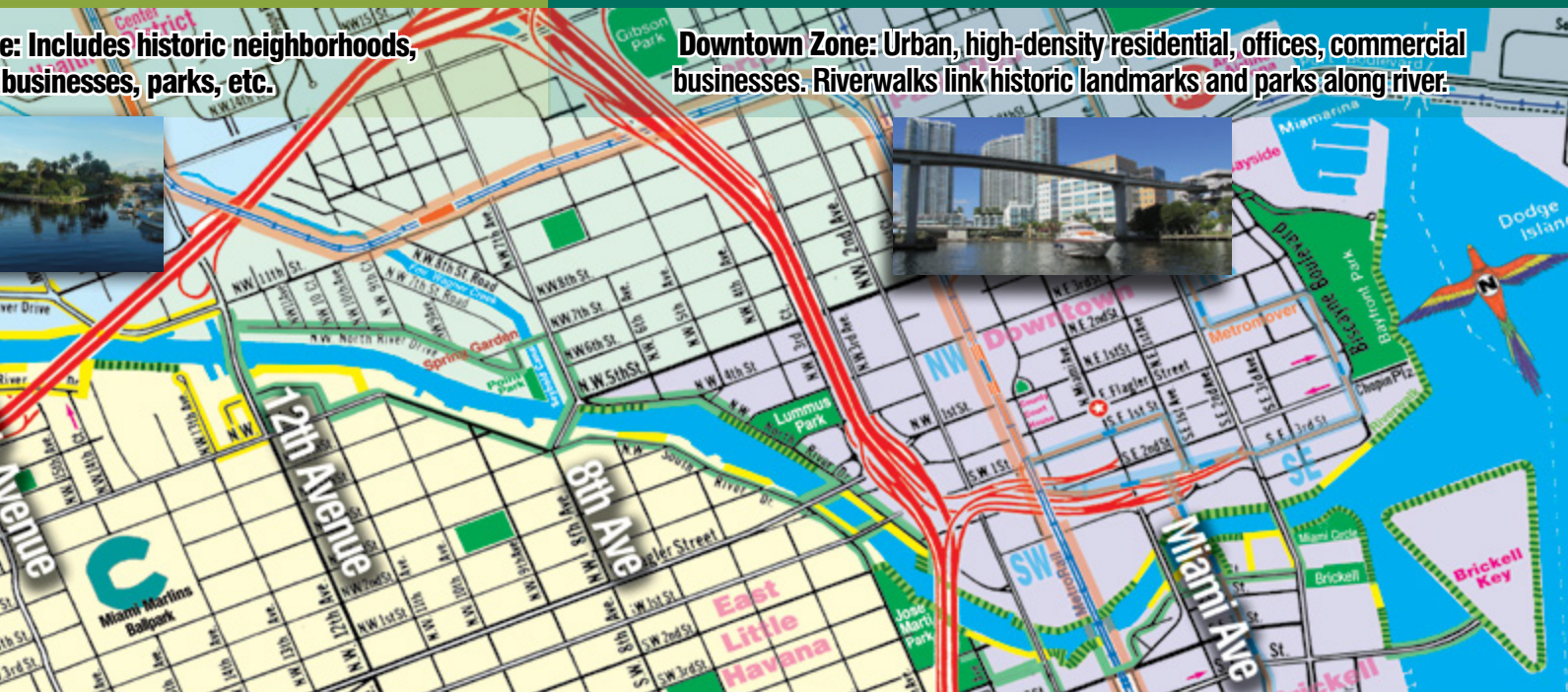
*Mouth of the Miami River including the public Riverwalk in Miami Circle Park, a designated National Historic Landmark.*

## UPPER RIVER

**UPPER RIVER:** Includes historic neighborhoods, businesses, parks, etc.

## LOWER RIVER

**LOWER RIVER:** Downtown Zone: Urban, high-density residential, offices, commercial businesses. Riverwalks link historic landmarks and parks along river.



*Map © 2001 Richard Troutner. All rights reserved.*

2002  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed

**2004**  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed

**2005**  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed

**2006**  
City of Miami adopts "A Vision for Miami's 21st Century Parks & Public Spaces" recommending completion of the Miami River Greenway • MRC hosts Greenways summit • Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed

**2007**  
Miami River Corridor Multi-Modal Transportation Plan created by Metropolitan Planning Organization and MRC recommending completion of the Miami River Greenway • Greenway construction continues

**2008**  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed

**2009**  
City Bicycle Master Plan adopted recommending completion of the Miami River Greenway  
• Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed and additional sections funded and designed for construction in 2010-2011

**2010-2018**  
Sections of the Miami River Greenway constructed





*Volunteers replanting the public riverwalk's community vegetable and fruit garden*

# Get Involved!

The Miami River Commission invites groups and individuals from the community to get involved in improving your Miami River District, and the private sector to help us as sponsors of events. To learn more about what you can do, visit our website at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org) for updates.

The Miami River Commission thanks all of the incredible volunteers of all ages and walks of life who planted, painted murals, picked up litter, removed invasive plants and spread recycled mulch along the riverwalk during 23 major volunteer beautification events in 2018. The MRC is thankful to our growing list of sponsors, partially listed at right, who contributed volunteers, supplies and funding to the “greening” of the river.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Miami Riverday festival is scheduled April 6, 2019, in Lummus Park, 250 NW North River Drive. Just like the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual festival, held April 7, 2018, Miami Riverday features free river boat tours, live music, environmental education, marine expo, historic re-enactors, children’s activities and much more.

All MRC and subcommittee meetings are publicly noticed. Public participation is encouraged. The full MRC usually meets on the first Monday of the month at noon, in the conference room at 1407 NW 7 Street.

## MRC thanks volunteers and sponsors:

[State of Florida](#)

[Miami-Dade County](#)

[City of Miami](#)

[Downtown Development Authority](#)

[One River Point](#)

[Miami Dolphins](#)

[Miami Marlins](#)

[University of Miami](#)

[Hands On Miami](#)

[Florida International University](#)

[Florida Wood Recycling](#)

[Florida Drawbridge](#)

[Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart](#)

[Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce](#)

[Leadership Miami](#)

[Country Day High School](#)



*Looking east: Hurricane Cove Marina, Durham Park neighborhood, Terrazas, Sewell Park, and River Landing under construction.*



Learn more about the Miami River's past, present and future, view reports, plans, public meeting minutes, agendas and more at the informative [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org)



*Antillean Marine international shipping vessel passing public riverwalk in Curtis Park.*

## Miami River Commission Members

**Chair: HORACIO STUART AGUIRRE**  
Representative from environmental or civic organization appointed by the Governor

**Vice Chair: Mr. FRANK BALZEBRE**  
Designee for Miami Dade Mayor:  
**Mayor CARLOS GIMENEZ**

**Florida Governor RICK SCOTT**  
Designee: **MS. PATRICIA "PATTY" HARRIS**

**Mr. LUIS GARCIA**  
Member-at-Large Appointed by the Governor  
Designee: **MR. JOHN MICHAEL CORNELL**

**Rep. KIONNE MCGHEE**  
Chair, Miami-Dade Delegation

**Mayor FRANCIS SUAREZ**  
Mayor of the City of Miami

**Commissioner EILEEN HIGGINS**  
Miami-Dade County Commissioner  
Designee: **Ms. MAGGIE FERNANDEZ**

**Commissioner WIFREDO "Willy" GORT**  
City of Miami Commissioner

**KATHERINE FERNANDEZ-RUNDLE, Esq.**  
Miami-Dade State Attorney  
Designee: **Mr. DAVID MAER, Esq.**

**Mr. FEDERICO FERNANDEZ**  
Chair: South Florida Water Management District

**Mr. BRUCE BROWN**  
Chair, Miami River Marine Group  
Designee: **Mr. RICHARD DUBIN**

**Ms. ALYCE ROBERTSON**  
Downtown Development Authority  
Designee: **Mr. NEAL SCHAFERS**

**Mr. ALFRED SANCHEZ**  
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce  
Designee: **Ms. SANDY O'NEIL**

**Dr. ERNEST MARTIN**  
Neighborhood Representative appointed by the City of Miami Commission  
Designee: **Mr. THOMAS KIMEN III**

**Ms. SALLYE JUDE**  
Neighborhood Representative appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission

**Mr. PHILIP EVERINGHAM**  
Designee of: **MICHAEL KARCHER**, Chair of Marine Council

**Ms. SARA C. BABUN**  
Member-at-Large appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission  
Designee: **Mr. Duber Luzardo**

**Mr. MANNY PRIEGUEZ**  
Member-at-Large appointed by the City of Miami Commission

## Ex-Officio Members:

**CONGRESSWOMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**  
Designee: **Ms. DEBBIE ZIMMERMAN**

**CAPTAIN MEGAN DEAN**  
United States Coast Guard  
Captain of the Port of Miami

Managing Director: **Mr. BRETT BIBEAU**

Designed by: **Toni Kirkland Graphics**

## MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION

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