In 2005, the Miami River Corridor’s mixed-use revitalization progressed with several groundbreakings and landmark achievements. Historic neighborhoods revived, greenways were built, new marine-industrial businesses opened and major redevelopment projects created new downtown riverfront homes.

**BY FALL 2005,** 40 percent of the Miami River maintenance-dredging project was completed, ahead of schedule and under budget. Maintenance dredging commenced in September 2004 at the salinity dam (NW 36 Street) in unincorporated Miami-Dade County, and proceeded east of the 22 Avenue Bridge in the City of Miami, removing 240,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments, in addition to debris including three cars, four boats and 15 handguns.

Maintenance dredging has been the top priority of the Miami River Commission (MRC) since the Florida Legislature created it in 1998. Restoring the river’s 15-foot-deep federal navigable channel allows vessels to fill cargo to full capacity and traverse regardless of tide, therefore increasing international trade, commerce and local employment. In addition, removing the contaminated sediments improves the natural environment of the Miami River and Biscayne Bay.


**THE MIAMI RIVER GREENWAY** broke ground in several sections in 2005, under the leadership of the Trust for Public Land, the City of Miami, Florida Department of Transportation and the private development community. The publicly accessible pedestrian path will feature landscaping, decorative lighting, historical markers, way-finding signage, and other amenities.

In 2005, 1000 Friends of Florida honored the MRC with the “Community Steward Award” for implementing the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan, a blueprint for a mixed-use river community worthy of our stewardship.
The MRC worked to include all interests in the river and its three distinct communities: the marine industrial community of the "upper river" (Salinity Dam to NW 22 Avenue); the historic neighborhoods, Civic Center area, marine industry and parks in the "middle river" (NW 22 Avenue to the NW 5 Street Bridge), and the emerging 24-hour downtown of the "lower river" (NW 5 Street Bridge to Biscayne Bay). The Miami River’s 11 miles of shoreline is sufficient for the river’s mixed uses to co-exist, including the downtown high-density re-development, preserving low density historical neighborhoods, marine industrial businesses and public parks. (See map below).

We have welcomed and promoted public participation in shaping the Miami River community and will continue to do so in the future.

AMONG THE 2005 HIGHLIGHTS:

- Dredging moved forward, ahead of schedule and under budget, with crews finishing their work from the western terminus of navigation to east of NW 22 Avenue, encompassing the entire "upper river" shipping and marine industrial area.

- More than $30 million has been appropriated from the public and private sectors to create the Miami River Greenway, to beautify and link the river’s community. For this work, I would especially thank Lavinia Freeman and the Trust for Public Land; bipartisan help from U.S. Reps. Kendrick Meek, Mario Diaz-Balart and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen; the city, county and MRC conducted a two-year planning process and hosted 42 public hearings to create the award-winning Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan in 2002. The private sector has used this blueprint in planning more than 12,000 mixed-income residential units along the Miami River’s multi-cultural corridor, as downtown becomes an evening destination.

The MRC’s priorities are: completing the maintenance dredging of the Miami River and implementing its strategic plan, titled the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan. Paying for the dredging was the greatest challenge. The local cost share was 80 percent of the $74 million project and therefore not financially feasible. In 1999-2000, the MRC was instrumental in changing that by working with elected and appointed officials to reduce the local cost share for dredging to 20 percent – finally making the project possible.

Under a joint planning agreement, the city, county and MRC conducted a two-year planning process and hosted 42 public hearings to create the award-winning Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan in 2002. The private sector has used this blueprint in planning more than 12,000 mixed-income residential units along the Miami River’s multi-cultural corridor, as downtown becomes an evening destination.

The plan evolves by growing. Of 73 implementation steps (up from 62 in 2004), 61 are either completed or ongoing with significant progress. These include: commencing dredging of the river; development of sections of the Miami River Greenway, in partnership with the Trust for Public Land and the City of Miami; decontamination vessel services; authoring the Energy Efficiency and Water Conservation Report; storm water system retrofits; redevelopment; creation of seven new waterfront parks; increased tree canopy; removal of derelict vessels; environmental education programs; volunteer clean-up and beautification projects; extending the hours of Metromover stations near the river, and expanding the Enterprise Zone economic incentives.

The river consists of three distinct, coexisting communities:

- **UPPER RIVER**: West of NW 22nd Ave. 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 and vehicular traffic.

- **MIDDLE RIVER**: Fifth to 22 Ave. The river travels through a diverse neighborhood, including the Civic Center area, and includes businesses, public parks.

- **LOWER RIVER**: East of the river’s mouth. The lower river is the gateway to Biscayne Bay, featuring recreational boating and living, it is part of an ecosystem that links Lake Okeechobee to Biscayne Bay. For that reason, we are proud to provide the commission with the funding necessary so it can continue its vital work.”
The Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan is a comprehensive and holistic plan for the river, the MRC looks forward to collaborating with the City of Miami to bring it into harmony with "Miami 21," while protecting the interests of all communities on the river. The plan was adopted as MRC's strategic planning agreement with the MRC, City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, and Miami River stakeholders. The plan was recognized by the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects with an "Award of Excellence." In 2003, the Florida Legislature recognized the MRC's Infill Plan with the "Community Steward Award." In 2005 the 1000 Friends of Florida recognized the MRC's success in implementing the plan with the "Community Steward Award."

The plan envisions the river in three distinct sections, described in greater detail on the map at the bottom of Page 3. The "Miami 21" plan for a comprehensive approach to zoning and development divides the city into four quadrants, three of which include sections of the river. Since the Miami River

New developments – such as Brickell On the River, in the "lower river" – include public riverwalks to link the greenways on the river's banks.

The public and private sectors have requested hundreds of copies of the plan to assist their planning and river improvement initiatives. The plan is available for downloading at www.miamirivercommission.org.

The Economic Development and Commerce Working Group (EDC) welcomes Bruno Barreiro as co-chair, joining fellow co-chair Megan Kelly. On behalf of the MRC, the EDC coordinated the September 2004 Marine Industries Symposium.

During 2005, the EDC worked on bringing the action items identified during the Symposium to fruition, and the following progress was made:

- Miami-Dade County adopted a resolution to create a Miami River "Boat Slip Bank" to protect existing dockage. This prevents a net loss of existing boat slips as areas around downtown are redeveloped, to ensure the continued viability of the recreational marine industry, which is a vital part of the river’s character.

- To meet the demands of this growing population, the Infill Plan recommended a Miami River Corridor Multi-Modal Transportation Study, which will be conducted in 2006. This study will include plans to alleviate traffic congestion through water taxi/water bus, transit systems, light synchronization, greenways, tunnels and more.

- The United States Coast Guard deemed the NW Fifth Street Bridge an illegal structure upon its construction in 1929. The problematic bridge was struck by vessels under tow twice in the first half of 2005, and 14 times over the decade, sometimes knocking out service for months during repair, which has been placed in the up position until its replacement is scheduled.

The bridge was deemed an illegal structure because it is built too close to the federal navigable channel, creating strong currents, while bascule bridge spans overhang fenders in the open position.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has agreed the MRC’s recommendation to replace the 76-year-old Fifth Street Bridge. We commend the FDOT for approving more than $44 million in 2004 to replace the bridge, fast-tracking the construction in 2006.

- The Miami-Dade County Planning and Zoning Department drafted the MRC-recommended Marine Industrial Zoning Ordinance, to be considered by the Board of County Commissioners in 2006.

- The Florida Legislature adopted the "Working
neighboring neighborhoods with the riverfront and its 10 public parks.

The Miami River Greenway Action Plan in full is available on our website at www.miamirivercommission.org

Scavenger 2000 de-pollution vessel, which removes floating debris, while treating the water through a decontamination system and oxygenating the Miami River.

by installing new solid waste interceptor baskets within the water basin. A grid protects the system with baskets that keep debris from entering the Miami River and Wagner Creek through the stormwater system's underground culverts.

The subcommittee is coordinating agency partner's efforts to create total maximum daily load (TMDL) water quality parameters, and a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP), first for Wagner Creek and then for the Miami River. In addition, the stormwater subcommittee is recommending the dredging of Wagner Creek and the Seybold Canal, which the City of Miami has committed to completing.

Miami-Dade County appropriated $100,000 in its Fiscal Year 2006 budget for the continued services of the Miami River Marine Group (MRMG), a consortium of private marine industrial businesses on the river. The MRMG turned over its $1 million video surveillance system to the Miami Police Department, which now has 24/7 access to view real-time images from the cameras placed at all Miami River shipping terminals.

In 2005, the MRMG collaborated with city and county marine patrols and received a $1.6 million grant from the Department of Homeland Security to buy two patrol boats and a mobile diving unit, for use on the Miami River. In addition, the MRMG was awarded more than $2 million in Department of Homeland Security grants in 2003-2004 to help bring the river's private international shipping terminals into compliance with the nation's new Homeland Security laws.

The Miami River's 23 Coast Guard-certified shipping terminals have participated in

In a growing community prone to flooding and hurricanes, stormwater management is vital for its ecological health. The main source of pollution into the Miami River and Biscayne Bay is an antiquated stormwater drainage and sanitary sewer system, serving the 69-square-mile Miami River water basin.

TO SOLVE THAT PROBLEM, THE CITY OF MIAMI did a major part of implementing the MRC Stormwater Subcommittee's Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Report, by installing new solid waste interceptor baskets within the water basin. A grid protects the system with baskets that keep debris from entering the Miami River and Wagner Creek through the stormwater system's underground culverts.

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The MRC coordinated the Ninth Annual Miami Riverday in March 2005, when we launched the "Miami River...Works for Me" PR campaign. The Tenth Annual Miami Riverday will be held March 25, 2006, at Jose Marti Park. The free festival celebrates the unique environment, heritage and culture of Miami’s working river.

The MRC coordinated and sponsored volunteer Miami River beautification and clean-up projects this year, including the East Little Havana Riverside Garden, North River Drive between NW 24th and NW 33rd Streets, and along South River Drive with a sunset mural, designed by renowned local artist Xavier Cortada, beneath the 27 Avenue Bridge.

We thank Miami-Dade County for its renewed funding to continue providing thousands of students with environmental and historical Miami River boat tours.
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.