

Miami River Commission's Stormwater Subcommittee Public Meeting Minutes December 4, 2024

The Miami River Commission (MRC) Stormwater Subcommittee's public meeting convened December 4, 2024, 10 AM, 1407 NW 7 ST. The attendance sheet is attached.

- I. "Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Plan" Agency Quarterly Implementation Progress Reports** – Ms. Juliet Ruggiero, Miami Dade County's Department of Environmental Resource Management's (DERM), provided a report covering July – September 2024. The most alarming water quality violations were detected at Wagner Creek testing station WC03 in July and September had enterococci Bacteria of 3,130 (cfu/100ml) when the safe water quality standard is only 130 (cfu/100ml).

Christine Wartman, Miami-Dade County Water & Sewer Department presented an excellent and detailed PowerPoint regarding the Connect 2 Protect Program, disconnecting septic sewer tanks and connecting homes to the County's sewer system which improves water quality. Ms. Wartman presented a map of an area within the Miami River Water Basin where the homes currently have septic tanks, which the County completed the design and has over \$1 million secured to disconnect their septic tanks and connect all the homes to the County's Sewer System free of charge. Ms. Wartman kindly agreed to present at the full MRC's January 6, 2025 public meeting, noon, downtown Library auditorium, 101 W Flagler.

Galo Pacheco, M. Sc., P.E. Interim Chief, Water and Wastewater Division, Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources (RER), Division of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) presented an excellent and detailed PowerPoint titled, "RER-DERM Smart Cover Pilot Study. Smart Covers on sanitary sewer manholes detect high levels of sanitary waters in the pipes and sends an alarm to the County and subject municipality so they may address the problem before a sanitary sewer overflow from the manhole into the Miami River, similar to the 2 sanitary spills Director Bibeau recently reported in Little Havana. Mr. Pacheco stated Phase I installed 192 Smart Covers and Phase II installed 234 Smart Covers, for a total of 426 current Smart Covers County Wide. Smart Covers also detects problematic infiltration, which the Department then eliminates. In only 1 year the new system detected 99 events which the Department repaired and therefore avoided sewage overflows, including 1 on Wagner Creek detected only 3 months after it was installed. The County's sewage lines get clogged with fats, oils, grease, rocks, etc. Mr. Pacheco kindly agreed to present at the full MRC's January 6, 2025 public meeting, noon, downtown Library auditorium, 101 W Flagler.

- II. Discussion Regarding 169 NW South River Drive** – Attendees discussed the City of Miami owned crushed stormwater outfall, located beneath the County owned 169 NW South River Drive. The County riverfront parcel is a sanitary sewer easement where a sewer line tunnels beneath the Miami River to the sewage pump station on the opposite side of the River.

III. Discussion Regarding Collapsing Shoreline Along South River Drive West of 27 Ave

The MRC's October public meeting minutes state:

"NW South River Drive from 27 Ave to 20 ST proceeds along a portion of the Miami River which has an unconsolidated shoreline, and several large and growing areas where the shoreline is collapsing into the River. When one of several large sink holes previously grew past the street's steel safety barrier, the City of Miami placed temporary plastic barricades around the hole to keep pedestrians and cars from falling into the Miami River. As the shoreline sink hole(s) grew larger over time, the ground under one of the plastic barriers fell into the River, along with the temporary barricade. Now the large sink hole (one of several) is slightly into the actual street's paved asphalt, and erosion has hollowed out under a portion of the street, where there is no longer solid ground beneath a portion of the street's asphalt. School buses etc. drive on this street (which has no sidewalks, no drainage, no curb and gutter, etc.) On March 6, 2023 the MRC adopted a unanimous resolution stating in part, "encouraging the City of Miami to apply for a TAP (FDOT – TPO) grant or seek a State / Federal cost share / earmark to repair the additional 2 adjacent shoreline collapses, while constructing a public Riverwalk and new stretch of the riverfront portion of South River Drive from NW 20 ST to NW 27 Ave, featuring landscaping, decorative lighting, etc.

The eastern most section of the subject collapsed shoreline is around a broken stormwater outfall (owned by FDOT) which drains 27 Ave. During the MRC's March 6, 2023 public meeting FDOT representatives presented construction engineering documents to repair this collapsed area, while planning to reconstruct a small portion of NW South River Drive (still with no sidewalks, no drainage, no curb and gutter, etc.) The distributed MRC Urban Infill and Greenways subcommittee's September 23, 2024 public meeting minutes with this item on the agenda state, "The FDOT representatives stated the City of Miami indicated they maintain this portion of South River Drive, but do not own it, and the City granted a permit for the planned FDOT repair. The City of Miami clarified that the permit issued for the FDOT collapsed shoreline restoration project was issued for work and Maintenance of Traffic within the City right-of-way (25 feet from Southerly R/W line of the Miami Canal to the south).

Attendees reviewed and discussed several maps and plats previously emailed from the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, and or SFWMD. For the eastern half of the subject riverfront portion of NW South River Drive (east of the stone bridge over tributary), the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County Representatives stated they believe South River Drive and the shoreline are part of the Miami River ROW, and therefore owned by SFWMD. Armando Vilaboy, SFWMD, provided numerous titles etc. supporting SFWMD's belief that they only own the water in the subject area, and no land. Mr. Vilaboy indicated if SFWMD is wrong, and the City and County are correct in that SFWMD indeed owns the shoreline and this portion of South River Drive, SFWMD does not own or reconstruct streets therefore would be unable to assist with the needed project, but SFWMD would be willing to provide ownership of the subject area to the City free of charge. Ms. Molina, Miami-Dade County, stated since the City has been maintaining the subject portion of South River Drive, therefore the City could claim ownership from SFWMD. The City clarified that the City only has maintenance responsibilities within its right of way. Ms. Molina agreed to research the amount of impact fees the County recently collected from the immediate areas 3 large

developments which are currently under construction, and if those impact fees may be used for the subject project. City of Miami Public Works Director Santana indicated he will be discussing these issues in the future with the City Manager.

City of Miami Public Works Director Santana stated the City of Miami owns the western half of the subject riverfront portion of South River Drive (west of the stone bridge over the tributary) in addition to 4 City of Miami owned riverfront folios which are managed by the City of Miami Parks Department. Director Santana suggested the MRC contact City of Miami Assistant City Manager Barbara Hernandez, whom oversees the Parks Department, as they are leading the City's efforts to repair the 2 large and growing collapsed portions of the shoreline in these City owned riverfront folios, and Public Works will coordinate with the Parks Department to include reconstructing this City owned portion of South River Drive in the subject future City of Miami project.

In addition to the TAP (FDOT / TPO) grant opportunity, attendees noted the subject project ("repair the additional 2 adjacent shoreline collapses, while constructing a public Riverwalk and new stretch of the riverfront portion of South River Drive from NW 20 ST to NW 27 Ave, featuring landscaping, decorative lighting, etc.") is a good fit for a large Federal grant."

Attendees reviewed and discussed a new color-coded aerial exhibit prepared by the MRC, showing the subject area and noting ownership of the 4 connecting areas. Attendees noted since the City of Miami owns a 25' wide easement between the private properties and the street, therefore there is sufficient space to shift the street towards the upland, which increases the space for the public Riverwalk. Attendees noted there is a new residential development under construction in the subject area, with another planned development in planning, therefore the number of pedestrians and vehicles will be increasing. Jim Murley noted the following next four steps to bring this MRC recommendation to fruition:

- 1) Resolve Ownership
- 2) Design
- 3) Funding including City Applying for grants
- 4) Construction

The MRC continues to recommend enforcing the shoreline ordinance by making expedited emergency repairs to the collapsed shoreline and encouraging the City of Miami to apply for a TAP (FDOT – TPO) grant, Federal Grant, or seek a State / Federal cost share / earmark to construct a public Riverwalk featuring a new seawall, and a new stretch of the riverfront portion of South River Drive from NW 20 ST to NW 27 Ave, featuring landscaping, decorative lighting, drainage, curb and gutter, etc."

IV. Discussion Regarding Collapsing Shoreline Along Wagner Creek South of NW 20 ST
Carolina Zamora, City of Miami, presented the following: "Project Scope: Wagner Creek Canal embankment stabilization between NW 20 St and NW 19 St and restoration including all impacted adjacent roads, any other impacted infrastructure, lighting, and landscaping. Construct a new sidewalk path along the west side of the Wagner Creek Canal from NW 20th Street to NW 15th Avenue and on the east side of the Creek connecting NW 15th Avenue to NW 20th Street, adjacent to the impacted area to be restored by the shoreline stabilization improvements."

Ms. Zamora stated the project has \$1.6 million secured and is expecting a \$2.3 million resilience grant to hopefully be awarded in 2025. The project's Technical Memo Design is estimated to be complete in April 2025.

V. Discussion Regarding Collapsing Shoreline at NW North River Drive and NW 25 Ave
MRC Managing Director Bibeau reported the City owned shoreline at NW North River Drive and NW 25 Ave around a City owned stormwater outfall is collapsing into the Miami River.

VI. Update Regarding FDEP's "Miami River Basin Stormwater Management" Grant Award - MRC Director Bibeau thanked FDEP for awarding the MRC's submitted application for \$500,000 in grant funding from the State's FY 23-24's \$20 million for improving water quality in the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve, by increasing frequency of vacuum truck services in stormwater manholes along the Miami River, landside garbage pickups, and landscaping i.e. removal invasive plant species along the Miami River. The stormwater system was identified as a source of pollution in the County's recent helpful Miami River Water Quality Assessment, which was reviewed during a previous MRC Stormwater Subcommittee public virtual workshop. In 2023 the MRC removed estimated 4,680 cubic yards of garbage (30 cubic yard dumpster filled three times per week) from the Miami River Basin.

VII. New Business

Attendees discussed Baffle Boxes and Downstream Defender Systems, which are designed to improve water quality in stormwater entering the Miami River, for example the Marlins Stadium across the street from the Miami River includes them and there are several in Miami Beach. Ms. Maria Molina, Miami Dade County Department of Public Works, stated they are not perfect as they need to be serviced with a vacuum truck every 3 months. Ms Molina stated in September Miami Dade County adopted a new code regarding impervious services which requires a 150% improvement in storm water quality before it is discharged into a waterway.

The next quarterly public MRC Stormwater Subcommittee meeting is scheduled March 5, 2025.
10 AM, 1407 NW 7 ST.

The public meeting adjourned.

Miami River Commission's Stormwater Subcommittee

Public Meeting

December 4, 2024 - 12:00 PM

1407 NW 7 ST, Miami, FL

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