



MIAMI RIVER
CORRIDOR
URBAN INFILL PLAN

prepared for
Miami River Commission, City of Miami, and Miami-Dade County



MIAMI - DADE



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INTRODUCTION

This section of the plan provides specific recommendations for protecting maritime uses along the Miami River as well as encouraging responsible expansion of recreational boating and water based transit. The Miami River is a transportation corridor for both the marine industry and recreational boats. The water-dependent activities along the River support a range of sailing and motor vessels of all types and sizes, contributing to the economy as well as the maritime character of the River. In order to provide continued service to these maritime users, the provision of a sustained and diverse boat slip inventory along the Miami River is necessary. The Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization has begun a waterways transportation study that will look at opportunities to establish commuter boat and water taxi service to relieve roadway congestion.

The direct economic impact of the mega yachts repair and maintenance at boatyards in the tri-county areas in 1998 was \$199 million. The marine shipping industry along the Miami River alone transports over \$4 billion of goods annually. There is clear justification to protect and enhance the industrial land uses and docking facilities for these types of crafts along the Miami River. Additionally, during the opportunities and constraints portion of this study, six planned residential and mixed-use development projects in the lower and middle river were identified. These projects will create demand for smaller scale recreational watercraft access and dock facilities. Existing slips may generally be rebuilt or renovated, but due to limitations associated with submerged land use, navigation, or environmental requirements, it is sometimes difficult to expand or build new marinas or docks. Recommendations for watercraft transportation are as follows:

Maintaining Existing Maritime Uses: Zoning regulations and procedures for seeking variances should require that water-dependent and water-related land uses be maintained on parcels with water access. Incentives, such as reduced fees or expedited review of applications, could be offered for development proposals that incorporate existing vessel docks and dry storage. A boat slip inventory should be conducted to determine the number and type of existing boat slips available along the Miami River. The purpose of this inventory would be to establish a target "level of service" for water transportation and vessel support. In the event that existing docking or vessel storage facilities are not retained during redevelopment, the inventory could also be used to track slips that might be available to reallocate to another suitable location.

Water Bus: The initial recommendation is to fund a water bus service to operate in the lower river. Such a vessel could stop

to pick up or drop off passengers at existing docks with public access, or at new courtesy docks as permitted. As development expands to the middle river service would expand to serve those areas. The long term vision for water bus service is to provide service for the entire river and link to other local destinations such as Coconut Grove, Miami Beach and the Port of Miami. In the future the water bus could provide service from the Miami Intermodal Center to the Port of Miami, allowing cruise passengers to arrive in Miami and enjoy the Miami River and its destinations on the way to the cruise terminal. The operation of a water bus service should not conflict with marine industrial activities.



A low profile water bus providing tours on River Day.

New Boat Slips: Opportunity for construction of new boat slips on the Miami River may be limited by submerged land ownership, navigation constraints or environmental issues. The state-approved Manatee Protection Plan for Miami-Dade County recommends new or expanded ship terminals or large (>100 feet) vessel facilities, as well as new slips for residential developments or courtesy docks, with limits on the density of motorboats. Currently, there is a general commitment from all parties that the existing baseline number of slips as described in the Manatee Protection Protection Plan shall remain. It may be possible to allow an even greater number of motorboat slips or density at a particular location without increasing overall impact to manatees in the River, if slips that were given up or were no longer used elsewhere could be "transferred" or reallocated. This approach could preserve the maritime character of the Miami River without sacrificing manatee protection or other environmental goals. The feasibility of such a procedure should be assessed, taking into consideration the inventory described above along with legal and regulatory requirements. It is implicit in this recommendation that manatee protection and boat dockage are to be maintained or enhanced.