

OPINION

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Local perspectives

• MIAMI

MARINE STADIUM GETS A BOOST

No doubt Mayor Tomás Regalado has a lot on his to-do list, but one thing we hope gets accomplished on his watch is restoring the Miami Marine Stadium. An analysis released this week makes that more feasible.

The engineering analysis says — with a big caveat — that the stadium could be repaired for \$5.6 million, far less than previous estimates. The caveat is that engineers weren't able to analyze pilings in Biscayne Bay that support the structure. If they need repair, the cost would rise. The engineers advise finding out more about the pilings before doing anything further.

Mayor Regalado is an enthusiastic supporter of renovating the amphitheater. With the city being strapped for cash, however, he's wisely looking to find preservation grants from state, federal and private sources. But there is at least one other step he can take to ensure the stadium's future: Keep it to its original intent.

While on the surface it looks pretty bad, what with the city's 18 years of neglect and being defaced with graffiti, the stadium's unique design still impresses. Part of the iconic look known as MiMo, for Miami Modern, the amphitheater's design by architect Hilario Candela makes it a treasure.

The 7,000-seat stadium was given historic status last year by the Dade Heritage Trust. But the city is appealing the designation because it wants to put a marina in the stadium's water basin. The mayor should have the city drop its appeal. A marina would spoil the historic nature of the amphitheater and its surroundings and ambience.

Many a South Floridian has happy memories of the marine stadium. It has been home to everything from rollicking Jimmy Buffett concerts to religious sunrise services. If Mr. Regalado brings the stadium back to life, he'll have a lot of grateful fans — and the city will have a unique venue back in business.