

OPINION

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Local perspectives

• MIAMI

MARINE STADIUM GETS COUNTY BOOST

If it's true that money attracts money, things might be looking up for the iconic but forlorn Miami Marine Stadium. To its disgrace, the city allowed the waterside outdoor venue to deteriorate after it was damaged by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. The stadium requires between \$5.6 million and \$8.5 million worth of basic repairs.

To get things rolling, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Carlos Gimenez this month got fellow commissioners to approve \$3 million from the county's voter-approved general obligation bond program for stadium renovation. Wisely, the money comes with a few strings attached.

To collect it, Miami has to present a complete plan for the stadium's renovation as well as a plan for how it will be used and managed. The city must also show that it has enough money to complete the rehab work.

Miami Mayor Tomás Regalado supports renovation, but the city doesn't have the money to back up that support. Mr. Regalado said the \$3 million would be seed money to leverage donations from other government sources — the state's preservation fund, for instance — and private donors. He also said the city will have the required plans ready in 18 months.

All good, as long as the city sticks to its commitment. The stadium, built in 1964, is considered an architectural and engineering masterpiece. The architect was Miami's Hilario Candela.

After the city let it fall into disrepair, there was talk around City Hall of using the land for a pricey marine-related development. Fortunately, the stadium has many supporters. A group called Friends of the Miami Marine Stadium fought City Hall, successfully it appears, and persuaded the city's preservation board to declare the structure a protected historic site.

Let's hope the county's \$3 million acts as the cash magnet it was intended to be.