

TO: Miami Beach Mayor and Commissioners
FROM: Adam Ganuza, Executive Director, The Rhythm Foundation
DATE: May 28th, 2025
RE: Miami Beach Bandshell Management Agreement Renewal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This memo details the remarkable transformation of the Miami Beach Bandshell under The Rhythm Foundation's (TRF) management since 2014. It highlights the venue's evolution from an underutilized space to a nationally recognized cultural landmark, marked by significant growth in programming, attendance, and economic impact. The memo emphasizes TRF's success in securing grant funding, investing in facility upgrades, and enhancing the Bandshell's national and international profile. However, it also points to the growing disparity between rising operating expenses and flat city contributions. To ensure the Bandshell's continued success and to fully leverage recent infrastructure investments, TRF requests a new 9-year management agreement and an additional \$200,000 annual contribution from the City of Miami Beach. This increased funding will drive future operations, further innovation, expand community programs, and deliver a substantial return on investment for the city.

BACKGROUND

On April 23, 2014, the City issued Invitation to Negotiate No. 2014-215-LR for Band Shell Management Services. On September 10, 2014, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2014-28722, authorizing the administration to negotiate with The Rhythm Foundation (TRF), as the top-ranked proposer pursuant to the ITN, for the management and operation of the facility (then referred to as the "North Shore Band Shell").

The City entered into a Management Agreement with TRF for an initial term of two years, with the option of up to three additional one-year terms. The agreement included an annual contribution from the City towards the operation of the facility.

On June 5, 2019, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2019-30846 accepting the recommendation of the City Manager waiving the 5/7th vote, the competitive bidding requirement, finding such waiver to be in the best interest of the City, and approving and authorizing the City Manager to execute a management agreement between the City and TRF for management of the City's North Shore Band Shell, for a period of five years, with two successive two-year renewal options.

On May 10, 2024, a renewal of bid waiver agreement pursuant to Resolution No. 2019-30846 for the management of the Miami Beach Band Shell by TRF was completed, renewing the agreement under the same terms, conditions, and pricing set forth in the agreement for two years.

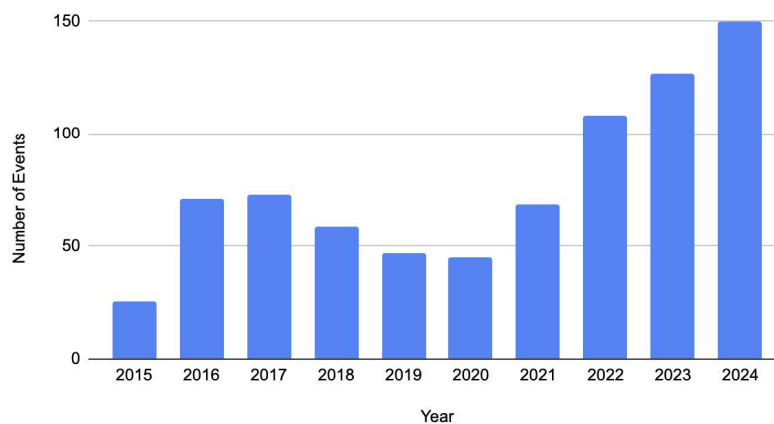
ANALYSIS

From underutilized facility to cherished local gem

The Miami Beach Bandshell has grown exponentially since TRF assumed management of the facility. What was once an underutilized facility has turned into a nationally-recognized and locally-cherished performing arts space and cultural anchor. Since 2015, the Bandshell has seen roughly 6X growth in the number of programs and 9X growth in attendance.

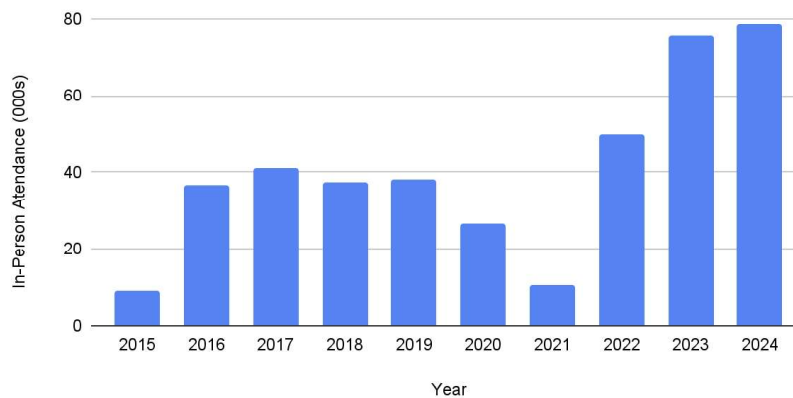
This growth was driven by work produced by TRF alongside our non-profit and commercial partners. TRF works with a network of over 50 local arts nonprofits to present high-quality productions at a fraction of the cost of comparable venues in the area. Many events are completely free and open to the public. Programming adheres to strict curatorial guidelines, and are a reflection of TRF's mission to foster international cultural exchange through the arts. In 2024, the Bandshell hosted events featuring artists from 25 countries and performances in nine languages.

Miami Beach Bandshell Utilization



Miami Beach Bandshell In-Person Attendance

excludes virtual audiences



This work resonates with our local communities. In 2016 and again in 2023, the Bandshell was named “Best Live Music Venue” by the Miami New Times, a recognition earned through thousands of votes by the publication’s readers. In 2021, the Miami Beach Bandshell was awarded Time Out Miami’s “Sustainable Venue of The Year”, recognizing its commitment to environmentally conscious practices. The internationally published TimeOut Magazine also recognized the Bandshell as “Best Live Music Venue” in 2024. During the 2025 Super Bowl, TRF was featured in a statewide advertisement for Google, highlighting the power of the arts and its importance to the Miami Beach community.

Direct feedback from our audience corroborates these recognitions. The Bandshell has about 1,900 reviews on Google, with an overall score of 4.7 out of 5. That is on par with the Arsht Center and the Moss Center, and ahead of the Fillmore Miami Beach and Bayfront Amphitheater.

In 2017, the City of Miami Beach honored Clark Douglas Burris by naming the stage at the Bandshell after him. Burris was a highly esteemed music teacher at Miami Beach High School for over 35 years and the founder of the Miami Beach Rock Ensemble, recognized as the first-ever high school rock band. This act of naming serves as a tribute to Burris's profound and enduring impact on the community, further integrating the Bandshell into the cultural heritage of Miami Beach.

In 2022, the Rhythm Foundation worked closely with City Staff to rename the facility “The Miami Beach Bandshell” and petition for national and local recognition for its unique architecture. The Bandshell was officially recognized and protected by the City of Miami Beach as a historic site and designated a National Historic Landmark by the US Department of the Interior. This prestigious recognition signifies the highest level of acknowledgment for historical and architectural importance at the national level within the United States. The facility was also included into the National Register of Historic Places.

The Bandshell has a growing national and international profile

The impact of the work of the Bandshell extends far beyond its circular walls. Through the creation of original media recorded at the venue, powered by recent investments in its technological infrastructure, the Bandshell experience is now available to audiences around the globe. We have a growing digital presence; over 50,000 followers on social media, internationally distributed live streams of concerts, and an upcoming original television series to be broadcast on PBS nationwide.

All this helps to further Miami Beach’s identity as a cosmopolitan and global center for arts and culture, while simultaneously moving it away from a superficial nightlife image.

The Bandshell is an economic driver of North Beach.

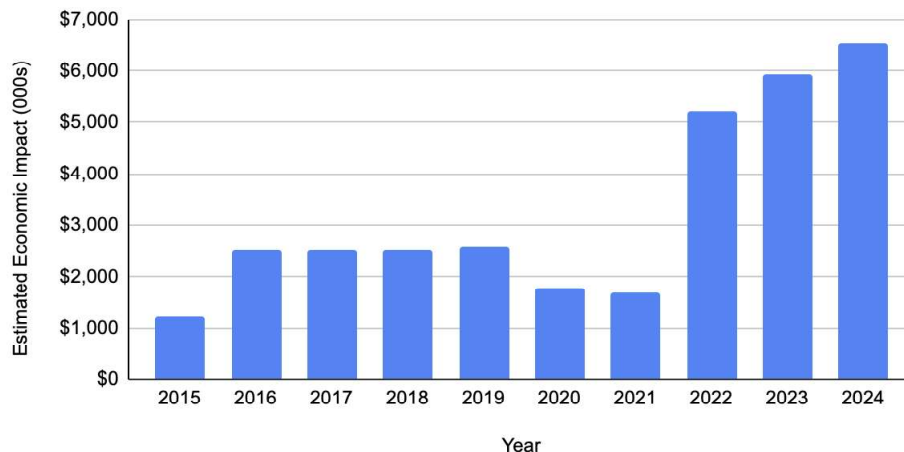
Americans for the Arts is the leading national arts advocacy organization. They created the *Arts & Economic Prosperity Calculator*. Now in its sixth iteration, this tool is the most broadly accepted method to estimate the economic impact of nonprofit arts and culture organizations.

Its empirically-tested estimations are generally conservative. The economic impact figures presented are generated using that tool.

Since 2015, the Miami Beach Bandshell has directly contributed \$32.5M into the local economy. Data shows a clear post-pandemic boom. In 2024, the Bandshell contributed an estimated \$6.5M into the local economy.

Miami Beach Bandshell Economic Impact

as estimated by the Arts and Economic Prosperity Calculator 6



The City of Miami Beach and TRF have invested heavily in the Bandshell.

The Miami Beach Bandshell has also been the recipient of significant grant funding, indicating external validation and investment in its future. In 2021, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awarded a grant of \$1.5M to TRF. This funding was used to upgrade the Bandshell's technology, with the aim of transforming it into a state-of-the-art virtual performance space.

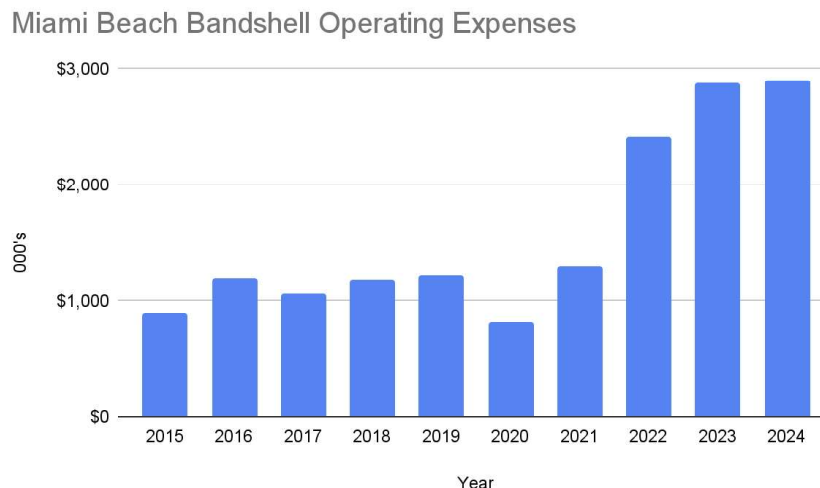
TRF has made significant investments into the facility beyond the Knight grant. In total, TRF has raised and invested \$6.2M into the upgrades and operations of the Miami Beach Bandshell. Over the same time period, the City invested \$5.5M in significant capital upgrades, notably the circular canopy and seating systems installed in 2020. Upcoming CMB capital contributions are the Phase 2 Canopy and GO Bond expansion of the “back of house” support facilities, which demonstrate the City's long term commitment to this unique cultural anchor.

A case for increased City contribution towards operations

The explosive growth of the Miami Beach Bandshell, especially post pandemic, has come with an associated increase in the operating expenses necessary to run the facility to a standard becoming of a National Historic Landmark and cultural anchor in Miami Beach. Technical production support and operations competence have been critical to our recognition and acceptance within the music industry and cultural community. Operating costs surged from about \$901K in 2015 to \$2.89M in 2024. This is due to many factors including, but not limited to,

much higher utilization of the facility, sharp jumps in local cost of living, increased need for high-skilled technical personnel, and overall increased costs given inflation.

The city contribution towards those operating expenses, however, has remained relatively flat. In 2015, that contribution was \$45,000. Ten years later, the city contribution is \$51,158, a 14% increase despite the 221% increase in operating expenses.



This stagnant City contribution, while deeply appreciated, hampers TRF's ability to fully leverage the potential of the venue to become the leading performing arts space in Florida and a widely recognized emblem of Miami Beach. For example, the recent technical infrastructure investments made in the venue require highly skilled, and costly, labor to maintain and operate. An increased operating contribution from the City would give TRF a way to sustainably increase our usage of the projection mapping tech to more consistently present digital public art on the canopy on evenings where there is no event happening. Another example would be to support TRF's ability to expand its media work and enhance Miami Beach's stature as a cultural capital of the Americas and of the globe.

Increased operating contributions would directly and positively impact the long-term sustainability of the Miami Beach Bandshell and, particularly, its community and mission-based programs. Additional funding would allow us to expand our free community programs, providing greater accessibility to high-quality arts and culture programming, as well as our mission-based work that many times features artists from around the world who are more culturally-significant than they are commercially-viable.

Increased operating contributions will also better position the Bandshell to withstand severe disruptions in the future. For example, the upcoming construction of the 72nd Street Community Complex would take the main parking lot in North Beach out of commission for at least two

years. We expect dire negative impacts on the Bandshell as a result. Greater operating contributions from the City would better position the Bandshell to weather that storm.

The Rhythm Foundation respectfully requests a new 9-year management agreement for the Miami Beach Bandshell, with an additional \$200,000 contribution from the City of Miami Beach annually towards operating expenses. This would bring the total annual City Contribution towards operations to \$251,000.

Alignment with Miami Beach's Strategic Goals

The work of the Miami Beach Bandshell aligns deeply with the strategic goals of the City of Miami Beach, particularly with the vision of "A Prosperous City," which emphasizes quality of life through the cultivation of arts, culture, education, and business.

By investing in the Miami Beach Bandshell, the city is directly contributing to its goal of being a 'Cultural, Entertainment, and Tourism Capital' as outlined in its vision statement. For example, increased funding would enable TRF to attract world-renowned music festivals, host cutting-edge digital art installations, and expand its community programming, enhancing Miami Beach's cultural offerings. This would continue building the North Beach identity as a vibrant cultural destination, drawing visitors from the tri-county area and beyond, increasing hotel occupancy and boosting local restaurant revenue. Importantly, the Bandshell helps to create a sense of community for the residents of North Beach, and all of Miami Beach.

Return on Investment

With the expanded programming made possible by the increased operational contribution from the City, we predict that our annual audience would increase by about 10%. That corresponds to an annual estimated economic impact of \$7M, \$481K greater than at present. This represents a return of \$2.41 in economic impact for every additional \$1 invested by the City.

CONCLUSION

With this new management agreement and critical funding, we can maintain the momentum and innovation that has made the Miami Beach Bandshell a cultural beacon for the city. Investing in the Bandshell is not merely funding a venue; it's fueling a cultural and economic engine that delivers exceptional returns for the City of Miami Beach.