

Name 'Miami Walk' stumbles as term for river, bay trails

By CATHERINE LACKNER

Reasoning that there are riverwalks and baywalks all over the country "but there is only one Miami," the principals of the Savino & Miller Design Studio came up with a new name and logo for the city's growing baywalk-riverwalk, a public pedestrian and bike trail along Biscayne Bay and the Miami River.

The name Miami Walk, "takes advantage of this great asset, this great jewel, we have," Barry Miller, design studio principal, told directors of Miami's Downtown Development Authority Friday. "We're inviting you to come walk on water."

In January, the authority hired Savino & Miller to develop a strategy for branding the project, which some suspect has languished for lack of identity.

After a number of meetings to gain public input, and much work with stakeholders, the branding came together, Mr. Miller said. He showed the group the new logo, a capital M poised as a mirror image above a capital W, each subtly brushed with ripples meant to evoke water and waves. A mangrove standing in water would be the new symbol, as it "binds land to water in a productive and diverse habitat," Mr. Miller said.

Though directors appeared to be in



Designers see the baywalk, shown here, and the riverwalk united under single banner.

favor of the design concept, they questioned the name.

"It's missing the water," said authority board member Alan Ojeda, president of Rilea Development Group. "It should be self-explanatory." His suggestion: Miami Water Walk.

"We still have more work to do," said authority board member Jerome Hollo, vice president of Florida East Coast Realty. "This idea came about because

the city asked us for an umbrella term that says that this is an asset for the whole city. But I think we can get that through without another 'w.' This seems to resonate best."

"If this helps catalyze this, we need to move forward as fast as possible," said Neisen Kasdin, authority board vice-chair and office-managing partner of Akerman LLP.

"It didn't resonate with me at first,

but it's growing on me," said Ken Russell, Miami commissioner and authority board chair. "It reminds me of a charity walk. We don't have the authority to name it, so we're recommending. We want to excite the rest of the world and pull them in. If we get people in love with it, it'll open up the politics and the money."

"We have some extremely creative people right here on the board," Mr. Kasdin said. The group includes several developers and people who work in real estate sales. "Let's give credit to our creative genius."

"Names are names, but part of branding is the story behind it," said authority board member Nitin Motwani, managing director of Miami Worldcenter Group LLC, and managing director of the Encore Housing Opportunities Fund. The project has always been about the water, he added.

"We're 99% of the way there," Mr. Russell told Mr. Miller and Ardiana Savino, design studio principal. "Let's give it pause."

"This went through a lot of meetings with robust public input," said Patrice Gillespie-Smith, authority senior manager for planning, design and transportation. She urged the board to keep that in mind as the process moves forward.