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Miami Intermodal Center



News Clip

Miami Today, March 25, 2004

Planned transportation hub was considered for secretariat

BY SHANNON PETTYPIECE

Miami Intermodal Center, a proposed transit hub near Miami International Airport, was among sites considered for the permanent headquarters of the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

While the center was not selected as one of the two sites that will be presented to the 34 trade ministers negotiating creation of the free-trade area, transportation and Florida FTAA officials said it initially seemed like a logical choice.

Florida FTAA Executive Director Jorge Arrizurieta said the state's Department of Transportation never filed a formal bid for the site, but department Secretary Jose Abreu discussed the location with Mr. Arrizurieta

three days before the deadline to submit proposals.

Mr. Abreu said the transportation department decided not to go through with the idea because Florida FTAA wanted a separate building for security reasons and didn't want to pay for development. Because of the design and finance structure of the project, Mr. Abreu said, the transit center couldn't meet those requirements.

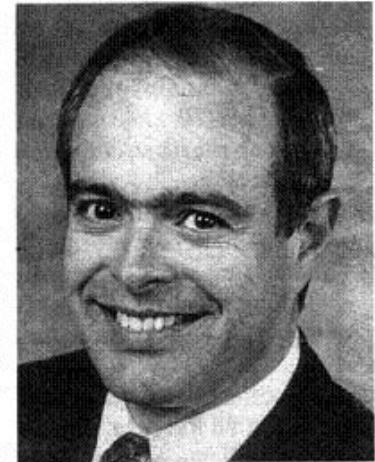
"It is not like I didn't think about it. I looked at making changes like having a private entrance just for the delegates, but the architects just didn't plan it that way," Mr. Abreu said. "We need to find a developer for that part of the MIC. FDOT will not pay for it all."

The \$1 billion Miami Intermodal Center is

to be a hub for several modes of mass transportation similar to New York City's Grand Central Station. Plans call for it to house a rental-car facility and what planners call the MIC Core, where passengers could connect from bus, car or train to the airport via a light-rail system.

Planners envision more than 1 million feet of commercial development in conjunction with the MIC Core – with such possibilities as a hotel, restaurants, a meeting space and an entertainment venue. Mr. Abreu said he thought about placing the FTAA headquarters in the core.

Mr. Arrizurieta said Florida FTAA is "extremely happy" with the Watson Island and Coconut Grove sites that will be pitched to the ministers.



Jose Abreu: FTAA headquarters development at intermodal center would be too expensive.