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Miami Intermodal Center



News Clip

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TRANSPORTATION

Getting closer: airport officials turn attention to central hub

By MARILYN BOWDEN

Completion of a Rental Car Center brings the Miami Intermodal Center at Miami International Airport, decades in the making, one step nearer to reality.

"Construction of the Rental Car Center is about 99% complete," said Gary Donn, Florida Department of Transportation's project manager for the huge ground transportation hub.

"Right now the 16 rental car companies are doing their buildouts inside the building. They have been working on the lobby, which is on the fourth floor, as well as on their respective levels below that.

"Turner Construction is doing some of the final touches on the construction."

He said the center, designed by architects Sequeira & Gavarrete, is tentatively to open in mid-July in the area bordered by Northwest 25th Street, 38th Court, 21st Street and LeJeune Road.

Florida Department of Transportation had kicked around a centralized hub at the airport since the 1980s, Mr. Donn said. Construction began in 2001 with roadway improvements, completed in 2008.

The next major project on the agenda, to the east of the Rental Car Center, is Miami Central Station, a transit hub where different modes of ground transportation come together.

"We hope to go to contract on Central Station by the fall of this year," Mr. Donn said. "When Hertz and Avis complete their move to the Rental Car Center, we will demolish those facilities and prepare the ground for construction.

"We will be rebuilding the existing Tri-Rail platform — making it longer and bringing it up to current standards — and adding a longer platform for two additional tracks for Amtrak or a high-speed rail in the future, or for Tri-Rail if they need to expand. There's room to add



Photo by Maxine Usdan

a third platform if necessary."

Central Station will also encompass bus depots, he said, for Greyhound, Metrobus, intercity buses, and courtesy buses and shuttles that serve the airport.

"If we can go to contract this fall," Mr. Donn said, "we're looking at the end of 2012 to get that operational."

Florida Department of Transportation is also coordinating with the construction of Miami-Dade Aviation Department's MIA Mover, a light-rail peoplemover connecting the airport, the Rental Car Center and Central Station.

"We anticipate completing the station we're building for the MIA Mover as part of the Rental Car Station to the point where we turn it over to the airport contractor this September," Mr. Donn said.

"Basically, we're building

Above: Workers at the MIA Mover, a light-rail peoplemover connecting the airport, the Rental Car Center and Central Station.

the shell, and they will come in and put in all the systems required."

The final component to the Miami Intermodal Center program is a joint development strategy on about eight acres east of Miami Central Station.

"We will look to enter into an agreement with a developer," Mr. Donn said. "We've always envisioned a type of development that would support the Intermodal Center, such as additional office space or a corporate hotel that would be funded



Courtesy Photo

privately."

Funding has come from a number of sources, both public and private, he said, and "the job has gone a lot easier thanks to all of our partners being so cooperative."

A value engineering study resulted in saving about \$40 million on the Rental Car Center, Mr. Donn said, "so that put us in a better position.

"We're paying a number of TIFIA loans" — from the fed-

eral Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 1998 — "through customer facility fees from rental cars.

"This was identified from the beginning as a nationally significant project. It's all coming together, and when completed will be a very nice gateway into our county, something we can be proud of."

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