



Renderings show Miami Central Station as it will be when completed, uniting six forms of transportation in a hub to provide connectivity that also links to taxis and even bikes.

Central station linking all ground transportation a year away

Nearby roads fixed; Amtrak snafu awaits

BY SCOTT BLAKE

Miami Central Station, promising to bring transportation "connectivity" to Miami-Dade County, is on track to open in about a year.

Construction is about half complete and the \$88 million Florida Department of Transportation project is on budget, said Ric Katz, the department's spokesman for the project.

From its 27-acre site near Miami International Airport, Miami Central Station will offer a variety of rail and bus services linking the airport to locations around Miami-Dade, South Florida and beyond.

"This is where all forms of ground transportation will come together," Mr. Katz said.

He said the station — just east of Miami International in an area called the Miami Intermodal Center — is on pace to open for service in November or December of 2013.

Miami Central Station will be "the crown jewel" of the Miami Intermodal Center program, he added, which also includes the neighboring Rental Car Center, just west of the station, and the MIA Mover, a light-rail people mover system that links the airport to the Rental Car Center and the station.

In addition to the MIA Mover, the station will feature five other major modes of transportation — Metrorail, Miami-Dade's heavy passenger rail system; Tri-Rail, a regional commuter rail linking Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach; Amtrak, the interstate rail company; Metrobus, the county bus system serving Miami-Dade; and Greyhound, an interstate bus company.

Also, the station will have facilities for taxi cabs, shuttle buses and even bicycles.

Metrorail and Metrobus, in addition to the MIA Mover, are already operating at the site, Mr. Katz said.

Construction is well underway for the station's Central Concourse, where travelers will pass as they head to and from

the airport and the station's transportation providers. The exteriors of the Amtrak and Tri-Rail facilities are nearly completed, among other work, Mr. Katz said.

New York City-based Turner Construction Co. is the project's main contractor.

Project officials are currently dealing with what Mr. Katz described as a minor snafu: when Amtrak's trains someday pull into the station, they will be a bit too long for the site and will protrude into Northwest 25th Street on the north side of the station.

To address this logistical problem, project officials are considering various options, which, Mr. Katz said, might involve redirecting that section of 25th Street to the north to leave more room for Amtrak.

The state also controls an 8.5-acre property next to the station site that could be set aside for commercial development that complements the station. Mr. Katz said those uses could be a mix of stores, offices and restaurants, and perhaps even a hotel with convention space.

He said the plan for that site still isn't final, and the state might request proposals for potential developers interested in leasing property there.

Either way, Miami Central Station will be a very busy place.

A Miami Intermodal Center ridership study estimated the MIA Mover will handle about 4.4 million passengers a year; Metrorail will get 1.6 million to 2.4 million; Tri-Rail should see more than 525,000; Greyhound should get 101,000; and Amtrak should have nearly 90,000.

The study did not project ridership for Metrobus, or taxis and shuttles.

Mr. Katz said some road improvements have been in the works near the station to help accommodate future traffic increases. A plus has been that the site isn't near residential neighborhoods, he said.

"When this opens," he added about the station, "we will be fulfilling our pledge to the county years ago to decongest the airport and provide [transportation] connectivity from the airport."



Photo by Maxine Usdan

Construction is about half completed on the \$88 million Florida Department of Transportation project.



Photo by Maxine Usdan

All forms of ground transportation will link together on the 27-acre site near Miami International Airport.



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Metrobus is now operating at the site of Miami Central Station. Six modes of transportation will link there.