

The Miami Intermodal Center (MIC):



Transportation Structuring At Its Best

By Thornton J. Williams, Williams McMillian P.A.

The Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) is a transportation hub under construction by the Florida Department of Transportation in Miami, Florida that will offer centralized transfer between Metrorail, Amtrak, Tri-Rail, buses, taxicabs and rental cars. Located next to the Miami International Airport (MIA), the MIC is a massive structural ground transportation hub that will provide multi-modal connectivity where none previously existed between the transportation systems in Palm Beach County, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and the Florida Keys, for residents and visitors alike. The MIC was constructed in the hopes of decongesting the roadways in and around the MIA. The completed center will cost \$1.7 billion and is expected to serve approximately 150,000 commuters and travelers each day. The MIC has been designated as a "Project of National Significance" by the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), which enabled the MIC Program to receive two loans, one for \$269 million and another for \$270 million. Other major funding sources include various state and local sources and private sector fees and charges.

In the early 1990s, due to growth and attraction of international business, Miami expanded as a major

player in the world marketplace. As connectivity between different modes of transportation became a more pressing need to eliminate urban area congestion, in the summer of 1993, the MIC Program was created. The FDOT entered into a partnership agreement with six federal agencies of the USDOT, with FDOT taking the lead in the plan, design and build of the MIC.

The MIC Program consists of several components all working in sync to achieve two main objectives: to connect and decongest. With initial roadway improvements completed in May 2008, the first construction project of the center was the Rental Car Center (RCC), a 3,400,000-square-foot rental car center that provides customers arriving through the MIA convenient access to participating rental car companies. The RCC opened for business on July 13, 2010. The RCC is a multi-level consolidated rental car center facility that consolidates the operations of 16 rental car companies in one location, is home to 6,500 rental cars and is projected to serve 28,000 customers daily. The facility has a multi-level fueling system which is the first of its kind in the United States.

Next, the MIA Mover, an automated people mover (APM) system between

the MIC and MIA, became operational on September 9, 2011. The MIA Mover is designed to quickly transport passengers between Miami International Airport's Main Terminal and the Miami Central Station and the Rental Car Center, as part of the MIC. The 1.27 miles link travels east from the MIA Station, to Central Boulevard and finally to NW 21st Street, where it curves north into the MIC Station. Projected to transport 48,000 daily visitors by 2020, the MIA Mover construction is utilizing innovative design-build methods and will entirely replace the shuttle bus service. This will in turn reduce gas emissions at the airport by 30 percent. For maximum efficiency of operation, the MIA Mover will have only two stations: one located at the MIC and one located at the MIA. The MIA Mover costs an estimated \$259 million to complete. The MIA Mover was funded primarily by Miami-Dade County in various agreements with the state

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Finally, the Miami Central Station (also called the Miami Airport Station), a rapid transit intercity rail hub will follow and is currently under construction and scheduled to be completed by 2013.

The station, just south and east of the Miami River and the MIA, is adjacent to the Airport Expressway and will serve the Amtrak, Tri-Rail, Metrorail and the Metrobus and is expected to be among the busiest passenger stations in Florida and the Southeast upon completion.

Additionally, the FDOT is currently pursuing private/public sector Joint Development possibilities on this massive project to enhance the MIC's economic viability. In turn, Joint Development will be privately funded by developers who lease MIC properties that have been set aside for that purpose.

Undoubtedly, the MIC hopes to become Miami's central transportation hub that will provide safe, efficient and seamless intermodal connectivity between the MIA (Miami-Dade County's number one economic generator) and the transportation systems in Palm Beach County, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and the Florida Keys, as well as South Florida's businesses. ■

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