

Transit-Oriented Developments in the Pipeline Across South Florida

Apartments, Offices, Retail, Hotels Within Walking Distance of Commuter Trains



Link at Douglas is expected to break ground later this year as a \$464 million, game-changing development in South Miami.

The project, a joint venture between 13th Floor Investments and the Adler Group, will have 1,375 units of residential, 280,000 square feet of office space, 75,000 square feet of retail and 83,000 square feet of public space on a seven-acre site bordered by U.S. 1, Southwest 27th Avenue, Peacock Avenue and Southwest 38th Avenue.

But the key just may be the Douglas Road Metrorail station in the center of the development that will connect it to downtown Miami.

"Our belief," 13th Floor's Arnaud Karsenti told CoStar News, "is that people would prefer not to spend time in cars in traffic if they can avoid it."

Link at Douglas is among a new breed of transit-oriented projects proposed for South Florida. Developers are rushing to build hotels, apartments, shops, restaurants and offices near public transportation stations that will attract workers and visitors from across the region and allow residents to drastically reduce their time spent behind a wheel.

This week, Brightline says it will launch passenger-rail service between the downtowns of West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale. The service is expected to extend to downtown Miami by the spring and onto Orlando in the next few years.

The existing Tri-Rail train service from West Palm Beach to Miami travels west of Interstate 95, making it difficult for commuters who work downtown.

Ron Drew, spokesman for the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, said Brightline will better connect Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties and make it more convenient for the more than 6 million people there to live in one county and work in another.

"It makes it easier for people to get to jobs, and it's a big advantage for us in attracting companies here," said Drew, whose organization serves as Broward's economic development arm. "The worker of the future wants to be able to take mass transit."

Since the Brightline service was approved in 2014, 2.5 million square feet of commercial real estate projects have started construction within a one-mile radius of the Fort Lauderdale station, according to figures from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance.

The pipeline of apartments is at 2,000 units, while nearly 100,000 square feet of office and more than 30,000 square feet of retail are under construction or renovation.

Last summer, Brightline's parent, Florida East Coast Industries, announced plans to partner with Lincoln Property Co. to build 290 multifamily units near Brightline's West Palm Beach station and 816 units at its MiamiCentral development in downtown Miami. The projects will be known as Park-Line.

"Park-Line residences are designed for people on the move who want to live and travel smarter," said Daniel Quintana, vice president of development for Florida East Coast Industries. "Each of the innovative towers in West Palm Beach and Miami will expand residents' playground and working options by utilizing a vast variety of transit options just steps away from their front door, including our new Brightline train service that will seamlessly connect Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach."

Last year, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission approved developer Joe Traina Jr.'s plan to build a mixed-use project called FATCity less than two blocks from the Brightline station in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

FATCity will have two 30-story towers that will include 185,000 square feet of office space, 612 apartments and retail at 300 N. Andrews Ave. The site is in the Flagler Village neighborhood and near FAT (Flagler Arts and Technology) Village. That corridor houses tech companies as well as arts and other professionals.

Traina has said he expects construction to start on FATCity by the end of 2018 or early 2019, with the project opening two years later.

The Stiles real estate firm is planning a 23-story office tower and two apartment buildings along Las Olas Boulevard near the Brightline station. Stiles' 360,000-square-foot building, the largest office tower in the city in a decade, is expected to open in fall 2020. It also will include 17,000 square feet of ground floor retail.

"We have been looking forward to Brightline beginning service," said Doug Eagon, vice chairman of Stiles. "All forms of mass transit, including Brightline, are a big positive for downtown Fort Lauderdale. Residents and office workers alike will enjoy traveling in South Florida without having to drive on I-95."



Meanwhile, in downtown Miami, the first phase of Miami Worldcenter is under construction on 27 acres near the Brightline station, at Northwest First Avenue, between Northwest Third Street and Northwest Eighth Street.

The first apartment building will be topped off in January and be ready for occupancy by the end of year. The first condominium building will be topped off this summer.

When the project is built out, it will have up to 450,000 square feet of retail, up to 600,000 square feet of office, as many as 1,700 hotel rooms and 2,000 residential units. It's one of the nation's largest private real estate developments under construction.

Nitin Motwani, managing principal of Miami Worldcenter Associates, said he spent a decade assembling the land.

"Our project sits at the confluence of arts, culture, entertainment and transportation," he said. "We felt very strongly that it would be the wave of the future."