

Developers break ground on \$600M project

By Brian Bandell



The ground breaking of the Link at Douglas transit-oriented development in Miami.

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The \$600 million Link at Douglas has broken ground, marking the largest and tallest transit-oriented development in Miami-Dade County.

Adler Group and 13th Floor Investments are building the project on seven acres leased from the county at the Douglas Road Metrorail Station. Built over five years, the project will have both private buildings and public improvements.

Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez said he's been hoping to activate the county land near the Douglas Road station for well over a decade. The station is only three stops south of Brickell, and four stops from Government Center in downtown Miami.

"It will offer the benefits of an urban lifestyle without worrying about a car, or parking or traffic," Gimenez said.

The Link at Douglas is slated for 1,500 residential units with 12.5 percent of that workforce housing, 25,000 square feet of retail, 250,000 square feet of offices, and 750 public parking spaces.

Arnaud Karsenti, managing principal of 13th Floor, said the first phase will have a 22-story apartment building with 312 units, a 36-story apartment building with 421 units, and the parking garage. Both buildings will have retail on the ground floor. Civic Construction is the general contractor.

Adler Group President David Adler said construction should take 18 to 24 months. The first phase will include about 100 workforce housing units, he added.

“A lot of people work and play in Brickell, but it doesn’t mean they want to live in Brickell,” David Adler said. “We are close enough to work, close enough to the dining and action of Brickell without living there.”

The office buildings will be near the corner of Douglas Road and U.S. 1, Karsenti said. They will probably start preleasing when the apartment towers are further along, he said.

The network of commuting options, from Metrorail to buses to the Coral Gables trolley to the forthcoming Underline linear park, will make the Link at Douglas an attractive place to live, said Michael Adler, chairman and CEO of Adler Group.

The developers will spend on \$17 million on public improvements to the site, including bus bays, Metrorail station improvements, a public plaza, and a quarter-mile strip of the Underline.

Karsenti said the Link at Douglas should increase public transit ridership by 3,000 to 4,000 per day.

Alice Bravo, director of Miami-Dade Transit, said the busiest public transit stations in the world are located near dense areas where many people live and work. The county hopes to facilitate more TODs so people have the option to avoid driving in traffic, she said.

Corwil Architects and Arquitectonica designed the project.