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Whole Foods Selects Downtown Miami Site

By [Jennifer LeClaire](#)

On the heels of Publix's decision to locate a new store at 18Biscayne in downtown Miami, Whole Foods Market has unveiled plans to open an organic grocery store to serve the area.

Whole Foods Market will open a new store as part of the Metropolitan Miami complex at the intersection of SE 3rd Avenue and SE 2nd St.

Tim Weller, vice president for MDM Development, the developer behind The Met, says Whole Foods' decision to open its first-ever downtown Miami store "speaks volumes to the quality of retailer that Metropolitan Miami will attract." Downtown Miami residents will have to wait, however, until late 2013 for the doors to open.



This isn't the first time Whole Foods Market has made a decision for downtown Miami. Lyle Stern, a broker at the Miami Beach-based Koniver Stern Group, the exclusive retail leasing representative of Metropolitan Miami, tells GlobeSt.com that Whole Foods first inked a deal at the Met in 2004—but backed out when the economy shifted.

"Once the clouds cleared and the economic outlook improved—and once Whole Foods was able to verify that downtown Miami had absorbed a tremendous number of residential units—the grocer decided to move forward with the store," says Stern, who also represents Whole Foods. "This is a huge endorsement of the population base in the downtown Miami and Brickell Corridor."

The Met 3 location within the Metropolitan Miami complex will be Whole Foods Market's 12th store in South Florida. Whole Foods has 10 other locations in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami Dade counties, and one more planned for Pembroke Pines in early 2012.

"Whole Foods always thought the Met was the best place to be. This location is the epicenter of the entire market that Whole Foods wants to serve, from Key Biscayne through the mid-50s and 60s on Biscayne," Stern says. "This site offers some of the greatest density of office space in that entire market."

According to the Miami Downtown Development Authority's Residential & Demographic Study, the number of Downtown residents has jumped by 81% in the past decade, growing from 39,000 people in 2000 to roughly 70,000 people now living in the district today. Recent reports also indicate that another 10,000 are projected to move to the neighborhood in the next three years.

"The quality of retail options like Whole Foods are making Downtown Miami an increasingly attractive destination," Alyce Robertson, executive director of the Miami DDA, tells GlobeSt.com. "Close to 200 new restaurants and retail businesses have opened in downtown in the past five years alone. We anticipate an even bigger surge in popularity as more hotels, stores, and entertainment options come to the neighborhood to capitalize on the growing residential population."