



Miami's Main Street Makeover: Reconstruction of Downtown's Historic Flagler Street Begins

\$13 million overhaul will transform the half-mile streetscape running between historic County Courthouse and Biscayne Boulevard.

Project is collaboration between Flagler Street property owners, Miami Downtown Development Authority, City of Miami, and Miami-Dade County.

Miami, FL – January 6, 2015 – As downtown Miami emerges as a hotbed of activity among residents, companies, visitors and investors from around the world, the neighborhood's historic Main Street is getting a welcomed reboot. Flagler Street, home to the highest concentration of historic buildings in downtown and a commercial base that's thriving amidst rapid population growth, will soon come alive with outdoor cafes, improved sidewalks and crosswalks, new shade trees, and off-street valet parking intended to reduce automotive congestion and enhance pedestrian mobility.

The \$13 million project, which began construction this week and is expected to be completed by the end of 2017, is made possible through funding from the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County, Miami Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Flagler Street property owners who agreed to a special assessment. The first phase of work will begin close to All Aboard Florida's Miami Central passenger rail station near the intersection of Flagler and SW 1st Avenue and progress eastward toward Biscayne Boulevard in a series of phases.

The Flagler Street renovation comes as downtown Miami experiences a surge in population growth, rising demand for urban living, and significant private investment in its urban core. The area's residential population has doubled in size – from 40,000 to 80,000 people – since 2000, according to the Miami DDA's 2014 demographics study. The DDA's Q3 2015 real estate report found that more than 90 percent of the 1,617 residential units that have been built this cycle have already been absorbed. Additionally, investor's such as Moishe Mana are placing bets in the city's Central Business District at rapid pace. Mana has already secured nearly 40 parcels in downtown Miami, with the majority of these on Flagler Street.

"Flagler Street can be to downtown Miami what Lincoln Road has been to South Beach, a unique pedestrian attraction," says Miami DDA Vice Chair and former Miami Beach Mayor Neisen Kasdin. "This renovation marks a new beginning for Miami's historic main street, which will become a popular promenade and gathering place for the thousands of new residents, visitors and workers in our urban core."

Flagler Street, named after Henry Flagler, whose railroad along Florida's east coast ushered in modern Miami's first settlers dating back to 1896, has long served as the commercial heart of the City's central

business district. The renovation will focus on the half-mile stretch between the historic Miami-Dade County Courthouse and Biscayne Boulevard. A number of notable buildings are situated along Flagler Street, including the Olympia Theater, the Alfred I. DuPont Building and the art deco Walgreens building, now home to La Epoca department store.

Brian Alonso, whose family owns La Epoca and who serves as co-chair of the Miami DDA's Flagler Street Task Force, believes the overhaul will create a new pedestrian focal point for a City that is becoming increasingly urban. "Our plan for Flagler Street does three things that will restore Flagler Street's place as Miami's Main Street. First, we're making the street more walkable with better sidewalks, crosswalks, and lots of shade trees. Second, we're allowing more space for sidewalk cafes and restaurants. And lastly, we're creating the ability to close the street to car traffic during street festivals and events."

Alonso adds that the revitalization project will serve to complement the adjacent and surrounding areas which are also undergoing significant new construction including Brickell City Centre and Miami World Center. The end result will be a neighborhood pedestrian-friendly street in the heart of the city's premiere historic district.

The Flagler Street reconstruction plan was developed by Miami-based Curtis + Rogers Design Studio in coordination with the City and Miami DDA Flagler Street Task Force. Features of the project include new bike racks, enhanced crosswalks, new street lighting fixtures and upgraded sidewalks, and live oak trees along both sides of the road. In a nod to Flagler Street's namesake Henry Flagler, moveable railroad gates will be added for the purpose of blocking car traffic during events, and decorative steel train rails will be embedded along the sidewalk.

Real-time updates about the Flagler Street restoration project can be found online at www.FlaglerStreetMiami.com. Specific questions should be directed to the City's 24-hour hotline at (305) 345-6946 or via email, info@FlaglerStreetMiami.com. In mid-January, there will also be an information office located at 166 Flagler Street, which will be open Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

About the Miami Downtown Development Authority

The Miami DDA is an independent agency of the City of Miami funded by a special tax levy on properties in its district boundaries. It is governed by a 15-member Board comprised of three public appointees and 12 downtown property owners, residents and/or workers who are tasked with overseeing the direction of the agency and setting policy. The agency is committed to grow, strengthen and promote the economic health and vitality of downtown Miami. As an autonomous agency of the City of Miami, the Miami DDA advocates, facilitates, plans, and executes business development, planning and capital improvements, and marketing and communication strategies. Visit www.MiamiDDA.com for more information.

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