RIDING BUSES CAN BE COOL: The first air-conditioned bus shelter in Miami-Dade County is being installed at the Hialeah Metrorail Station, a spot where many Metrobus routes connect with Metrorail. The county was on the ribbon this week.

MIAMI OPEN FOR BUSINESS: The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau is closer to contract with the Florida Department of Health in Miami-Dade County to communicate updates for visitors about mosquito-borne illnesses and states where there is no wide-spread transmission of Zika in Miami-Dade County. Information is available at miamiconvention.com/travel-advisory-information. Additionally, the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, GMCVB and Miami-Dade Reusse Coastline Officials this past weekend urged all passengers to continue patronizing Wyndham businesses; and the Miami Downtown Development Authority provided Zika resources on www.miamiski.com.

NEW SCHOOL RISING: Miller Construction Co. has begun building a two-story, 11,200-square-foot higher education facility for developer and owner of Miami Beach’s Gables University, the University of Miami, which has signed a 15-year lease with The Graham Companies and is expanding from its current location in Miramar. The Puerto Rico-based university operates 15 university centers throughout the island territory and five in the US. The university uses the Discipline-Based Dual Language Immersion Model, which focuses on the development of English and Spanish language skills to equip adults with both the professional and dual language skills that are in high demand in today’s global workplace.

MLK MURAL GETS APPROVAL: Miami city commissioners have approved a community-based agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation for the installation, completion and maintenance of a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. mural on the south side of the 1.95-acre lot at 6026 Nw Second Ave. The agreement includes renovations to the center columns. In a square resolution, commissioners accepted the recommendation of the Liberty City Trust approving a service agreement with Moving Lives Arts Center (MLK Arts Center Inc.) for the installation and maintenance of the mural. The move also authorized the city manager to execute an agreement with the Liberty City Trust for funding the project at about $500,000.

ALMABRA TOWERS WELL CONNECTED: WindScore, a company behind the international standard for cutting-edge internet connectivity in high rise buildings, said Almabra Towers in Coral Gables has achieved Platinum Wired Certification, making it the first building in Coral Gables and the 24th in Florida to receive the Platinum ranking. This signifies that it offers the best-in-class tech capabilities. Almabra Towers joins a distinctive group of technologically advanced buildings with peers such as the Empire State Building and Miami’s Southeast Financial Center.

AIRPORT ATTRACTION JAPANESE DELEGATION: The Miami-Dade Aviation Department hosted a welcome reception for a delegation from Kansai, Japan, who traveled to South Florida as part of its Sister Cities International Partnership with the City of Miami, the airport said. The delegation toured the Miami International Airport and learned about its passenger and cargo hub operations. "We made the pitch that Miami is a great place to do business," said aviation department Director Ennio Gonzalez told Miami Today. The delegation’s visit came during a week of two June meetings with Japan. All Nippon Airways executives and an April meeting in Tokyo with Turkey’s (Turkish Airlines) Airport representatives.

HATE CRIME LAW BACKED: Miami city commissioners adopted a resolution urging the Florida Legislature to amend state laws to include enhanced penalties for false claims and misconceptions against law enforcement, firefighters and emergency services personnel due to their employment status. The legislation directed the city clerk to send a copy of the resolution to the members of the legislature, Gov. Rick Scott and his cabinet. The resolution was authored by Commissioner Frank Carollo, who cited a recent ambush against police officers as a motivating factor for the move.

TAYLOR & MATHIS ACQUIRED: Cushman & Wakefield has acquired Taylor & Mathis of Florida LLC, a commercial real estate company specializing in agency leasing and property management. The acquisition makes Cushman & Wakefield the second largest property management firm in Florida. The company manages nearly 52 million square feet in the state. Over the past ten years, Taylor & Mathis of Florida has developed more than 400,000 square feet of office and retail product valued in excess of $70 million. The acquisition creates a combined portfolio of 41 million square feet.

CONDO RESALES, RENTS DOWN: "Condominium resale price growth in June was down 4.2% year-over-year, and, however after three years of double digit price growth (2012-2014), this current retreat from 2013 pricing may be temporary, as supply-demand economics continue to shift," a mid-year report from Miami’s Downtown Development Authority, in 2014. The rental construction pipeline has expanded to more than 5,500 units as of June, and combined with the delivery of more than 566 rental units since the new year, has yielded a leveling-off of pricing. Construction market growth has been nominal or negative in all sub-type, except studios, which grew by 4% year-to-date.

NEW EDITION PROGRAMS: Miami-Dade County Public Schools will begin 2016-2017 with 59 new choice/magnet programs, the most ever created in an academic year, bringing the total to nearly 600.

CONSTRUCTION: In an Aug. 4 article, the business role of Gary Schaefer, incoming chair of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, was increased. He is Miami Market president for Bank of America.

Plan for Mana’s tall, slender tower near new transit hub wins praise

By John Cruce, Miami Today

Developer Maxiso Mana is planning to build a tall and slender residential tower in the heart of Miami’s urban core with a single new parking space. But the project is to rise one block from the city’s new transit hub known as Miami-Central. The city’s new expanded train station now under construction will be home to Brightline, a high speed passenger rail service to Orlando, the Metrorail and Metromover, a Tri-Rail link, and connections to other modes of transportation including Metromover, ride-sharing services, taxis and bicycles. The fact it should be easy to live in Mana’s new tower and not own a car.

The city's Urban Development Review Board recommended approval of the project, which requires removal of a two-story structure but is planned for 200 N. Miami Ave.

Board member Gerald C. Marston likes the project so much he made the motion to recommend approval "enthusiastically."

The tower is to rise 49 stories and include about 328 residential units aiming to attract a millenial crowd. Some of the lower apartments are expected to be small or micro units.

David Lederman, an attorney representing the developer, said about a dozen stories will have the micro apartments, about 23 stories will be home to market rate apartments, and the top floors will be penthouse units. The site, 14,322 square feet at the northwest corner of Northwest Second Avenue and North Miami Avenue, is today home to a handful of small businesses in older two- to three-story buildings.

The tower was designed by Zyswicke Architects, and the firm’s Suri Yaffar offered details to the review board about the project.

While the tower has no parking, it will rise in an urban environment close to public transit, she said. MiamiCentral helps create "alternative choices of living" for these people who want to reside downtown, she said.

The tower’s micro units will be studio-sized and the market rate apartments will be one- and two-bedroom units, Ms. Yaffar said.

The development is to include two floors of amenities and a top pool deck.

"It will be an exciting place to be, at," she said.

The amenity options and common areas spaces between floors will help keep the building lively, she said.

The tower is to have a large lobby but no retail uses. Ms. Yaffar explained a unique design element on the outside of the planned tower. Mesh screens that can be moved, she said, will keep the façade on the upper levels fluid. She said tenants will be able to see through the material but it can shade the apartments.

The skin of the building is conceived as a movable sculpture, the screens will animate the building as they are opened or closed. The operable screens will provide shade and reduce heat gain," Ms. Yaffar said.

Mr. Marston commented that he considers "architecture that changes" is a good thing.

Board member Robin Bosco also liked the proposal, and congratulated the developer on an excellent project.

"It’s very exciting. I’m looking forward to it," said Mr. Bosco.

Mr. Marston also offered congratulations, saying the proposed tower was refreshing and "not a glass box with balconies on it."

Mr. Marston concluded by saying the tower will be a very creative addition to the city. While board member Dean Lewis expressed reservations about the sliding façade and how weather might affect the material, he said introduction of micro units in the area is important.

The fact that developers don’t have to build parking can mean "bringing down rents," said Mr. Lewis, and this is an appropriate place for such a project.

Mr. Lederman followed up on that point, noting that along with being near public transit the project is about 150 feet from a public parking garage.

"This project is the future of Miami," he said.

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