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Publix to have ground floor site beside Virgin trains station

BY CATHERINE LACKNER

Downtown Miami residents will have another grocery store alternative when Publix Super Markets opens an outpost on the ground floor of 3 Miami Central at 161 NW Sixth St., adjacent to the Virgin Trains station. An opening date has not been announced.

According to a memorandum of lease signed by landlord DTS 3MC and Publix, Publix will take the 26,671-square-foot ground floor of the building. The lease also provides for parking.

3 Miami Central is part of a the three-building complex, Virgin Miami Central, which includes the train station. An

advertisement for the complex says that “Virgin Miami Central is amplifying the downtown retail environment,” and that tenants including Einstein Bros. Bagels and Joe & The Juice “are now open. A 24-hour Starbucks is set to open this summer. Stay tuned as we unveil new partners, including a major grocer.”

According to the lease between Publix and DTS 3MC, the “major grocer” will be Publix; a provision grants the supermarket chain “the exclusive right within the project ... to engage in the retail sale of groceries, to operate a grocery supermarket, bakery, delicatessen, and/or fish market,” to have a pharmacy and to engage in the sale of food, beer, wine

or alcohol for off-premises consumption.

Another provision specifically names the grocery companies that cannot open in Virgin Miami Central, including Winn Dixie, Whole Foods, Fresh Market, and Trader Joe’s, as well as general merchandise companies that sell food and have pharmacies, such as Walmart and Target.

“There’s been speculation for some time that Publix is going into Virgin Miami Central, and it makes perfect sense to me, given the recent growth in that side of the CBD,” said Jason Shapiro, managing director of the Aztec Group, who is not a party to the deal. “Publix is the most recognizable of the supermarket chains, and in this complex

are apartments, office buildings, and the terminus of the train service. It makes all the sense in the world for them to be there.”

The exclusivity clause “is a fairly typical restriction,” Mr. Shapiro said “They define what they feel is their competition, what can bite into their sales. I’ve never seen a Publix lease that didn’t have this provision, especially in a new building like this one.”

The real estate website The Next Miami reported that Publix has pulled City of Miami permits, apparently in preparation for construction.

Lakeland-based Publix Super Markets did not return calls seeking comment.