

Brickell retail demand grows with residents, more entrants coming

BY CATHERINE LACKNER

When it comes to Brickell retail today, the mainstays are restaurants, with high-end stores in Brickell City Centre opening soon. But retail's future is more difficult to predict, observers say.

"Demand for retail is strong because of the incredible increase in the number of people living in Brickell, which will continue to grow over the next several years as condos finish," said Adam D. Lustig, a partner in the real estate group of the Bilzin Sumberg law firm who has handled many retail transactions.

"You see a lot of foot traffic and a lot of people in the restaurants, but I haven't seen a lot of new retail other than what is in Brickell City Centre. It will be interesting to see who their customer ends up being. High-end retail will likely attract a lot of tourists. The question is, will it attract locals?"

The area is still underserved in terms in retail, he said, especially in the mid-market level.

"If somebody wants to go to Target now, they have to go to Midtown. Young professionals don't have places to shop for some of value type of retail," Mr. Lustig said.



Boris Kozolchyk: Even in upper-end Brickell you need lightbulbs.

Because of the physical structure of Brickell Avenue – long stretches without any storefront retail – most of the area's retail uses are concentrated from Southwest Eighth to 10th streets on South Miami Avenue or even farther west, he explained.

"In retail, density is very important. Brickell is becoming a neighborhood that can support itself with walk-by traffic. In addition to the residents, there is a working population that creates even greater demand for restaurants and stores."

And, in addition to Brickell City Centre's high-end offerings, which will include many Latin designers and well-known brands, the swelling population will demand mid-

This is especially true since Miami Worldcenter changed its retail component from Bloomingdales and Macy's as lead tenants to high-end stores.

"I don't know of any projects in play, but if there are those opportunities, we may see them on the edges or toward the western end of Brickell," he said.

Such a project is rumored to be going up at 90 SW Eighth St., said Boris Kozolchyk, executive vice president for retail services at Colliers International. The Barlington Group is said to be developing a three-story building there; two floors will house a Target Express, he said.

But the real element that will determine the area's retail identity is Brickell City Centre, he said. "That will create a departure point for others; they will look at the retail there to see what works and what doesn't."



Jason Shapiro: a paradigm shift in attitude culminates in opening.

level goods and services, Mr. Kozolchyk said.

"Even in a high-end neighborhood, people need to buy light bulbs. I think the retail in Brickell City Centre is going to be very successful, but people will also need dry cleaners, salons, things like that."

"What we are witnessing here is pretty amazing, both on and off Brickell," said Jason Shapiro, a managing director at Aztec Group Inc. "There's been a paradigm shift in attitude that happened when Mary Brickell Village was developed 15 years ago, culminating with Brickell City Centre and all of the millennials who are moving into the new condo and apartment buildings."

Shoppers will come from other parts of Miami-Dade County and South Florida to shop at Brickell City Centre and the other retail outlets that enter the market, he predicted.

"It will be interesting to see what kind of sales they have, but there is pent-up demand. When Miami Worldcenter is built, there will be a nice, even mix of retail and people will be coming over the river from the north – the Biscayne corridor and even farther – to make it a day or a weekend of shopping in Brickell. Now, the only other high-end retail in the area is the Design District. But time will tell; we'll know a lot more in a year."