

OP-ED JANUARY 6, 2016 6:40 PM

MDX's role in improving traffic in Miami-Dade

HIGHLIGHTS

MDX has had a hand in a variety of roadway improvements in recent years.

More than \$340 million in improvements currently under way or set to begin soon.



BY LOUIS MARTINEZ

mdxway.com

The MDX Board, staff and I are focused on leveraging our ability and strength as an agency to deliver the most effective transportation program for our community in partnership with Miami-Dade County, municipalities and the Florida Department of Transportation.

Over the years, MDX has played a critical role in providing solutions to our infrastructure challenges.

- MDX recently constructed a new entrance to Miami International Airport called Central Boulevard, a project that MDX built and partly financed for Miami-Dade County.
- MDX reconstructed SR 874/Don Shula Expressway from the Turnpike to the Palmetto, providing a new and improved expressway
- MDX is also the leading agency in the planning, design and construction of the new Dolphin Park and ride, and contributed \$215 million to reconstruct the SR826/SR 836 interchange that will be completed in 2016.

With more than \$340 million in improvements currently under construction or set to begin in early 2016, MDX is keeping its promise to deliver critical infrastructure projects that reduce bottlenecks and improve travel times.

This past September MDX began the widening of SR 836/Dolphin Expressway in the most congested segment from 57th Ave. to 17th Ave. The shoulders of the expressway are being built to accommodate Express Bus Service traveling on the shoulder during peak travel times providing a transit alternative to commuting by car.

In 2016 MDX will begin construction of a completely new 87th Avenue Interchange with SR 836 that will relieve traffic in the congested Doral area. A new entrance ramp to westbound SR 836 from 12th St. will remove traffic from the 87th Ave. interchange.

Also in 2017, MDX will begin construction of a new connection from SR 836 to I-95 serving the Civic Center and hospital area. With these improvements this community's most vital artery, the Dolphin Expressway, will find a renewed life serving the economic wellbeing of Miami-Dade connecting PortMiami, Miami International Airport and the industrial areas of West Dade.

Communities in the south Kendall area will also find relief with the new extension from SR 874 to 128th Street. These investments are made possible by the users of the MDX system. By 2020 all of projects, except the I-95/SR836 interchange, will not only be completed but will have generated over 10,400 new jobs and a total economic impact to our community of \$1.5 billion.

As we look forward to the next generation, Miami-Dade's residential development, employment, and economy is anticipated to grow exponentially over the next 10 to 20 years.

As a community we must implement solutions for our existing transportation needs as well as those that this prosperity brings. While MDX is only a piece of the larger puzzle, we look forward to working with all of the community's transportation partners to find these solutions.

MDX's Strategic Master Plan is looking at promoting enhanced transit systems along existing corridors; providing the footprint for Express Bus Services; making infrastructure investments to serve new rail options, and creating a system of transportation hubs to provide commuters with multi-modal choices.

Although MDX has partnered with over \$100 million in transit oriented projects, the core of MDX's Strategic Plan for future transportation infrastructure, developed by its board, expands MDX's mission to serve a broader spectrum of multi-modal infrastructure needs for a vibrant Miami-Dade County.

MDX champions the improvement of the economic climate in Miami-Dade, and also must provide special attention to infrastructure investments that stimulate growth by improving commercial mobility and serving industrial areas of Miami-Dade.

A major tenet of MDX's Strategic Plan is recognizing that MDX's future investments have to be executed in a collaborative way. The ability to define the roles between partnering agencies and focusing on attainable projects is fundamental to solving our transportation issues.

Louis Martinez is chairman of the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority.