

TPA welcomes new cars for SkyConnect train

TAMPA, Fla. (July 17, 2017) – Tampa International Airport today welcomed 12 train cars designed for its new 1.4-mile automated people mover system dubbed SkyConnect. The SkyConnect will connect TPA's Main Terminal to the Economy Garage and brand new rental car center. The system will open to the public in early 2018 following extensive testing by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America, which is building and operating the system.

"The SkyConnect builds on Tampa International Airport's legacy of innovation and customer service," said Airport CEO Joe Lopano. "The train will allow the Airport to continue to grow in its existing footprint while taking millions of vehicles off our roadways and giving rental car customers access to more options than ever before."

The Airport celebrated the arrival of the SkyConnect cars with an event at Port Tampa Bay. Speakers included airport and port officials as well as Florida Gov. Rick Scott, Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn, Japan Consul General Ken Okaniwa and Aviation Authority Chairman Robert Watkins.

"We are excited to welcome these new trains and transition into a new phase of construction," Watkins said. "This project is fantastic for Tampa International Airport and for the Tampa Bay region. More than 6,900 workers have played a part in constructing the SkyConnect and rental car center, logging some 3.4 million hours of work. It's had a tremendous economic impact."

Crews began construction on the SkyConnect system in November 2014 and work on the guideway structure finished earlier this year. The trains will be lifted onto the SkyConnect guideway beginning Tuesday, July 18, kicking off roughly six months of testing.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries built the SkyConnect cars at their factory in Mihara, Japan – a process that took about 13 months. Each train car cost approximately \$1.9 million and is designed to last 25 years.

The SkyConnect trip from the Main Terminal to the Rental Car Center will take about 5 minutes, including a stop at the Economy Parking Garage. Once at the Rental Car Center, passengers will be greeted by 16 different rental car brands – double what the Airport currently offers. The facility will also include kiosks for obtaining boarding passes and checking bags.

The unique car exteriors feature birds commonly found in the Tampa Bay region. The Airport team worked with the Audubon Society, a conservation group focused on birds, to select the images.

"These train cars feature the latest technology and a design concept unlike any we've seen before," said Darin Friedmann, Vice President and General Manager of Mitsubishi

Heavy Industries America's Transportation Systems Division. "Tampa International Airport has a long history with automated people-movers as the first airport in the world to incorporate the system into their design. We are thrilled to continue to build upon that legacy."

The SkyConnect system and rental car center are part of Phase 1 of TPA's Master Plan expansion. The expansion also includes the addition of 69 new shops and restaurants, a complete renovation of the Main Terminal's transfer level and other enabling projects.

Phase 2 of the Master Plan includes new passenger pick-up and drop-off curbsides with express lanes for travelers who aren't checking bags, and commercial development around the Rental Car Center. Phase 3 features a 16-gate airside.

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