

THANK YOU YSELA FOR THE INTRODUCTION.

GOOD MORNING, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE.

I WANT TO BEGIN BY THANKING CORAL GABLES MAYOR JIM CASON FOR PARTICIPATING WITH US THIS MORNING.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO OFFER A SPECIAL THANKS TO UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI PRESIDENT DONNA SHALALA WHO HAS BEEN CRUCIAL TO THIS PROJECT.

THANK YOU BOTH FOR YOUR HARD WORK IN MAKING THIS A REALITY!

IT IS TRULY A PLEASURE TO BE HERE WITH YOU FOR THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF THE PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS AT THE UNIVERSITY METRORAIL STATION.

THIS IS A PROJECT THAT I HAVE FOUGHT FOR AND SUPPORTED FOR MANY YEARS – EVER SINCE MY DAYS AS THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER FOR DISTRICT 7.

WE KNOW HOW PAINFUL THE EVENTS AT THIS INTERSECTION HAVE BEEN. OVER THE YEARS, ONE TOO MANY LIVES HAVE BEEN LOST AT THE INTERSECTION OF U.S. 1 AND MARIPOSA COURT, AND WE HOPE TO PUT A STOP TO THAT ONCE AND FOR ALL.

TODAY, WE TAKE A GIANT STEP TO PROTECTING THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO CROSS THE HEAVILY-TRAVELED US-1 WITH

THE GROUNDBREAKING OF THIS NEW PEDESTRIAN OVERPASS.

THIS PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE WILL PROVIDE A SAFE CROSSING FOR THE MORE THAN 1,300 DAILY CROSSINGS OF PEOPLE WHO EITHER WANT TO REACH OUR METRORAIL STATION, OR ARE GOING FROM OUR STATION TO THE BUSINESSES ACROSS THE STREET.

THE ROAD HAS BEEN LONG, AND NOT WITHOUT OBSTACLES...

BUT WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF YOU ALL, WE WERE ABLE TO GET HERE TODAY...

THIS HAS MOST CERTAINLY BEEN A TEAM EFFORT...

THIS IS THE RESULT OF MULTIPLE COUNTY DEPARTMENTS WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE SURE ALL ASPECTS OF THE DESIGN, PERMITTING, AND BIDDING OF THIS PROJECT ARE ON THE CORRECT PATH TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO EXPEDITE THIS INITIATIVE.

AS WE CELEBRATE THE GROUNDBREAKING OF THIS OVERPASS, I WOULD BE REMISS NOT TO MENTION ALL THOSE WHO HELPED US GET HERE TODAY.

I WANT TO THANK THE UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI COMMUNITY FOR THE SUPPORT IT HAS OFFERED.

ALSO, HERE TODAY IS OUTGOING STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT ALESSANDRIA SAN ROMAN, AND INCOMING PRESIDENT BRIANNA HATHAWAY.

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.

I WANT TO THANK ALL OF THOSE WHO THROUGHOUT THE YEARS HAVE LENT THEIR VOICES TO REMIND EVERYONE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS PROJECT.

I WANT TO ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR TRANSPORTATION PARTNERS – THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION, SOME OF ITS REPRESENTATIVES TRAVELED ALL THE WAY FROM ATLANTA TO BE PRESENT FOR THIS IMPORTANT CEREMONY TODAY,

AND THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, AS WELL AS THE CITIZENS INDEPENDENT TRANSPORTATION TRUST – THEY HELPED US TO NOT ONLY FUND THIS PROJECT, BUT ALSO WORKED WITH US IN KEEPING THIS PROJECT MOVING FORWARD.

ALSO, I WANT TO RECOGNIZE OUR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY DEPUTY MAYOR ALINA HUDAK WHO HAS OVERSEEN THIS PROJECT FROM DAY ONE.

AND A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COUNTY STAFF, WHO WHEN NEGOTIATIONS AND LACK OF FUNDING SEEMED TO STALL THIS PROJECT, THEY THOUGHT ‘OUTSIDE THE BOX’ AND BROUGHT SOLUTIONS THAT CLEARED THE HURDLES FOR THIS PROJECT.

AS YOUR MAYOR, AND AS THE FORMER COUNTY COMMISSIONER OF THIS DISTRICT, I AM ESPECIALLY PROUD TO JOIN ALL OF YOU TODAY IN THE THIS LONG-AWAITED GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY.

LET'S JOIN TOGETHER TO CELEBRATE YET ANOTHER MILESTONE TOWARD OUR COMMON GOAL OF PROTECTING THE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF OUR WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.

THANK YOU AGAIN AND I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING ALL OF YOU HERE WHEN CONSTRUCTION IS COMPLETE IN THE SUMMER OF 2016!

MAY GOD BLESS YOU AND MAY CONTINUE TO BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

