

Raise the ceilings? Tech companies are forcing developers to redesign traditional warehouse spaces

Tenants are seeking taller ceilings, larger trailer parking and more docks per unit

By [Francisco Alvarado](#) | August 16, 2018 09:45AM



L to R: Panelists Erin Byers, David Blount, Stephanie Rodriguez, Adam Vaisman and panel moderator Maria Juncadella

E-commerce tenants are forcing industrial developers to build warehouses with interior ceilings taller than 30 feet and larger parking lots to accommodate idle tractor trailers and delivery vehicles, according to a panel of experts.

“Everybody is now looking at 36-foot-clearance heights,” said Stephanie Rodriguez, Duke Realty’s vice president of leasing. “Multi-story warehouses are the new buzz.”

Adam Vaisman, director of acquisition for Butters Construction & Development, David Blount, vice president of [Foundry Commercial](#); and Erin Byers, vice president with Colliers International, affirmed Rodriguez's view during a Crew Miami luncheon Wednesday that focused on how players in e-commerce are rapidly changing the way [Class A warehouses](#) are configured.

For instance, Butters and joint venture partner Bristol Group are about to open two [new buildings](#) at the Hillsboro Technology Center in Deerfield Beach that will provide tenants with up to 32 feet of clearance height, 55-foot column spacing, 180-foot wide truck courts, and a minimum of four docks per unit, Vaisman said.

The buildings are designed to accommodate one large tenant or can be broken down to 15,000-square-foot units. The warehouses also feature ESFR sprinklers, high impact glass, motion activated T5 warehouse lighting and ample parking.

"Higher ceilings is definitely a trend that keeps evolving," Butters said. "For some developments, we are recommending 36-foot clearance height. We built one at Beacon Lakes that ended up being leased by Amazon."

Vaisman said tenants are also seeking a larger trailer parking footprint. "It is something we are now incorporating in our designs," he said. "I know guys who are buying vacant lots just so they can build surface parking lots for trucks."

Rodriguez said another trend involves e-commerce giants setting up fulfillment centers that require a substantial number of parking spaces for delivery drivers. "They are using Uber drivers to finish the delivery," she said. "They need spaces for hundreds of cars. There is one in Midtown Miami where they had to expand [the property's] parking lot."