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New South Florida Rail Connection to Miami International Airport Almost Done

By Mark Simpson

For close to three years, Miami-Dade Transit workers have been banging out 2.4 miles of track. And now AirportLink Metrorail — a rail connection to Miami International Airport — is slated to be finished this spring.

The new elevated rail line will connect Miami's Metrorail system to a major new transit hub adjacent to Miami International Airport called the MIC, or Miami Intermodal Center. The MIC will be fully operational by 2013, connecting passengers and other transit riders to bus lines, Amtrak, and south Florida's Tri-Rail commuter service. An automated people mover that goes between MIC and the MIA is already in service.

The AirportLink, which is the largest expansion of Metrorail since it was launched in 1984, is an elevated train — and one the most complicated transportation projects happening in the Miami area. Paying for the project has come largely through a half-penny sales tax approved for the project by voters in 2002. The sales tax has raised about \$404 million dollars; another \$100 million has come from the Florida Department of Transportation.

The Miami area hosts Florida's largest collection of rail systems. Orlando is building a commuter train called "SunRail", which is slated to open in two years.