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PUBLIC MEETING FOR METRORAIL EXPANSION

Miami-Dade Transit will hold a public meeting March 25 to present the latest plans for the proposed \$526 million Metrorail spur that would run from the Earlington Heights station into the new Miami Intermodal Center.

The meeting will begin around 6 p.m. with an informal open house followed by a formal presentation at 7 p.m. at Transit's Sheila Winitzer Central Administration Building Auditorium, 3300 NW 32nd Ave.

The 2.4-mile MIC-Earlington Heights line is the first of three proposed Metrorail expansions known collectively as the Orange Line, and it is the only one being built without matching federal construction money.

More than 80 percent, or \$426 million, is coming from the Miami-Dade half-percent sales tax for transportation, the balance from state transportation funds.

Construction is tentatively set to begin in December, and new train service would start in the late 2011. The spur will end at a new station and bus terminal that will be built at the intermodal center located on the east side of LeJeune Road adjacent to Miami International Airport.

Direct access from the MIC Metrorail station to the airport will be provided by an automated people mover. The original meeting, set for late February, was abruptly postponed so county commissioners and Transit administrators could travel to Washington to discuss the latest funding crisis for another piece of the Orange Line: the 9.5-mile, \$1.6 billion North Corridor running up Northwest 27th Avenue from 79th street to the Broward County line.