

# Texas lagging in race for high-speed rail money from U.S. government

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AUSTIN – Texas for years has taken a highway-centric approach to transportation, a factor that is likely to put it at a disadvantage this summer as it competes for billions of dollars in new federal money for high-speed passenger rail.

The federal government has offered \$8 billion now, and an additional \$5 billion over five years, to develop 11 high-speed passenger rail corridors throughout the United States. Two of those corridors run through Texas, including one that would link Dallas to Austin and San Antonio.

But with draft proposals for how to spend that money due July 10, Texas finds itself shut out of the biggest sources of those funds. That's largely because it has never funded the kinds of studies its biggest ideas for high-speed rail require.

"Texas is really behind everyone else because we have not done the studies to see if high-speed rail corridors are feasible," executive director Amadeo Saenz said at a meeting Wednesday of the Texas Transportation Commission.

Much of the \$8 billion that the Federal Railroad Administration plans to distribute will go to projects that are either ready to be built but lack funds, or are years from construction but already have undergone feasibility and environmental studies.

One proposal for high-speed rail in the state, the Texas T-Bone, has been backed by groups in Texas for years but has never been funded by the state and or formally evaluated.