



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Texas Press Release



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"21ST CENTURY CAMINO REAL CORRIDOR"

"Today's joint announcement on high-speed rail from here to Denver is an historic moment. I applaud Governors Richardson, Perry, and Ritter in making this happen. Here in El Paso, we will make every effort to join Congressman Silvestre Reyes, Mayor John Cook, and the Governors of the three states to push this critical project and specifically to include the Salmayuca line in the Federal Railroad administration study. Our main goal should be a 21st century Camino Real that strengthens economic ties in this 400 year old corridor that has been the lifeline for trade for so long."

Today, three southwest Governors announced that Texas is partnering with New Mexico and Colorado to take the initial steps in developing a high-speed rail corridor between El Paso and Denver.

Earlier this year, President Barack Obama launched an aggressive effort to develop a national network of high-speed passenger rail lines. High-speed rail is characterized by trains that operate at [speeds of at least 110 mph](#).



Source: US Department of Transportation

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The President unveiled a strategic plan identifying \$8 billion in federal stimulus funds and a separate five-year, \$5 billion investment as a down payment to jump-start the nation's high-speed rail lines. Europe and Asia have had similar high speed rail lines for years.

Congress has authorized up to eleven high-speed corridors across the U.S. Currently only 10 corridors have been designated. The three-state partnership is seeking the 11th designation and will be applying for federal funds to conduct a viability study.

Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado could receive up to \$5 million from the Federal Railroad Administration under the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 to study the viability of the El Paso to Denver High-Speed Rail Corridor. The three states will submit the joint pre-application for funds tomorrow, Friday July 10th

For Texas and particularly for El Paso this development is historic. The El Paso area is among the largest international commuter and commercial ports in the Western Hemisphere, with more than 23 million border crossings from pedestrians, commuters and commercial trucks in 2007 alone.

[Since 1881, El Paso has served as a major rail hub.](#) With gas prices on the rise and with highway costs inflating 75 percent every five years, [El Paso's mobility future must include international commuter rail and mass transit.](#) Adding high speed rail to strengthen an existing 400 year old trade corridor should be a regional priority.

With the movement of current industrial rail west of the Juarez Mountains, El Paso-Juarez can be a dynamic international commuter line as well. The estimated 50 miles of track in Juarez and the El Paso MPO Study area is expected to provide for economic growth to the region and alleviate traffic congestion on existing road facilities that intersect with rail traffic.

For El Paso/Juarez, this also presents an historic opportunity to take existing rail right-of-way and adapt it to new use as state-of-the-art high speed and commuter rail. In the future, existing rail in Juarez being relocated to Santa Teresa could be used to expand cross-border commuter rail in El Paso-Juarez, similar to how New Mexico [used existing freight rail to start their Commuter train Rail Runner.](#)

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