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N.C. seeks \$6B for high-speed rail

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The North Carolina Department of Transportation has asked to use \$6 billion in federal recovery money to link Charlotte and Washington, D.C., with a high-speed rail service that would run through the Triangle.

"The nut of it is that we are ready and the feds agree," says Patrick Simmons, director of the state DOT's rail division.

North Carolina and Virginia have been planning the route for years, long before the federal stimulus funds were available, Simmons says.

Last week, he submitted preliminary applications for the service that would add a second track along existing rails, build depots and straighten tracks along the N.C. leg of the project. Those tracks run through the Triangle, with stops in Raleigh, Cary and Durham.

The plan is to connect Charlotte and the Triangle to the nation's capital with trains that reach 110 mph, the preliminary applications state.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has allotted \$8 billion for high-speed rail service. And President Obama wants to spend an additional \$1 billion per year for such projects.

Simmons says it's too early to talk about timetables for a Charlotte-to-D.C. link. Formal applications for recovery cash won't be submitted until later this summer.

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