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Virginia and North Carolina have established the only bi-state, high-speed rail partnership in America, the Virginia-North Carolina High Speed Rail Compact, which was authorized by Congress and established through legislation enacted by the Virginia and North Carolina General Assemblies. The purpose of the Compact is to examine and discuss strategies to advance multi-state high-speed rail initiatives. Virginia has also planned for the acquisition of CSX's abandoned line between the Petersburg area and Norlina, North Carolina, which is slated to be used for dedicated, 110-mph high-speed intercity passenger rail service.

### 3.3.1 Federal High Speed Rail Program

In 2002, FRA designated ten high speed corridors under Section 101-0 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and Section 11-03(c) of the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) for passenger rail service in high population density and congested intercity sections of the nation.<sup>1,2</sup> This designation allows a corridor to receive specially targeted funding for highway-rail grade crossing safety improvements and recognize the corridor as a potential center of high speed rail activity.

#### Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor

In 1992, the U.S. DOT designated the SEHSR from Washington, D.C. to Charlotte, North Carolina, as one of five original national high-speed rail corridors. The SEHSR corridor is made up of a number of rail segments with top speeds of up to 110 mph covering the south Atlantic states with passenger rail service to and from the Northeast including Amtrak's service north to New York and Boston. The U.S. DOT subsequently designated an extension of the SEHSR corridor from Richmond to Hampton Roads in 1996, followed by other extensions to Georgia and Florida.

In 2002, a Tier I EIS was completed for the original, 450-mile Washington, D.C. to Charlotte, North Carolina segment of the SEHSR. The environmental study also established the purpose and need for the SEHSR as well as the vision for passenger rail service on the corridor. The SEHSR Tier I EIS recommended an incremental approach to developing the corridor.

Since then, DRPT has been working with the FRA and the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia to advance higher-speed rail service on the SEHSR corridor. The system will be developed

<sup>1</sup> <https://ntl.bts.gov/DOCS/istea.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tea21/h240suba.htm#1103>























