

METRO

Memphis-Nashville passenger-rail line gets \$500K federal grant

By [Bill Dries](#), Daily Memphian

Updated: December 07, 2023 7:09 AM CT | Published: December 06, 2023 5:43 PM CT



The Federal Railroad Administration has issued a \$500,000 grant to start planning an Amtrak passenger-rail line between Memphis and Nashville, and from there to Chattanooga and Atlanta. (Matt Slocum/AP file)

The idea of a passenger-rail corridor between Memphis and Nashville — and from there to Chattanooga and Atlanta — has a \$500,000 grant from the Federal Railroad Administration to start the planning process.

U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., announced the grant Wednesday, Dec. 6, as part of what is called the “Corridor ID” program.

With the federal funding, planners of the four-city rail corridor will begin developing the project's scope as well as a schedule and estimate costs for a service-development plan.

D.C. Scorecard: Trump's indictment, Cohen on Amtrak; Kustoff at Le Bonheur

The City of Chattanooga applied for the funding with Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland and the mayors of Nashville and Atlanta joining the application process.

Cohen has long advocated for a passenger-rail corridor in the freight-dominated region.

Steve Cohen

@RepCohen · Follow

X

Tough news for all the doubters: we're taking the next big step towards a passenger rail line linking [#Memphis](#), [#Nashville](#), [#Chattanooga](#) & [#Atlanta](#).

What's good for Memphis is good for America —[@SecretaryPete](#) knows! More here: bit.ly/3TbfZNQ

Watch on X

11:39 AM · Dec 6, 2023

♥ 496

💬 Reply

🔗 Share

Read 32 replies

This past September, Cohen pushed U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg for federal funding to begin the planning process.

Cohen said the passenger rail line could be “a major economic shot in the arm” that will “invigorate travel and tourism across our state.”

“Once this service is in operation, much of the country will be accessible by rail from Memphis,” he said. “This is a very big deal.”

The same \$8 billion pool Tennessee’s \$500,000 is coming from, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, included \$1 billion in grant money for a new passenger-rail route between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Richmond, Virginia, and another \$2 billion for more passenger rail in Pennsylvania.

The Tennessee Advisory Committee on Intergovernmental Relations recommended in a June report that the Tennessee Department of Transportation pursue a passenger-rail route connecting Nashville, Chattanooga and Atlanta as the state’s top priority.



U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., announced the Federal Railroad Administration grant Dec. 6 as part of what is called the “Corridor ID” program. (Mark Weber/The Daily Memphian file)

A Nashville-Memphis connection was the second priority.

The state’s only Amtrak line connects Memphis with New Orleans to the south and Chicago to the north, running once a day in each direction.

The state report recommended more service between Memphis and Chicago but made it a lower priority.

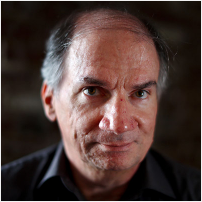
TOPICS

- STEVE COHEN
- PASSENGER RAIL
- FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION

Bill Dries on demand

Never miss an article. Sign up to receive Bill Dries' stories as they’re published.

+ Follow



Bill Dries

Bill Dries covers city and county government and politics. He is a native Memphian and has been a reporter for more than 40 years.