



May 25, 2023
Governor Laura Kelly
Capitol, 300 SW 10th Ave., Ste. 241S
Topeka, KS 66612-1590

RE: Heartland Flyer Extension

Dear Governor Kelly,

The Greater Wichita Partnership and Downtown Wichita are pleased to offer support for the extension of the Heartland Flyer rail service from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Newton, Kansas. We applaud Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas' commitment and partnership to secure Corridor Identification for the extended route which provides an enhanced economic opportunity and an invaluable connection to the cross-country Amtrak network.

As one of the region's primary economic development entities, the Partnership works to expand job opportunities, attract and retain talent and improve the quality of life within a 10-county region in South Central Kansas. Extending this vital rail service along the Interstate-35 corridor provides numerous benefits including:

- **Enhanced Connectivity:** Creating a new rail route linking Newton and Wichita to Oklahoma City and Fort Worth, Texas connects top population centers such as Wichita to the national transportation grid. The extension opens a variety of connections for rural and urban residents to the east and west coasts, particularly to larger cities such as Kansas City, Chicago and Los Angeles on the Southwest Chief.
- **Economic Development:** Restoring the Heartland Flyer between Texas and Kansas through Oklahoma is a critical means of fully connecting the nation's fastest-growing economic development corridor along I-35. Rail service through the heartland, particularly the Greater Wichita region, creates a significant opportunity to enhance the area's attractiveness to businesses looking to establish operations or expand their reach. Additionally, improved rail access will lead to increased tourism and visitor spending which benefits local businesses and generates job growth.
- **Community and Regional Development:** The Heartland Flyer extension contributes to the overall development of the Greater Wichita region, fostering stronger ties among neighboring communities and facilitating regional collaboration.

The extension of the Heartland Flyer demonstrates the potential to enhance transportation infrastructure, stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life for businesses, residents and visitors alike.

We commend the states of Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas for their hard work and dedication to advancing rail service in the Greater Wichita region and we look forward to discussions to add a second frequency to the line in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Fluhr".

Jeff Fluhr, President
Greater Wichita Partnership
Downtown Wichita