

# REAP | Regional Economic Area Partnership

February 6, 2023

To: The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary  
United States Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

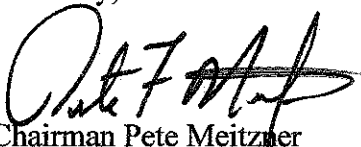
The Regional Economic Area Partnership (REAP) is pleased to offer support for the Kansas Department of Transportation, Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and Texas Department of Transportation's joint application for the Heartland Flyer Extension to be accepted into the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program. This extension is a long-held economic development and transportation objective to re-connect numerous Oklahoma and Kansas communities to the national network via the Southwest Chief at Newton, Kansas, and points across the nation.

REAP is comprised of over 35 city and county governments in ten counties of South Central Kansas, including Butler, Cowley, Harper, Harvey, Kingman, McPherson, Pratt, Reno, Sedgwick, and Sumner, as well as multiple school districts and higher education institutions. These jurisdictions and education partners have voluntarily joined together to guide state and national actions that affect economic development in the region and to consider and adopt joint actions among member governments that enhance the regional economy.

The long-awaited, full re-connection of this corridor in America's Heartland will provide increased transportation choices and economic opportunity for rural and urban residents and businesses alike. With its long-term value of enhancing economic growth within the I-35 Corridor megaregion, and near-term benefit for improving the Amtrak National system, the Heartland Flyer Extension is vital.

Restoring the Heartland Flyer between Texas and Kansas is also an important means of fully connecting the nation's fastest-growing economic development corridor located along Interstate 35 (Laredo, TX – Kansas City, MO) boasting over 40 million population, 10 million jobs, and a 28 percent growth rate. The gap in rail service between Oklahoma City and Newton must be remedied to ensure we take advantage of the opportunity to enhance our links with this enormous and growing economic super-region.

Sincerely,



Chairman Pete Meitzner  
Sedgwick County Commission  
REAP Chair