



February 16, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition 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.

The South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition supports the extension of passenger rail service to connect the Southwest Chief and the Heartland Flyer. Restoring passenger rail service between Kansas City and Dallas will provide a vital link between Wichita and Kansas City and Wichita and Oklahoma City. The full re-connection of this corridor would provide increased transportation choices for college students attending school in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas as well as traveling seniors and business travelers.

By closing the 200-mile service gap, KDOT and ODOT are partnering to improve the region's manufacturing base, worker productivity, commerce, trade, connectivity and economic mobility. Closing this gap will also reconnect these significant rural areas to the region's metropolitan centers.

Home to several million people, the proposed passenger rail corridor from Oklahoma City to Newton via Wichita would in effect connect the economic, manufacturing and transportation centers along the I-35 Corridor Megaregion with the shipping centers in Chicago and energy production centers in Texas. Strengthening these connections will provide for the development of a more prosperous economy from Chicago to San Antonio.

As a coalition, our focus is on making enhancements to the transportation infrastructure that will benefit the entire region through improved access for commerce. The South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition supports this joint application because it will provide additional opportunities to foster growth throughout the region by providing additional transportation options.

Sincerely,

Brett Letkowski
Chair
South Central Kansas Transportation Coalition