



February 24, 2023

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

RE: Letter of Support – AMTRAK - Heartland Flyer Extension (KDOT, OKDOT, TXDOT joint application)

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WAMPO) 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.

WAMPO supports this application for the following reasons:

- a. This Amtrak Corridor connecting Newton (KS), Wichita (KS), Oklahoma City (OK), Norman (OK), Dallas (TX) has a great demand potential to serve students and their families, along this corridor. There are Universities along this corridor in Kansas City, Wichita State University, Universities in and around Oklahoma City, Norman, as well as in and around Dallas. Heartland Flyer Extension Corridor has a great potential to serve students and families of these universities and colleges along this corridor.
- b. In addition, Wichita is a home for military base and a resource for national security, thus having a passenger rail mode serving national security personnel would serve a greater purpose.
- c. There are ridership transfers noted at Newton going towards Dallas. Hence this corridor connecting Newton, Wichita, and Dallas will serve those customers traveling enroute Kansas City to Dallas.
- d. The riders of Amtrak train in Kansas are dedicated using this mode even though the operating hours at times are in the middle of the night before sun rise.
- e. FRA's long distance service study <https://fralongdistancerailstudy.org> evaluates the restoration of discontinued daily intercity rail passenger service.
 - San Francisco Chief Route (1954 – 1971) was discontinued in 1970 that served Wichita (KS), Emporia (KS), Oklahoma & Texas.
 - Lone Star Route (1974 – 1979) Amtrak route discontinued in 1979, that served Wichita (KS), Emporia (KS), Oklahoma & Texas.
- f. There is a regional support and support of the local governments, many leaders and many elected officials along this corridor are very supportive of the Heartland Flyer Extension Corridor.

Please feel free to contact me or my staff at 316-779-1320 or email at Chad.Parasa@wampo.org if there is any additional information that we can provide in support of this Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chad Parasa", written over a horizontal line.

Chad Parasa
WAMPO Executive Director