



OKLAHOMA
Transportation



September 8, 2022

Dear Secretary Buttigieg and Administrator Bose,

As you begin implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58), we ask you give full and fair consideration to the Heartland Flyer Northern Extension project in Oklahoma and Kansas to be included in the Corridor Identification and Development Plan (22308 of the IJA).

The current line of the Heartland Flyer runs twice daily between Oklahoma City, OK and Fort Worth, TX and provides an invaluable connection to the cross-country Amtrak network. Ridership on the Heartland Flyer has recovered quickly following the downturn of the Covid-19 pandemic, showing the need and desire of Oklahomans to travel by rail.

The long-awaited, full re-connection of this corridor in America's Heartland would 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, this Corridor Designation is the first step in this vital 400-mile re-connection. This extension is a long-held economic development and transportation objective to re-connect numerous Oklahoma and Kansas communities north to the national network via the Southwest Chief at Newton, Kansas, and points across the nation.

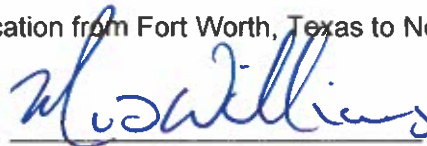
Restoring the Heartland Flyer between Texas and Kansas through Oklahoma is also an important means of fully connecting the nation's fastest-growing economic development corridor along Interstate 35 (Laredo, TX- Kansas City, MO). This area boasts over 40 million people in population, 10 million jobs,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

The Heartland Flyer extension to Newton, KS currently has the full support and backing of the Oklahoma and Kansas Departments of Transportation, every Chamber of Commerce in the State of Oklahoma, and over 20 cities in all three states. The Heartland Flyer Extension has already undergone extensive preliminary study and planning over the course of the past 15 years and significant prerequisite preparation has been accomplished.

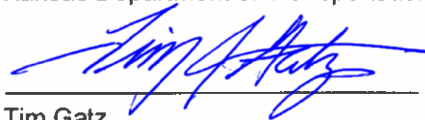
We respectfully request Designated Corridor Identification from Fort Worth, Texas to Newton, Kansas.


Julie Lorenz (Sep 16, 2022 08:05 CDT)

Julie Lorenz
Secretary of Transportation
Kansas Department of Transportation



Marc Williams
Executive Director
Texas Department of Transportation



Tim Gatz
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