



Homer Nicholson, Mayor

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February 13, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The City of Ponca City 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 States of Kansas and Oklahoma Legislatures have both been supportive of the expansion of the Heartland Flyer from Oklahoma City to Newton, KS. The City of Ponca City, OK has passed numerous Resolutions in support of this expansion over the last few years, 2008, 2018 and again in 2021. During a demonstration Amtrak train trip from Oklahoma City to Kansas City approximately 2,000 residents showed for the five-minute stop here in Ponca City. The City has since acquired control of the old Santa Fe Depot and is committed to its renovation as a transportation hub for North Central Oklahoma. It will house our local public transportation bus service, be tied into the City's pathway system which will provide both walking and biking connections, as well as vehicular traffic. It is located in the City's downtown core and will enhance the economic vitality of the Historic Downtown District.

This expansion will also provide for a means of public transportation out of town to larger metro locations for residents needing additional medical care or treatment. Currently they have to plan for someone to take them to their medical appointments or treatments. It reduces their ability to be independent and yet still live in their hometown. It is a way to provide for some dignity to these individuals.

It is anticipated that this route expansion would lead up to 200,000 annual riders with an economic impact of \$64.8 million on cities and towns along the expanded service. Return on Investment studies from Kansas University and Texas Transportation Institute/Texas A&M showed 4.6:1 and 4.5:1 ROIs respectively on expansion of this route.

North Central Oklahoma has been disconnected from the national public transportation system and this small, 200-mile, expansion would connect them back into the system as well as connect the DFW metroplex with the Kansas City metroplex and beyond. Thereby reducing the need for vehicular travel, reducing congestion on the highways, less fuel used to reduce pollution and reduction on accidents that cause loss of life or creation of disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Homer Nicholson".

Homer L. Nicholson  
Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Craig Stephenson".

Craig Stephenson, ICMA-CM, MS  
City Manager