

City of Wichita  
City Council Meeting  
August 10, 2021

**TO:** Mayor and City Council  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution Supporting the Extension of Amtrak Services  
**INITIATED BY:** Council Member Agenda  
**AGENDA:** Council Agenda

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**Recommendation:** Adopt the resolution and authorize all necessary signatures.

**Background:** The City of Wichita has not had direct access to passenger rail service since 1979. Citizens of Wichita who want to utilize Amtrak's passenger rail service must currently travel to other localities, such as Newton or Hutchinson, to access rail service.

Earlier this year, Amtrak released the Amtrak Connects US Plan to grow rail service across the country. This 2035 vision identifies expansion and enhancement of rail corridor routes that offer economically viable, frequent, reliable and sustainable passenger rail service.

The Amtrak plan includes adding the expansion of the Heartland Flyer line from Oklahoma City through Wichita, to Newton, where it will connect with the Southwest Chief. The expansion of the Flyer line to connect with the Southwest Chief is estimated to add 100,000 to 200,000 passengers annually.

**Analysis:** Passenger rail service has become a subject of renewed interest in the United States as fuel and energy prices escalate, and as the federal government continues to tighten environmental and air quality standards impacted by motor vehicle emissions. It is somewhat incongruous that a city of the area, population and economic significance of Wichita is currently without passenger rail service, while smaller communities such as Newton, Hutchinson and Lawrence have such service. Restoration of passenger rail service to Wichita in connection with the proposed route extension would remedy this situation and provide a direct rail route south to Oklahoma City and Fort Worth. It would also connect (at Newton) to existing Amtrak routes, west to Los Angeles and east to Kansas City and Chicago (with further service connections from Chicago to passenger rail routes that serve major eastern population centers).

**Financial Considerations:** The resolution does not include a statement of financial support or contribution from the City of Wichita.

**Legal Considerations:** The City of Wichita Law has reviewed and approved the proposed resolution.

**Recommendations/Actions:** It is recommended that the City Council approve the resolution and authorize all necessary signatures.

**Attachments:** Resolution and Amtrak Fact Sheet.

RESOLUTION NO.: 21-308

A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WICHITA FOR EXPANSION OF AMTRAK PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE IN OKLAHOMA AND KANSAS.

WHEREAS, Amtrak has released the AMTRAK CONNECTS US plan to grow rail service across America; and

WHEREAS, the 2035 VISION identifies expansion and enhancement of corridor routes that offer economically viable, frequent, reliable and sustainable passenger train service; and,

WHEREAS, the 2035 VISION proposes adding 160 additional communities to the national rail network, including extension of the Heartland Flyer line from Oklahoma City, through Wichita, to Newton where it will intersect with the Southeast Chief, serving numerous other cities along the route in Kansas and Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has proposed 100% funding for the capital costs required for the redevelopment of this corridor, currently in the federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act; and

WHEREAS, Amtrak has identified an Extension of the Heartland Flyer as an economically viable train for a connection with the Southwest Chief at Newton, Kansas, that will improve the performance of the national network; and,

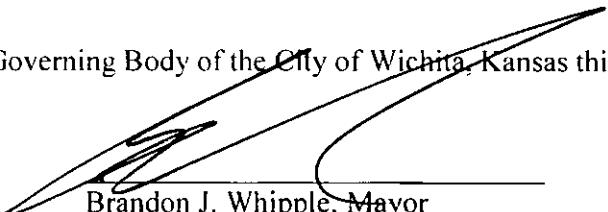
WHEREAS, an Extension of the Heartland Flyer between Oklahoma City and Newton would add the cities of Edmund, Guthrie, Perry, Ponca City, Arkansas City, Wichita and Newton to the schedule; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE AFORESTATED PREMISES, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF WICHITA, KANSAS that:

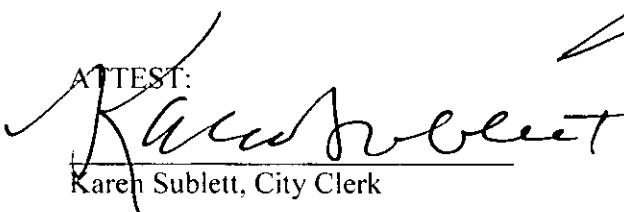
The City of Wichita expressly supports the continuation of the Southwest Chief and the expansion of the Heartland Flyer Lines.

This Resolution will be in full force and effect from its date of passage by the City Council of the City of Wichita, Kansas.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED by the Governing Body of the City of Wichita, Kansas this 10<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2021.

  
Brandon J. Whipple, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
Karen Sublett, City Clerk

Approved as to form:

  
Jennifer Magaña  
City Attorney and Director of Law



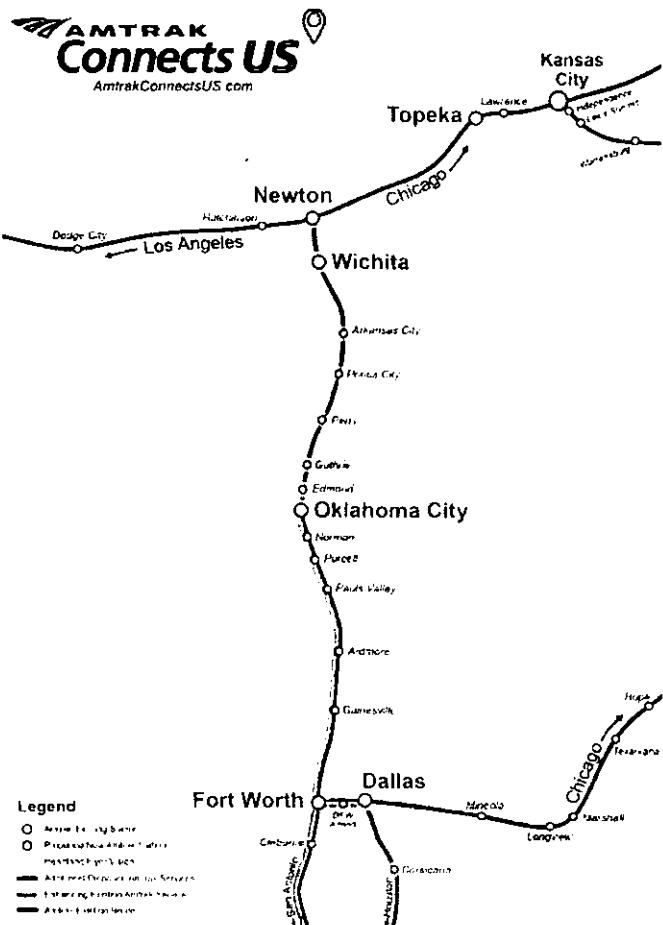


## Amtrak's Vision:

### Fort Worth - Oklahoma City - Wichita - Newton

Amtrak's vision extends the existing *Heartland Flyer* route to serve Wichita and link to Amtrak's *Southwest Chief*:

- Expand from 1 to 3 round trips between Oklahoma City (OKC) and Fort Worth (FTW), connecting with *Texas Triangle* services to Dallas, Houston, Austin, and San Antonio, and the *Texas Eagle* to Los Angeles, Tucson, St. Louis, and Chicago.
- Extend 1 Fort Worth - Oklahoma City round trip to Wichita and Newton, KS (NEW) for a connection with Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* to Los Angeles, Albuquerque, Kansas City, and Chicago.



## Heartland Flyer Extension

Frequency	Initial Trip Time	Host Railroad	Economic Impact
FTW-OKC: 3 daily round trips OKC-NEW: 1 daily round trip	FTW-OKC: 3:59 OKC-NEW: 4:19	BNSF	\$64.8 million annually, plus \$1.9 billion in economic activity from one-time capital investments

## Corridor Growth

Extension and improvement of Amtrak's existing *Heartland Flyer* service would enhance existing service between Fort Worth and Oklahoma City, bring new service to Wichita, and increase connectivity to the Amtrak network via Newton. Although Oklahoma City and Wichita are only 160 miles apart, the last time they were connected by passenger rail was in 1979. Additionally, the service would connect to the *Texas Triangle* routes included in Amtrak's corridor vision. The Dallas/Fort Worth area is home to over 7.5 million people, the fourth largest in the United States, and the route in total would serve an area with over ten million residents.

## Proposed Stations

- Newton, KS
- Wichita, KS\*
- Arkansas City, KS\*
- Ponca City, OK\*
- Perry, OK\*
- Guthrie, OK\*
- Edmond, OK\*
- Oklahoma City, OK
- Norman, OK
- Purcell, OK
- Pauls Valley, OK
- Ardmore, OK
- Gainesville, TX
- Fort Worth, TX

\* New Amtrak stations

## Environment and Transportation Equity

The growth experienced by the Wichita-Dallas corridor has been accompanied by increased traffic congestion, especially along Wichita's I-235 highway. The Dallas – Fort Worth – Arlington corridor is one of the top ten most congested areas in the United States. According to the Texas A&M

Transportation Institute, drivers in the region lost 67 hours sitting in traffic in 2017. Oklahoma City has experienced similar issues. Amtrak service can bring much-needed relief to the corridor.

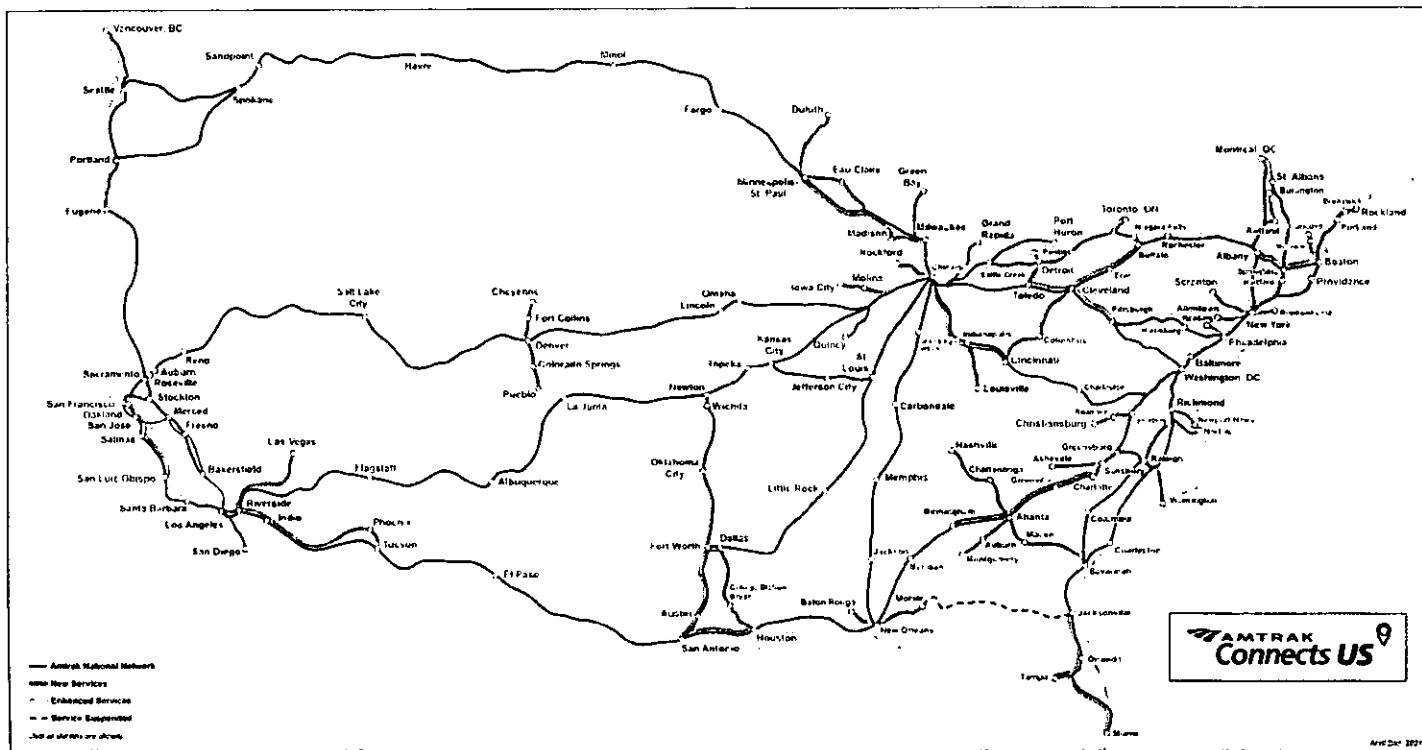
New rail connections between smaller cities in the corridor and Wichita, Oklahoma City, and Fort Worth would improve mobility for underserved communities, connecting residents to new education and employment opportunities along the corridor.

## Connections to Higher Education

Extending the *Heartland Flyer* would create new connections between major metropolitan cities, medium-sized cities, and colleges and universities. Students, their families, faculty, and staff will be able to take advantage of frequent Amtrak service to avoid traffic between destinations.

Colleges and universities served by the *Heartland Flyer* Extension would include:

- Bethel College (*Student Population: 514*)
- Cowley University (*Student Population: 3,762*)
- Friends University (*Student Population: 2,800*)
- Hutchinson Community College (*Student Population: 5,500*)
- Newman University (*Student Population: 2,705*)
- Oklahoma Christian University (*Student Population: 2,200*)
- Texas Christian University (*Student Population: 9,704*)
- Texas Wesleyan University (*Student Population: 2,619*)
- University of Central Oklahoma (*Student Population: 11,433*)
- The University of Oklahoma (*Student Population: 26,327*)
- Wichita State University (*Student Population: 15,550*)



Investment in America's infrastructure is critical to the economic and environmental well-being of our nation. As we look to the future, Amtrak is exploring new opportunities to better connect communities, reduce our carbon footprint, and provide economic benefits for every American. Over the next 15 years, Amtrak's vision for expansion will connect up to 160 communities throughout the United States by building new or improved rail corridors in over 25 states.

Amtrak's plan will benefit all Americans and impact rural main street and urban city centers. Amtrak will introduce new stations in over half of U.S. states, increase rail service to 47 out of the top 50 metropolitan areas, and create over half a million new, well-paying jobs.

Please continue to check this page throughout 2021, as we will have more information and content throughout the year.

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## Videos

## Images/Maps

## Presentations

Misc.

## Amtrak Connects Us: Full Report

The accompanying report offers more details about our vision to improve 25 of our existing routes, add 39 new routes, and bring service to over 160 new communities, in addition to the over 525 communities we proudly serve today.

## National Fact Sheet

Amtrak's vision to grow rail service and connect new city pairs across America rises to the urgent challenges of our time, and will provide new and improved train service to millions of additional passengers. This one-pager provides more information on Amtrak's vision for a rail network America needs that offers frequent, reliable, sustainable, and equitable train service.

#### Front Range Corridor Fact Sheet

Connecting a thriving corridor with safe, convenient, sustainable Amtrak service for Amtrak's vision between Pueblo and Cheyenne.

#### 3C + D Corridor Fact Sheet

Despite being less than 250 miles apart, the last time Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati were connected directly by rail was in 1967. Amtrak's vision would turn both Cincinnati and Cleveland into new hubs for Amtrak service.

#### Heartland Flyer Extension Fact Sheet

Extension and improvement of Amtrak's existing *Heartland Flyer* service would enhance existing service between Fort Worth and Oklahoma City, bring new service to Wichita, and increase connectivity to the Amtrak network via Newton. Although Oklahoma City and Wichita are only 160 miles apart, the last time they were connected by passenger rail was in 1979. Additionally, the service would connect to the *Texas Triangle* routes included in Amtrak's corridor vision. The Dallas/Fort Worth area is home to over 7.5 million people, the fourth largest in the United States, and the route in total would serve an area with over ten million residents.

#### Arizona Roundtable Fact Sheet

This new corridor links the rapidly growing Phoenix and Tucson areas with daily multi-frequency service between downtown Tucson through Phoenix to the West Valley suburb of Buckeye. It also links Phoenix and Tucson to Los Angeles with increased daily service. Eleven mayors of communities along the Tucson - Phoenix corridor, led by Tucson Mayor Regina Romero and Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego, have released a joint letter to Congress expressing support for Amtrak's vision to bring passenger rail service to one of the fastest growing regions in America.