



February 24, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce (WRCC) is pleased to offer support for the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT), 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.

Home to several million people, the proposed passenger rail corridor from Oklahoma City to Newton via Wichita would connect the economic, manufacturing and transportation centers along the I-35 Corridor Region 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.

By completing 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, which is of vital importance to the Wichita region. This will also reconnect these significant rural areas to the region's metropolitan centers.

The WRCC supports the extension of passenger rail service to connect the Southwest Chief and the Heartland Flyer, reconnecting Wichita with Kansas City to the northeast and Oklahoma City to the south via rail. The full reconnection of this corridor would provide increased transportation choices for business travelers who commute through the region, college students attending school in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas and traveling seniors.

The WRCC serves Wichita and surrounding communities, advocating for a pro-business climate to foster economic growth. This connection is foundational to our region's future economic success, and we wholeheartedly support this application.

Sincerely,

John Rolfe
President and CEO