



**Department of Public Works & Utilities**

October 4, 2018

RE: City of Wichita Support for Heartland Flyer Expansion

Dear Senator McGinn and members of the Joint Legislative Task Force:

On behalf of the City of Wichita, Kansas, we provide this letter of testimony to the 2018 Joint Legislative Task Force in support of the Heartland Flyer expansion. We appreciate the time and effort put forth by the members of the Task Force, traveling across the State, to gather this input directly from the stakeholders and partners.

While Wichita plans to present its transportation priorities at the October 18 meeting, we wish to express support for other transportation projects in the South-Central Kansas region. Of particular importance is the expansion of the Heartland Flyer and the City of Newton's efforts in promoting this project. We continue to express emphatic support for passenger rail service from Oklahoma City to Newton, with service in Wichita. Expansion of the Heartland Flyer route would provide a direct link between the metropolitan areas of Dallas/Fort Worth, Oklahoma City, Wichita and Kansas City – connecting more than ten million persons with direct passenger rail service that is currently unavailable.

Support for the extension of the Heartland Flyer has been expressed by 49 cities, 6 counties and 19 Chambers of Commerce along the I-35 corridor stretching from Kansas City to Fort Worth. The availability of business and recreational travel to utilize the new connection would have a positive economic impact on the state and local communities served along the route, which is enhanced by the ability for business travel to remain productive during travel time. A University of Kansas study found an after-tax economic benefit for the state of more than 3:1 ([northernflyeralliance.com](http://northernflyeralliance.com)).

The City views passenger rail and its economic impact to be a vital benefit to the Wichita area, the other communities along the route and the state of Kansas overall. Earlier this year, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) announced that Amtrak is moving forward with a feasibility study for extension of the Heartland Flyer route. The City of Wichita supports these efforts and potential state funding for extension of the Heartland Flyer and its operation.

Sincerely,



Gary Janzen, P.E.  
City Engineer/Assistant Director

**Engineering Division**