

April 15, 2014

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

The Wichita Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (WBPAB) enthusiastically encourages the US Department of Transportation (US DOT) to fund the City of Wichita 2014 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant application for the Northern Flyer Project. The WBPAB supports this project to support economic development through improved regional connectivity and expansion of transportation options.

The Northern Flyer Project (a.k.a. Heartland Flyer Extension) supports the long-term national goals that have been established by the TIGER grant program. It is a multi-jurisdictional project, requiring the cooperation of the State of Kansas, State of Oklahoma and many local governments. The project will enhance regional connections by closing the 200 mile passenger rail service gap along the I-135 corridor - between Dallas, Texas and Newton, Kansas. This connection will enhance mobility and more prosperous economies from Chicago to San Antonio.

In addition to supporting economic development through enhanced connectivity, the Northern Flyer project will also bring economic benefits through the expansion of transportation mode options. Increased transportation mode options can allow individuals greater freedom to reduce household transportation costs, by providing convenient alternatives to utilizing a motor vehicle. The ability to take a train can also increase productivity, by allowing travelers to focus on things other than driving.

The WBPAB is especially excited about future pedestrian and bicycle connections associated with the Northern Flyer Project. The rail investments in Wichita can be maximized for economic development through the development/revitalization of adjacent districts focused on the most efficient urban forms of transportation – walking and bicycling. The adjacent districts can be integrated into the City of Wichita bicycle network (currently under development and recommended in the Wichita Bicycle Master Plan) and utilize the latest guidance from the Wichita Pedestrian Master Plan (draft coming this spring).

The Northern Flyer Project meets the TIGER goals for significant regional and national impact and will be successful for generations. The WBPAB encourages you to fund the City of Wichita, Kansas, 2014 TIGER grant application for the Northern Flyer Project

Sincerely,

Jack Brown
Wichita Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board Chairperson