



May 2, 2025

RE: Support for the Amtrak Heartland Flyer

Senator Brent Hagenbuch
Texas State Senate
Texas Capitol, Room ____
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Senator Hagenbuch,

On behalf of a broad coalition of stakeholders from Gainesville and Cooke County—we write to express our strong support for Amtrak’s *Heartland Flyer* and to respectfully urge your support for full funding of the Texas Department of Transportation’s (TxDOT) commitment to this critical service in Senate Bill 1.

The *Heartland Flyer* serves as a vital transportation link between Fort Worth, Gainesville, and Oklahoma City along the Interstate 35 corridor. It offers a dependable, energy-efficient, and affordable travel option for both business and leisure passengers, while helping to reduce congestion on one of the state’s busiest highways. Notably, approximately 30% of *Heartland Flyer* passengers connect to either the Trinity Railway Express (TRE) or Amtrak’s *Texas Eagle*, reinforcing the service’s importance as part of a larger, integrated regional and national rail network.

Gainesville is a key access point on the *Heartland Flyer* line, connecting Cooke County residents and visitors to one of the nation’s fastest-growing metro areas—and vice versa. Fort Worth, with its \$3.5 billion tourism economy, and Gainesville, with its vibrant, emerging downtown and beautiful historic BNSF Santa Fe Depot (Amtrak station), both benefit directly from strategic transportation services like the *Heartland Flyer*. This service enhances job access, workforce mobility, tourism, and regional economic development. It is specifically recognized as a community asset in the Texas Downtown Association’s 2024 *Downtown Gainesville Assessment* and is a central component in our forthcoming Comprehensive Plan, Downtown Master Plan, and Parks & Trails Master Plan: *Guiding Gainesville 2040*.

Further supporting this corridor, Amtrak has approved \$1.9 million in funding for ADA improvements at the historic Santa Fe Depot in Gainesville (GLE) in fiscal year 2026. This

investment will ensure greater accessibility and continued service quality for passengers of all abilities.

We respectfully request your support in securing continued state funding for this essential service by adopting the House language in Article 11 of Senate Bill 1, which includes \$7,056,238 in State Financial Support for the *Heartland Flyer*.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to further discuss the *Heartland Flyer's* positive impact on regional transportation, economic development, and quality of life across North Texas.

Sincerely,

William Myers, Executive Director
Gainesville Economic Development Corporation
In partnership with our community stakeholders

Judge John Roane
Cooke County, Texas

Mayor Tommy Moore
City of Gainesville, Texas

Eric Bridges
North Central Texas COG

Ryan Morris
Gainesville EDC

Jennifer Shumate
Gainesville Area
Chamber of Commerce

Suzanne Canon
Downtown Gainesville Alliance

Michelle Seegers
Ripples Gainesville