

# Economic Impact of Amtrak's Heartland Flyer

The Heartland Flyer provides one daily round-trip between Oklahoma City and Fort Worth, offering an important travel alternative along the busy I-35 corridor. Oklahomans also benefit from regional connectivity with a dedicated bus link from Oklahoma City to Newton, Kansas, four intrastate stops and additional connections through Texas.

This state-supported route is a long-standing partnership between Amtrak, ODOT, and TxDOT. Since 2007, Texas has contributed matching funds alongside Oklahoma. This year, the Texas Legislature did not approve its share of the funding beyond September 2025. As a result, the North Central Texas Council of Governments stepped in with emergency funds to sustain this valuable operation through June 2026.

Continued and increased investment in the Heartland Flyer expands travel options for Oklahomans, supports local and regional commerce, and strengthens industry, tourism and education across the state. With stable funding, the service can build on its success to deliver even greater benefits to the people of Oklahoma.



## Snapshot of the Heartland Flyer Today



**125**  
Jobs Supported



**\$5.5m**  
Labor Income



**\$2.1m**  
Tax Revenue



**\$11.3m**  
Gross State Product (GSP)

**37%**

of Oklahomans live within



**25 mi.**

of a passenger rail station

**80k**

passengers rode the Heartland Flyer with a

**1.3% annual increase**

over the past 10 years



Why do people ride the Heartland Flyer?

**38%** visiting family and friends

**30%** short trip for recreation

**11%** non-regular business travel

**9%** personal business

**4%** long trip for recreation (>1 week)

**3%** regular commute

**5%** other



\*Based on data from 2024

## Scenarios Evaluated for Economic Impact

 <b>1x</b>	<b>Scenario 1</b> Evaluates the <b>existing conditions</b> based on Amtrak's current service	 <b>1x</b>	<b>Scenario 1a</b> Evaluates an <b>additional stop</b> to the existing service in <b>Thackerville</b>	 <b>2x</b>	<b>Scenario 2</b> Evaluates an <b>additional daily round-trip</b> on the existing corridor	 <b>1x</b>	<b>Scenario 3</b> Evaluates the impact of <b>extending service north</b> from to Oklahoma City to Newton, KS
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### Future Scenarios: Average Annual Impacts (2033-2053)

Values Rounded in \$M	Direct Benefits		Total Economic Benefits			
	Scenarios In Order of Impact	Direct Benefits *	Jobs Supported	Labor Income	Gross State Product	Tax Revenue
	2: Increased Frequency	\$16.9M	180	\$7.6M	\$15.0M	\$2.9M
	3: Expand to Newton, KS	\$14.8M	155	\$6.3M	\$12.8M	\$2.4M
	1a: Stop in Thackerville	\$13.7M	150	\$6.5M	\$13.1M	\$2.5M
	1: Existing Service	\$11.7M	130	\$5.9M	\$12.0M	\$2.2M

\*Direct Benefits include Tourism and Visitor Benefits, Transportation Safety Benefits, Transportation Cost Savings, Highway User Effects, Highway Maintenance Savings and Energy Savings; Values have been normalized in 2024 Dollars

### Summary

#### 1 Economic & Regional Benefits

- Generates tourism revenue, supports jobs, raises tax income and boosts GSP
- Boosts economy by providing affordable, reliable service—also benefitting highway users

#### 3 Bolstered Connectivity & Tourism

- Links neighboring states to Oklahoma City for major events such as the 2028 Olympics
- Supports small-town economies and regional mobility

#### 5 Enhanced Comfort & Accessibility

- Spacious seating, power outlets, restrooms, snacks and pet-friendly travel
- Attracts older adults (23% of riders) and riders with limited income (21% of riders)

#### 2 Measurable Long-Term Contribution

- 70-80% of direct benefits from visitor spending; 20-30% from safety and cost savings
- Scenario 2 (increased frequency) yields the largest quantitative gains over the baseline

#### 4 Affordable Transportation Mode

- Round-trip fares of \$50-\$60 offer a cost-effective alternative to driving or flying
- Expands access to jobs, education and healthcare, especially for smaller communities

#### 6 Education & Cultural Enrichment

- "Trails and Rails" program turns trips into mobile classrooms
- Promotes Oklahoma's history, culture, and natural heritage