OhioHealth

February 13, 2026

The Honorable David Fink
Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration
US Dept of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative – Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (FSP) Program Application

Dear Administrator Fink:

I am writing on behalf of OhioHealth in support of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), the Franklin County Convention Facilities Authority (FCCFA), and their project partners as applicants for the Federal State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (FSP) grant application.

OhioHealth is a nationally recognized faith-based, not-for-profit healthcare system that has served the Central Ohio community since 1891, driven by a mission to improve the health of those we serve. Today, we represent 16 hospitals, more than 200 ambulatory sites, and a family of 35,000 associates, physicians and volunteers across a 50-county area in the state of Ohio. As Central Ohio's largest health system and one of its top employers—with a footprint that includes urban, suburban, and rural areas—we recognize the critical need for robust transportation infrastructure in our region, connecting our patients, workforce and communities to essential health care services.

The grant application named, "**Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative**," will strengthen the passenger rail network in Ohio and throughout Midwest, revitalize the smaller Midwestern communities, promote economic development and make the transportation network safer and more reliable for all residents. The Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative is requesting $6,000,000 in federal funds to analyze the existing utility easements and non-freight corridor right-of-way, conduct the market analysis, and perform grade separation safety studies for future passenger rail corridors. The Project would also conduct a feasibility study for passenger rail service to the John Glenn International Airport and begin preliminary engineering on a proposed rail station at the Greater Columbus Convention Center to serve future passenger rail service.

The proposed **Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative** would build upon previous and ongoing passenger rail development efforts in the Midwest while facilitating the implementation of passenger rail service in Central Ohio. The **Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative** would supplement the development of the Midwest Connect and 3C+D passenger rail corridors, which are two new passenger rail corridors in Step 2 of the Corridor ID program. Central Ohio is the fastest growing region in the Midwest and will be home to more than 3 million residents by 2050. This growth is supported by major economic development projects, including more than $30 billion invested by Intel, Anduril, and Honda, as well as OhioHealth's more than $1.5 billion in healthcare infrastructure investment throughout the state.

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The **Heartland Rail Connectivity Initiative** aims to build upon federal, state and local efforts to revitalize Ohio's urban and rural communities by development of new long-distance and regional passenger rail connections to key economic opportunities while furthering efforts to create a multimodal transit hub in Downtown Columbus. For OhioHealth, enhanced passenger rail connectivity represents a crucial step forward in improving access to care for patients across our 50-county service area, easier commutes for our 35,000 associates, and stronger connections between our facilities and the communities we serve. Reliable transportation infrastructure is an essential part of ensuring access to high-quality health care, particularly for aging populations and rural communities that face greater barriers to accessing specialized care. OhioHealth is in full support of these efforts to develop new passenger rail service to connect key Ohio destinations and believes that this project represents a commitment to necessary investment in safety, corridor preservation, and economic prosperity.

Thank you for your consideration of this important application.

Sincerely,

Jesse W. Longoria

Jesse Longoria
Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy & Growth Officer
OhioHealth