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Western Kansas May Lose Amtrak's Southwest Chief

The Wichita City Council is paying close attention to the recent announcement by the Kansas Department of Transportation regarding the future of the Southwest Chief Amtrak route from Newton through western Kansas. The City Council has always been supportive of the continuation of the passenger rail service provided by the Southwest Chief route. In recent years, the City Council also has been supportive of the evaluation of a potential Northern Flyer passenger rail route from Dallas to Kansas City via Wichita. The KDOT announcement raises the possibility that the Southwest Chief service may be re-routed south from Newton through Wichita to link with existing east-west service through Oklahoma. In recent months, Council Member Pete Meitzner has engaged the Wichita business community in an active discussion about the merits of expanded passenger rail service. That discussion will continue, but the dynamics of discussion may change dramatically, depending on the fate of the current Southwest Chief service. "It is imperative that the City of Wichita pay close attention to this rapidly-evolving issue," said CM Meitzner. "The announcement regarding the future of the Southwest Chief service dictates that we continue this important community discussion and be alert to any challenges or opportunities that present themselves."

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