



United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve Office
P.O. Box 585, 226 Broadway
Cottonwood Falls, Kansas 66845-0585

IN REPLY REFER TO:

April 7, 2008

A3823 (TAPR)

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is written in support of including Strong City as a potential stop in the upcoming Amtrak study to determine the cost and feasibility that passenger rail service could bring to Kansas.

The Strong City community owes its origin to the railroad, choosing to name itself after Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe President William Barstow Strong. In the following years, Strong City became an important stop on the railroad line and a major shipping point for the area's cattle, limestone, and agricultural products.

Today, the community is looking to its past in planning for the future by restoring the 1913 railroad depot. The depot will serve not only as a draw for history and railroad enthusiasts, but would provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate modern passenger service as well. It will also be a stop along the Flint Hills National Scenic Byway and is adjacent to the future hiking and biking trail between Cottonwood Falls, Strong City, and the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve less than one mile to the north.

The developing 10,894-acre preserve, a National Park Service area, is the only unit in a federal system of parks dedicated to the tallgrass prairie ecosystem. As infrastructure, programs, and public access continue to expand in the future, the preserve will become a significant public attraction and destination. Restoring passenger rail service will provide a future energy-efficient way for people to access the preserve and the greater Flint Hills region.

It is very important that Strong City, a gateway community to the preserve and Flint Hills region, be included in this study. As rural communities continue to struggle economically, opportunities like this are critical to their future survival and livelihood. We ask for your favorable consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Stephen T. Miller
Superintendent