

386010

OST-2003-15483-26



January 18, 2006

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Dennis J. DeVany
 Chief, Essential Air Service Division, X-53
 Office of Aviation Analysis
 U.S. Department of Transportation
 400 Seventh Street, S.W.
 Washington, D.C. 20590

DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION
 DIVISION OF AIRCRAFT
 2006 FEB - 8 A 9:10

Dear Mr. DeVany:

Thank you for the opportunity for the City of Manhattan to provide input into the Essential Air Service proposal review process. Both the City Commission and the Airport Advisory Board have discussed this matter in great detail and we offer the following comments.

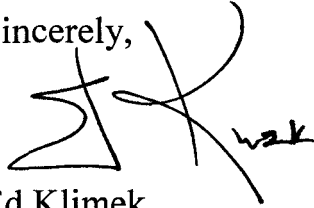
The City is concerned that the options that appear viable based upon your letter dated December 22, 2005 do not meet existing air service needs and certainly do not meet the growth in need occurring at the present time associated with a rapidly expanding Fort Riley. The City believes that we need a minimum of four daily flights at the present time and service split apart from Salina. This scenario would maximize the number of seats available for our region. Unfortunately, this option was not presented. Therefore, the City would first be supportive of Option 2 submitted by Air Midwest, which would increase the current air service by one daily flight each Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Secondly, the City would support Option 3 submitted by Air Midwest, which would split the Manhattan air service from Salina air service.

As we have previously indicated to you, there appears to be continuing customer service issues with Air Midwest that are concerning to the City. In light of this, the City would strongly encourage the Department of Transportation to institute performance standards in the Essential Air Service agreements. Such performance standards should provide for acceptable levels of customer service and also provide for a range of acceptable fares. The airline presently receives a subsidy whether or not

there are any passengers. Without any incentive for the airline to encourage enplanements, fares can escalate to a point that it is unaffordable to fly. Greater control over these factors will ensure better accountability for the significant federal tax dollars involved with this program.

The City appreciates the opportunity to provide its comments in this process and we look forward to working with you further in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ed Klimek', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Ed Klimek
Mayor

EK/DS/ds
06007

cc: City Commission
Ron R. Fehr, City Manager
Diane Stoddard, Deputy City Manager and Interim Airport Director