

TOPEKA HISTORIC SITES FOR HERITAGE TOURISM

The Capital City Historic Sites Preservation Initiative

GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

*Linking tourism with heritage can do more for local economies than promoting them separately. That's the core idea...save your heritage, share it with visitors, and reap the economic benefits of tourism.**

Topeka, capital of Kansas, is a place of highly significant historic events and activities since its founding in 1855. Recognizing this as an opportunity for the attraction of heritage tourism from across the nation, and through international tourism agencies, this initiative is to assist in preserving Topeka's essential historic sites.

Funding for this initiative was secured by the one per-cent increase of the Topeka Transient Guest Tax in 2003.¹ The intended use of this funding was clarified in Ordinance No. 18980; "Monies deposited into this fund from the transient guest tax shall be expended only on projects of a public heritage tourism benefit located within the city and shall not be expended on projects that are private or primarily commercial in nature..." Limited commercial functions such as a gift shop are permitted within the scope of all historic preservation projects.

The Topeka City Council formed the *Historic Sites for Heritage Tourism Committee* (Committee) as a representative body to 1) establish critical guidelines, 2) qualify applications under the guidelines, and 3) offer funding recommendations to the City Council. Committee members are one representative of the Topeka Lodging Association and two each from the Topeka Heritage Alliance, Topeka Landmarks Commission, and Topeka Tourism Alliance.

The Great Overland Station is a key historic site in the capital city's rich railroading heritage. Its successful restoration is the precedent historic site for this initiative and how this funding is available. This funding was approved to preserve "Topeka's rich historical heritage" in reference to Topeka's key historic sites. Together Topeka's key historic sites, preserved and open to the public, can as in other capital cities, be a strong foundation for the attraction of wider heritage tourism.²

Focusing on building a strong foundation for heritage tourism with the limited funding will add new and increased transient guest taxes from overnight stays in local lodging; contribute to raising Topeka property values and thus its tax base; and add sales tax revenue contributed by out-of-town guests. This will complement other already funded programs to preserve neighborhoods and commercial districts.

This initiative uses only transient guest tax revenue at properties that are open or to be open to the public on a regular basis.

*Quoted from *How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism*, by the National Trust for Historic Preservation

WHAT IS THIS INITIATIVE?

- The purpose is to encourage and assist in funding the restoration of Topeka's key historic sites and all Topeka citizens may take part in this initiative
- The beginning primary objective is to support projects³ that protect historic sites open to the public on a regular basis that have become endangered due to lack of funding assistance
- Supporting objectives include:
 - Adding and increasing local sales and transient guest tax revenue that help keep local property taxes competitive with other cities
 - Promote Topeka as a place to work and live
 - Enhancing Topeka historic site attractions in the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area⁴
- Additional objectives are expected to follow beginning objectives as successes and funding might permit

FOREWORD TO THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application is designed to provide information about requested projects, to be used by the Committee as a guide in fulfilling the objectives of this tourism initiative.

The Committee encourages applicants to carefully review these guidelines and then assess project qualifications before processing the application.

SUBMITTAL AND QUALIFICATION

There are no minimum or maximum application quotas. Applicants should explain why a proposed project meets the criteria of this initiative, tell why the historic site is or is potentially a major attraction to overnight guests, and provide supportive explanation and documentation appropriate to their application.

Applications will be accepted annually by 4 p.m. on the first Monday in February. Emergency funding applications will be considered on an as-needed basis.

Submittal of an application prepared according to the guidelines does not automatically qualify a historic site project for funding. Applications that do not qualify will not be funded. Applicants who may be unaware are hereby informed that this particular funding source is very limited in scale and use.

1. Applications must be complete and submitted on time. All applications must be for on-site projects for a major Topeka historic site attraction that is:
 - Already listed in an authorized historic property register, *and*
 - open to the public on a regular basis⁵, *and*
 - a project of eligible work, *and*
2. Sites used for private benefit will not be funded
3. Projects for sites operated for institutional purposes such as, health care, transportation, religious, education, and uses in similar categories and projects for non-historic site functions will not be funded
4. Projects for sites owned or operated by governments and other taxing authorities will not be funded using transient guest taxes.

PROJECT WORK

The Committee requests that all projects follow the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards⁶ for the planning and treatment of historic properties.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all laws and preservation project processes, including projects that formally require work according to the Secretary's standards.

Applicants must propose at least one substantial phase of historic site preservation and if funded, be prepared to show progress on the project within four weeks of an approved award.

- Eligible

Eligible work can include mitigation of physical threats, replacement of essential mechanical systems not easily repaired,⁷ and essential research and planning⁸ by qualified consultants.⁹

- Ineligible

The initiative will not fund projects including but not limited to property maintenance, rehabilitation for purposes not related to historic site functions, relocation, property acquisition, programming, staff expenses, and visitor-readiness.¹⁰

PROJECT REVIEW

The Committee will review applicant-architect-contractor documents and project progress. The Committee will seek to suspend or rescind an award if funds are not applied for the approved project.

Third-party professional approval of contractor requests for payment will typically be essential to the City's disbursement of funding. Projects costing under \$5,000 may be exempted from third party approvals. The use of "AIA," Better Business Bureau and similar standard practice agreements is required of all grantees.

Awardees must submit a brief monthly project progress report for the duration of the award contract period. A closing report is due 30 days afterward. An outline of application steps is:

1. Applicant delivers one signed original and seven copies of a completed application
2. The Committee will within 60 days of the submittal date:
 - Assess project qualification,
 - Consider historic site visits if necessary,
 - Provide the applicant a scheduled opportunity to respond to any Committee questions,
 - Determine funding recommendations,
 - Inform the applicant of awards approved by the Transient Guest Tax Committee, City Council
3. Successful grantees will sign a City of Topeka contract for disbursement of an award (see below).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation process is designed to reveal a project's relationship to the stated objectives of the Topeka Historic Sites for Heritage Tourism initiative.

Projects will be evaluated by the Committee in the context of historic site preservation. Reviewing project objectives, urgency, financial need, and applicant capacity to perform the project are critical. Projects should be well conceived and narrative responses developed to fully and accurately inform the Committee. Responses could include these and / or any other points the applicant may determine:

- Reviewing project objectives;
 - ✓ Description of the site
 - ✓ Relating project objectives to historic site significance
- Assessing urgency of need to complete the project;
 - ✓ Proposed scope of work, budget, and schedule
 - ✓ Severity of threats and present condition of the historic site
- Assessing the applicant's financial need and ability to fund the project budget;

- ✓ Other appropriate funding requested, such as NPS, State of Kansas, tax credit, and private source grant and loan funds
- ✓ Applicant resources
- Assessing the applicant’s capacity to perform the project;
 - ✓ Responsibility for the historic site
 - ✓ Status of other project budgets

EXPENDITURE OF APPROVED FUNDING

The Committee may recommend funding levels other than requested by the applicant.

Funding recommendations will be submitted to the Topeka City Council, Transient Guest Tax Committee. These will be prepared without Committee and City staff member conflicts of interest or prejudice.

The City of Topeka will not assist applicants with approved projects, however, stipulations will be enforced under a City of Topeka contract for funding. Some stipulations are:

- Successful not-for-profit applicants will provide at least 20 percent of a project budget unless otherwise negotiated in Committee over urgency and financial need
- Successful for-profit applicants will provide at least 80 percent of the project budget unless otherwise negotiated in Committee over urgency and financial need.
- Although not required, in-kind services may represent up to 10 percent of a total budget, by not-for-profit owners only, and may be used as applicant cost-share funding.
- Public historic sites must be operated and open to the public for a period of at least ten years after completion of the funded project or face actions to recover all or part of the award.
- The entire funding award is due in return to the grantor immediately if the historic site is used or sold for private use, or closed for any reason except substantial physical loss of the site.
- Construction industry standard contract documents must be signed and managed by the applicant.
- The City of Topeka may disburse up to 25 percent of its cost share on receipt of signed contract documents. The remainder of the City’s cost share will be disbursed on a periodic basis upon proof of progress toward completion of the project, which acceptance of payment by project contractors will be evidence. Approximately 5 percent of the total approved project budget may be retained by the City until all applicant share funding is paid and the project completed.
- Award disbursement must meet all City of Topeka standard financial procedures.
- Grantees must begin project work within 45 days of consummation of a funding contract and complete the project within 24 months. Under any applicant violation of the funding contract, the Committee may seek award withdrawal, revision in the award amount, extension of a work period, and take any other actions that may be necessary to accomplish initiative goals.

The Committee and the City of Topeka may request other stipulations under funding contracts and reserves the right to modify or waive the above stipulations if warranted by project specifics.

COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT OF THIS INITIATIVE:

To evaluate the success of this initiative, the Committee will use the results of funded projects, and obtain comments by initiative partners including the Topeka Transient Guest Tax Committee.

APPENDIX A

Federal historical register acronyms

- NHL: National Historic Landmark Program
- NRHP National Register of Historic Places Program
- NTF National Underground Railroad “Network to Freedom” Program
- other Define or describe this on a separate page and attach.

APPENDIX B

Answering Questions 1-22

- 1-5: Self explanatory
- 6: Check one box only. Awards must be used for capital projects at major historic sites open to the public on a regular basis.
- 7-8: Self explanatory
9. Funding must be awarded to the historic site owner and spent on the approved project. Awards are not transferable without the completion of a new contract under the original objectives, with review by the Committee
10. If not incorporated, check “private.”
11. Self explanatory
12. State the estimated total site improvement budget for visitor readiness. Include work not funded under this initiative such as education and interpretive facilities, administrative quarters, lavatories, accessibility features, and exhibits.
13. State the total historic site preservation budget. This is work necessary to preserve and restore historic elements, materials, and spaces of the historic site that represent its historic significance.
- 14-22 Self explanatory

DEFINITIONS

¹ Topeka Transient Guest Tax

The levy upon the gross rental receipts derived from or paid by transient guests for lodging or sleeping accommodations, exclusive of charges for incidental services or facilities, in any hotel, motel, or tourist court.

² Heritage tourism

The *National Park Service* states that heritage tourism is “the conduct of activities to attract and accommodate visitors to a site or area based on the unique or special aspects of the history...of the site or area.”

³ Project

One or more planned phases of historic preservation at a historic site to be open to the public on a regular basis.

⁴ Freedoms Frontier National Heritage Area

Authorized by the Congress in 2006, the capital city is included in an eastern Kansas and western Missouri region with a unique and nationally significant history.

⁵ Open to the public on a regular basis

Sites operated for public use by organizations or individuals in tandem with missions for the public good, such as the initiative precedent, the Great Overland Station. Residential, commercial, religious, school, and such types of property are not open to the public. Corporation charters may help reveal whether a property is for public use and benefit, or for private use and benefit.

⁶ Secretary of the Interiors Standards

These national standards are available online at nps.gov

⁷ Essential mechanical systems:

Basic air conditioning (heating and cooling), plumbing, and electrical service when such require replacement if repairs are not a prudent option. This range of project work may be funded under the current objective, if to mitigate property threats.

⁸ Preservation planning:

See the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic properties*

⁹ Qualified consultants:

See the *Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic properties*.

¹⁰ Visitor readiness:

May include items such as bathrooms, elevators and other handicap accessibility features, signage, security systems. See Freedom’s Frontier and tourism organization materials on this subject, which all historic sites to be open to the public on a regular basis will likely have determined before proceeding with capital historic preservation projects

END OF GUIDELINES

TOPEKA HISTORIC SITES FOR HERITAGE TOURISM

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