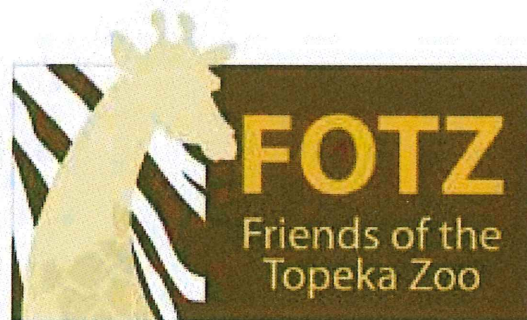


APPLICATION FOR TRANSIENT GUEST TAX FUNDS

SUBMITTED BY

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1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Each year, more than 150 million people visit zoos and aquariums. Whether it is a family vacation or corporate outing, one thing is for certain - zoos and aquariums are part of a powerful, caring industry with enormous collective impact on animals, the environment, and the communities they serve.

Studies conducted by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums have indicated;

- Zoos and aquariums draw 134 million visitors each year – more attendance than the NFL, NHL, and Major League Baseball combined!
- Two million households in America – some five million people – are zoo or aquarium members!
- Zoos and aquariums are powerful tourism generators for their communities. They enhance their local economies each year by attracting over 134 million visitors.
- Zoos and aquariums take conservation action all over the world supporting nearly 700 field conservation and research projects in 80 countries.
- The public trusts the conservation message of zoos and aquariums. In a recent poll, the public ranked zoos and aquariums among the most powerful and trusted sources on environmental issues.

The Topeka Zoo is no exception;

- Over the last 5 years, the zoo has doubled its attendance. In 2014, the Topeka Zoo had an annual attendance of 202,711 visitors. 49% of zoo attendees are over the age of 12.
- The Topeka Zoo has 5,034 Membership households. This represents approximately 20,136 members. It should also be noted that our members represent 21 different states.
- The Topeka Zoo is the number one tourist destination in Topeka. Over 200,000 visitors a year take advantage of the zoo as an educational experience, a beautiful green space in the heart of our capital city, and as a cultural asset.
- The Zoo's animal collection encompasses more than 246 birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. Animals are displayed in naturalistic settings replicating their native habitats, and some travel throughout northeast Kansas as Animal Ambassadors, providing educational outreach through the Zoo 2 You program.
- In 2014, the Topeka Zoo supported 35 different conservation organizations and research projects – both locally and internationally.
- For years, the Topeka Zoo has been selected #1 family destination by Best of Topeka, a survey conducted by the Topeka Capital Journal seeking the best of northeast Kansas.
- The Topeka Zoo is one of 249 zoos across the country that has the distinction of being accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

For 51 years, Friends of the Topeka Zoo has served as a support arm for the Topeka Zoo raising funds to help support a wide variety of zoo enhancements, marketing, education programs, conservation efforts and more. We are proud to have served a part in helping the zoo evolve with new exhibits and attractions that capture the imaginations of guests and remind them that the world is bigger than our borders. We are presently involved in a 3.3 million capital campaign for Camp Cowabunga. In addition, we are presently working with a private donor on the development of an Asian Garden. Going forward, FOTZ will be highly involved in raising funds for a new Africa section of the zoo that will cost over \$20 million.

FOTZ continually strives for ways to help improve the Topeka Zoo. In 2012, Friends of the Topeka Zoo invested resources into the development of a master plan for the zoo that would not only renew various areas and aspects of our beloved regional attraction but also add exciting exhibits with broad appeal. Funding for this zoogeographical masterplan will include both public and private dollars. Fundraising efforts are underway and over the course of the next 12 years, guests to the Topeka Zoo will experience the following new features:

Camp Cowabunga

An African Safari camp located in the heart of the Africa section of the Topeka Zoo. This exhibit will provide a “safari of the imagination” for guests as they experience what it is like when you go on safari. Camp Cowabunga, surrounded by elephants, painted dogs, Patas monkeys and lions, will engage kids of all ages in imaginative play. This exhibit is scheduled for ground breaking in 2016 and to be completed in 2017.

Asian Garden

This beautiful garden will feature lush plantings, bridges, and three koi ponds each connected by a tranquility stream. A variety of meditative seating will be available for guests to sit and enjoy the calm serenity of the gardens. The Tea House will serve as a rental venue with a seating capacity of 250 people. In addition, The Bamboo Terrace will serve as an outdoor rental venue overlooking the ponds with seating for 250 as well. Conceptual design for this project is currently underway. Pending donor approval, groundbreaking will occur in 2015 with the opening of the Asian Garden in 2016.

Tiger Trails

As part of the new Asia experience, guests will journey to Sumatra where they will experience multiple opportunities to see Sumatran tigers up close and to learn more about these critically endangered cats’ struggles within their island world. Anticipated groundbreaking will be spring 2017 with opening of this exhibit in summer of 2018

Giraffe Canopy

As part of our Africa Expansion, our giraffe family will be relocated to a new home. Giraffe Canopy will provide a new barn for the giraffe to reside in during inclement weather. In addition, guests will experience an eye-to-eye view from tree-top level as

they learn more about giraffe in the wild. Anticipated ground-breaking will occur in spring of 2018 with the opening of this exhibit in summer of 2019

Elephant Reserve

This 3-acre habitat will serve as a new home for the zoo's current elephants with room to expand to a herd. Guests will be able to relate to the elephants' distinctive personality traits, behavior characteristics, social interactions, and daily routines while observing the rapport, trust, affection, and mutual respect they have with their keepers. In contrast to the elephants' safe, spacious home, guests will learn about the wild elephants struggle for survival and how Africa's national parks, nature reserves, and zoos around the world are working to protect their future. Ground breaking for Elephant Reserve will be summer of 2018 with the opening being summer of 2020.

Front Entrance

Zoo visitors will be greeted by a new front entrance to the zoo complete with a new guest service and membership office, restaurant, gift shop, and ticket booths. As guests walk up to the entrance, they will be greeted by the chatter of gibbons and be able to watch the playful nature of river otters. Once inside, guests will travel through world plaza which will become a central feature of the Topeka Zoo. Anticipated groundbreaking for the front entry will be 2022 with the opening being summer of 2023.

With all of these exciting projects coming to the Topeka Zoo, comes a challenge. How can we market these exhibits to maximize our attendance? Nationally, zoo trends show a significant increase in attendance after the opening of a new exhibit. Historically, the Topeka Zoo has seen a 20% increase in attendance upon opening a major exhibit.

Understanding the growth of the Topeka Zoo, Friends of the Topeka Zoo identified the need for a full time Marketing Manager. In 2015, FOTZ hired a full time Marketing Manager to our staff. During this year, we have been evaluating the current marketing plan for the Topeka Zoo. Our current marketing plan is supported by several in-kind donations of advertising and a small marketing budget that the zoo and FOTZ have which is less than \$25,000 annually. Future marketing plans, and the purpose of this project, are to develop and implement a long term regional marketing plan for the Topeka Zoo.

2. PROJECT BUDGET

Friends of the Topeka Zoo is seeking total funding in the amount of \$2,480,000 to be disbursed over the course of 12 years. Requested funds will be used to develop and implement a long term regional marketing plan for the Topeka Zoo. The overall plan consists of, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Consultation with Experts.** FOTZ will consult with a professional marketing firm to identify branding strategies which will best market the Topeka Zoo. Through this process, we will develop goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based. This customized approach will yield a valuable return-on-investment.
- **Advertising Campaign.** FOTZ will develop an advertising campaign that will target specific regional markets. Understanding no campaign should ever be set in stone, we will constantly test, review, and refine tactics in order to achieve the best possible results for the Topeka Zoo.
- **Marketing Mix.** FOTZ will identify a marketing mix that satisfies the target markets to include radio, TV, online, print, public relations, and e-marketing campaigns.
- **Website Design.** Statistics show that 75% of travelers use the internet to make their travel plans. To that end, FOTZ will be developing a new website with dynamic tools like interactive maps, reservation services, custom landing pages, videos, and hyperlinks to accommodate zoo guests. An important part of site development will be SEO optimization to attract more traffic to the site.
- **Social Media Applications.** FOTZ will use several social media outlets to complement our marketing efforts. These include producing videos that can be included on YouTube, providing updates about activities on Facebook and Twitter and posting current photos of the zoo events and animals on Instagram. In addition, to help evaluate social media effectiveness, we will establish social media metrics to include reach, site traffic, leads generated, signups and conversions which will help determine our return on investment.
- **Print Publications.** Though more travelers are getting their information on the internet, they still want a paper publication in hand before coming to their destination. Friends of the Topeka Zoo will identify regional travel guides that can offer opportunities to promote the zoo. In addition, we will reach out to travel editors for potential feature ideas to help promote the zoo in those publications.

- **Corporate Outings.** Businesses are always looking for fun venues for pre-convention meetings or after-hours social events. FOTZ, in partnership with Visit Topeka, intends to reach out to meeting planners to promote the Topeka Zoo as an additional destination to consider when planning their meetings.
- **Improved Ticketing System.** FOTZ will strive to improve guest service efficiency while increasing attendance and per capita spending by integrating ticketing, retail, and foodservice areas into one software platform. This will allow FOTZ to create cross promotions and analyze the business across segments. In addition, this will allow FOTZ to identify more in depth information on the visitors that are coming to the zoo which will be helpful for future grant opportunities.
- **Collaborative Partnerships.** We believe that people are seeking a memorable outing that is also affordable, close-by, and offers fun family activities. Topeka is well positioned to capture a large number of these visits with a good summer leisure marketing campaign. In partnership with Visit Topeka and the Topeka Lodging Association, we will work collaboratively with other local family destinations to develop a “Fun Family Getaway” concept promoting Topeka and all it has to offer.

Below is a proposed annual budget with estimates on the total breakdown.

2016 BUDGET	
ITEM	COST ESTIMATE
Marketing Consultant	\$ 50,000
Integrative Software	\$ 80,000
Website Design	\$ 20,000
TV Advertising	\$ 30,000
Radio Advertising	\$ 30,000
Print Publications	\$ 30,000
Social Media/Online Advertising	\$ 30,000
Miscellaneous Marketing	\$ 10,000
TOTAL	\$280,000

2017 – 2027 ANNUAL BUDGET	
ITEM	COST ESTIMATE
Marketing Consulting	\$ 10,000
TV Advertising	\$ 40,000
Radio Advertising	\$ 50,000
Print Publications	\$ 50,000
Social Media/Online Advertising	\$ 40,000
Miscellaneous Marketing	\$ 10,000
TOTAL	\$200,000

3. OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

To maximize the funds requested, FOTZ will utilize its non-profit status to seek discount media rates. In addition, FOTZ will explore grant and sponsorship opportunities that can be used towards marketing efforts.

4. HOW MUCH TGT FUNDING IS REQUESTED?

Friends of the Topeka Zoo requests a total of \$2,480,000 from the Transient Guest Tax money to be disbursed as follows:

YEAR	AMOUNT
2016	\$ 280,000
2017	\$ 200,000
2018	\$ 200,000
2019	\$ 200,000
2020	\$ 200,000
2021	\$ 200,000
2022	\$ 200,000
2023	\$ 200,000
2024	\$ 200,000
2025	\$ 200,000
2026	\$ 200,000
2027	\$ 200,000
TOTAL REQUESTED	\$2,480,000

5. WHAT WILL THE TGT FUNDS BE USED FOR?

Friends of the Topeka Zoo is currently underway soliciting businesses, exploring grant opportunities and meeting with private donors to fund the various master plan projects. The TGT funds, as identified in the Project Budget, will be used to develop and implement a marketing plan for the Topeka Zoo utilizing a variety of marketing avenues.

6. WHAT ARE THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM BENEFITS TO THE CITY?

Not only does the Topeka Zoo have a deep commitment to wildlife conservation and education but it also generates valuable economic benefits for the community. Serving as the city’s number one tourist attraction, the Topeka Zoo draws guests from all over the country. It has a significant impact on our city, providing jobs to our residents and drawing families and individuals to Topeka’s other attractions.

As the Topeka Zoo continues to grow, visitors from around the country will experience upgraded amenities, premier customer service, world-class animal care and an ever-evolving landscape filled with new or renovated exhibits. With an investment in

marketing, we can expect a significant increase in zoo attendance. Increasing and enhancing exhibits result in longer zoo stays. Longer zoo stays result in more people investing in the many restaurant and lodging opportunities Topeka offers and ultimately brings money back into the community.

7. WHAT IS THE PROJECTED RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR THE CITY (DIRECT AND INDIRECT)

Through a customized marketing plan, FOTZ will establish goals that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based. This approach will yield a valuable return-on-investment which can be measured both directly and indirectly.

Increased Attendance. With new exhibits and a customized marketing plan, the Topeka Zoo will see a significant increase in attendance.

Increased Revenue. With an increase in attendance, comes an increase in revenues for the city of Topeka through admission fees and increased traffic and revenue to local businesses. Friends of the Topeka Zoo will also see an increase in revenue – revenue that is reinvested back into the Topeka Zoo.

Better Data. Through google analytics, social media metrics, new guest service software, and SEO optimization, we will be able to monitor our websites traffic and drill down to specific details of our visitors including reach, site traffic, leads generated, and demographics. This data is critical for any future grant projects.

Visitor Awareness. Through collaboration with Visit Topeka and other local attractions, we are increasing visitor awareness of the number of fun family attractions Topeka has to offer. What once was a trip to the zoo becomes a weekend of fun leading to overnight stays.

Quality of Life. For over 80 years, the Topeka Zoo has served as a family destination. Through the addition of numerous exhibits and enhancements, we enhance the quality of life of our city.

Mission Touches. As a leader in wildlife education and conservation in our region, this project allows us the opportunity to increase the number of people who are touched by our mission.

8. WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE PROJECT?

Upon approval of funds, FOTZ will begin the process of developing a timeline. The timeline will be guided by the Marketing Firm that FOTZ selects. A sample timeline is below that can be used as a guideline for our project.

Upon funding approval	Submit RFP to marketing firms
December 2015	Select Marketing Firm
January 2016	Initial consultation with Marketing Firm
January 2016	Secure guest service software
January 2016	Meet with Visit Topeka and Topeka Lodging Association
February 2016	Begin consultation with website developer
February 2016	Installation and training of software
February 2016	Research markets
March 2016	Identify marketing mix to include radio, TV, online, print, public relations, and e-marketing campaigns.
March 2016	Begin web design
April 2016	Begin advertising
May 2016 – December 2016	Continue advertising

Following the first year of the project, the remaining 11 years will follow the proposed timeline below. Keep in mind, it would be based on feedback we receive from our Marketing Consultant:

January	Meet with marketing consultant
January	Evaluate plan and adjust as necessary based on what new exhibits are opening
March	Identify marketing mix to include radio, TV, online, print, public relations, and e-marketing campaigns.
April	Begin advertising
May – December	Continue advertising

9. HOW MANY VISITORS WILL COME TO YOUR PROJECT?

Based on attendance history of the Topeka Zoo and the implementation of this strategic marketing plan, we estimate our attendance as follows:

YEAR	ANTICIPATED ATTENDANCE	COMMENTS
2016	243,253	Asian Garden Opens
2017	291,903	Camp Cowabunga Opens
2018	305,498	Tiger Trails Opens
2019	320,772	Giraffe Canopy Opens
2020	384,926	Elephant Reserve Opens
2021	404,172	Travelling Exhibit
2022	424,380	Travelling Exhibit
2023	445,599	Front Entry Opens
2024	467,878	Travelling Exhibit
2025	491,271	Travelling Exhibit
2026	515,834	Travelling Exhibit
2027	541,625	Travelling Exhibit
TOTAL VISITORS	4,837,111	

10. HOW WILL YOUR PROJECT CREATE OVERNIGHT STAYS AT HOTELS?

By offering additional exhibits we increase the stay time while at the zoo. Working collaboratively with Visit Topeka and the Topeka Lodging Association, we have the opportunity to introduce guests to additional attractions in Topeka. This can turn a one-time visit to the zoo to a weekend stay and multiple area attraction visits.

11. IS THERE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND/OR MATERIALS, INCLUDING PICTURES, OTHER DETAILS, ETC. THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE COMMITTEE?

Included with this request are two documents:

1. Zoo Master Plan documents
2. Conceptual designs for Camp Cowabunga