



# CITY OF TOPEKA

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Transient Guest Tax Committee

**From:** Bill Fiander, AICP, Planning Director

**Re:** TGT Fund Application – Heritage Tourism Planning and Marketing

**Date:** August 14, 2015

**1. Describe the project.**

The City of Topeka's Comprehensive Plan, through the Historic Preservation Plan, advocates for the incorporation of historic preservation into Topeka's long-term economic development strategies. A key element of this strategy is to encourage the preservation of recognized historic assets that contribute directly to economic development through heritage tourism.

Local historic interpretive sites are a major element of Topeka's heritage tourism, but interpretive sites are only one part of heritage tourism's draw. Visitors who appreciate historic sites also appreciate communities that value their historic character. Heritage visitors want to experience authentic places and want a complete experience.

Heritage visitors aren't going to be interested in the parts of Topeka that look like every other place. The neighborhoods that have been surveyed for historic significance, nominated and listed on a historic register, and marketed as heritage tourism sites will appeal to heritage visitors. The historic neighborhood tour may not be the reason a heritage tourist comes to Topeka, but it may be the reason that visitor stays longer and spends more money in Topeka. These authentic places are also an important element of Topeka's heritage tourism.

TGT funding is proposed to be used for **Heritage Tourism Planning and Marketing** purposes. **Identifying, nominating, and promoting** the city's historic assets is the purpose of this proposal. The following is a breakdown of the proposed use of the TGT funds:

- TGT funds will be used by the Planning Department for **Heritage Tourism Planning**. These funds will match Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grants that are administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). HPF grants assist communities in planning for the preservation of their historic resources. Examples of projects that can utilize HPF grants include:
  - Historic Surveys
  - National Register Nominations
  - Design Guidelines
  - Preservation Plans
- TGT funds will be administered by Visit Topeka for **Heritage Tourism Marketing** purposes. Effectively marketing the local historic sites is a key element of heritage tourism. Examples of projects that Visit Topeka will implement and market include:
  - Website
  - Phone/tablet app
  - Brochure guide
  - Other marketing tools

## 2. What is the total budget for the project?

TGT funding of \$10,000 per year is being requested to be used for Heritage Tourism Planning purposes. The Heritage Tourism Planning funds will be programmed and used on a yearly basis. Budgets will vary year-to-year depending on the scope of the projects. Past planning projects range from \$28,827 to \$37,577 for total costs.

TGT funding of \$10,000 per year is being requested to be used by Visit Topeka for Heritage Tourism Marketing. Visit Topeka will create the marketing program and use the TGT funding annually to maintain the program and market local historic sites as a package.

## 3. What are funding sources other than TGT dollars for this project?

TGT dollars will be used to leverage Federal grant funding through the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office via the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). The HPF grant program assists communities in planning for the preservation of their historic resources and accounts for 60% of total project budgets. TGT funding and in-kind contributions would cover the remaining 40%. Based on past projects, \$19,020 was leveraged on average by TGT dollars.

It is anticipated there will be no funds other than the TGT funds for the Heritage Tourism Marketing program administered by Visit Topeka.

## 4. How much TGT funding is requested?

The funding request is \$20,000 per year:

- \$10,000 for use by the Planning Department for **Heritage Tourism Planning**.
- \$10,000 for use by Visit Topeka for **Heritage Tourism Marketing**.

## **5. What will the TGT funds be used for?**

TGT funds will be used for Heritage Tourism Planning and Marketing purposes. The Planning Department will use the TGT funds to match HPF grants that are administered by the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Visit Topeka will use TGT funds for Heritage Tourism Marketing. If funds should be unused for these purposes in any particular year, they may be used as match for Heritage Trust Fund grants or similar program through the SHPO.

Past projects that have leveraged HPF grant funding include:

- Topeka Historic Preservation Plan
- College Hill historic surveys
- Downtown Historic Districts – historic survey, nominations, and design guidelines

Potential future HPF projects include:

- Historic listing nomination for expanding the College Avenue Historic District
- Historic listing nomination for NOTO
- Historic survey of neighborhoods more than 50 years old
- Design guidelines for existing historic districts

Examples of heritage tourism marketing projects:

- Website
- Phone/tablet app
- Brochure guide

## **6. What are the economic development and tourism benefits to the City?**

Heritage tourism is a major economic driver. 78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, translating to 118.3 million adults each year. Heritage tourism travelers travel more frequently: 5.01 leisure trips vs. 3.98 for non-cultural/heritage travelers, and spend more money than other kinds of travelers. Cultural and heritage visitors spend, on average, \$994 per trip compared to \$611 for all U.S. travelers.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to direct spending, heritage tourism enhances and promotes the city's image and identity. An engaging interpretive program, a vital historic downtown center, residents who value their city's character, a place that visitors like to be – these attributes can be positive factors in the city's larger economic strategy of attracting new businesses, helping existing businesses grow, and increasing the number of primary jobs. Locally, heritage tourism helps investors make historic preservation economically viable by using historic structures and landscapes as destinations to attract and serve travelers.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cultural & Heritage Traveler Study, Mandela Research, LLC, 2009*

**7. What is the projected return on investment for the City (direct and indirect)?**

The City of Topeka will leverage an additional 60% of its investment by leveraging federal funding through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Grant Program. In addition, investments made in heritage tourism will result in local expenditures made by visitors to Topeka to visit its growing number of attractions.

**8. What is the timeline for the project?**

TGT funding will be programmed and used on an annual basis.

**9. How many visitors will come to your project?**

This is unknown since this proposal is not for one physical historic site. This proposal covers soft costs to identify, nominate, and promote the city's historic assets to support Topeka's heritage tourism which ultimately attracts visitors.

**10. How will your project create overnight stays at hotels?**

The city's historical attractions draw visitors and give those coming to the city for other reasons something more to do. Heritage tourism supports the convention and event businesses and enriches the experiences of those staying in the city's hotels, encouraging them to stay longer and to return to Topeka.

**11. Is there addition information and/or materials, including pictures, other details, etc., that would be helpful to the committee?**

TGT funding has most recently been used to leverage HPF grants to successfully nominate two downtown historic districts to the National Register of Historic Places, secure funding to develop design guidelines for the two downtown historic districts, and has been used to survey the College Hill neighborhood for potential expansion of the College Avenue historic district.

Designation of properties to the National Register of Historic Places enables those properties to benefit from a 25% State of Kansas Income Tax Credit, and an additional 20% Federal Income Tax credit for income producing properties for qualified rehabilitation expenditures.