

~ Service and Finance Plan ~

Transportation Education and
Outreach Center

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~ Executive Summary ~

The Transportation Education and Outreach Center (TEOC) is a recently established Minnesota nonprofit corporation whose mission is to provide unbiased, objective research to the public regarding the effects of current and proposed transportation policies on communities, citizens, and businesses in Minnesota. These services of the Center focus on important trends, policy options and fiscal issues relating to matters of transportation system efficiency, safety, and reliability.

The Center's research will analyze transportation policies and finances and how those impact societal benefits for citizens of all geographic areas and all income levels. The Center will focus on the transportation system's effectiveness in providing access to important destinations that impact quality of life as well as economic opportunity. The Center's research and analysis will include transportation's effects on job creation tied to multi-modal transportation system improvements.

TEOC was incorporated as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation in 2015 and is in the process of submitting an application to the US Internal Revenue Service for recognition as a Section 501(c)(3) education and charitable organization.

In its first year, the Center will develop and implement a strategic plan which will include steps to secure initial funding and undertake projects related to its mission. The plan will identify potential revenue sources for TEOC including contracts for services and charitable donations that will finance the start-up costs of the organization. The plan will identify strategies to expand services and grow the organization over the next three years by broadening its base, expanding and enhancing the Center's products and services, and pursuing a vigorous marketing/communications strategy.

~ Organization Overview ~

TEOC is a Minnesota nonprofit corporation that is applying for state and federal tax-exempt status. Its primary purpose is to provide unbiased, objective research to the public regarding the effects of current and proposed transportation policies on communities, citizens, and businesses in Minnesota.

The Center serves lawmakers, policy leaders, interested citizens and businesses in order to enhance the economic well-being of all citizens. TEOC seeks to encourage development of a safe, efficient and effective multi-modal transportation infrastructure that protects the environment and natural resources.

The Center's business philosophy is articulated by its mission statement, goals and objectives, statement of values, and vision statement.

➤ *Mission Statement*

The Transportation Education and Outreach Center provides nonpartisan, objective, and credible research and analysis on transportation systems in Minnesota and other states. These activities are intended to serve the interests of the public, local communities, businesses, transportation policy professionals, and state, local and federal policymakers.

➤ *Goals and Objectives*

To carry out its mission, TEOC will pursue the following goals:

- Serve as a resource to the general public on issues relating to transportation finance and policy as they relate to matters involving access to destinations and economic opportunity.
- Provide information to local communities to assist them in their efforts to provide safe and efficient transportation options for all their citizens.
- Support state and local units of government in Minnesota and elsewhere in their efforts to maximize flexibility of all funding sources in order to deliver a broad program of transportation infrastructure projects.
- Increase awareness and build the reputation of the Center's analysis and research by producing peer-reviewed, nonpartisan, objective reports and policy studies, and by pursuing a vigorous community outreach and communications strategy.
- Continually build a network of potential partners, sponsors and funders for the Center's work.

- Ensure that the Center’s Board of Directors, officers, and staff continually work to pursue the Center’s mission, vision and values.

Specific short-term objectives to support these goals include:

- Secure enough funding in 2015 and 2016 to generate sufficient resources to offset expenses.
- Secure Section 501(c)(3) tax exempt status by September, 2016.
- Prepare at least three project proposals for submittal to charitable foundations by the end of FY 2016.
- Conduct a minimum of three presentations to interested groups on transportation issues.
- Prepare a “Qualifications” brochure by December 2016 detailing the professional qualifications and expertise of the Center.
- Develop an operational and effective website for the Center by May 1, 2016.
- Subscribe to transportation-related publications and websites to keep current on contract opportunities in the public sector and periodically, as appropriate, submit commentaries to these publications and websites.
- Prepare in 2016 at least two commentary pieces flowing from the Center’s work for publication in area media.

➤ *Values Statement*

TEOC holds the following core values to guide the Center in its work.

- **Transportation systems matter in people’s lives.** The Center believes in the value of a sound transportation system and supports the notion that transportation infrastructure is a fundamental element of a healthy society.
- **Policy decisions affecting people must involve the people.** The Center believes that democracy is best served when citizens are afforded the opportunity to offer input. Toward that end, TEOC will work to provide meaningful opportunities for public input regarding its work.
- **Open access to credible information leads to better policy outcomes.** The Center will always provide objective, non-partisan analysis. The goal is to provide policymakers with accurate, credible and timely information that they can use in making transportation policy and finance decisions.

➤ *Vision Statement*

If TEOC is successful in achieving its mission and its goals, the people of the state of Minnesota will -- by the year 2030 -- have access to a multi-modal transportation system that is adequately and consistently funded, statewide in scope and accessibility, is a major contributor to job growth, and protects the environment and natural resources.

~ Work Environment for the Center: Current Issues and Trends ~

Many factors are contributing to the emergence of transportation policy matters in the public consciousness. Perhaps the most significant contributing factor is the simple fact that people are recognizing the critical role that the transportation system plays in promoting economic growth by providing for more efficient movement of both people and freight.

Achieving this economic growth, however, is being hindered by a transportation infrastructure that is aging and in dire need of repair. Increasing public demand for more accessible, safer and more ecologically friendly transportation options have also contributed to placing transportation policy matters on the front burner nationally as well as in Minnesota.

These and other issues and trends will accelerate the demand for the Center's services. As a consequence, TEOC will intensify its efforts to optimize the organization's impact on transportation policy and financing decisions.

➤ Rededicated Interest in Transportation Finance Issues and Challenges

Governor Mark Dayton created a Transportation Finance Advisory Committee (TFAC) in 2012 to analyze and quantify the funding needs for all modes of transportation in the state. The work of TFAC clarified the need for increased funding and increased investments to strengthen and improve the transportation system. State policymakers, stakeholders, local governments, reporters, editorial boards and citizens have articulated a consensus that additional funding is needed and that the Legislature must determine the best funding plan to reduce the gap between current funding levels and transportation system needs.

While action was expected during the 2015 legislative session, no major funding increases were passed. Discussions will continue at the highest levels regarding how to grapple with the funding issue and what the impact of various funding options will be on Minnesota's economy and residents.

➤ Reauthorization of Federal Transportation Funding

The amount of state resources able to be devoted to transportation is closely tied to federal transportation policy and finance. TEOC will therefore position itself to participate in the work of implementing the policies and goals of the latest federal surface transportation authorization act – the FAST Act. Communities are seeking information about new policies in the act and the impact of this legislation on transportation in Minnesota.

➤ ***Economic Development***

In order for the national and Minnesota state economies to continue their recoveries, restoration of the transportation infrastructure must play a key role. A high quality transportation system can form the foundation of a productive, growing economy that offers greater access to opportunity for all sectors of the population. Equal access to transportation is key to reducing income disparity and revitalizing communities.

Policymakers are recognizing that strong and sustainable productivity growth is a precondition for innovative public policies. The Center will strive to capitalize on this trend, seeking opportunities to work with the public, private, and non-profit sectors to foster continued economic growth through safer and more effective modes for transporting people and products.

➤ ***Land Use & “Smart Growth”***

Urban areas and developing regions are facing growth decisions that will have lasting impact into the future. Thoughtful land use planning offers regions the opportunity to accommodate growth in a manner that improves the livability of their communities. TEOC will closely monitor “Smart Growth” policy discussions, and seek opportunities to participate.

➤ ***Public Health and Safety***

Minnesota and the rest of the nation face many challenges related to public health and safety, including increased levels of traffic volume and congestion and physical barriers to many modes of transportation. The Center will work to identify policy options that improve conditions in all types of neighborhoods by increasing options for walking and bicycling, improving system safety, reducing air pollution, and creating better transit connections to health services and other healthful destinations.

~ Value of the Center to Minnesota ~

The Center seeks to provide tangible value to the following four constituencies:

- **Benefits to the Public.** More important than any other of its functions, TEOC strives to emphasize its role as a resource on transportation policy matters and as an effective communicator of information to the interested public. The Center will continue to take advantage of opportunities to report on timely issues, including the effects of local, state, and federal transportation financing policies in order to encourage more public participation in the process.
- **Benefits to Government.** Governments often do not have the time or the resources to expend on public relations and communications. Non-profit organizations like the Center fill a valuable role when they provide services that governments would like to be able to do, but are unable to do. The Center will continue to work closely with all levels of government in an effort to provide communications, analytical, and research services that serve the interests of governments and their citizens.
- **Benefits to Policy Advocates.** Although TEOC strives for complete objectivity in its analytical work, the organization recognizes that policy advocates may use its work to promote their own agendas. The Center will consider accepting projects that may serve the needs of specific advocates, as long as it can identify a broader public purpose as outlined above. The Center will never compromise its core mission, vision, and values.
- **Benefits to Business.** Minnesota businesses rely heavily on the state's transportation system to transport goods and people. Because of its location in the far Upper Midwest, this state is not well-positioned to be a natural national transportation hub. Therefore, Minnesota must work even harder to ensure that our businesses are provided with the best possible multi-modal system to serve their needs.

As it develops its long-term strategic plan, and its shorter-term work plans, TEOC will include more specific goals, activities, and desired outcomes for each of these four.

~ *Financial Plan* ~

In the Center’s first year, it will seek funding through a variety of start-up grants and contributions. Ultimately, the Center’s financial plan is to become fully self-supporting through grants, donations and contracts for services. The table below projects the Center’s annual budget for fiscal year 2016 through FY 2018.

Transportation Outreach and Education Center Projected Budget, Fiscal Year 2016 through 2018 (Fiscal Year: January 1 through December 31)			
	2016 (Est.)	2017 (Est.)	2018 (Est.)
Revenues			
Contracts for Service			
Contributions	\$0	\$10,000	\$10,000
Grants	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
TOTAL REVENUES	\$5,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Expenditures			
Salaries / Benefits	\$0	\$0	\$0
Contract Management	\$0	\$5,000	\$10,000
Equipment / Supplies	\$0	\$2,000	\$5,000
Marketing	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Rent	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$0	\$17,000	\$20,000
Net Revenues over Expenditures	\$0	\$3,000	\$0

As reflected in this preliminary budget, TEOC believes it can raise sufficient resources to finance expansion of programs and services over the following two years. By the end of FY 2017, the Center anticipates gross revenues of \$20,000 per year, with all resources committed to the policy research and analysis activities.

TEOC is an independent legal entity. In its first three years it will office with the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, a Section 501(c)(6) nonprofit and may share equipment and staff time. Careful records will be kept regarding any shared personnel, equipment and office usage. As with its relationships with other entities, the Center’s co-location with the Alliance will not compromise the Center’s core mission, values, and vision.