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**Center For Equitable Transit-Oriented Communities Request for Proposals, Year 2 (2024-2025)**

**1. Overview & Objectives**

The following is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Research, Education, and Technology Transfer projects for the Center for Equitable Transit Oriented Communities (CETOC) funding year two, 2024-2025.

CETOC is a United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) funded Tier 1 University Transportation Center (UTC). Based at the University of New Orleans, the CETOC consortium also includes researchers and facilities from Florida Atlantic University, the University of Colorado - Denver, the University of Florida, and the University of Utah. CETOC research, education, and technology transfer activities aim to support USDOT’s climate solution and sustainability goals by promoting transit access, multimodal infrastructure, compact and efficient land use patterns, as well as resilience and climate mitigation and adaptation.

**2. Focus Areas/Topics of Interest**

CETOC-funded research, education and tech transfer activities should tap into the relationship between transportation and land use as a nexus of achieving economic, safety, equity, and climate benefits through the following broad research areas:

- Next-generation public transit systems,

- Coordination of land use and transportation planning,

- Resilient infrastructure and communities,

- Data, technology, and transformation.

CETOC projects should advance environmental preservation, equity, and transformation of existing transportation systems. CETOC activities should promote equitable multimodal transportation systems through direct engagement with disadvantaged and underserved communities to deliver results that address their essential transportation needs; and/ or by enhancing access and reducing transportation costs for disadvantaged and underserved communities, with a focus on increasing multimodal travel options, enhancing multimodal experiences, and preparing communities for climate disaster. CETOC outreach and educational efforts should support diversity among the next generation of transportation professionals across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. CETOC projects should also support safety, economic strength, and global competitiveness of urban and rural communities through transportation system investments in sustainable and carbon-minimizing approaches.

CETOC projects should provide concrete outputs, outcomes, and impacts that extend beyond academic settings, and which produce tangible benefits and transformations for our communities and communities around the nation and the world.

**3. Eligibility & Funding**

Principal Investigators (PIs) and Co-PIs[[1]](#footnote-1) funded by CETOC must be faculty members, research faculty, or post-doctoral researchers from one or more of the consortium member universities: the University of New Orleans, Florida Atlantic University, the University of Colorado - Denver, the University of Florida, or the University of Utah. Proposals must be submitted by an eligible PI to be considered. All PIs should obtain a free ORCiD Identification Number prior to submission of a proposal if they do not already have one.

Collaborative proposals including multiple investigators are highly encouraged, particularly those including investigators from multiple consortium member universities, which may be weighted more heavily in the review and selection process. Projects involving multiple consortium member universities must provide budget breakdowns by university as indicated in the Project Proposal Form (Appendix B).

Proposed budgets may not exceed $100,000 in federal funding per consortium member university per project. Projects with proposed budgets below the maximum are encouraged.

The USDOT requires that all projects obtain 50% matching funds from non-federal sources, which may be in the form of cash or in-kind services. Project proposals must indicate both amount and sources for matching funds.

A minimum of 10% of project funding must be used for technology transfer activities.

**4. Pre-Proposal**

PIs will be required to submit a brief pre-proposal to the CETOC Leadership Team prior to submission of the formal proposal. Pre-proposals will be reviewed for eligibility criteria, alignment with CETOC’s stated goals, objectives, and field of interest, and to ensure that proposed projects do not repeat research which has already been conducted or is in progress, either within CETOC or elsewhere. Proposals from multiple PIs with the same objective may be returned with the suggestion of resubmission as a collaborative proposal.

Pre-proposals should follow the format shown in Appendix A.

**5. Proposal Format**

Formal proposals should follow the format outlined in Appendix B. All proposals must be accompanied by either a signed match commitment letter(s) or a statement indicating match funding sources and the reason a signed letter has not yet been obtained. ***All final approvals are contingent on provision of a signed letter of match support.*** Please note that as part of the form shown in Appendix B, proposals must either agree to adhere to the CETOC Data Management Plan (DMP) (shown in Appendix C) and provide a Data Description as an addendum to that plan or agree to adhere to the CETOC DMP as well as provide a project specific DMP which includes a Data Description.

**6. Review Process & Selection Criteria**

After passing the pre-proposal stage, PIs have until the Proposal Submission Deadline listed below under ‘Timeline & Deliverables’ to submit a completed formal proposal following the format shown in Appendix B. Proposals missing required information or submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

Accepted submissions will then enter a process of peer review by members of the CETOC Advisory Board or other qualified academic, governmental, private sector, or non-profit industry personnel familiar with the area of research. The peer review process will be single-blind, and reviewers will remain anonymous. Each proposal will be reviewed by no less than two reviewers. Faculty from consortium member universities who have submitted proposals for this RFP are disqualified from serving as reviewers for this round of proposals.

Reviewers will evaluate proposals based on the following criteria:

1. Does the proposed project align with CETOC’s Mission Statement and stated Goals?[[2]](#footnote-2)
2. Does the proposed project align with CETOC’s stated Research Focus areas?[[3]](#footnote-3)
3. Is the proposed methodology sound, and in alignment with the stated project objective?
4. Does the project have a viable and measurable result (within a one-year timeframe)?
5. Does the proposal demonstrate the project’s potential impact? Is the impact broad and viable?
6. What are the overall strengths and weaknesses of the proposed projects, and what recommendations do you have for the project’s improvement?
7. Does the project involve collaboration between consortium members?
8. Does the project present strong opportunities for education, outreach, and technology transfer activities?

Reviewers will provide narrative evaluations as well as categorical rankings (e.g., do not recommend, acceptable, recommend, highly recommend).

The CETOC Leadership Team will make a final selection of projects to approve for funding from among the highest-ranking proposals as scored in the peer review process.

**7. Timeline & Deliverables**

Pre-proposals and proposals should be submitted by the deadlines below to CETOC Project Manager Bob Danton: jfdanton@uno.edu

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date Issued | February 22 2024 |
| Pre-Proposal Deadline | March 14 2024 |
| Pre-Proposal Acceptance Notice By | March 22 2024 |
| Formal Proposal Submission Deadline | April 19 2024 |
| Final Decisions | May 31 2024 |

All approved projects’ PIs must adhere to all deliverables and reporting guidelines as laid out in the University Transportation Centers (UTC) Grant Deliverables and Reporting Requirements document, including but not limited to semi-annual reporting, annual performance indicator reports, reporting of inventions and patents, depositing and documentation of data, and submission of final reports. The most recent version of the requirements can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/utc/bil-grant-deliverables-and-reporting-requirements>.

**8. USDOT Funding Acknowledgement**

All materials published based on work funded by this proposal should include the following acknowledgement:

*This work was supported by a US Department of Transportation (USDOT) Tier-1 University Transportation Center (UTC), the Center for Equitable Transit-Oriented Communities (CETOC) (Grant No. 69A3552348337).*

**Appendix A: Pre-Proposal**

*Return to CETOC Project Manager Bob Danton at jfdanton@uno.edu*

**Proposal Title:**

**Expected Duration:**

**Investigators** (With Names, Affiliations, Contact Info & ORCiDs, PI Marked With \*)**:**

**Proposal Type** (Research, Education, Tech Transfer)**:**

**Proposed Budget** (Federal & Non-Federal, Non-Federal matching funds must be at least 50% of the amount of Federal Funding requested)**:**

**Primary Topic** (Must align with stated CETOC and USDOT goals and priorities)**:**

**Project Description** (1,000 words maximum)**:**

Include: a description of how the proposed project fills a research gap and/or community need, how the project aligns with stated CETOC goals and objectives, what types of methods and data will be used, what tangible outcomes and impacts the project will produce that extend beyond academia, what educational, workforce development, and/or technology transfer components will be associated with the project, and what outside partnerships will be involved.

**Appendix B: Formal Proposal**

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BIL Act - USDOT Tier 1 UTC; Year 2 2024-2025

Return to CETOC Project Manager Bob Danton at [jfdanton@uno.edu](mailto:jfdanton@uno.edu)

**Lead Recipient/Grant Number**: University of New Orleans/69A3552348337

**Center Name**: Center for Equitable Transit-Oriented Communities

**USDOT Research Priority**: Preserving the Environment

**Submission Date**:

**Principal Investigator Institution**:

**Primary USDOT Strategic Goal** (*select drop down*): Climate and Sustainability

**USDOT Priorities**: *Describe how the project supports US DOT priorities and the RD&T strategic goals as outlined in the USDOT Research, Development and Technology Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2022-2026, which can be found at https://www.transportation.gov/mission/us-dot-strategic-plan-fy-2022-2026. Also describe how the project engages in breakthrough, advanced, or transformative research.*

**CETOC Topic** (*select drop down*): Next-Generation Public Transit Systems

**Principal Investigator(s) with Institution, ORCID(s) and Contact Information**: *Indicate lead PI with \**

**CETOC Partners:** *Provide full name, institution, contact information, and ORCiD number of any consortium member partners who will actively engage in the project.*

**External Partners:** *Provide full name, institution, contact information, and ORCiD number of any external partners who will actively engage in the project, as well as an indication of what their involvements will be, i.e. financial support, in-kind support (e.g., partner makes software, computers, equipment, etc., available to project staff), facilities support (e.g., project staff use the partner’s facilities for project activities), collaborative research (e.g., partner’s staff work with project staff on the project) personnel exchanges (e.g., project staff and/or partner’s staff use each other’s facilities, work at each other’s site), etc.*

**Project Type** (*select drop down*): Research

**Project Title**:

**Project Funding**:*Include Federal (CETOC) funding amount, non-Federal (cost share) funding amount* ***and sources****, Total funding amount, and amount of funding which will be spent on planned Technology Transfer activities (minimum 10%), as well as an indication of what those activities will be.* ***For multi-university projects, include full breakdown for each consortium university****.  
Example for Collaborative Project:  
UNO (principal): $50,000 CETOC funding, $25,000 match ($10,000 LADOT, $15,000 UNO)  
$75,000 total. $8,000 to tech transfer for implementation of new systems.  
FAU (secondary): $30,000 CETOC funding, $15,000 match (State of Florida)  
$45,000 total. $4,500 to tech transfer for software deployment and publication.  
Total Budget: $120,000 ($80,000 CETOC, $40,000 match); Total Tech Transfer $12,500.*

**Project Start and End Dates** (Format month/day/year to month/day/year):

**Project Milestones:** *Indicate important milestones for completion of various deliverables and other aspects of the project. For multi-year projects, indicate clearly what deliverables will be submitted by the end of the first year.*

**Project Abstract (~500 words)**:

**Objectives:** *What are the overall goals and objectives of the project? What transportation issues are you trying to address, what research questions are you trying to answer, etc.*

**Literature Review:** *Provide a brief (1 page maximum) overview of the existing literature on the subject, including a clear indication of how the project fills a gap in the existing research and/or practice as well how it addresses a tangible need from a community or systems-wide (i.e., non-academic) perspective. Provide references in the ‘****References/Bibliography****’ section below.*

**Data and Methodologies:** *Provide a clear description of the methodologies which will be used to carry out the proposed research, including an identification of data sources to be used, data to be collected, how data will be utilized, modified, shared, and distributed to the public and other stakeholders, etc.*

**Equity:** *Provide a concise explanation of how the project advances CETOC and USDOT’s goals of increasing equity in the transportation system and/or in transit-oriented communities, including impacts on historically underserved populations and communities, opportunity access, climate equity, etc.*

**Outputs (Results of the Work Performed**): *Describe what new research, technology, or products and/or process(es) this research project is expected to produce. The outputs could include publications, conference papers, and presentations; website(s) or other internet site(s); new methodologies, technologies, or techniques; inventions, patents, and/or licenses; data or databases, application software, analytical models, etc. Also describe any new partnerships outside of the UTC consortium that may be established or have been established through the project.*

**Outcomes/Impacts**: *Describe the application of the output and any changes this output has or will make to the transportation system, or its regulatory, legislative, or policy framework, including a description of products or patents, or a change in practice, or instances of research results informing policy decisions. Discuss how this research output will positively impact the transportation system in terms of safety, reliability, durability, costs, workforce development, etc.*

**Technology Transfer Activities**: *Describe planned activities that will make research results available to potential users in a form that can be implemented, utilized, commercialized, or otherwise applied. Indicate what percentage of the budget will be dedicated to these activities.*

**Web Links:** *Provide any relevant web links.*

**Final Research Report**: *Upon completion of the project, provide a URL link to final report.*

**Project Deliverables**:   
 PI agrees to submit all deliverables within 30 days after the project end date.

**Data Management Plan (DMP**): *Select Only One*  
 I have reviewed and agree to adhere to the CETOC DMP and have attached a Data Description below.   
 I have reviewed and agree to adhere to the CETOC DMP. In addition, this project complies with the attached DMP, which contains a complete Data Description (please attach the project specific DMP).

**References/Bibliography:** *Provide full references for all sources cited in the Literature Review and elsewhere in the proposal.*

**Principal Investigator CV(s):** *Provide bios for all listed PIs and Co-PIs in NSF sketch format.*

**Other Notes, Comments, and Images:**

**Center Director Approval Signature and Date**:

**Appendix C: CETOC Data Management Plan**

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**Center for Equitable Transit Oriented Communities (CETOC) Data Management Plan**

**Tier 1 UTC, Grant Period June 1, 2023 – May 31, 2028**

**Date Effective: June 1, 2023**

**Grant Number: 69A3552348337**

**Lead University: University of New Orleans**

**Consortium Members: Florida Atlantic University, University of Colorado Denver, University of Florida, University of Utah**

**Plan Author: Bob Danton, University of New Orleans; jdanton@uno.edu**

**Contact: CETOC Director; Guang Tian, PhD.; (504) 280-6521; gtian@uno.edu**

This Data Management Plan (DMP) outlines the basic procedures and minimum requirements for managing data associated with research projects under the direction and/or funding of the Center for Equitable Transit Oriented Communities (CETOC). All CETOC principal investigators (PIs) are expected to follow the procedures and guidelines outlined in this DMP and to comply with all U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Public Access Plan requirements for storing, archiving, and making accessible data produced as part of CETOC research projects or with the use of CETOC funding. Any deviations from this DMP must be submitted with project proposals as a separate project-level DMP. Project-level DMPs must provide reasoning for deviation from the plan below and detailed descriptions of how the project-level DMP complies with all USDOT requirements and other applicable regulations. All project-level DMPs must be approved by the Center Director.

1. Data Description & Overview

The Center for Equitable Transit-Oriented Communities (CETOC) is a U.S. Department of Transportation designated University Transportation Center. It focuses on preserving the environment by promoting transit access, multimodal infrastructure, compact and efficient land use patterns, as well as resilience and climate adaptation. CETOC is a consortium of five universities that consists of renowned transportation researchers and educators from the University of New Orleans, Florida Atlantic University, the University of Colorado, Denver, the University of Florida, and the University of Utah. Florida Atlantic University is the USDOT-designated Minority Serving Institution (MSI) and Hispanic Serving Institution of CETOC.

CETOC's Mission is to cultivate transit-centered, equitable, and resilient communities that support residents' multimodal travel needs and preserve the environment. The Center plans to achieve these goals through 1) production of research which will advance scientific knowledge and identify innovations that can inform the planning and development of equitable transit-oriented communities; 2) leadership which will cultivate a diverse group of visionary transportation leaders who will dedicate their careers and inspire others to advance public transportation and build equitable and resilient communities; 3) education and workforce development which will train a new generation of transportation professionals with the knowledge and techniques needed to meet the challenges of the present and be prepared for the future, and 4) technology transfer initiatives which will produce transformative products (e.g., tools, databases, methods, and strategies) to be widely adopted and implemented by the transportation profession for building equitable transit-oriented communities.

In carrying out this mission, the Center, its PIs, and other associated researchers will produce a wide variety of data. It is the duty of each PI to ensure that data produced as part of CETOC research initiatives complies with this DMP and with all USDOT requirements. Transportation data of all kinds, including historical data, is of great value to researchers both today and into the future. As part of CETOC’s mission to promote technology transfer, data produced by the Center should be made accessible to other researchers to the greatest extent possible.

Data types that may be produced by the Center may include, but are not limited to, the following: travel surveys and other types of survey data, interviews, spatial data including GIS, GPS, and other location data, demographic data, infrastructure data, governmental and administrative data, photography, audio, video, 3D models, and more.

Each PI will provide a Data Description as part of their CETOC Project Request Form. The Data Description should describe types of data to be used, collected, created, or modified during the course of the project, including but not limited to a description of the methods and software used, data and metadata formats, and potential value of the data for re-use, technology transfer, and further research. This Data Description, along with metadata for each dataset, will be preserved with the data when it is made accessible at the completion of the project according to the guidelines detailed below.

Whenever possible, data containing personal identifiers, proprietary information, or other secure information should be anonymized and made accessible in a modified format that meets all applicable legal and regulatory requirements. When it is not possible to provide data to the public for reasons of intellectual ownership, anonymity, security, etc. the processes for storing and securing the sensitive data must be noted by the PI in the Data Description as well as documented in a project-level DMP and approved by the Center Director.

2. Standards Used

Whenever possible, data should be made accessible in non-proprietary formats to allow for the greatest possible opportunity for future use and transfer of technology and information. Industry-standard open specification file formats, such as shapefiles for GIS data, are also acceptable. When the use of proprietary data types and file formats is unavoidable, the reasoning and format choices should be detailed in a project-level DMP and approved by the Center Director.

Metadata for all datasets should be created by the PI in accordance with industry standards. Metadata should be stored in in a standard and accessible file format (e.g., .txt, .csv) and must, at minimum, detail the data’s author, contributors, creation data, title, abstract, keywords, file format(s), quality control measures, software used to create, modify, or process the data, and tools or software required to view or utilize the data. This metadata is to be shared and stored with the data everywhere the data is stored or made available.

3. Access Policies

Data collected, utilized, or produced in conjunction with CETOC-associated research is to be made publicly accessible to the fullest extent to which it is possible, legal, and ethical to do so. In cases where data contains personally sensitive information, proprietary or classified information, or other data which presents legal or ethical barriers to open access and distribution, the PI must create a project-level DMP listing the reasoning behind restricting the data access and the protocol for doing so. Whenever possible, data should be made available in a modified format (e.g., anonymized) that preserves the data’s utility while ensuring that access to it adheres to legal regulations and ethical considerations. When it is not possible to do so, the PI must detail the restrictions on the data and indicate how it will be stored securely and under what conditions it can be accessed.

Any project producing data associated with human subject research must abide by all requirements and protocols of the lead institution’s Institutional Review Board, including but not limited to ensuring informed consent of participants and protecting participant privacy and confidentiality.

4. Re-Use, Redistribution and Derivative Products Policies

Intellectual property rights shall be maintained by the project’s PI and/or their home institution unless otherwise transferred at their discretion. PIs must explicitly state if they choose to transfer intellectual property rights or copyright to the public domain.

The USDOT reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use and to authorize others to use the work for government purposes data produced in conjunction with CETOC-funded projects.

In cases where previous copyrights, such as those pertaining to proprietary data sources or derived from copyrighted instruments apply to project data, those copyrights must be identified and cited, and all legal conditions imposed on the use of such data must be adhered to. This includes but is not limited to citing the data source and license under which the data was accessed and utilized, listing the owner of the intellectual property rights and/or copyrights to the data, and indicating any transfer or re-licensing of the data or rights thereto for reuse, redistribution, or the production of derivative products.

5. Archiving and Preservation Plans

All CETOC data from completed projects shall be stored and archived on a USDOT Public Access Plan compliant[[4]](#footnote-4) repository with a persistent identifier (e.g., DOI) and linked to on the CETOC webpage. Zenodo (https://zenodo.org/) is a free and compliant repository and is the suggested repository for CETOC project data. PIs wishing to use another repository should indicate their reasoning for doing so in a project-level DMP and are responsible for ensuring that the repository meets all USDOT requirements. All stored data for completed projects will be linked to on the CETOC webpage (https://www.uno.edu/cetoc) with an interface maintained by the Center Director, lead University, or representatives thereof.

**Change Log:**

2023-09-23: Original Draft

1. For the purposes of this RFP, ‘Principal Investigator,’ ‘PI,’ and ‘Co-PI’ refer to the leading researcher(s) on a proposed or approved CETOC project, responsible for carrying out and performing all necessary reporting on the project. This does not imply receipt of an individual sub-grant. While individual project budget amounts shall be determined by the proposal and approval process described in this document, grant funding will be distributed to consortium universities through a single subgrant per university, managed by the CETOC Site Director/Leadership Team member of that university. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mission Statement: CETOC's Mission is to cultivate transit-centered, equitable, and resilient communities that support residents' multimodal travel needs and preserve the environment.

   Goals:

   Research: Advance scientific knowledge and identify innovations that can inform the planning and development of equitable transit-oriented communities.

   Leadership: Cultivate a diverse group of visionary transportation leaders who will dedicate their careers and inspire others to advance public transportation and build equitable and resilient communities.

   Education and Workforce Development: Train a new generation of transportation professionals with the knowledge and techniques needed to meet the challenges of the present and be prepared for the future.

   Tech Transfer: Develop transformative products (e.g., tools, databases, methods, and strategies) to be widely adopted and implemented by the transportation profession for building equitable transit-oriented communities. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. CETOC’s Research Themes: Next-Generation Public Transit Systems; Coordination of land use and transportation planning; Resilient infrastructure and communities; Data, technology, and transportation [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. SEE: United States. Department of Transportation. (2022). Guidelines for Evaluating Repositories for Conformance with the DOT Public Access Plan. https://doi.org/10.21949/1520563 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)