



Statement of Values and Code of Ethics

**South Fraser OnTrax (SFOT)
Transportation Advocacy Society**

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Introduction

South Fraser OnTrax (SFOT) Transportation Advocacy Society (herein “SFOT”) is incorporated under the British Columbia Society Act as a not-for-profit corporation. As a matter of fundamental principle, SFOT will adhere to the highest ethical standards because it is the right thing to do. As a matter of pragmatic self-interest, SFOT should do so because public trust in our performance is the bedrock of our legitimacy. Donors and volunteers support nonprofit organizations because they trust them to carry out their missions, to be good stewards of their resources, and to uphold rigorous standards of conduct.

SFOT seeks to earn this trust every day and in every possible way. But organizations like SFOT are, at base, people, and it is up to our people (general membership, board members, founders, executive leaders, and other volunteers) to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to the core values of integrity, honesty, fairness, openness, respect, and responsibility.

It is recommended by accountability organizations that a society like SFOT have a formal code of ethics with which all of their trustees and volunteers are familiar and to which they adhere. This Statement of Values and Code of Ethics for SFOT helps us to serve that purpose.

Adherence to the law is the minimum standard of expected behavior. Nonprofit and philanthropic organizations must do more, however, than simply obey the law. We must embrace the spirit of the law, often going beyond legal requirements and making sure that what we do is matched by what the public understands about what we do. Transparency, openness and responsiveness to public concerns must be integral to the behavior of SFOT. This document is a companion to the *SFOT Terms of Reference for the Board and Directors*.

Statement of Values

Any code of ethics is built on a foundation of widely shared values. SFOT seeks to embody the following values:

- Commitment to the public good;
- Accountability to the public;
- Commitment beyond the law;
- Respect for the worth and dignity of individuals;
- Inclusiveness and social justice;
- Respect for pluralism and diversity;
- Transparency, integrity and honesty;
- Responsible stewardship of resources; and,
- Commitment to excellence and to maintaining the public trust.

These values lead directly to the Code of Ethics for SFOT that follows. These values inform and guide the actions our society should take in developing our policies and practices.

The Code of Ethics for SFOT

I. Personal and Professional Integrity

All founders, board members and volunteers of the organization act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the SFOT Society. Our organization promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness and integrity.

II. SFOT Mission

The SFOT Society has a clearly stated mission and purpose, approved by the board of directors, in pursuit of the public good. All of its programs support that mission and all who work for or on behalf of the organization understand and are loyal to that mission and purpose. The mission is responsive to the constituency and communities served by the organization, and is of value to the society at large.

Our Mission

- By being a positive voice in our community, we can provide transportation and smart growth research, data and information to help our leaders make informed decisions.
- To provide meaningful education and learning opportunities to help inform the general public as to what quality development and transportation options are available to us.
- We strive to listen to the development and transportation concerns and needs of our regional residents and help add their voices to ours in order to stimulate change.
- To lead by supporting the objectives of Metro Vancouver in developing an ongoing Livable Region Strategic Plan, we can create a better community for generations to come.
- We seek to be inclusive in allowing the general public to get involved with us and explore transportation options and new ideas.
- We are very supportive of sustainable and cost-effective growth and transportation solutions that will promote sustainable communities.
- We advocate for quality transit, such as light rail, that will attract people looking for efficient alternatives to roads and traffic congestion.

III. Governance

SFOT has an active governing body, namely our Board of Directors, which is responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction of the organization and for oversight of the finances, operations, and policies of the organization. The governing body:

- Ensures that its board members or trustees have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and that all members understand and fulfill their governance duties acting for the benefit of the organization and its public purpose;
- Has a conflict of interest policy that ensures that any conflicts of interest or the appearance thereof are avoided or appropriately managed through disclosure, refusal or other means; and

- Is responsible for the hiring, firing, and regular review of the performance of any future hired executive director or staff, and ensures that the compensation of the chief executive officer and staff is reasonable and appropriate;
- Ensures that the executive director and appropriate staff provide the governing body with timely and comprehensive information so that the governing body can effectively carry out its duties;
- Ensures that the organization conducts all transactions and dealings with integrity and honesty;
- Ensures that the organization promotes working relationships with board members, staff, volunteers, and program beneficiaries that are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness;
- Ensures that the organization is fair and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for all board, staff and volunteer positions;
- Ensures that policies of the organization are in writing, clearly articulated and officially adopted;
- Ensures that the resources of the organization are responsibly and prudently managed; and,
- Ensures that the organization has the capacity to carry out its programs effectively.

IV. Legal Compliance

SFOT is knowledgeable of and complies with all laws, regulations and applicable legal conventions.

V. Responsible Stewardship

SFOT and any of its future subsidiaries manage their funds responsibly and prudently. This should include the following considerations:

- It spends a reasonable percentage of its annual budget on programs in pursuit of its mission;
- It spends an adequate amount on administrative expenses to ensure effective accounting systems, internal controls, competent bookkeeping, and other expenditures critical to professional management;
- SFOT compensates any future staff, and any others who may receive compensation, reasonably and appropriately;
- If SFOT solicits funds, we will have reasonable fundraising costs, recognizing the variety of factors that affect fundraising costs;
- SFOT will not accumulate operating funds excessively;
- SFOT will with any future endowments (both foundations and public charities), prudently draw from endowment funds consistent with donor intent and to support the public purpose of the organization;
- SFOT will ensure that all spending practices and policies are fair, reasonable and appropriate to fulfill the mission of SFOT; and,
- All financial reports are factually accurate and complete in all material respects.

VI. Openness and Disclosure

SFOT provides comprehensive and timely information to the public, the media, and all stakeholders and is responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information, given our current 100% volunteer staff. All information about the organization will fully and honestly reflect the policies and practices of SFOT. Basic informational data about the organization, such as financial reports, reviews and compilations, and any audited financial statements will be circulated at every monthly meeting or otherwise available to the public as per the BC Society Act. All solicitation materials accurately represent the organization's policies and practices and will reflect the dignity of program beneficiaries. All financial, organizational, and program reports will be complete and accurate in all material respects.

VII. Program Evaluation

SFOT regularly reviews program effectiveness and has mechanisms to incorporate lessons learned into future programs. SFOT is committed to improving program and organizational effectiveness and develops mechanisms to promote learning from its activities and the field. SFOT is responsive to changes in its field of activity and is responsive to the needs of its constituencies.

VIII. Inclusiveness and Diversity

SFOT has a policy of promoting inclusiveness and its members, staff, board and volunteers reflect diversity in order to enrich its programmatic effectiveness. SFOT takes meaningful steps to promote inclusiveness in any hiring, retention, promotion, board recruitment and constituencies served.

IX. Fundraising

SFOT raises funds from the public or from donor institutions and recognizes that we must be truthful in our solicitation materials. SFOT respects the privacy concerns of individual donors and expenditure of funds consistent with donor intent. SFOT is committed to disclosing important and relevant information to potential donors.

In raising funds from the public, SFOT will respect the rights of donors, as follows:

- To be informed of the mission of SFOT, the way the resources will be used, and their capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes;
- To be informed of the identity of those serving on SFOT's governing board and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities;
- To have access to SFOT's most recent financial reports;
- To be assured that their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given;
- To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition;
- To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by the law;
- To expect that all relationships with individuals representing SFOT of interest to the donor will be professional in nature;
- To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of SFOT or hired solicitors;

- To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that SFOT may intend to share; and,
- To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.

X. Grantmaker Guidelines

At any time in the future, should SFOT become a grantmaking body, SFOT understands that we will have particular responsibilities in carrying out this mission. These include the following:

- SFOT will have constructive relations with grantseekers based on mutual respect and shared goals;
- We will communicate clearly and on a timely basis with potential grantees;
- SFOT will treat grantseekers and grantees fairly and with respect;
- We will respect the expertise of grantseekers in their fields of knowledge;
- We will seek to understand and respect the organizational capacity and needs of grantseeking organizations; and,
- SFOT will respect the integrity of the mission of grantseeking organizations.