PROJECT READINESS

Planning and Constructability

STIP/TIP/TTIP/TAM Plan: The Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) has long identified the need for the Project, however, due to the significant investment required for project construction, SWO has only recently added it to their transportation priorities. The Project is listed in the 2024-2029 Tribe's Transportation Improvement Plan (TTIP). This plan was acceptance by the BIA. A Resolution approving the updated TTIP can be found at: https://inputcentral.com/swo2025build

Consistency with Other Plans: The SWO Tribal Department of Transportation Facility Project is identified in the 2019 SWO Long Range Transportation Plan (pg. 111). Three meetings were held as part of the SWO LRTP update in 2019. These meetings sought input from Tribal and other officials on portions of the plan. Input from these meetings was incorporated into the planning. During these meetings Transit needs and facilities were often a main discussion item. Transit has been increasingly recognized as an element of livability and economic development on the Reservation. For many residents of the Reservation transit service is their primary means of transportation. Without transit access, individuals would be restricted in their ability to enhance their lives and increase their economic prosperity. The 2019 LRTP recognizes the need for Tribal Transit service and for transitioning to an in-house Tribal transit service:

> "The Tribe is looking to start its own Transit Service when the current contract with Community Transit Program expires in 2022. To do that the Tribe will need to set aside funds to facilitate the construction of transit bus shelters, acquisition of new rolling stock, and various other costs such as training and employing staff to run the service. The Tribe will need to start competing for grants that are recommended in order to pay for the costs of running the service. It is recommended that the money currently given to Community Transit continue to be allocated to transit services after the contract expires."

Since its inception in 2015, Tribal Transit has continued to be part of the Tribal Transportation budget and council discussion/resolution approving funding each year. Prior to receiving their first FTA Tribal Transit Formula Grant in FY21, SWO used funding from their TTP allocation or would apply for, and hope to be awarded, FTA Tribal Transit Competitive Program funds, to pay for their partnership agreement with Community Transit. This has put a strain on the Tribes TTP funding that is also used for regular construction activities and preventative maintenance of paved and non-paved roadways. Use of these dollars to support public transit, essentially leaves minimal funding for needed road rehabilitation to address deteriorating roadways and identified safety improvements. With the FTA formula allocation now in place, SWO has proven they are ready to take next steps in initiating in-house transit services. Completion of the Project will assist in a successful transition and provide improved access, coordination, and communication for staff as well as the opportunity to grow transit services and better maintain essential transportation equipment.

Freight Plans: The project is not considered a freight project and is not included in a freight plan.

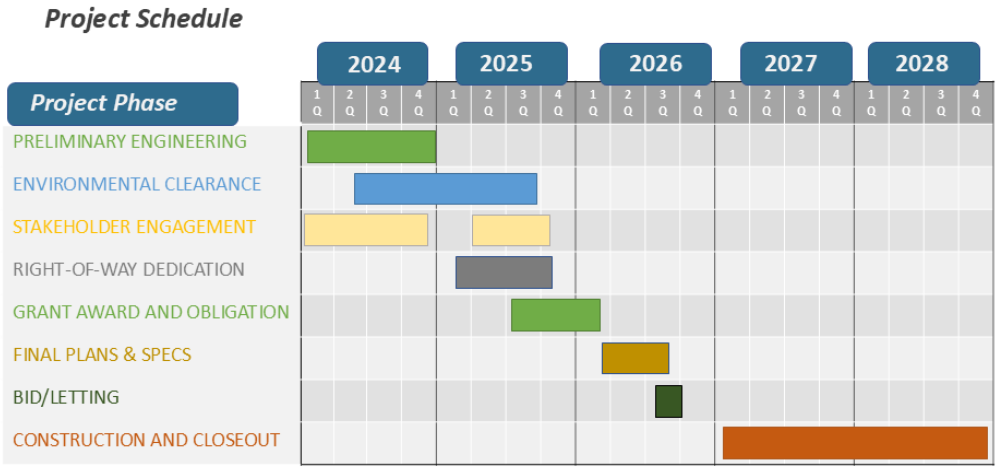
Property Acquisition/Right-of-Way (ROW): SWO owns the land the facility is located on (held in federal trust by the BIA). Although no ROW will be purchased, a parcel of the land will be platted and dedicated to the facility.

Construction Techniques/Phasing: The Project will use a single contractor design build method. The design-build method eliminates the need for multiple contracts and bidding stages and aims for better cost control through integrated planning.

Proposed Schedule

This Project is positioned to begin construction promptly, with bidding in Fall of 2026. The schedule is based on time of award and obligation as well as anticipated risk and mitigation strategies. SWO began the initial planning process for the Project in 2022. At the end of 2024, preliminary engineering was at 30 percent design. A preliminary building footprint, legal survey, wetland survey, cultural records searches, public/stakeholder engagement, and a preliminary site design have been completed. Right-of-Way dedication, additional stakeholder engagement, and environmental clearance will be completed by the end of 2025. The final planning activities included in the grant application are fees for architectural design and detailing for code compliance, electrical and mechanical design, and finalization of the site design. Based on the anticipated schedule, the Project will bid in Fall 2026 to allow the contractor extra time to order materials and mitigate the risk of late or inaccessible materials. SWO anticipates a two-year construction period due to short construction seasons with winter months. Final design will be completed in 2026, and then structural construction will take place in 2026/2027. The overall timeline results in substantial completion and project closeout by end of 2028.

- **Preliminary design** – Started in June 2022 will be complete in December 2025
- **Project listed in TTIP** – January 2024
- **NEPA process**: June 2024 – October 2025
- **ROW dedication:** February 2025 – October 2025
- **Stakeholder engagement:** January 2024 – November 2024 and April 2025 - October 2025
- **Finalization of grant agreement/obligation of grant funds**: June 2025 – March 2026
- **Final design**: March 2026 – September 2026
- **Construction**: September 2026 – December 2028



NEPA and Permitting

Right-of-Way Acquisition Plans

The project site, held in federal trust by the BIA, requires no additional ROW acquisitions. Coordination with local utility providers for site connections will begin in Q2 2025 and conclude by Q4 2025.This direct control facilitates immediate commencement of work post-award, eliminates potential delays related to site acquisition or permission processes, and guarantees a smooth path to project completion. Although no ROW will be purchased, a parcel of the land will be platted and dedicated to the facility.

NEPA Status

A NEPA process was initiated in accordance with FHWA guidelines and the South Dakota Environmental Procedures Process. An initial analysis was performed with a recommendation for an Environmental Assessment (EA). The NEPA EA for the Project is anticipated to be completed in July 2025. To expedite the process, SWO has engaged with federal and state agencies early, ensuring that any potential environmental concerns are resolved promptly.

Environmental Studies

Environmental investigation fieldwork has been completed and report drafting is underway for the Project and should be completed during the summer and early fall of 2025. All environmental reports can be found at: https://inputcentral.com/swo2025build

A Wetland Delineation Report was completed in October 2023. The report assisted with determining the wetland impacts associated with the proposed reconstruction project and any permitting that would need to be acquired in the survey area.

A Level III Cultural Resource Inventory request was prepared and submitted to the SWO Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO). On January 29, 2025, a determination of "No Historic Properties Affected" was made. THPO clearance letter can be found at: https://inputcentral.com/swo2025build

A Hydraulic Design Report will be completed during the final design phase.

Required Permits

Section 404 Permit will not be necessary for the project, Section 401 Certification will be acquired.

Project Support

Public & Agency Involvement Process and Results: In 2022, the SWO started their initial planning for a Transportation Facility and establishing in-house transit service. Specific tasks included developing and implementing a community engagement plan to increase support and awareness of this facility and to capture valuable input from the community. SWO conducted a Transit Study to determine the feasibility of developing the in-house transit program to serve the residents of the Lake Traverse Reservation and ending their agreement with Community Transit. Goals as outlined in that plan include further establishing purpose and need, addressing community concerns and incorporating, where possible, stakeholder and public input into preliminary design. An online survey was sent out to the community in March 2022 and closed at the end of April 2022. This survey was used to gather data on use and frequency of transit ridership and future needs.

SWO DOT engaged with Community Transit to study operational coordination efforts for the Tribal areas/services. Discussions between the SWO DOT and Community Transit involved the potential to coordinate drivers, dispatch upgrades and storage facilities in SWO areas and the community of Sisseton, SD. Additionally, a tribal transportation coordinator position to manage SWO transit needs was created. A series of meetings were held between the SWO DOT and Community Transit to outline a range of coordination opportunities and evaluation as each entity moved forward with transit investments in the areas adjacent and including the SWO tribal lands.

In June 2024, Tribal Transit completed a community engagement event as part of their preliminary engineering activities for the Project at the Tribes general council assembly. This 2-day event had high attendance totaling 683 on day 1 and 657 on day 2. Information was shared of Tribal Transit moving to a fixed local route for increased access for essential services for tribal residents. A survey was completed to gain further insight into transit services the community would like to see incorporated with Tribal Transit expanding services. Results concluded a need for increased local services as well as weekend trips to big-box retailers like Walmart for items that are either not available locally or have an increased cost in which the low-income residents could not afford.

Additional stakeholder engagement is scheduled for Summer/Fall of 2025, including community meetings to finalize site access and operational details with affected residents and local businesses.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Although all construction projects contain some risk, the Project is considered low-risk. The Project is currently being managed by SWO DOT staff who will lead design and liaison with the single contractor. Minimal challenges have been identified, and SWO feels confident these can be mitigated through final design and permitting. All preliminary engineering and design will be completed prior to construction, identifying and mitigating any noted concerns that might otherwise arise had these steps not been taken. Costs are based on prior experience and project planning including preliminary engineering, design, ROW, and NEPA. If actual construction costs exceed the RAISE grant funding, SWO will dedicate additional TTP funding to cover overruns. Bidding will take place in Fall 2026 to allow the contractor extra time to order materials and mitigate the risk of late or inaccessible materials.

RISK	STATUS/MITIGATION STRATEGY	RISK LEVEL
Technical Feasibility	All planning activities including preliminary design & environmental will be complete prior to construction	Low
Schedule	SWO is planning for a two-year construction process to reduce risk and take advantage of alternative construction methods.	Low
Environmental Review	An Environmental Assessment will be completed prior to construction. Early coordination with federal and state agencies to reduce delays	Low
Reviews and Permits	No permits have been identified and there are no anticipated issues that would delay permitting if necessary.	Low
Public Engagement	Public engagement has been conducted and will be ongoing. The community is aware of the need and are supportive.	Low
Local Approvals	The Project is identified in 2024 TTIP and the 2019 LRTP both of which included engagement with the public and stakeholders. Tribal Council is fully supportive.	Low

Budget	The budget is current and has been calculated based on known variables for supplies, time, and labor and inflated by 3 percent per year to address anticipated year-of-construction actual costs. All construction estimates include 15 percent contingency. SWO will dedicate additional TTP funding to cover any overruns.	Low
Contract Administration	Contract and grant administration will be completed by SWO's staff who are experienced in administering federal transportation grants.	Low

Technical Capacity Assessment

Federal Funding: SWO is committed to maintaining their infrastructure investments as they are critical to the Reservation's economic competitiveness and quality of life for residents. They have a long history of planning, designing, and delivering successful capital projects. The Tribal Transportation Program is the primary source of transportation funding for the Tribe. This accounts for roughly 90% of total Tribal transportation funding with other Federal and state funding sources, accounting for the remaining amount. SWO has extremely limited resources for local funds, so they rely heavily on federal and state programs to maintain a safe and efficient transportation system. SWO has a long history of managing both federally funded and non-federally funded projects, underscoring its capacity to successfully oversee, report on, and achieve significant outcomes in line with grant objectives. The Tribe has staff that are well-versed in the reporting requirements associated with federal grants.

Federal Regulations: The Project will comply with all Federal requirements including Buy America provisions, ADA regulations, Civil Rights requirements, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations.

Project Planning: The Project is listed in the SWO's 2019 LRTP and is a prioritized project that was added to the 2024-2029 TTIP.

Project Delivery: SWO has diligently worked to identify and prioritize transportation project needs against available funds. They have successfully and responsibly administered over $30 million of their limited TTP funding on necessary and high-priority transportation improvement projects while making all efforts to leverage additional funds from competitive funding programs. They have experience with grant reporting and annual reporting to the Federal Highway Administration's Tribal Transportation Program Port Reporting. They have consistently proven to be a good steward of Federal funding and are well-versed in the reporting requirements associated with federal grants. SWO has recently and successfully administered FTA Tribal Transit Competitive Program, TTPSF, FEMA BRIC, Tribal Bridge Improvement Program, and other federal and state grant awards.

Recent projects of similar size and/or scope:

Reconstruction of 11.6 miles of BIA 700 Barker Hill to SD Hwy 10. This project was split into two phases. Total project cost of $14,350,000 (engineering costs of $350,000, material contract for concrete box culverts $900,000 and construction costs of $13,100,00). The project was successfully completed in 2016.