Project Description

The Spirit Lake Tribe is requesting $4,149,564 in RAISE grant program funds to complete the planning and preconstruction activities for the Spirit Lake Tribal Community Repair and Rehabilitation Project (The Project). This rural project is on the Spirit Lake Nation, in northeast North Dakota. It includes the communities of St. Michael, Tokio, Crow Hill, and Fort Totten, the central hub of the Reservation that provides access to goods and services, employment, education, tribal services, and recreation opportunities for the 3,787 reservation residents. This project will provide safer, more connected, and equitable multimodal transportation infrastructure in an Area of Persistent Poverty and a Historically Disadvantaged Community.

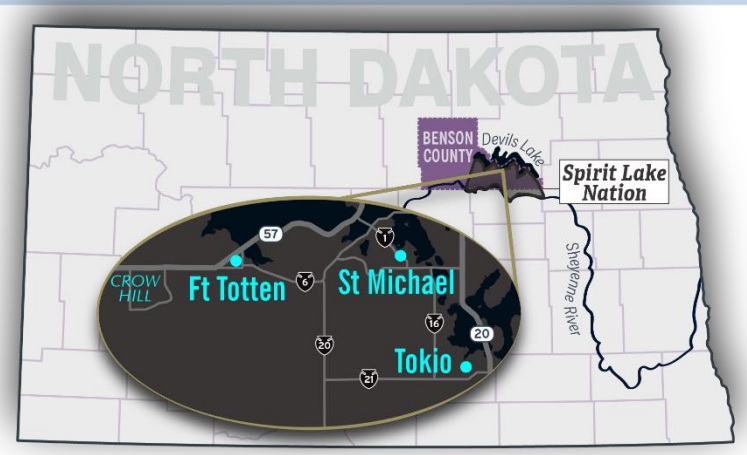
The Spirit Lake Roads Department currently expends half of its annual Tribal Shares of Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funds on regular maintenance activities and the other half on preventive maintenance projects to patch and chip seal coat its paved roadways. This leaves essentially no TTP funds available for much needed road rehabilitation to address deteriorating roadways, complete shoulder widening to reduce roadway departure crashes, address known drainage issues, or provide repairs and upgrades for safe and accessible pedestrian facilities. Additionally, the Tribal Roads maintenance shop caught on fire December 11, 2023, making it completely unusable. The Spirit Lake Nation seeks to provide a transportation system that can safely and efficiently move people and goods and provide quality multimodal access to Tribal housing, services, and employment opportunities.



The Project will complete all planning and preconstruction activities to address declining roadway infrastructure, drainage issues, shoulder widening, improve parking and driveway accessibility for residents, provide ADA accessible shared use paths, improve pedestrian lighting, connect neighborhoods to essential services with the addition of pedestrian trails where there are none, and design a Tribal Roads Shop to meet the current and future needs of Spirit Lake Nation. Additionally, the Tribe plans to update 911 and snow removal address maps for emergency responders and evacuation planning and preparation. Completion of planning activities will result in a “shovel ready” project that meets current roadway, pedestrian, and stormwater requirements, preparing the Tribe to apply for multiple state and federal grant opportunities to complete construction. The project will significantly improve the safety and accessibility of the transportation system within the community, provide opportunity for future economic and tourism development, and connect residents to schools, businesses, medical and essential services, and Tribal facilities.

Detailed Statement of Work

The Project includes roadways and pedestrian routes in several Tribal communities on the Spirit Lake Reservation. Areas include the communities of St. Michael, Tokio, Fort Totten and Crow Hill. The roadways are primarily owned by BIA and maintained by the Tribe. Many of them were constructed more than 50 years ago and now suffer from deteriorating infrastructure that



does not meet current design standards. The **location map** shows the four tribal areas that are separate from each other but encompass the majority of Tribal residents. The infrastructure issues are similar throughout the different areas and include deteriorating roadways and pedestrian facilities, lack of ADA accessibility, poor access to homes, and stormwater drainage issues. As a result, this project considers the connectivity throughout the Reservation as a whole and would like to address all the individual project areas as one overall community project to resolve the current infrastructure needs. Design will be completed for the project as a whole, knowing that construction may take several phases due to the cost and size. Additionally, the Tribal Roads maintenance shop caught on fire December 11, 2023 which has made it completely unusable. The planning project will also include complete design and preconstruction activities for a new Tribal Roads Shop to meet the current and future needs of the people of the Spirit Lake Nation.

The Project scope will include survey, environmental clearance, right-of-way, drainage study, preliminary concepts, completion of preliminary design, final plans and specifications, and public engagement work essential to ensuring the communities are involved in the process. Completion of planning activities will position the Project for RAISE or other grant construction dollars in future years and ensure that currently anticipated rehabilitation/construction costs are accurate, and the Project is as close to "shovel ready" as possible when going to bid.

Roadway Rehabilitation

The roadway surfaces throughout the Reservation are in a state of disrepair including cracking, rutting, depressions, potholes, and significant alligator cracking. Paved roadways are out of section, with varying longitudinal and cross-slopes causing a very rough ride. During the preliminary design, the street substructure will need to be analyzed to determine the preferred roadway section, as it appears that the crumbling surface may be a combination of minimal asphalt depth, substructure instability and a lack of adequate drainage. Residential parking issues will also be assessed to ensure current design standards are met and provide for safe accessibility to residential housing. Several streets do not have adequate driveway access to the adjacent housing and are too narrow for parking on both sides of the street. Street widths, parking availability, and pedestrian facilities vary, and often conflict, within the project areas.



Wheel ruts, depressed cracks, and no shoulders on BIA 21



The Project will include a mill and overlay of community streets and driveways in Fort Totten, Crow Hill, St. Michael, and Tokio. Adequate street widths, parking access, and safe, clear pedestrian facilities are needed throughout the roadway system. Identified project streets have significant deterioration and often lack the paved width to effectively accommodate traffic, parking, and pedestrians throughout the neighborhoods that connect children to schools, provide access to jobs, and connect residents to Tribal government and facilities.

Shoulder Widening



The shoulder widths along areas of BIA 1, 6, 8, 15, and 20 are insufficient. There is no room for drivers to maneuver to avoid crashes or have room to correct if the vehicle leaves the roadway. Adequate shoulder width is particularly important on higher speed roadways and areas where there is limited stopping distance. There is also limited room for emergency vehicles to safely pull over to address emergency situations or for safe storage of disabled vehicles along these roadways.

The roadways will be designed to meet current highway safety standards and widened to incorporate 2-foot shoulders.

Pedestrian Accessibility and Lighting



The pathway in Fort Totten was originally constructed in 2006. It currently experiences periodic flooding issues and needs a grade raise to correct the deficiency. The curb ramps are not ADA-compliant which creates barriers for non-motorized travelers, *as shown in the picture*, and access to facilities such as the Tribal Administration Offices which lacks safe and ADA accessible pedestrian crossings.

The pathway in St. Michael was originally constructed in 2010 and is in need of rehabilitation for safe pedestrian accessibility. The Project will include design of a patch and chip seal on this facility.

Along BIA Route 1 from St. Michael to ND Highway 57 intersection, adjacent to where the Spirit Lake Casino is located and many Tribal residents are employed, there is no pedestrian access. People will walk along the narrow shoulder, putting themselves and drivers at risk of a vehicle/pedestrian crash. The Project will complete the design of a new separated pathway that will run along BIA 1 from St. Michael and connect to the future pathway along ND Highway 57 that NDDOT is currently designing for construction in 2026.

SLT is also requesting grant funding from this planning grant to purchase a skid loader with a snowblower, broom, and bucket for maintaining and clearing the current pathways. This is a recommendation from the Fort Totten Walkability Assessment that was completed in April 2020. The full report can be found at: https://inputcentral.com/spiritlaketribe-raise.

Storm Sewer and Drainage

Drainage improvements in Fort Totten are needed. The existing storm sewer within the project area is a major concern that will be addressed during planning. Drainage has been a consistent issue in two specific locations within the central section of Fort Totten.



Drainage improvements in St. Michael are needed. Poor initial planning resulted in a substandard combination of overland flow and storm sewer which causes several areas to flood when there is significant rainfall or snow melt. The drainage issue results in the flooding of streets and homes. The project will be analyzed as a whole, reviewing the existing drainage structures, locations of overland flow, and other contributing areas. The drainage modifications will require several of the roadways to be modified to account for the additional flows, whether by underground structures or valley gutters.

Tribal Roads Shop

The Tribal Roads maintenance shop caught on fire December 11, 2023 which has made it completely unusable. The Tribe has land available that will provide a more centralized location for road maintenance services and is also located adjacent to the Spirit Lake EMS building. This location will provide for more efficient access during emergencies in inclement weather that may require a snowplow to clear roadways for the ambulance to get to a location. The planning project will include complete design and preconstruction activities for a new Tribal Roads Shop to meet the current and future needs of Spirit Lake Nation. The maintenance shop will provide office space for staff, a safe space for vehicles to be stored inside, space for in-house maintenance on vehicles and equipment, resulting in significant cost savings, and a covered salt/sand storage area that will serve all of the Spirit Lake Nation.

911 and Snow Removal Mapping

Currently, 911 address signs have not yet been installed on the Spirit Lake Nation. It has been recommended in the Tribe's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Tribal Transportation Safety Plan (TTSP) to install 911 address signs throughout the Spirit Lake Nation to aid in the proper documentation of incidents and the ability to find remote locations. The Project will complete a large map of all the buildings that have a 911 address. This will be shared with all stakeholders that have a need for it, including law enforcement, emergency medical providers, and snow removal agencies (currently a shared effort between Roads, Housing, and other Departments).

Project History and Related Infrastructure Investments

In recent years, the SLT has invested all its available Tribal Transportation Program funds to maintain its reservation roadways (approximately $1,000,000 per year). This has left no TTP funding for

FY2016	$536,690	TTPSF	Widening 2 miles of BIA 6
FY2020	$333,574	NDDOT TA	Turn Lane into CCCC Head Start
FY2020	$58,102	TTPSF	PE & Admin for CCCC Head Start Turn Lane
FY2022	$112,644	TTPSF	Widening on BIA 21 - Design Only
FY2023	$1,800,000	FEMA BRIC	Comprehensive Flood Protection and Interior Drainage Scoping

construction or improvements. Consequently, the Spirit Lake Tribe has applied for project funding through other sources. The table lists recent grant success.

Two miles of BIA6 will be widened through the curves west of St. Michael in 2024 with $536,690 in TTPSF funds. This widening design is excluded from the cost estimate submitted for RAISE. Another mile of BIA6 was widened with a grade raise in 2003-2004, design for that mile of widening is also excluded from the application. A mill and overlay is still needed.

A center left turn lane has been funded for the Cankdeska Cikana Community College Head Start facility on BIA6. This project has been designed already and is planned for bidding soon.

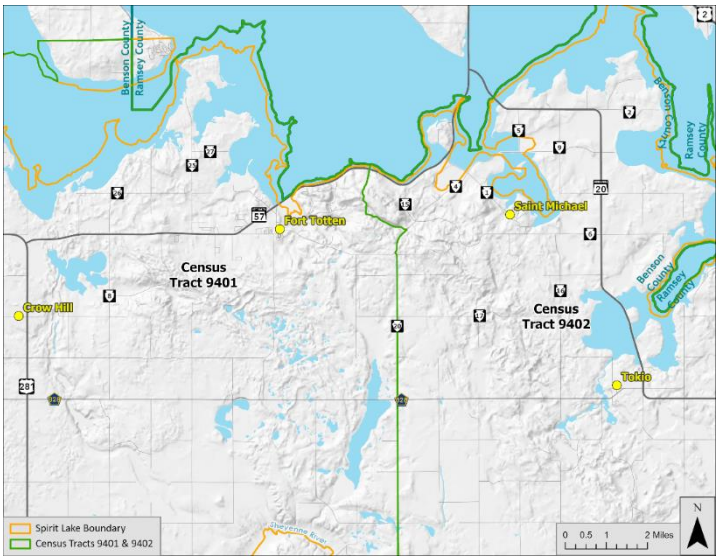
BIA21 received a TTPSF grant for design of a shoulder widening project. BIA21 has already been widened in two spots totaling about 1.25 miles, one in 2020 with NDDOT HSIP funds and the other in 2013 with TTP funds. Design of the widening on BIA21 is excluded from this application. A mill and overlay is still needed.

Current Design Status

This project has been a priority for SLT since at least 2017. TTP Transportation Improvement Program (TTP TIP) Resolution A05-17-336 listed Shoulder Widening as a TTP priority. However, funding limitations have made it impossible to complete it. (The 5-year TTP TIP is required to be financially constrained.) We have completed small projects through competitive grant programs in a few of the highest priority areas, but a system-wide approach is needed.

Geographical Description

The Project area is located on the Spirit Lake Reservation in rural, northeastern North Dakota.



The Reservation is home to many individuals and families in financially sensitive situations. It has a population of 3,787 people with 33.9 percent of the population living in poverty. Fort Totten, the main Tribal hub providing access to goods and services, health care, education centers, employment, childcare, recreation, and other essential tribal services, has a population of 1,160 people with 41.7 percent of the population living in poverty. Having access to reliable, safe transportation infrastructure is critical to living sustainably in this impoverished rural area.

The Project improvements are located in communities of St. Michael, Tokio, Crow Hill, and Fort Totten, on the Spirit Lake Reservation. St. Michael and Tokio are located in Benson County (Census Tract 9402). Fort Totten and Crow Hill are in Benson County (Census Tract 9401) in northeastern North Dakota. Both census tracts lie within an Area of Persistent Poverty, a Historically Disadvantaged Community, Justice40 (CEJST), and EPA IRA Disadvantaged Community.