

BUILDING
ROADS TO
SOVEREIGNTY:

Developing Little Shell's First Long
Range Transportation Plan

September 23, 2025



P R E S E N T E R S

- Gerald Gray, Jr., Tribal Chairman
- Clarence Sivertsen, First Vice Chairman
- Terra Branson-Thomas, Senior Policy Advisor
- Jamie Wark, Project Manager, SRF Consulting Group
- Patrick Reardon, Environmental Specialist, IMEG

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- Tribal history and early acquisition strategy
- Approach to LRTP Development
- New Route Requests
- Pulling all the pieces together
- Discussion and Q&A

LITTLE SHELL TRIBAL HISTORY

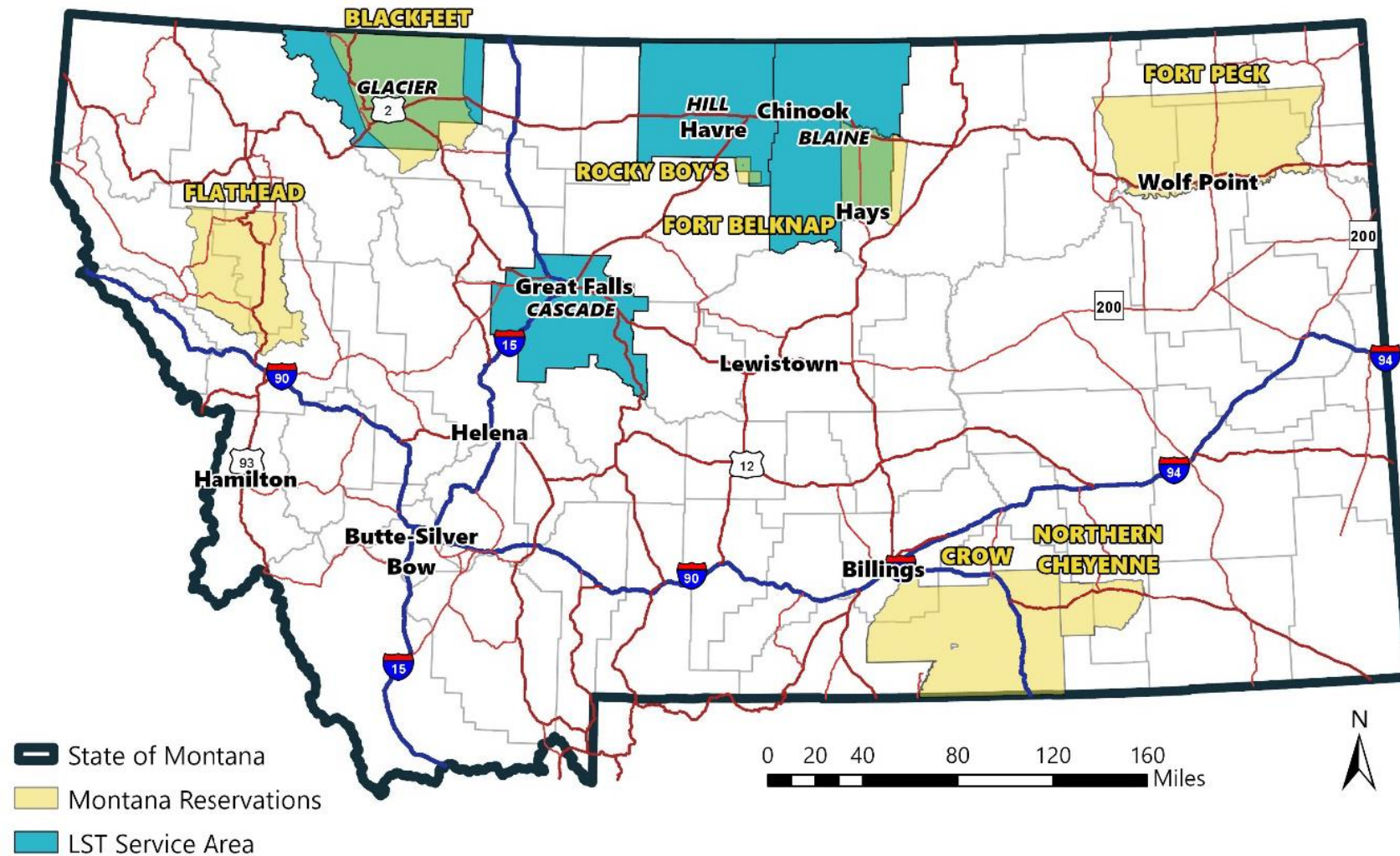
- Historical descendants of Pembina Band of Chippewa Indians
- Refused to sign 1863 Treaty of Old Crossing and the 1892 McCumber Agreement
- Instead, the Little Shell Band migrated north to Canada and, eventually, Montana
- The Band fought for restoration for more than a century
- In December 2019, the Tribe was restored and initiated tribal government operations

LITTLE SHELL OPERATIONS

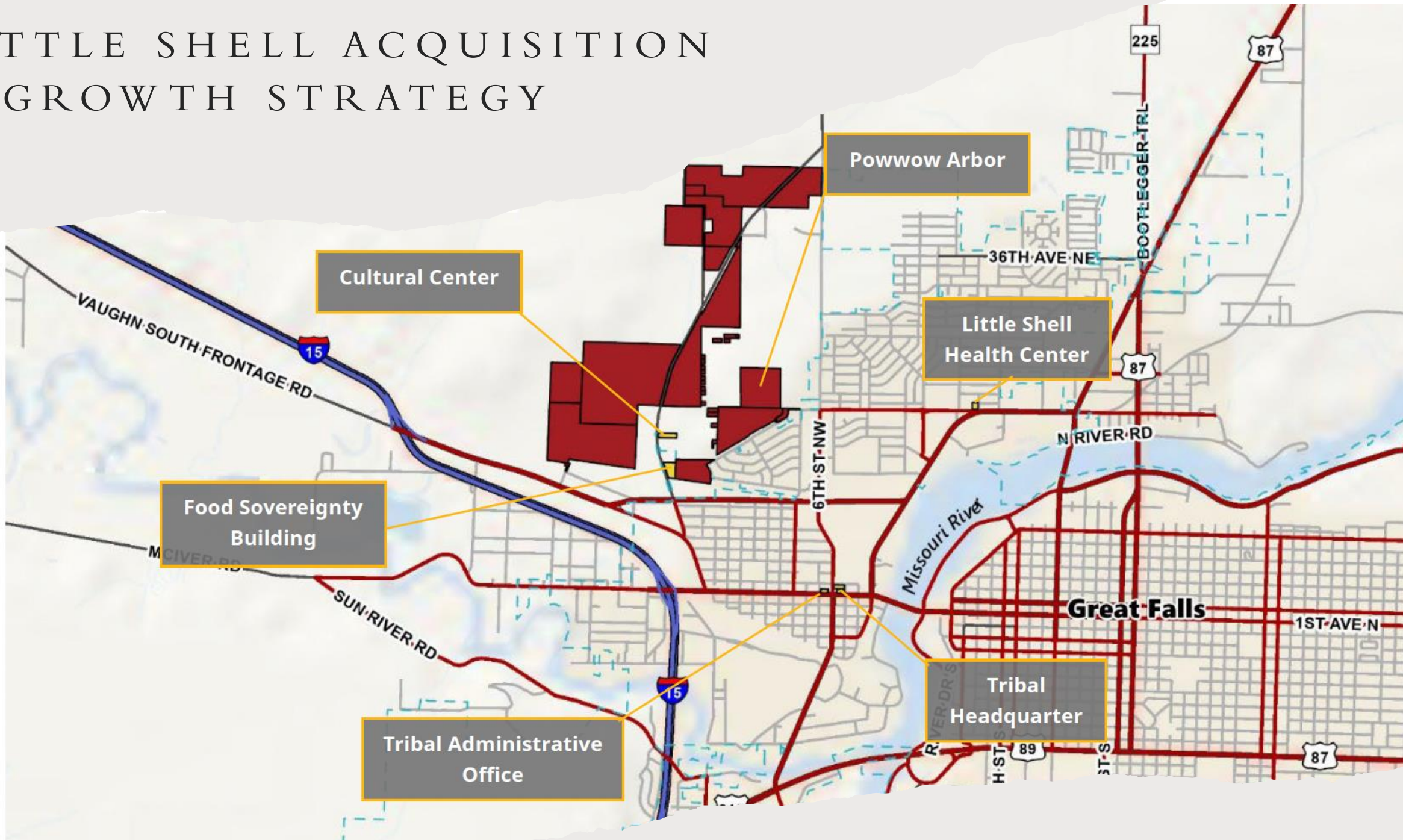
- Food Sovereignty
- Health
- Culture and Language Programs
- Housing
- Enrollment
- Transportation



LITTLE SHELL SERVICE AREA



LITTLE SHELL ACQUISITION & GROWTH STRATEGY





Approach to LST's Long Range Transportation Planning



Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Development

- LST received noticed of eligibility for Tribal Transportation Program funding from the BIA in 2021
- TTP funds can be administered through FHWA and BIA
- TTP requires three Items
 - 20 Year Long Range Transportation Plan
 - National Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory
 - Tribal Transportation Improvement Program



L RTP Development – Background

RFP

LST released RFP
for LRTP, NTTFI
and TTIP
development

AWARD

Contract awarded
to IMEG
(formerly NECI)
and SRF
Consulting teams

KICK-OFF

Project kicked off
in Spring 2024

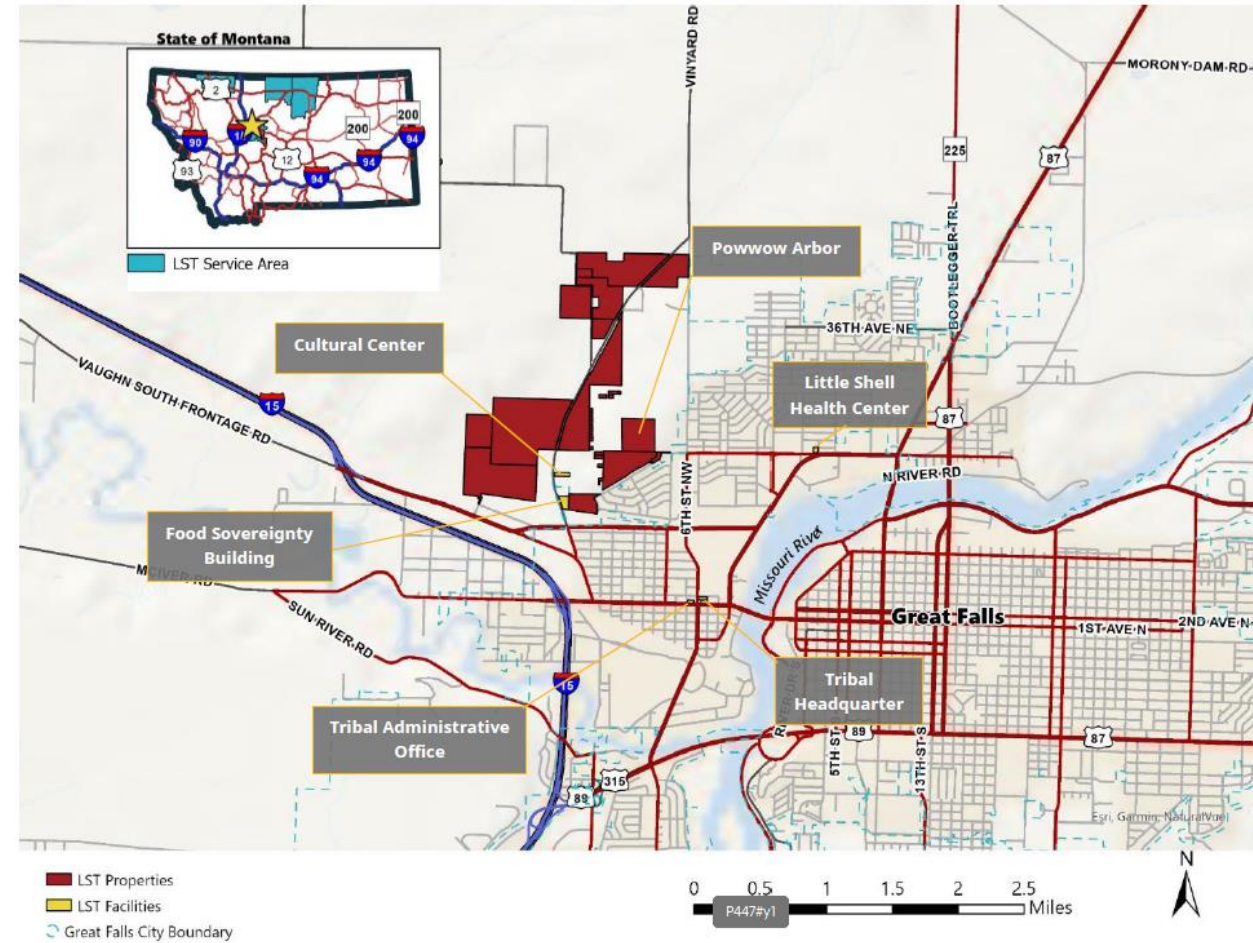
APPROVAL

LRTP approved in
Spring 2025



L RTP Development – Background

- LST owns/maintains no roadways
- LST owns five properties with Tribal government service facilities
 - Tribal Headquarters
 - Administration Office
 - Elder Center
 - Food Sovereignty
 - Health Center



LRTP Development – Purpose

- LRTP is required to access TTP funds
- Strategic planning tool
 - Proactively plan and prioritize transportation facility improvements
- Exercise Tribal sovereignty
 - The 2045 LRTP is the first of its kind for the Little Shell Tribe, representing a significant milestone in establishing their own sovereign transportation program.
 - Address tribal needs



L RTP Development – Eligible Facilities

- Five properties include parking lots
- Title 23 of the U.S. Code and 25 CFR Part 170
 - Directly related to transportation
 - Appendix A to Subpart B of Part 170 of the CFR lists a number of eligible activities, which include:

“Planning and development of rest areas, recreational trails, parking areas, sanitary facilities, water facilities, and other facilities that accommodate the traveling public.”

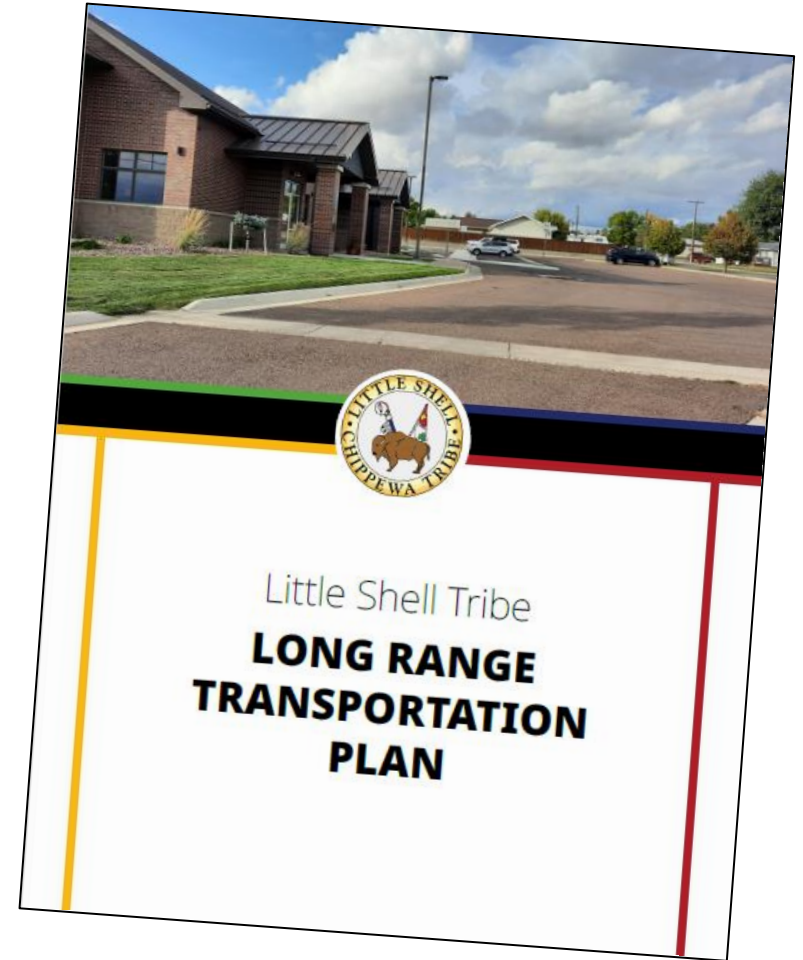
“Fringe and corridor parking facilities including access roads, buildings, structures, equipment improvements, and interests in land.”

“Adjacent public parking areas.”



LRTP Development – Key Components

- Key components of the LRTP document
 - Goals and Objectives
 - Existing Conditions
 - Public Engagement
 - Facility Inventory
 - Maintenance/Preservation Plan
 - Financial Plan
 - Transit



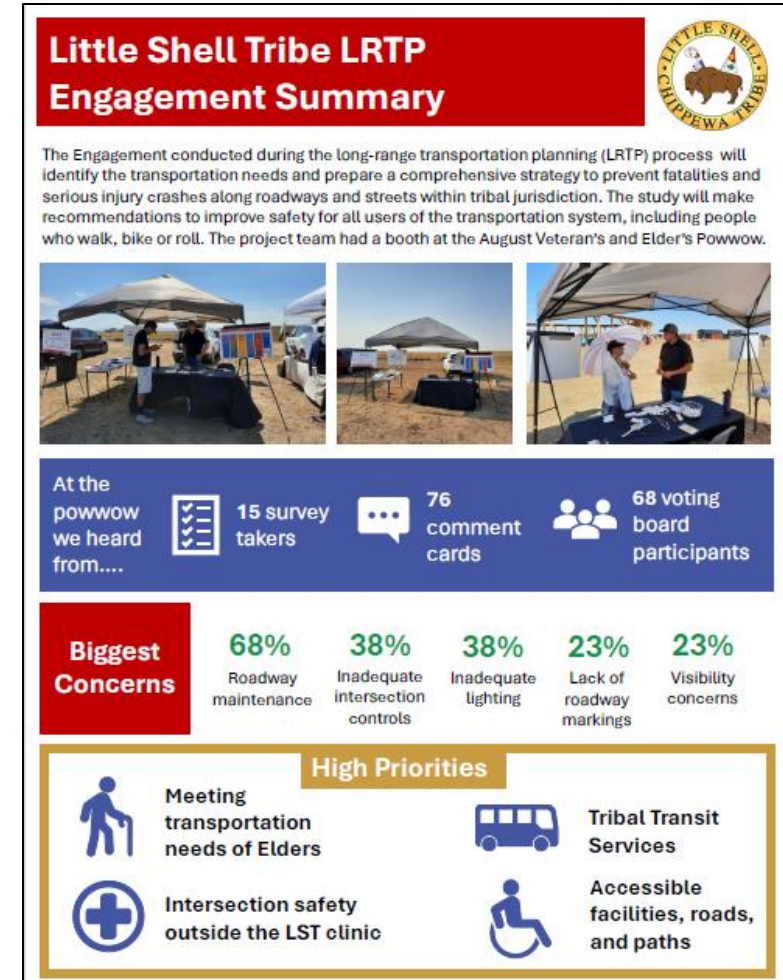
LRTP Development – Community Engagement

- Online survey (15 responses)
- Annual Veteran's and Elder's Powwow
 - Comment card (76 responses)
 - Engagement exercise (68 responses)



L RTP Development – Community Engagement

- Biggest concerns
 - Roadway maintenance
 - Inadequate intersection controls
 - Inadequate lighting
 - Lack of roadway lighting
 - Visibility concerns
- Highest priorities
 - Elder transportation needs
 - Tribal transit services
 - Intersection safety near Health Center
 - Accessible facilities, roads and paths



LRTP Development – Property Evaluation and Needs Assessment

- Performed field review of five properties
- Help understand needs for each facility
- Help understand level of effort and/or cost to improve facility
- Discussion with LST Leadership



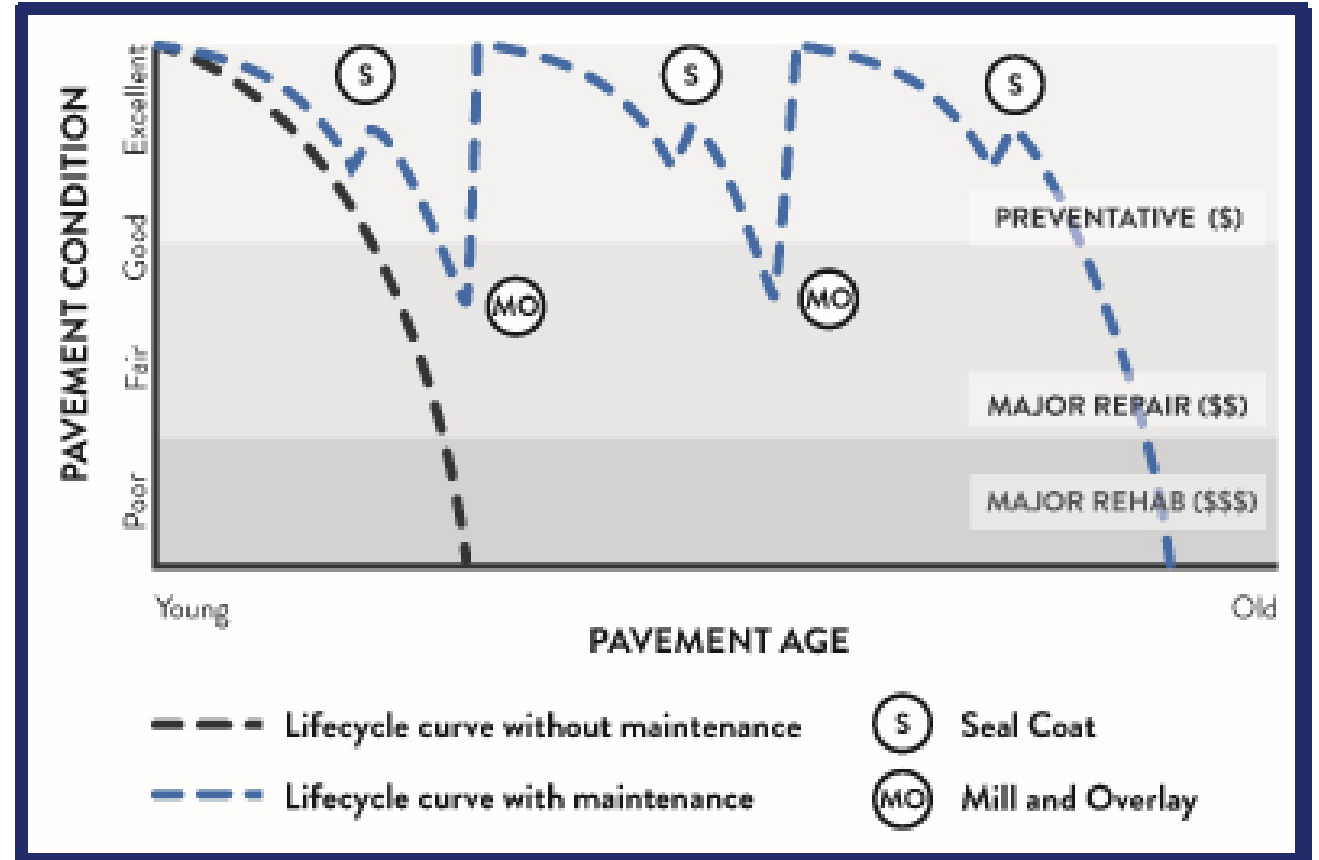
LRTP Development – Integration of Cultural, Environmental and Economic Factors

- Consideration was needed to address cultural needs of community and Tribal Leadership
 - Planned developed near Hill 57
 - Powwow grounds
 - Master concept plan near Food Sovereignty Building
 - Improve access to government service facilities and culturally significant locations for:
 - Elders
 - Pedestrians
 - Other community members



LRTP Development – Example Strategies

- Strategies to address parking lot issues are based on pavement conditions
 - Preventative (\$)
 - Major repair (\$\$)
 - Major rehabilitation (\$\$\$)



LRTP Development – Example Priorities Identified

- Prioritization of projects is important
 - Short-term, mid-term and long-term facility need
 - Planning level cost estimates
- Prioritized list was developed using scoring matrix based on:
 - ✓ Tribal Leadership feedback
 - ✓ Community feedback
 - ✓ Surface condition
 - ✓ Goals and objectives

L RTP Development – Example Priorities Identified

Table 18. Elder Center Short Term Preservation Plan Priority

1529 Stuckey Road – Elder Center		
Improvement	Priority Rating	Cost Estimate
Phase I – ADA Improvements	11	\$64,700
Phase II – Paving and Grading (around building)	11	\$291,800
Total		\$365,500

Table 22. Elder Center Mid Term Preservation Plan Priority

1529 Stuckey Road – Elder Center		
Improvement	Priority Rating	Cost Estimate
Phase III – Paving and Grading (entire lot)	5	\$306,800
Total		\$306,800

Table 24. Health Clinic Long Term Preservation Plan

425 Smelter Ave – Health Clinic		
Improvement	Priority Rating	Cost Estimate
Signage	2	\$6,900
Total		\$6,900

LRTP Development – Preservation Plan

- Project prioritization was used to create preservation plan
- Preservation plan was used to create TTIP
- Facility inventory was used to develop NTTFI



**Long Range
Transportation
Plan (LRTP)**



**National Tribal
Transportation
Facility
Inventory
(NTTFI)**



**Tribal
Transportation
Improvement
Program
(TTIP)**



**Tribal
Transportation
Program (TTP)
Funds**

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LITTLE SHELL TRIBE'S NATIONAL TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES INVENTORY (NTTFI)

2025 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION IN INDIAN COUNTRY CONFERENCE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2025



A Brief Overview of the Route Submittal Process

- The BIA maintains the Road Information Field Data System (RIFDS), which is a digital database containing all the tribal routes with the Nation Tribal Transportation Facility Inventory (NTTFI)
- For tribes to spend federal funding on transportation infrastructure that routes must be incorporated into the NTTFI, reflected within an LRTP and included in the annual TTIP.
- New route submission will require individuals with RIFDS training and tribal permissions.
- Route specific data will be entered within the RIFDS database coupled with the required attachments as laid out in 25 CFR 170.446



A Brief Overview of the Route Submittal Process (cont.)

- Updates are done on an annual basis, with tribes being required to provide the necessary information by March 15.
- The BIA then is obligated to review the submitted information and provide requests for additional information by May 15 if errors or omissions are found within the submittal.
- The tribe must respond to this request and provide that requested data by June 15.
- The BIA Regional Office must validate all submittal information by July 15.
- BIADOT is required to approve all submitted inventory update requests from the regional offices by September 30 or return the request back to the regional office for additional information.

Little Shell Tribes Process

- Through the LRTP scoping process, LST highlighted the facilities that the tribe owned that it wished to incorporate into the NTTFI.
- Utilizing the LRTP along with guidance and knowledge from LST, IMEG pulled together the required data for the RIFDS submittal along with creation of the strip map.
- The Tribe then approved resolutions and waiver letters and gathered the appropriate signature from tribal representatives to submit data.
- Submission of routes ahead of deadline.
- Addressed feedback and concerns.
- Awaiting to hear the final verdict on the submission.

Required Information for Submittals

- All submittals of existing routes are subject to include the items laid out within 25CFR 170.446.
 1. LRTP
 2. Tribal Resolution
 3. Strip Map
 4. ADT Documentation
 5. Representative Photo
 6. Additional Incidental Cost Verification
 7. Acknowledgement of Public Authority responsibility

Long Range Transportation Plan

- The route must be incorporated into the LRTP. This can be as simple as including an appendix A at the back end showing the additional routes being added to the LRTP. However, future renditions of the LRTP will need to reflect these newly added routes into the overall tribal inventory, which is a larger undertaking.
- Note: LRTP's require a 30 day review period, so advanced planning for inventory updates is important to include the time it would take to update and publish the LRTP (additional time should be allocated should feedback be received).

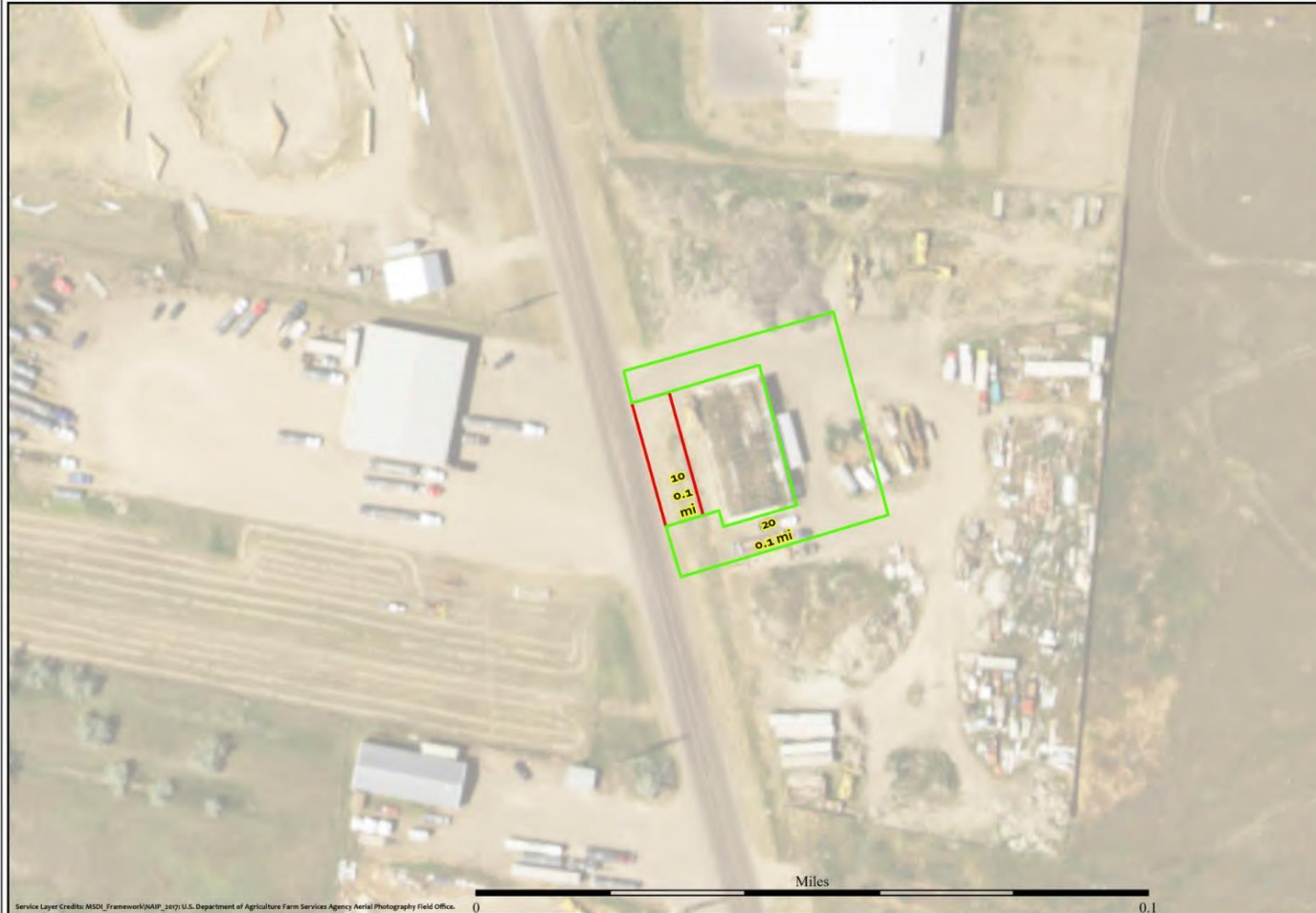
Tribal Resolution

- A tribal resolution will be needed that states that the tribe(s) wish to update their NTTFI and incorporate additional routes and/or make changes to existing routes.
- To simplify and expedite the process, incorporate all updates into a single resolution.
- Note: Knowing how frequently a council meets is important. As is informing the council members ahead of time of the updates and the purpose. Questions and the need for clarification can sometimes table a resolution, taking more time to get it passed. Plan accordingly so it doesn't jeopardize the submission.

Strip Map

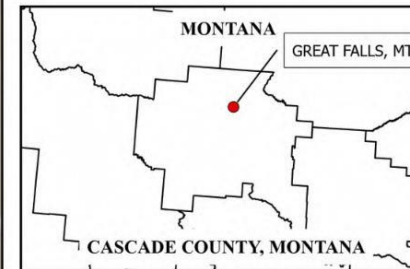
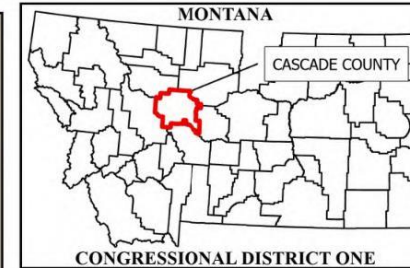
- Strip maps are the visual representation of the route within the NTTFI. While ranging in appearance and layout, a good strip map
- A strip map must include (based on the definition within 25 CFR 170.5):
 - The proposed route, broken down by each section
 - The route in relation to State, County, Tribal and Congressional Boundaries
 - Defined dimensions with Latitude and Longitude of the route
 - North Arrow, Scale Bar, Traffic Counter Location and Other nearby Transportation Facilities
 - A table that provides the routes data
- Note: We have found great success utilizing GIS to create the strip maps. Not only does it create uniform maps that can be set up in a template to guarantee that all the required information is incorporated, but it can also be linked to a larger database that will house the same NTTFI data as RIFDS. This can provide a tribe with quicker and cleaner access to vital information pertaining to individual routes when planning or updating the inventory. It can also be used to systematically locate routes that may need to be updated based on age or other discrepancies.

STRIP MAP - ROUTE 0001 FOR THE LITTLE SHELL TRIBE



ROUTE 0001 COORDINATE TABLE

Route	Section	Beginning Latitude	Beginning Longitude	Ending Latitude	Ending Longitude
0001	10	-111.344726	-111.344726	47.518819	47.518819
0001	20	-111.344263	-111.344263	47.518819	47.518819



Route by Functional Class

- Undefined
- Major Arterial
- Rural Minor Arterial
- City Local
- Rural Major Collector
- Rural Local
- City Minor Arterial
- City Collector
- Trail
- Other Transportation Facility
- Airstrip
- Overlap Section

ROUTE BY OWNER

- BIA
- Tribe
- State
- County
- Undefined

SECTION NUMBER

- 10
- 20



- Sample Strip Map produced by IMEG

ADT Documentation

- To input a value for the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) documentation of the traffic counts is required.
- Note: Should a tribe not have the time or resources to conduct an ADT, the tribe may waive an ADT input and elect to go with the default values based on road class. This can be helpful when there is urgency to get a route incorporated into the NTTFI. Routes can be updated at a later date to incorporate a traffic count, should one occur after the inclusion of the route into the inventory.

Representative Photo

- A photo of each section is required. This photo is to be taken at the start of each section and should be an accurate representation of the route.
- Note: This is a great item to update at the same time that you update the Surface Condition Index (SCI) of new and existing routes. Having an updated photo that represents a decrease in the surface condition

Representative Photo



- Tips for a good Representative Photo
 1. Taken at the start of a section
 2. Representative of current conditions
 3. Encompasses full width of the route.
 4. Clear picture with good lighting.

Additional Incidental Cost Verification

- Additional Incidental Costs are associated with the inclusion of Fencing, Landscaping, Structural Concrete, Signage and Utilities on a route. Incidental cost is derived 75% from roadbed condition and 25% from the five items listed above.
- Note: Tribes can waive the incidental cost with a signed letter from an authorized individual. This can be done to expedite approval or in the case where there is a minimal amount of the above referenced items on a project. This can always be updated after the fact.

Acknowledgment of Public Authority Responsibility

- Acknowledgement of Public Authority Responsibility is a letter from the responsible entity (Tribe, State, County, City) who maintains the road stating their responsibility over the roadway. For non-tribal routes, this is generally in the form of a MOU. Tribal entities responsible for the maintenance of a roadway will need to sign a letter acknowledging their responsibility and obligation.
- Note: Getting an MOU from an outside governing body can prove to be difficult and time consuming, plan accordingly when trying to incorporate a non-tribal route in the NTTFI.

Lessons Learned and Practical Guidance

- Input all the information you have access to when putting together a RIFDS submittal, don't cut corners when it comes to details (Your future self or predecessor will thank you).
- Begin thinking about your next years inventory submittal on March 16th
- Create and follow checklists for both the required RIFDS data and the CFR requirements.
- Be prepared to use unconventional resources to gather submittal information (Boots on the ground is best but think outside the box when not feasible).
- Build a strong relationships with other government entities. Cooperation and communication involving infrastructure projects makes money go further and it makes acquiring MOU's for NTTFI inclusions easier.

Lessons Learned and Practical Guidance (Cont.)

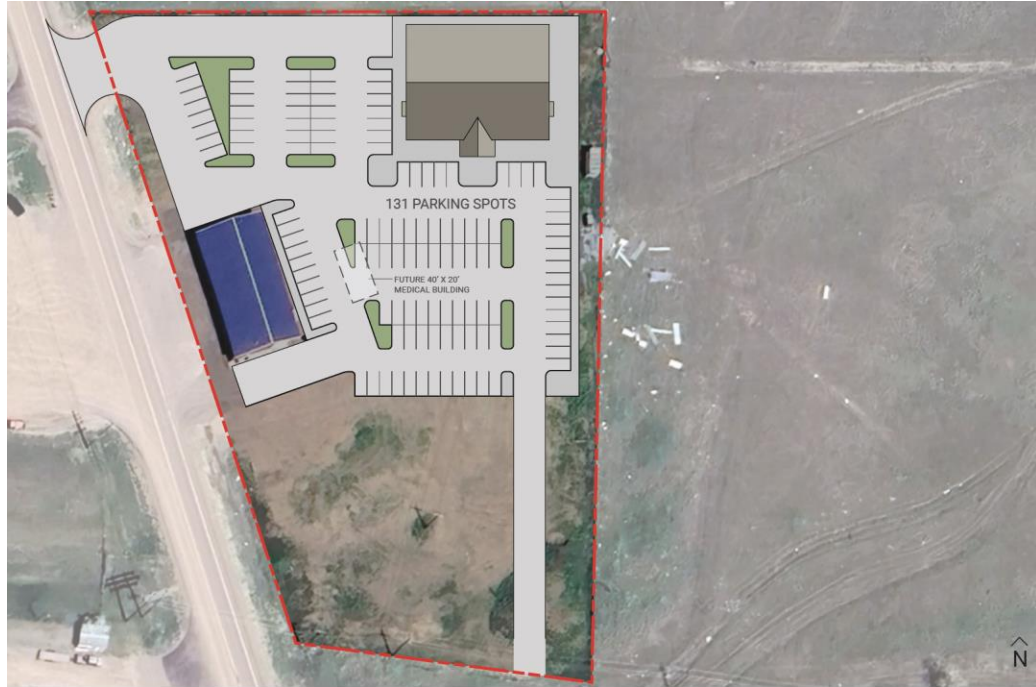
- Don't be afraid of redundancy if it supports the information you are providing.
- Remember that in order to spend money on transportation project, the facility must be in the NTTFI.
- Updating the inventory will be beneficial in the future.
- Utilize GIS databases to map tribal routes.
- Don't be afraid to make calls and follow up when seeking assistance or status updates from a federal agency.

PULLING EVERYTHING TOGETHER

- Land Acquisition and Planning
- Infrastructure to support long-term vision of tribal operations
- Coordinating across governments and community members



PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES



PLANNING CONTINUES



NEW PROPERTIES



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS