



Enhancing Road Safety for Native American Communities in the Northern Plains: A Research and Outreach Initiative for Safer Journeys

CTIPS-040 – UTC Project Information

Recipient/Grant Number:	North Dakota State University Grant No. 69A3552348308
Center Name:	Center for Transformative Infrastructure Preservation and Sustainability
Research Priority:	Preserving the Existing Transportation System
Principal Investigator(s):	Ronald Hall Kimberly Vachal, Ph.D.
Project Partners:	USDOT, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology – \$265,673 North Dakota State University – \$172,687.45 Northern TTAP – \$53,134.60 North Dakota LTAP – \$39,850.95
Total Project Cost:	\$531,346
Project Start and End Date:	12/19/2024 to 12/18/2026

Project Description

The goal is to continue working with NTTAP, Regional LTAPS, CTIPS Partners and Transportation Research Board committees to overcome equity challenges and identify traffic safety priorities for Tribal Nations in the Northern Plains so institutional capacity can be strengthened to ensure safe journeys on tribal lands based on proactive traffic safety planning, programs, policies, and resource decisions.

Objective 1: Engage with Tribal Communities to strengthen traffic safety information. Supporting tribal road inventory/maintenance, crash documentation, education, enforcement, and post-crash EMS response as essential foundation knowledge. Identify purposeful action to ensure continuity of agency commitment and community recognition of traffic safety as a priority through program documentation and succession strategies.

Objective 2: Support the FHWA Safe System approach. Community wellness and shared responsibility in safe journeys for members and guests are achieved through this holistic approach. Respecting traditional

community wellness provides valuable context for exploring innovative and culturally attuned programs that provide agility to address local road safety priorities.

Objective 3: Recognize and recommend ways to redress equity in well-documented disadvantaged aspects of Native American Community resource access, community connectivity, and capacity building to proactively promote and sustain safe journeys on tribal lands.

Objective 4: Support development and implementation of research needs developed by Tribal governments, Tribal organizations, and Transportation Research Board Committee on Native American Transportation Issues regarding workforce needs, equity, and program delivery.

USDOT Priorities

Safety: Improving safety is a top priority for the USDOT. Make our transportation system safer for all people. Advance a future where transportation-related serious injuries and fatalities are eliminated (USDOT 2023). Progress is possible by understanding and addressing crash risk; essential to this is equipping decision-makers to identify priorities and for strategic countermeasure investment in a sustained Safe System approach.

Equity: Recognizing and addressing equity is ubiquitous in the USDOT Strategic Plan. Reduce inequities across our transportation systems and the communities they affect. Support and engage people and communities to promote safe, affordable, accessible, and multimodal access to opportunities and services while reducing transportation-related disparities, adverse community impacts, and health effects. (USDOT 2023). Research and outreach to support and inspire Tribal Nations' work to prioritize local traffic safety issues and effectively implement strategies underpin a sustained ability to address inequities in national safe journeys resource access and allocation. Equity data and analysis tools should be developed and refined to accurately identify Tribal and American Indian/Alaska Native transportation needs and gaps.

Outputs

Tribal workforce support to institute new technology, asset management, and/or decision tools via NTTAP liaise. Peer knowledge-sharing with demonstration project results, project summaries, and presentations to practitioner and academic audiences to disseminate research findings. Initial workforce and technological capacity will be queried. Tribal practitioner feedback will be solicited to refine for ongoing improvement.

Outcomes/Impacts

This research and technology transfer will amplify collaborative efforts to build knowledge and Tribal Nations' capacity for safety mobility for journeys in the Northern Plains. Saving lives through a Safe System approach will be the ultimate community outcome. The cultural foundation will define and strengthen each Tribal Nation's initiatives to ensure Safer Communities, Safer Journeys, Safer Speeds, Safer Vehicles, and Post-Crash Care.

Final Report

Upon completion, the final report link will be added to the [project page on the CTIPS website](#).