

MEMORANDUM

TO: Roger Millar

FROM: Elizabeth Schilling

DATE: June 5, 2015

RE: Technical Assistance Progress Report, Fort Peck Tribes

Regional Coordination

The Tribes report that they work with the City of Poplar routinely to address issues around infrastructure for the Sustainable Village/Old Airport site and other transportation projects, such as a new proposal from the Montana DOT to install roundabouts at two points on Highway 2, one east of Poplar and one at the road that connects to the Tribal offices.

In March, the Assiniboine & Sioux Rural Water Supply System and the Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority, which serves the non-reservation portion of the northeastern corner of Montana north of the Missouri and about halfway across Valley County, signed a water compact making the tribal water system the sole supplier for the non-tribal authority. This collaboration is historic in the region and marks the achievement of one of the goals for the water treatment plant described during our meeting.

Sustainable Village

The Sustainable Village, planned on the Old Airport Site located north of Highway 2 east of the Town of Poplar, continues to be the main focus for the Economic Development office. A tribal enterprise, Integrated Solutions, is overseeing the installation of sewer and water for the neighborhood of 20 homes funded by the Make it Right Foundation, and five foundations have been completed. Homes are being constructed in Ferndale, Washington, and then trucked to the site.

The Tribes are still looking for funding to construct the Wellness Center. A TIGER planning grant was used to finish design of the infrastructure throughout the Sustainable Village, including the access road from Highway 2 to the Wellness Center. As of this writing, the Tribes were writing a new proposal for a TIGER construction grant to complete the planned infrastructure.

The Tribes have been working with the Montana Department of Transportation to identify improvements that will increase safety and convenience for pedestrians in Poplar around the Wellness Center. The state has proposed two roundabouts on Highway 2, one at the access road to the Tribal offices and one to the east of Poplar, and the Tribes would also like to improve lighting along the path to a convenience store – already frequented by school children - and American Legion Park – to increase its use. The tribes are working with the state to identify a source for the local match for these projects.

Other Developments

- The previously approved development of a highway travel plaza and small casino 23 miles east of Poplar has been put on hold to research other options as far as resources and size of a tribal casino. In late March the Council determined that the plan was too expensive and did not provide enough benefits for the Tribal members.
- Refinery, after many hours of discussion and research with the proponent and planner of the proposed refinery, plans have been put on hold.