On June 23, 2020, America Walks hosted the webinar, “Tribal Transportation Planning and Pedestrian Safety”, where presenters discussed why pedestrian fatalities are so prevalent in tribal communities, provided an overview pedestrian fatality/injury data, and explored potential solutions to this problem. Participants learned how cultural heritage, communication challenges, and jurisdictional issues involving tribal, state, and federal governments have contributed to pedestrian fatalities, and presenters discussed case studies in which collaboration, a unified advocacy voice, and safety campaigns are starting to improve outcomes. This webinar is part one of a two-part Walking Towards Justice in Indian Country series.

Our webinar panelists represented government agencies, research organizations, and the communities of Pueblo of Laguna and Yakama Nation. America Walks received many questions and comments from attendees, and many were answered during the live webinar. Panelists took time to offer their expert answers, to continue the conversation and provide further insight on best practices they used for creating safe, accessible, and enjoyable walking conditions in their communities, so you can too. Visit the webinar recording page which includes a link to the YouTube playback and full list of additional resources.

**Do you have coordination with transit on any of the routes and design plans?**

**Misty:** ...early involvement with various stakeholders such as transit providers would help incorporate transit routes on design plans where needed and recommended. The initial phase of public involvement in LRTP development, is the best time to conduct specific stakeholder (ex: transit) work sessions to identify needs. These transit needs are then considered when improvement recommendations are formulated.

**Sharon:** The Pueblo of Laguna's bike and pedestrian route plan is linked to transit stops.

**Sharon – have you or will you have any opportunities to use TTP funds for the pedestrian/bicycle routes?**

**Sharon:** The Pueblo of Laguna has combined TTP funds with other sources, especially state funding, for bike/pedestrian facility construction. TTP funds are extremely limited, but they are good leverage for additional funding.

**Crash/incident data is a critical element for safety analysis. What are some of the barriers to obtaining this data from the Tribes and what are some strategies to overcome these barriers?**
Misty: The primary barrier tends to be the assurance that the crash data does not include personal identifying information of Tribal members, so privacy. Aside from continued working relationships to establish trust, an entity could show Tribal staff what types of data is collected, for what purpose, how, and who it is shared with. Sharing collaboration examples from other entities’ crash data in use may also give confidence and willingness to share crash data. Another barrier may be lack of electronic data. A Tribe may have paper records and has not invested in transforming it to electronic format. Providing resources to assist a Tribe in converting this information could be helpful. As stated, each Tribe has different circumstances, so it is best to make efforts to understand a particular Tribe’s position on whether or not it chooses to share its crash data. The best way to start these conversations with a Tribe is through consultation, first at the gov-to-gov level (ex: formal letter), and then proceeding from there if there is an interest.

How did you handle the NEPA with the various federal funding sources?

Sharon: The Pueblo of Laguna had an innovative approach to NEPA for its bike and pedestrian route design and construction, using a first-of-its-kind programmatic environmental assessment for all the priority bike and pedestrian routes, with the BIA as lead agency. This allowed approval of all routes up front, with a FONSI. When individual routes are funded for construction, the funding agency, as the new lead agency, can adopt the BIA’s decision, sometimes with some additional material.

In Washington, there are Regional Transportation Planning Organizations that we need to participate in getting some WSDOT funding. Do you find that funding strategy to be equitable for the tribes when they have to work with RTPOs often prioritized by the counties?

Misty: Tribal participation in RPTOs are up to the Tribal Governments. I have heard RPTO representatives state that it is near impossible to award State funding to Tribes without their consistent presence at meetings. Attending meetings allows Tribal transportation staff to participate in the decision-making and voice their own needs often. Active participation in RPTO is beneficial for Tribes to obtain additional funding.

Sharon: The Pueblo of Laguna has had more success working directly with the NMDOT directly, submitting competitive applications to the state for Recreational Trails Program and Transportation Alternatives Program funding, than by having the projects ranked in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program through the RTPO. However, RTPO staff have been very supportive.

How can Native communities incorporate denser, walkable land uses that facilitate pedestrian connectivity (along with the design of pedestrian facilities themselves)? It seems like many Native communities continue to have very dispersed land uses that are automobile-oriented, which would still be long distances to walk, even with sidewalks/trails.
**Misty:** It is important not to impose our views on what we think might be best for a Tribal community. The best way to support Tribes is to understand their unique situations by reading through their plans (general, land-use, transportation), if available, which may outline their vision and priorities for their community. It is also good to listen to the express needs and concerns through various venues (ex: workshops, conferences, trainings). Like any community, if the Tribe desires these conditions, it would start with their LRTPs and gaining consensus amongst various stakeholders in their community to collectively pursue efforts that would support making this a reality in the short, mid, or long-term.

**Sharon:** There are many factors which affect the density of land use on tribal lands, including jurisdictional authority and the checkerboard. Native communities can make a statement about their goals for denser, more walkable communities through comprehensive plans, and, especially if the plans are officially adopted, use them as tools to continue to express their goals.