

# Wellpinit Design Workshop

*A Plan to Improve Wellpinit Agency Loop*



**November 2012**

*Prepared by:*

*Local Government Commission*

*Walkable and Livable Communities Institute*



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This project is funded by US EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities under their Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program via a grant to the Project for Public Spaces (PPS). The Building Blocks program funds quick, targeted assistance to communities that face common development problems.



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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## Background

Antithesis Research (AR), a Native American non-profit organization is partnering with the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STOI) to implement a FY2010 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Challenge Planning Grant for the Spokane Indian Reservation. The grant will allow the Tribe to develop its first ever adopted comprehensive plan. The Sustainable Community Master Plan plan will be community-driven and aimed at reducing combined housing and transportation costs, creating sustainable Transit Oriented Development, preserving open space and leveraging investments to improve the quality of life for Spokane Indian Reservation (SIR) residents.

Their project supports Tribal self-determination efforts, walkable, safe, healthy communities and reclaiming tribal identity on reservation lands. The SIR is an isolated community and through this process they intend to provide a platform for inclusive participation in the surrounding regional economy through collaboration with local universities, businesses, and non-profit organizations. In addition, they are aggressively seeking community participation for this process and will develop a tribal community participation policy to help guide future efforts.

In 2011, Antithesis Research applied for and received a U.S. EPA Building Blocks Technical Assistance Grant under the US EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program. The grant provided technical services to conduct a mini-charrette which would serve two main goals: 1) provide a platform to develop a vision plan for the Wellpinit Agency Loop area in Wellpinit, Washington, thereby helping the Tribe reclaim it as a true "town center;" and 2) to assist them with meeting their goals of increased participation from all levels of Tribal government and the community.

A mini-charrette is an interactive, intensive, two- to three-day public engagement process in which a Design Team works with local residents to craft a Smart Growth/Sustainable Development vision for the future of the community along with illustrative specific recommendations for a town center or neighborhood. The Local Government and the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute provided this assistance.

This report documents the activities under that grant for a mini-charrette for the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, Washington.





## Process

Design charrettes are an increasingly popular tool for neighborhood and street design programs. Charrettes are community-based design exercises that come out of a sincere desire to have the public involved in a meaningful way to craft their own future. This format allows residents to be the primary force behind the designs. They are typically brought together for several sessions over a short period of time, before the charrette project team finalizes the designs and prepares a report like this one.

This mini-charrette consisted of the following activities: (1) Focus group sessions; (2) a Visioning Exercise; (3) a Values Exercise; (4) a graphically rich presentation that illustrated some of the basic principles of Smart Growth/Livable Communities and shows examples of similar communities that have implemented changes; (5) a Design Exercise during which participants, in groups of 6-8, are given large aerial photos of the focus neighborhood and are asked to discuss with their neighbors changes they would like to see, and then to write or draw these on the maps or plans; and (6) a presentation by Design Team members of the recommendations (based on the Design Exercise) through drawings, plans, graphics and photo simulations.



The Local Government Commission based out of California, and Dan Burden from the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute in Washington, worked with Antithesis Research to conduct a mini-charrette from July 16-18, 2012 on the Spokane Indian Reservation. The following is a description of that process.

## Outreach

Antithesis Research took the lead in conducting outreach for the mini-charrette, with assistance from the Local Government Commission. They already had in place outreach efforts from their previous work as part of their HUD Community Challenge Grant. An article was placed in the Spokane Indian Tribes' monthly community papers, *The Rawhide Press*. Flyers for the charrette were also produced and distributed throughout the community of Wellpinit. Along with word-of-mouth, they also advertised the mini-charrette on their website. Raffle items were collected by Antithesis Research to help provide an incentive for community members to attend.



## Day One – Focus Groups and Site Exploration

On the first day of the mini-charrette the Design Team met with Antithesis Research staff to discuss the project goals and go over the activities for the mini-charrette. This session was also used to help the Design Team get Antithesis Research's perspective on what were the critical issues facing the community as well as the results of their past efforts with their HUD Community Challenge Grant process.



A focus group session was held for members of Tribal departments and Head Start that morning to describe the purpose of the project and to discuss some of the obstacles facing the community. This session provided the design team with a historical perspective of the Spokane Indian Reservation as well as identified some of the past barriers to effective communication between the Tribal government, its departments, and Tribal members.

After that session, the design team explored the study area through a guided tour with Antithesis Research staff.

### **Day Two - Walking Audit and Community Design Workshop**

On Tuesday, July 17, a combined Walking Audit and Community Design Workshop was held. Although it was raining, that didn't hamper the community from participating and sharing their own ideas for the future of Wellpinit. After moving the workshop from its original location within the Wellpinit Agency Square Loop to the Tribal Administration offices, Tribal drummers kicked off the proceedings by leading attendees in an opening prayer and songs.

Due to the rain, the walking audit was postponed until the weather cleared. Dan Burden led the attendees in a visioning and values exercises. The first exercise was to have everyone write down vision statements on index cards for what they envisioned the community of Wellpinit to become over the next 20 years. Dan asked some of the attendees to share their visions with the rest of audience. To gain perspective on the Tribe's history, some of the elders also shared their stories about how life used to be on the reservation when they were younger and how some of the Tribe's sense of community and traditions have been lost over the years.

Burden then had them write down on sticky notes the five things they valued most about Wellpinit and their community. The Design Team then collected and grouped the sticky notes on a nearby wall. Through this exercise everyone could see which values they most held in common with others in the community. (A summary of the values groupings and vision statements are included in the Appendix.)

After these exercises, Dan Burden conducted a graphic-rich presentation highlighting some of the components of placemaking and for creating more livable communities through highlighting what other communities have done. He also described some of the tools the Tribe could use for improving the streets and land use around Wellpinit Agency Square Loop, and for Wellpinit in general. These included topics such as traffic calming, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and access requirements and techniques.





After the presentation, the design team had participants break up into smaller groups for the design exercise where everyone would have the opportunity to put down their own ideas on large aerial maps of the study area. At the end of the exercise, each table took turns sharing their respective ideas with the rest of the participants. As the presentations continued, there were some common themes that emerged from the presentations:

- Moving buildings into appropriate land use clusters
- Providing better gateways to the community
- Adding bicycle lanes and trails



After the table exercises, the rain cleared and Dan Burden led participants on the walking audit up Ford-Wellpinit Road from the Tribal Administration office to the Trading Post, over to Wellpinit Agency Loop and back down to the BIA Highway 27 intersection. The tour ended with everyone meeting back at the Antithesis Research office for a BBQ lunch.

Later that evening, an open house was held at the Antithesis Research office for those community members who were unable to participate in the morning activities. People came by, checked out the ideas shown on each of the aerial maps from the design exercise and added their own ideas on an aerial map. A group of teenagers also visited the Antithesis Research office to share their perspective on the future of Wellpinit and Agency Square Loop.

### ***Day Three***

On the last day of the charrette the Design Team processed the input collected from the mini-charrette activities and began drawing up recommendations for the study area. These ideas were presented to Antithesis Research and Tribal Staff for additional comments.

The following chapter highlights the recommendations that came out of this mini-charrette process. Recommendations will be broken out into Short-term, Medium-term, and Long-term projects to help guide implementation.



# CHAPTER TWO: RECOMMENDATIONS

## Project Area

The Spokane Indian Reservation (SIR) includes 2,094 residents. The unemployment rate is 55% and 26.8% of households are below the federal poverty level. 45% of those who are employed still earn wages under the poverty level. The high unemployment rate is related to the significant decrease in the Tribe's leading industry, the timber industry.

SIR is located in northeastern Washington State, approximately 45 miles from Spokane, WA. Today, SIR is comprised of 157,376 acres, has a total population of 2,712 (The U.S. Department of the Interior, BIA, "Labor Market Information on the Indian Labor Force," 2011) and is isolated from the surrounding region. The current population increased by 4.5% from 2000 to 2010, however the population increased by 33.4% between 1990 and 2000. This can be explained by the addition of the gaming industry during the 1990's and increase in availability of non-timber jobs.

The community of Wellpinit is centrally located on the Spokane Indian Reservation (SIR), and is the headquarters for Tribal Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Clinic, Tribal



Figure 1. Aerial view of the Wellpinit Agency Loop study area and surrounding community.



Court, Public Safety, the Wellpinit School District, Tribal Health and Human Services, Head Start, tribal day care facility, a community center, two churches, a gas station, the only full service grocery store on the reservation, and residential dwellings. It is the one area that all residents of the reservation utilize.

The main focus of the mini-charrette is on Wellpinit Agency Loop (also nicknamed “Agency Square”) which is the main location for agency-related activities such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Indian Health Clinic, the Tribal Court and Jail, Tribal Roads Department, and Tribal Health and Human Services. Head Start and several residences are also located in this area.

Based on the input received from the community during the mini-charrette, a strong consensus formed that the Tribe should reclaim Wellpinit Agency Loop for the community and relocate certain land uses out of that location. For example, there was agreement that the jail and all its barbed-wire fences which are clearly visible from the intersection at BIA Highway 27 and Ford-Wellpinit Road (as you enter town from the south), should be relocated.



For reorganizing future land uses around Wellpinit Agency Loop, the Design Team identified seven main land use categories within the core of Wellpinit (see Figure 2, next page):

- **Tribal Government**  
All Tribal Government business should be maintained in its current facility off of Ford-Wellpinit Road in the southwest corner of town.
- **Judicial**  
Many felt that all judicial activities (including the jail) should be maintained near each other and located by the current public safety property off of Ford-Wellpinit Road, across from the current Trading Post, rather than in Agency Loop. This will most likely require the purchase of adjacent private properties to accommodate any new buildings.
- **Commercial/Residential**  
This area would cover the Trading Post, current housing as well as areas where the current jail, BIA building and Roads Department are located. The locations indicated on the map (Figure 2) would be the location where additional housing and more appropriate businesses could be located.
- **Health/Wellness**  
Activities related to health and wellness should be located around the current location of the STOI Health and Human Services building at the north end of Agency Loop.
- **Educational**  
Educational facilities should be maintained near where the current middle school is located. Head Start could also be relocated to this area to free up the central lot in Agency Loop for alternative uses.



- **Cultural**

There was also a lot of consensus during the mini-charrette for reclaiming the central lot where Head Start and a current parking lot are located to serve as a more culturally-focused gathering area. It could become a location for the Tribe to house smaller cultural and recreational activities, maintaining the pow wow grounds outside of town for larger cultural activities. Elders explained that this area had been used for these types of activities in the past and that this would help the Tribe reclaim some of that past.

- **Recreation**

The consensus was that the current ball field at the south end of town should be maintained and enhanced. Other locations in the Agency Loop area that could be maintained as open space to provide for other recreational activities such as picnics were also identified.



*Figure 2. Organizational framework for future land uses in around Wellpinit Agency Loop.*

# Short Term



Figure 3. Diagram of short-term recommendation locations.

## Short-Term Recommendations (1–2 Years)

There are several low cost projects that could be undertaken over the next couple of years to help create momentum for making future improvements in the community. Refer to Figure 3, previous page for locations. (Numbers do not indicate priority.)

1. Build a walkway on the eastern side of Ford-Wellpinit Road from the Tribal administrative building to the Trading Post. Decomposed granite, asphalt or concrete could be used for the walkway depending on the Tribes' preference.
2. There was concern about the curve adjacent to the Tribal Administrative Building on Ford-Wellpinit Road, especially in winter when weather conditions are poor and vehicle speeds are higher than is appropriate for that location. The Tribe can build a raised median island at the curve adjacent to administrative building to help lower speeds. This may require widening the roadway to accommodate the raised median.
3. Add a high-visibility crosswalk just north of the Tribal Administration north-side parking lot entrance.
4. As a temporary measure in the short-term, the parking lot west of the Head Start can be converted to a basketball court by adding hoops and paint. This would require trading some parking spaces for another location that the youth can utilize.
5. Add a welcome sign at the entry to town off BIA Highway 27 and Wellpinit Agency Loop. There was strong support for a better gateway to Wellpinit as the current signage is not very noticeable.
6. Extend the walkway from the Trading Post up to the high school to provide a safer path for the high school students to take. Many residents were observed walking on the shoulder of Ford-Wellpinit Road.
7. Begin preparing a plan for creating a central square with cultural and recreational activities on the site currently occupied by Head Start.
8. Begin the process of moving the jail and Tribal Court to a location closer to the current public safety facility on Ford-Wellpinit Road. There was strong consensus among the community for relocating the jail, as it is a very prominent structure as you arrive in Wellpinit. Some of the properties located next to the current public safety property are private properties, so there are issues that the Tribe will need to work out for proper siting of a new jail location.

### Summary

1. Walkway from Tribal Administration building to Trading Post
2. Raised median island in curve adjacent to Tribal Administration building
3. High-visibility crosswalk at north Tribal Administration entrance
4. Convert parking lot west of Head Start to basketball court
5. Welcome sign at entry to town
6. Extend walkway from Trading Post to high school
7. Prepare plan for creating a central square with cultural and recreational activities
8. Move jail and tribal court

# Medium Term

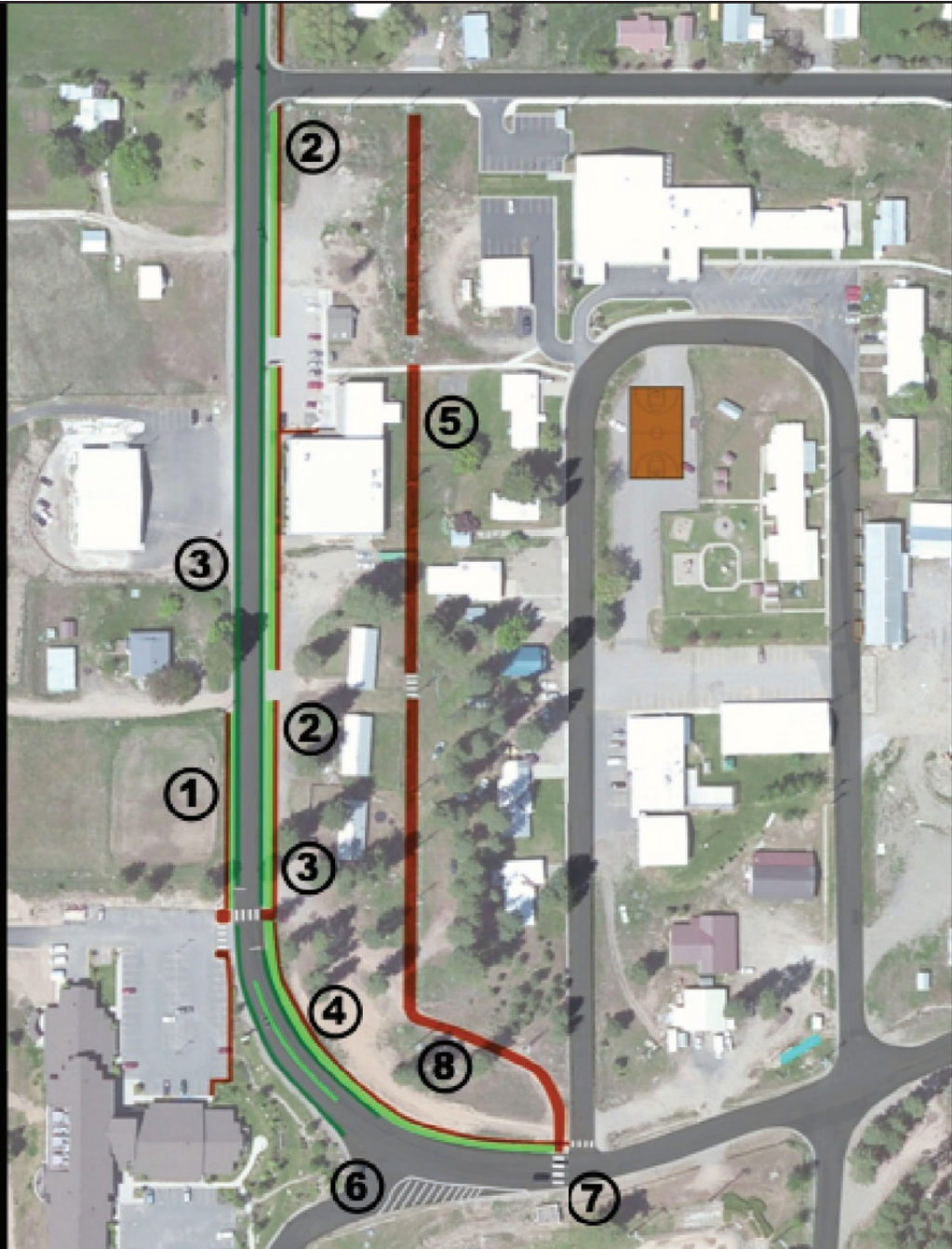


Figure 4. Diagram of medium-term recommendation locations.



## Medium-Term Recommendations (2–5 Years)

Some projects will require more time to complete. Refer to Figure 4, previous page, for locations of the following recommendations. (Numbers do not indicate priority.)

1. Build a walkway on the west side of Ford-Wellpinit Road using decomposed granite, asphalt or concrete. This will complement the walkway on the east side of the road.
2. Build swales with a planter strip between the roadway and walkways on both the east and west sides of Ford-Wellpinit Road. Swales should be designed to allow for water runoff to filter into the ground.
3. Add 5-6 foot bicycle lanes on both sides of Ford-Wellpinit Road north from the Tribal Administration building to the high school. The roadway will need to be widened by approximately 12 feet in order to accommodate the bike lanes. Not only will the bicycle lanes provide a safer environment for bicyclists in this area, they will also act as a buffer to any pedestrians walking along the side of the road.
4. Extend the walkway with planter strip and swales along the east side of Ford-Wellpinit Road toward the Wellpinit Agency Loop intersection near the southern entrance to town.
5. Use the north-south utility easement between Ford-Wellpinit Road and Wellpinit Agency Loop to create a pedestrian/bicycle walkway with landscaping. This walkway would run from Wellpinit School Road in the north, down to the Ford-Wellpinit/Wellpinit Agency Loop intersection.
6. Stripe out the excess asphalt to square up the intersection at the Ford-Wellpinit Road and access road south of the Tribal Administration building. This will help narrow down the roadway at this location and provide an additional buffer until a longer-term solution can be built.
7. Add high-visibility crosswalks at locations where it's determined that people want to, and need to, cross the roadway. The locations shown on Figure 4 (previous page) would be good candidates, but might not be the highest priority for the Tribe.
8. Create a picnic area in the open space across from Tribal Administration building. This would provide another location for Tribal staff and residents to congregate and socialize. Additional trees could be planted and picnic tables added at this location.

### Summary

1. Walkway on west side of Ford-Wellpinit Road
2. Swales with planter strip between roadway and walkways on both east and west sides of Ford-Wellpinit Road.
3. Widen Ford-Wellpinit Road by 12 feet and add 5-6 foot bicycle lanes
4. Extend walkway and swales with planter strip to main intersection entering town
5. Pedestrian/bicycle walkway with landscaping in utility easement
6. Stripe out excess asphalt at Tribal Administration south access road intersection
7. Add high-visibility crosswalks at priority locations
8. Picnic area across from Tribal Administration building.

# Long Term

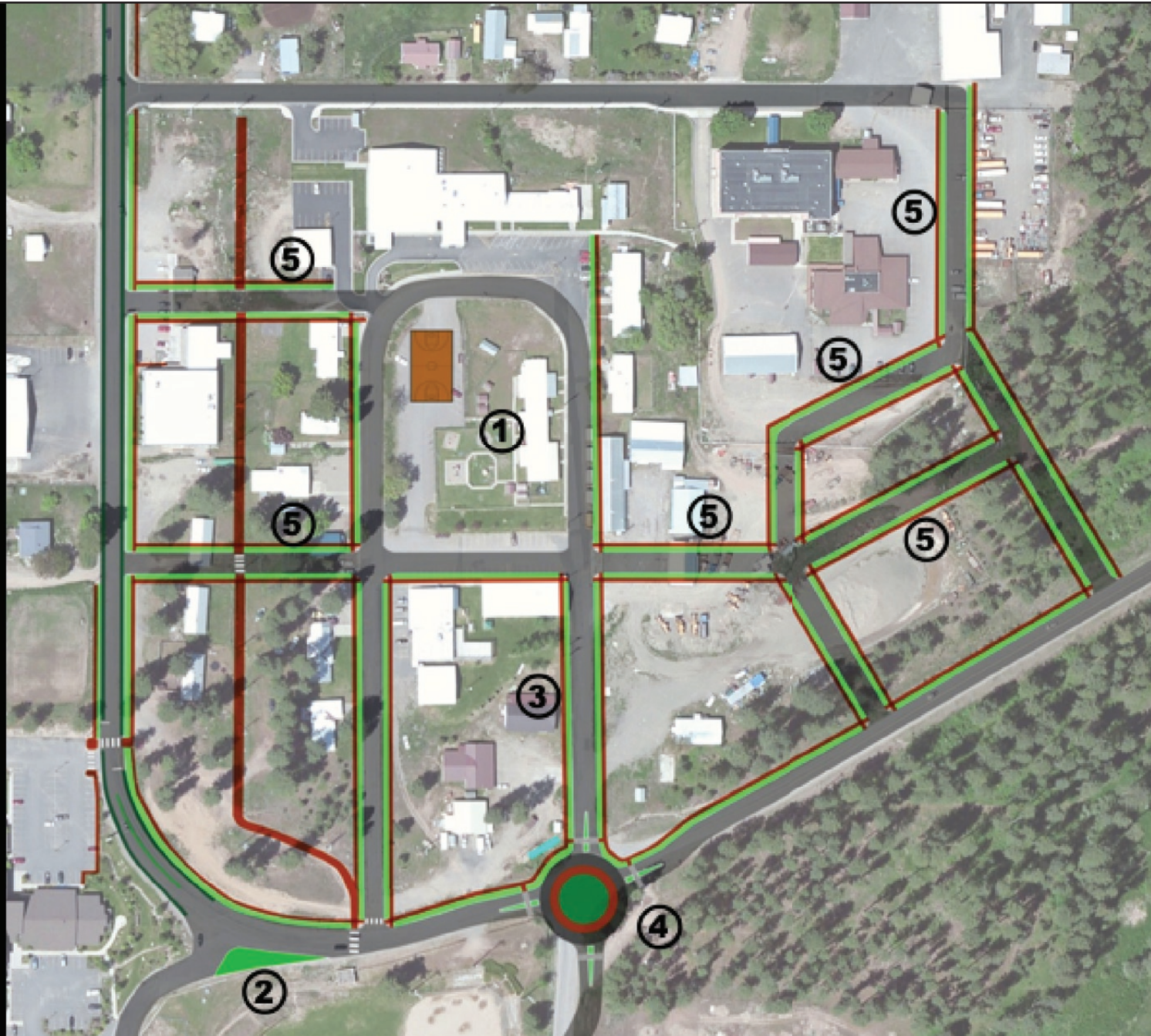


Figure 5. Diagram of long-term recommendation locations.

## Long-Term Recommendations (5-10 Years)

The following recommendations will take several years for the Tribe to complete. Refer to Figure 5 for the numbered locations. (Numbers do not indicate priority.)

1. Develop the parcel where Head Start is located into a central plaza with cultural/recreational activities including a basketball court, a location for drumming circle, and other uses as determined by the Tribe.
2. Replace the striping located near the south access road to the Tribal Administration building with a curb extension to create a safer intersection. This will narrow the curve to help reduce speeds, and provide better protection for motorists pulling out of the access road. The sight-lines will be improved so a motorist pulling out of this intersection will have a better view of any southbound traffic on Ford-Wellpinit Road.
3. Convert all one-way streets throughout the town center into two-way streets. This will help to keep speeds slower on these streets. Walkways with landscaping strips should be added to the existing streets within the town center.
4. Build a modern roundabout at the intersection of BIA Highway 27/Wellpinit Agency Loop/Ford-Wellpinit Road. The roundabout will not only help manage the traffic flow at this large intersection, but will also serve as a gateway to help keep traffic slow as it enters town. A roundabout at this location will also reduce the crossing distances for pedestrians. Figure 6 (next page) shows how a roundabout can fit into this intersection.

A detailed engineering study will need to be done to properly design the roundabout for this location. However, as shown in Figure 6, the southern and eastern legs of the roundabout will need to be shifted to better align the approaches. While the Tribe has looked at building a roundabout near the Tribal Administration building in the past, this location would serve as a better candidate for a roundabout.

5. Build new streets with sidewalks and landscaping to create a walkable block structure and allow for future commercial and residential development in the town center. The street network shown in Figure 5 is conceptual. Actual alignment of any new streets will depend on future planning and analysis based on the Sustainable Community Master Plan in development.

### Summary

1. Central plaza with cultural/recreational activities
2. Curb extension to create safer intersection
3. Convert one-way streets to two-way throughout town center with walkways and landscape strips
4. Roundabout at entry to town
5. Build new streets with sidewalks and landscaped streets to create walkable block structure



Figure 6. Diagram of roundabout at BIA Highway 27/Wellpinit Agency Loop/Ford-Wellpinit Road. The roundabout is characterized by yield controlled entry points, channelized approaches, truck apron for larger vehicles, and high-visibility crosswalks.

## Visual Representations with Recommendations Implemented

The following are visual representations to see how proposed recommendations near Wellpinit Agency Square Loop might look. The Design Team heard during the mini-charrette that there was a desire to maintain the rural feel of the community as well as to have any development reflect Native design. Decisions will have to be made by the Tribe on what kind of development they will want based on guidance from the Sustainable Community Master Plan in development at the time of this report.



*Figures 7 (left) and 8 (right). Before and after images of Ford-Wellpinit Road looking north with walkways, bicycle lanes, artwork, and possible new redevelopment at Trading Post location.*



Figures 9 (left) and 10 (right). Before and after images of Ford-Wellpinit Road looking toward existing housing.



Figures 10 (left) and 11 (right). Before and after images of BIA Highway 27/Wellpinit Agency Loop/Ford-Wellpinit Road with roundabout and new development . It was learned during the Sustainable Community Master Plan process that there was some acceptance for two-story development.

## CHAPTER THREE: NEXT STEPS

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Based on community input from the mini-charrette, this report identifies several projects that the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STOI) can undertake in the coming years to help revitalize the Wellpinit Agency Loop from its current uses and improve the surrounding area.

Recommendations were identified as those that can be implemented in the short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (2-5 years), and longer term (5 years or more). While the STOI may not choose to undertake all of the recommendations, the completion of shorter-term recommendations will allow Tribal members to see actual improvements in their community soon after their participation in these planning events. This should lead to the sense that participating in the planning process is worth it. However, economics, and logistics will play a role in further shaping these ideas in terms of where and when they will be implemented.

Medium- and long-term recommendations will be more complex and take more time to complete. Some will also require the involvement of non-Tribal agencies, or private property owners. For example, widening Ford-Wellpinit Road to accommodate bicycle lanes in the medium-term and installing a roundabout in the long-term will require the cooperation of Stevens County Department of Public Works and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to approve such changes, to deal with right-of-way issues, and to pursue any necessary funding for construction.

The mini-charrette process should be duplicated for other locations on the STOI reservation to help implement the Sustainable Community Master Plan. While there are already plans to conduct a mini-charrette for a US EPA Office of Sustainable Communities water infrastructure-planning project with the Tribe in Wellpinit, additional mini-charrettes can take place for tribal lands at locations such as West End and Ford where there are a mix of housing and other community uses.

### Performance Measures

The following are performance measures the STOI can use to gauge whether the goals of the project — developing a vision plan for the Wellpinit Agency Loop area and assisting with increasing participation from all levels of Tribal government and the community — are being met.

- Use of mini-charrette in another location on the STOI reservation to create a specific plan that supports the Sustainable Community Master Plan.
- An increase in STOI government attendance at public planning events when possible.

- An increase in Tribal Member attendance at public planning events.
- Increase in enthusiasm and support for the planning process and development of plan goals, objectives and policies in the Sustainable Community Master Plan by the public.
- Willingness of tribal departments to sign a declaration of support and commitment to implement the Wellpinit Agency Loop Plan.
- Willingness of tribal departments to sign a declaration of support and commitment to implement the Sustainable Community Master Plan.
- Completion of any Short-term recommendations in the next 1-2 years.
- Completion of any Medium-term recommendations in the next 2-5 years.
- Completion of any Long-term recommendations in the next 5-10 years.

As part of this project, LGC will follow up with the STOI six to nine months after the mini-charrette to get a report on their progress towards completing recommendations provided in this report and the stated performance measures.



# APPENDIX

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## Community Values

1. Native Architecture/Culture/Language/Native Art/Tribal Spirit/Spirituality/Identify/Traditions/History
2. Respect/Honor/Pride/Sharing/Support/Recognition/Safety/Clean
3. Community/Family/Elders/Women/Youth/Ancestors/Creator
4. Friendship/Togetherness/Gathering/Loyalty/Friendly/Togetherness/Communication/Collaboration
5. Use of Land and Respect/Open Space/Water Plants/Wildlife/Nature/Native Planning
6. Sports/Recreation/Healthy Living/Fun/Freedom/Celebrating
7. Education

## Wellpinit Vision Cards: The Next Twenty Years

“In 20 years we are a community full of respect. We respect ourselves, we respect others, we respect the environment, land, water, etc. Most of all we love and respect our creator.”

“Modern with cultural design. Engineered correctly for drainage (master plan). Cultural design. Beautiful landscape.”

“The community will be safe, friendly, and eye appealing.”

“(Agency Square) – To create a gathering place that promotes health and prosperity.

(Community) – A healthy and functioning place to live that offers more opportunities and activities. A place that is alcohol and drug free. Heightened educational programs and economic development to create a flourishing community that is focused on self-sufficiency, sustainability and teamwork.”

“In 5-10-20 years... Safe place for our children with sidewalks, lighting and something for them to do.”

“More updated buildings. Maybe an entertainment center for the tribe? Theater?”

“Child/Teen friendly community. Safe place.”

“New, walk and smile at where I live. A touch of culture and value our name.”

“Connected and relevant. Nodes of services. Public art. Living museum, medicinal plants, etc.”

“Colorful Welcome to Wellpinit signage. I'd like to see artistic signage, re-name the square, use of native landscaping, built benches of cob – community built – with amphitheater, more soft walking trails rather than sidewalks, pretty lighting, small buildings for business use (coffee, bookstore, bakery, etc), interpretive signage/memorial.”

“A place of contentment, a place where you don't have to pursue happiness, you already have it.”

“What I feel this community would be like in 20 years... Because we (STOI) are so excluded from all recreation I foresee a community of walk ways, bike trails, small businesses where it is feasible for the community to purchase items that are not outrageous. Physical awareness for the whole community. Bowling, splash pads.”

“Community will be designed, facilitated, planned, controlled, visioned, engineered, constructed, directed, drawn, by the Spokane Indians. Also prioritizes Native voice of our college youth. Non-Spokane Indian designed, visioned, engineered, constructed, directed, drawn, etc – would be a Spokane Indian community dispossessed.”

“A safe place to raise a healthy and happy family – one who takes pride in the area they are living – and to give back to the community.”

“Hearts are good, simple life, lots of camaraderie, culture is honored, history is known.”





“Clean, pleasing to the eye, versatile (sports, presentations, drumming, art). Remember the past (pile of antlers), welcoming tourists.”

1. To have a place to go and keep the culture growing.
2. To have cultural activities going on all summer long.

# Design Exercise Community Recommendations



## Key to Elements

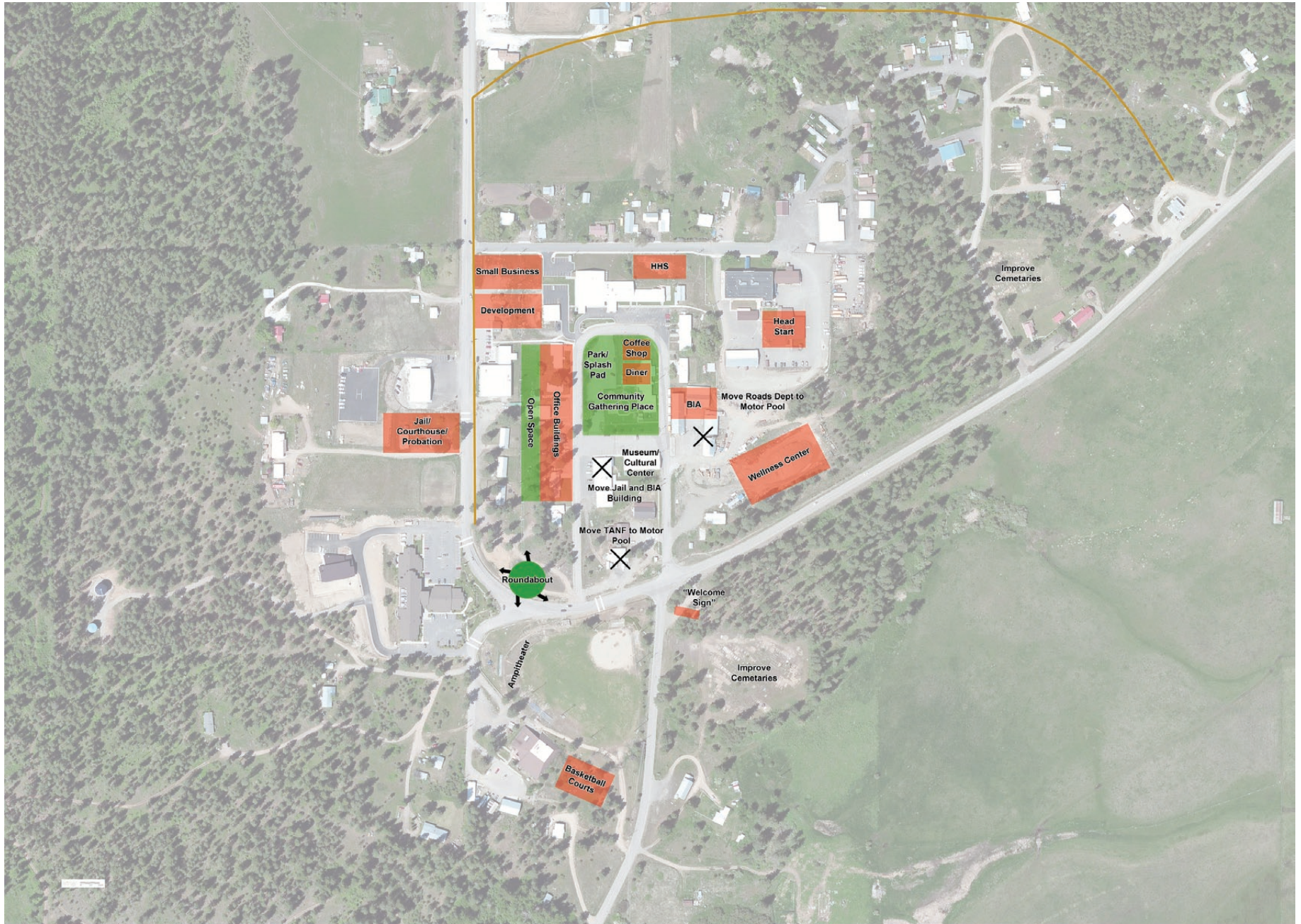
-  Remove Building from this Location
-  Open Space
-  Trails/Bikeways
-  Paved Walkways



**Community Design Input - Table 1**



**Community Design Input - Table 2**



**Community Design Input - Table 3**



**Community Design Input - Table 4**





**Community Design Input - Evening Comments**



Community Design Input - Teen Group