The Gila River Indian Community

* The Gila River Indian Community is located south of the Phoenix Metropolitan area.
* The Gila River Indian Community Department of Transportation (GRICDOT) was established in 1997.
* Since its establishment, GRICDOT has grown from a staff of 5 to a department that has multiple divisions and over 40 employees.
  * Planning
  * Realty and Right-of-way
  * Construction and Engineering
  * Road Maintenance
  * Transit
The Community has over 300 miles of BIA roads.
Most routes are low volume
Over 100 miles of unpaved roads

Safety Stats

Number of Crashed per year, 2008-2012

Over the 5 year data collection period there were 3,3336 crashes on the Community, with 82 being fatal.
The Community’s Existing Efforts in Safety
The Community’s Existing Efforts in Safety

* At Gila River, the 4 E’s include:
  * Enforcement – Gila River PD
  * Education – Gila River Injury Prevention Program
  * EMS – Gila River EMS
  * Engineering – GRIC DOT
* Each area has focused in Safety through their specific programs
  * PD: DUI Enforcement
  * Injury Prevention: Child Car Seats and Community Education
  * EMS: Community Training and Ambulance Services
  * DOT: Safety Planning and Engineering Countermeasures
GRICDOT’s Efforts in Safety

* **Planning:**
  * Participation in Inter-Tribal Council of AZ and State Safety initiatives
  * Involvement with Federal Safety Program
  * Safe Routes to School
  * Through planning efforts in other departments
  * Tribal Safety Plan

* **Engineering:**
  * SR 87
  * Blackwater School Road
  * Speed Humps
  * Gila River Bridge Project
In 2011, GRICDOT applied for a planning assistance grant from ADOT for a Safe Routes to School Program.

Sacaton Middle School was identified and site visits were conducted.

Several safety issues were identified but there were also a lot of encouraging signs.

There was participation from the school but safety projects never materialized.
Planning: Safe Routes to School

Poorly placed crosswalks

Bike racks are difficult to use

Use of Skill Center Road
Planning: Multimodal Pedestrian Safety Study

* The Community’s Land Use Planning and Zoning Department applied for a PARA grant through ADOT.

Purpose: To evaluate pedestrian safety needs on the Gila River Indian Community. Projects can include sidewalks/shared use paths, bus stops/turnouts, and other infrastructure to support the Community’s long term goals. A goal is to develop planning-level cost estimates for each proposed enhancement and help identify potential funding sources.
Study Area: The MPSS will focus on the populated areas of the Community. All 7 Districts have recommended projects.
Planning: Multimodal Pedestrian Safety Study
Engineering: State Route 87 Project

- State Route 87 runs through the Community in District 4, District 2, and District 1.
- There has been numerous fatalities on this route.
- Through successful partnerships with ADOT, additional left turn lanes were constructed at 15 intersections.
- Other safety measures included new signage, surface treatment, a centerline rumble strip and new pavement markings.
Engineering: State Route 87 Project

Gilbert Road at SR 87 BEFORE

Gilbert Road at SR 87 AFTER
Engineering: State Route 87 Project

Mawid Subdivision turnoff
BEFORE

Mawid Subdivision turnoff
AFTER
The Gila River Bridge over Sacaton Road was considered structurally deficient (rating of 34) in the last bridge inspection. GRICDOT applied for Bridge funds for both design and construction. The project was also awarded SHRP2 funds. FHWA Showcase Project.
Engineering: Gila River Bridge

- This bridge is the main access into Sacaton.
- Recent floods highlighted the need for bridge replacement.
The Process of Creating a Tribal Safety Plan for the Gila River Indian Community
GRIC DOT was contacted by ITCA to see if we were interested in participating in creating the framework for a safety plan.

When we began this project, there were not any tribes in Arizona with a Tribal Safety Plan.

- Currently, GRIC’s Transportation Plan has a small safety section with state MVC data.

GRIC DOT contacted other E’s at GRIC to gauge interest and to get data/research.

- Met with each E to discuss safety issues in the Community, anything they would like to see changed in terms of Safety, and FUNDING!

Decision was a safety plan was needed which was supported by GRIC’s Governor Mendoza.
On August 5, 2013, GRICDOT hosted the Safety Planning workshop.

Participants included:
- FHWA
- ADOT
- BIA
- ITCA
- Maricopa Association of Governments
- AZ Department of Public Safety
- Indian Health Services
- Community Departments.

Presentations from GRIC stakeholders, FHWA, and MAG.
## Safety Plan Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety Area</th>
<th>Highlights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMS (GREMS)</td>
<td>Focus is to provide premier hospital service, ambulance service</td>
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<td>Stretch of I-10 is safety issues, have been dealing with even before there was a Fire Department</td>
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<td>Most of prevention is on education with children</td>
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<td>Bike safety team, bike safety education is dormant and no participation anymore</td>
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<td>Have ATV for public and community education push, especially during the fair</td>
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<td>Partners include DPS, Fire Dept., work with them on staging on highway to help reduce secondary incidents.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety Area</td>
<td>Highlights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education (Injury Prevention)</td>
<td>Injury Prevention program started in 2008; partnership with IHS</td>
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<td>Was developed to address 2 main focus: high rates of motor vehicle collisions and elder fall prevention</td>
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<td>Child Safety Seat program: sponsor child safety seat prevention program, certify 12 car seat technicians in the community</td>
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<td>Use a referral system for car seat training</td>
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<td>Distribute car seats and educate caregivers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Have conducted seatbelt observations: usage is 53%, which is below state and NHTSA averages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety Area</td>
<td>Highlights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enforcement (GRPD)</td>
<td>DUIs and prescription drugs with non-native are on the increase.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Increased DUI enforcement and traffic stops in last 2 years.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concerned about hazardous materials on trucks traveling through Community.</td>
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<td>Increased incidents with people coming from outside the community.</td>
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<td>Would like to team with courts for possibly higher fines make offenses reportable (tribal court is not reportable like state court is)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would like to look at help with speed relate collisions: speed humps/bumps near housing and school areas. Both temporary and permanent solutions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes from Workshop 1

* GRICDOT will be the champion of this project.
  * The Safety Plan will tie into the current planning documents.
* Emphasis areas identified include:
  * Speed Management
  * Law/Policy Improvements
  * Data Management
    > Additional emphasis area of Impaired Driving was included post-workshop based on additional data.
* Next Steps:
  * Comments from leadership
  * Host second workshop
  * Stay active in State Update of Highway Plan
* Challenges:
  * Study will have to go through GRIC’s leadership and processes for approval.
  * Limited staff to work on plan
On October 18, 2013, GRICDOT hosted the 2nd Safety Planning workshop.

Participants included:
- FHWA
- ADOT
- BIA
- MAG
- ITCA
- AZ Department of Public Safety
- Indian Health Services
- Community Departments.

The goal of this workshop was to define the vision, finalize emphasis areas, and discuss strategies.
Vision:
“Life Matters”
Improve roadway safety on our reservation by moving toward zero deaths and serious injuries.

Emphasis Areas:
* Data Management
* Speed Management
* Law & Policy
* Impaired Driving
* Lane Departures
* Vulnerable Road Users

It was important to the group to include emphasis areas that would appear in the State Highway Strategic Safety Plan.
Safety Plan Workshop 2

- **Emphasis Areas**
  - Data Management
  - Speed Management
  - Law & Policy
  - Impaired Driving
  - Lane Departures
  - Vulnerable Road Users

- The group participated in a brainstorming activity to come up with benchmarks and strategies for these areas.
Safety Management Committee:
- One of the ideas that has come out of the workshops is the creation of a Safety Management Committee.
- Con: Another layer of approval prior to Council approval.

- Community Council
  - Natural Resources Standing Committee
  - Health and Social Standing Committee
  - Government and Management Standing Committee
  - Legislative Standing Committee

- Transportation Technical Team
  - Lt. Gov
  - DOT
  - LAW
  - DEQ

- Safety Management Committee
  - DOT, Injury Prevention, PD, EMS,
Outcomes from Workshop 2

* **Next Steps**
  * Determine what is feasible to include in the plan
  * Send the draft to the appropriate GRIC committees for review and approval.
    * Establishing a process for review/update will occur from committee input.
    * Consider a Safety Management Committee to oversee implementation
  * Revise the plan based on input from committees and possibly go back to the committees prior to Council
  * Get GRIC Council to adopt plan

* **Challenges:**
  * Study will have to go through GRIC’s leadership and processes for approval.
  * Limited staff to work on plan
  * Changes in DOT Leadership
When all was said and done, GRICDOT decided to only move forward with a plan that primarily focuses on Engineering.

- Plan does discuss other efforts by the other E’s
- We did not move forward with recommending a safety committee.
- Plan approved by Council in July 2014.
In the safety Action plan, we focused on the following Emphasis Areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Enforcement</th>
<th>Engineering</th>
<th>EMS</th>
<th>Other Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speed Management</td>
<td>Speed Management</td>
<td>Lane Departure</td>
<td>Impaired Driving</td>
<td>Data Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Road Users</td>
<td>Impaired Driving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safety Culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But as a department, we are working on strategies to reduces crashes involving Lane Departure, and only providing guidance in the other areas.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasis Area</th>
<th>Recommended Strategy</th>
<th>Recommended Lead Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lane Departure</td>
<td>Install wider shoulders on roadways.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane Departure</td>
<td>Improve guardrails</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane Departure</td>
<td>Conduct a road safety assessment, where needed, to identify possible issues that would lead to lane/roadway departures and the remedies.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane Departure</td>
<td>Conduct a roadway sign inventory and replace signs as needed to meet new MUTCD requirements.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Management</td>
<td>Implement a policy for the installation of appropriate traffic calming devices on residential subdivisions.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed Management</td>
<td>Develop a policy on when and where to conduct speed studies that are used to set speed limits.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerable Users</td>
<td>Support projects identified in the ADOT PARA study where feasible.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Management</td>
<td>Coordinate with ADOT on how data might be shared and the benefits of doing so.</td>
<td>GRICDOT</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Strategies to reduce crashes involving speed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Recommended Lead Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modify the driving behavior of residents by requiring driver education for repeat speeding offenders and young drivers.</td>
<td>GRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impose higher fines for high speed violators</td>
<td>GRPD, Courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased use of police for speed enforcement</td>
<td>GRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A “Reduce Speed” campaign</td>
<td>GRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement safety recognition and awards for safe travel the Tribal Workforce</td>
<td>EMS, Insurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strategies to reduce crashes involving impaired driving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Recommended Lead Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a media campaign using billboards, TV, radio, web, and/or information at the Casino to educate drivers on the risks of impaired driving.</td>
<td>Injury Prevention, CPAO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved treatment programs for alcohol and drug abuse</td>
<td>Health Resources Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement an education program for older teens and adults that involves a mock crash similar to the Every 15-minutes program</td>
<td>GRFD, GRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve laws and policies concerning impaired driving to make it a more serious offense. Improved laws should allow for Driver’s license revocation and suspension, allow for vehicle impoundment or confiscation, and increased fines. Repeat offenders should receive more harsh penalties.</td>
<td>GRPD, Courts, Law Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased use of checkpoints and dedicated patrols for impaired driving enforcement.</td>
<td>GRPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement the use of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers to assist at sobriety checkpoints</td>
<td>GRPD</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Other Recommendations

#### Strategies to reduce crashes among vulnerable road users

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Recommended Lead Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase Community education on safety issues such as bicycle safety and</td>
<td>Health Resources, Recreation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look at programs that would improve school safety.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete the ADOT PARA Multimodal Pedestrian Safety Study</td>
<td>LUPZ, with GRICDOT participation</td>
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</table>

#### Strategies to improve the safety culture at GRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Recommended Lead Department</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create a task force to evaluate, refine, and improve laws and policies</td>
<td>GRPD, Community Council, Injury Prevention, Law Office, Courts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for traffic enforcement in the community. The task force should</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specifically evaluate laws and policies concerning the following topics:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speeding, impaired driving (alcohol and drugs), impaired driving (mobile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>device use), seat belt use, helmet use, child seat use, driver education,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and cross jurisdictional enforcement.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investigate opportunities to allow recuperation of funds to be used in</td>
<td>GRPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>support of traffic safety activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a media campaign to inform the public of any law/policy</td>
<td>Community Public Affairs Office, Courts</td>
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<tr>
<td>improvements</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons Learned from this Process

* Coordination with your internal and external partners is crucial.
* Governmental processes can hold up process, but if it needs to be done, it needs to be done.
* Don’t let the little details, the “what ifs,” the “but we can’t do that,” hang up the process.
* Keep the Community’s best interest in mind.
* Have patience.