

The RESERVATION ROAD PLANNER Game™

The board game that teaches you how to plan road construction projects on your tribal reservation.



"Inland-area Reservation" board (laminated soft vinyl, 24" x 36")



"Northwest Coastal-area Reservation" board (laminated soft vinyl, 24" x 36")

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New roads on Indian reservations are needed for a variety of reasons—to serve new businesses, link remote villages to county and state highway systems, provide access to cultural activities and to replace unwieldy rutted and gravel-paved tracks, to name a few. Moreover, traffic accidents on reservation roads occur at roughly twice the national per-capita rate of accidents on state highways and county roads.

In addressing these needs, decision-makers in Indian Country often find themselves lost in the bureaucratic tangle of the planning process, from funding to environmental review to schedules and timelines to final implementation. Therefore, the Lummi Nation in partnership with the BIA Northwest Region has developed a process in the form of board game to educate to its players about the environment in which transportation is planned, financed and developed.

With the objective of planning and building a road, the game is played by drawing "assignment" or "challenge" cards representing the order and phases of a project. The "road" segments are then drawn onto the game board's vinyl surface with erasable markers. The cards contain instructions that either advance or delay the road planning process. Prominent within these instructions are injunctions concerning environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and archaeologically

significant places—burial grounds or villages. Implicit in this play is the concept that while the shortest line between two points may be the cheapest road to build, it is not necessarily the best for the environment or even the most cost-effective over time.

A landscape architect firm was hired to prepare the design and graphics for the board's playing surface and develop it into a prototype for testing and play. Specifically, the firm was asked to draw two maps, for the board's playing surface, representing archetypal (but, in effect, fictional) Northwest Coastal and Inland-area reservation landscapes. Each map was to show a scale grid, zoning boundaries, property line boundaries and a number of existing features such as casinos, schools, gas stations, wetlands, forests, rivers, villages, fishing grounds, etc. In addition, illustrations of tribal culture were to be added to the board layout.

The 24" x 36" game boards are rolled into a tube with the cards, markers and instructions. Initial play-testing by participants has been carried out with enthusiastic reviews and the game's creators aim to eventually release the project nationwide, generating additional "maps" representing various landscapes throughout Indian Country.

