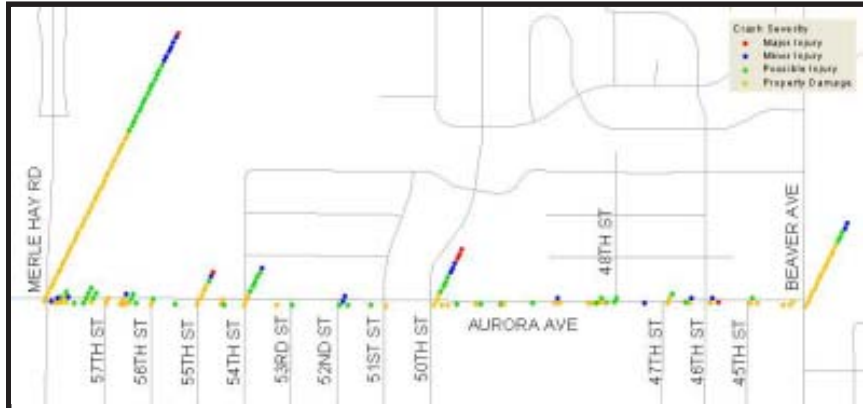


Take advantage of free crash data analysis and mapping service

THE IOWA Traffic Safety Data Service (ITSDS) at CTRE is helping Iowa's local agencies take the guesswork out of roadway improvement decision-making.

The service provides free crash data analyses and mapping services.



Aurora Avenue, crash location and severity (1996 to 2000)

Only In Iowa

CTRE's RESEARCH ENGINEER and ITSDS manager Zach Hans says the ITSDS is possible because of Iowa's proactive highway safety community and its vast stores of crash and roadway data. (In fact, Iowa is a National Model for technological and institutional integration of safety data.)

The Iowa DOT is a leader in collecting statewide safety-related data and sharing it across jurisdictions. In addition, the department has developed increasingly sophisticated generations of computer-based tools for integrating and analyzing all that information (e.g., Traffic and Criminal Software, or TraCS).

But not all county and city engineers have a crash data analyst on staff, or the time or know-how to use the tools themselves.

The ITSDS, initiated in 1999, acts as free data analysis "staff" for local agencies. It is the brainchild of Reg Souleyrette, professor of civil engineering at Iowa State University and associate director of CTRE; Joyce Emery, program manager in the Iowa DOT's Office of Traffic and Safety; and Mike Laski, director of the Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB).

The ITSDS is supported by the Iowa DOT and the GTSB, Iowa Department of Public Safety. •

How the service works

The ITSDS conducts small- and large-scale roadway safety analyses, on demand, for local agencies. Requests reflect a variety of interests: law enforcement, engineering, child safety, policy/legislation, etc., and are submitted by phone or e-mail.

Graduate students at CTRE do most of the legwork. They collect appropriate data, employ analysis and display tools, and provide results in convenient formats, often detailed geographic information system (GIS) maps that graphically display layers of data.

In 2003 alone, the ITSDS received 90 requests for data analyses.

A recent example

Michael Ring, P.E., principal traffic engineer for the City of Des Moines, Iowa, thought a specific four-lane, undivided segment of Aurora Avenue might be a good candidate for conversion to a three-lane road with a center turn lane.

Several such conversions in Iowa during the last few years have resulted in reduced crash numbers and severity.

Ring requested an analysis of crash frequency and types along the segment in question. Hossein Naraghi, who will soon receive an MS degree in civil engineering at ISU, conducted the analysis for Ring.

Ring compared the data and maps generated by Naraghi to "before" data from previously converted segments. The data confirmed that the Aurora Avenue segment was indeed a good candidate, and this summer the city will convert the segment to a three-lane roadway with a center turn lane.

For more information

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