

# *Results of the Independent Hanford Traffic Safety Study and Next Steps*

May 2010



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY**

# *Background*

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- Your safety does not stop with the work you do — driving safely on site is an equal factor in keeping you safe.
- Key Hanford roadways are operating over capacity at peak times, causing congestion and slow-downs.
- In some spots the posted speed limits do not accurately reflect the “natural” speed for the flow of traffic.
- Congestion and slow-downs are giving rise to impatient drivers taking unnecessary and unsafe risks.

# *Study Commissioned*

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- The Department of Energy (DOE) asked the Mission Support Alliance (MSA) to commission an extensive study of Hanford traffic patterns and roadway suitability.
- MSA enlisted a highly reputable traffic safety enhancement consultant, Transportation Solutions, Inc. (TSI) to carry out the study.
- TSI used extensive modeling data and daily traffic flow observations to come up with its findings and recommendations.
- The Hanford Site Traffic Safety Committee, made up of DOE, contractors and labor representatives, worked in conjunction with TSI. The Benton County Sheriff's Office also is a member of the Committee.



# *Recommendations/Actions*

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- The study made several recommendations on how to improve traffic safety.
- DOE directed MSA to implement recommendations that will have the greatest positive impacts to roadway safety and can be accomplished quickly.
- Two recommendations were deemed unrealistic to implement.

# *Recommendations/Actions*

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- Safety, not improving commute times, was the primary consideration in the selection of recommendations to implement.
- All actions will be considered “pilot projects” and will rely on employee/driver feedback to determine if they are improving safety.

# *Improvements*

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- Route 4 South will be converted to a one-way, two-lane roadway for peak commuting times
  - Will be afternoon commute only
  - Extending to morning commute will be explored
  - Alternate routes will be provided for “reverse commuters”
- The speed limit on selected roadways will be raised from 55 to 60 mph
  - Provides a safer experience for drivers
  - More people will stay in their lane because they feel like they’re driving the speed that the road can handle
  - Reduces back-ups and aggressive passing

# *Improvements*

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- “Channelization” – merge lanes at the intersections of Routes 3 and 4 South
  - Free right turn lane for merging to improve traffic flow
- Construction of “safety pull-outs/turn outs”
  - Route 4 South and Beloit Avenue (Rattlesnake Barricade entrance off Highway 240)
  - Allows for safer access for the Benton County Sheriff’s Office to perform safety enforcement actions
  - Will allow a safe place for drivers to pull over if they have car trouble or need to take a call

# *Recommendations Not Acted On*

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- Roundabouts
  - Construction phases would disrupt and divert traffic on main Hanford roads, exacerbating congestion problems
  - Large machinery could not navigate around turns
- Radar/Camera Enforcement
  - Would require special Washington State Legislature approval
  - Process could take years
  - Privacy issues

# *Awareness/Feedback*

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- MSA will conduct an awareness campaign
  - Frequent messages; video tutorials; timeline and progress updates; tailored presentations and guest speakers for organizations; FAQ's
- Feedback mechanisms:
  - Website and mailbox for comments
  - Employee Zero-Accident Councils/President's Zero-Accident-Councils
  - HAMTC/HGU Safety Reps
  - Benton County Sheriff's Office
- Link to the traffic study: <http://ow.ly/1BLbA>

