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Temporary signs to help end I-595 confusion

By [Michael Turnbell](#), Sun Sentinel

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A new stretch of State Road 84 that funnels drivers to westbound Interstate 595 is confusing some commuters, with its labyrinth of changing lanes and diverging ramps.

Part of the problem is a lack of overhead signs. They're included in the \$1.8 billion reconstruction of I-595, but won't be installed until work in the area is completed.

To ease the problem, the contractor this week installed more temporary signs on S.R. 84 to help drivers choose the correct lane.

"It's a maze," said Adolfo Podrecca, after a recent drive on the newly opened road. "First time I tried it I ended up on I-595. Second time on the turnpike. Third time, I'm afraid to try it."

Earlier in December, contractors finished the last in a series of ramp modifications that change how drivers get to westbound I-595 from S.R. 84 and S.R. 7. The old on-ramp from northbound S.R. 7 used to split traffic to the left for I-595 and right for Florida's Turnpike. Now it's the opposite.

"You have to quickly get over to the right, and then quickly get over to your left," said Lyz DeMarco of Hollywood, who frequently takes S.R. 7 north to I-595. "I thought that the construction would ease the entering and exiting, but this system right now is very confusing and is sure to cause an accident in the future."

New overhead signs installed this week on the S.R. 7 on-ramp includes one with arrows that direct drivers for the southbound turnpike and another for westbound I-595 and the northbound turnpike. A trio of ground-mounted signs with the I-595 and S.R. 84 route numbers and the turnpike logo also were put up.

"People are used to doing things a certain way. Without overhead signs, drivers have had questions and we are trying to address them as best as we can with additional signs that guide them into the proper lane," said I-595 construction spokeswoman Melanie Sexton.

The stretch of westbound I-595 between S.R. 7 and Davie Road has been an early focus for contractors because of the gridlock experienced during the afternoon commute.

Before all the recent changes, separate on-ramps from S.R. 84, north- and southbound S.R. 7, and the turnpike each dumped traffic onto the westbound interstate within the span of about a mile.

The result often was huge backups because the on-ramps were too close together. Engineers came up with a solution to build the missing link of S.R. 84 between S.R. 7 and Davie Road to relieve crowding on the interstate.

Now, traffic from S.R. 84 and S.R. 7 headed for westbound I-595 must travel along a new stretch of S.R. 84 that's also doing double duty moving traffic from westbound I-595 to Florida's Turnpike.

The new trouble spot is where those drivers have to crisscross each other to go in different directions – either north on the turnpike or west to I-595.

On the upside: traffic on westbound I-595 is flowing much better.

It's the drivers on S.R. 84 and S.R. 7 who are griping. Those headed to I-595 must travel much farther west along S.R. 84 - past the traffic signal at Davie Road before they can enter the interstate.

"I watched as traffic zipped along at 65 mph on westbound 595. It took me 10 minutes to finally reach the light at Davie Road, and then wait for it to change so I could go through to finally reach the ramp to 595. This was at 3 p.m.," said David Stein.

That was more than a week ago. Sexton said conditions have improved and motorists no longer have to stop at the traffic signal at Davie Road.

On December 14, crews opened a third "channelized" lane on S.R. 84 that allows drivers to flow continuously through the intersection without stopping for the signal.

But Sexton said the continuous flow lane is only temporary and will go away after the intersection of westbound S.R. 84 and Davie Road is shifted to its permanent alignment.

The I-595 reconstruction, which started in February 2010, reached the half-way point in December. More than \$328 million has spent on the road work so far.

Construction is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2014.

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