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New I-595 ramps modified after confused drivers complain

By [Michael Turnbell](#), Sun Sentinel

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A chorus of complaints by drivers has paid off, with contractors modifying the design of new ramps linking State Road 7 to Interstate 595 and Florida's Turnpike.

The changes, made this week, give drivers a longer distance to choose lanes when they merge from S.R. 7. Drivers also don't have to change as many lanes. And to further help, more overhead signs will be installed shortly.

When the new ramps were first unveiled in early December, drivers only had about 500 feet to crisscross each other to go in different directions — either west to I-595 or north on the turnpike — and they had to swerve over multiple lanes to do so. The Sun Sentinel reported their concerns after the ramps opened.

Now drivers have about 1,000 feet to change lanes and they can access either highway from the middle lane.

The new ramps changed how S.R. 7 drivers get to westbound I-595, taking them along a new stretch of S.R. 84 that's also doing double duty moving traffic from westbound I-595 to the turnpike.

"The lane patterns change quickly and to get on I-595 west is very short. You have to merge very quickly or you have no choice but to enter Florida's Turnpike," said Judy Sattler, of Plantation, shortly after the ramps were first opened to traffic.

After fielding numerous such complaints, project engineers agreed the new design was confusing, said senior engineer Sergio Gonzalez.

In addition to modifying the ramps, workers put up more roadside signs, but some were placed on curves and were tough to see until drivers came upon them. Gonzalez said overhead signs are being fabricated and should be installed by April.

"These will be much more visible as drivers approach with arrows pointing down toward the lanes," he said.

So far, engineers say the ramp changes are working and drivers don't seem as confused, based on field observations.

The speed limit on the new stretch of S.R. 84 and the ramps is 45 mph. But Gonzalez said electronic speed signs have shown most drivers are traveling 55 mph or faster, too fast for the way the road was designed.

"I did notice the new signs and they are certainly big, saying which way to go," said Jeff Brodeur, of Plantation. "I think the overheads will even help some more."

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

On Thursday night, an unidentified woman was killed by multiple vehicles as she tried to walk across the westbound lanes of I-595, just east of the Davie Road exit. Officials say they don't believe the accident had anything to do with the construction.

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 decided to build the missing link of S.R. 84 between S.R. 7 and Davie Road to relieve crowding on the interstate.

"I understand the concept of what they're doing, but someone was sleeping to let this design slip through," Brodeur said.

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