



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

Secretary Mike Dew
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

November 21, 2017

RE: U.S. Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway Intersection

Dear Secretary Dew:

First, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation. The purpose of my letter is to follow-up on a letter I previously wrote to Interim FDOT Secretary Rachel Cone on February 6, 2017 concerning the dangerous and deadly intersection of U.S. Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway (copy attached). I am writing today because of another fatal car crash that occurred at this intersection, yesterday, November 20, 2017. There have now been six people killed this year at this intersection along with many injuries, some of which were life altering.

Previously, Interim Secretary Cone indicated a study was completed by FDOT in December 2016 on this intersection. So far, FDOT has installed some roadway markers and repainted some lines. In my opinion, the roadway markers installed along the edge of the median have just added to driver confusion and clutter. While I acknowledge that these deaths and traffic crashes have been caused by driver error the current design and driver speed contributes to the dangers of this intersection.

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office investigates most traffic crashes in Flagler County. The Florida Highway Patrol handles most serious crashes and traffic homicide investigations. According to the records of the Sheriff's Office in the 3-year period of 1/2014 thru 1/2017 we have handled 207 crashes in the vicinity of this intersection or at this intersection. Of these, 147 crashes resulted in injuries, 58 with no injury and 2 were hit and run crashes with no injury. The T-style intersection currently has a flashing signal light with amber for U.S. 1 indicating use caution and flashing red for Old Dixie Highway requiring westbound traffic to stop before proceeding onto U.S. 1. However, the design of U.S. 1 has curves near the intersection in both directions resulting in reduced visibility of cars approaching the intersection from either the north or south. While the speed limit is posted at 65mph, most cars exceed the posted speed limit. This area also has a long stretch of open highway with no traffic control devices between Seminole Woods Blvd and Plantation Bay on U.S. Highway 1. More recently since August 2017, there have been almost a dozen accidents at or near this intersection, most with injuries and one fatality.

I understand FDOT is considering a round-a-bout as a solution. I also understand this solution is more than a year away because of funding, design and the need to purchase additional land. While I will not discuss my personal opinion on a round-a-bout solution at this intersection, as I will defer to the FDOT experts, a quicker solution is needed now, such as installing a fully functional traffic light. I also recommend the following stopgap measures:

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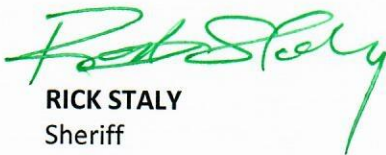
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- Install additional signage indicating "dangerous intersection ahead" for north and south bound lanes of US 1 as drivers approach Old Dixie Highway.
- Drop the speed limit to 45mph on US 1 at the curves north and south and through this intersection with warning signs indicating reduced speed limits ahead. (While I do not believe lowering the speed limit is a viable long-term solution because neither FHP or my agency have sufficient resources to enforce and change driver behavior, if FDOT is intent on installing a round-a-bout this would begin to educate drivers on the lower speeds that are needed for a round-a-bout to be successful).
- Remove the stop sign for westbound Old Dixie Highway at CR 325. This creates a double stop within a very short distance and appears to be confusing to drivers who may think they have already stopped for the US 1 intersection. A single stop sign for CR 325 drivers to enter Old Dixie Highway appears sufficient.
- If a traffic light is not installed for this intersection, install signage on Old Dixie westbound at US 1 indicating cross traffic does not stop. Install a similar sign for US 1 southbound traffic that is turning east on to Old Dixie Highway.

Obviously, if a fully functional traffic light is installed the above suggestions would need to be modified.

In summary, the Flagler County Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution in February 2017 supporting my previous letter and request to FDOT. I again request that FDOT work on an interim solution while you design a long-term solution. Thank you for your assistance in making our community safer.

Sincerely,



RICK STALY
Sheriff

C: Flagler BCC



Rick Staly, Sheriff
FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

Interim Secretary Rachel D. Cone
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

February 6, 2017

RE: U.S. Highway 1 and Old Dixie Highway Intersection

Dear Secretary Cone:

First, I would like to thank you for your phone call on Sunday afternoon concerning the tragic crash resulting in five fatalities and three other injuries on U. S. Highway 1 at the intersection of Old Dixie Highway. I know you share my expressions of sympathy and condolences to the family.

You mentioned that a study was being conducted or may have just been finished by FDOT on this intersection. As a resident of Flagler County for the past 11 years and formerly Flagler County Undersheriff and now Sheriff of Flagler County and a law enforcement officer in Florida for 41 years I would like to provide you my insight into this intersection and the immediate area.

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office investigates most traffic crashes in Flagler County. The Florida Highway Patrol handles most serious crashes and traffic homicide investigations. According to the records of the Sheriff's Office in the 3-year period of 1/2014 thru 1/2017 we have handled 207 crashes in the vicinity of this intersection or at this intersection. Of these, 147 crashes resulted in injuries, 58 with no injury and 2 were hit and run crashes with no injury. The T-style intersection currently has a flashing signal light with amber for U.S. 1 indicating use caution and flashing red for Old Dixie Highway requiring westbound traffic to stop before proceeding onto U.S. 1. However, the design of U.S. 1 has curves near the intersection in both directions resulting in reduced visibility of cars approaching the intersection from either the north or south. While the speed limit is posted at 65mph most cars exceed the posted speed limit. Just last week one of our deputies stopped a car traveling 100mph because "the driver was late to work." This area also has a long stretch of open highway with no traffic control devices between Seminole Woods Blvd and Plantation Bay on U.S. Highway 1.

While I am not a traffic engineer I do not believe lowering the speed limit alone is a viable solution. Our agency and FHP do not have sufficient staffing levels to enforce the speed limit to the level necessary to have an impact on the traffic flow. Drivers will just continue to exceed the speed limit and those that are caught will just incur a larger fine. To me this is not a solution. My recommendation would be to install a fully functioning traffic signal along with signage north and south of the intersection on U. S. 1 warning drivers they are approaching a traffic signal. This is needed because of the proximity of the curves to the intersection. A fully functional signal would stop north and southbound traffic before vehicles from Old Dixie Highway can cross U.S. 1 to travel south on U.S. 1. It would also stop northbound traffic to allow a safer crossover for vehicles turning east onto Old Dixie Highway.

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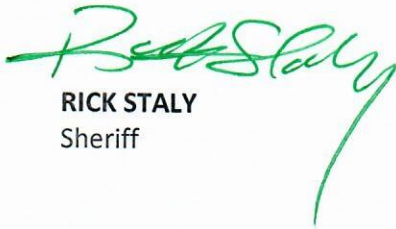


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Additionally, the installation of a traffic signal would possibly cause drivers to stop, thereby shortening the distance between traffic signals and in theory reducing vehicle speed.

In summary I recommend FDOT install a fully functional traffic signal at this intersection. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



RICK STALY
Sheriff

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