



### **Racetrack Road and Skipper Ave. Intersection**

Many citizens have written to express their concerns and frustrations for the many vehicle accidents at the intersection of Racetrack Rd and Skipper Avenue. I share your concerns and have worked with Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to find safer solutions. There have been 38 accidents reported at this intersection from May 1 2022 thru May 26, 2023. As your commissioner this is extremely concerning. We have numerous thoughts on why this may be an issue, however we are waiting for FDOT to report their findings. I wanted you to know that we are concerned and eagerly awaiting solutions from FDOT.

Racetrack Road is a State Road (SR 188) and therefore can only be addressed by the State of Florida through the FDOT. The county cannot redesign or change a State of Florida intersection. FDOT has an active construction project along SR 188 at this time and that includes potential intersection improvements.

The Sheriff's Office conducted high visibility enforcement at the intersection. Motorist were surveyed as to the reason they failed to stop and the majority of individuals indicated they did not see the traffic signal turn red or did not see the signal.

#### **Three possible issues were identified as reasons that may have contributed to the traffic crashes at the intersection:**

1. There is a flashing yellow emergency signal on Racetrack Rd. at the entrance of Ocean-City Wright Fire Department, approximately 560 feet west of the intersection of Skipper Ave. When approaching the intersection from both directions, the emergency signal appears significantly brighter than the traffic signal at Skipper Avenue. This may cause motorists to focus on the emergency signal and fail to notice the traffic signal.
2. As vehicles make right turns on a red light, as permitted by law onto Skipper Ave from eastbound Racetrack Rd, an assumption is made by motorists that the light has turned to green and they proceed into the intersection when in fact the light is still red.
3. It has been noted that there are obstructions giving limited visibility of oncoming eastbound and westbound traffic on Racetrack Rd. Motorist are unable to take evasive action should a vehicle run the red light traveling east or west.

#### **Five Possible solutions identified:**

1. Install traffic signal reflective back plates to improve visibility at the traffic lights, especially during daytime hours.
2. Install “No Right Turn on Red” signage along the eastbound lanes.
3. Install “Traffic Signal Ahead” signage east and west of the intersection.
4. Trim or remove shrubbery causing visual obstructions in the northwest, northeast, and south west corners of the intersection.
5. Install traffic signal pole lights east and west of the intersection as an extension of the existing traffic signal arms.

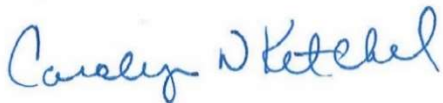
Finally, you may be asking, why NOT turn off the emergency signal arm by the Fire Station when the firetrucks are not rolling onto Racetrack Rd? The answer: by Florida State law, the emergency arms must blink a continuous yellow until an emergency vehicle enters the roadway and then it must turn to red.

As your Commissioner, I have advocated for swiftly addressing this intersection because it has become one of the most dangerous in Okaloosa County. Until Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) addresses some of these much-needed changes, **I ask you to proceed on Racetrack Rd with extreme caution especially when approaching this intersection from any direction.**

You may wish to send your thoughts and concerns in a letter to the Public Information Office for FDOT District 3; which services Okaloosa County at following address.

[FDOT-D3COMM@dot.state.fl.us](mailto:FDOT-D3COMM@dot.state.fl.us).

My Sincere Thanks,



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