

## our views

## DOT comments an insult

**N**OT surprisingly, the Georgia Department of Transportation has decided not to put a traffic signal at the intersection of Damon Gause Bypass and Old Pendergrass Road in Jefferson. Despite the fact that this dangerous intersection saw 13 injury wrecks last year, the two roads don't meet the DOT's statistical criteria for a traffic signal.

One might debate that point, but the DOT didn't stop there in their analysis of the problem. The DOT went further in its comments to argue that the multitude of wrecks at the intersection were due to speeding motorists and a "failure to yield."

In other words, the DOT accepts no blame for a poorly designed intersection as contributing to the wrecks.

Certainly, speed may have contributed to some of these wrecks. But it is insulting for DOT officials to sit in their ivory tower and declare their design is flawless and that only we stupid motorists are to blame for the multitude of wrecks at that intersection.

The facts say otherwise:

- **FACT:** This intersection along the relatively new bypass has seen more wrecks than any other location. Is that because more dumb drivers traverse that intersection, or could it be because of the intersection's poor design and the lack of a traffic control signal?

- **FACT:** Other intersections along this bypass with fewer wrecks and less cross-road traffic have gotten traffic signals, although they certainly appear not to meet the DOT's statistical criteria. Why is that?

- **FACT:** The bypass on either side of this intersection is straight and slopes down hill, a factor that no doubt contributes to an increased speed in the area. While motorists should be mindful of speed, DOT officials shouldn't be surprised that their own road design contributes to speed at this intersection.

- **FACT:** Blaming motorists for a "failure to yield" at this intersection is laughable. Because of the design of this intersection, it's almost impossible to know who has the right-of-way if you're crossing on Old Pendergrass Road or turning off the bypass. It is a very, very confusing intersection with insufficient turning lanes and poor markings, all of which rests squarely on the shoulders of DOT engineers, not motorists.

- **FACT:** The DOT upgrades intersections based on past traffic patterns, not future needs. But that criteria is crazy. It's like building a new school based on last year's students when you know you will need more classrooms next year. As it applies to this intersection, the new commercial development on one corner, the location of multiple school facilities along Old Pendergrass Road, the number of new subdivisions along that road and the new recreation complex are all increasing traffic to that intersection. To argue that such growth patterns can't be considered in traffic planning is typical bureaucratic thinking and not based on reality.

Despite what the DOT may argue, this is a very dangerous intersection, in large part because of how it was designed by DOT engineers. To deny that and to then turn around and blame motorists is both wrong and insulting.