

Richard G. Payne
Commissioner
District IV



THE CITY OF KEY WEST

P.O. BOX 1409
KEY WEST, FL 33041-1409

1300 White Street
(305) 809-3844
rpayne@cityofkeywest-fl.gov

PLEASE DO NOT RESPOND

**Re: Workshop regarding Parking Garages
& Related Issues
June 21, 2017**

Dear Fellow and Lady Commissioners:

Due to the length of this memorandum I thought it best to submit it to you in writing prior to our meeting in hopes that you as well as members of the public could have time to read it and look over the exhibits attached rather than my going through it all at our workshop. I appreciate if you would take the time from your busy schedules to read it and I apologize for its length but there are so many issues that I felt needed to be addressed concerning this important matter facing our city.

**COMMON KNOWLEDGE: OFF-STREET PARKING
NEEDED IN OLD TOWN**

I can think of no better argument in behalf of more off-street parking in Old Town than to ask each commissioner to think back to the last time that they had an occasion to drive down to Lower Duval Street for an event or to visit a business there and found themselves driving around lower Duval Street searching in vain for a place to park-even at our Mallory Square parking lot.

Key to the Caribbean – Average yearly temperature 77° F.

So we all know there is now and has been for a very long time a severe shortage of places to park near lower Duval Street because we all have experienced it for ourselves and unfortunately recent events has caused this shortage to grow. The only question we should ask ourselves now is: Are we, the City Commission of 2017 finally going to do something about this, or will we choose to do the popular thing and kick the can down the road and let some other commission, hopefully-someday do something about it?

BALANCED APPROACH NEEDED

My research has led me to the conclusion that what is needed To relieve traffic congestion in Old Town and provide the much needed off-street parking is for the city to take a balanced multi-faceted approach which includes supporting all programs that will help keep vehicles off our streets such as Ride Share; Bike Share; the Car Free Key West; the Bus Transit Loop Program; Park & Ride and other such programs. I have concluded that while these programs will all be somewhat helpful that they will ultimately come up short in helping us a complete solution for our traffic congestion woes and eliminate our need for more off-street parking in Old Town.

Unfortunately, after all is said and done, we will still need to have more off-street parking in Old Town, be it parking garages or surface parking lots, or a combination of both. It will not do to have parking garages located on Stock Island, New Town or elsewhere if we expect that they will be used for experience teaches us that they must be near where people want to go. Many workers from the lower Keys and Stock Island commute daily to Key West to work, many carrying their children to drop off at school before going to work.

Parking garages located on Stock Island or New Town will not work for them. For they will not drive to the school and then drive back to Stock Island or New Town to a Park and Ride to catch a shuttle ride to Old Town to work and then, after work reverse the process to return to their cars and drive home.

In addition, with respect to our Car Free Key West Program, how many of us commissioners have been convinced to give up our automobiles? No one of us, yet we expect others to do so. The people of New Town, where I have lived for 46 years, mostly all drive their automobiles to work, to and from schools and shopping centers and are not willing to pay a Ride Share driver to transport them to work each day or to transport their children to and from school or to the doctor's office or to practice or games, as many in New Town have families with young children and most do not live close enough to walk or bike to work. So while these programs may benefit many they will not take away the need for off-street parking in Old Town for the people I represent or for the motoring public who visit our fair city. In saying this I do not presume to speak for the residents of other New Town districts, but it would surprise me greatly that their views differ from the majority views expressed to me by my New Town constituents.

NEW TOWN WOULD LIKE TO VISIT OLD TOWN

In my 2015 campaign for election to the New Town seat I went door-to-door in my district to meet my neighbors and find out from them their concerns and what matters that they deemed important for their elected commissioner to work on. Among the things that they told me was they would like to be able to drive to Old Town and find a place to park when they did so

that they too could attend events, visit the Sunset Celebration and the many businesses at Lower Duval and many confided that because of the difficulty finding parking there that they didn't venture down to lower Duval if they could at all avoid it. It thus became an important part in my campaign that if elected, I promised do my best to work toward getting more off-street parking for them in Old Town. I printed that pledge in my campaign literature and mentioned this goal at almost every candidate forum I attended. At times I even mentioned where I thought that they could be constructed, mentioning the 1.5 acres the city owns at 609 Greene Street as well as at 616 Simonton/Angela where we once had a parking garage for many years.

MY PRE-REQUISITES FOR AN OLD TOWN GARAGE

In my wildest dreams I never thought that I would one day find myself to be standing before you as an advocate for construction of two parking garages in Old Town. I personally do not favor construction or the paving of land. I know that no commissioner has ever won a popularity contest for supporting the construction of parking garages or the paving of parking lots, particularly in paradise as the song goes. Perhaps that is why they are not there now? It wasn't popular then and it is not popular now.

Yet, as a commissioner seriously searching for a solution to our Old Town traffic congestion and lack of off-street parking problem I had to finally bring myself to consider and then advocate just that after concluding that it must be done.

My New Town neighbors pay taxes and would like to be able to visit Lower Duval, enjoy the Sunset Celebration like

everyone else, attend cultural events, do their duty and serve on juries, visit the shops and restaurants and browse Lower Duval as Old Town residents and tourists now do, but have great difficulty doing these acts due to lack of parking there.

Many drivers who work but do not live in Old Town have obtained city parking stickers that allow them to park in Old Town residential neighborhoods. As a result residents there often find that there is no parking near their homes and that there are often not enough parking spaces left for them elsewhere, even in our parking lots.

I have read the traffic studies, the last 3 all recommended that the City provide more off-street parking. I also examined all the various alternatives to having a parking garage in hopes that perhaps one or more of these alternatives could be enough to provide the solution that we need. Sadly, I have concluded that they will never give us the full solution that we need.

I examined Ride Share -Uber and Lyft programs; Bike Share; Car Free Key West, our Park and Ride at Grinnell and Caroline, our Old Town Bus Transit Loop Program as well as the hotel shuttles and was left with the opinion that all these programs together will not solve our traffic woes. I concluded that they will all be somewhat helpful and provide some relief but they will not be enough. I am even left with the belief that ride share programs may actually prove to add to our traffic woes in Old Town and I will attempt to explain my reasons for thinking this more fully later in this paper.

I haven't read any reports that Uber or Lyft services in other cities have resulted in the lessening of traffic congestion or have eliminated the need for off-street parking in any city.

The motoring public in America as well as in Key West, will not likely give up their 100+ year love affair with the automobile and it is a given that they will continue to drive to Key West to visit our city and our Tourist Development Commission will insure that they will keep on coming, as tourism is Key West's main industry and we are quite good at it. Niles Automotive and Duncan Ford have not yet begun to close their doors and give pink slips to their salesmen, mechanics and parts department workers. It is a safe bet that cars will be here to stay in spite of our best efforts with Car Free Key West. While staying at our Motels and Bed and Breakfasts our visitors who drove here will want to drive to Lower Duval, our tourist epicenter, and they will need parking when they do as will my New Town constituents who will go there to. People in New Town will not likely give up their automobiles that they need to drive to work and take their kids to school or practice and they will not be happy to shell out \$50 or more to use a ride share to travel to Lower Duval and back or brave the streets of Key West riding bicycles down to Old Town with their children when they still have their own vehicles, licensed and insured available to safely transport them wherever they want to go. They work and pay their taxes and as permanent residents they want to be able to go to a part of their city that tourists who drive here from hundreds of miles away willing to pay over \$300 a night for lodging want to go- Lower Duval. All will need a safe and convenient place to park when they do. The City of Key West should help New Town residents to be able to fully enjoy the benefits of living in this great city as well as the visitors who drive here. So, yes, I accept as accurate the recommendations of our last 3 parking/traffic consultants that more off-street parking is needed. They were absolutely and positively right when they advised the city that more off-street parking is needed in Old Town! It is truly an inconvenient truth.

PARKING NEEDED FOR PUBLIC WISHING TO ATTEND CULTURAL EVENTS IN OLD TOWN

The residents of the City of Key West have been blessed over the years by having available to them many cultural and Artistic events presented by such civic organizations as The Red Barn Theatre, Studios of Key West, The Waterfront Playhouse, The Theatre on Eaton Street, San Carlos Institute, Theatre XP, Key West Theatre, The Fringe Theater Key West And The Tropic Cinema, to name only a few, all at their Old Town locations.

Unfortunately, parking in Old Town to attend these events is Exceedingly limited and more off-street parking, particularly At Angela and Simonton Streets would be highly beneficial for these events and would serve to enhance our citizenry's ability to access these life enriching productions and exhibits that our many talented artists and writers produce for us. Having concluded that the city needs a balanced multi-faceted approach to solving the Old Town parking problems which must include construction of parking garages the next question I had for myself was: Can they be located on Stock Island, New Town or elsewhere other than Old Town? My experiences tell me that facilities located elsewhere would not likely be utilized as people want to park near to where they wish to go, which in Key West's case is Old Town and not New Town. We have only to look at the fact that during the tourist season the Grinnell Street/Caroline Park & Ride is full as is the surface parking lot at the Bight along Caroline Street and likewise at Angela/Simonton Street, as well as the beach at the Gulf of Mexico end of Simonton Street and while we are at it lets not forget that the Mallory Square parking is also full as

well during the tourist season. Off-street parking must be located in Old Town.

Many who work in Key West reside in the lower Keys at Big Coppitt, Stock Island, Rockland Key, Summerland, Sugarloaf, Little and Big Torch Key and even Big Pine whose residents must come to Key West for jury duty and all commute to Key West daily, all needing parking when they get here and each competing with visitors and residents for Old Town parking.

I have reluctantly concluded that parking garages are most needed in Old Town.-but where then? We know that Old Town real estate is among the most expensive real estate in America. It just makes good sense to construct on property already owned by the city.

Next I asked myself if they have to be constructed in Old Town could they be designed to be aesthetically pleasing to the eye and designed to blend in with the neighborhood they are located in as opposed to the standard unattractive variety? Looking into some designs for parking garages I concluded that they can be aesthetical and pleasing enough to fit into the neighborhoods that they are sited in. I submit to you some exhibits of architectural renderings I found to give you an idea of the type of parking facility what I consider aesthetical realizing that subjective opinions as to what meets that definition depends on the eye of the beholder.

They must be designed so as not to have a negative impact on the businesses in their immediate vicinity and be designed to enhance and not detract from being located near a historic waterfront? I note that Key West's perhaps most historic structure is the U.S. Customs Building at Mallory Square which is located within several hundred feet of the Weston

parking garage which is on Key West Harbor waterfront but fits in well with its neighbors. All businesses there appear to be thriving and employees busy.

All my concerns have been answered in a positive manner.

My discussions with our parking staff lead me to conclude that parking garages in Old Town would generate enough revenue to pay for themselves and not be a burden on the citizens and taxpayers of Key West.

At 609 Greene Street the city owns 1.5 acres of prime real estate and the city owns more at 616 Simonton / Angela Street, where a parking garage once stood for over 40 years and I often parked my car there.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD AT 609 GREENE STREET

Many changes have occurred in this Greene Street neighborhood since 1910-almost all of the old buildings shown in the old photograph taken the day before the first train came into Key West. Instead of these historic structures, what we find today are modern townhouses 35 ft. in height with another 10 feet of height for the elevator shafts of each, the city's dirt parking lot with lobster trap storage, 2 sewer pump buildings, a two story fish house building and a waterfront restaurant and bar. The parking garage that I suggest is only 3 parking levels high and will not exceed the height of its townhouse neighbors. This facility will provide up to 300 parking spaces. The commission could decide on building a smaller or a greater

parking garage or decide on having only a surface area parking lot hopefully adding more parking spaces than the 50 spaces currently planned after asphaltting and landscaping. Today there is no reason that working with a skilled local architect or a planner that a suitably designed parking garage could not be designed and made to aesthetically fit in neatly to the site located behind the two rows of tall modern townhouses which would for the most part, obscure the facility from view. A pedestrian walking down Greene Street would not really see the garage until crossing the Simonton Street intersection.

The opponents of a parking garage at Greene Street have gone to great lengths to prepare and circulate an exaggerated blue print for a fictional parking garage which greatly exaggerates the size, scale, dimensions and land coverage of the modest parking garage I suggest may be built there. Their drawing appears to be a drawing for the "Mother of All Parking Garages" that no sane person would ever propose to be built. A true monstrosity no one has proposed to be built calculated to scare people into believing what the city commission would build it if not vigorously opposed.

I attached a preliminary drawing showing the land coverage for a parking garage at Greene Street and is only shown here by way of explaining what could ultimately be designed if the commission would go forward on the possibility of having a parking garage at 609 Greene Street. The land coverage of this proposal shows that the nearby businesses can be left ample room to continue their profitable operations with room for deliveries and hosting outdoor events, and would not have any adverse effect on their businesses operations and would actually give the Conch Republic Seafood/Schooner Wharf Restaurant and Bar room to expand and improve its kitchen operations.

TWO NEW EVENTS AND THE EFFECT ON OLD TOWN TRAFFIC AND OFF-STREET PARKING?

There are two significant events that have occurred since the 2011 Carrying Capacity Study which to my mind strengthen the underlying basis for the recommendations coming out of that study. There will be soon the construction of 300 new residential workforce dwellings on Rockland Key and Stock Island. Each of these new dwellings, by law must have at a minimum, 2 parking spaces. This could add up to over 500 additional cars commuting to Key West to work, joining the hundreds of commuters already coming into Key West each morning. Many of these commuters will seek to park in Old Town near their place of employment.

In addition to this development is the fact that the city has lost 150 parking spaces with the building of the townhouses on Simonton Street that had formally been used for off-street parking by private interests and we are soon about to lose another 100 spaces when the nearby parking lot formally owned by the Spotswood family on Simonton Street is developed into shops and commercial structures by its new owners, a R.E.I.T. known for commercial developments around the United States. Because this loss has happened since the Carrying Capacity Study of 2011, the recommendations to provide more off-street parking in Old Town have become even a more valid because 2011 study was doubtlessly aware of the existence of these off-parking spaces in their inventory taken in 2011. We as a city commission must be aware of these two new developments and address the need to create more off-street Parking because these developments will definitely have an adverse effect upon the businesses located on the 600 block of

Greene Street and vicinity. Lost customer parking will translate into lost earnings which can in turn lead to lost employment opportunities for workers.

We also know that during the height of the tourist season in Key West that the parking lot near the Bight on Caroline Street is usually at full occupancy as is the nearby Park and Ride garage at Grinnell and Caroline Streets. It is therefore important for the City to act in a positive manner to replace some of the lost off-street parking.

JURY SERVICE IN OLD TOWN

In addition, jury service at the federal and state courthouses, both located in Old Town has been for years a continuing problem for jurors summoned to report for jury service. Many traveling in by automobiles from as far away as Big Pine Key To do their civic duty.

To date, what the City has done is to decide to spend \$500,000. To asphalt and landscape the dirt 609 Greene Street surface parking lot that we now lease to The Schooner Wharf Restaurant and Bar. This will only continue the parking that is Presently there at an expenditure that will net the city of Key West only 15 more off-street parking spaces. Each new parking space costing us \$33,000. Our vote implementing this asphaltting and landscaping has been stayed pending our vote on this resolution. At the very least, we need to take another look at this plan and maximize the use of this surface lot if that is what we ultimately decide to do.

2011 CARRYING CAPACITY STUDY

\$247,000.00

Six years ago we paid our consultants, expert traffic consultants, CALVIN & GIORDANO & ASSOCIATES \$247,000 to conduct a carrying capacity study for us and make recommendations for improving our traffic flow in Old Town. For over a period of 12 months these traffic engineers studied every intersection and traffic light and street corner in Key West using stop watches and trip wires and compiled an impressive 12 inch thick report for us. They also surveyed thousands of residents and visitors to receive their opinions. over those 12 months in 2011. These experts concluded that too many vehicles are currently on our streets in Old Town “driving around looking for a place to park” and recommended that we provide more off-street parking. These experts did not advise us against building parking garages because to do so would create more traffic congestion with everyone driving there to park their cars as some now argue.

What is being proposed by me is that we substitute our approval for the paving of the dirt parking lot there with an approval go forward on the future construction a parking facility which will give the city a net gain of up to 350 off-street parking spaces there rather than only the 15 spaces which our asphaltting plan would bring us at this Greene Street location. We must not lose sight of the fact that 250 nearby off-street parking spaces have been or will soon be lost to us there.

BENEFITS OF BUILDING PARKING GARAGES IN OLD TOWN

- 1. We could get 500 or more new off-street parking***

spaces which is potentially 500 more vehicles off of our Old Town streets rather than only the 15 spaces we gain with some improvements to a surface parking lot costing the City \$500,000.

2. We are told that parking garages, over time will Pay for themselves-creating no burden on the tax payer.

3. Key Westers from New Town, where I live will gain a safe and convenient parking facility which Will enable them to conveniently access lower and Middle Duval Street businesses and the Sunset Celebrations which they cannot now do. Visitors who stay in motels who wish to do the same will Also be able to do so as well.

4. The Thompson fish house currently occupied by Reef Relief is in great disrepair and appears to be in need of a great deal of repair or most likely removal, no matter what is or is not done at Greene Street regarding parking garages or surface lot. Removal of that building would allow for additional space to accommodate the parking garage and also allow additional space for the needed expansion of our present tenant's kitchen operation- thus a dual benefit. Reef Relief can be moved to another

nearby appropriate location suitable to their needs.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

It is argued that we need to preserve the Old Town Character existing at the 600 Block of Greene Street. [I enclose a 1910 photograph of this neighborhood and ask you to note that none of the buildings shown were residential, all are commercial and at least 35 ft. high reaching all the way to the water. Unfortunately, today none of these structures remain and we cannot preserve what is no longer there.

As regards 616 Simonton/Angela Street address. This was the location of a parking garage which was there for many years until it had used up its useful life and was removed and replaced with a surface parking lot. No objections have been made To a parking garage at this location.

A handsome L shaped garage could be placed there replacing the present surface parking lot.

On Greene Street- The historic warehouses that we

see in the 1910 photograph are gone now. They have been replaced by two rows of townhouses, a surface dirt parking lot, two sewer pump buildings, rows of stored lobster traps and a restaurant/bar. There are no historic structures there and there is no reason why we cannot place an aesthetically designed parking garage there that will still allow The waterfront area to be unchanged.

Would building a 3 or 4 level parking garage obscure any townhouse owners view of our historic harbor? The answer is NO because they presently have no view of the harbor. Only a visit to the waterfront will allow for a view of the harbor and the boats and vessels therein. One of the most historic buildings in Key West is the Old U.S. Customs Building at Mallory Square and located a few doors down from it is the multi-level Weston Parking Garage which is located on the Key West ships channel waterfront, fitting in, in its location, in close proximity to our most historic structure in Key West. There is no reason that an aesthetically designed parking garage cannot be designed in like manner to fit in on Greene Street as well.

BUSINESSES CAN BE ACCOMMODATED

With a parking garage we will be eliminating our annual leasing of our surface parking lot. Sorry about that but I am confident that the extra business revenue will make up for this loss.

Reef Relief's complementary lease from the city can be easily relocated to somewhere else, nearby and appropriate to their educational mission. Sorry about that too. But I am confident that Reef Relief will be happy to know that many of their fellow Key West citizens will be benefited from having a safe

and convenient place to park their automobiles when they chose to visit and patronize lower Duval Street businesses or visit Reef Relief offices for education and training about the importance of our reef.

Lobster trap storage can be relocated nearby to accommodate the lobster fisherman.

Our Bight Board will be happy to find that not all parking garages need to be “big and ugly” but can be built with attractive aesthetic facades that allow them blend in with their neighbors.

The 35’ foot tall townhouses on the 600 block of Greene St. which front on Simonton Street will have a multi-story parking garage behind them as well as other similar townhouses behind them instead of the present surface area parking lot and stored lobster traps so they will experience very little change in their present circumstances and a parking garage will not change their lack of view.

In the final analysis, the City properties located at 609 Greene and 616 Simonton must of necessity be placed to a more beneficial use that will answer to the needs of a greater number of our residents.

Residents of District IV as well as other New Town districts Must have convenient and inexpensive access to Old Town, Something that they do not now have.

THE “IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL COME”

ARGUMENT

Vehicles coming to and going from a parking garage create no greater traffic congestion than other vehicles on the city's streets except that they are soon inside the garage, parked and safely off the street whereas the other vehicles remain on the street circling and continuing to contribute to congestion. Objections to parking garages in Old Town based on the old slogan argument that "If you build it, they will come." is in truth a very insensitive argument aimed directly at New Town residents and no one else." It is tantamount to saying to them that we don't want to build a parking garage because if we do you will come to it and in so doing create traffic congestion for us. Stay in New Town. Tourists from other places are not going to know that there is a new parking garage in Old Town for them to go to. So if we build it, it will not be them who will be 'coming' to it. The only people who will "come" are new town residents who will know that the garages are there. Surely, we commissioners all believe that New Town residents have a right to drive to Old Town for a few hours anytime they wish? It is a nice catchy slogan but it is totally inappropriate in the context that it is being used here.

THE REALITY--NO PLACE TO PARK

Currently, there is not enough off-street parking to accommodate the vehicles looking for parking to permit their removal from our streets. That is a daily reality in Old Town. Ride share operators will also soon find this to be the case when they too seek parking.

The inconvenient truth is ride share systems like Uber and Lyft and others that will come along may actually contribute to our

current traffic congestion problems rather than giving us the solution that we seek. Uber drivers drive automobiles and their cars create congestion as they ride people to various locations carrying passengers who may have left their cars at home or flown into Key West. The congestion they produce making their livelihood is never-the-less traffic congestion just as when a New Town resident decides to drives to an Old Town parking garage or as when tourists drive down to us from the North or Canada in their own vehicles.

TWO SCENARIOS

First Scenario

Lets examine Ride Share for a moment by comparing two different scenarios: Suppose a resident from New Town decides that it has been a long time since he and his family have gone down to Mallory Square to see the sunset and decides to use a Ride Share system to go there. He uses his smart phone app and calls Uber or Lyft and within 5 minutes a Ride Share operator shows up to his home and his entire family, wife and 3 children get in and are transported down to lower Duval and are left off. The cost for the trip down was \$20 or \$30. not counting the tip . They walk to the sunset celebration and watch the street performers and visit a restaurant. The Uber driver leaves them and continues to drive Old Town streets waiting for a dispatch to another rider knowing that under Uber protocol in order to be the Uber driver who gets the dispatch he will have to be the car nearest where the caller to be picked up is calling from. He, like the rest of us will look for a free place to park and save gasoline until his or her next call but free places to park are exceeding hard to come by in Old Town. He circles Duval Street, avoiding the pedicabs and tourist walking.

Therefore that Uber driver will likely continue to contribute to traffic congestion in Old Town as he drives Old Town in search of a free place to park until his or her the next dispatch. I understand that After July 1, 2017 the Florida Legislature in its wisdom has provided that Florida municipalities may not regulate Ride Share programs in anyway, therefore the city will not be able to limit the number of Ride Share operators working in the city at any particular time or the prices that they decide to charge. Therefore Key West is likely to see fifty or more Uber and Lyft operators working our streets and initially our Taxis will still be here as well, all adding to our traffic woes, instead of being a solution to our traffic woes as many suggest.

At the beginning ride share transportation charges will likely be extremely low compared to rates charged by taxis. When taxi competition is eliminated the ride share rates will likely dramatically increase and those of us with automobiles will decrease our use of ride share. Thereby canceling any hopeful remedial traffic congestion lessening benefits ride share was Predicted to bring us. I believe that Ride Share Programs will not be that solution to decongest the streets of Old Town for us or eliminate our need to provide off-street parking.

The driver in our first scenario charges the New Town rider another \$20 to \$30 dollars to return him and his family to his New Town home. This adventure has cost our rider and his family \$40 to \$60 to visit Old Town. I ask, is this resident likely to use Uber or Lyft again? Would you?

Second Scenario

Now lets look at a second scenario. Assume that the same new town resident decided to drive his own car with his family down to the sunset celebration. After all, he owns is own car

which he needs to drive to work and take his children to school and ball practice and shopping and it is licensed and insured and its running good with gasoline in the tank. He has worked hard all week and doesn't particularly like the idea of paying someone else \$40 to \$60 dollars to drive his family 2 miles down to Old Town and back. He decides to drive his family down to the Greene Street or Angela Street parking garage where he parks and they walk to the sunset celebration and watch the sunset at Mallory Pier. After the sunset, for which they all dutifully applauded when the sun successful went below the horizon they walked back to the Greene Street and went to the Conch Republic Seafood Restaurant to treat his family to desert and afterwards they walked to the parking garage where a small fee was paid and they drove back to their home in New Town. Outing cost \$4.00 plus the cost of ice cream and apple pie and tip at the waterfront restaurant.

Under which scenario was traffic in Old Town less negatively impacted? And while we are on this subject, why should someone living in New Town have to pay upwards of \$30 to \$60 or whatever charge is then in effect, just to visit a part of his own city lying only 2 miles distant from his home? Is this fair to add more cost in the most expensive place to live in Florida? Did the travel by the New Town driver, a city taxpayer, to the Greene Street or the Angela Street garage create undue traffic congestion down there? Should we tell them and his family that we want for them to stay in New Town unless they call a Ride Share, ride bicycles down or hire a driverless car down there? Would cars entering and leaving the garage be coming at such a rate so as to create too much traffic congestion at the entrance to the garage (the previous entrance to our surface parking lot)? The idea that parking garages will aggravate our traffic problem is truly "a dog that won't hunt", a red herring argument that doesn't pass the common sense test. Our

consultants have studied our traffic situation and have rendered their recommendations to us, as traffic engineers who we paid \$247,000. They told us, as did the 2 previous traffic studies that “ you folks in Key West need more off-street parking “ *Parking* garages and parking lots are how we get more off-street parking and they do not create more traffic congestion than they eliminate.

The value of property in Key West, particularly in the vicinity of the lower Duval is extremely costly real estate. It only makes sense that property that the city of Key West already owns there should be where a parking garage is considered as opposed to where land must be purchased. It would be the most economical approach that could be taken by us.

People are not going to decide to come to Key West because we have a new parking garage in Old Town. The TDC is not going to advertise for tourists to come to Key West because we have an new exciting place to park. So if we build it how will they come? Who will come more are residents of New Town because they want to access a part of their city that has not been an easy thing for them to do. But with parking garages, citizens who live in New Town might venture over to another part of their city that they currently don't go because there will be a convenient and safe place for them to park.

FUNDING

There are two primary ways to finance construction of the parking garages. One way would be to tie the garages to an overall traffic improvement program and thereby become eligible to apply for various federal and state grants.

The second way would be to finance construction through the traditional bonding method, with the loan being repaid solely with revenue coming from the parking garages themselves.

Neither of these approaches takes funding away from other worthwhile programs, such as construction of affordable housing using revenue from the city's share of the Bed Tax which can only be used for that purpose. Any excess revenue from parking garages can be used to pay for the expenses of maintaining our Truman Waterfront Park for which we have no economic engine to generate the funds needed there.

Funding by way of Infrastructure (101) and/or the Key West Bight (405) would impact approved General Government and/or capital projects or potentially require the elimination or Delay of other programmed capital projects and I would not Therefore recommend this manner of financing the construction of the parking garages.

So, in conclusion, lets have the courage to stand up and do something positive to address our shortage of off-street parking which is effecting our citizens so negatively. Let us begin to alleviate traffic congestion in Old Town, and let us be the City Commission that did not kick the can down the road, or punt the ball for future commissions to do what is necessary by ignoring what needs to be done for the sake of popularity. Let us get going on the real solution-the Balanced Multi-faceted Approach. Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on the matter.

Respectfully submitted, your colleague,

Richard

Richard Payne, District IV