

May 15, 2015

RE: BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY COORDINATOR - FOR MAY 19 COMMISSION MEETING

Dear Key West City Clerk:

I have been a resident of this city for 55 years and am an avid bicyclist. My mother lived here from 1910 – 1988 and never drove a car; transporting me, my sister and three cousins all over this island on a bicycle. How times have changed. The Tourist Development Council has been very successful. We are a major tourist destination. The resulting traffic congestion and accidents have reach critical mass. I continue to ride a bicycle, assuming the risks, because I know where the safe alleys and lanes are; and I ride on the sidewalks when necessary. But, our visitors and new residents do not know where the safe bicycle routes are. That is the #1 reason this city needs a full time Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Coordinator. I see bicyclist every day on busy streets like Truman Avenue and Whitehead Street – **accidents waiting to happen**. In all good conscience, we cannot let this unsafe condition continue.

I have been a case manager paralegal investigating accidents for local law firms for 25 years. This past tourist season (Nov – April) was particularly brutal for our bicyclists. I have seen my auto v. bicycle case load increase at least 25% this tourist season. The injuries are tragic. Please allow me to put a human face on one such accident as an example:

Marisa was a new resident, only 18 years old, riding her bicycle on the business side of the N. Roosevelt sidewalk. She was headed to Saint Mary's Catholic Church on Truman Avenue to pick up her sister from school when a car slammed into her as it left a gas station. The careless driver said he didn't see her. She lay on the ground hemorrhaging from the mouth and convulsing with seizures. She was treated at the scene by EMS; transported by ambulance to Lower Keys Medical Center; then transported by helicopter to Jackson Memorial Hospital. She survived this accident with diagnoses of severe head trauma and a fractured neck. The negligent driver had only \$10,000 liability insurance to compensate her. Her medical expenses are \$63,000+ and accruing = another Medicaid case for Florida taxpayers. Her neck injury will heal; the brain damage is permanent. This accident could have been avoided if Marisa had been told how dangerous that commercial corridor is for bicycles and pedestrians. There are safer routes to transverse the island. She could have used either the bike path on the Gulf side of North Roosevelt, or better yet, the back way through the Staples Avenue bicycle bridge/path instead.

Similar auto v. bicycle accidents were repeated daily during our past high season. The newspaper and television reports screamed that **KEY WEST IS THE BICYCLE ACCIDENT CAPITOL**. Not good PR for a tourist destination. Hiring a full time Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Coordinator is the first logical step we can take under the current high accident conditions facing this city. **Please consider my comments when you decide what to do about the Bicycle Pedestrian Safety Coordinator Tuesday May 19th.**


JEAN GREGORY

1109 GEORGIA ST.

KEY WEST, FL 33040

305-731-0582 305-293-0902

"conchsister@yahoo.com"

RECEIVED
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

2015 MAY 19 AM 8:13

CITY OF KEY WEST
KEY WEST, FLORIDA