

Keri O'Brien

From: Loretta DiTocco <lorettamdt@outlook.com>
Sent: Monday, June 1, 2026 6:48 PM
To: City Clerk External E-Mail; Keri O'Brien; Mayor E-Mail; District VI; District V; District III; District IV; District II; District I
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Southernmost Point Project

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing as a Key West resident to respectfully urge you to vote NO on June 4, 2026, on the proposed award of ITB #26-005 to Charley Toppino & Sons, Inc. for the Southernmost Point Plaza Project.

This \$4.25 million project was submitted by a single bidder and would permanently narrow South Street in order to satisfy the requirements of a Tourist Development Council (TDC) grant. While I support addressing the drainage problems in the area, I do not believe this project, as currently designed, represents the best use of taxpayer funds or serves the long-term interests of Key West residents.

Only one responsive bid was received. The City's original solicitation required redesign and re-bidding after project issues were identified, yet the revised solicitation still failed to attract competition. Before committing more than \$4 million in public funds, the Commission should consider whether a more limited drainage and roadway repair project could be competitively bid at a substantially lower cost.

The TDC will contribute approximately \$1 million toward the project, leaving local taxpayers responsible for roughly \$3.3 million. To qualify for the grant, however, the City must construct plaza-style improvements including widened sidewalks, decorative lighting, landscaping, and extensive reconstruction.

Residents need drainage improvements. They do not necessarily need a costly plaza project. The City should evaluate whether a simpler infrastructure-focused alternative could achieve the primary objective at a fraction of the cost.

The proposal would reduce South Street's width from approximately 25 feet to 20 feet. This corridor serves residents, businesses, delivery vehicles, rideshare traffic, tour vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, and emergency responders while also accommodating one of Key West's most visited landmarks.

Unlike flooding, which occurs periodically, the roadway narrowing would affect traffic operations every day. The Commission should carefully consider whether reducing roadway capacity is consistent with the project's stated goal of improving traffic flow.

Residents have waited years for relief from flooding in this area. That work should move forward. However, drainage improvements should not be conditioned on acceptance of an expensive plaza design. Separating the drainage scope from the plaza-related elements could allow critical infrastructure work to proceed more efficiently and with broader public support.

Beyond the construction price, the project creates ongoing maintenance obligations for decorative infrastructure, eliminates paid parking spaces, and could impose significant future costs if roadway

modifications prove problematic and require reversal. Because TDC funding may have to be repaid if the roadway is later restored, the practical effect is to make these design changes difficult and expensive to undo.

I support improving the Southernmost Point area and addressing longstanding drainage problems. However, I do not support awarding a \$4.25 million single-bid contract for a project that permanently alters an important residential corridor, prioritizes grant-driven amenities over essential infrastructure, and commits the City to substantial long-term costs.

I respectfully ask the Mayor and Commissioners to reject the proposed award and direct staff to return with a more focused, competitively bid drainage and roadway improvement plan.

Thank you for your consideration and your service to the residents of Key West.

Respectfully,

Loretta

Key West, Florida