

May 19, 2026

Dear Commissioners,

Thank-you for all your hard work. For example, your forward progress with City Hall which has been a huge endeavor requiring an extraordinary time commitment by all of you, the transformation of Sunset Park, the retention pond, and many other infrastructure improvements exhibiting your relentless dedication to improving our community.

I have been an owner in KCB for almost 15 years now and seen the shifts in community culture each time a new Mayor is elected. I am asking the Commission to establish a long-range planning committee to develop a Master Plan – a clear and enduring vision for our City — one that thoughtfully defines Key Colony Beach’s mission, values, and long-term goals. The purpose is to identify and preserve the unique qualities that make KCB so special, and to ensure those defining characteristics endure beyond changing commissions and administrations, rather than shifting with each new Mayor or Administrator.

This effort should include extensive citizen participation to ensure the plan reflects the values, priorities, and collective vision of our community.

An example of why this planning effort is so important — and how it can guide future decisions — is illustrated by something as simple as the bait and fish-cleaning table installed at Sunset Park. If our community’s priority for Sunset Park is preserving unobstructed oceanfront views and maintaining passive park spaces where residents and visitors can simply relax and enjoy the extraordinary waterfront setting, perhaps that table does not belong there. If, however, the goal is to embrace and support KCB’s fishing heritage and waterfront lifestyle, then the table is entirely appropriate.

Without clearly defined long-range goals, decisions can become piecemeal rather than part of a cohesive vision. Over time, those decisions result in a fragmented culture and character of a community, while residents are left uncertain about the broader direction and priorities of their governing body.

Attached is my initial draft illustrating what a Master Plan for Key Colony Beach could look like, to provide greater clarity regarding the type of Master Plan I am proposing.

Thanks to the Commission’s hard work in addressing much of the City’s infrastructure needs, we now have the opportunity to focus on developing an enduring plan that preserves and strengthens the qualities that make KCB special — including a sense of safety, belonging, trust, community identity, and quality of life for generations to come.

I would also like to offer my services as a volunteer to participate on a long-range planning committee tasked with developing a proposed Master Plan for review and consideration by the Commission. In addition, I would suggest appointing a designated Commissioner to serve as liaison to the committee to help ensure coordination, communication, and continuity throughout the planning process.

Respectfully,

Lynne Benton

KCB's Master Plan Sample

“Honestly Now, What’s Your Hurry? You’re Here.”

This can be the iconic¹ core vision philosophy for KCB. It means a community that values:

- livability over congestion,
- stewardship over overdevelopment,
- community over conflict,
- and quality of life over constant acceleration.

The philosophy recognizes that our community’s greatest asset is not simply its location, but the feeling of belonging and safety it creates.

“The feeling of belonging” and “safety” are foundational qualities that strongly influence whether people experience a community as welcoming, healthy, and emotionally secure. In a small coastal community like Key Colony Beach, these ideas can become part of the community’s identity and culture.

The Most Powerful Aspect of This Philosophy

Most modern communities are struggling with:

- congestion,
- stress,
- overdevelopment,
- polarization,
- and loss of identity.

“Honestly Now, What’s Your Hurry? You’re Here.” offers a fundamentally different civic philosophy: a community intentionally designed around quality of life rather than constant acceleration.

That is compelling and authentic for the Florida Keys.

Long Range Plan Tag Line: “Preserving What Makes This Place Timeless”

Another example of a Tag Line is the Ocean Reef Club repeatedly describing itself as:

“A Unique Way of Life”

“More than a club, it’s family.”

¹ “Iconic” means: widely recognized, distinctive, and strongly symbolic of something important, memorable, or representative. An iconic thing becomes: instantly recognizable, emotionally associated with a place or idea, and part of a community’s identity or culture.

The Feeling of Belonging

A “feeling of belonging” means people feel accepted, connected, valued, and part of the community.

It is the sense that:

- you are welcome,
- your presence matters,
- your voice is heard,
- and you have meaningful connection to neighbors and place.

In practice, belonging often comes from:

- knowing your neighbors,
- friendly interactions,
- community traditions,
- volunteerism,
- civic participation,
- and shared pride in the community.

Examples:

- neighbors greeting one another,
- people stopping to talk,
- community events,
- residents looking out for each other,
- feeling recognized rather than anonymous.

Why It Matters

Communities with strong belonging often experience:

- stronger civic engagement,
- lower conflict,
- greater volunteerism,
- more resilience after disasters,
- and higher overall quality of life.

People are more likely to:

- care for the community,
- participate constructively,
- and support one another.

Safety

Safety means more than simply low crime rates.

It includes:

- physical safety,
- emotional safety,
- environmental safety,
- and civic safety.

Physical Safety

People feel protected from:

- crime,
- dangerous traffic,
- flooding,

- unsafe infrastructure,
- and environmental hazards.

Examples:

- safe streets,
- walkability,
- emergency preparedness,
- lighting,
- resilient infrastructure.

Emotional / Social Safety

People feel:

- respected,
- comfortable speaking,
- and free from hostility or intimidation.

In civic life, this means:

- respectful meetings,
- civil dialogue,
- transparency,
- and governance people trust.

Civic Safety

Residents feel:

- government is fair,
- rules are applied consistently,
- and decisions are understandable.

People may disagree with decisions yet still feel secure if:

- they believe the process was respectful and transparent.

Why These Concepts Matter in Long-Range Planning

Communities often focus heavily on:

- buildings,
- roads,
- and infrastructure,

but the qualities residents most treasure are often:

- belonging,
- safety,
- trust,
- peace,
- and quality of life.

These “soft qualities” are frequently what make a place truly special.

Vision Statement Example

To preserve and enhance a safe, welcoming, resilient, and uniquely relaxed seaside community where residents and visitors alike can slow down, connect with nature and neighbors, and enjoy the exceptional quality of life that defines the Florida Keys.

Core Long-Range Planning Themes

1. Preserve Small-Town Timeless Coastal Character

Goals:

- Avoid over-urbanization
- Preserve neighborhood identity
- Protect waterfront views and open feel; waterfront gathering spaces (Sunset park)
- Protect residents' privacy
- Allow technology if only necessary and discreet.

Policies:

- Encourage context-sensitive redevelopment
- Preserve walkability and golf-cart culture
- Maintain architectural compatibility
- Limit visual clutter and over commercialization
- Support local business without over commercialization
- Electronic bill boards prohibited.

2. Livability First

The philosophy implies: life should feel manageable and enjoyable.

Priorities:

- Calm traffic
- Safe pedestrian movement
- Public gathering spaces
- Noise management
- Balanced tourism

Potential initiatives:

- shaded walking routes,
- pocket parks (we have 😊),
- canal-front seating (we have 😊),
- sunset gathering spaces (we have 😊),
- expanded bike/golf cart connectivity.

3. Transparency and Respectful Governance

A slower-paced, community-oriented town requires:

- civility,
- transparency,
- and trust.

Governance goals:

- transparency and civility,
- respectful public dialogue,
- understandable decision-making,

- strong citizen participation,
- long-range thinking over reactive politics.

Vision principle:

“A great community listens before it reacts.”

4. Stewardship of Natural Resources

The philosophy connects deeply to:

- water,
- nature,
- and environmental quality.

Long-range goals:

- clean canals,
- healthy nearshore waters, water quality, canal health
- mangrove protection,
- resilient shorelines,
- sustainable landscaping,
- reduced runoff.

5. Balanced Property Rights and Community Interests

The Keys culture strongly values private property rights, but long-range success requires balance.

Guiding principle:

Individual property rights and community character are not opposing goals; both are essential to preserving the qualities that make the community special.

6. Resilience Without Losing Character

One of the largest future challenges:

- sea level rise,
- flood adaptation, sustainability,
- insurance pressures,
- infrastructure adaptation.

The goal: adapt carefully without losing the relaxed Keys identity.

Vision:

- resilient roads,
- thoughtful elevation strategies,
- nature-based shoreline solutions,
- storm preparedness, while preserving charm and aesthetics.

7. Intergenerational Community

A successful long-range plan should ask: Will future generations still experience the same feeling of arrival and peace here?

Focus:

- family-friendly spaces,
- aging-in-place,
- workforce sustainability,
- preserving local traditions,
- multigenerational livability.