

SOUTH OF FIFTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, INC.

August 26, 2021

RE: Immediate Action Required in the MXE

Dear Mayor and Commissioners:

The South of Fifth Neighborhood Association, Inc. (SOFNA) Board of Directors is an elected body responsible for promoting and maintaining quality of life for thousands of residents and for businesses within the South of Fifth Neighborhood.

On behalf of our members, SOFNA is shocked and disgusted with both the violent nature and increasing number of daily threats to our safety, quality of life and most recently, the predictable, tragic, and senseless loss of life on Ocean Drive.

It is no longer acceptable for us to hear only about future discussions and plans for the regentrification of Ocean Drive and the Entertainment District. Although we understand and heartily agree that the City must reimagine and plan for the future, we have an urgent problem that requires action *now*.

We believe that there are concrete emergency action steps that the city can take NOW to provide a necessary level of support to your residents.

SOFNA demands immediate action, including the following:

1. **Increase the police presence** exponentially, by bike, vehicle and foot in the Entertainment District. Saturate the zone with a constant active police presence.
2. Implement a **ninety (90) day emergency police presence** including Swat, Gang, MEP, and County resources dedicated to the Entertainment Zone. Reassess progress at the 60 day mark; make changes as necessary.
3. Designate a **special police drug task force for the entertainment district** to root out and arrest all drug activity in this area.
4. **Remove all extended outdoor seating** in the Entertainment District
5. **Open Ocean Drive immediately to vehicular traffic, and establish all foot traffic to be on the east** side of the street. Opening ocean drive to cars immediately reduces the “block party.” Since the closure of Ocean Drive, the side streets from 6th to 14th Streets have become dead-end safe zones for crime and unacceptable behavior. The immediate opening of Ocean Drive will make these side streets functional, and thus visible again to street traffic and police patrols.
6. **Place police monitoring cameras** at every intersection of the Entertainment District with proper staffing of police monitoring personnel.

7. Implement random **DUI traffic stops** on high impact ingress and egress points to South Beach.
8. **Divert funding** as necessary from other projects to fully fund these measures.

SOFNA places the responsibility for this spiraling disastrous situation firmly at your feet; our citizens rely on you to:

- Make the hiring decisions on critical positions such as the Police Chief and the City Manager.
- Use your monthly meetings to prioritize, address, and drive proactive steps to improve safety and quality of life. With our City spiraling out of control we think that public safety must take priority over such items as re-naming streets, handing out awards, and/or discussing new developer projects.
- Use your power to allocate City money and resources to make our City safe and livable again.

The buck stops with you. The future is NOW, and we need your leadership NOW. We demand a plan for immediate action.

Respectfully,


alyson.bertram (Aug 27, 2021 09:39 EDT)

The SOFNA Board of Directors