

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Millin Young Says Halt To St. Thomas's Downtown Revitalization Project Is An Affront To Local Business Owners; Calls Emergency Hearing

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ST. THOMAS -- After having closely monitored the St. Thomas Downtown Revitalization Project from its inception, Senator Janette Millin Young has scheduled a meeting to determine [why the feds abruptly stopped the project last week](#), a press release Mrs. Millin Young's office issued on Tuesday has revealed.

"I am disappointed, but not surprised by this latest action by the feds given the fact that I have been sounding the alarm on this issue for months," Mrs. Millin Young, [second only to Senator Marvin Blyden](#) in the general election's senatorial race, said.

Mrs. Millin Young, who chairs the 31st Legislature's Committee on Economic Development, Agriculture and Planning, said she has been deeply disturbed since sources have shared with her that the Federal Highway Administration has questioned the project's procurement process, and has now ultimately suspended funding for the project.

On Tuesday, the senator scheduled a committee meeting to take place on Tuesday, November 22, 2016.

"There have been too many interruptions causing our downtown to look unsightly, negatively impacting our businesses in the area," she said. "If tourism is our most important revenue generating product and Downtown Charlotte Amalie has earned the reputation as the key to this product for St. Thomas, then it only makes sense that we do all that we can to protect this revenue source.

"We must protect the industry that contributes much to employing Virgin Islanders as well as to our government coffers. Furthermore, we cannot afford to lose federal monies that have already been approved because that would mean that we would be forced to identify local funds in the middle of a fiscal crisis."

She added: "I have repeatedly offered my assistance to ensure a timely and successful outcome of the St. Thomas Downtown Revitalization Project. There may be some among us who have gotten comfortable with a stagnant economy and shuttered businesses, but I refuse to allow our economy to collapse while there are workable solutions to our problems."

The senator said that the committee meeting she has called is not geared to cast blame on any particular agency, but to find out how the Legislature can help bring the St. Thomas Downtown Revitalization Project to fruition. According to the release, Mrs. Millin Young is committed to a comprehensive improvement of our infrastructure throughout the territory. It says the senator is concerned that every unnecessary error in the bidding process casts a dark cloud over our reputation. Therefore, her review of all projects will continue at the next meeting and in the 32nd Legislature.

"I look forward to getting deadlines for various phases, anticipated completion dates and most of all accurate information," Mrs. Millin Young concluded.