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May 20, 2015

Chairman Charlie Gerdes and Councilmembers  
City Hall  
Delivered by email: [council@stpete.org](mailto:council@stpete.org)

**RE: South Basin District – Waterfront Master Plan – Development Opportunity Sites**

Chairman Gerdes and Councilmembers:

These comments are offered on behalf of St. Petersburg Preservation (SPP). As further explained below, SPP urges council to amend the recommendations for the South Basin District portion of the downtown waterfront master plan (DWMP) by removing proposed new development which has been both described in the text of the plan (hotel/conference center) as well as depicted in red as “development opportunity sites” at page 68 of the draft plan.

SPP has been an advocate of the waterfront master planning process as SPP views our public downtown waterfront and parkland as one of city’s greatest amenities and historical assets. Planning for the future use and protection of this jewel is an important function for the city to undertake. SPP was one among a broad array of civic organizations contributing to assist in bringing the Urban Land Institute to St. Petersburg to provide a framework for the waterfront master planning process.

The vision of William Straub and other early city leaders to set aside the downtown waterfront for parks and public amenities has proven to be a wise decision both in terms of quality of life for residents and the economic health of the city. This vision remains viable to this day and it is vital that it continue to be protected and nourished. Historically, as of 1918, the Waterfront Park System extended the breadth of the downtown waterfront from 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue South.

SPP views the “development opportunity sites” within the draft DWMP in the South Basin District as a major departure from Straub’s vision for our city and the waterfront parks. The map at page 68 of the draft DWMP should be changed from “red” development opportunity sites to “green” park space and further consideration given to planning for the future use of these areas. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,  
/s/  
Peter Belmont  
Vice-President