

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## MAYOR KICKS OFF MAJOR INITIATIVE IN CHILDS PARK –

St. Petersburg, Fla. (September 19, 2006) -- Today at a press conference at the city's Childs Park Recreation Center, Mayor Rick Baker, members of City Council, and city and neighborhood leaders launched a major new initiative for the Childs Park neighborhood. Similar in scale to the Mayor's Midtown Initiative, Mayor Baker has asked Deputy Mayor Goliath Davis, III to lead a multi-department effort to improve the vitality throughout the Childs Park neighborhoods.

The formal process is expected to begin on Thursday, Sept. 21, as City Council will be asked to approve a contract with the RMPK Group. The consultant will work with the city in hosting a series of neighborhood focus groups and community meetings from September to April, 2007. From these focus groups, a plan will be developed that forms a vision for the area, defines its boundaries, and takes note of current perceptions and realities. The plan will also recommend infrastructure, facility and other enhancements for the neighborhood. In developing the plan and future boundaries for the program, consultants will study an area loosely defined by Second Ave. N. to 31st Ave. S. and 34th Street to 49th Street.

Following today's press conference, Sanitation crews were deployed throughout the neighborhood as part of a continued effort to resolve an ongoing problem with illegal dumping in vacant lots and alleys. In just the last three months, Sanitation's Target Crew picked up 100 tons of debris during 20 special trips through the neighborhood.

Deputy Mayor Goliath Davis, III said, "When we embarked upon the Midtown initiative, there was much discussion about including Childs Park in the program. Childs Park is a unique area -- considerably more residential, with many young residents, faith-based organizations and distinct needs in the area of youth services, programs and infrastructure. It will require its own plan and program. We're looking forward to working in partnership with the neighborhood residents, associations, nonprofits and

businesses to put together a plan that will realize much of the same success that we've had in Midtown."

"The city has been working in the Childs Park neighborhoods since the early 1990s when Council adopted its neighborhood plan," said Mayor Rick Baker. "This energized effort is an important step in creating the concept of a 'seamless city,' where all residents have an equal opportunity to succeed and have access to a high quality of life."

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