William C. Ballard
1255 Brightwaters Blvd.
St. Petersburg, FL 33704
727-827-5021
wballard12@verizon.net

June 22, 2014

Peter A Clark, Chairman
St. Petersburg Pier Working Group
City Hall

Re: A suggested program for the new St. Petersburg Pier

Dear Mr. Clark:

I watched a video of the first public input session. The Mayor, your group and the city's staff have provided the public input process clear direction. This morning I completed the online survey. The survey should provide useful guidance.

My take is that when your group is preparing its program recommendation it should be guided by the following limitations:

- We will have a new pier which, to provide similar views, will have to extend into the bay about as far as the existing pier.
- That long approach bridge, if sized to provide pedestrian walkways, bicycle lanes, and properly sized motorized vehicle lanes to accommodate emergency, service and public transportation vehicles, and the pier head and whatever the architects choose to put on it, will consume a large majority of the project budget.
- The additional program elements buildable from the small remaining budget should work together and be concentrated on the eastern end of the pier uplands. A coherent entertainment and recreational project will be more satisfying to users than what would result from implementing a disconnected wish list. Confining the upland improvements to the eastern end reduces the amount of real estate to be reconfigured. This would also leave most transportation and parking issues for consideration in the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan – where they belong.

The team working on the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan would benefit from a report from your group which identifies pier area amenities which are not included in your program recommendation despite these program elements being highly desired by our residents. The master plan team will have the time to envision how some of those desired amenities could be incorporated into the city's plans for the future.

On the following page is a proposed program which I ask you to consider. I believe that it conforms to the budgetary assumption and guidelines listed above.

Proposed Program for the New St. Petersburg Pier

1. Provide a real pier experience similar to that which our residents and visitors have enjoyed for nearly a century. This facility should include:

- **Restaurant (s) offering great Bay views, all weather dining + outdoor seating (location to be determined)**
- **Safe, wide pedestrian walkways with shaded rest areas**
- **Bicycle and other non-motorized vehicle lanes – separate from pedestrians**
- **Motorized people mover (trolley, etc.), service and emergency vehicle lane(s)**
- **Fishing platforms and a bait shop**
- **Bicycle rental shop**
- **An alongside mooring berth with utilities to accommodate visiting tour or exhibition vessels such as The Lynx (18th Century American Schooner Replica)**

2. Provide an enhanced Spa Beach and Spa Beach peninsula with a sand volley ball court, basic outdoor fitness apparatus, changing rooms, restrooms and outdoor showers + a possible safety and weed filter net protecting the swim area. This item borrows from Darryl LeClaire's conceptual plan.

3. Provide a snack/light dining/beer & wine pavilion adjacent to an outdoor dance/event floor and a children's splash pad – a flexible recreational and entertainment facility to attract people of every age. This item borrows from Michael Maltzan's original "Hub."

4. Replace the small boat monthly rental slips in the northeast diagonal corner of Central Yacht Basin with short term transient docks to provide boaters access to pier and downtown amenities. (Do not attempt to dock or rent small boats from the pier itself.)

5. Enhance the landscaping for all green areas and add shared use (pedestrian and bicycle) pathways.

Further Comments

The Vinoy Basin is a highly valuable, underutilized asset. Its southern seawall could accommodate large yachts. Its western seawall could accommodate a boardwalk and small boat transient dockage providing boaters a short walk through Straub Park to Beach Drive – but a breakwater is needed and that is a long term project. This Proposed Program places no "hard" and costly improvements in the way of potential uses of the Vinoy Basin.

Everybody loves green space, but the great majority also loves their cars and the ability to park near their destination. The when and what of public transportation in South Pinellas is in transition. This Proposed Program can be implemented with little change to Second Avenue NE as it exists. Most of the existing parking on the pier uplands could remain

available to future users of new pier amenities until we have public acceptance of alternative means of accessing our pier. Then, a higher use for those parking lots can be considered.

A beach is the ultimate family entertainment facility. This proposed program offers a wholesome response to task force chairman Randy Wedding's statement that "The Pier is in the entertainment business and needs to address a primary unfulfilled niche for family entertainment." The enhanced beach and the nearby pavilion and related outdoor entertainment amenities would attract families during the day and early evening and adults, young and old, at night.

A berth in the 12 plus feet of water at the pier head for a transient exhibition vessel and a berth for a seasonal exhibition vessel alongside the uplands (a Master Plan item) would preserve the character of St. Petersburg's pier as a real pier. This connection to the Bay, the Gulf, and the oceans beyond is a part of our history to be recognized and enjoyed.

A facility for kayaks, paddle boards and other small craft rentals does not belong on a pier in the open waters of Tampa Bay. Tampa Bay is frequently very rough. The channels on both sides of the pier are utilized by large, fast, power boats to access the Central and Vinoy yacht basins. North Shore Beach, with its available parking and the protection of shallow flats, is a far better location for a facility for these small personal craft. Refer this item to the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan.

Thank you for the effective work that you are doing for our city and for considering my thoughts.

Very truly yours,

s/

William C. Ballard

CC:
Pier Working Group Members
Mayor Rick Kriseman