

April 18, 2024

City of St. Petersburg City Council  
c/o Cynthia Sheppard, Administrative Officer  
Delivered electronically on April 18, 2024

To the honorable members of the St. Petersburg City Council:

The Greater St. Petersburg Area Economic Development Corporation promotes St. Petersburg as an outstanding place for businesses considering relocation or expansion, providing opportunities for the people of St. Pete by bringing new jobs, innovation, and investment to the Sunshine City. The proposed redevelopment of the Historic Gas Plant District and retention of the Tampa Bay Rays is a vital part of our city's future success. **We urge the Council to vote in favor of this transformational project.**

This isn't just about the Rays themselves, though they are great corporate citizens (including investing in many community organizations) and great people (who live here and embrace the St. Pete culture). But it's not that. It's not even just about keeping baseball, though it would be terrible to say "Got Away" instead of "Here to Stay."

**It's about the complete project:** a new neighborhood that brings together affordable housing, quality office space, baseball, meeting space, hundreds of millions in new property tax revenue (as opposed to the current zero dollars), public parks, and more.

**It's about jobs:** retaining the Rays—who employ about 1,300 full and part-time people increasing to thousands of direct and indirect jobs during the season—creating construction jobs for the next two decades, and developing new Class A office space to house jobs for St. Pete companies that wish to expand and out-of-market companies and people that want to "Become St. Pete."

**And it's about place:** transforming 86 acres of parking lots and empty space into a thriving community that learns from and honors St. Pete's past while creating new opportunities.

No deal is perfect for everyone. (As someone once said, "A good compromise is when both parties are dissatisfied.") But it's a good deal, and **we don't want the Sunshine City to strike out by demanding perfection over progress.**

We hope you will join us in supporting this once-in-a-generation chance to provide new housing, equity, and opportunity while retaining a major employer and creating new jobs for decades to come.

Yours truly,



Mike Swesey  
President & CEO  
St. Petersburg Economic Development Corp.



Bill Kent  
Chair, Board of Governors  
St. Petersburg Economic Development Corp.

**2024 Board of Governors in Support**

