



March 4, 2021

Chair Lars Hafner and Commission Members  
St. Petersburg Charter Review Commission  
Delivered by Email

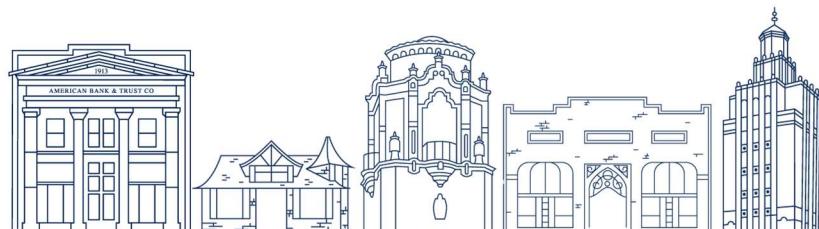
**RE: Keep St. Petersburg Special Community Character Master Plan  
Charter Proposal**

Chair Hafner and Commission Members:

Preserve the 'Burg ("PTB") asks the Commission to consider approving a new charter provision requiring a community character master plan focused on the key elements contributing to St. Petersburg's sense of place: historic preservation, the arts, local business, neighborhoods and diversity. The present waterfront master plan charter provision can serve as a model (waterfront master plan charter language and a similarly worded proposed community master plan charter section attached). The waterfront master plan requirement was one of the successful efforts of the 2011 Charter Review Commission, both in that the provision was approved by more than 55% of the voters and in the acclaim that has come about for the adopted master plan.

PTB was a part of the broad 2011 effort to include a waterfront master plan requirement within the city charter. The effort came about with a recognition of the critical role the public waterfront has in the city's success and that a resource of such magnitude should receive the focused assessment and protections achievable thru a master planning process. Understanding the importance of the waterfront also led the 2011 charter review commission to set aside questions posed by some as to the appropriateness of including a master plan requirement within the charter. The majority of the public apparently agreed as reflected by the strong vote supporting the charter amendment.

PTB views the key elements of our community character as historic preservation, the arts, local business, neighborhoods and diversity. It is these elements, along with the public waterfront, that are the key drivers to keeping our city special and to its success. Although St. Petersburg can today claim it is special, community character is not a given, rather, something to be cherished and protected. Thus, PTB suggests, as with the



**WWW.PRESERVETHEBURG.ORG • 727.824.7802  
P.O. BOX 838 ST. PETERSBURG, FL 33731**

waterfront master plan, a community character master plan is needed and the city charter is the correct place for the requirement to be included.

As with the waterfront master plan, a community character master plan would offer an opportunity for the City to proactively and holistically assess and plan for how best to maintain one of its key resources – our community character. As with the waterfront master plan charter language, the wording for a community character master plan provision need not be overly detailed nor complicated.

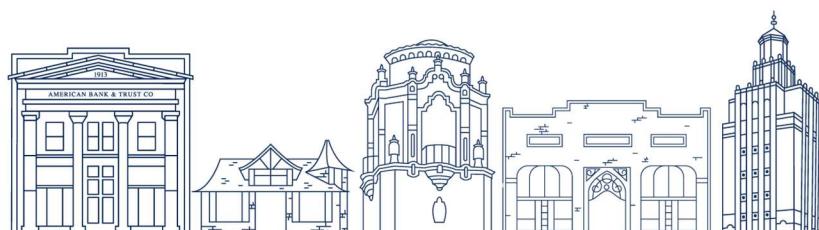
PTB believes, just as occurred with the waterfront master plan amendment question, that a community character master plan requirement will garner majority support on election day. More and more one hears concerns expressed about how St. Petersburg's "feel" or sense of place is being hurt by the pace of growth as well as concerns voiced as to the need to better address our diversity. One of the most recent examples is found in a Catalyst Community Voice Program by Adam Smith, "Will Growth Kill St. Pete's Funky Vibe? (<https://stpetecatalyst.com/political-party-adam-smith-will-growth-kill-st-petes-funky-vibe/>). What better way to assure the public that our city recognizes the perils of insensitive growth and the need for a diverse city than by having a master plan that addresses the key elements of our community character?

We appreciate your consideration of our suggestion and look forward to further discussion with you about the merits of including a Keep St. Petersburg Special community character master plan requirement among your recommendations for voter approval.

Sincerely,

/s/

Peter Belmont  
Advocacy Chair



### **Existing Charter Provision**

#### **Sec. 1.02. - Park and waterfront property; use, disposition.**

(g) On or before July 1, 2012, the City Council shall, adopt, by ordinance, a process to create an inclusive Master Plan for the downtown waterfront. The ordinance shall set forth procedures for the adoption of the Master Plan. These procedures shall include the outline for the process to create the Master Plan, the criteria to be addressed within the Master Plan, the manner of adoption of the Master Plan and a process to assure that adequate inclusive public input is obtained by the City Council prior to adoption of the Master Plan. On or before July 1, 2015, City Council shall prepare and approve, based on the process in the ordinance prescribed herein, the Master Plan. The inclusive Master Plan shall be reviewed and updated not less than every 7 years after the adoption date.

### **Proposed Charter Provision**

#### **Sec. 1.03. – Community character.**

(g) On or before \_\_\_\_\_, the City Council shall, adopt, by ordinance, a process to create an inclusive Master Plan for the Community Character elements of historic preservation, the arts, local business, neighborhoods and diversity. The ordinance shall set forth procedures for the adoption of the Master Plan. These procedures shall include the outline for the process to create the Master Plan, the criteria to be addressed within the Master Plan, the manner of adoption of the Master Plan and a process to assure that adequate inclusive public input is obtained by the City Council prior to adoption of the Master Plan. On or before \_\_\_\_\_, City Council shall prepare and approve, based on the process in the ordinance prescribed herein, the Master Plan. The inclusive Master Plan shall be reviewed and updated not less than every 7 years after the adoption date.

