



**South  
Carolina  
Ports**

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **PORT AFFIRMS UNION PIER CRUISE TERMINAL PLAN, CRUISE MANAGEMENT MEASURES**

*Charleston, SC* – The South Carolina State Ports Authority (SCSPA) Board today affirmed both its plans to move ahead with its new cruise terminal on the north end of Union Pier, as well as its commitment to effectively manage the cruise business and keep cruises compatible with the size and unique character of Charleston.

In a Resolution approved unanimously, the SCSPA Board committed to advancing the new cruise terminal in the location identified in the Union Pier Concept Plan, which was developed with extensive public input over the course of 18 months and endorsed by City Council last September.

The new terminal – shifted north of the current passenger terminal on the Union Pier Terminal property – will be located in an existing cargo-handling facility. Redevelopment of the southern end of the property – Phase 2 of the Union Pier Concept Plan – would begin following the successful relocation of the cruise operation to the northern portion of the property.

Last month, a \$2.4-million contract for design work on the facility was awarded to CH2M Hill along with a team of local engineers and architects. Conversion of the building is slated to begin by the end of the year and the terminal is expected to open by the end of 2012.

The Resolution further states that Columbus Street Terminal is not a viable option for the cruise business. With a \$21-million investment in the terminal, relocation of BMW's roll-on/roll-off business and other cargo growth, the entire terminal is needed for cargo operations to support the growth of the port.

Stated in the Resolution are the numerous benefits of implementing Union Pier Concept Plan, which would improve traffic flow, limit the terminal to one ship at a time, recognize the historic Bennett Rice Mill Façade, provide public access to the waterfront and develop new, non-maritime uses for a significant portion of property on the peninsula.

The document also references previous commitments by the SCSPA to voluntary cruise management measures, which was included in writing and attached to City Council's resolution last fall. Supplementing the Board's Resolution, SCSPA Chairman Bill Stern and President and CEO Jim Newsome wrote in a letter to Charleston Mayor Joe Riley that the agency will continue to operate transparently and adhere to its cruise management plan, which describes that the port will host only one ship at a time and handle no more than 104 cruise ships a year.

“Charleston is a niche cruise market mainly supported by customers who drive to Charleston from a four or five state area. More than 80 percent of the embark/debark passengers come

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## ***Port Affirms Union Pier Plan, Cruise Management Measures – add 1***

from these states,” Stern and Newsome stated in the letter. “The voluntary limit on the number of ships approximates both the size of the passenger market and the size of ship that would be successful in Charleston.”

The SCSPA recognizes that proactive consultation with stakeholders is necessary and so clarified the communication and public input solicitation measures should at any time the nature of cruise business in Charleston change. These actions, committed by the SCSPA to begin at least one year in advance of any change, include:

- Written notification to key stakeholders, including the Mayor, City Council, Cruise Neighbors Advisory Council, Maritime Association of South Carolina, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Historic Charleston Foundation and the Preservation Society.
- Convening of a community forum.
- Solicitation of public input through one or more public hearings, including a public hearing during a City Council meeting.
- Careful and thoughtful consideration of all public input.
- And a report to the Mayor and City Council on the SCSPA’s findings and decision.

Newsome and Stern’s letter also commits to an open and public process for the Phase 2 non-maritime redevelopment process.

“The SCSPA, working with its consultants on the project, will work directly with the City’s Planning staff, there will be public presentations and public hearings as part of it and this part of the Union Pier Plan will eventually be brought to the City’s Planning Commission and City Council for their approval.”

“We have been very thorough and consultative in our review process of the Union Pier concept plan and have chosen an alternative which offers great benefit to the City and the port in terms of restoring access to a large part of the Charleston waterfront and providing a modern cruise terminal, which allows the most efficient and seamless cruise operation imaginable,” the letter stated. “We are prepared and, in fact, need to move forward expeditiously with this project.”

For additional information on the SCSPA’s cruise business and plans, please visit [www.UnionPierPlan.com](http://www.UnionPierPlan.com).

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