Last Thursday was a triumphant day for the future plans for growth at USF St. Petersburg. Regional Chancellor Karen A. White presented the $100 million USF St. Petersburg Campus Master Plan to the USF Board of Trustees, USF community and members of the media.

After full review of the plan and a virtual campus tour, the Board of Trustees unanimously passed plan. Immediately after, the Board discussed and approved financing plans for the first phase of both student residential housing and the parking garage.

"Much has been accomplished at USF St. Petersburg during the last 40 years, and this plan will guide and support the future expansion of research, academics and student life," White said. "In addition, there is great community interest and energy behind campus expansion in St. Petersburg. There is excitement about what we've become and what we can achieve in the next 10 years."

During the meeting, Dick Beard, chairman of the USF Board of Trustees, expressed support for the growth anticipated at USF St. Petersburg and other regional campuses. "Over the next five years, there may be 30,000 students on the regional campuses. These campuses are becoming more and more important to all of us. My view is that these regional campuses will be the engine that drives the USF system for long-term growth."

White noted that enrollment projections for 2008 predict more than 6,000 students on campus. University planners indicate that the campus’ current 220,000 square-foot footprint is insufficient to support that volume of students. And, even if the campus achieves support from the state to build the Science and Technology building, the additional square footage would still fall short of the needed classroom and student space.

Abdul Nasser, whose team has led the master planning improvements and process said, “These residential halls are the gateway to our campus, linking the futures of downtown St. Petersburg and USF St. Petersburg.” Nasser, regional vice chancellor for administration and finance, said, "With residence halls we can attract more out-of-state and international students and increase the vibrancy on campus."

**Waterfront Living and Learning**

The day after final Board approval was granted; three short listed design/build teams presented their residential housing proposals to a campus committee. In conformance with the selection process established by statute, the group is charged with evaluating and ranking the proposals for White for discussion with the Campus Board. Next, White will present the recommendation to USF President Judy Genshaft for a final decision in January.

Construction of the first phase of residential housing is planned to begin spring semester on the corner of 5th Avenue South and Second Street. The first residence hall is estimated at $18.3 million and will be a seven-story building offering students apartment-style living. Unlike traditional dormitories, the apartments will offer private rooms for each student, one bathroom for every two students and a kitchen in each suite that is shared by no more than four students. Research has shown that students prefer this new living style that offers additional privacy.

Plans for the residence hall include 79 four-bedroom apartments, seven double bedroom units and a single bedroom unit. Each floor will have a laundry room and study lounge. A proposed new policy requires freshmen to live on campus if they live more than 30 miles away from campus.

**Parking Garage**

Always an exciting topic for universities, parking is an important priority for our campus. A parking structure, which will be completed in two phases to provide 1,325 spaces, is planned for the northern quadrant of campus. The structure will enable across-the-street parking for students living in residence halls as well as benefit commuters exiting from the interstate. Students will be able to take the I-175 exit directly to campus parking.

Plans for the first floor of the parking structure include a Barnes and Noble bookstore, the USF St. Petersburg Police
Department and USF St. Petersburg Parking Services. The size of both structures is based on campus growth projections for enrollment for the 2008-2009 academic year.