



PRESERVATION SOCIETY of CHARLESTON

—Founded 1920—

CRUISE SHIP TOURISM IN CHARLESTON AND RELATED PORT ISSUES

July 27, 2010

It is the position of the Preservation Society of Charleston that specific steps should be taken to protect the quality of life of the residents of the City of Charleston from the significant economic, social and cultural impacts caused by increased cruise ship traffic at the Port of Charleston. Reasonable, written and enforceable regulations should be put in place to ensure that negative tourism impacts are managed and that the integrity and character of our city is not diminished. We believe that five objectives are utmost in charting an appropriate course:

1. The **quality of life** of the citizens of the city should be the primary factor in weighing any decisions that are made about the cruise ship industry and the Union Pier property. Tourism and the local economy flourishes when the citizens of the city are pleased with how it is managed.
2. **Maximum transparency** and public input are essential for ensuring that future plans for the cruise ship industry and Union Pier property consider potential negative impacts before future contracts are signed. Written commitments, timely public release of relevant documents and the use of impartial data (economic impact, traffic, etc.) should be the basis of decision making.
3. **Reasonable regulations** are the responsibility of the City of Charleston to ensure that the cruise ship industry is managed in the same way that all other tourist-related industries (pedicabs, walking tours, carriage tours) have been regulated. While imperfect, tourism management regulations are an essential tool for minimizing negative social and cultural impacts.
4. **Appropriate redevelopment** of the Union Pier property should be integrated into the existing fabric of the City of Charleston in order to enhance the sense of place that distinguishes our historic district with appropriately scaled new construction, compatible uses, quality materials, and the protection and preservation of existing historic resources. This should include a reconsideration of the present accommodations overlay as it relates to the property and the final location of a new terminal.
5. **Stabilization and restoration of the Bennett Rice Mill façade** should not be contingent on any future cruise ship contract or Union Pier redevelopment plan. It is urgent that the at-risk physical condition of this historic façade, owned by the State Ports Authority, be addressed so that this unique piece of industrial architecture can stand as a testament to our collective commitment to the historic legacy of our city. The SPA should consider placing a historic preservation easement on the façade.

In support of these five objectives we present to the City of Charleston, the State Ports Authority and to the general public the attached set of "Recommendations for Sustainable Cruise Ship Tourism" that we have prepared for consideration and debate. We believe that these recommendations provide a basis for appropriate action by the City of Charleston and the State Ports Authority to manage cruise ship tourism so that we can protect the quality of life and historic resources of our world-renowned historic city and still derive an economic benefit from the cruise ship industry.