

# St. Petersburg Times

Sunken Gardens can be part of a big league visit Series:  
LETTERS  
[0 SOUTH PINELLAS Edition]

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## Document Text

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Re: Propping up Sunken Gardens, editorial, Aug. 2.

Your editorial said that St. Petersburg shouldn't be in the business of "propping up" a private business such as Sunken Gardens. That amuses me. In the same editorial, you state "keeping pace with preparations for the Devil Rays will stretch the city's resources . . ." With that statement, you admit that the city is already "propping up" a private enterprise, the Devil Rays, a private enterprise owned by a handful of millionaires. I believe that the propping to date leans somewhere toward \$100-million. Be that as it may, if St. Petersburg taxpayers are for it, it's fine with me. (I don't live in St. Petersburg.)

However, I can't believe you'd risk letting a gem like Sunken Gardens fade away. The owners are asking only \$1.5-million for the whole dang thing and it's already complete! The city probably paid that much just for that big TV thingamajig that will hang over the Rays' baseball diamond.

Why not think of Sunken Gardens as an extension of the baseball experience? Once you've enticed visitors to downtown St. Petersburg for the old ball game, keep them a little longer and get back some of those tax dollars. Don't let them get out of town with just a hot dog and a beer. Keep them for dinner.

You're on the way to being a "big league" city, but something is still missing. Consider what other big league metros have to offer that you don't: A journey in to see the Atlanta Braves can be stretched into a visit at Atlanta Botanical Gardens. A day with the Cubs can turn into a drive to the

Chicago Botanic Gardens. And you may not get to first base with your sweetie at the Yankees game, but you can look forward to a stroll through New York Botanical Gardens afterward.

St. Petersburg already has the world class Dali Museum, The Pier, a waterfront that defies words. All are trip-extenders to downtown. Why not add the premier St. Petersburg Botanical Gardens aka Sunken Gardens? It wouldn't take a lot to make it so. In this game, \$1.5-million is peanuts. Andy Durey, Gulfport