Statement from Tampa Bay Rays 2020 Co-Chairs and Founders
Ron Christaldi and Chuck Sykes
December 4, 2018

Attention Rays Advisory Group, Rays 100, Leadership Committees, Friends of the Rays, Civic & Business Organizations, and petition signers:

As the ballpark discussions progress, we counsel patience in allowing the City of Tampa, Hillsborough County and the Rays to work through the process. We continue to believe that the Ybor site is the best location for a reimagined, next-generation ballpark for the Rays that will ensure their success and provide great benefit to the Tampa Bay community. Until the Rays commit to a site outside of the Tampa Bay region, the deal has life and we should not cease our efforts. The Rays have yet to identify an alternate site outside the region and we believe the Rays still prefer the Ybor ballpark site over all others. We call upon our elected officials and the Rays to work through any sticking points and we, as a community, stand ready to assist in resolving the open issues to make this effort a reality.

The goal and mission of Tampa Bay Rays 2020 has all along been to help ensure the future of the Rays in Tampa Bay for generations to come. That mission remains intact. Rays 2020 and this community, particularly the business community, have stepped up in a big way. The Rays 2020 family of supporters have been part of one of the largest, most comprehensive and inclusive community efforts that this region has seen. We have significantly increased business financial support with the effect of giving the Rays confidence to increase their financial contribution to the ballpark. After only scratching the surface, Rays 2020 has secured $16 million a year in corporate pledges for tickets and sponsorships when the new ballpark opens. Over a 30-year ballpark life, that is $480 million in corporate support. We have also significantly impacted positive public opinion through over 75 speaking engagements and in securing the endorsements of over 25 of the most prominent civic and community groups. This success is reflected in the poll which showed that with that amount of corporate support, approximately 70% of voters in Hillsborough county favor the effort, which helps the elected officials and civil servants proceed to do their part in this effort with confidence. We are proud of Rays 2020 and this community for stepping up in this way.

We knew this would not be easy. We knew that challenges would be faced. Nonetheless, we are resolved to continue this robust community effort to keep the Rays in Tampa. We are sure in our conviction that the Rays must stay in Tampa Bay. We have confidence that the Ybor ballpark site is the best option. Complex negotiations are sometimes daunting but it’s up to us to keep the torch lit and press to keep the Rays here. In the words of Yogi Berra, "It ain't over until it's over!" We will keep the Rays in Tampa Bay. It’s what this community wants, and we will not rest until we succeed.