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Riverlife announces departure of president and CEO Vivien Li

PITTSBURGH - After two and a half years as Riverlife President and CEO, Vivien Li submitted her resignation to the Riverlife board of directors this week, citing her desire to spend time with family members in declining health. Her final day as president and CEO is Friday, April 13, 2018. Riverlife is the Pittsburgh nonprofit organization that works to reclaim, restore and promote the city's riverfronts.

"These two and a half years in Pittsburgh have been an extraordinary time both for the city's riverfronts and for me personally," said Ms. Li. "I am proud that the conversation around creating wonderful public amenities on Pittsburgh's waterfronts has grown significantly, with so many new projects nearing completion that will create new standards for public access and activity on the waterfront."

"Recently, several family and close friends outside of Pittsburgh have become seriously ill, which has forced me to rethink my priorities, including the balance between work and personal needs. I am reluctant to leave Pittsburgh but know that this is the right decision for me," said Ms. Li.

"We can all understand the pull of returning home, especially when there are loved ones in need," said Margaret McCormick Barron, Riverlife board chair. "Boston is a special place for Vivien, and we were lucky that she shared her home with Pittsburgh for two and a half years. She has achieved remarkable success at Riverlife, including ushering forward long-awaited legislation to update Pittsburgh's riverfront zoning, and we're glad she is leaving on such a high note."

During her time as Riverlife President and CEO, Vivien was a driving force behind securing commitments from riverfront developers to include public open spaces and public amenities such as seating areas, drinking fountains, bike fix-it stations, phone charging outlets, public rest rooms, and public art in new real estate projects. She was a key proponent in helping to secure unanimous City Council approval of an interim riverfront planning overlay district as the city develops permanent riverfront zoning. She oversaw groundbreakings of the Riverlife-led restoration of the lower trail at Allegheny Landing and the Mon Wharf Switchback ramp. Ms. Li also worked with Strip District property owners, developers and neighborhood groups to oversee the release of the Strip District Riverfront Park Vision Plan, a plan for 20 blocks of riverfront public destinations and amenities between the David L. Lawrence Convention Center and the 31st Street Bridge.

Vivien Li was instrumental in helping shape the Department of City Planning's updated zoning legislation, known as the "RIV," which received Planning Commission approval March 6 and will be up for a City Council vote later this spring. The RIV is expected to simplify Pittsburgh's riverfront



zoning code and incentivize riverfront property owners to include public access and amenities in their riverfront projects.

Vivien Li has been recognized by numerous organizations, including most recently with a Women of Achievement Award from Cribs for Kids (2018), an honorary degree from Allegheny College (2017), Commonwealth Award from the Boston Society of Architects (2017), Clean Star Award from Alcosan (2016), and the national Sierra Club's Walter Starr Award (2015).

Ms. Li joined Riverlife as President and CEO on October 1, 2015. She moved from Boston where she had previously been president of The Boston Harbor Association (TBHA). Prior to her 24 years at that organization, Ms. Li served on the senior staff for Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, special assistant to the state's commissioner of public health, project manager for the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and was an urban conference manager for the National Urban League. Ms. Li received her BA in environmental management from Barnard College, Columbia University; and a joint master's degree in public affairs and urban and regional planning from Princeton University.

The Riverlife board announced that the role of interim director will be filled upon Ms. Li's departure by Pete Mendes. Mr. Mendes' firm Mendes Consulting focuses on working with non-profit organizations in the Pittsburgh area. He brings 28 years of financial, governance and leadership experience to provide strategic and operational leadership for non-profits in a period of transition. Riverlife will soon finish a board-driven strategic planning process which began late last year.

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About Riverlife

Riverlife (formerly Riverlife Task Force) is a public-private partnership established in 1999 to guide and advocate for the redevelopment of Pittsburgh's riverfronts. Riverlife works to make Pittsburgh's riverfronts cleaner, safer and more fun for everyone by bringing recreation, ecological restoration and economic opportunity back to our waterfronts. www.riverlifegh.org