

STATEMENT OF VIVIEN LI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, RIVERLIFE
PLANNING COMMISSION PDP #16-189, North Shore Office Building, Continental
JANUARY 10, 2017

Good afternoon, I am Vivien Li, President and CEO of Riverlife, a non-profit organization which promotes, enhances, and activates Pittsburgh's riverfront.

Thanks to the efforts of the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Sports and Exhibition Authority (SEA), Steelers, Pirates, Continental Real Estate Companies, Carnegie Science Center, Rivers Casino, and others, we have a vibrant North Shore riverfront being developed consistent with a long-term master plan. Riverlife supports the re-development of Site 14, with office space for hundreds of new employees, restaurants which will attract thousands to the riverfront, and new amenities for the general public. We ask that the Planning Commission incorporate the following in its approval:

Design:

---At a 5 January 2017 meeting with the project proponent, Riverlife's Riverfront Design Committee was very encouraged to hear that exterior restaurant and retail activities will be on all four sides of the site. This is consistent with the North Shore Master Plan which states: "Storefront designs that blur the distinction between interior and exterior space are encouraged. Roll-up doors and windows, french doors, outdoor dining and retail areas all encourage the connection between interior and exterior space." While the proposed site plan does not clearly depict this on North Shore Drive, we understand that the project proponent will ensure such vibrant activity on all sides of the site.

---At the 5 January 2017 meeting, the Committee indicated concern about the balance between the round tower on the corner of the 225 North Shore Drive building and the square tower of the proposed building. Even though they were not intended to be a pair in the North Shore Master Plan, the proximity of these main architectural features in close proximity suggests that relationship. The Committee suggests that they be made similar to add symmetry.

---Design of the fencing and screening of the loading dock calls for fencing with applied vinyl mesh. Experience in Pittsburgh has shown that applied vinyl mesh is not durable and does not stand up to the elements. We suggest that the fence be constructed only of permanent, high-quality materials and that an artist be engaged on the team to design the fence.

Public Amenities:

---The proposed new building fronts on the riverfront and is in close proximity to the popular Riverfront Water Steps. As more and more of the public enjoy our improved riverfront, amenities such as rest rooms for the general public need to be part of riverfront development. We highly commend the project proponent for agreeing to incorporate an accessible rest room for the general public, regardless of patronage or tenancy, into the design of the building.

---We strongly support the exterior bike storage area which will be available to both the general public as well as building tenants. We ask that a bike repair station and a phone charging outlet also be included as part of the exterior public amenities, and that the proponent incorporate a creative lighting scheme under the bridge to further enhance this area.

Environmental Sustainability:

--- Consistent with the Peduto Administration's strong support for Pittsburgh's 2030 District goals, we ask that this project incorporate building performance goals of the 2030 Challenge. SEA, the Steelers, and the Pirates have all committed to the 2030 District goals. As the building tenant refines the build-out, we ask that plans be shared with City Planning to ensure consistency with the 2030 District goals. We note that the proponent is not proposing additional parking but taking advantage of the existing nearby parking and public transit, as well as providing new amenities for cyclists. This is a good first step in reducing transportation emissions towards meeting the 2030 Challenge.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Vivien Li
President and CEO
Riverlife