



STATEMENT OF VIVIEN LI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, RIVERLIFE

PLANNING COMMISSION PDP #15-149, CASINO DRIVE, HOTEL
FEBRUARY 7, 2017

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

Riverlife supports Rivers Casino's plans to bring a riverfront hotel to the North Shore, with a cafe/restaurant/bar and rest rooms open to the general public on the ground floor of the hotel. Along the river, we support additional riverfront benches, drinking fountains, public art, phone charging station, interpretative signage, trail signage, as well as continuation of the free programming currently provided by the applicant to enhance the riverfront experience. To connect to the city, we support additional bike racks, a bike repair station, and establishment of a Healthy Ride station.

Consistent with Riverlife's "Guide to Riverfront Development", we strongly recommend active programming of the ground floor, particularly at the southeastern corner of the hotel. As currently proposed, a fire pump room and egress stairways are proposed for that corner, taking some of the best views of the river and city and some of the best connections to the riverfront for back-of-the-house activities. We strongly urge that a cafe, fitness center, or other activation purpose be located at that corner, and that a transparent facade be incorporated to more clearly activate the proposed gateway to the river.

The plaza next to the northeastern corner of the hotel needs to be designed to facilitate riverfront access and not serve as a stand-alone plaza. It is an important portal to the river, and the use of public art, trees, directional pavement, planters, and benches would help reinforce pedestrian movement and ease of access to the river.

We further recommend enhancement of Sprout Way, including with public art, wide generous sidewalks, enhanced landscape, and programming of uses as mentioned above.

Thank you for your consideration.