

PLANNING COMMISSION FLDP/REVISED PLDP #17-063, 15th at SMALLMAN STREET

Public Testimony, May 30, 2017: 15th at Smallman Street project; RDC, Incorporated is proposing to build a 105,000 sq. ft., 4-story office building at the corner of 15th and Smallman Streets in the Strip District. Approximately 150 surface parking spaces will be provided next to the building.

---

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

Riverlife is very supportive of RDC, Incorporated's proposed new building at the corner of 15th and Smallman Streets. As proposed, the project is consistent with the Strip District Riverfront Park Vision Plan calling for the activation of 15th Street, a key perpendicular pedestrian and cyclist connection from the Strip District neighborhood to the riverfront. The architectural design of the building recognizes a four-sided building, with active facades that face 15th Street, Smallman Street, Waterfront Place, and the proposed parking area. The ground floor transparency of the building helps to activate the first floor, making it more inviting.

In response to suggestions, the project proponent is activating the building corner at 15th Street and Waterfront Place with public realm amenities discussed and shown in the plans, including seating, bike racks, a bike repair station, cell-phone charging station, and bottle filling station. At the corner of 15th and Smallman Streets, the proponent will provide publicly-accessible connections from the sidewalk to the plaza as shown on the plan, including the integration of steps and seat walls. The proponent has indicated a commitment to support the programming activities of riverfront abutters by keeping the parking area open on weekends, free of charge for Strip District residents, visitors, and food trucks.

As the proponent works to finalize design elements of the building and site, we recommend the following:

--- The Committee recommends exploring alternatives to the public realm abutting the parking area on Smallman Street, such as the inclusion of native plants and seating. The Committee also recommends continued integration of public amenities, such as rest rooms for trail users and those enjoying the 15th Street connection to the riverfront, into the public realm and the first floor of the building.

---The proponent has indicated a commitment to LEED Core and Shell certification, and we recommend the incorporation of city-scale goals that will also be of mutual benefit to the developer, including Pittsburgh's 2030 District, P4, and OnePGH sustainability and resiliency goals. Consistent with this, we recommend design alterations to the southwest facing glass facade in order to create a comfortable interior work environment. Design recommendations include use of exterior and interior shading elements and glazing qualities that provide high indoor environmental quality.

---To ensure enjoyment of the site by all people, we recommend a complete review of the site plan to ensure compliance with Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

--- Finally, we recommend that the renderings match the site plan, and that contextual sections and elevations that depict grade changes and the surrounding urban context be included in all presentations.

Thank you.

--

**Vivien Li**  
*President and CEO*