



STATEMENT OF VIVIEN LI, PRESIDENT AND CEO, RIVERLIFE
PITTSBURGH PLANNING COMMISSION
OCTOBER 4, 2016

Good afternoon. I am Vivien Li, President and CEO of Riverlife, a non-profit organization which works to reclaim, restore, and promote Pittsburgh's riverfronts. Earlier this year, Riverlife, City officials, and Strip District riverfront property owners unveiled a bold vision for a Strip District Riverfront Park designed to increase public use, access, and enjoyment of this key part of our riverfront.

Philanthropic foundations approached by Riverlife to help fund implementation of this vision have indicated that they expect property owners to contribute and help support the realization of this vision. Without tangible support from property owners, it will likely take until 2030 to 2035 to realize the riverfront trail improvements and other amenities described in the plan.

We thank Oxford Development for sharing with us their proposed plans for Riverfront West at a number of meetings and site visit. At the 11 August 2016 Zoning Board meeting, Riverlife supported Riverfront West's variance request for reduced on-site parking and we supported a building height variance comparable to that at Riverfront East. As this project moves through the approval process in a manner which hopefully reinforces the Strip District Riverfront Park vision, we suggest the following:

- Have the riverfront side of the building welcoming to both building residents and users of the future trail. This can include elements such as interim walkways near the river, interpretive signage, and/or amenities like public art, drinking fountains, phone charging stations, and restrooms on the river side.
- Provide a river-facing facade which feels like a front side facade, with views from the lobby through the building to the river side as well as an articulated entry from the river side. Likewise, the trellis on the river side should be seamless in design with the rest of the building, and not feel like a wooden, "add-on" element.
- Link the neighborhood to the river through a perpendicular connection to Railroad Street; a sidewalk on the west side of Riverfront West; paved pedestrian connection to the sidewalk across the parking lot; and relocation and/or screening of the trash dumpster on the side facing the neighborhood.
- Finalize and submit to Planning Department staff the landscape plan.

With the active support of Oxford Development and other Strip District property owners, we are hopeful of a timely implementation of the Strip District Riverfront Park vision. Thank you for your consideration.