



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**RIVERLIFE APPEALS APPROVAL
OF NORTH SHORE CASINO PARKING GARAGE**

Today, Riverlife filed an appeal of the Pittsburgh City Planning Commission's decision on January 14, 2008, approving the \$450 million Project Development Plan for the casino to be located on the city's North Shore. Included in the decision was approval of a 3800-space parking garage, which is 10 stories tall, more than 600 feet long, and which will dwarf the two-story casino.

"Our concern is the parking garage, which is listed as an accessory structure, is so enormous it will tower over the casino building facing the river," said Lisa Schroeder, Executive Director of the 38-member task force. "We are not opposing the casino, nor do we want to slow construction of the project, the riverfront promenade, the amphitheatre or the trail. This massive parking garage was originally depicted as being partially underground and hidden behind the casino. This is not the project that was publicly depicted and is a significant change which violates the Pittsburgh Zoning Code. We believe we have no choice but to go directly to the Supreme Court."

"This garage, which is two football fields long and ten stories high, violates numerous provisions of the Code, not the least of which is that an accessory parking garage cannot exceed the dimensions of the main building," said Riverlife attorney, Clifford Levine. In 2005, City Council amended the Zoning Code with specific requirements designed to prevent big box sprawling structures. "If proper deliberative procedures had been followed, and if scale drawings had been submitted in a timely fashion, the Commission would have had the opportunity to see that the massive garage violates the Zoning Code."

"Excluding airports and a few regional shopping malls, there are not many garages of comparable size in urban America," said world-renowned urban planner Alex Krieger, who submitted testimony to the Planning Commission on behalf of Riverlife. Krieger is the author of the *Vision Plan for Pittsburgh's Riverfronts*, which has been the blueprint for riverfront planning for the last eight years. "I cannot think of a recent precedent of a city allowing a massive parking garage more than 600 feet in length to be located so close to its waterfront and to dominate its environment from so many vantage points."

“This precedent will set back decades of progress and investment to reclaim our rivers and advance Pittsburgh as one of America’s great cities.” says John Oliver, Chairman of Riverlife. “It violates the planning principles leading to billions of dollars invested by both the private and public sectors. Developments like the North Shore, Station Square and the South Side Works have integrated the rivers into the city and repositioned the riverfronts as a center of regional growth. Investors take risks knowing that their adherence to planning codes will encourage future quality and enhance their property values. In only a few years, we have proven that significant buildings and beautiful spaces boost development prospects and make our riverfronts a gathering place and a point of pride. This is not the time to ignore critical provisions of the Zoning Code and roll back the clock.”

Riverlife Task Force:

Riverlife has been a leader in the riverfront revitalization process, with stakeholders who have made substantial financial investments in the vicinity of the proposed casino. Riverlife stakeholders include property owners, foundations, community and business leaders, and City and County government officials. The proposed casino lies within the heart of Three Rivers Park and directly impacts the mission Riverlife was organized to promote and for which it has undertaken significant efforts, both in time and in financial resources. Riverlife stakeholders have made substantial investments in the design, development and construction of public riverfront projects, including North Shore Park, Point State Park, the Mon Wharf, and future riverfront parks at the South Side Works and the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

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