



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 25, 2015**

**URA AND RIVERLIFE ARE TWO OF EIGHT NATIONAL GRANTEES FOR  
2015 SUSTAINABLE CITIES DESIGN ACADEMY**

**PITTSBURGH, PA** The American Architectural Foundation (AAF) announced today that two projects in Pittsburgh have been selected for the 2015 Sustainable Cities Design Academy (SCDA). A total of eight public-private development teams will receive leadership training and technical assistance. The selected teams—consisting of city leaders, developers and design professionals—will join AAF's national sustainable design team of experts for an intensive, three-day design charrette in Washington, DC this summer.

"I congratulate the URA and Riverlife on their efforts to make Pittsburgh a leader in green initiatives and infrastructure," Mayor William Peduto said. "Bringing world class sustainable development to our communities will continue to improve the quality of life for our residents for years to come."

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), in partnership with the City of Pittsburgh Planning Department and McCaffery Interests, was named a grantee for the Produce Terminal Smallman Street project.

Long a neighborhood in flux, Pittsburgh's Strip District was once home to heavy industrial uses including foundries and glassworks. Those uses gave way to a bustling wholesale marketplace, fed by railway shipments of produce and eventually by trucking distribution throughout the Pittsburgh region. The Smallman Street corridor, formerly a rail yard between 16<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Streets to service the iconic Produce Terminal building, was paved over during the rail-to-truck transition with little regard for antiquated or non-existent public infrastructure. The uninterrupted length and elevated height of the building platform creates public space and access issues for those five blocks in the Strip District that had become disconnected from the Allegheny River during the heavy industrial era. Multiple plans and programming options have been considered for redevelopment of the building as well as public space and road improvements around the structure. None of the current plans address all of the many challenges facing the Smallman Street corridor.

"The Strip District is synonymous with gritty authenticity and is a lively place savored by local and international visitors alike. Working with SCDA our local team hopes to strengthen the unique attributes that have defined that special 'place' around the Terminal building," said URA Acting Executive Director Robert Rubinstein. "Our team hopes to gain a fresh perspective on this site and utilize the technical expertise of the SCDA to create a design that serves all of the current and future uses, needs and visitors interacting with this building."

Riverlife in partnership with Oxford Development Company, Friends of the Riverfront, Neighbors in the Strip, and The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority was named a grantee for the Strip District riverfront park project.

The Riverlife team expects to leverage the experience and expertise of the Sustainable Cities Design Academy (SCDA) to strengthen partnerships with private developers, to address the challenges of maintaining a riverfront park and trail system along an eroding riverbank, find solutions using green infrastructure, and brainstorm funding strategies.

"The Allegheny riverfront in the bustling Strip District is one of the most exciting opportunities in America, and incorporating parks in new developments and generating revenue for ongoing park maintenance is a challenge facing the Strip and city parks nationally," says Riverlife Acting Director Jay Sukernek.

- MORE -

“The opportunity to interact with experts from the SCDA will help strengthen Pittsburgh’s efforts to be a leader in finding long-term solutions to care for these public assets. As we plan a new riverfront park in the Strip District, we are very fortunate to have such a strong group of partners.”

Project teams compete to attend SCDA, which provides resources, education, and best practice support needed to make environmentally responsible design decisions. SCDA helps these teams to formulate action plans for their projects while providing the design leadership training and technical assistance needed to address the specific design challenges that they face in their cities. Since establishing SCDA in 2009, AAF has served 50 project teams in cities across the United States through the generous support of program sponsor United Technologies Corporation.

For additional information about AAF or SCDA, please visit [www.archfoundation.org](http://www.archfoundation.org).

For additional information about the URA, please visit [ura.org](http://ura.org)

For additional information about Riverlife, please visit [Riverlife@pgh.org](mailto:Riverlife@pgh.org)

#### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN ARCHITECTURAL FOUNDATION**

Established in 1943 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the American Architectural Foundation (AAF) is dedicated to utilizing the power of architecture and design to improve lives and transform communities. Through its programs, AAF provides design leadership and sustainability programs to architecture, design, education, public policy, urban planning, and preservation.

#### **Media Contact:**

Elizabeth Okeke-Von Batten

Program Director, Sustainable Cities Design Academy

202-787-1017

[evonabatten@archfoundation.org](mailto:evonabatten@archfoundation.org)

#### **ABOUT THE URA**

The Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA) is the City of Pittsburgh’s economic development agency, committed to creating jobs, expanding the City’s tax base and improving the vitality of businesses and neighborhoods. The URA achieves this mission by assembling, preparing and conveying sites for major mixed-use developments; and by providing a portfolio of programs that include financing for business location, relocation and expansion, housing construction and rehabilitation, and home purchases and improvements.

#### **Media Contact:**

Gigi Saladna

Chief Communications Officer

412-255-6434

[gsaladna@ura.org](mailto:gsaladna@ura.org)

#### **ABOUT RIVERLIFE**

Since 2000, Riverlife has worked with downtown partners to plan, develop, improve, and finance Three Rivers Park, Pittsburgh’s 13-mile interconnected riverfront park system made up of many critical riverfront projects identified in Riverlife’s *Vision Plan for Pittsburgh’s Riverfronts*. Thanks to these key projects and the vision plan that links them, city residents and visitors now experience a renewed Pittsburgh with waterfront public parks, accessible riverfront trails and vibrant outdoor amenities for recreation and relaxation.

#### **Media Contact:**

Stephan Bontrager

Director of Communications

412-606-2187

[stephan@riverlifepgh.org](mailto:stephan@riverlifepgh.org)