



NEW VISION FOR ALLEGHENY RIVERFRONT

URA authorizes contract for consultant team to begin visioning process

(PITTSBURGH) **March 12** – The Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) Board of Directors authorized a contract for a consultant team to develop a vision for a key segment of the Allegheny Riverfront today.

"For decades, our riverfronts were used as transportation centers for the industries of the past, but now we will use them to further the momentum surrounding Pittsburgh's third renaissance," Mayor Ravenstahl said. "It's time we return our riverfronts back to our neighborhoods, reclaiming our waterways as amenities and part of what makes Pittsburgh 'America's most livable City.'"

A steering committee comprised of staff from the URA, Department of City Planning, and Riverlife, along with property owners, developers, and community representatives unanimously selected the team led by Perkins Eastman to spearhead the visioning process for the 6.45 mile segment of the Allegheny Riverfront stretching from the Strip District to Highland Park.

"The team developed by Perkins Eastman has a breadth of both local and national experience," Rob Stephany, Executive Director, URA said. "The committee undeniably believes that this group has the ability to generate the big picture solutions that this process calls for, and we assert they will make excellent partners."

This contract is the latest outcome building on a ten-year riverfront visioning and investment process, in which thousands of citizens and leaders set goals for restoring the Pittsburgh riverfronts. Significant investments in riverfront parks over the last ten years have created a strong incentive for riverfront economic development.

"When it comes to distinctive urban waterfronts, the Allegheny Riverfront is as exciting an opportunity as any location in the country," said Lisa Schroeder, Riverlife executive director. "We applaud the City of Pittsburgh for involving the community in a planning process that will better connect the river into the heart of the City. The Allegheny riverfront has the potential to improve the daily quality of life for ten neighborhoods."

The Perkins Eastman team was selected for their dynamic approach to framing the problem, and for not coming to the table with a ready-made solution. They have demonstrated experience with projects of this scale and nature, particularly dealing with gritty, challenging conditions, and have proven excellence in leadership and engaging community process.

The team is comprised of Perkins Eastman, and Urbanomics for urban design and planning; GSP Consulting for market assessment and development; Cahill Associates, Viridian Landscape

Studio, and Continental Conservation on environmental and infrastructure design and planning; and Trans Associates and Clear View Strategies for transportation design and planning. Authorization was granted today for a contract not-to-exceed \$350,000. Work is scheduled to begin immediately and will be completed within 12 months time.

“The Allegheny’s edge, along with its associated communities, can be a primary thread that connects its distinct neighborhoods and becomes a key amenity in their future development,” Stephen Quick, FAIA, Principal, Perkins Eastman said. “We are thrilled to be working on this vision plan that links the Allegheny to its neighborhoods and downtown, and can also become the precedent for other city riverfront neighborhoods.”

Twenty-four proposals from world-class teams were received in response to an RFP issued in October 2008. A highly competitive process ensued, with the selection committee short listing four respondents for further presentation and interview.

The RFP requested proposals from teams with expertise in urban design, market research, and traffic and transit analysis to create a market-based, urban design vision and implementation plan for the segment of riverfront currently occupied by surface parking and heavy industry. The final plan will be incorporated into, and serve as a model for, the City’s comprehensive riverfront master plan, scheduled for completion in 2010.

Date: March 12, 2009
Contact: Megan Stearman
412-255-6576
mstearman@ura.org

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.