



Division of Development Administration and Review

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

412 Boulevard of the Allies, Second Floor

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Date of Hearing: June 5, 2025
Date of Decision: July 18, 2025

Zone Case: 68 of 2025
Address: 100 Art Rooney Avenue
Lot and Block: 7-M-76, 8-J-30 and 8-J-20
Zoning Districts: RIV-NS
Ward: 22
Neighborhood: North Shore

Request: Installation of Major Public Destination Facility Electronic Sign

Application: BDA-2025-04050

Special Exception	Section 919.03.P	Major Public Destination Facility Electronic Sign
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Appearances:

Applicant: Heidi Edwards, Shawn Gallagher, Christopher Prisk, Bill Kolano

Findings of Fact:

1. The Subject Property is located at 100 Art Rooney Avenue in a RIV-NS (River, North Shore) District in the North Shore.
2. A stadium primarily used for football games is located on the Subject Property. Various parking lots surround the parcel used for the stadium.
3. In 2009, a 154.25 sf LED sign was installed on the east façade of the stadium structure. The existing LED sign is directed towards Art Rooney Avenue, Gold Lot 1 and W. General Robinson Street and provides static, illuminated messaging about events at the stadium.
4. The Applicant proposes to remove the existing 154.25 sf LED sign and to replace it with a new 1,117 sf LED sign on the east façade, in a location that would be proximate to the location of the sign that is to be removed. The proposed sign would also be generally directed towards Art Rooney Avenue, Gold Lot 1 and W. General Robinson Street.
5. The Applicant asserted that the existing LED sign has reached the end of its useful life and the Applicant seeks to replace it.

6. The Applicant stated that the proposed 1,117 sf LED Sign would be used for events or activities within the facility, under the control of the primary occupancy of the facility. The Applicant provided evidence that the location of the sign would not be within 100' of the river, any City historic district or any residential or public realm district; and would not obscure any official traffic signals or driver views.

7. The Applicant indicated an intent to comply with the motion, dwell time and brightness requirements for the proposed sign.

8. Chris Prisk, a professional traffic engineer, testified that the proposed LED Sign would not create any detrimental transportation impacts.

9. Jerome Jackson, Executive Director, Northside Leadership Conference, submitted a letter in support of the Application.

10. No one appeared at the hearing to oppose the request.

Conclusions of Law:

1. Section 919.03.P permits electronic non-advertising signs on "Major Public Destination Facilities" as a special exception, subject to specific requirements regarding location, content, size, and operation.

2. In Section 919.01.C, the Code defines "electronic sign" as "any sign, video display, projected image, or similar device or portions thereof with text, images, or graphics generated by solid state electronic components. Electronic signs included, but are not limited to, signs that use light emitting diodes (LED), plasma displays, fiber optics, or other technology that results in bright, high-resolution text, images, and graphics."

3. "Large video display" is defined as "an electronic sign that features real-time, full-motion, or pictorial imagery of television quality or better."

4. A "public destination facility, major" is "a structure providing as its primary use cultural services, public assembly, and recreation and entertainment facilities (general, indoor and outdoor and gaming enterprise)" with seating to accommodate a minimum of 10,000 people at a single event.

5. Pursuant to Section 919.03.P.2, the Board is to review all electronic signs on major public destination facilities according to the special exception review standards and procedures in Section 922.07 and the standards set forth in Section 919.03.P.4 through 10.

6. "Large video displays" are to be reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council as a conditional use.

7. Section 919.03.P.4 provides that major public destination facilities may use electronic signs to display the name of the facility, "including sponsor or memorialized names assigned thereto and their logo or identifying mark. However, products or services of sponsors shall not be displayed." That section also provides that the electronic sign may display the name of the major enterprise, principal activities and events; video displays of activities, events

or games in the facility or away games associated with the facility; and events and activities (on and off-premises) under the control or ownership of the primary occupant of the facility.

8. Section 919.03.P.5 provides that major public destination facility electronic signs shall not be located within 100' of or be primarily directed towards, rivers, parks, City Designated Historic Districts, or properties within a residential or public realm zoning district. Video displays are not to be visible from roadways or ramps for roadways with speed limits that exceed 35 m.p.h. Electronic signs may not obscure or otherwise physically interfere with an official traffic sign, signal or device and may not interfere with a driver's view of approaching, merging or intersecting traffic.

9. Section 919.03.P.5.e provides that no more than one electronic sign and one video display may be located on the site of a major public destination facility.

10. Section 919.03.P.6 limits motion on electronic signs to "static text, images, and graphics" but provides that motion is allowed on video displays depicting activities, events or games at the facility or contemporaneous away games of teams associated with the facility.

11. Section 919.03.P.7 states that text, images or displays on an electronic sign may not change more than once every 30 seconds and the twirl time between may not exceed 0.25 of a second.

12. Pursuant to Section 919.03.P.8, luminance during daylight hours shall be no greater than 2,500 nits and at all other times, no greater than 250 nits.

13. Section 919.03.P.9 provides that that maximum size of an electronic sign or video display shall be 1,200 sf.

14. Section 919.03.P.10 requires that all electronic signs are to be equipped with automatic dimmer controls and that the applicant must certify, before issuance of any operational permits and with annual reports, compliance with motion, dwell time, brightness and other requirements.

15. Section 922.07.D sets forth the general review criteria for special exceptions. Section 922.07.D.1 provides that the Board is to approve a special exception only if it determines that the proposed development complies with all applicable Code provisions.

16. Section 922.07.D.1.a requires the Board to determine that a proposed development "will not create detrimental visual impacts, such that the size and visual bulk of the proposed development is determined to create an incompatible relationship with the surrounding built environment, public streets and open spaces and land use patterns."

17. Section 922.07.D.1.b requires the Board to determine that the proposed use would not adversely affect "vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the vicinity of the subject tract."

18. Section 922.07.D.1.d provides that a development is not to create detrimental operational impacts, including impacts from hours of operation and traffic management, with consideration given to adjacent and surrounding land uses with differing sensitivities to operational impacts.

19. Under Pennsylvania law, a special exception is a form of a permitted use. A use that is permitted as a special exception “evidences a legislative decision that the particular type of use is consistent with the zoning plan and presumptively consistent with the health, safety and welfare of the community.” *Allegheny Tower Assoc.’s., LLC v. City of Scranton Zoning Hearing Bd.*, 152 A.3d 1118, 1123 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2017), citing *Greth Dev. Grp., Inc. v. Zoning Hearing Bd. of L. Heidelberg Twp.*, 918 A.2d 181 (Pa. Comm. Ct. 2007); see also *Cogan Properties, LLC v. East Union Twp. Zoning Hearing Bd.*, 318 A.2d 981 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2024) and *Bray v. Zoning Bd. of Adj.*, 410 A.2d 909 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 1980). By designating a use as a “special exception,” the governing body has determined that the use is one that is appropriate in the zoning district, subject to the criteria that the governing body has established for the use. *Cogan*, 318 A.3d at 986, quoting *Siya Real Est., LLC v. Allentown City Zoning Hearing Bd.*, 210 A.2d 1152, 1157 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2019).

20. The football stadium at issue here is a “public destination facility, major” under the Code’s definition.

21. The proposed sign would be an “electronic sign” associated with a major public destination facility. As presented the Board, the electronic sign would not feature “real-time, full-motion, or pictorial imagery of television quality or better” and thus would not be a “video display.”

22. The proposed 1,117 sf sign would be within the maximum 1,200 sf area permitted under Section 919.03.P.9 and the Applicant indicated that, in accordance with Section 919.03.P.5.e, the proposed sign would be the only electronic sign on the stadium.

23. In accordance with Section 919.03.P.5.a, the Applicant provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed sign would not be located within 100’ of or primarily directed towards, rivers, parks, City Designated Historic Districts, or properties within a residential or public realm zoning district.

24. Because an “electronic sign,” and not a “video display,” is proposed, compliance with provision that requires that “video displays” are not to be visible from roadways or ramps for roadways with speed limits that exceed 35 m.p.h. does not apply.

25. In accordance with Section 919.03.P.6, 7 and 8, the Applicant provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the sign would comply with the motion, dwell time and brightness requirements. The Applicant also indicated an intent to comply with the controls, testing and annual certification requirements in Section 919.P.10.

26. The Applicant provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed sign will be generally compatible with the surrounding built environment, which includes the parking lots and other infrastructure that supports the stadium.

27. The Applicant provided general testimony that the proposed sign would not create traffic issues or other operational issues in the vicinity of the Subject Property.

28. The Applicant provided sufficient evidence to generally address the requirements of Sections 919.03.P and 922.07.D.1 for the proposed special exception, and consistent with the applicable Code requirements and legal standards, approval of the application is appropriate, subject to the conditions set forth below.

Decision: The Applicant’s request for a special exception pursuant to Section 919.03.P to install a 1,117 sf major public destination electronic sign is hereby APPROVED, subject to these conditions:

- **Displays on the sign shall be limited to those described in Section 919.03.P.4;**
- **In accordance with Section 919.03.P.4.a, products or services of sponsors shall not be displayed on the electronic sign;**
- **No additional electronic signs shall be permitted on the major public destination facility;**
- **The electronic sign shall comply with the motion, dwell time and brightness requirements described in Section 919.03.P.6, 7 and 8 and the annual reporting of compliance requirement in Section 919.03.P.10; and**
- **The electronic sign shall not be used for a “video display,” as defined in the Code.**

s/Alice B. Mitinger
Alice B. Mitinger, Chair

RECUSED
LaShawn Burton-Faulk

s/John J. Richardson
John J. Richardson

Note: Decision issued with electronic signatures, with the Board members’ review and approval.