



Division of Development Administration and Review

City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

412 Boulevard of the Allies

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15219

Staff Report

Staff Report for Case # 058 of 2025 – 640 Casino Drive

Date of Hearing: July 10, 2025
Zone Case: 058 of 2025
Address: 640 Casino Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
Lot and Block: 7-M-2
Zoning Districts: RIV-NS
Neighborhood: Chateau

Request: Reconfigure existing 165,923 sf surface parking lot to include 386 parking stalls total including 8 accessible space as "Parking, Commercial (General) in RIV-NS district

Application: BDA-2025-02437

Special Exception	Section 911.02	Parking, Commercial (General) is not permitted as Special Exception within RIV-NS District
Variance	Section 911.04.A.45(a)(4)	"Parking, Commercial (General)" is not permitted within 1,000 feet of a gaming enterprise.
Variance	Section 905.04.1.2.a	Maximum 75 surface parking spaces permitted; 386 surface parking spaces requested
Variance	Section 918.03A.4	Minimum height of 42" screening is required at all sides; none requested

Staff Report:

1. The Subject Property is located at 640 Casino Drive in RIV-NS (Riverfront North Shore) District in Chateau Neighborhood. The property abuts Allegheny Avenue at east, Casino Drive at south and Sproat Way at west.
2. Subject property is north of and across North Shore Drive from Carnegie Science Center and is referred to as the “North Lot” of the Carnegie Science Center. Dimensions of the Subject Property are approximately 265’ by 600’ (165,923 sf).
3. Subject property is across Sproat Way and within 1,000 feet of the Rivers Casino Gaming Enterprise, and is across Allegheny Avenue from Acrisure Stadium. The Allegheny Station of the Port Authority of Allegheny County (“PAT”) abuts the parcel in the north.
4. The Carnegie Science Center seeks permanent relief for approval of continued use of the North Lot as a 386-space commercial surface parking lot, serving the Science Center and other related parking needs in the immediate vicinity.
5. In 2004, the Port Authority acquired portions of the Subject Property through a condemnation agreement (“Condemnation Agreement”) for the construction of the Port Authority’s Allegheny Station and an associated temporary construction easement. The Condemnation Agreement required the Port Authority to construct, in two phases, the 450-space North Lot, which Port Authority delivered to Carnegie Institute.
6. In 2008, the City of Pittsburgh Planning City of Pittsburgh Planning Commission approved a 2008 Master Plan for the Science Center, which identified the construction and use of the 450-space North Lot as primary parking area of the Science Center.
7. A 2018 Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (18-OCC-00904) permits “Use of 450 space parking for commercial (general) and accessory parking for 1 Allegheny Avenue (7-M-500). Approval for surface parking spaces above 150 expires 6-15-2024”
8. A 2019 Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (19-OCC-00190) that was issued to amend 18-OCC-00904, permits “use of 441 space parking for commercial (general) and accessory parking for 1 Allegheny Avenue (7-M-500). Approval for surface parking spaces above 150 expires 6-15-2024.”
9. A 2021 Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (OOP-2021-16456) permits “use of surface parking (150 total, 5 accessible) and temporary use per ZBA of surface parking (291 total, 7 accessible) – expires 4/1/2026 – includes accessory parking for 1 Allegheny Avenue (7-M-500).”
10. In Case 287 of 2016, the Zoning Board of Adjustment approved the Science Center’s request for the required special exception and related variances from the number of spaces and the design standards for commercial parking lots, to allow the continued use of the North Lot for 450 spaces, subject to the condition that the Applicant bring the North Lot into compliance with the Code’s maximum permitted surface parking requirements

within 7 years after the issuance of a building permit for the future Science Center addition.

11. In Case 124 of 2021, the Zoning Board of Adjustment approved the extension of conditions in Case 287 of 2016, modifying the original condition to extend compliance to April 2026 (based on the issuance of the building permit in April 2017). The decision also requires that before April 2026, the Applicant must either seek approval for an additional 3-year continuation of the surface parking lot as a special exception per Section 905.04.I, or apply for permanent variances from all applicable surface parking lot standards in accordance with the Zoning Code provisions in effect at that time.
12. On March 19, 2025, the applicant submitted #BDA-2025-02438 that proposes to use the subject property as a 386-space commercial surface parking lot with 8 ADA spaces accessing off Sproat Way and approximately 20,000 sf at southeast corner as Parks and Recreation (Limited).
13. The Department of Mobility and Infrastructure (DOMI) reviewed the plans and issued comments to the applicants on April 16, 2025, which are attached to this report. DOMI staff have requested the proposed mid-block crossings and angular parking within public Right-of-Way to be removed from the conceptual plan as these elements are not in compliance with DOMI and PennDOT standards.
14. A Development Activities Meeting (DAM) for the application was held on May 21, 2025 with the Manchester Chateau Partnership Alliance, Manchester Neighbors, and Department of City Planning. A copy of the DAM report is attached.
15. The revised conceptual site plan submitted by the Applicant is attached to this report.

Development Activities Meeting Report (Version: 01/24/2024)

This report created by the Neighborhood Planner and included with staff reports to City Boards and/or Commissions.

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: Science Center Parking Lot at 640 Casino Dr.	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Residents Manchester Chateau Partnership Alliance Manchester Historic Society
Parcel Number(s):	
ZDR Application Number: BDA-2025-02438	
Meeting Location: via Zoom	
Date: May 21, 2025	
Meeting Start Time: 6:00pm	
Applicant: Indovina & The Science Center	Approx. Number of Attendees: 14
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Alterations Require Zoning Board of Adjustment approval	

How did the meeting inform the community about the development project?

Ex: Community engagement to-date, location and history of the site, demolition needs, building footprint and overall square footage, uses and activities (particularly on the ground floor), transportation needs and parking proposed, building materials, design, and other aesthetic elements of the project, community uses, amenities and programs.

<p>The North Lot is a large parking lot that's north of Casino Drive that was created when the Allegheny station of the light rail transit station was built around 2008. Before that, there was a building there called the Miller Printing Building, but it was demolished to make way for the station in the lot. The lot was created from that. And it has since been utilized as a service parking lot for the Science Center specifically.</p> <p>The Science Center went through a process with the city to get temporary variances from the city design standards, which are primarily dedicated towards the improvement of a surface lot by providing landscaping and trees. Since about 2019, the Science Center has made several attempts to develop the property, but in all those cases, were really unable to find an arrangement that worked. They are proposing to meet their parking needs with a paved lot and a science park, an area that will have outdoor science related components.</p> <p>Provided images of existing conditions, and proposed site plan and renderings. Showed new proposed egress and ingress.</p> <p>Going back to ZBA due to size of the site and the number of parking spaces as it currently sits, as well as the proposed arrangement is in excess of the current riverfront zoning district requirements</p>

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
The last time we saw this, there was an idea of retail and more green space. What happened with that?	The fundamental challenge that we've had is that with any development, it consumes so much of the parking here that it requires then large structured parking, which put which then is financially not feasible.

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>What do you think the timeline of existence for this is? When can we see this developed into housing?</p> <p>I do like that you're moving the parking lot entrance and appreciate the landscaping.</p>	<p>I'm not sure I have an answer to that question. The fundamental challenge we face is that we need approximately 700 parking spaces and that parking is core to our ongoing sustainable operations. So the estimated cost of a single parking space and structured parking now is nearly \$60,000. So when you factor that in to replacing potential loss parking here, you're talking just for this lot somewhere in the neighborhood of \$25 million. And so that becomes a prohibitive cost and as a non-profit we are challenged to figure out how to strike that balance between the mission and the development and the sheer magnitude of the investment that it would take to maintain our operations.</p> <p>And while we're not in a position to create a full housing development, we want to make sure that we can do something for the community and I think the addition of some outdoor space in, in an otherwise asphalt urban environment is, is sort of a really good starting point.</p>
<p>I'm fine with the proposed changes to the lot, the addition of trees and the science park is nice. The green spaces is absolutely amazing and, and Manchester's probably hotter than most other parts of the city because of all the asphalt we have.</p>	

Planner completing report: SJE

Landscaping Analysis				
Item	Factor	Proposed	Required	Total Provided
Landscaping	30 sf / space	386 spaces	11,580 sf	> 14,846 sf *
Street Trees	1 / 30 lf	1,108 lf	37 trees	40 trees **
Landscaping Trees	1 / 5 spaces	386 spaces	78 trees	78 trees
Total			115 trees	118 trees

* Does not include proposed Parklet or Street Trees
** 30 street trees exist



Carnegie Science Center North Lot

Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh
One Allegheny Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Indovina
Associates
Architects
3185 Penn Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
p 412.263.3800
f 412.248.4185

All dimensions and existing conditions shall be checked and
verified by Contractor at the site. Any discrepancy shall be
reported to the Architect in writing.
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Project Number 24126
Date 01.08.2025
Revisions

Enlarged Site Plan

Sheet No.

AC-1.01

1 Site Plan
1" = 20'-0"



0 15' 30' 60'

1 - Changemark note #01

Status as of Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:26:41

Type: Correction

State: Corrections Required

Page: 1

Created by :Amy Ivoska

On :Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:26:41

Type :Correction

State :Corrections Required

A curb cut from DOMI will need to be applied for. A draft curb cut has been created as a sub-permit on the BDA. Please complete and submit DOMI-CC-2025-04403 in OneStopPGH.

----- 0 Replies -----

2 - Changemark note #02

Status as of Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:31:15

Type: Correction

State: Corrections Required

Page: 1

Created by :Amy Ivoska

On :Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:31:15

Type :Correction

State :Corrections Required

A ROW Improvement Plan review will be required for the review of the sidewalk design, and any area in the ROW including the sidewalk and area along the newly proposed science park. The site plan submitted needs to include all dimensions, items in the ROW, encroachments, furnishings, and any pinch point dimensions that may occur. A draft ROW application has been created under the parent BDA. Please complete and submit DOMI-ROW-2025-04404 in OneStopPGH.

----- 0 Replies -----

3 - Changemark note #03

Status as of Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:34:02

Type: Correction

State: Corrections Required

Page: 1

Created by :Amy Ivoska

On :Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:34:02

Type :Correction

State :Corrections Required

The mid-block crosswalks are not compliant with PennDOT or MUTCD standards and will not be approved by DOMI. Please remove them from the site plan and show the crossing at the appropriate intersection(s).

----- 0 Replies -----

4 - Changemark note #04

Status as of Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:35:34

Type: Correction

State: Corrections Required

Page: 1

Created by :Amy Ivoska

On :Wednesday, April 16, 2025 09:35:34

Type :Correction

State :Corrections Required

The parking layout on casino drive cannot be permitted by DOMI through any existing permit process. Please remove the on-street parking spaces from the site plan.

----- 0 Replies -----