



COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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MEMORANDUM

Date: February 24, 2021

To: Michael G. Bartholomew, MCP, LEED-AP, City Manager

From: Michael McMahon, Director of Community and Economic Development *mm*
Jonathan Stytz, Planner *JS*

Subject: Consideration of a Major Amendment to the existing Planned Unit Development under Section 12-3-5 of the Des Plaines Zoning Ordinance, as amended, to construct a two-story addition onto the existing casino building and make various site adjustments at 2980-3000 River Road, and the approval of any other such variations, waivers, and zoning relief as may be necessary. Case #21-002-PUD-A

Issue: The petitioner is requesting a Major Amendment to the Planned Unit Development (PUD) under Section 12-3-5 of the Des Plaines Zoning Ordinance, as amended, to construct a two-story addition onto the existing casino building and make various site adjustments at 3000 River Road, and the approval of any other such variations, waivers, and zoning relief as may be necessary.

Analysis:

Address: 2980-3000 River Road

Owner: Gregory A. Carlin, Midwest Gaming & Entertainment, LLC, 900 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60611

Petitioner: Michael Tobin, Midwest Gaming & Entertainment, LLC, 900 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 1600, Chicago, IL 60611

Case Number: 21-002-PUD-A

Real Estate Index Numbers: 09-34-300-032; -045; -046; & -047

Ward: #6, Alderman Malcolm Chester

Existing Zoning C-6, Casino District

Existing Land Uses Casino, Parking Garage, and Surface Parking

Surrounding Zoning	North: C-2, Limited Office South: Commercial (Rosemont) East: Cook County Forest Preserve West: I-294 Tollway, then C-7, High Density Campus District
Surrounding Land Use	North: Hotel South: Office Space and Rosemont Village Hall East: Open Space/Park West: I-294 Tollway, then O’Hare Lakes Business Park
Street Classification	Devon Avenue and River Road are classified as Arterial Streets.
Comprehensive Plan Designation	Commercial

Final Planned Unit Development

Project Description

The applicant is requesting a Major Amendment to the Planned Unit Development to amend Ordinance Z-33-19 to allow for a proposed expansion of Rivers Casino, which is located at 2980-3000 River Road, and the modification of the “Onsite Utility Maintenance Agreement” between Midwest Gaming & Entertainment, LLC and the City of Des Plaines recorded as Document Number 1129903055. The existing property contains a 140,363 square foot casino building, a four-story parking garage with a pedestrian bridge connecting from the second level of the garage to the casino building, and a two-story office building with a surface parking lot. With all lots combined, the property encompasses 20.017 acres in land area. This request comes after the previous Planned Unit Development Major Amendment request to expand the existing parking garage to accommodate necessary parking for the increase of gaming positions from 1,200 to 1,485, which was approved December 2, 2019 through Ordinance Z-33-19. The parking garage expansion resulted in a net gain of 719 parking spaces bringing the total number of parking spaces on site to 3,063 parking spaces.

This request will entail a proposal to expand the existing casino building with a two-story, approximately 84,000-square foot addition and various site adjustments to the parking garage, main site entrance, and circulation of the site. The two-story expansion is comprised of approximately 84,000-square feet of enclosed space distributed over two main levels and two smaller mezzanine levels, including approximately 33,000-square feet of new gaming space, small food and beverage outlet, 10,100-square foot multi-purpose event center, and associated back of house areas. The proposal to expand the casino building is a direct result of recent Illinois legislation that allows existing casinos to apply to expand from the former limit of 1,200 gaming positions to the new limit of 2,000 gaming positions. As cited in the applicant’s Project Narrative, the ownership team is proposing the casino building expansion with this Planned Unit Development Major Amendment request to reach 2,000 gaming positions.

The other items to note are the modification of the “Onsite Utility Maintenance Agreement” to account for the parking garage expansion that was approved with the previous Planned Unit Development Major Amendment for the

property and the proposed amendments to the Localized Alternative Sign Regulation (LASR), which was originally approved by City Council through Ordinance Z-6-10 and to which a previous amendment was approved December 2, 2019 through Ordinance Z-33-19. While the materials and project narrative provide details of proposed amendments to the LASR on the site, this request will be submitted on a separate development application at a later date.

The Des Plaines Zoning Ordinance Section 12-7-3.I. requires one parking space per gaming seat, the same parking regulation as the State of Illinois. The total number of parking spaces provided by the previous parking garage expansion far exceeds the parking count required by the Zoning Ordinance as 2,000 parking spaces are required and 3,063 spaces will be provided. The proposed parking is high in order to accommodate the approximately 1,200 employees that work at Rivers Casino and the expansion of the casino to reach 2,000 gaming positions. The attached traffic study discusses the parking and trip generation in more detail (Attachment 10).

Compliance with the Comprehensive Plan

As found in the City of Des Plaines' 2019 Comprehensive Plan, there are several parts of the Comprehensive Plan that align with the proposed project. Those portions are as follows:

- Under Future Land Use Map:
 - The property is marked for commercial land use. The proposed expanded parking garage will further enhance the existing casino property which will also allow the casino to expand to the maximum allowed 2,000 gaming positions. This will also allow the casino to continue to be a regional entertainment destination.
- Under Economic Development:
 - The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the economic vitality of the surrounding area and its importance to the broader region. The proposed enhancements of this site would be in-keeping with prior development efforts from the casino.

Compliance with the City's Strategic Plan, Focus 2022

The City's current Strategic Plan lays out a clear vision for future economic development projects. Specifically, under Re-imagined Growth, the Strategic Plan states the following: "Encourage more entertainment and hotel expansion to enhance the Casino corridor". Approving the proposed development application will assist with enhancing the casino corridor as it will prepare this site to expand the casino and allow for an attached hotel.

As cited in various sections in the Des Plaines Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Ordinance, each request comes paired with a series of statements to assist the Planning and Zoning Board as well as the City Council to review the facts with each request. These statements are referred to as 'Standards' and the subsections below directly relate to the requests being made by the applicant.

Planned Unit Development (PUD) Findings

As required, the proposed development is reviewed in terms of the findings contained in Section 3-5-5 of the Zoning Ordinance. In reviewing these standards, staff has the following comments:

A. The extent to which the Proposed Plan is or is not consistent with the stated purpose of the PUD regulations in Section 12-3-5-1 and is a stated Conditional Use in the subject zoning district:

Comment: A PUD is a listed conditional use in the C-6 zoning district. The proposed project meets the stated purpose of the PUD. Additionally, the proposed improvements of the subject parcels will enhance the neighboring area, but also be cognizant of nearby land uses. Please also see the responses from the applicant.

B. The extent to which the proposed plan meets the prerequisites and standards of the planned unit development regulations:

Comment: The proposed development will be in-keeping with the City's prerequisites and standards regarding planned unit development regulations. Please also see the responses from the applicant.

C. The extent to which the proposed plan departs from the applicable zoning and subdivision regulations otherwise applicable to the subject property, including, but not limited to the density, dimension, area, bulk, and use and the reasons why such departures are or are not deemed to be in the public interest:

Comment: The proposed project is in-line with the intent of a PUD as a setback exception for the five foot building setback requirement for the existing office building at 2980 River Road has been recorded with the previous PUD Major Amendment in 2019. All other aspects of the property's building height and number of parking spaces complies with the Zoning Ordinance. Please also see the responses from the applicant.

D. The extent to which the physical design of the proposed development does or does not make adequate provision for public services, provide adequate control of vehicular traffic, provide for, protect open space, and further the amenities of light and air, recreation and visual enjoyment:

Comment: All provisions for public services, adequate traffic control and the protection of open space are being accommodated in the development. The petitioner is proposing to adjust the main entrance to the site to accommodate the building expansion and improve circulation and access throughout the site. Please also see the responses from the applicant.

E. The extent to which the relationship and compatibility of the proposed development is beneficial or adverse to adjacent properties and neighborhood:

Comment: The proposed expansion complements existing development to the north, west and south as all surrounding properties, except for the Cook County Forest Preserve are built up. Additionally, measurements will be made to reduce any impact on the nearby properties as all elements will have to comply with the Des Plaines Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances.

F. The extent to which the proposed plan is not desirable to physical development, tax base and economic well-being of the entire community:

Comment: The proposed project will contribute to an improved physical appearance within the City by constructing an addition onto the existing casino building with updated landscaping, utility connections, and vehicular access and circulation. This will contribute positively to the tax base and economic well-being of the community. Please also see the responses from the applicant.

G. The extent to which the proposed plan is in conformity with the recommendations of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan:

Comment: The proposed development meets the goals, objectives and recommendations of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan. Please also see the responses from the applicant.

Planning and Zoning Board Review: The Planning and Zoning Board met on February 23, 2021 to consider a Major Amendment to the existing Planned Unit Development (PUD) with exceptions to allow for the construction of a two-story addition onto the existing casino building and various site improvements.

The applicant's engineer, Todd Shaffer, presented the proposal for the major amendment to the Planned Unit Development (PUD), which includes the expansion of the existing casino building, various roadway improvements throughout the site, and an amendment to the Utility Maintenance Agreement between the City and the casino. He noted that River's Casino has plans to update the signage on the property and have added these details to the elevation and rendering documents for reference. However, he concluded that the proposed amendment to the existing Localized Alternative Sign Regulation (LASR) will be requested on a separate development application at a later date. Mr. Shaffer showed the Phase 2 Overlay Exhibit to identify that the proposed building expansion would be located between the north wall of the casino parking garage and the south wall of the existing parking garage. He described the proposed floor plans of the casino expansion and parking garage, which will be altered to accommodate the addition of a small food and beverage center, additional gaming area, multi-purpose event center, and back of house office area. The second level of the expansion will include enclosed access to the third level of the parking garage, poker room, event space, and additional office space. He mentioned that the new addition will blend into the existing architecture of the casino building.

Mr. Shaffer added that the request includes the amendment of the Utility Maintenance Agreement between the City and the casino to include the parking garage expansion that was part of previous PUD Amendment in 2019. The current request will slightly alter the southern portion of the parking garage to accommodate the casino addition but the parking garage entrance will remain the same. Mr. Shaffer discussed the proposed improvements to the casino entrance, including the addition of an outbound left turn lane from the driveway to River Road, redesigning the intersection near the parking garage entrance and proposed casino entrance, relocating the valet and drop-off area, landscaping additions, and lighting relocation on the site. He added that the valet and drop-off area will be relocated to the first level of the parking garage to address concerns by Engineering department regarding motorists having to make a U-turn on entrance road to get to current valet and drop-off area along casino's east side. Mr. Shaffer explained that the landscaping at casino entrance will be revised to remove landscaping in areas that will be covered by the proposed addition and add landscaping in other areas along the entrance road. Finally, he discussed the Photometric Plan and minor adjustments that are proposed for lighting on site.

The Planning and Zoning Board Members asked/discussed the following: the renderings of the main entrance road facing the proposed casino addition; if anything is happening with the tollway designed interchange at Devon Avenue and I-294 and if the casino has coordinated with the tollway regarding those plans; what the traffic counts are at the Devon Avenue and Shafer Court intersection; if the west access to the site will still be open; the proposed project starting date and date of completion; concerns with emergency vehicle response time and access on site; will additional employees will be hired with the casino addition; if the casino is opening job opportunities up for Des Plaines residents; where live entertainment will be located in the casino addition; what the current pedestrian and vehicular egress/ingress plans are for the casino during the construction of the addition; and where the future hotel will be constructed on the property.

The Community and Economic Development Department summarized the staff report and recommended approval of the request. Director McMahon provided some background on the design of this intersection before the casino was built explaining that there was a private developer looking to redevelop the O'Hare Lakes property across the tollway in the mid-late 2000s into a large mixed use development tied with housing. However, this project did not materialize.

No residents or members of the public spoke regarding this case. The Planning and Zoning Board *recommended* (6-0) that the City Council *approve* the requests without any conditions.

Recommendation: I recommend approval of Ordinance Z-31-21 to approve a Major Amendment to the Planned Unit Development under Section 12-3-5 of the Des Plaines Zoning Ordinance, as amended, to construct a two-story addition onto the existing casino building and make various site adjustments at 2980-3000 River Road with the following conditions:

Conditions of Approval

1. That drawings may have to be amended to comply with all applicable codes and regulations.
2. That the River’s Casino North Expansion Plan, the Landscape Planting Plan, and the Photometric Site Plan all dated January 22, 2021 are updated to reflect the Amended Plat of PUD, which was revised on March 3, 2021.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Project Narrative
- Attachment 2: Petitioner’s Responses to Standards
- Attachment 3: Location Map
- Attachment 4: Plat of Survey
- Attachment 5: Casino Renderings
- Attachment 6: Traffic Study
- Attachment 7: Site and Context Photos
- Attachment 8: Chairman Szabo Memo
- Attachment 9: Draft Excerpt of Minutes from the February 23, 2021 Planning and Zoning Board Meeting

Ordinance Z-31-21

- Exhibit A: Amended Plat of PUD
- Exhibit B: Casino Building Floor Plans
- Exhibit C: Casino Building Elevations
- Exhibit D: River’s Casino Parking Structure Floor Plans
- Exhibit E: River’s Casino Parking Structure Exterior Building Elevations
- Exhibit F: Select Engineering Plans
- Exhibit G: Planting Plan
- Exhibit H: Tree Preservation Plan
- Exhibit I: Photometric Site Plan
- Exhibit J: Unconditional Agreement and Consent

Rivers Casino – North Expansion PUD Amendment Summary of Zoning Actions & Project Narrative (03/03/2021)

The anticipated zoning actions at this time will include:

1. PUD Amendment
2. Amendment to the Localized Alternative Sign Regulation (LASR)

FUTURE REQUEST (NOT INCLUDED)

3. Modification to the “Onsite Utility Maintenance Agreement” between Midwest Gaming & Entertainment LLC and the City of Des Plaines recorded as Doc. No. 1129903055

Note:

This agreement will also be modified to account for the garage expansion that was approved with the last PUD Amendment for the property

The proposed improvements are being made in the east-west corridor between the casino and parking garage as summarized below.

Building/Garage Revision:

- The 2 Story Expansion houses approx. +/-84,000 sf of conditioned space distributed over 2 main levels with 2 smaller mezzanines.
- Within the Expansion, there will be approximately 33,300 sf of new Gaming space along with a small Food & Beverage outlet, 10,100 sf multi-purpose ‘event center’ and associated back of house.
- Project will also include Signage elements on the East Façade that include the use of LED (approximately 14’ H x 98’ L) as well as static building signage.
- The West Façade will incorporate very similar size and scale static signage as to the West, as well as an LED display on the West Façade of the new expansion and South West corner of the existing property.
- The Existing building ‘Lantern Lights’ will be upgraded to 3 sided LED elements located on the West Façade as well as on the existing Garage.
- Some alterations will be made to the third floor of the existing garage (which aligns to the second level of the expansion). Due to egress requirements on the second floor of the expansion, doors have been added from the expansion to the garage. These doors are required by code to allow the occupants within the building to egress through a new horizontal exit at the existing garage. The existing entry vestibule from the garage will be enlarged to create a better user experience. The new entry vestibule is protected from vehicular traffic by bollards and striping. The enlargement of the vestibule and additional egress doors have caused parking to be modified on the third floor of the existing garage.
- A smoking patio that accommodates the gaming and poker areas on the second level expansion is proposed on the third level of the existing garage. The addition of the patio has caused parking to be modified on the third floor of the existing garage.
- Alterations to the lower level of the phase 1 portion of the existing parking garage to accommodate valet/drop-off, including the construction of an enclosed waiting area and valet room. The existing eastern vehicular entry drive located immediately west of the elevator lobby will be removed and the existing westernmost vehicular exit drive will be widened and converted to a vehicular entry drive. An exit lane will be provided out the north wall of the existing garage that will connect to the existing roadway.



Site Revisions:

- Demolition of Porte Cochere on north side of casino
- Demolition of existing walkway connecting parking garage and existing casino.
- Demolition and reconstruction of the existing east-west roadway that includes two (2) westbound lanes and one (1) eastbound lane located between the existing casino and the parking garage. The roadway will be reconstructed to have one lane in each direction
- Addition of a 2nd northbound left turn lane at the casino main entrance to Des Plaines River Road
- Modification of the existing traffic signal mast arm to accommodate the additional northbound left turn lane
- Modification of the median in the north leg of Des Plaines River Road to accommodate the additional northbound left turn lane by reducing the median width and increasing the roadway width
- Modification of the pavement markings for the inbound lane of the casino main entrance to Des Plaines River Road to account for an entry taper, westbound through lane and westbound right turn lane into garage
- Restriping the outbound lane of the casino main entrance
- Modification of the western north-south road to account for the reconstructed east-west road
- Addition of a service drive to account for a new overhead door on the west side of the building addition
- Converting the existing northbound right turn lane on the west side of the casino to a striped short-term delivery and drop off area
- Stormwater management in accordance with the updated MWRD WMO
- Minor increase in impervious area due to building addition and construction of additional northbound left turn lane.
- Construction of a new sanitary service and grease trap on the west side of the building addition to connect to the existing sanitary sewer system that serves the existing casino
- Modifications to the existing storm sewer system to account for the building addition
- Maintaining the existing east-west water main
- Maintaining the existing east-west Pratt Avenue Relief Sewer Force Main
- Addition of a cross walk from the area between the main garage entrance/exit to the northeast corner of the lower level building addition.
- Addition of a handicap accessible drop off area on the north side of the east-west road between the building addition and the existing garage
- Removal of the existing eastern vehicular entry drive located immediately west of the elevator lobby on the south wall of the garage. The existing westernmost vehicular exit drive will be widened and converted to a vehicular entry drive.
- Addition of an exit drive from the valet/drop-off section of the lower level of the parking garage along the north wall of the parking garage.
- Modification to the proposed stairwell located east of the main garage entrance/exit adjacent to the south wall of the existing garage