



COFONE CONSULTING GROUP, LLC

CHRISTINE A. COFONE, PP, AICP
Principal

May 15, 2018

Lance B. Landgraf, Jr., P.P., AICP
Director of Planning
Casino Reinvestment Development Authority
15 South Pennsylvania Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401

RE: **Boardwalk 1000, LLC**
1000 Boardwalk at Virginia Avenue
Block 1, Lot 146 & Block 61, Lot 29
Application #2018-05-2398

Dear Mr. Landgraf:

We have deemed this application **complete** for review.

In the subject application, the applicant is seeking preliminary and final site plan approval and "C" variance approval for the exterior signage located on the bridge that spans the Boardwalk and connects Hard Rock Hotel Casino to The Steel Pier within the Beach (B) Zone District. No additional site improvements are proposed.

As part of our analysis, we undertook the following tasks: an inspection of the subject premises; a survey of surrounding land uses; review of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority Tourism District Land Development Rules and Tourism District Zoning Map; review of business signage plans, consisting of one sheet, prepared by SOSH Architects and dated April 4, 2018; an application cover letter from Jack Plackter, Esq., dated April 20, 2018 (inclusive of an application rider); and a CRDA application dated May 10, 2018.

We offer the following analysis and comments for your consideration.

Description of Site and Summary of Development Proposal

The Site is developed with a bridge structure over the Boardwalk which connects to The Steel Pier amusement pier.

The Applicant has leased the exterior of the bridge over the Boardwalk for the placement of



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signage. The Application proposes four signs: two window identification signs on either side of the bridge bearing the Hard Rock badge logo; one electronic billboard business sign; and one wall identification sign on the structure toward the pier (to be owned and operated by Steel Pier Associates). Other than some façade treatments, no additional site improvements are proposed.

Surrounding Land Uses

The Site is located in the northeastern section of the Tourism District and along the boardwalk in an area defined by resort commercial uses. The bridge spans the boardwalk, connecting Hard Rock Hotel Casino with The Steel Pier. It is within the northern extent of the boardwalk resort area.



Zoning Compliance

The property is located in the Beach (B) Zone District. As stated at CRDA Land Development Rules Section at N.J.A.C. 19:66-5.9, the purpose of the B District is as follows:

The purpose of the B Beach District is to capitalize on the unique land use attributes inherent of the proximity to the Atlantic Ocean through promotion and zoning controls that maximize the value of the zoning district

Various variances are required for the signage package. The CRDA Land Development Rules regulate signs at Section 19:66-5.7, titled "Signs," and as specific to the RS-C District, at Section 19:66-5.7(j) titled "Sign rules for commercial and special purpose districts. Signs



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shall be permitted in the GWAY, RC, CBD, KAR, TWD, B, MARINA, GB, AI, and BADER zoning districts.”

The following table depicts **non-conformities** pursuant to Section 19:66-5.7, CRDA Land Development Rules’ Sign Requirements.

Site Signage SCHEDULE					
Reg. SECTION		PERMITTED OR REQUIRED	EXISTING CONDITIONS	PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS	DNC: DOES NOT CONFORM
19:66-5.7 (j)	SIGN REGULATIONS				
19:66-5.7 (j) 2. ii	Sign Structural Types	Electronic billboards except within Beach District	NONE	Electronic billboard	DNC
19:66-5.7 (j)4. i	Max. Surface Area of Signs	25% of the total wall surface area per elevation	NONE	52.43% wall surface area	DNC
19:66-5.7 (j)5. vi	Electronic Billboard	40’ max height from grade	NONE	56.25’ from grade	DNC

Master Plan Review

The subject property is located within the Atlantic City Tourism District. Pursuant to the New Jersey CRDA Atlantic City Tourism District Master Plan, the overall intention and vision is to “reinvigorate Atlantic City in the near-term as the leading resort destination in the Northeast and beyond (Page 4, New Jersey CRDA Atlantic City Tourism District Master Plan). Among others, overarching objectives are to “develop an economically viable and sustainable tourism district” and “[expand] Atlantic City’s tourism and economic bases” (Id, Page 1-2).

Planning Analysis and Issues for Consideration by the Board

In regard to the “c” variances, the Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) at NJSA 40:55D-70c sets forth the standards for variances from the bulk regulations of a zoning ordinance. A “c(1)” variance is for cases of hardship due to factors such as shape or topography, or due to “an extraordinary and exceptional situation uniquely affecting a specific piece of property or the structures lawfully existing thereon.” A “c(2)” variance may be granted where the

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purposes of zoning are advanced and the benefits of deviating from the ordinance requirements outweigh any detriments. The benefits derived from granting a “c(2)” variance must include benefits to the community as a whole, not just to the applicant or property owner. A “c” variance application also must address the “negative criteria.”

We offer the following for your consideration in reviewing the Application:

- 1) The Applicant requires three variances from N.J.A.C. 19:66-5.7 related to the signage package, as detailed in the site signage schedule in this report. The Applicant shall provide the statutorily required testimony through a New Jersey licensed professional planner.
- 2) The Applicant shall provide detailed architectural testimony relative to the signage package intention, design, scale, illumination, and relationship to the surrounding area. The testimony shall explain the overall necessity of the proposal.
- 3) The Applicant shall describe the proposed copy programming for the electronic billboard sign, copy rotation, brightness levels, etc. We recommend that the Applicant agree to work with local authorities to display urgent messages if warranted, such as weather warnings and Amber Alerts.
- 4) The Applicant’s professional planner should discuss the signage package from the context of the purposes of the site and immediate area.
- 5) The Applicant shall discuss how the signage package will advance the objectives of the Tourism District.
- 6) The Applicant should furnish testimony relative to whether any other site improvements are proposed in conjunction with the Application. The Applicant’s sign plans indicate various improvements along the bridge façade.
- 7) The applicant shall hire its own professional engineer to prepare a plan to traverse the boardwalk, and design any boardwalk decking cover and under deck support systems to avoid damage to the existing boardwalk. The existing condition of the boardwalk must be documented prior to any work in this area. All costs for the design and installation of the protection/support system shall be borne by the applicant.



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- 8) The applicant shall obtain a boardwalk access permit from the City to access the boardwalk to install the signage.

We would be happy to address any questions or comments on the above at the public hearing.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine A. Nazzaro-Cofone, AICP, PP
CRDA Consulting Planner

cc: Robert L. Reid, AICP, PP, Land Use Regulation Enforcement Officer
Paul G. Weiss, Esq., Chief Legal Counsel
William England, PE, Board Engineer
Applicant's Attorney
Applicant's Engineer