

HEARING AND ACTION REPORT

APPLICATION:	DCP-ZDR-2024-00328
PROPERTY:	900 Freeport Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15238
PROPERTY OWNER:	Pittsburgh Water
NEIGHBORHOOD:	Lincoln-Lemington-Belmar
RCO:	Lincoln-Lemington Collaborative, DAM held May 29, 2024
ZONING DISTRICT:	RIV-IMU
PROPOSAL:	Construction of new building and site work

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Conditional Use Application **DCP-ZDR-2024-00328** was filed by Brown and Caldwell on behalf of Pittsburgh Water, for demolition, new construction, and site work for improvements to the Aspinwall Water Treatment Plant site.
2. The site is located on the north side of the Allegheny River and sits adjacent to Aspinwall Borough and O'Hara Township. The site is bordered by Penn Central Railroad to the north, Allegheny Rivertrail Park to the west.
3. There is a Capital Lease Agreement between Pittsburgh Water (formerly PWSA) and the City of Pittsburgh. As of September 1, 2025, Pittsburgh Water will retain ownership of the subject parcel.
4. Per Section 911.02, Conditional Use approval is required for Utility (General) within the RIV-IMU zoning district, which triggers Planning Commission and City Council review.
5. Per the zoning code, the campus is deemed a water-dependent facility.
 - a. 905.04.B.6 Water dependent facility - A facility or use that by its nature is required to be on or adjacent to a river; without such adjacency the use could not exist. This includes facilities or uses in legal existence prior to the RIV District that were originally designed to utilize the rivers (such as concrete factories), but do not currently use river transport and generally maintain legacy infrastructure related to river use.
6. The applicant proposes a new building for chemical storage that would replace the existing fluoride building on the campus. This building would be located within the 125 ft. riparian buffer at 78'-9", but is permitted due to the water-dependent status of the facility.
7. The application also includes an 84-in clearwell bypass to be constructed to the south of the existing underground clearwell. It will tie into the existing inlet and outlet gatehouses and will be in service while construction takes place on the clearwell.

PLANNING COMMISSION

29 JULY 2025

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8. The applicant notes that the construction of the clearwell bypass pipe necessitates the removal of trees within the Riparian Buffer. Given the site status as a water-dependent facility, the application is not required to meet the Riparian buffer standards per 905.04.E.4.A.2, so tree removal is not expressly prohibited.

905.04.E.4.A.2 Grading, filling, excavation, clear cutting, and removal of vegetative cover are prohibited within the riparian buffer zone, except in the following instances, and only to the extent the Zoning Administrator determines to be necessary:

(c) To facilitate a Water-Dependent or Water-Enhanced Facilities or Uses, including riverfront trails.

9. Given the necessity of the tree removal for the clearwell bypass construction, city planning staff are allowing the application to proceed if the trees are replaced on site or funds in lieu of replacement are provided. In this case, the applicant has opted for funds in lieu, which comes out to a total of \$636,000.00 for the 2,122" combined inches of trees removed. This will be paid to the City's Street Tree Commission Trust Fund.
- α. For reference, any tree removed that has a DBH of 12" or more must be replaced with the equivalent combined total diameter of removed trees (915.02.D). The city uses a standard 2" caliper tree of \$600.00 each to calculate the total replacement.
10. Given the sensitive work and tree removal within the riparian buffer, and inability for the applicant to replant trees on site, city staff have requested that the applicant provide a report or study outlining potential future improvements to the existing concrete revetment along the Allegheny River, adjacent to where the tree removal is proposed. This concrete revetment was noted to be in poor/deteriorated condition in a 2021 study - *Riverbank Stability Assessment and Applied Best Practices Guide* - conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers for the City of Pittsburgh.
11. The applicant has provided a change order request from GHD Engineering, Architecture and Construction Services that outlines preliminary and final design costs for the rehabilitation of the entire 3,000 ft. revetment wall. The work would be part of the future Raw Water Intakes Project, to be submitted for permitting at a later date. A copy of the change order is attached.
12. The applicant proposes security fencing around a portion of the perimeter of the site. "security fencing" is expressly permitted via 905.04.H.1.a.4 of the zoning code if it is required by state or federal regulations. The applicant has indicated they are following the UFC 4-022-03 for Security Fences and Gates standards.

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13. A Development Activities Meeting (DAM) was held with the Lincoln-Lemington Collaborative Ave on May 29, 2024. A copy of the DAM report is attached.
14. The Application was reviewed City Planning design staff and there were not substantial comments. Review by the Contextual Design Advisory Panel was not recommended.
15. A Stormwater Management Plan was submitted in March 2025 and is currently under review.
16. The project is subject to the review criteria for conditional use applications set forth in 922.06.E.1. The standards are included below and a copy of the applicant's responses are attached.
 - (a) That the 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;*
 - (b) That the development will not create detrimental transportation impacts, such that the proposed development is determined to adversely affect the safety and convenience of residential neighborhoods or of vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the vicinity of the subject tract, including traffic reasonably expected to be generated by the proposed use and other uses in the area given the existing zoning, existing land uses and proposed land uses in the area;*
 - (c) That the development will not create detrimental transportation impacts, such that the proposed development will result in traffic volumes or circulation patterns that exceed the capacity of streets and intersections likely to be used by traffic to and from the proposed development;*
 - (d) That the development will not create detrimental operational impacts, including potential impacts of hours of operation, management of traffic, servicing and loading operations, and any on-site operations associated with the ongoing functions of the use on the site, in consideration of adjacent and surrounding land uses which may have differing sensitivities to such operational impacts;*
 - (e) That the development will not create detrimental health and safety impacts, including but not limited to potential impacts of noise, emissions, or vibrations from the proposed development, or functions within the proposed site which would otherwise affect the health or safety of others as a direct result of the operation of the proposed use;*
 - (f) That the development will not create detrimental impacts on the future and potential development of parcels in the vicinity of the proposed site of the development; and*

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(g) That the development will not create detrimental impacts on property values.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

That the Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh **makes a positive recommendation to City Council** on Conditional Use Application **DCP-ZDR-2024-00328**, filed by Brown and Caldwell on behalf of the property owner, Pittsburgh Water, with the following conditions.

1. The final construction plans, including site plans and elevations shall be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator prior to issuing the final Record of Zoning Approval.
2. That the applicant pay the established fee-in-lieu fee for the tree removal prior to issuing the Record of Zoning Approval.

SUBMITTED BY: _____

Joseph Fraker, Senior Planner (Commissions and Code Development)

Development Activities Meeting Report

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

Logistics	Stakeholders
Project Name/Address: Bruecken Pump Station (7779 E Lock Way) & Aspinwall Pump Station (Freeport Road)	Groups Represented (e.g., specific organizations, residents, employees, etc. where this is evident): Highland Park Community Council, Lincoln Lemington Collaborative
Parcel Number(s): 122-L-50, 171-B-1-0-02	
ZDR Application Number: DCP-ZDR-2024-01437, DCP-ZDR-2024-00328	
Meeting Location: Zoom	
Date: 5/29/2024	
Meeting Start Time: 6 pm	
Applicant: PWSA	Approx. Number of Attendees: 20
Boards and/or Commissions Request(s): Planning Commission	

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.

Water Reliability Plan

These projects are a part of PWSA's Water Reliability Plan. This is an effort to improve storage, distribution, and pumping of PWSA's water systems managed. The plan's series of projects will strengthen and add redundancy to the water system. These projects are required by the State through a Consent Order. \$300 million will be invested over the next five years. This plan also culminates with complete restoration of the Clearwell Bypass water treatment system, which is essentially a large tank. Aspinwall and Bruecken are the two pumping projects. Both stations are over 100 years old and need to be modernized.

Aspinwall Pump Station

The Aspinwall Pump Station is located on Freeport Road, near the PWSA Water Treatment Plant. Water treated at the PWSA Water Treatment Plant flows through the Clearwell treatment system before being pumped through the Aspinwall Pump Station or Bruecken Pump Station. The pump station supplies water to 20% of the City of Pittsburgh. The new design for the Aspinwall Pump Station will include interior upgrades within the station, a new roof, historic features such as new windows, and a replacement of the chemical storage. The current fluoride station and garage adjacent to the pump station will be demolished. Trees to the south of the Clearwell will be removed for access and later replaced. Additionally, an electrical substation will be constructed by Duquesne Light. The Aspinwall Pump Station will also go through a historic designation proves with the PA State Historical Preservation Office, which found the pump station and the Aspinwall Treatment Plant to have historic significance.

The primary construction entrance will be at the plant entrance on Freeport Road. A second construction access will utilize River Avenue and driveway to PWSA facilities to the west of Clearwell. All construction work will occur within the facility. The project schedule will be Monday through Friday, 7 am – 5 pm.

The project is currently in the design completion and permitting phase. Bidding documents are in progress and PWSA received a PWS permit in March 2024. For the construction phase, PWSA expects a contract to be awarded in early 2025. Construction is expected to begin in May 2025 and be completed in late 2029 or early 2030.

Bruecken Pump Station

Bruecken Pump Station is located across the street from the Pittsburgh Water Treatment Plant along the border of Lincoln-Lemington and Highland Park. The pump station was originally constructed in 1931. The pump station pumps water to Highland Reservoir 2, which supplies water for over 35% of Pittsburgh. PWSA is designing and building a new facility and associated structures. The design incorporates unique architectural styles due to nearby recreation amenities such as the trail. The old pump station will remain in place. The new building will house pumping equipment and the older building will be used for other PWSA operations. This project will also involve replacing the perimeter fencing and reorganizing/cleaning up materials that are currently stored on the property.

During construction, trucks and equipment will enter Brilliant Yard via Butler Street (SR 8)/Washington Blvd. All work will occur within the facility. The project schedule will be Monday through Friday, 7 am – 5 pm.

This project is currently in the design completion and permitting phase. Bid documents are in progress and a PWS permit was received in March 2024. For the station upgrades phase, PWSA expects a contract to be awarded in Early 2025. Construction is expected to start in Mid 2025 and be completed in late 2029 or early 2030.

Community Outreach Plan

Construction will be communicated through project signs, community meetings, and the PWSA website. For any questions, residents are asked to contact Mora McLaughlin at mmclaughlin@pgh2o.com.

Input and Responses

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
Aspinwall Pump Station: Great to see that the work on the building is being approached as historic restoration, this is a handsome building. Trees to the south are noted to be removed, how about the trees at the north side along Freeport Road, too? Would be nice to open up this vista.	Due to City of Pittsburgh requirements, any time we remove a tree, we are required to replace trees. Trees are coming down on the south side of the project for necessity. We probably won't be affecting trees on other parts of the project site.
It doesn't look like this will affect traffic based on your presentation, is that true?	We do not anticipate any interruptions to traffic. We will be sure to account for any issues that may arise.
	This is a unique situation as this sits on the outskirts of the City but technically does exist in your neighborhoods so I appreciate everyone coming out tonight to give their feedback.
What is this project going to [do] for the Lincoln community?	Overall, the Water Reliability Plan is intended to improve reliability (uninterrupted, high quality, good pressure) of water in the Pittsburgh area.

Questions and Comments from Attendees	Responses from Applicants
<p>How will construction of these projects affect our water supply?</p>	<p>You should not see an interruption in your water service/supply. The only noticeable changes should be the construction on site. This plan is designed for to prevent interruption to the water supply, which is why all pumping and rising mains work is being completed before working on the Clearwell. We really have thought of all means and methods necessary to ensure continuous access to water supply while the Clearwell is restored, and you should not notice any difference in water pressure, supply, or anything else.</p>

Planner completing report: Adriana Bowman, Neighborhood Planner and Austin Herzog, Neighborhood Planner



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

Alternative Compliance Agreement for Landscaping and Screening Standards
Approval by Administrator Exception as per Section 918.06 of the Pittsburgh Zoning Code

Applicants seeking approval of an Alternative Compliance Plan are subject to the following standards:

- A. The alternative plan shall illustrate that the intent of the provisions of this chapter can be more effectively met, in whole or in part, through the alternative means;
- B. The proposed solution shall meet or exceed otherwise applicable landscaping and screening requirements;
- C. Natural land characteristics or existing vegetation on the proposed development site would achieve the intent of this chapter;
- D. Innovative landscaping or architectural design is employed on the proposed development site to achieve a screening effect that is equivalent to the screening standards of this chapter;
- E. The required landscaping or buffering would be ineffective at maturity due to topography or the location of improvements on the site; or
- F. The proposed alternative represents a plan that is as good as or better than a plan prepared in strict compliance with the other standards of this chapter.

Per the policy of the Department of City Planning, it is recommended that Alternative Compliance Plans should consist of:

- 1. An alternative on-site landscaping and screening plan;
- 2. An off-site landscaping/greening endowment which will have a significant community benefit, or
- 3. A combination of the two.

Additionally, please note the following:

- 1. We recommend that alternative landscaping plans should be prepared by a licensed Landscape Architect.
- 2. Off-site endowments should be agreed to by all land-owning entities. A letter or other proof of such agreement in writing should be provided in support.
- 3. On city-owned land, Art Commission approval may be required per the City Code.
- 4. Endowments of street trees including the tree, pit cut, and installation per City standards may be provided at cost by the applicant.

5. Funds in-lieu of landscaping requirements may be accepted in certain circumstances based on the following calculations:

Number of interior and street trees required by the Zoning Code multiplied by \$600 per tree.*

* Fee is based on minimum cost for tree pit cut, new tree, and install as according to Pittsburgh Treevitalize program.

* Fees will be assessed by the Zoning Reviewer on the applicable OneStopPGH application and can be paid through the Pay tab on the Applicant's OneStopPGH account portal.

Alternative Compliance Agreement for Landscaping and Screening Standards

I have read and understand the preceding standards and policy regarding Alternative Compliance to the Landscaping and Screening Standards of Section 918 of the Pittsburgh City Code (Zoning Ordinance.)

Development Name: Clearwell Bypass Project

Address and Parcel Number: 900 Freeport Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15238; 171-B-00001-00000-02

Neighborhood: Lincoln Lemington Belmar

I have opted for the following form(s) of Alternative Compliance:

- Alternative on-site landscaping and screening plan
- Off-site landscaping/greening endowment
- Off-site street tree endowment with my own contractor
- Off-site street tree endowment paid to the Shade Tree Commission at a cost of:
\$600 x $2122 \div 2 = 1061$ trees = \$636,600.00

I agree to implement this plan according to the schedule set forth in the attached Alternative Compliance Plan, which is incorporated herein as Exhibit A.

Applicant for Alternative Compliance:

William J. Pickering
Signature

Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
Affiliated Company (if applicable)

Zoning Administrator, City of Pittsburgh

William J. Pickering 7/10/2025
Printed Name Date

WPickering@pgh2o.com 412-255-2099
Contact (email and phone)

Our ref: 12647924

May 30, 2025

Mr. Daniel Cleary
Pittsburgh Water
1200 Penn Avenue
Penn Liberty Plaza 1
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Proposal for additional engineering services related
to raw water meter pit and revetment wall repairs**

Dear Dan

The scope of work included in GHD's original proposal for the Aspinwall Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Raw Water Intakes (PW Project#2024-100-104-04) included several assumptions and limitations. Among them were the following:

1. All aspects of design would be included in a single set of construction contracts (separated by trade)
2. Limit of revetment wall rehabilitation extends approximately 500 feet between the east and west gate houses
3. Existing intake structure configurations would remain largely unchanged (rehab only)
4. Given assumption #3, above, our current scope includes assistance in securing authorization to use PADEP / USACE Nationwide Permit 3 – General Maintenance, for the repair, rehabilitation or rebuilding of existing structures within the floodway (no individual permits from DEP or USACOE required).

During engineering services contract negotiations, certain scope and fee modifications were made, as addressed in our letter dated October 4, 2024. Additions to our scope approved through those negotiations included:

1. Alternatives evaluation related to intake structure configurations
2. Additional permitting effort (Joint Permit application) related to new intake structure(s) in the floodplain/floodway along with potential removal of existing structures
3. The original limits of revetment wall investigations and rehabilitation design remained unchanged

Since the time of our original proposal and the October 4, 2024, revisions thereto, Pittsburgh Water engaged in discussions with the City of Pittsburgh regarding rehabilitation of the entire revetment wall spanning full length of the WTP property from the east intake to the western end of the clearwell (approximately 3,500 LF).

Additionally, since October 2024, Pittsburgh Water determined that raw water meter vault improvements were urgent and needed to be implemented separately and ahead of the intake and revetment wall rehabilitation. These changes to the project scope and approach will have the following impacts on our design fee:

1. Preliminary design (bathymetric and land survey along additional 3,000 feet of riverfront) - \$25,000
2. Preliminary design (geotechnical investigations along additional 3,000 feet of revetment wall) - \$60,000
3. Preliminary design related to additional 3,000 feet of revetment wall - \$5,000

4. Final design related to additional 3,000 feet of revetment wall - \$90,000
5. Final design related to separating meter vault work into separate construction contracts - \$20,000
6. Stakeholder coordination (permitting work) associated with additional 3,000 feet of revetment wall work within floodplain - \$30,000
7. Bid phase related to additional 3,000 feet of revetment wall - \$5,000
8. Bid phase related to separating meter vault work into a separate set of construction documents - \$5,000
9. Construction phase services related to additional 3,000 feet of revetment wall - \$10,000
10. Construction phase services related to separating meter vault work into separate construction contracts - \$5,000
11. Commissioning phase services – \$5,000

A summary of our original fee breakdown, the previous revision and this current revision is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 *Engineering services fee breakdown*

Task	Name	Original proposal	Previous revision	Current revision
Task 1	Preliminary design	\$495,113.52	\$693,283.52	\$783,283.52
Task 2	Final design	\$496,855.98	\$1,021,704.71	\$1,131,704.71
Task 3	Stakeholder coordination and outreach	\$98,328.74	\$136,997.60	\$166,997.60
Task 4	Bid phase services	\$24,568.21	\$34,677.84	\$44,677.84
Task 5	Construction phase services	\$204,179.74	\$232,146.56	\$247,146.56
Task 6	Commissioning phase services	\$58,511.36	\$88,356.24	\$93,356.24
	Total	\$1,377,557.55	\$2,207,166.47	\$2,467,166.47

We appreciate this opportunity to continue our services to Pittsburgh Water. Please advise if you have any questions or concerns.

Regards



Rulison Evans
Senior Project Manager
412-684-9041
rulison.evans@ghd.com



Mallory Griffin
Project Director
484-201-5907
Mallory.griffin@ghd.com



1001 Liberty Avenue
5th floor
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

T: 484.228.1284

Memorandum

Subject: DCP-ZDR-2024-00328 - Conditional Use Criteria Memo

Pittsburgh Water Aspinwall Pump Station Improvements and Clearwell Bypass Project

Date: May 23, 2025

To: Joseph Fraker, Senior Planner, Department of City Planning

From: Heather Dodson, PE, LEED AP, Senior Manager, Brown and Caldwell

Copy to: Anthony Gallina, Project Manager and Sonja Svihla, Ph.D, Project Manager

Conditional Use: 922.06.E.1 General Criteria

City Council shall approve Conditional Uses only if (1) the proposed use is determined to comply with all applicable requirements of this Code and with adopted plans and policies of the City and (2) the following general criteria are met:

(a) That the 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;

Response: The Aspinwall Pump Station's exterior will have exterior rehabilitation restoration that includes window replacement, exterior and interior masonry cleaning and repairs, including the terra cotta cornice and gutters, roof to be replaced, and the rehabilitation of the entrance archway. Per the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office mitigation plan approved on January 14, 2025, Pittsburgh Water must ensure that all historic preservation and archaeological work is performed by, or under the direct supervision of, a person or persons who meet, at a minimum, the Secretary of the Interior's ("SOI") Professional Qualifications Standards. The Chemical Building #2 facade is designed to be in scale and character with the late modern forms of the 1950's era buildings that are spread around the PWSA Aspinwall Treatment Plant campus. These simple and modest brick structures have straightforward geometries with simple patterns emerging from the brickwork. This choice has been made to integrate the building into the greater campus, while also setting it apart from the historic 1912 Beaux-Arts pump station that stands alone on the campus. The brick color for the chemical building will match both the historic pump station and the 1950's era buildings and will wrap all the way around the building with a subtle brick pattern emerging at the parapet as a nod to the ornate cornice of the historic pump station.

(b) That the development will not create detrimental transportation impacts, such that the proposed development is determined to adversely affect the safety and convenience of residential neighborhoods or of vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the vicinity of the subject tract, including traffic reasonably expected to be generated by the proposed use and other uses in the area given the existing zoning, existing land uses and proposed land uses in the area;

Response: The pump station and the clearwell bypass are fully located within Pittsburgh Water's Aspinwall

Treatment Plant. The transportation impacts to Freeport Road is not expected increase in traffic to the Aspinwall Treatment Plant. It is not expected that the rehabilitation of the Aspinwall Pump Station will add more staff than the current pump station requires.

(c) That the development will not create detrimental transportation impacts, such that the proposed development will result in traffic volumes or circulation patterns that exceed the capacity of streets and intersections likely to be used by traffic to and from the proposed development;

Response: The transportation impacts to Freeport Road is not expected increase in traffic to the Aspinwall Treatment Plant. It is not expected that the rehabilitation of the Aspinwall Pump Station will add more staff than the current pump station requires.

(d) That the development will not create detrimental operational impacts, including potential impacts of hours of operation, management of traffic, servicing and loading operations, and any on-site operations associated with the ongoing functions of the use on the site, in consideration of adjacent and surrounding land uses which may have differing sensitivities to such operational impacts;

Response: The impacts of the rehabilitation of the Aspinwall Pump Station and construction of Chemical Building No 2 and clearwell bypass project will create no changes to the Aspinwall Treatment Facility's on-site operations, traffic, and loading operations.

(e) That the development will not create detrimental health and safety impacts, including but not limited to potential impacts of noise, emissions, or vibrations from the proposed development, or functions within the proposed site which would otherwise affect the health or safety of others as a direct result of the operation of the proposed use;

Response: The impacts of the rehabilitation of the Aspinwall Pump Station and new Chemical Building No 2 and clearwell bypass will not create detrimental health and safety impacts. The Aspinwall Pump Station improvements and the new Chemical Building No. 2 and Clearwell Bypass will not increase the current levels of noise, emissions, or vibrations on the Aspinwall Treatment Facility.

(f) That the development will not create detrimental impacts on the future and potential development of parcels in the vicinity of the proposed site of the development; and

Response: The Aspinwall Pump Station is located on the existing Aspinwall Treatment Plant that is bordered to the north by the Norfolk Southern Railway, Freeport Road (SR1001) and St. Margaret Hospital and the Waterworks Mall, to the south by the Allegheny River, to the west by Aspinwall Borough property. There are no changes to the use of this parcel this project will not create detrimental impacts on the parcels in the vicinity of the Aspinwall Treatment Plant.

(g) That the development will not create detrimental impacts on property values.

Response: The Aspinwall Pump Station Improvements and Clearwell Bypass Project will not have a detrimental impact on property values, it is fully located within the existing Aspinwall Treatment Plant. The existing pump station will have exterior rehabilitation restoration that includes window replacement, exterior and interior masonry cleaning and repairs, including the terra cotta cornice and gutters, roof to be replaced in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's ("SOI") Professional Qualifications Standards.