

# The Rivers Casino

Location: Allegheny County Pittsburgh  
Size: 17 Acres  
Features: Flat land, riverfront Location  
Owner: Holdings Acquisition Co. L.P.  
Current Use: Casino  
Past Use: Steel mill and warehouse  
Contaminants: Petroleum and tar  
Total construction cost: 300 million dollars

**Site Timeline**

- 1925: Occupied by Crucible steelworks and Carnegie Steel rolling mill
- 1970s-1980s Collapse of steel industry
- 1990s: Site purchased by Gateway Clipper Co.
- 2006: Majestic Star LLC awarded casino license
- 2007: Ground broken
- 2008: Bought by Holdings Acquisition Co.
- August 9 2009: Rivers Casino opens

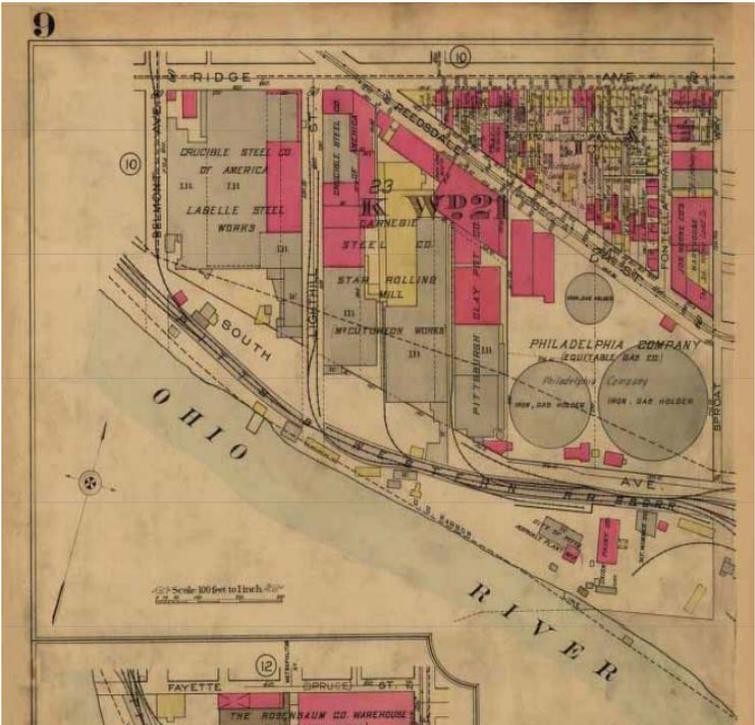
*Note\* Images are courtesy of Mr. Michael Stern, Strada Architecture, LLC and Mr. Martin Knuth, Civil and Environmental Consultants*

## History

The Rivers Casino sits on land that began as wetlands formed by the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. During Pittsburgh’s period of industrial growth, these wetlands were progressively converted for industrial use. Previous tenants have included coal gasification plants, railroad yards and steel mills.

## Topography

The Rivers Casino sits on prime real estate. Occupying 17 acres situated in the North Shore neighborhood, it faces the Ohio River to the South, with Heinz Field(home to the Pittsburgh Steelers) to the East and the West End Bridge to the West. There have been some issues with heavy traffic, especially on



Steelers game days, but a light rail extension is being built to alleviate this issue.



Pittsburgh Port Authority Map of the North Shore Connector Project

## Site Assembly and Control

The site had been a vacated steel mill and warehouse. The previous site owner Mr. Terry Wirginis of the Gateway Clipper Company sold the 17 acre property to The Majestic Star Casino LLC for about 20 million dollars.

## Environmental Problems

Overall the site was cleaner than expected. During the cleanup there were some soils contaminated by leaking underground fuel tanks and tars. These contaminants remained from a long history of heavy industry on the site. A total of about 11,000 tons of petroleum-impacted soil and about 1600 tons of tar-impacted soil were removed for off-site landfill disposal. The local groundwater is untainted.

## Social/Community Infrastructure

The Northshore neighborhood is home to PNC Park(home of the Pittsburgh Pirates) and Heinz Field, and has seen rapid growth in the past few years. The area is predominantly commercial, and the Pittsburgh municipal government has ambitions to make it a major shopping and entertainment center.

## Physical Infrastructure

As part of Pittsburgh's North Shore Connector project, a light rail extension will be built to provide an alternate way to get to the casino from the city. Allegheny Station will serve to help

commuters from Downtown Pittsburgh to the Rivers Casino. The projected cost of the entire new rail line is 550 million dollars.

### **Costs and Financing**

The Pennsylvania Race Horse Development and Gaming Act reserved one gaming license for Pittsburgh. After a lengthy application process, the proposal from PITG Gaming, LLC, a holding company owned by Don Barden's "The Majestic Star Casino LLC" was awarded the casino license in December of 2006. Several lawsuits were filed by the losing applicants, possibly delaying the early phases of construction. Ground was broken in December of 2007. In July of 2008, Barden defaulted on a 200 million dollar bridge loan and halted construction due to lack of funds. On July 15 2008 he sold 75% of his stake to Holdings Acquisition Co, this was approved by the Gaming Board and construction resumed with new funding. In November of 2008 the name of the Casino was changed to "Rivers Casino". The Casino opened on August 9<sup>th</sup> 2009.

### **Current**

The Rivers open for 10 there have problems

any about the The major seems to be traffic area. This of a the light rail

completed. While revenues at the casino are lower than projected, activity has been increasing in recent months.



### **Status**

Casino has been months and been no related to construction or complaints remediation. complaint the increase in around the should be less problem when extension is