

Pitt at Hazelwood Green



A Signature Proving Possible Initiative

A home for Pitt Football. A hub for Innovation. A catalyst for Pittsburgh.

- A 45,000-seat football stadium and event space
- A 24/7/365 academic and innovation hub
- A commercial and civic district for all

Executive Summary

Pitt at Hazelwood Green is a university transformation initiative in which football serves as the catalyst for a new district connecting Pitt to research, industry, entrepreneurship, students, alumni and Pittsburgh.

The model is Northwestern University's We Will campaign. Northwestern did not isolate Ryan Field from the university's larger ambitions. Its comprehensive campaign raised \$6.1 billion from 174,380 donors, and its capstone \$480 million Ryan family gift simultaneously advanced research, education, business and athletics while providing the lead gift for Ryan Field. Pitt now has the same strategic opening: Proving Possible, its newly launched \$3 billion comprehensive campaign, is explicitly about shaping the University's next century.

The central proposition Pitt at Hazelwood Green can physically unite Proving Possible's ambitions for student success, innovation, partnership and regional impact while giving Pitt football a permanent home.

This proposal answers that question with Pitt at Hazelwood Green: an intimate 45,000-seat stadium wrapped by academic, research, innovation, office, retail, hospitality and public spaces. The district would be active throughout the week, not only on football Saturdays.

The timing is consequential. Pitt's current home, Acrisure Stadium, sits within a public stadium lease structure approaching its 2030-31 renewal window. Pitt's own long-term tenancy will therefore need to be considered in the context of the North Shore's next operating era. Meanwhile, Pitt averaged 51,845 fans at home in 2025, yet for 2026 intentionally reduced the football configuration at Acrisure to 51,416 because fan research found that the larger environment diminished energy and atmosphere. A purpose-built 45,000-seat stadium is therefore not a retreat from demand; it is a deliberate premium-capacity strategy.

Why Now?

Three independent developments are converging: Pitt has launched the largest fundraising campaign in its history; the North Shore stadium agreements are approaching renewal; and Pitt Athletics has already acknowledged through its seating strategy that a smaller, fuller football environment produces a better collegiate experience.

Signal	What is happening	Why it matters
Proving Possible	\$3B campaign; nearly \$1.4B raised at public launch; campaign runs through June 2033.	A major capital initiative can be integrated into an existing university-wide philanthropic story.
Acrisure renewal window	SEA's principal Acrisure lease with PSSI reaches its renewal period around 2030-31.	Pitt should evaluate its future before simply defaulting into the next long-term North Shore arrangement.
2025 attendance	362,917 total home attendance across seven games; 51,845 average.	Demand supports a major venue while arguing against building excessive capacity.
2026 seating strategy	Pitt took the upper East and West sides offline, setting football capacity at 51,416.	Pitt itself cites atmosphere, energy and fan connection as reasons for a tighter environment.

A 45,000-seat building would target roughly 87% of Pitt's 2025 average attendance. That scarcity is a feature if the venue is designed around better seats, better sightlines, more premium inventory, a concentrated student section and a distinctly collegiate atmosphere. Marquee games can command premium pricing; ordinary games no longer need tens of thousands of visually empty seats.

Important lease nuance The SEA directly leases Acrisure Stadium to the Steelers-affiliated PSSI Stadium LLC. The strategic point for Pitt is not that Pitt controls that public lease; it is that the entire North Shore stadium operating framework is entering a renewal period, creating a natural moment to decide whether Pitt's next multi-decade football arrangement should remain there.

The Northwestern Model

Northwestern publicly launched We Will in 2014 with a \$3.75 billion target and a donor-participation goal. After reaching those goals early, it raised the target to \$5 billion and ultimately closed at \$6.1 billion from 174,380 donors. The campaign funded university-wide priorities rather than a single capital project.

The stadium lesson came at the campaign's end. The Ryan family's \$480 million gift—the largest in Northwestern history—supported biomedical research, neuroscience, global health, economics, business and the redevelopment of Ryan Field. Northwestern described the stadium component as a lead gift and explicitly planned to raise additional philanthropy for the project.

What to copy The transformational donor was not asked to choose between academics and athletics. The gift linked them. Ryan Field became one visible expression of a broader institutional investment.

That is the model for Hazelwood Green. The stadium should not consume Proving Possible. Hazelwood should become one signature initiative inside it, with gifts allocated across athletics, research, students, community impact and the public realm.

Proving Possible: Pitt at Hazelwood Green

Proving Possible launched publicly in September 2026 with a \$3 billion goal, nearly \$1.4 billion already raised, a goal of 200,000 donors and a campaign horizon through June 2033. The campaign is deliberately tied to the centennial of the Cathedral of Learning's groundbreaking and to the idea of shaping Pitt's next 100 years.

Proving Possible priority	Hazelwood Green expression
Accelerate Student Success	Experiential learning, student entrepreneurship, internships with district tenants, Panther Pitt, gathering spaces and a true collegiate football home.
Advance Scholarship, Creativity & Innovation	Applied research, robotics, AI, mobility, advanced manufacturing, public-facing innovation and corporate research partnerships.
Cultivate Community, Partnership & Impact	Hazelwood public spaces, local-business opportunities, workforce programs, community programming, riverfront connectivity and local hiring.
It's Possible at Pitt	A visible university district that combines athletics, innovation, entrepreneurship, major events and Pittsburgh's industrial-to-technology story.

A New Model for a University Stadium



Concept rendering: public-facing innovation and research spaces integrated into the stadium district.

The mixed-use premise is what separates this proposal from a conventional stadium. The football bowl is wrapped and surrounded by spaces that have independent academic, commercial and civic value.

Program	Year-round role
Innovation Gallery	Public-facing demonstrations of robotics, mobility, AI, advanced manufacturing and student work.
Academic / project space	Flexible classrooms, studios, capstone work and interdisciplinary project rooms.
Enterprise offices	Rentable space for corporate research partners, startups and technology tenants.
Commercial district	Restaurants, cafés, Pitt retail and locally oriented businesses active beyond event days.
Hospitality / events	Clubs and suites designed to become conference, meeting and private-event inventory.
Public realm	Plazas, riverfront connections, green spaces, markets, festivals and community programming.

Sensitive research should remain in purpose-built environments with appropriate security, vibration control, HVAC and loading. The stadium-facing research component should emphasize applied work that benefits from visibility and public engagement.

The 45,000-Seat Home for Pitt Football



The stadium should be designed around the experience Pitt is already trying to create at Acrisure: a fuller building with concentrated energy. Pitt's 2026 reduction to 51,416 seats was explicitly driven by fan feedback that the larger stadium environment could diminish atmosphere even when attendance was strong.

- 45,000 fixed seats, with standing-room and flexible event capacity where appropriate.
- Steep lower and upper bowls that keep spectators close to the field.
- A concentrated 10,000-seat-class Panther Pitt student environment, preserving the student section as the emotional engine of the building.
- Premium clubs, loge boxes and hospitality distributed to improve revenue without hollowing out the bowl.
- Large open steel bays that frame the hills, sky and riverfront rather than imitating an enclosed NFL venue.
- Videoboard placement integrated into the structural frame and visible from all primary seating zones.

The capacity should be presented as premium scarcity, not downsizing. A sold-out 45,000-seat stadium creates a stronger television image, better atmosphere and more pricing power than a 68,000-seat professional venue configured down with tarps.

A Premium Experience in Every Seat

The stadium should feel intentionally smaller than an NFL venue without feeling compromised. The seating bowl, concourses and floating canopy should be designed around proximity, comfort and unobstructed views so that the difference between a standard ticket and a premium ticket is primarily the level of amenity—not whether the fan can see the game well.



- Clear, unobstructed sight lines from every primary seating section, with careful attention to railings, portals, videoboards and standing spectators.
- Steep seating geometry and minimal distance between the sidelines and first rows so fans feel close to the action throughout the bowl.
- A floating canopy extending over nearly all seating areas, providing meaningful protection from rain and sun while preserving the open-air character of the stadium.
- Wide, intuitive concourses with field views where possible, reducing the feeling that fans leave the game when they leave their seats.
- Comfortable seating dimensions, modern restrooms, efficient concessions and strong cellular/Wi-Fi infrastructure as baseline expectations rather than premium upgrades.

Club-level seating should add a distinctly elevated experience: climate-controlled lounges, high-quality food and beverage, comfortable social spaces, dedicated entrances, upgraded restrooms and outdoor terraces that maintain direct visual connection to the field. The goal is hospitality that feels sophisticated but still unmistakably Pitt.

Corporate suites and boxes should function as relationship spaces for Pittsburgh employers, research partners, sponsors and major donors. On game day they provide premium hospitality; throughout the year, selected club and

suite spaces can support meetings, receptions and university-corporate events. This makes premium inventory part of Pitt's partnership strategy as well as an athletics revenue stream.

Panther Pitt: A Student-First Experience

Panther Pitt should be treated as a defining architectural element of the stadium, not simply a block of discounted seats. The student section occupies a steep, concentrated end-zone environment designed to put students close to the field, keep them visually unified and project their energy across the entire bowl.



- A dedicated student entrance and pregame gathering zone that creates a clear arrival ritual before students reach their seats.
- A steep, continuous seating arrangement that keeps Panther Pitt visually intact rather than splitting students among decks or isolated sections.
- Safe-standing and rail-supported areas where appropriate, with conventional seating available where accessibility and comfort require it.
- Dedicated student concessions, restrooms and hydration points so students can remain in the section rather than dispersing throughout the stadium.
- A field-level relationship that makes the players, band, cheerleaders and student section feel connected during entrances, touchdowns and late-game moments.
- Integrated Pitt branding, retired-number references and traditions that make the section unmistakably Panther Pitt.

Why it matters to everyone A great student section improves the experience beyond the students themselves. Concentrated noise at one end of an intimate 45,000-seat bowl creates a stronger television image, more energy for players and a more distinctly collegiate atmosphere for every spectator in the building.

Pitt Band: Purpose-Built Game-Day Operations

Victory Heights will serve as the Pitt Band's institutional home, restoring dedicated facilities after the post-Pitt Stadium decades in Trees Hall. The Hazelwood stadium should provide purpose-built game-day operations that connect cleanly to that Oakland home.



- A dedicated seating block near field level.
- A direct, wide and unobstructed route between seating and the field for pregame and halftime performances.
- Game-day instrument staging and secure temporary storage sized specifically for performance operations.
- Nearby restrooms, hydration, medical access and staff support.
- Bus/loading access designed around game-day movement between Oakland/Victory Heights and Hazelwood.

The Story of Pitt Football

A permanent Pitt Football museum should be incorporated into the stadium and remain accessible on non-game days. It would give alumni, recruits, families, tourists and visitors to the innovation district a reason to enter the building

year-round while establishing the new stadium as the steward of a football tradition that predates it by more than a century.

The collection has extraordinary material to work with. Pitt recognizes nine football national championships, spanning 1915 through the undefeated 1976 team. As of 2026, 11 players associated with Pitt have been elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, tied for third-most among colleges, and Pitt has retired the jerseys of 11 players. The museum should present those achievements as a living lineage rather than a trophy case.

Museum zone	Experience
Nine National Championships	A chronological championship gallery from Pop Warner and Jock Sutherland through the 1976 Tony Dorsett team.
Pitt to Canton	Stories and artifacts from Pitt's 11 Pro Football Hall of Fame members, including Dan Marino, Tony Dorsett, Mike Ditka, Larry Fitzgerald Jr. and others.
Retired Jerseys	Permanent recognition of the 11 retired Pitt jerseys, including Aaron Donald's No. 97, with player stories integrated throughout the building.
Great Games & Pitt Stadium	Film, audio, photographs and artifacts preserving the atmosphere of the original Pitt Stadium and defining games across eras.
The Next Chapter	A changing gallery for the current team, recruiting classes and new accomplishments so the museum never feels finished.

This history should also spill into the stadium itself: retired numbers visible from the bowl, championship years integrated into concourses, historic imagery along circulation routes and storytelling embedded in premium spaces. The museum becomes the concentrated centerpiece, but the entire building carries the program's history.

Past and future The purpose of celebrating Pitt football history is not nostalgia for its own sake. The new stadium should make a simple argument: this program has an illustrious past worthy of a permanent home, and the building is an investment in advancing that story for the next generation.

The \$1.25 Billion Hazelwood Green Initiative

The Hazelwood Green initiative should establish an approximately \$1.25 billion philanthropic target spanning athletics, research, students, community impact and sustainable infrastructure. The initiative would operate as a signature component of Proving Possible, with donors able to direct support toward the parts of the project that align with their priorities.

Campaign component	Illustrative target	Purpose
Stadium & Athletics	\$500M-\$600M	Bowl, premium spaces, student experience, fan amenities and core stadium systems.
Research & Innovation	\$250M-\$300M	Applied research spaces, programs, centers and corporate partnerships.
Student Opportunity	\$150M-\$200M	Scholarships, experiential learning, entrepreneurship, internships and fellowships.
Hazelwood & Community	\$100M-\$150M	Public realm, workforce programs, community space and local-business support.
Sustainability & Infrastructure	\$100M+	Solar, stormwater, mobility and eligible public infrastructure.

The fundraising story

A donor can support football without pretending football is the University's only priority. An academic donor can support Hazelwood without funding a scoreboard. A transformational family can do both—and attach its name to an entire era of Pitt.

One Transformational Gift. Thousands of Owners.

The project should seek a \$250-\$400 million transformational lead commitment that spans multiple university priorities. The naming conversation should be about helping build Pitt's next great district, not merely purchasing the name of a stadium.

- \$150-\$225M: stadium and athletics components.
- \$50-\$75M: research and innovation initiative.
- \$25-\$50M: student scholarships and opportunity.
- \$25-\$50M: community, public realm and workforce programs.

Around that lead gift, Pitt can create challenge funds that broaden ownership of the project: an Innovation Challenge, a Panther Pitt Challenge, student-opportunity matching funds and a Hazelwood Community Challenge. Enormous leadership gifts and mass participation can reinforce each other.

A campaign for every Panther Proving Possible already aims to energize 200,000 donors. Hazelwood can give alumni a tangible project within that campaign while still allowing every gift to be designated to the part of the initiative the donor values.

Total Project Capital Stack

The full project carries a planning-level capital range of approximately \$1.8-\$2.4 billion. Its financing should combine philanthropy, University and athletics capital, private development, sponsorship and public-benefit infrastructure

funding so that Pitt is not required to philanthropically fund or borrow for every component.

Source	Illustrative range	Role
Hazelwood philanthropic initiative	\$1.0B-\$1.25B realized/pledged	University mission, stadium core, research, student and community priorities.
University / athletics debt & internal capital	\$250M-\$400M	Assets supported by reliable athletics/facility cash flows.
Private development / ground leases	\$250M-\$400M	Office, retail, restaurants and selected parking.
Public infrastructure grants / incentives	\$100M-\$200M aspiration	Transit, streets, brownfield, stormwater, public realm and eligible energy scopes.
Premium seating / sponsorship commitments	\$100M-\$175M value	Founders clubs, suites, naming inventory and commercial rights.

The project should establish separate capital stacks for the stadium, academic/innovation space, private real estate and public infrastructure. That protects the University from treating every square foot as an athletics expense.

Sustainability & Hazelwood Green

Hazelwood Green is a remediated industrial site with an explicit sustainability and community-development identity. The stadium concept aligns only if it behaves like a mixed-use district and environmental redevelopment project rather than a sea of parking surrounding a bowl.

- Solar photovoltaic canopies integrated into stadium roofs, garages and selected buildings.
- High-performance envelope, heat recovery, smart controls, LED lighting and demand management.
- Green roofs and native Pennsylvania plantings.
- Structured parking to minimize land consumed by cars and reduce heat-island effects.
- Stormwater treatment using permeable surfaces where site conditions permit, plus lined bioswales, rain gardens, detention and treatment where direct infiltration is inappropriate on a brownfield.
- Recycled-content steel, lower-carbon concrete, regional sourcing and design-for-disassembly principles.
- Transit-first event planning with explicit mode-share targets.

The public-benefit components are also the strongest candidates for grants and incentives. Pennsylvania capital and multimodal programs, PennDOT transportation funding, federal brownfield programs and then-current energy incentives should be pursued for independently valuable public scopes—not as a disguised subsidy for the football bowl.

Transportation & Infrastructure

A 45,000-seat stadium cannot be planned around the assumption that every fan drives to Hazelwood. The mobility plan must be designed at the same time as the building and should make non-driving options predictable enough that

fans choose them voluntarily.

- High-frequency Oakland-Hazelwood student and campus shuttle spine with dedicated event-day loading zones.
- Event-day Pittsburgh Regional Transit service overlays and timed connections to Oakland and Downtown.
- Remote parking network using university, Downtown, South Side/Technology Center and contracted lots with prepaid shuttle reservations.
- Structured shared-use parking at district edges, serving weekday research/office demand and Saturday football demand.
- Protected pedestrian, trail and bicycle connections, including bike valet and micromobility parking.
- Geofenced rideshare and charter-bus zones separated from residential streets, with managed postgame release.

Transportation principle Do not try to make driving effortless for 45,000 people. Make the alternatives reliable, legible and bundled into the ticketing experience.

Hazelwood Traffic & Community Impact Study

Before design is locked, Pitt and the site owner should commission an independent transportation and community-impact study with Greater Hazelwood resident representation.

- Baseline weekday/weekend traffic, transit ridership, parking utilization, pedestrian/bike movement, freight and emergency response.
- Sellout, 35,000-attendance, weeknight-event, overlapping weekday-employment and severe-weather scenarios.
- Mode-share targets establishing maximum on-site private-vehicle share and minimum transit/shuttle/walk-bike shares.
- Intersection and corridor analysis for Second Avenue, Hazelwood Avenue, Blair Street, Greenfield approaches and other modeled routes.
- Resident parking protections, turn restrictions, event traffic staffing, anti-idling rules and rideshare enforcement.
- Air-quality and noise baseline with post-opening monitoring.
- Emergency management, evacuation and redundant access planning.
- Mandatory first-season audit and a funded mitigation reserve.

A standing Hazelwood Stadium Mobility & Community Committee should include Pitt, Hazelwood Green ownership, the City/DOMI, Pittsburgh Regional Transit, public safety, neighborhood organizations and residents through at least the first three operating seasons.

Development Roadmap

The North Shore renewal window creates urgency, but a credible Hazelwood project cannot be designed, entitled, funded and built by 2030. The practical use of the date is as a strategic decision point: Pitt should know whether it intends to remain a long-term North Shore tenant before committing to another lengthy arrangement.

Phase	Timing	Primary decisions
0. Sponsor alignment	0-6 months	Pitt leadership, trustees, site ownership, City, donor sounding and community framework.
1. Feasibility	6-18 months	Program, geotech/environmental, traffic, market, cost, donor capacity and alternatives analysis.
2. Capital + entitlements	18-36 months	Lead gifts, private partners, grants, land-use approvals and community benefits.
3. Design + early works	30-48 months	Utilities, mobility, procurement and enabling packages.
4. Construction	48-84 months	Stadium/core district with surrounding development phased to demand.
5. Opening + adaptive operations	Post-open	Mobility, community, energy and stormwater performance audits.

A realistic opening horizon is approximately six to eight years after formal feasibility authorization. If Pitt began serious feasibility work now, the 2030-31 Acrisure renewal period could become the moment for an intentional bridge arrangement rather than an automatic multi-decade commitment.

Pitt's Next Landmark



The next 100 years start here

One hundred years ago, Pitt broke ground on the Cathedral of Learning—a physical declaration of what the University aspired to become. Proving Possible explicitly asks what Pitt's next century should look like.

Hazelwood Green offers a compelling answer: Oakland remains Pitt's academic heart, while Hazelwood becomes a new front door connecting the University to innovation, industry, entrepreneurship, athletics and Pittsburgh.

1926 — THE CATHEDRAL OF LEARNING

2026 — PROVING POSSIBLE

203X — PITT AT HAZELWOOD GREEN

This document is a concept proposal, not a feasibility study, land-use application, environmental report, traffic study, fundraising plan or financial commitment. Cost, program, grant eligibility, development rights, lease terms and funding structures require professional validation.