

Casinos And Your Health

Toronto Casino Consultation 2013

Overview

- The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) initiated a process of expansion in December 2010 and has identified 29 zones across Ontario in which they intend to offer a gaming venue.

- Four areas of Toronto are being considered for potential locations for a new casino and include Downtown, Port Lands, Exhibition Place (C1) and Woodbine (C2) (See map on reverse side).

- Each site has a proposed construction of a stand-alone Casino or an Integrated Entertainment Complex. It is OLG's intention to seek an Integrated Entertainment Complex in C1.

Ernst & Young has published a detailed report on the estimated economic costs and benefits to the city available at: www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-51515.pdf

The Facts

- Problem gambling seriously affects upwards of 11,000 people aged 18+ in the GTA and 25,000 people in Ontario. Additionally, there are approximately 129,000 people in the GTA considered low to moderate-risk gamblers¹.

- There are clear links between the availability of casinos and increases in problem gambling and have been observed in Niagara Falls, Sarnia, Sault Ste Marie, Brantford, and Thunder Bay².

- A recent report by the Medical Officer of Health has concluded that a casino located in the GTA will likely increase health risks for Toronto residents and nearby communities³.

- Gambling increases stress, harms financial well-being, increases crime, contributes to job losses and lost work productivity, and can lead to addiction⁴.

- Problem gambling can contribute to depression, insomnia, intestinal disorders, migraine, and other stress-related disorders⁵.

- One in four moderate to severe problem gamblers in Canada report being under a doctor's care for emotional or physical problems due to stress, and more than one in three report feeling depressed⁶.

- Clear links have been established between problem gambling and problem drinking. This combination increases risk of intimate partner violence⁷.

- Not all populations are at equal risk of problem gambling: people living in poverty, new Canadians, seniors, and youth are disproportionately affected⁸.

- Problem gambling can also have a health impact on families and communities, including through financial problems and family breakdown and divorce⁹.

- The health impacts of problem gambling can be intergenerational with children of problem gamblers being more likely to use tobacco, alcohol or drugs and develop psychosocial problems, educational challenges and emotional disorders throughout their lives¹⁰.

The Consultation Process

- Public input is required by provincial law and began January 2013. Community consultation dates and locations are available on the City site at: www.toronto.ca/casinoconsultation/haveyoursay.htm

- The City Manager will report on the public consultations March 2013. Subsequently the City will pass a resolution rejecting or specifying conditions under which Toronto would be willing to host a new OLG casino.

What We Should Be Asking

- How does a casino in your neighbourhood affect your health?
- How is the wellbeing of your community affected?
- How does problem gambling affect the health of marginalized populations, such as people with low income, newcomers, seniors, and young people?
- What is the real cost of a casino for Toronto and Ontario?

Further Information

Our recent publication, *The Real Cost of Casinos: A Health Equity Impact Assessment*, is available at: www.wellesleyinstitute.com/

Additional information regarding the proposal and the potential social and health impact can be found on the Toronto Casino Consultation site: www.toronto.ca/casinoconsultation/index.htm

You can submit your input to the Council by the deadline: Friday January 25, 2013: <https://surveys.dpra.com/casino/CasinoSurvey.aspx>

How will the Proposed Sites Affect Your Neighbourhood?



¹ Toronto Public Health and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, *The Health Impacts of Gambling Expansion in Toronto: Technical Report*. November 2012. <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-51873.pdf>.

² Robin Room, Nigel E. Turner and Anca Ialomiteanu, 'Community effects of the opening of the Niagara casino', *Addiction*, Vol. 94, No. 10, 1999, pp. 1449-1466.

³ Jason J. Azmier, *Gambling in Canada 2005: Statistics and Context*, Canada West Foundation, 2005.

⁴ Mark Griffiths, 'Betting your life on it: Problem gambling has clear health related consequences', *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 3289, No. 7474, November 2004, pp. 1055-1056.

⁵ Margot Andresen, 'Governments' conflict of interest in treating problem gamblers', *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, Vol. 175, No. 10, November 2006.

⁶ Robert L. Muelleman, Tami DenOtter, Michael C. Wadman, MD, T. Paul Tran, MD, and James Anderson, 'Problem Gambling In The Partner Of The Emergency Department Patient As A Risk Factor For Intimate Partner Violence', *The Journal of Emergency Medicine*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 2002, pp. 307-312.

⁷ Steven Cook, Nigel Turner, Angela Paglia-Boak, Edward M. Adlaf and Robert E. Mann, *Ontario Youth Gambling Report: Data from the 2009 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey*, Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, November 2010

⁸ Toronto Public Health and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, *The Health Impacts of Gambling Expansion in Toronto: Technical Report*, p. 13.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17-18.