

54% of Toronto Residents Support Idea of New Casino in Toronto

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Shops, Entertainment and Hotel, Four in Ten (37%)
More Supportive***

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Ipsos Reid

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Toronto, ON – Almost all Torontonians (89%) have heard about the possibility of a casino in Toronto and at first blush 54% of Torontonians support the idea while nearly half (47%) oppose it according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Canadian Gaming Association.

However, if the casino were part of a larger complex which included restaurants, shops, entertainment venues and a hotel, four in ten (37%) Torontonians say they would be more supportive of the casino project, including 17% of those who were opposed at the outset, while one in ten (6%) are less supportive knowing this, and six in ten (57%) say their opinion of the project hasn't changed either way knowing this.

The Perceived Impact of a Potential Casino...

All things considered, six in ten (59%) think that a casino in Toronto would have a 'positive impact' on Toronto, while four in ten (41%) think the net impact would be 'negative'.

Similarly, six in ten (58%) are closer to the opinion that a 'casino should be allowed in Toronto because it will provide many benefits to the city such as jobs and economic development', while four in ten (42%) more closely believe that a 'casino should not be allowed in Toronto because it will attract criminal activity and entice problem gamblers'.

Supporters of a casino say the main reasons they are on board are because it would be good for the economy (63%), tourism (27%), more jobs (24%), that it would be a more convenient location (than going afar) (15%) and that it is good entertainment and fun (11%). Those who oppose the casino cite potential gambling addiction (32%), increased poverty (17%), crime (16%), a poor source of revenue (14%) and increased social problems (14%) as their top reasons for not wanting the venue.

The Potential Benefits and the Concerns...

In terms of the perceived benefits of a casino, three quarters (76%) of Torontonians think that tax revenue for Toronto would be a benefit, followed by job creation (69%) and increases in tourism (65%), entertainment options for tourists and residents of Toronto (63%), development in restaurants and shops (58%), and development in hotels (55%).

But Torontonians are not without concerns about a casino project. Seven in ten (70%) are 'worried' about such things as increases in criminal activity (60%), costs for social services (59%), costs for policing (58%) and poverty (55%) along with prostitution near the casino (45%) and problem gambling (38%).

Where the Casino Might Be Located...

Respondents were asked whether they approved or disapproved of a casino being located in various areas – some having already been discussed in the media, others being hypothetical locations for comparative purposes. From a list, the following results emerged: Woodbine Race Track (54%), Ontario Place (51%), and Exhibition Place (51%) had the highest levels of approval ratings while other options provided such as Downsview (37%), the East Waterfront Portland's (37%) and downtown Toronto near the Convention Centre (31%) all received much lower level of support.

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Why they Go to a Casino...

Among the 57% of Torontonians who visit casinos, four in ten (42%) said entertainment is the number-one reason they visit a casino, while one in three (35%) visit primarily to play the slots. One in ten (14%) say they primarily go to play table games, while 4% go primarily for the dining. One in twenty (5%) visit a casino for some other reason.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between March 16 and 21, 2012, on behalf of the Canadian Gaming Association. For this survey, a sample of 810 adults living in Toronto proper from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Toronto been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error.

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