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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT RESPONDS TO RELEASE OF FEASIBILITY STUDY ON CHICAGO CASINO AND ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF COMMUNITY SURVEY

Chicago committed to working with state to ensure casino will be successful after independent report finds the current tax structure of casino is not financially feasible

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today responded to the independent report commissioned by the Illinois Gaming Board that examined the economic feasibility of a casino in Chicago. This report found that the “gaming expansion legislation that allows for a casino in the City of Chicago is very onerous from a tax and fee perspective” and it is likely not financeable under the proposed structure.

“We have been clear from day one that the creation of a new casino for Chicago has to be financially viable and address the revenue needs of the City of Chicago,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “While the study confirms our concerns about the tax structure that the legislature passed, we know that this can be addressed, and we look forward to working with the governor and legislative leaders to revise the legislation and ensure a new casino will be beneficial for Chicago’s communities and the entire state.”

The feasibility study, required by state statute, marked the first step in the City’s process for moving forward with a casino by seeking to evaluate the economic feasibility of the project. A separate process will inform the site selection for a casino and will be met with a robust community engagement process.

Mayor Lightfoot also today announced the results of the initial public survey to identify Chicagoans’ preferences and top priorities for a new Chicago casino, which will help guide future decisions about the casino process. In just under three weeks, more than 10,000 residents provided their feedback on key priorities for the casino, with focus on revenue generating ability and preferred location.

“The initial results of our survey out today provide valuable insight as we explore the best ways for a casino to generate new revenues for our city and residents. One of the key messages we heard from Chicagoans is that they would like to see the casino generate tax revenue for the City,” said Mayor Lightfoot.

The initial results also indicate that residents are interested in the casino’s ability to generate new revenues, address Chicago’s pension costs and offer new employment, with



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responses on preferred amenities, location as well as biggest areas of concern for residents varying across the board. The full report on the preliminary survey findings can be found [here](#).

Some of the key findings of the survey include:

- 73 percent of the responses said the most important benefit of opening a casino in Chicago are increased tax revenue and increased employment.
- 36 percent of respondents indicated they would like to see a casino built near downtown while 32 percent indicated they would prefer a location that will generate new development.
- Most respondents want the casino to include amenities such as restaurants, theater or live entertainment.
- The biggest concerns identified in the survey were related to increased traffic and congestion, gambling addiction, and displacement of residents.

Overall the initial survey results showed respondents were generally positive about a new casino in Chicago. However, respondents also indicated that the City should think carefully about additional economic development to support residents of those communities if one of those areas was chosen as the new site. The City will use these initial findings to inform continued discussions with the community around the plans for a future casino, and to inform the process for determining a permanent site location for the casino.

With more work to be done to inform planning, and ensure Chicago harnesses the full revenue generating benefits for a casino and its impact on communities, the City will provide ongoing opportunities for the public to give feedback during community meetings beginning later this year. During public meetings, residents will have the opportunity to share their feedback on issues that will inform the location, development and operation of a casino, and to learn more about how a casino will inform future financial solutions for the city.

A new casino is envisioned for Chicago as a result of recently enacted legislation and is made possible as a result of Mayor Lightfoot's efforts working with state leadership to secure the requisite approvals. Under the state law, new revenues from a Chicago casino will be used to fund Chicago's police and fire pensions. It is estimated that a Chicago casino will create thousands of jobs as well as contracting opportunities for the community.

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