

Design Advocacy Group of Philadelphia Statement on the Selection of Sites for Gaming Establishments in Pennsylvania

With the July 2004 passage of the Pennsylvania Gaming Act, Philadelphia is poised to receive 5,000 slot machines that could draw as many as 40,000 people a day. Now is the time to think about how gaming establishments will affect the physical fabric of our communities. Typically these parlors are large, insular structures that generate significant car and bus traffic. They have the potential to adversely affect businesses and communities. The following planning principles should be followed so that these establishments benefit rather than damage Pennsylvania's cities and suburbs.

- **Analyze impact before selecting the site.**
The large number of patrons that gaming establishments attract will generate significant automobile and bus traffic. An impact study should precede any discussion on site selection for a gaming establishment. The study should include all issues that will affect the quality of life for those living in, working in, or visiting the area. Such issues include access by public and private transportation; pedestrian circulation; service; noise, light, and environmental pollution; and affect on existing and new businesses.
- **Design to protect and enhance immediate surroundings.**
Typically gaming establishments are large buildings that dominate the neighborhoods in which they are located. These buildings should be designed to enhance their immediate surroundings, whether located in the suburbs, small towns, or in the middle of large cities. In urban areas, in particular, design attention must be given to the massing, scale, material, rhythm, color, and detail of construction to avoid damage to existing neighborhoods.
- **Encourage a variety of uses.**
Typically gaming establishments are large, single-use structures. In New Orleans and elsewhere, their large scale and insular design has been found to deaden the street and harm the social and economic vitality of the city. To counteract this effect, gaming establishments should be part of mixed-use developments that include such uses as theaters, retail, hotels, and other related activities. Mixed-used developments appeal to a wide range of users over the course of the day, month, and year, stimulating a lively and healthy community.
- **Include the public in the process.**
The public has a strong interest in protecting the quality of the neighborhoods in which these facilities will be located. The siting and design of every gaming establishment should be vetted through an open public process. Experts on the environmental impact of gaming houses, their physical context, and their architectural design should be invited to the process to inform the discussion so that the physical impact is understood by the people who will be most affected by these establishments.

Prepared by the DAG Task Force on Gambling
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