

Town of Massena community reuse of former General Motors industrial site.

PROPOSAL

Summary – A proposal exists to reuse the former GM site located adjacent to the Massena Port of Entry at the eastern end of St. Lawrence County, off of State Route 37. This proposal involves the location of a Class 3 gaming and entertainment property that will operate in concert and cooperation with the tribally-owned Class 3 gaming resort property, Akwesasne Mohawk Casino Resort.

A working committee of members of the Akwesasne Native community, acting in a living trust capacity, will act as a leasing entity of the former GM property to interested parties acting on behalf of the Town of Massena. Members of this committee will come from a cross section of Akwesasne, including prominent community members residing in the Town of Massena.

This working committee would come together to acquire the former GM site for redevelopment purposes, when that becomes a feasible option. The property would then be made available through a long-term leasing agreement between the working group and potential partners. Terms of the leasing agreement would focus on a 99-year understanding with standard contingencies. Nine ten-year leases and one nine -year lease would accommodate the agreement terms in a renewable and revocable fashion. At the end of the agreement, the former GM site would then be presented to a governing entity on behalf of the community of Akwesasne.

Intended benefits for the project outcome will focus on tax relief that will come for the Town of Massena, County of St. Lawrence and the Massena Central School District through employment and increased tax revenue stream from real estate taxes paid by the Town of Massena Casino for the Massena property usage. The payment of the taxes will be part of the comprehensive agreement negotiated with the gaming property management partner(s).

Other benefits to the North Country region would be made through the direct support of the latent agricultural sector in St. Lawrence and Franklin counties, as well as the Akwesasne Territory. This would be done to spur agricultural reinvestment into the area and to provide jobs in this economic sector.

Employment for Akwesasne, Franklin County and St. Lawrence County residents would also be emphasized throughout the hiring process for gaming property workers.

GAMING MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP(S)

To create a fair and equitable method of selecting a gaming management partner to assist with this project implementation, the selection process will be made transparent and public.

Possible candidates for the gaming partnership entity(s) will be made from the pool of qualified gaming project teams that have already submitted feasibility proposals to New York State in the form of active gaming projects that are currently under award consideration.

Candidate preference will be given first to gaming management partnership groups not awarded a license in the current round of public proposals received by New York State.

PROJECT FOCUS STATEMENT

This project is intended for the benefit of the tax-paying citizens of New York. The goal of this project is to impact the regional social and economic conditions affecting the residents of St. Lawrence and Franklin counties.

The employment of area residents within this project will be both active and persistent. One goal of the outcome of the proceeds of this plan would be to reduce the overall rates of social assistance in St. Lawrence and Franklin counties by a rate of ten-percent per year of operation, and by fifty-percent overall.

DIRECT BENEFITS SUMMARY

St. Lawrence County residents: 5% of overall tax revenue

Property tax freeze within St. Lawrence County through the stabilization of the taxable base rate. This direct benefit would be achieved when the gaming property operational goals would be eventually reached financially.

50% tuition to county residents at a state-approved or operated educational facility located within St. Lawrence or Franklin counties. This would be paid through a 2.5% share of the overall tax revenue.

Agricultural sector projects in St. Lawrence County would be supported through a direct allocation from community revenue sharing from the gaming operations at a rate of 2.5% of overall tax revenue.

Some intended projects within this include the fostering of livestock, the immediate reuse of abandoned properties through cooperative farming, the acquisition of agricultural harvesting equipment that could be mutually used by local farmers, and the marketing of regional crops to ensure diversified crop rotation selection.

Franklin County residents: 5% of overall tax revenue

Property tax freeze within Franklin County through the stabilization of the taxable base rate. This direct benefit would be achieved when the gaming property operational goals would be eventually reached financially.

50% tuition to county residents at a state-approved or operated educational facility located within Franklin or St. Lawrence counties. This would be paid through a 2.5% share of the overall tax revenue.

Agricultural sector projects in Franklin County would be supported through a direct allocation of community revenue sharing from the gaming operations at a rate of 2.5% of overall tax revenue.

Some intended projects within this including the fostering of livestock, the immediate reuse of abandoned properties through cooperative farming, the acquisition of agricultural harvesting equipment that could be mutually used by local farmers, and the marketing of regional crops to ensure diversified crop rotation selection.

Akwesasne Territory residents: 5% of overall revenue

A percentage of the revenue-share from the gaming operations will be made available in the form of direct assistance to the residents of the Akwesasne Territory.

The direct assistance could take the form of per-capita payments to community members of the Akwesasne Territory, or could also be distributed through an emergency claims office that would address overdue accounts payable to utility and service providers to Akwesasne Territory residents.

Agricultural sector projects within the Akwesasne Territory would also be supported through the direct allocation of community revenue sharing from the gaming operations via Franklin County.

Overall, 5% of the gaming property revenue would be distributed to Akwesasne residents.

Examples of these projects would include the acquisition of agricultural harvesting equipment that could be mutually used by local farmers, and the marketing of regional crops to ensure diversified crop rotation selection. The location of a centrally-located regional farmer's market produce outlet in Akwesasne would assist in the nutritional benefit to all North Country residents and would allow for ongoing commercial sales to the destination gaming properties food and beverage departments. Environmental monitoring livestock herds also will be supported by the agricultural support program.

PROJECT-RELATED BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Additionally, the development of retail outlets are also a possibility on-site or at regional sites to be determined in conjunction with this project fruition under a management agreement yet to be determined at a later stage of the property development.

INSIGHT TO GAMING PROJECT DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

The development of a rivalling gaming property located in Cornwall, Ontario remains a distinctive possibility within the next 1-5 years, based on Canadian market analysis and public comment.

The redevelopment of the former GM site for the stated purpose of gaming and entertainment would reduce the likelihood of a Canadian gaming property from being developed regionally.

The development of other licensed gaming properties in areas west of both Massena and Cornwall will be considered complementing gaming properties to this regional destination project and not solely those of a competitive nature which would detract from the overall success of this described project.

NOTES

The direct revenue sharing to Akwesasne Territory residents will have to be specifically studied for equitable distribution feasibility due to local (Akwesasne) concerns of federal taxation implications for the benefit recipients. (i.e. 1099 matching tax documentation of benefit receipt)

Public meetings will be scheduled for the discussion of all aspects of this preliminary proposal, including this subject.

The existing New York State – St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Gaming Compact agreement does not include direct per-capita revenue sharing allowances which would create the template in this matter. As a result, there is no current per-capita distribution for Akwesasne Territory residents. That status quo does not reflect the interest by the Akwesasne Territory residents to participate in a revenue sharing distribution, direct – indirect or otherwise.

Opinion polling and other means of information-gathering would be encompassed to maximize the direction of any revenue sharing considerations and implementation.

Areas of concern pertaining to direct revenue sharing distribution would have to encompass previously existing eligibility thresholds for social service programs that are already being received by the recipients, regardless of location.

The employment of residents of all of the involved geographic areas is of such a critical regional nature that a gaming license dispensation will be actively sought for non-cash handling positions within this gaming property location. A variety of gaming license holders (key, currency, non-currency) within the gaming property personnel will not affect the success of the gaming property management in any way.

To this regard, the adjudication of employee background check investigative areas will be sought in support of proven employee performance standards attainment, after an extended period of service has been reached.

The support of New York agricultural areas regional support (as envisioned by this detailed project proposal) is highly exemplified by the recent Op-Ed published by the Auburn Citizen newspaper which was submitted by New York State Senator Michael Nozzolio at:

http://auburnpub.com/news/opinion/columnists/nozzolio-agriculture-means-everything-to-finger-lakes---lake/article_1f9c8d47-b244-5634-b8fc-7b9b7c96a159.html

A listing of possible gaming partnership teams for purposes of consideration pertinent with this project can be found at: <http://gaming.ny.gov/pdf/06.30.14.CasinoApplicants.pdf>