



March 9th, 2015

Mayor John Tory, Chair
Executive Committee
City of Toronto, Office of the Mayor
100 Queen Street W, 2nd Floor
Toronto, ON – M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Executive Committee Members,

As Deputy Mayor, I have taken on a lead role in economic development to aid in the processes that will promote revitalization and sustainability, generating gains in private investment and local job creation. A letter submitted to my office by Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG) has opened a dialogue to discuss merits of how, as a City, we can achieve further economic success in Etobicoke and in Toronto.

WEG has been a longstanding partner, operating in Toronto since 1881. The Woodbine Racetrack facility has been a part of the North Etobicoke fabric since 1956 and has since earned worldwide recognition as a premier horse racing operation.

I am writing the Executive Committee to advise that North Etobicoke faces the very real threat of losing the racetrack. As you may be aware, the short term arrangement between WEG and the Province, through the Horse Racing Partnership Funding Program expires in 2019.

For WEG to achieve long-term sustainability for the horse racing industry, solutions must be identified that are successful over the long-term and provide consistent revenue streams that will facilitate growth, while providing security for the horse racing industry. If solutions are not found then Toronto faces the potential loss of more than 7500 jobs and over 1800 in the Rexdale community that WEG currently provides.

The concept of expanded gaming will provide not only WEG a revenue stream to support horse racing at this site, but will provide the City and North Etobicoke immense revitalization and economic prospects. I am writing to you and the Executive Committee to consider engaging in the process to attain a resolution by the City of Toronto to permit the expansion of gaming at the Woodbine Racetrack, which would include the introduction of live gaming tied to a bigger vision; the creation of a premier "entertainment destination" for our City. The opportunity is before us to create a legacy at this site that will see an economically depressed area like Rexdale revitalized with new operations like a hotel, restaurants, retail, amenities, partnerships to support community needs, etc.

Under a new administration we have the opportunity to engage the private sector, along with other orders of government to ensure that Toronto remains at the forefront of economic growth, while remaining highly competitive with its surrounding municipalities. The expansion of the Woodbine Racetrack will allow us the opportunity to achieve just that.

Moving forward it is important to remember that gaming via the racetrack has been taking place since 1956 and gaming through slots and electronic tables since 2000.

It is also timely that we consider a live gaming expansion at this site as the OLG is currently engaged in the procurement process to identify a qualified private sector service provider to operate OLG Slots at Woodbine racetrack pursuant to its Modernization Plan. The support of expanded gaming will allow WEG and a future private sector service provider the ability to work with the City through a redevelopment application process, creating a catalyst for revitalization of the surrounding area. This important first step is required in order for WEG and the OLG to develop a redevelopment strategy in consultation with the City to ensure the long-term success of the Rexdale Community.

The expansion of gaming at this specific site will create an environment with immense potential and benefit to the City of Toronto and its residents. Benefits include:

- Creation of local jobs, fostering economic sustainability & vitality in the Rexdale community
- Establishment of a new world class, premier "entertainment destination" for Toronto
- Increased revenue to the City through property taxes and hosting fees
- Redevelopment of nearly 700 acres at the 555 Rexdale Blvd site
- Remain a premier tourist attraction with over six million visitors a year
- Act as a catalyst for further growth and revitalization in the Rexdale/Etobicoke area
- Stronger City and Community partnership with WEG

It is important that we listen to our communities and act in their best interest regarding this matter. We saw positive community support for the expansion at Woodbine, highlighted through polling and public consultations, which were identified in the 2013 report when the gaming expansion at Woodbine Racetrack was before Council in the previous term. I also found that during my 2014 door-to-door re-election campaign that positive sentiment remained in Etobicoke North for expanded gaming at Woodbine Racetrack. I strongly believe that the support from our residents will continue to be there, as we will have the opportunity to engage them again through a willing host/expanded gaming process site specific to 555 Rexdale Blvd.

I will be in attendance at the March 25th, 2015 Executive Committee meeting to discuss this matter further with the committee and to present a motion that will be site specific to 555 Rexdale Blvd. This will commence the process to attain a resolution by the City of Toronto to permit the expansion of gaming at the Woodbine Racetrack, which would include the introduction of live gaming, acting as the catalyst for greater vision for this site.

I strongly believe that expanded gaming at Woodbine racetrack will not only allow WEG to sustain long-term revenue security for the horse racing industry, but the overall project will have even greater and more positive impacts that will be felt in Etobicoke and the rest of the City.

I recommend that the Executive Committee move the following:

1. Executive Committee request City Council authorize the City Manager to conduct a public consultation process to seek input from Torontonians on the matter of expanded gaming at 555 Rexdale Blvd (Woodbine Racetrack); including:
 - a. A public meeting in Etobicoke;

- b. An online questionnaire;
 - c. A city-wide public opinion poll; and
 - d. A presentation at Executive Committee
2. Executive Committee request City Council direct the City Manager to prepare a report for the June 30th, 2015 meeting of Executive Committee, which would include an assessment of the technical planning requirements, and merits and potential risks of expanded gaming at 555 Rexdale Blvd (Woodbine Racetrack); including:
- a. The size and type of facility that would be suitable at the Woodbine location;
 - b. Any required land use, infrastructure and other planning matters associated with expanded gaming at the Woodbine site;
 - c. The potential economic impact (GDP and jobs) of expanded gaming at Woodbine Racetrack and the potential added economic impact of an expanded entertainment and retail destination;
 - d. The potential risks to the current employment at the Woodbine Racetrack if a new casino were to be located within the GTA but outside of the City of Toronto;
 - e. The identification of social and economic development objectives that the City may require as conditions for its approval of expanded gaming at Woodbine, to leverage any new development to benefit local Toronto residents and communities;
 - f. The potential additional social impact to individuals and families due to gambling-related addictive behaviour and crime, and options to mitigate the negative human and social impact;
 - g. Any incremental costs associated with expanded gaming at Woodbine including police, fire and emergency medical services costs;
 - h. The amount of projected revenue to be received by the City as part of a Municipal Contribution Agreement with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation reflecting projected revenues at the new gaming site; and
 - i. The results of the public consultation, per Recommendation 1.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Deputy Mayor Vincent Crisanti
Councillor, Ward 1 – Etobicoke North