

Future 91 construction impact on casino

Written by Administrator
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SPRINGFIELD, Mass. (WWLP) - Traffic plans will play a role in who wins the **Western Massachusetts** casino license, but construction on the Interstate 91 viaduct isn't going to be the deciding factor.

The **Interstate 91 Viaduct** through Springfield is in for a major overhaul. Somewhere in the price range of \$400 million.

Pioneer Valley Planning

Commission Executive Director Tim Brennan

told 22News I-91 construction is bigger than any casino.

"The casinos will be dependent upon that to get people to their doors, but we need 91 for a whole variety of purposes", says Brennan.

Penn National, MGM and Hard Rock would all be impacted by any potential construction on I-91. The issue that any construction details may not be unveiled until well after a casino license is awarded.

"I think the casino decision will come well before the actual work on 91 begins, it's an expensive project, it's a complicated project and will have to be in a way that's least disruptive as possible", says Brennan.

The Massachusetts Gaming Commission told 22News the infrastructure development will be relevant, but they need more information on particulars before the MGC can assess how it might impact decision-making.

Those particulars just aren't likely to be out there by the time these casino licenses are awarded in early 2014. MassDOT is only in the study phase for the 91 Viaduct. They will have a better sense of the timing of a project after figures out how it will fix it.

It's premature to say what role this construction project could have on a casino license, since the state hasn't even figured out how its going to pay for it.

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