

Written by Administrator
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Chicago is finally set to get a much-anticipated casino. And it's not just any casino, but one that could rival Las Vegas mega-casinos in size and scope.

Unlike previous proposals, this will not be a city-owned venture (though Chicago is set to get a third of the casino's adjusted gross receipts, so it's in the city's interests for any eventual operator to succeed). Gov. J.B. Pritzker said Tuesday that's at the city's request, though he backs the decision because he believes a "business-oriented partner" will "make it a more effective endeavor."

A major question, ripe for bettors (or real estate speculators) is where the casino will go.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot isn't sharing her thoughts publicly.

Pritzker isn't offering a specific site, but he has an opinion: not downtown.

"We should be creating jobs in communities that have been left out and left behind and there are a lot of areas of Chicago that fill that bill," Pritzker said Tuesday. "But it's important to me that we focus on job creation in those areas, in particular for people that don't have the job opportunities that come from the center of the city."

But already, Ald. Sophia King says the Bronzeville community doesn't want a casino on the oft-mentioned site of the former Michael Reese Hospital.

"The community has consistently opposed a casino on the site. The Michael Reese Advisory Committee has honored this strong sentiment and has been diligently working with Farpoint development on the highest and best use of the land. They are proposing a vibrant mixed use development consisting of residential, commercial and community space that also pays homage to Michael Reese Hospital and the greater Bronzeville community," she said in a statement.

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The governor says he believes that a target casino audience – tourists and convention-goers – would leave downtown for a casino in a neighborhood, nothing that gamblers already travel to try their luck in Hammond, Indiana.

Separately, Pritzker indicated that he will sign the budget legislators passed last week in its entirety, rather than using his veto pen to eliminate a \$1,600 pay raise for legislators – their first since 2008.

Pritzker said he's signing the budget in full, "as-is," given that it was highly negotiated. He also says he respects lawmakers, who put in a lot of work in service to the state.

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