

Lightfoot issues deadline for Chicago casino approval

Written by Administrator
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Mayor Lori Lightfoot wants the Chicago City Council to give final approval for a new downtown casino by next Wednesday.

CHICAGO - Mayor [Lori Lightfoot](#) wants the [Chicago City Council](#) to give final approval for a new downtown [casino](#) by next Wednesday.

Lightfoot said Friday she's "confident" the votes are there, despite objections from thousands of neighbors who live near the site at Chicago Avenue and Halsted Street.

"I'm anxious to get a temporary casino up and running as quickly as we possibly can, so the revenues start to flow to our city," Lightfoot said.

In addition to objections to the proposed Bally's site, there's a battle brewing over the surprise temporary casino site the mayor recently announced with no advance public notice or discussion.

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The council member representing that area mocked Deputy Mayor Samir Mayekar's suggestion of strong support for it.

"With all due respect to Deputy Mayekar, there are not a great many people in River North who are excited about a casino at Medinah Temple, or at the permanent site to be quite honest," said Ald. Brendan Riley, 42nd Ward. "We did a poll and more than 85 percent of downtown residents -- not just River North -- are opposed to this move."

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The mayor's aides argued for quick action to ratify the Near North Side site, because it would still take many months after that to win the required approvals from other oversight agencies, including the Illinois Gaming Board.

"This project is good for our business environment in Chicago and is going to keep us nationally and globally competitive. I will remind everyone that New York is currently exploring a casino RFP that they'll put out. And peer cities that we compete with for tourists -- like Sydney, London, Singapore -- these cities all offer gaming," Mayekar said.

Leaders of the city council's special committee on the casino said they plan to call a vote this Monday, and to have the full council vote on Wednesday.

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