



10 Points of Clarity on NO! Downtown Hamilton Casino

	What They're Saying About Us	What We're Actually Saying About a Downtown Hamilton Casino
1	<i>They don't want a casino.</i>	What we don't want is a casino in downtown Hamilton, but we are prepared to keep and to expand Flamboro Downs.
2	<i>They don't care about the money we receive from OLG.</i>	We are fiscal realists, so we realize the City of Hamilton has come to rely on the \$4.5 million it receives each year from OLG. Not only that, we realize that the total amount goes into General Revenues, which means unlike Brantford, we don't separate the money out for use on special projects.
3	<i>They're hypocritical and want it both ways.</i>	We acknowledge that gambling creates social and health problems, as do other legalized offerings such as alcohol and tobacco. We also acknowledge that the provincial government is a problem gambler, and has absolutely no intention of ending their addiction to gambling-derived revenues. As a result, we are also social realists. We realize that casinos are here to stay in Ontario. What we want to avoid is increasing the level of damage caused by a casino, even for a minority of citizens, by placing it downtown thereby making it not only closer to many problem gamblers, but also easier for problem gamblers, and near-problem gamblers, to get to either by walking or by taking public transit (HSR).
4	<i>They don't believe in personal choice and individual responsibility.</i>	We believe in both personal choice and in individual responsibility which is why each of us has made a personal choice to oppose building a casino in downtown Hamilton. Problem gambling is an addiction disguised as personal choice. Even OLG acknowledges it as a problem and spends millions trying to deal with it each year. We acknowledge the role of individual responsibility, but we include in ours the social responsibility to not knowingly increase social problems by choosing to locate a casino in downtown Hamilton where we know it will exacerbate the devastating problems created by problem gambling such as depression, spousal abuse, divorce, bankruptcies, developmental issues for children, suicides. Problem gamblers will still exist in Hamilton if we don't build a casino downtown, but we may be able to avoid increasing their number by keeping it in Flamborough.
5	<i>They're just demonstrating NIMBYism.</i>	We have taken an evidence-based approach to understanding the social and financial risks of a casino and then using that understanding to avoid exacerbating the problem it creates. We have looked at the impressive growth in development downtown, using the growth stats from Hamilton's Economic Development Department as proof positive that downtown revitalization is well-underway. We believe a new Hamilton is emerging, one that doesn't require the addition of a casino in order to succeed.
6	<i>They don't care about revitalizing downtown Hamilton.</i>	Many of the strongest voices against building a casino in downtown Hamilton are people who use it the most. Many of them own businesses downtown. Even more of them visit downtown regularly. They live downtown, many within blocks of King and James. Others believe that Hamilton's downtown is already being revitalized. There is more to do, of course, but much has been done, is underway, and is planned for the future. Citizen-based initiatives such as the monthly Art Crawls and the annual SuperCrawl receive national media attention as examples of a new energy in downtown Hamilton.



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7	<i>They don't care about jobs the casino will bring.</i>	We know that jobs are essential in the new Hamilton. Good, long-term, well-paying jobs. The Flamboro Downs casino already supports hundreds of full-time and part-time jobs, both directly related to gaming, as well as related to the horse racing industry. We want to maintain those jobs and to add to them. Closing Flamboro in order to open a casino in downtown Hamilton will see the loss of many of those jobs. It will also simply translate into the migration of hundreds of existing casino-related jobs to downtown from Flamborough. Yes, more casino-related jobs will result from a larger casino, but a larger casino is possible at the current location at Flamboro Downs.
8	<i>They're prepared to overlook a significant development opportunity.</i>	We aren't overlooking anything. In fact, we've gone to some lengths to ensure we understand all aspects of the casino proposal. The pros and the cons. OLG-derived revenues will come to Hamilton regardless of location. New hotels are already being built downtown, and more have been promised. New management and new contracts will bring new vibrancy and viability to our citizen-owned HECFI assets - downtown. New investments in higher density residential have been made and have been announced right in the downtown core. More and more people are saying they want to live, work, and play downtown. By choice, not by circumstance. We believe the opportunity for further residential and commercial growth downtown is the truly sustainable opportunity. We do not believe a casino in downtown Hamilton enhances that mix.
9	<i>They don't have hope in Hamilton's future.</i>	It's precisely because we have hope for Hamilton, and for downtown Hamilton in particular, that we oppose a casino for downtown Hamilton. We have hope that enlightened investors will see the exciting financial upside of investing in Hamilton's downtown without the presence of a casino. We have hope that more and more citizens will choose downtown Hamilton as the place they want to live, whether they're beginning their careers, or whether they've chosen to spend their retirement in the heart of their city.
10	<i>They only see the negatives and don't want to look at the positives.</i>	We have worked hard to understand both sides of this equation. Research on the public health impact of a conveniently accessible casino in our downtown shows us the significant risks and social costs of such a location. Research on the economic development impact a casino has on a downtown, its property values, and its local businesses is disheartening, to say the least. There may be some more jobs within the casino, but not because of the casino. There may be some additional property taxes paid by the casino, but there is solid evidence that a casino puts downward pressure on businesses, homes, and real estate values in the neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to the casino. The amount of gambling-derived revenues provided to Hamilton from OLG are largely known. OLG President and CEO Rod Phillips has told us that we may see an increase of up to 10% on the \$4.5 million we receive currently. That still represents only 1/3 of 1% of the City of Hamilton's total annual operating budget. We don't propose receiving less. We propose maintaining the amount we receive, and that we maintain the site from which we receive that amount, namely Flamboro Downs. The social and business costs of a downtown casino far outweigh any financial benefits.