

East Hartford submits casino proposal backed by former Springfield City Councilor Anthony Ravosa Jr.

Hartford casino proposal

Former Springfield city councilor Anthony Ravosa and his development team's proposal for an East Hartford casino.

[Dan Glaun](#) | dglaun@masslive.com



By Dan Glaun | dglaun@masslive.com The Republican

[Follow on Twitter](#)

on November 06, 2015 at 10:54 AM, updated November 06, 2015 at 12:27 PM

East Hartford has formally submitted its casino proposal to the tribal business seeking to build a third casino in Connecticut.

The proposal, pitched by a development group led by former Springfield City Councilor Anthony Ravosa Jr., would place a casino, restaurants and entertainment options just off Interstate 84, at the site of a former Showcase Cinemas movie theater. MM4CT, the joint Mohegan-Mashantucket Pequot company authorized by Connecticut's June gaming act to seek a casino site, hopes to choose a location by Dec. 15.

East Hartford's government has pushed for the casino, approving a zoning change to allow entertainment at the site and authorizing Mayor Marcia Leclerc to submit the proposal.

"As you stated in the request for proposal that you wish to leave a better place for your grandchildren, as a life-long resident and Mayor of the Town of East Hartford, I wish to leave a better community for all of our residents both young

and old who call this community home," Leclerc wrote to the tribes in the proposal. "I am excited about the opportunity for the town to be home for to the new gaming and entertainment facility and look forward to working with you on this project."

The plan is more ambitious than originally suggested by Ravosa and his development group.

Ravosa's original proposal was expected to cost \$138 million and included between 1,000 and 2,000 gaming machines, dining and drinking options, a dance club and over 1,200 parking spaces.

But details released on the [website](#) of Pearce Real Estate, the company managing the proposals for the tribes, laid out a more ambitious plan, targeting more than 2,000 gaming positions and more than 3,000 parking spots.

The new proposal includes 2,000 slots, a 2,100 space parking garage, 1,000 surface parking spaces, and other amenities including full-service restaurants, fast food options, bars and a dance club.

The Mohegan and Mashantucket Pequot tribes, operators of the state's two federal Indian casinos, are teaming up in an attempt to beat MGM Springfield to the punch and insulate Connecticut's gaming revenues from out-of-state competition, tribal leaders have said.

MGM Springfield is targeting a fall 2018 opening, while the tribes have released a rapid schedule for finding a casino site. Their request for proposals was released on Oct 1, the deadline for responses is Nov. 6, and the tribes hope to select a site by Dec. 15.

East Windsor has also said it plans on submitting a proposal, though First Selectman Denise Menard has not returned requests for comment since losing her seat in Tuesday's elections.

The Hartford Courant reported that both Bradley International Airport and the Enfield Square mall may submit proposals as well, despite lacking authorization from their municipalities. They would be taking advantage of loosened

requirements by the tribes, which originally requested proposals from municipalities but announced this week that they would accept "incomplete" proposals from interested developers.

Connecticut's legislature will still have to authorize the construction of a new casino once a site is chosen. The state's June gaming act only authorized MM4CT to seek a site, part of an effort to insulate the law from expected legal challenges.

MGM Resorts International filed such a challenge in August, suing in federal court to have the law declared discriminatory and unconstitutional. That court battle is still [ongoing](#).