Georgians Could Reap Significant Benefit from Casino Resorts

*Potential legalized gaming is on the minds of legislators as well as major casino operators and developers with potential sites already under consideration in coastal Georgia.*

Even before the Georgia General Assembly convenes in January, several well-known casino operators are scouting Georgia for potential sites to develop destination resorts that would include casino gaming. Rick Lackey of City Commercial Real Estate recently announced that more than 5,000 acres of potential resort sites are currently under listing agreements with the company.

Legislative leaders are poised to introduce legislation again in the upcoming session of the Georgia General Assembly. Rep. Ron Stephens (R-Savannah), chairman of the House Economic Development and Tourism committee, has been a champion of gaming legislation in years past and plans to sponsor similar legislation in 2021. Gaming legislation requires passage by two-thirds of legislators and the governor’s signature before being placed as a referendum on the ballot for voter approval.

“There has been a groundswell of support for legalized gaming throughout the state,” said Stephens. “Georgians support the economic opportunities presented by casino resorts, especially jobs and revenue that they would bring to local communities.”

Resorts would be strategically located adjacent to interstates around the state to attract drive-to and drive-through tourism. Thousands of tourists stop in Georgia every year to either change planes en route to destinations around the world, or to buy gas as they travel by car to vacation destinations in Florida and other areas. Casino resorts would seek to capture the business of those tourist as well as serve as planned vacation destinations.

“While it may seem that metro Atlanta would be an obvious location, rural Georgia may very well have better locations,” says City Commercial Real Estate’s Lackey. “Some of the very best sites in Georgia are in Savannah, Midway and Kingsland.”

Generally, successful destination resorts with casinos draw customers that can easily travel by car and are within 2-to-5-hour drive times of major population centers. The coastal Georgia sites all are located along I-95 adjacent to exit ramps and are strategically located in Savannah, Midway and Kingsland. Population within a 2-hour drive for all three sites is up to 5 million, and within a 5-hour drive the population jumps to between 30 - 35 million. The intersection of I- 95 and I-16 clocks traffic counts second only to Atlanta intersections. The Kingsland site offers access to Jacksonville and its amenities including an international airport.

“Change is inevitable and there are a lot of things I thought I would never see in Georgia that I have lived long enough to see,” said Representative Al Williams (D- Midway). “We have to believe enough in the people to give them the right to decide.”

“Designers of The Battery, the mixed-use development and home the Braves, have master planned a mixed used development on the Columbus property that includes retail, family entertainment, retail shopping, two hotels, a casino, golf facility, music venue, sports fields, convention center, townhomes, senior living and workforce housing,” added Lackey. “A development of this magnitude would require a capital investment of between $500 million and $1 billion and create between 3000 and 5000 local jobs.”

**About City Commercial Real Estate**

City Commercial Real Estate, Inc. is a boutique commercial real estate brokerage and advisory company based in Atlanta. The company offers more than 35 years of experience in all types of commercial real estate transactions and unparalleled relationships in the commercial real estate and development industry throughout the country. For more information, visit [www.CityCRE.com](http://www.CityCRE.com).