

A RAPID HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR A POTENTIAL GAMBLING FACILITY IN THE CITY OF DELTA, BC



In 2017, a Rapid Health Impact Assessment (HIA) study was conducted to help the British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC) and the City of Delta identify and communicate to stakeholders the potential health-related social and economic outcomes that may be associated with the establishment of a new gambling facility in the City of Delta.

Health Impact Assessment is a tool used to systematically and comprehensively evaluate the potential positive and negative health impacts of a project. By viewing a proposed project through a health lens, the HIA process provides evidence-based recommendations that can identify and enhance the potential benefits of the project, while minimizing any potential negative impacts.

The City of Delta HIA examined several impacts as they relate to health, along with other issues (both positive and negative) that have been raised in relation to the establishment of new gambling facilities. The process relied on key stakeholders to set the scope of the HIA, which included government officials, local health authorities, the BC Ministry of Health, service providers/operators, BCLC, and a responsible gambling subject matter expert.

The specific health issues examined in the HIA are grouped under five categories: (a) Socio-economic effects; (b) Neighbourhood impacts; (c) Access to gambling; (d) Economic effects on municipalities; and, (e) Effects on health, social and protective services.

About the Proposed New Facility in the City of Delta

- The preferred **location** for the proposed facility was identified by the Delta City Council as the site of the **current Delta Town & Country Inn**, at the junction of Highways 99 and 17A;
- The gambling facility will comprise an enhanced gaming floor with a wide variety of **table games and slot machines**;
- The facility will be 'integrated', meaning that it houses not only a casino, but also other amenities including multiple **food and beverage** outlets with all-season patios, a **hotel** with about 75 to 125 rooms, and a **meeting space**;
- It is estimated that the new facility will involve \$70 million in capital investment and add **700 new jobs**, and **500 person-years** of construction-related employment, and have an estimated annual payroll of \$5.9 million; and
- As the Host Local Government of a gaming facility receives 10% of the net revenue generated, this is expected to result in a payment of about **\$1.5 million to \$3 million** annually to the City of Delta.

What did the HIA find?

- The results of the HIA were consistent with the general research on gambling and health:

"The reality is that these new venues have neither caused widespread economic rejuvenation, nor have they created major new social problems. However, there have been some benefits, costs and changes." (Blue Thorn Research and Analysis Group 2007)

- A mixture of positive, negative and neutral impacts
- The majority of municipality / community impacts are either positive or neutral, with negative impacts largely associated with problem gambling issues:
 - **For positive effects, the highest priority determinant was direct revenue from the facility, which has the potential to positively impact health and well-being of community members depending on revenue allocation**
 - **For negative effects, the highest priority determinants were financial, mental health and social / family impacts related to problem gambling**

HIA Results

Using a decision matrix, health impacts were assigned a priority level ranking, based on the priority for consideration and mitigation of the impact by BCLC and/or local governments or other stakeholders:

| | Priority | Potential Health Consequence |
|--|----------|------------------------------|
| Effects from direct revenue (facility) | High | Positive |
| Job opportunities and income | High | Neutral to Positive |
| Neighbourhood vitality and growth | High | Positive |
| Entertainment / leisure | Medium | Positive |
| Effects from indirect revenue (surrounding businesses) | Medium | Mixed |
| Impacts of problem gambling: financial, mental health, and social and family | Medium | Neutral to Negative |
| ➤ Among people vulnerable to problem gambling | High | Negative |
| ➤ Across the population as a whole | Low | Neutral |
| Effects on health care services | Medium | Mixed |
| Effects on social services | Medium | Mixed |
| Effects on emergency services | Medium | Mixed |
| Property values | Low | Unknown |
| Crime | Low | Neutral to Negative |
| Traffic | Low | Neutral to Negative |

Recommendations from the HIA

- Consider how to use municipal and provincial revenue in a way that supports healthy communities;
- Promote education and awareness around problem gambling prevention, treatment and services within the local host community before a decision is made to proceed, and then again after the facility first opens, to reduce or manage the potential increase in problem gambling and mitigate associated negative effects;
- Promote hiring practices that preferentially target unemployed or underemployed individuals from within the local host community; and
- Ensure that final project design minimizes potential adverse effects on traffic and parking, noise exposure, and adverse competition with existing businesses.

Read the full report here:

<https://www.bclc.com/content/dam/bclc/corporate/documents/intrinsic-city-of-delta.pdf>