



## News Coverage on Casino Gambling

### Sheldon Silver's casino intentions

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08/13/2012

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ALBANY — Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver hasn't played his hand on where he'd like to see a casino in the city, but he is open to Coney Island or Willets Point, the Daily News has learned.

While talks won't heat up for several months, Silver favors a location that is either already a "destination resort area" in the city, or could become one, a source close to the speaker said. Aqueduct Racetrack in Queens is also a place he would consider, the source said.

Some insiders want a casino to be part of a redevelopment of the Jacob Javits Convention Center on the West Side. But Silver remains adamant about keeping gambling dens out of Manhattan and other densely populated parts of the city, the source said.

The speaker has not shut the door on Coney Island, which is being promoted by many influential types in Brooklyn — including Borough President Marty Markowitz — as a way to bring more people to the historic seaside destination, which has its famed amusement park and now a minor league baseball stadium.

And some have floated the idea of a casino as part of the planned megadevelopment of the gritty Willets Point site near Citi Field. Silver hasn't axed that concept, either. The source close to Silver said the Bloomberg administration is privately backing Willets Point as a suitable spot, although a spokesman for the mayor denied that was the case.

The Legislature took the first step this year toward passing a constitutional amendment to legalize casino gambling and authorize up to seven casinos in the state. New York City is in line for one, but Gov. Cuomo and lawmakers are not expected to press for a deal on casino locations before next year.

Silver, the source said, expects that “one or two other sites (in the city) could pop up as we move forward.”

Before final decisions are made, Silver — who last week received a prestigious Excellence in State Leadership Award from the National Conference of State Legislatures — will hold talks with his Democratic conference, particularly members whose districts could host potential locations.

There is no guarantee, the source added, that Silver’s conference will back the idea of a casino in the city, regardless of where it’s located.

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