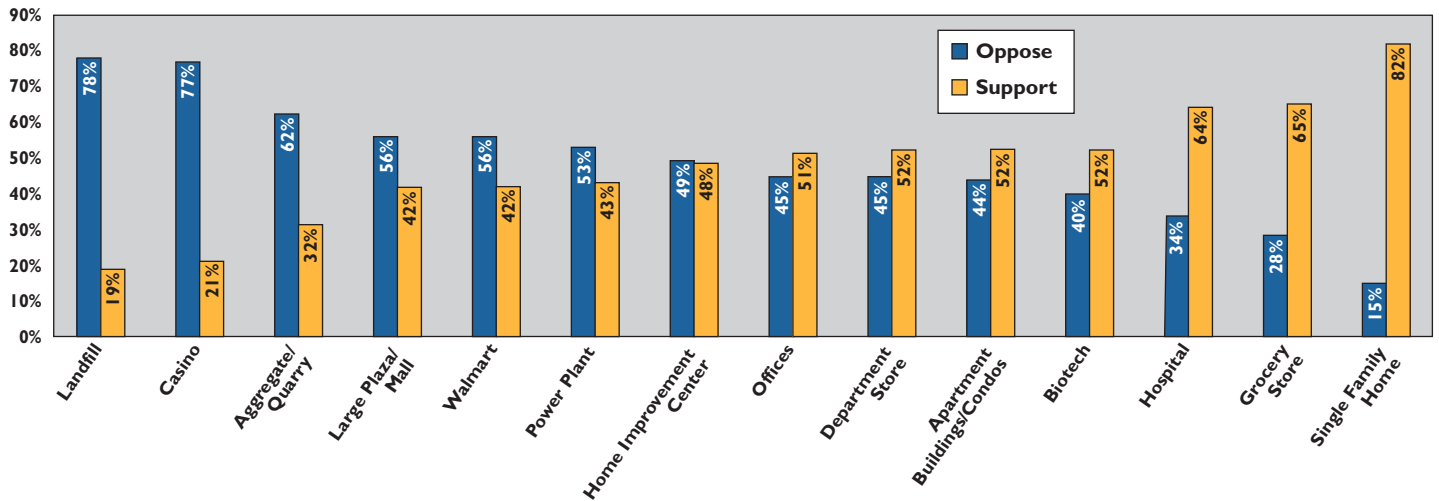


Would you support or oppose the following development in your community?



SOURCE: THE SAINT CONSULTING GROUP, 2008 SAINT INDEX SURVEY OF 1,000 US ADULTS

Development trends ...

POLITICIANS, OPERATORS TAKE NOTE: CASINOS MORE RADIOACTIVE THAN NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

Americans in 2008 said by a margin of 84 percent to 14 percent that casino gambling is acceptable for themselves or others, according to the annual American Gaming Association poll. In the same year, Americans also said by similar margin – 77 percent to 21 percent – that they would oppose the development of a casino in their community, according to the Saint Index poll.

In fact, the prospect of building a local casino is far more radioactive than building a nuclear power plant (60 percent opposed – “The Simpsons” must have something to do with that). Only the prospect of a local landfill is more rank – barely – than a casino.

While opposition to development generally declined last year as the need for economic stimuli

grew, the opposition to casino development remained steady, according to the annual Saint Index of attitudes toward real estate development. Saint Consulting, a Hingham, MA, consultancy that specializes in land-use politics, did not question respondents about casinos specifically. The firm did find, however, that, “Protecting community character is one of the major reasons that people cite” in opposing development, Vice President **Stephen Shepherd** said.

It may be small consolation to note that the percentage of adults who oppose casino development has declined by 3 percentage points – from 80 percent – since the last time we analyzed this survey. (See vol. 11, no. 18, p. 1 for that earlier analysis.)

The huge disconnect between accepting casino gambling and wanting a casino in one’s ZIP Code is the result of the NIMBY syndrome, and the politicians and operators who are eager to expand gaming (see related story p. 6) had better take note of this force.

Pennsylvania is timely Case Study A for witnessing the impact of the not-in-my-back-yard movement

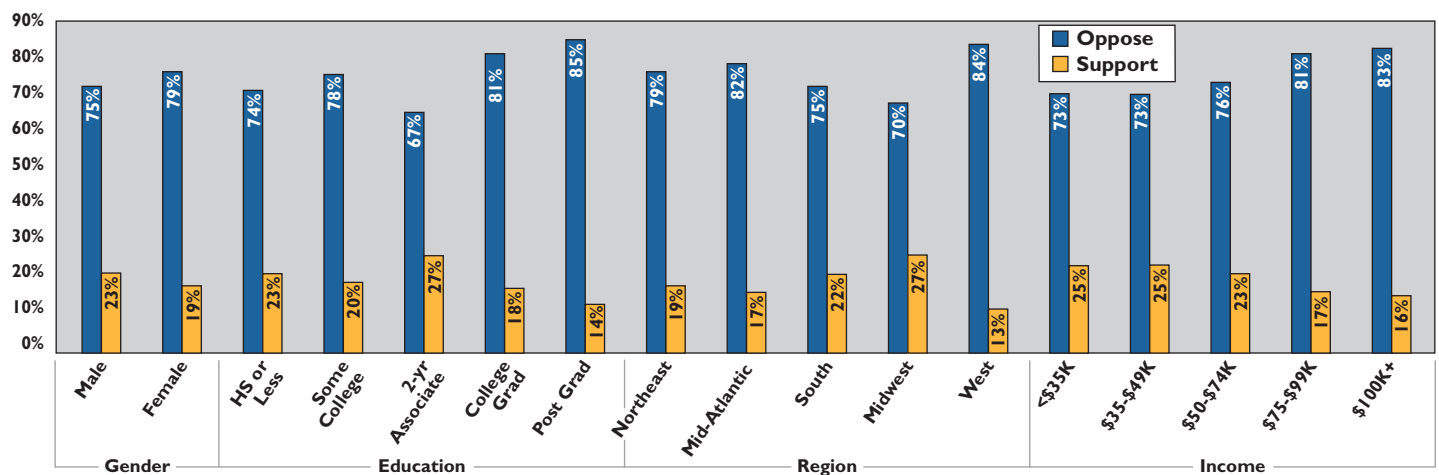
against casino development. The planned Foxwoods and SugarHouse casinos are not close to breaking ground in Philadelphia almost 2½ years after receiving their licenses due to fierce local opposition, and Foxwoods has attempted to move from its original site. Even before the licenses were awarded, Boyd Gaming effectively abandoned its proposed casino hotel in Limerick after a local outcry.

“The thing we see a lot is that people are afraid of their property values. That is a very strong motivator in opposing a project in the community,” Shepherd said.

As the second chart on this page shows, the opposition to casino development cuts across all demographic segments. If casino developers are intent in building in a sensitive area, their chances of success increase if they appeal to lower-earning Midwestern men who have an associate’s degree.

The survey demonstrates another reason why race tracks remain an important point of entry for the gaming industry: They are already in people’s back yards. ■

Views toward casino development in home community, by demographic



SOURCE: THE SAINT CONSULTING GROUP, 2008 SAINT INDEX SURVEY OF 1,000 US ADULTS