

# Detroit Free Press

## Pistons addition could help make city a top destination

Casinos, nightclubs, theater and sports is a combo few have

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BY KATHERINE YUNG  
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

A trio of casinos. Live theater. Nightclubs. The Tigers, Lions and Red Wings.

Adding the Pistons to this mix could help downtown Detroit bolster its status as an urban adult entertainment destination, said Christopher Leinberger, an urban land use strategist and University of Michigan professor. "It's a very unique combination that very few other cities have," he said.

It's not clear where a new arena would be built. Several sites have been suggested, but the Ilitches aren't talking about possible locations. The Ilitches have made no secret of their desire to move the Red Wings out of the aging Joe Louis Arena to a new facility that could accommodate the Pistons, perhaps closer to the MotorCity Casino Hotel and Fox Theatre, both owned by the Ilitch family.

In addition to already offering games played by three professional sports teams, Detroit boasts the third largest walkable concentration of casinos in the country, behind only Las Vegas and Atlantic City.

And unbeknownst to many, Leinberger said, Detroit has the nation's third largest number of live theater seats, trailing only New York City and Houston.

Building professional sports arenas downtown, versus the suburbs, tends to benefit both the cities themselves as well as attendance at games, Leinberger said. "Most cities have learned that," he said. "You have all sorts of spin-off economic development."