

## Evolution and development of metro-casinos

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the metro-casinos that are being built in Las Vegas and how they differ from the existing casinos that proliferate downtown and the Las Vegas strip. Examples of mega-casinos cropped up all along the strip during the 1990's and into the new century but very shortly there will be a massive change on the strip. To understand the changes taking place in the casino industry it is important to look at the casinos of the past to include themed and mega casinos before discussing the current trend in Las Vegas casinos, the metro-casino. These mini cities within cities have the entire infrastructure of a metropolis. They are self-contained microcosms of the larger Las Vegas area and contain living, dining, convention, and entertainment space all in one overarching architectural plan. The difficulties inherent in such a massive undertaking will be discussed as well as what changes this may herald in the overall casino markets of the world.

Keywords: Theme Resort, Mega Resort, Leed Green Certified, Residential

## Introduction

Las Vegas is known for its extravagant hotels and vast casinos. The competition is never ending and owners are always trying to top each other. The age of the small to medium sized casino-hotel is over and a new era of casinos is approaching. The construction of these massive casinos cost billions of dollars and they are the largest independently funded projects in the nation. The function of this paper is to define a metro-casino and identify the differences between existing casinos and metro-casinos of the future.

## Review of the Literature

On the Las Vegas strip there are a multitude of hotel and casino types, from the small mom and pop to large themed casinos with exploding volcanoes and sinking ships. Hotels and casinos today such as the Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, MGM Grand, Caesar's Palace and The Luxor Hotel and Casino are grand casinos that offer luxury, rest and relaxation for most guests. However, a new breed of casino is cropping up in Las Vegas called the metro casino. Old style casinos may well struggle to stay afloat once the new casinos come online. (Leco, 2008). Revenues that have been accumulated in Las Vegas from prior casinos are funding the creation of large city scale casinos which will contain multiple lodging enterprises, restaurants, entertainment facilities, convention space, living space, shopping and meeting space all under overarching architectural platform (Hausman, 2007). The top five hotel and casinos of Las Vegas mentioned above have what has been considered the "norm" of features for a Las Vegas resort. What these hotels and casinos have that others do not, are options of where to eat, to sleep, to lose your money and to be entertained (Leco, 2008) and to live. For example, the Bellagio offers a selection of nine different dining experiences, guest rooms, suites and villas to rest your head. If you are a player at heart there are many ways to try to "beat the house" if you think you can with slots, poker rooms, table games and race and sport bookings. For entertainment there are a variety of events, from exciting breath taking shows like "O" from Cirque du Soleil, or relaxing activities like golf or venturing through the fine arts gallery (bellagio.com, 2008). The Mandalay Bay offers many of the same features allowing guests the freedom to be connoisseurs, escapists, players, party goers, or professionals. There are thirteen restaurant choices, two wedding chapels, a shopping mall and Broadway type productions. The guest is able to create the experience most fit to them or to who they would like to be. Leisure activities include spa treatments, a shark reef aquarium or a day at their man made beach fully equipped with real sand (mandalaybay.com, 2008). MGM Grand has the option of sixteen dining facilities and a fast food court. Also, there are three stages with productions done outdoors as well as two indoors with a dance club. The MGM is host to many sporting events and a broad range of entertainers (mgmgrand.com, 2008). An Omni max theater is a great place to take your kids at Caesar's Palace after looking at all the Roman Empire inspired architecture. This hotel and casino offers a variety of nine restaurants, a beauty salon, wedding palace, and health spa for rejuvenation (caesarspalace.com, 2008). Finally to round out the top five, The Luxor Hotel and Casino is great for entertainment with a variety show, virtual reality game room, and a show featuring the illusionist Chris Angel (luxor.com, 2008). There is also a shopping gallery, six restaurants, and an IMAX theater.

Modern casinos are competing in a fiercely competitive environment for the tourist and gaming dollars that flow into Las Vegas. Bigger and better has been the name of the gap thus far

and the casinos now being built on the strip are not exceptions to this rule. The metro casinos now being built have been planned meticulously on a grand scale with bigger and better attractions than the current casinos on the strip offer. They will offer more space, more luxuries, and more entertainment and absorb cost for construct. Many metro-casinos are up and running and many others are almost ready to come online. The Palazzo, which is an extension of the Venetian, a 1.8 billion dollar project. These two buildings together will make the largest hotel and residents center in the world. This establishment opened its doors on January 17, 2008 with 105,000 square feet of casino available for play (*Palazzo/Venetian/Sands News*, 2008). The next metro casino in the works is the joint project called City Center from the MGM Mirage and Dubai World. This 11+ billion dollar project is said to be the “most expensive privately funded construction project in the western hemisphere” by the Vegas News Today and Tomorrow website (*City Center News*, 2008). The MGM MIRAGE’s City Center really is the casino for the new era. The City Center will offer its own parking garage, people movers or trams, and fire station. Not only will this structure include hotels, casinos, shopping districts, entertainment, venues, parks, and roof top gardens resident and condominium centers, they plan to incorporate green technology into the establishment. The City Center has been planned by 8 of the world’s foremost architects. “MGM MIRAGE has engaged the world’s foremost architects to collaborate on this magnificent mixed-use urban community. Every building will be an icon of superb contemporary design, and together, they will create an unparalleled skyline that will define a new Las Vegas. The architectural ‘dream team’ includes Pelli Clarke Pelli; Rockwell Group; Studio Daniel Libeskind; Kohn Pederson Fox; Helmut Jahn; RV Architecture, LLC led by Rafael Viñoly; Foster + Partners; and Gensler” (*Citycenter.com*). The City Center is expected to open its first phase in November of 2009. According to a press release from City Center “The development of City Center marks a significant milestone in the vision to create a living experience like none other in Las Vegas,” said Terry Lanni, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of MGM MIRAGE. “City Center’s stunning contemporary architecture coupled with its singular collection of amenities will set this global city apart as a place not just to visit, but to live.” (*City Center New*, 2008).

Due to the current economic conditions some hotels in construction have been suspended. As of August 1, 2008 work on the Echelon has been suspended because of the uncertain credit market. Construction is expected to resume sometime in 2009. When this structure is complete it to can join the ranks of the City Center, MGM Mirage, and The Palazzo of The Venetian as metro-casinos. The Echelon will cost an estimated 4.8 billion dollars and have five partially separate towers. These towers will share credit to having the 4<sup>th</sup> largest casino in Las Vegas, along with the 4<sup>th</sup> largest convention center. Guest will be able to choose from 30 restaurants and bars in 2010 if construction resumes (*Echelon*, 2008).

Las Vegas has become a destination for much more than gambling and everyday new concepts and designs are under construction to support that. Essentially new cities in the form of metro casinos are being built in Las Vegas and will soon create a new landscape in the strip.

### **The Metro-casino**

The casinos that are now under construction can really be classified as metro because there is nothing more to describe them as. These casinos are nothing like what currently exists on the Las Vegas strip. The amount of money in Las Vegas is so immense that it is used to “one-

up” the competition. Owners of existing casinos are building casinos that can only match those of small cities.

Metro-casinos are the newest attractions in Las Vegas. Not only is the size of their casinos impressive but the added attractions and features are what really makes them different. A metro-casino can be defined as a newly constructed casino which contains the traditional lodging and gaming experiences as well as multiple living spaces (hotel, suite, resident and condo living ), multiple gaming spaces, multiple entertainment experiences, spas, meeting and convention space, shopping malls, multiple restaurants, and the infrastructure to support these small cities.

In the following sections, the history and evolution of themed casinos is discussed, followed by today’s casinos and finally an analysis of metro-casinos. Through this analysis, conclusions can be drawn and the key differences in existing casinos and metro-casinos to reinforce its definition.

### **The Themed Casino**

The history of the themed casino dates back to the 1960’s when a man named Jay Sarno came to Las Vegas and said “I’m going to design a casino with lots of columns and statues and fountains and tons of marble” (Cheng, 2005). In 1966 Caesars Palace opened and was the truly first themed casino on the strip. Sarno then went on to develop Circus Circus in 1968 which was a big tent with a circus inside but a casino broke out within the madness (Cheng, 2005). Upon walking into the casino patrons slid down a metal pole to reach the casino floor. Elephants walked the casino floor and randomly pulled on slot machines and trapeze artists flew overhead. This theme relaxed a bit, but the original concept of the circus theme is still in today’s Circus Circus by the MGM Group.

The Mirage was opened in 1989 having a tropical and exotic theme. The person behind this themed casino was Steve Wynn. Steve Wynn is credited with the movement in Vegas towards casinos that fulfilled every need. This was the most expensive hotel/casino to date costing \$630 million (The Mirage, 2008). It was reported that this casino would have to bring in \$1 million a day to pay off the 7-year construction loan. The Mirage however did so well that it paid off the loan in just 18 months (The Mirage, 2008). The next themed casino that was set to be built was Treasure Island. Treasure Island was first slated as an extension onto the Mirage, but plans changed to make it stand by itself on the strip. The concept of Treasure Island intended to attract families with whimsical pirate features and icons such as the skull-and-crossbones strip marquee, a large video arcade, and staged pirate battles nightly in "Buccaneer Bay" in front of the casino entrance on the Strip (Treasure Island, 2008). Every casino was built with a particular theme, which was aimed to make Las Vegas a family oriented place to vacation. Since the popularity of the themed casino, the attraction in Las Vegas has gone from downtown to the strip. The idea of the themed casinos has proven to be very popular to tourists coming to Las Vegas. With a 95 percent weekend occupancy rate (100 at the newest casinos) there seem to be a never ending supply of people fascinated by the Las Vegas Strip ([travel.nytimes.com/2007/04/24/business/24vegas.html](http://travel.nytimes.com/2007/04/24/business/24vegas.html)). This is the reason why casinos companies continue to compete with each other to build bigger and better things to attract more and more tourists and gamers.

## Casinos of Today

In order to show the future of casino gaming is necessary to first look at the present condition of casinos in Las Vegas. To do this and investigation of the top five current casinos currently in Las Vegas, the Bellagio, Mandalay Bay, MGM Grand, Caesars Palace, and The Luxor Hotel and Casino. Following is a description of each casino/hotel including a chart of their major restaurants, night clubs, and entertainment.

### The Bellagio Las Vegas

The Bellagio was built in 1998 by the MGM Mirage Group. It is a combined hotel and casino, consisting of 6,124 rooms and an 116,000 square foot casino floor (Bellagio website, 2008). There are six different night clubs and nine different restaurants to choose ranging from fine dining to quick eats. The Bellagio also offers a spa and salon, a world famous circus called Cirque du Soleil, and a variety of games in the casino. The casino consists of over 40 table games from black jack to roulette. The Bellagio also has 2,400 slot machines and private gambling areas and hosts the World Poker Tour. The Bellagio has various works of art such as Dale Chihuly blown glass art and Richard MacDonal art that features the Human Body (Bellagio website, 2008).

<u>Nightclubs</u>	<u>Restaurants (Fine Dining)</u>	<u>Entertainment/amenities</u>
Fontana Bar	Circo-Tuscany Inspired	“O” Cirque du Soleil
The Bank	Jasmine-Lakeview American	Botanical Gardens
Larame	Le Cirque- French Cuisine	Fountains of Bellagio

### Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino

The second hotel is Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. Mandalay Bay has 3,309 rooms and 135,000 square feet of casino gaming (Mandalay Bay website, 2008). They have one permanent show called Mamma Mia and its signature attraction is the shark reef. Also offering a number of nightclubs and restaurants it is best known for only having two notable restaurants (Mandalay Bay website, 2008).

<u>Nightclubs</u>	<u>Restaurants (Fine Dining)</u>	<u>Entertainment/amenities</u>
Eyecandy Sound Lounge	Mix-French and American Cuisine	Mamma Mia
Mix Lounge	Fluer de Lys-French Cuisine	Shark Reef
House of Blues	Aureole-American Cuisine	Boxing Matches

### MGM Grand

The MGM Grand offers over 5,044 rooms and has a casino that is 171,500 square feet in size (MGM Grand website, 2008). They have a variety of shops and restaurants, four of the restaurants are notable and two food courts. The permanent shows at the MGM Grand are KA, Crazy Horse and Paris. The signature attractions at this hotel and casino are the Lion Habitat, CBS Television City and Tabu (MGM Grand website, 2008).

<u>Nightclubs</u>	<u>Restaurants (Fine Dining)</u>	<u>Entertainment/amenities</u>
Studio 54	L'alelier French Cuisine	Cirque de Soleil
Zuri	Joel Robuchin-French Cuisine	Lion Habitat
Centrifuge	Wolfgang Puck-American Cuisine	Crazy Horse

### **Caesars Palace**

Caesars Palace offers over 3,348 rooms spread out over five towers. The gaming space at Caesars is 166,000 square feet offering a variety of table games and slot machines (Caesars Palace website, 2008). The signature attraction at this hotel and casino is the Forum Shops and also its nine notable restaurants. It has permanent entertainment including Bette Midler and Elton John.

<u>Nightclubs</u>	<u>Restaurants (Fine Dining)</u>	<u>Entertainment/amenities</u>
Pure	Guy Savoy-French Cuisine	Colosseum entertainment
Shadow Bar	Rao's - Italian Cuisine	Cher performs
Cleopatra's Barge	Hyakumi-Japanese Cuisine	Elton John

### **Luxor Hotel and Casino**

The Luxor Hotel and Casino has 4,407 rooms and a casino space of 120,000 square feet. The Luxor offers over 1,500 slot machines and 87 table games. The top shows at the Luxor are Fantasy and Carrot Top. The Luxor offers over nine nightclubs and three notable restaurants (Luxor Hotel website, 2008).

<u>Nightclubs</u>	<u>Restaurants (Fine Dining)</u>	<u>Entertainment/amenities</u>
LAX Night Club	Tender Steak and Seafood	Atrium Level
Cathouse	Fusia Luxor – Asian Inspired	Bodies Exhibition
Noir Bar	T&T – Mexican Cuisine	

These are the most extravagant casinos in existence today and even though they were not built too long ago, the bar is already being raised. Casino owners are always trying to gain the competitive advantage over their rivals and feel the need to expand whenever possible. Marketing and renovations can only go so far to attract tourists and high rollers to a casino. Now, new luxurious casinos are being built to gain a competitive advantage.

### **Metro-casinos**

The Metro-casinos that are being built on the Las Vegas strip and around the world are investigated next. One of these metro-casinos is nearing completion and some of the others have run into financial issues and halted construction until additional funds are secured. Under each casino there are pertinent facts including, number of rooms, size of the casino floor, and attractions.

## Plaza Las Vegas

Plaza Las Vegas is one of the largest metro-casinos that are being erected in Las Vegas. This project was originally going to be the site for the Montreux by Phil Ruffin. After complications this hotel will now be a replica of The Plaza in New York City and will have the same exterior design. ELAD, who owns the Plaza in New York City, has bought the property, which housed the New Frontier. Their new project will cost over five billion dollars. This new property will be huge and will accommodate many more people than the original Plaza in New York City. This project is slated to start soon and will be completed sometime in 2011 (wikipedia.org, 2009).

- Seven towers containing 6,700 keys (4,100 hotel rooms and 2,600 resort condominium units)
- 175,900 square feet of casino area
- 134,500 square feet of restaurant area
- 347,887 square feet of retail area
- 539,607 square feet of convention space
- 50,000-square foot health club
- 1,500-seat theater
- 227,038 square feet of open space on the roof top of the podium that includes gardens and pool areas



## Cosmopolitan Hotel and Resort

Many of the casinos that you see in Vegas have distinct themes and designs to reflect their unique design. This metro-casino will have no distinct theme and will be built by Perini Building Co. and will have two towers. One tower will be the Spa Tower, and the other will be the resort tower. This building will be next to the Bellagio and will have competition from the already established hotel and casinos on the Strip. The Cosmopolitan will offer condos as well as hotel rooms, a feature that many metro-casinos are bringing to Las Vegas (Adams, 2008)

- Will be built next to the Bellagio on the north end of the Strip
- Non-Themed
- Cost – 3.9 billion dollars
- Occupancy
  - 3,000 condo units
  - 800 hotel rooms



- Casino Floor – 75,000 square feet
- The resort will feature a 300,000 square foot retail space
- Spa – 40,000 square feet
- Opening in early 2010

## Palazzo

The Palazzo is one of the metro-casinos that have recently opened on the Las Vegas Strip within the last year. This casino is joined with the Venetian and was built by Taylor International. The grand opening was in January of 2008. This hotel and casino contains all suites and is considered to be one of the most luxurious hotels in Las Vegas. When the Sands Expo is finished this will be the largest resort and hotel complex in the world, this building was also “green” certified and is the world’s largest LEED green certified building in the world. The Palazzo was certified green for the following reasons (Adams, 2008);

- Artificial turf, drip irrigation and moisture sensors in planted areas result in over a 75% reduction in irrigation needs.
- Swimming pools at The Palazzo are heated with an expansive solar pool heating system. In the summer, the excess solar energy not needed for the pools is directed to the hotel's hot water system, reducing the need to heat water for guest suites.
- Air conditioning controls in guest suites that automatically setback by several degrees when guests are not present and reset to the desired temperature upon return.
- Team member service areas equipped with lighting occupancy sensors that shut off lights when no one is in the area.
- Interior plumbing fixtures use 37% less water than conventional buildings as a result of water-efficient showerheads, high efficiency toilets and low-flow lavatory faucet aerators.
- Moisture sensors monitor real time, site specific air temperature, humidity, rainfall and other factors to provide daily watering cycle adjustment.
- A waste recycling program implemented from demolition through completion diverted over 70% of waste from the landfill.
- The building's structural steel averaged 95% recycled content, while the concrete averaged a 26% recycled content rate ([www.energy-daily.com](http://www.energy-daily.com))
- The resort is an extension from the Venetian and the name is from a famous site in Venice, Italy
- Cost – 2.5 Billion dollars
- The building is independent from the Venetian but connects to the hotel and casino at a few designated points

- The two buildings together will create the world's largest hotel
- Rooms – 7,074 and Suites (Including Venetian)
- Will feature a 60 foot high glass domed entry lobby with two story fountains
- Rooms- 3,025 (Palazzo)
- Casino Floor – 105,000 square feet
- 1,900 Slot Machines
- 450,000 square feet of meeting and convention space
- 375,000 square feet of shops
- 4,000 space parking garage
- Opened December 2007



## Echelon Place

One of the largest projects on the Vegas Strip, which has currently been suspended, is the Echelon Place. These 5 hotels will extend over 87 acres of Las Vegas real estate and will be the biggest project on the north end of the Strip. There will be open space on the 87 acres that are being constructed by Tishman Construction for more expansion if need be for more towers and land development. The first construction drafts of this resort featured a large LED waterfall between both towers, but this has been removed and a new flamboyant entrance way is being developed to welcome guests and tourists Echelon, 2008.

- Will be built where the Stardust was located
- Cost – 4.8 Billion dollars
- Will feature 5 hotels
- Rooms – 5,280
- Resort will cover over 87 acres
- Main Hotel – Echelon Place – 2,600 rooms  
700 suites in tower
- Mondrian Hotel – 1,000 rooms
- Delano Hotel – 600 rooms
- Shangri-La Hotel – 400 rooms

- Casino Floor – 140,000 square feet
- 750,000 foot convention center
- 350,000 square feet of shopping space
- Will include over 30 bars and restaurants
- Project suspended



### City Center Las Vegas

Construction of the City Center will be the most expensive privately funded construction project in U.S. History. The project will be a mini-city with its own fire station, and on-site power plant, and plenty of parking and space for tourists. City Center is aiming to achieve LEED certification for the project as outlined by the U.S. Green Building Council. Many other resorts and casinos in Las Vegas have taken in the “green” movement and have moved toward this certification the green initiatives include water conservation, the co-generation plant, preservation of indoor environmental quality, and alternative transportation and carpooling for City Center employees. City Center will be full of art work from many of the world’s leading artists, including Maya Lin, Jenny Holzer, Claes Oldenburg, Coosje Van Bruggen, Nancy Rubins, Frank Stella, Henry Moore, and Richard Long. City Center will have a 1/4-mile Las Vegas Strip frontage. Reports from MGM MIRAGE state that a new Cirque du Soleil show, called Elvis, will premiere at the City Center Resort on opening day. City Center has brought in over 8,000 construction workers and 39 cranes to encompass the large construction project. When the City Center is completed it will create 12,000 new permanent positions (Center City, 2008).

- Will be built by the MGM Mirage Group
- Will be a complete city with hotels, casinos, shops, condos, entertainment, venues, parks, and rooftop gardens
- A separate power plant and fire station will be included in the City Center
- On the old boardwalk site opposite the Planet Hollywood
- Over 7,000 hotel rooms over 5 hotels
  - Largest will be the 4,000 room City Center Resort and Casino
  - 60 stories high
  - 165,000 square foot casino

- 70,000 square foot spa
- 2,000 seat theatre
- Over 500,000 square feet of retail and shopping space
- 7,500 space parking garage
- 900,000 square feet of back room use
- Designed by Rafael Vinoly, Lord Norman Foster, James Cheng, Art Gensler, Cesar Pelli and Kohn Pedersen Fox
- Cost – Over 11 Billion dollars
- Largest privately owned construction site in the western hemisphere
- First phase opening in 2009



### Casino Analysis

After looking at the casinos of today and the Metro-casinos of tomorrow there are some similarities and some noticeable differences. These charts provide a brief breakdown of similarities and differences ( Adams, 2008-2009).

Today's Casinos		
	Rooms	Sq. Footage of Casino Floor
Bellagio	6,124	116,000
MGM Grand	5,044	171,500
Mandalay Bay	3,309	135,000
Caesars Palace	3,348	166,000
Luxor	4,407	120,000
Metro-casinos		
	Rooms	Sq. Footage of Casino
Plaza Las Vegas	4,100 2,600 Condo Units	175,900
Cosmopolitan Resort	800 3,000 Condo Units	75,000

Palazzo	3,025 7,074 Rooms and Suites (Including Venetian)	105,000
Echelon Place	2,600 700 suites in tower	140,000
City Center	7,000 2,700 Condo Units	165,000

The first thing noticed is that the casino floor size does not differ significantly. In fact the casinos that are currently built are even bigger in some cases than the metro-casinos of the future. There could be many reasons for this. First, research by casinos may show that creating a larger casino will not add to any additional gambling revenue or tourism revenue. There is a plateau that has finally been reached, confirm that the size of the casino in the Bellagio and the MGM are enough and adding additional floor space would not significantly increase profitable. Second, this may indicate an effort to make Las Vegas a more family oriented destination. By slightly reducing the size of the floor and letting other attractions draw business, is a sign that casino floors larger than 170,000 square feet will not create any additional incremental revenue. An example of this is the Cosmopolitan Hotel and Casino. The size of the casino floor is only 75,000 square feet which is the smallest of any of the metro-casinos and its half of the size of many of today's casinos as well. The main attraction here is the retail space which is 300,000 square feet and the spa which is 40,000 square feet and residential condominium additions. Although the casino will still be the leading revenue source for the Cosmopolitan the goal is to attract guests to the spa and mall which may be an effort to make this a better place to bring the family or to live (Cosmopolitan, 2009).

The next noticeable difference between metro-casinos and the casinos of today is the residential and condominium rooms that are added. In metro-casinos there are permanent living spaces being added for those who want to call Las Vegas their home. In 2006 an estimated 552,539 people lived in Las Vegas which was a 15.1% increase since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau). This is a rather small number for any city in the United States and this was a sign for casino owners to tap into this market of residencies and not just temporary lodging for tourists. To go along with this movement metro-casinos are not limited to just one building or one hotel. In many of the new metro-casinos being built there are many towers and some of them are for condominiums and others are for hotels and for some both are in the same tower. Four of the five metro-casinos are multi-tower hotels. The Plaza Las Vegas has 7 towers for hotel and condominiums while the Echelon Palace and Las Vegas City Center has 5 towers. The Palazzo consists of 2 towers but will consist of over 7,000 rooms and will be one of the largest amounts of rooms in the world. Condominiums in a multi-tower establishment are a new design, and are being implemented in metro-casinos (Center City, 2008).

Another difference is the extremely large amounts of conference space available. In today's casinos the real attraction is the casino itself but some of the bigger hotels like the Bellagio and the MGM can handle conferences and weddings, although certainly not many at the

same time. The City Center Las Vegas has 900,000 square feet of just preparation space for conferences and weddings to easily accommodate any event. There is even a 7,500 space parking garage for all people attending an event to park in. With all of this space for meetings and events more couples and organizations may choose Las Vegas as the place for their weddings and conferences (Center City, 2008).

The last thing that differentiates today's casinos and tomorrow's metro-casinos is the vast amount of retail space. Las Vegas recently has been getting into the fashion world and being a noted city for something other than gambling. The Las Vegas City Center has 900,000 square feet of retail space available for shops. This mall will not look like any other mall though. MGM Design Group's Sven Van Assche says "The business model of a retail mall is very successful worldwide, but we didn't want to create another mall. We wanted an iconic piece of architecture that reflects what City Center can be: a series of experiences." (Schneider, 2008)

Many of the metro-casinos are creating space for designers to place stores right next door to the casinos. This may also contribute to the movement to become more family oriented as well. Research is conducted frequently about the reasons why people come to Las Vegas and The Knight Ridder Times reported on some of the findings. They say: "The amount spent shopping increased just \$4 per person to about \$141, much less than the 2004 increase of more than \$27 or the 2005 increase of more than \$12" (Spillman, 2007). Even though this is not a significant increase it is still an increase and metro-casino owners are changing the shopping experience to once again create an unforgettable experience.

## Conclusion

Casinos are definitely changing and they are turning into something other than just a place to gamble. Metro-casinos have been defined as a newly constructed casino that goes beyond the lodging, hotels, residents, condominiums, resorts, gaming, and entertainment aspects of today's casinos; and contains attractions like spas, meeting space, condominiums, and shopping malls to exceed clients' expectations. After looking at both today's casinos and casinos under construction, they all go above and beyond the basic functions of a casino. Casinos builders are now incorporating metropolitan like infrastructure. Metro-casinos are cities within cities. They will be setting the standard for gaming and tourism operations just as the themed casinos did in the 1960s. Soon all of these casinos will be opening their doors and entertaining guests in many more ways than ever before. It is only a matter of time before the competition heats up again and raises the bar for architects to design the newest entertainment grounds in Las Vegas.

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