

U 8 # o =

h
" = #

October 2022



†
%o)
%ok
%o@
%ou
U
%o°
%ou U
V \ k # y 8
@ # =

These interviewers conducted 47 virtual interviews with community members living in eight communities around Encore. Participants had diverse racial and ethnic identities, represented diverse communities, and spoke five different languages: English, Chinese [Mandarin or Cantonese], Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Spanish. Half of participants identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/e. A majority were women and were between 25 and 54 years of age. Almost half of participants had lived in their community for over 10 years. The study team analyzed interview transcripts and notes to identify themes, shared sentiments, and differences across participants' perspectives. Working with the Community Advisory Board, interviewers, and a subset of participants, the study team interpreted the findings.

What perspectives did community members have on Encore?

Participants expressed concerns about the effects of Encore on health. Participants believed:

†
%ou

%ou #
u
@ # =

V \ k # @ # =



The findings and recommendations in the Snapshot are those of the study team and do not necessarily reflect the position of the MGC.



Participants had mixed views on legalized gambling.

Some participants shared negative views, some had positive views, and a few participants had neutral views on legalized gambling including both ambivalent and mixed perspectives.

Participants had mixed views on the effects of Encore on the local economy, including employment, housing, and small businesses.

Participants believed:

- Encore created jobs, however several anticipated more job development and have not yet seen it happen.
- Encore has seen job loss and negative financial impacts on employees due to COVID-19.
- That there has been a trend of increasing rent and home prices in Encore's surrounding communities, but limited growth of affordable housing. Some participants noted this may reflect broader market trends rather than Encore's impact.
- Encore has crowded out small businesses, however several participants shared that Encore may have helped increase foot traffic to local small businesses.

Many participants who identified as Hispanic or Latino/a/e and/or who had lived in the communities surrounding Encore for more than 10 years often had negative views of the casino's effects on jobs, including the quality of jobs.

Participants had mixed views on the effects of Encore on various social and environmental factors.

Participants believed:

- Encore has led to more green spaces and better road conditions around the casino but changes to the skyline as well as more construction and traffic.
- Encore has not improved local infrastructure enough beyond the casino.
- Encore has increased local presence of police, ambulances, and criminal activity.
- Encore is a good place to gather, strengthening community relationships, however several shared that Encore and gambling may strain relationships with family and friends.
- ***That ease of access to a nearby casino normalizes gambling behavior for young people.***

Recommendations from community members:

Reinvest money in nearby communities:

Several participants believed Encore should fund community programs and the development of more parks and green spaces. They recommended that Encore fund walking bridges and public transportation beyond the casino grounds. Several participants described the need for Encore to develop or invest in community programs for families and youth. Other recommendations included investing in the environment (e.g., clean energy), providing more local job opportunities, and supporting local small businesses and immigrant communities.

About the study team

This research was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago in partnership with the Institute for Community Health and a Community Advisory Board. Jenna T. Sirkin, Petry S. Ubri, Jared Sawyer, Christina Drymon, and Meghan Woo are with NORC. Sofia Ladner, Danielle Chun, and Sarah Jalbert are with ICH. Community Advisory Board members included Diego Nascimento, Hugo Rengifo, James Eliscar, Jessica Thai, Linh Ho, Veronica Monserrat, and Wil Renderos. Community interviewers included Tatiana Antoine, Yanqing Huang, Milla Maia, and Josh Zhu. For more information, contact Jenna Sirkin at Sirkin-Jenna@norc.org.

Support and resources for people who experience problem gambling:

Some participants described a need for Encore to bolster efforts at providing educational materials and resources for people who experience or are at risk of gambling-related harms. This could involve sharing pamphlets, posting visible signage, establishing programs that restrict entry to people with a history of problem gambling, and/or providing resources for loved ones of people who experience problem gambling.

More actively engage with community members:

A few participants wanted Encore to engage with community members directly, participate in community meetings, and listen to community needs. This would allow Encore to develop programs and opportunities based on those needs.

Conclusion

It is challenging to disentangle Encore's impact from broader factors like the COVID-19 public health emergency and rising inflation. However, participants shared specific concerns and perceptions about Encore's community impact on health, the economy, and social and environmental factors. ***Participants also highlighted concerns about "Encore for whom?" noting Encore's disproportionate effects on the surrounding communities based on socioeconomic status and cultural background.*** Encore and local governments should recognize these potential impacts and engage with the community for input on their needs and how resources should be allocated.

Citation and About This Snapshot

NORC, ICH, and Community Advisory Board (2022). [Community Perspectives on Encore Boston Harbor Casino](#). Massachusetts: NORC at the University of Chicago; Institute for Community Health; Community Advisory Board.

MGC Snapshots are intended to translate lengthy and sometimes technical reports into an easily understandable overview of the research. This snapshot was tailored for a clinical audience. This snapshot was adapted from the [Research Snapshot](#) prepared by the Gambling Research Exchange Ontario (GREO).

Published: October 2022

Financial support for this study comes from the Massachusetts Gaming Commission through the Public Health Trust Fund.

