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The Massachusetts Gaming Commission Receives 12-Month Public Safety Impact Report from MGC Crime Analyst

*Ongoing analysis continues to show public safety data is commensurate
with introduction of similarly-sized facility*

On December 15, 2016 during a public meeting, the Massachusetts Gaming Commission (MGC) was presented with an updated **Public Safety Impact Report** that focused on an analysis of changes in police data after the first year of operation at Plainridge Park Casino. This public safety assessment and ongoing research is being conducted by MGC consultant and crime analyst Christopher Bruce. The analysis continues to demonstrate no significant causal relationship between changes in police data and the opening of Plainridge Park Casino.

As mandated by the Legislature and in an effort to better assess the impacts of new gaming facilities across the state, MGC commissioned a series of efforts to study, assess, and prepare for the social and economic impacts of gambling. As part of that overall effort, the Commission requested a specific analysis of the impact of gambling on public safety in Massachusetts cities and towns. This 12-month analysis compares recent data to an initial collection of baseline research data conducted prior to the opening of Plainridge Park Casino.

The method used by crime analyst Christopher Bruce to conduct this study includes the collection of public safety data from records systems of Plainville, Attleboro, Mansfield, North Attleboro, Wrentham, and the Massachusetts State Police. The time period includes July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016 (12 months after the opening Plainridge Park Casino on June 24) compared against past July-June periods since 2010.

Since its opening in June 2015, Plainridge Park Casino has shown crime and calls for service totals commensurate with similarly-sized and trafficked facilities. As for the surrounding community, the totality of evidence shows little impact on most crimes and calls for service.

The presence of the casino does appear to be related to an increase in types of calls for service expected with an increase in traffic and people to an area including collisions, lost property and citizen complaints about traffic problems. Findings also identified an increase in credit card fraud; however, it remains unclear if there is a relationship with the casino.



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“I would like to commend the ongoing cooperation and participation of local police agencies. This research project provides a rare opportunity to collaborate on public safety strategies and the MGC looks forward to continuing our important role as a dedicated partner in this effort,” said MGC Commissioner Gayle Cameron.

Christopher Bruce said, “In the first year of operation at Plainridge Park Casino, analysis indicates that most changes in public safety data are proportional with non-gambling facilities of similar size.” Bruce added “A public safety analysis of this nature is unprecedented and we are pioneering new territory. I hope this public safety analysis continues to provide important information that local police departments will deem helpful and can utilize to assist with the development of effective data-driven strategies. ”

MGC Chairman Steve Crosby noted, “Our comprehensive Research Agenda is based on the proposition that we assess the impact of casinos on facts and not anecdotes or prejudice. This public safety report is an important element of that fact-based analysis. Naturally, we are pleased that to this point there has been virtually no negative impact on crime rates due to the casino; however, we will continue to closely monitor the issues raised in this report and any future developments with rigor and integrity.”

A summary of findings from 12-Month Public Safety Impact Report:

- In the first year of operation, Plainridge Park Casino produced crime and call figures commensurate with similarly-sized facilities in the region.
- Overall crime was down in the communities, few significant increases in crimes in the surrounding area.
- Most significant increases were tied to traffic activity: complaints, collisions, disabled vehicles, suspicious vehicles.
- Some evidence of increases in economic crimes (credit card fraud) possibly tied to casino presence though no direct evidence
- Further studies needed with full comparison datasets for crime and traffic collisions when data is available in 2017.

Analyst Christopher Bruce will continue this research project and intends to make a second year presentation to the Commission at the end of 2017. To view a copy of 12-Month Public Safety Impact Report, click [here](#).

About MGC Crime Analyst Christopher W. Bruce

Christopher W. Bruce is an internationally-recognized expert in police data systems and police data analysis. He is a career crime analyst with previous service at the Cambridge Police Department and the Danvers Police Department. He was president of the Massachusetts Association of Crime Analysts from 2000 to 2004 and has served in several roles in the International Association of Crime Analysts. He currently consults with the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance; the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs; the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; and the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training.



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