



Legislation Text

File #: 18-1006, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to request City Manager to work with Long Beach City College (LBCC), the Long Beach Department of Economic Development, Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network (PGWIN), and North Long Beach higher education experts and advocates to explore the feasibility of establishing a higher education center in North Long Beach.

Community colleges are a key contributor to the diversity of higher education and an improved economy. Representing over 8 million students nationwide, community colleges are primary institutions for workforce development and an affordable, accessible gateway to baccalaureate degrees. The Long Beach College Promise illustrates what an alignment of educational institutions, businesses, and local governments can do to support access to education and local economic development. Though cost and preparation are common barriers to educational attainment, proximity also reinforces inequality within higher education.

The Problem

Over the past decade, studies have assessed linkages between distance and education, indicating that proximity affects a student's institution of choice, their probability to study, and educational attainment. A 2009 publication affirms that geographic location is an important factor in determining where, and often whether, a high school senior goes onto college; most commonly being the case for first-generation and low-income students.' Therefore, the odds of applying to college are increased the closer an institution is located.

In addition to enrollment, distance places a strain on performance and educational attainment, negatively affecting students of color and those who work while in school, Today, approximately 40% of first-time freshmen are enrolled in community colleges across the country. However, of those first-time enrollees, it will take up to 6 years for at least 30% of the low-income, first-generation students to complete their Associate's degree. ii For these demographics, distance poses a variety of barriers for a student's educational attainment: from finances, to the social integration, commuter students have a more difficult time navigating college terrain.

Following the 2014 American Community Survey findings for Long Beach, educational attainment levels are highest in the neighborhoods closer to higher education institutions.

A Look at North Long Beach

Home to many youth and families, half of the North Long Beach population is less than 30

years old. Though younger adults in the Uptown area enter higher education at rates comparable to the rest of the City and the Los Angeles County, only 13% of people between 25 and 34 years of age have a Bachelor's degree. Furthermore, only 40% of North Long Beach youth are enrolled in college, compared to almost half of Long Beach and LA County.

Sharing borders with the City of Compton, many North Long Beach residents find Compton Community College easier to access for their studies. Over the past three years, roughly 8% of Compton College's enrolled students were from the 90805 zip code, whereas 10% of Uptown residents are currently enrolled at LBCC. Connectivity hinders residents' educational attainment, as the average bus commute from Jordan High School to a LBCC campus takes 2 hours. In fact, most North-South Long Beach Transit (LBT) routes stop on either South Street or Artesia Boulevard and do not reach all of the Uptown community. North Long Beach residents travelling to either LBCC or Compton are likely to ride at least three buses, and use an inter-agency transfer between LBT and Metro to reach either campus.

Long Beach City College has campuses in the East and Central Long Beach areas, and is also present Downtown, where the Small Business Development Center serves as a resource to the community. There is no higher education presence in the North Long Beach area, which could attribute to the lower attainment levels in the area.

The Opportunity

National projections indicate that by 2020, 65% of all American jobs will require some form of post-secondary degree or credential." The majority of our low-income and communities of color are not currently equipped to meet this demand and will be excluded from future employment opportunities, unless educational stakeholders and local government are proactive in engaging and providing access where need is prevalent.

As the Atlantic Avenue corridor is revitalized and major development within the Uptown area is currently taking place, this is a prime time for the City to explore the feasibility of establishing a higher education center in North Long Beach. Community colleges are the largest sector of higher education, providing more certificates and workforce training than any other, and improving the local economy and quality of life. In addition, community colleges expand access to education and help fill workforce gaps by creating an educated labor force, which is a key element of the Everyone In initiative.

There is no significant fiscal impact for the feasibility study.

Approve recommendation.

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