LONG BEACH'S SKATEBOARDING EXTREME SPORTS DOCTOR

Dr. Joshua Snodgrass, who grew up skateboarding, is now the head of the sports medicine fellowship at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center.

Brandon Richardson / Business Journal
A pair of ‘affordable’ homes open next year
...

New zoning in Bixby Knolls could bring more development
...

Developer can move forward with Dolly Varden housing project on one condition
...

City planning staff hosted an open house on July 11 inside the Expo Arts Center on Atlantic Avenue, where easels held up diagrams of the area with different colored blocks indicating the type of development that could be allowed on major corridors like Atlantic Avenue, Long Beach Boulevard and Wardlow Road. While those corridors are expected to be the most affected by zoning changes, the entire area...

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The Dolly Varden Hotel in Long Beach is slated for demolition to make room for a new multi-story building.

By Jason Ruiz

The old Dolly Varden hotel building can be converted into 144 new apartment units, the Cultural Heritage Commission said at a meeting on July 25, as long as the historic sign and the building’s facade are kept in place. Requiring the developers to keep the facade and the first 15 feet of the building’s entrance was a last-minute tweak the commission made July 24 as it took the “difficult” vote to approve the hotel’s demolition. The housing project could keep the Dolly Varden sign displayed on the third floor of the new building instead of on the rooftop deck on the eighth floor of the new development. The move to require the developer to keep the facade, though, could endanger the proposed project that was slated to bring 16 affordable units to Downtown and 155 more. The developer believes would also add to the city’s lower-priced housing stock because of their smaller size. “I do think, at that point, it becomes a very different study, and we need to go back to the drawing board rather then keep the existing design,” Ryan Caldera, a senior project manager at Studia 11, told the commission about the new requirement. The commission’s vote is appealable to the city’s Planning Commission. The vote came over the objections of some community members including Long Beach Heritage, who said that the building should be saved from demolition and preserved for future generations.

In Long Beach’s ongoing effort to update zoning citywide, planners are now focused on the Baby Knolls area, where some residents have expressed apprehension about the effects that new development could have on parking, while others are excited at the prospect of making the area more walkable.

By Jason Ruiz

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Planning Commission clears way for Legends to build 1st permanent parklet on 2nd Street

The Planning Commission voted 3-1 earlier this month to deny an appeal and uphold the city's zoning administrator's approval of the parklet.

By Jason Ruiz

Legends Restaurant & Sports Bar in Belmont Shore has been approved to construct a permanent parklet.

Residents gathered inside the Expo Arts Center study concept maps of the areas where zoning could change in Bixby Knolls.

The parklet will take up the two parking spaces directly in front of the business.

Sanchez-Lopez said that the process, the better the zoning will be, “because right now it’s just asphalt and auto body shops. It’s pretty hot.”

Sanchez-Lopez said that the public meetings are important for the planners trying to figure out what’s best for the area and increase diversity. It could also create more of a nightlife and entire other businesses to move to the area, and existing businesses to stay open later.

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The Long Beach Community College District and the city will officially begin negotiations in September over a vacant lot in North Long Beach that the college hopes to develop into affordable student housing.

A negotiation window that could last a year or longer will begin next month, the City Council approved the talks earlier this month. The council authorized an initial 240-day window for the college to assess if the site is viable for a 36-bed affordable housing project the college is seeking to build and to prove that it has the finances to pay for it.

The city and the college could extend that window by up to 90 days.

Long Beach declared the three parcels of land just north of the Michelle Obama Library as surplus in May ahead of negotiations with plans for the college to potentially develop it.

The proposed housing project would be three stories tall and include educational spaces, a food pantry and other student services. Earlier this year, a college spokesperson said that the project was estimated to cost about $32.3 million.

Expanding the college’s footprint into North Long Beach is a strategic step by LBC as it tries to engage a larger portion of the city and the college plans to use the project to create more affordable student housing.

College officials have indicated that affordable housing is something they want to pursue, and a larger 46-bed facility at the college’s Liberal Arts Campus could be something LBC would undertake in the future. That project was estimated to cost $25 million, the college had applied for state funding but did not receive it.

The proposed housing project in North Long Beach would be located just a block away from a higher education center that the college also plans to operate. The center, which the college authorized the college to begin using earlier this month, will include a computer lab and offer some non-credit courses and other services like small business advising.

LBC’s board of trustees is expected to vote by August 2024 on whether to place the ballot measure before voters in the November 2024 election. If passed, it would increase the project’s cost to $103 million; the college had applied for state funding but did not receive it.

Another concern the college is facing is whether voters will pass the ballot measure that the college had leftover from a previous bond measure.

LBCC does have $89 million in leftover money from a previous bond measure that the college had previously applied for but did not receive.

The vote was originally scheduled for this summer, but the commission decided to postpone it to allow negotiations to continue between the city and the applicants.

Two new drive-thru restaurants at the Long Beach Towne Center will have to wait a couple more weeks before being approved, after the Planning Commission delayed voting on new El Pollo Loco and Basking Sands locations due to disputes over city requirements to install solar panels.

Earlier this month, the commission pushed a potential vote to its Sept. 7 meeting after representatives from both chains said they were surprised by the requirement to include solar panels in their designs.

Conditions of approval attached to both projects stipulate that the buildings either need to integrate solar power into their buildings’ design “to the extent feasible” or enroll in Southern California Edison’s Green Rate program to comply with the city’s Climate Action Plan goals.

Edison has paused enrollment in its Green Rate program for both residential and commercial accounts because “interest has exceeded capacity,” according to Edison’s website.

Representatives from both chains said they had planned to use the Green Rate program and that adding solar would likely put their projects over budget. The commission decided to postpone the vote to allow negotiations to continue between the city and the applicants.

The project proposed building the two new restaurants on the final undeveloped parcel of land at the Long Beach Towne Center along Carson Street near the Sam’s Club gas station site.

A Planning Commission vote is expected to be tied the split panel, which includes the Walmart, into two and to approve the designs of the proposed drive-thru features at both locations. Both drive-thrus showed double-lane layouts to help prevent their queues backing up into the parking lot of the site with a city staff report indicating that they could hold a combined 33 vehicles.

Both locations are proposing to operate from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. daily.

Comments

Dolly Varden (Calif. Pfg.)

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August 2023
Real Estate

approximately 300 square feet and spaces for parklets was actually a sidewalk,” Dean said. “It’s a public navigate the corridor when parklets said that it was difficult for her to area’s sidewalks.

and the congestion they bring to the on already tight parking conditions on Second Street, noting their effect of people who live in the area that said she had gathered 600 signatures with the new parklet. “And I fully able to enjoy that “natural wealth” Kyle St. Romaine said during of the best weather on the planet,” about Long Beach is we have some

Continued from page 4

Legends Parklet

Dean, who uses a wheelchair, Julie Dean, president of the Belmont Shore Resident Association, said she had gathered five signatures of people who live in the area that are opposed to permanent parklets on Second Street, noting their effect on the public walkway, which she said was likely a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

“Legends does not own that sidewalk,” Dean said. “It’s a public right of way.”

Commissioner Michael Clemens questioned if removing parklets for parklets was actually a loss of public space, noting that only people who drive can use parking spaces. A condition of the new permanent parklets is that they will have to be made available to all members of the public, regardless of whether they’re buying anything from the business it belongs to.

“People who don’t drive don’t benefit from those spaces,” Clemens said.

The commission voted 3-1 to deny the appeal and uphold the city’s zoning administrator’s approval of the parklet in May.

Two other restaurants in Belmont Shore, Open Swans and The Win-Dow, which is replacing Archilochus’ at the west end of the Second Street corridor, both have applications for either a parklet (Open Swans) or outdoor dining set to be hung by the city’s zoning administrator later this month.

Parklets were a lifeline for restaurants during the pandemic as they allowed diners to eat outdoors while indoor dining was restricted or banned to limit the transmission of COVID-19. However, the city required all temporary installations to come down by the end of January.

The request for proposals includes those pre-security locations that city staff said are “rare,” as part of the ongoing $122 million Phase II Terminal Area Improvements program. Little Brass Café Express and a couple of proposals involving the historic terminal building, but both were shuttered amid a systemic problem.

“We sort of treated the proposals for pre-security concessions, which I know will solidify LGB’s reputation as one of the coolest airports — and as one of the most comfortable and easy to navigate—in the country,” airport Director Cynthia Gaesty said in a statement.

The three areas include:

• A concession space with an outdoor patio on the new terminal at area beside the new baggage claim facility. According to the city, the 1,072-square-foot space that the new terminal would be occupied by a fast-casual or grab-and-go dining option.

• A former restaurant area on the second floor of the 1928 historic terminal building. While the space for decades served as a restaurant with a full bar and available outdoor dining with views of aircraft taking off and landing, officials said they would be open to other proposals, including event or co-working space.

• An alcove on the first floor of the historic terminal building, which the city said would be ideal for food, beverage or retail vending operations.

While the city expects these businesses to open next year, the announcement stated operation start dates are negotiable based on the proposal and necessary build-out.

“This is an incredible opportunity for entrepreneurial ideas to take flight and give our travelers more high-quality, convenient dining options that are unique to Long Beach,” Gausty concluded.

3 new dining, retail spots at LGB expected to open next year

The request for proposals includes three pre-security locations, openings that city staff said are “rare,” as part of the ongoing $122 million Phase II Terminal Area Improvements program.

By Brandon Richardson

City officials announced earlier this month that Long Beach is seeking operators for three new dining and retail locations at Long Beach Airport, which are all expected to open next year.

The request for proposals includes three pre-security locations that city staff said are “rare,” as part of the ongoing $122 million Phase II Terminal Area Improvements program.

Last month, the city had received two dozen proposals for pre-security locations, but when the application could be blocked if neighborhood groups opposed the project, but changes adopted by the council only allow opposition to trigger a hearing before the City Council if a parklet project faces opposition during a 30-day period in which the applicant must post public notice of an intent to build a parklet.

Parklet projects in Belmont Shore face a different process because they’re in the Coastal Zone, which in some cases requires approvals from the California Coastal Commission for a project to move forward.

However, the Second Street corridor is in a portion of the zone where the city has the authority to issue permits.

The city has received two dozen parklet proposals for parklets in the city’s Second Street corridor, which gave the City Council the last word on permanent parklet proposals, but the decision limits the power of residents in that process.

The original language adopted by the council said that a parklet application could be blocked if neighborhood groups opposed the project, but changes adopted by the council only allow opposition to trigger a hearing before the City Council if a parklet project faces opposition during a 30-day period in which the applicant must post public notice of an intent to build a parklet.

Today I’ve got something for readers who have perhaps been growing weary of some of the more esoteric, multi-million dollar waterfront properties I sometimes allude to in this space. These are homes to dream about because they’re way too far away for all but the most committed of Long Beachers who work hard every day in order to bring home enough money to pay the city’s average rent of $2,127 for a two-bedroom apartment—totally about half the cost of what you’d pay for a mortgage for a medium-priced home sold in Long Beach in July. That’s even less heartening for those who are struggling to save to get into the housing market is the type and condition of homes and their location that’s relatively affordable—and I mean relative to the $4 million homes in Naples and the Peninsula as well as to the newly $5 million homes that are scattered about elsewhere in semi-desirable neighborhoods throughout the city.

I might be going to extremes with this first place I couldn’t help but notice over on the west side of town at 1529 W. Summit St.

Curb appeal? Not too bad. It’s got a nice white wrought iron fence and a gate latched between two single-family homes. There’s a small patio in the front yard with a lawn and a large shade tree. The home’s on the market for $600,000.

Inside, the house has been upgraded with new floors and paint. The living room has a drop ceiling with exposed beams and a fireplace, both of which will appeal to buyers. There’s also an updated kitchen with new cabinets and appliances.

As you move back through the house, you find a large bedroom with en suite bathroom, a second, larger bedroom, and a third bedroom that could be used as a home office or guest room.

The home is being sold as-is with cash or hard money only, and if you have to ask what hard money is, you probably don’t have any. Still interested? The listing agents are Jessica Nair and Brian Brooks.

A much, much nicer home, with a lot fewer cosmetic drawbacks, is a three-bedroom, two-bath, 1,323-square-foot Spanish-style bungalow at 680 Cedar Ave, in the Washington neighborhood, where its list price of $620,000 might be a tad on the dear side. Pick it up and slap it down somewhere else, say, Brady

COLUMNS

TIM GROBATY

A pair of affordable homes with unique issues

A Spanish-style bungalow at 680 Cedar Ave is dwarfed by two multi-family buildings. Knolls or Belmont Heights, and it wouldn’t be unreasonable to ask for $700,000 or more.

A nice Spanish-style bungalow with finishes-

covered facade in the front. The little house is wedged between two large multi-family complexes. But here, especially looking like real estate holdout blanketed by two large multi-family buildings, it’s difficult to deploy the oft-used adjective “cute.” if you’re the type that frequently finds yourself challenged to deal with, there’s plenty of potential for spankies. Still, the 900-house went through a thorough remodel in 2014 with an admirable effort to bring privacy—and even luxury—to the property, especially in the backyard where, without planning, residents and their guests would be prime viewing material for the second-floor residents in the buildings on either side.

Driving a house job of protecting the backyard from the viewing pleasure of the neighbors is a large and handsomely wood-covered patio house as well as rows of tall evergreens along the fence. Inside, the house has been upgraded with new appliances in the kitchen, which opens into the living room with a wide-open floor plan. The floors are dark wood laminate and the bedrooms are large and off the master. The property is listed by Realtor Natasha Said of Coldwell Banker.

Both of these homes I’m showing you today are under the median price for homes recently sold in Long Beach, but even if they can be considered affordable, it shows that there’s a little more to consider than the Realtor’s adage, “location, location, location.”

One can possibly be flipped with more than a little know-how and hard work, the other is stuck, almost adamantly, where it is.  

INTEGRATED RESOURCES FOR RESILIENCY
Popular George’s Greek Cafe locations in Downtown, Lakewood sold to new owners

The Loizides family has owned and managed the iconic restaurant for over two decades.

By Caitlin Antonios

George’s Greek Cafe locations on Pine Avenue and in Lakewood will no longer be owned by the Loizides family. However, Nicky Loizides, daughter of the restaurant’s founder, George, will take majority ownership of the Belmont Shore location. She will share ownership with her brother Euripides, who goes by “Rip,” after purchasing her brother Jimmy’s stake in the restaurant.

Details on the two sales, which are still in progress, have not been revealed. However, and the sale for the Pine location won’t be final for about four to six weeks, Loizides said.

Nicky Loizides said the Belmont Shore restaurant will still feature the same name and her mom’s recipes. “All of that is gonna stay,” she said. “That’s what’s important to me.”

The Belmont Shore location has been undergoing a remodel and will have a grand reopening event in a month or two after the work is complete. Loizides said there may be new things added, like some specials, but it will be an addition to the menu, not a replacement.

Loizides said her brother Jimmy and his family moved north to Subang and it became too difficult to manage operations for all three restaurants. Loizides added that the Pine location continued to struggle after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I made sense to sell for my brother,” she said. “I just wanted to keep a part of my parents alive and because we live in the community and I’ve run this store for a while it made sense for us.”

The family has owned and managed the iconic restaurant for over two decades.

George Loizides originally opened George’s Greek Deli on Pine next to First Bank on the late 1990s before expanding to a full-service restaurant on 135 Pine Ave. He later expanded to Belmont Shore and Lakewood.

The wildly popular restaurant had been a Downtown staple for years, with the late family patriarch often out front greeting each guest.

The family immigrated to Long Beach in 1979, where George Loizides took a job working at a liquor store, while his wife Rodou, whose recipes are used in the restaurant, to the United States.

His family got sponsored by another refugee, Ladine Chan, who goes by “Ladine” or “Lay,” who moved in 1981. They worked their way up and eventually ran George’s Greek Cafe locations on Third and Pine next to Wilson High School.

In 1996, the United Cambodian Camp Oakes in Big Bear.

Continued on page 19

EM3 prepares youth to be Long Beach’s future leaders

By Brandon Richardson

In 1980, Ladine Chan was born in a Thailand refugee camp on the border of Cambodia. Her parents survived genocide, while so many of their friends and family did not.

“I had two older sisters who died of starvation,” Chan said quietly.

His family got sponsored by another refugee, Chan said. “I just wanted to keep a part of my parents alive and because we live in the community and I’ve run this store for a while it made sense for us.”

The family has owned and managed the iconic restaurant for over two decades.

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In 1996, the United Cambodian Camp Oakes in Big Bear.

Continued on page 19

A group photo of the students who attended EM3’s 2023 summer camp at YMCA Camp-Oakes in Big Bear.

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LBBJ
wasn’t a ‘bad’ kid, and so long as I was
he said of the teachers. “So as long as I
I used to fix all their cars for them,”
was still absorbing knowledge while
abuse problems, though he never
identified closest with the social
part of any one crowd, but always
emphasis on action sports, such as
Snodgrass instructs the young doctor.
Ankle, but no X-rays on file.
Snodgrass said. “And school started to get fun.” So he decided to continue his education.
With no family support, he could only afford to apply to two universities: UC San Diego and UC Santa Cruz. The latter sent him the big envelope first, so he packed his bags and moved up north.
Snodgrass recalled. “These outcasts were my
He tested out of several classes
in its 50th year at the Long Beach
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Teen mental health needs skyrocketed during pandemic

By Tea Konecny

When her high school suddenly switched to an online format in 2020, Goselle Becerra Murillo started sleeping class.

Becerra Murillo, who recently graduated from Cabrillo High School, said that she felt constantly drained, and accustomed to doing so in the report, adding that the appeals process to remand the Medicaid for their health care, but income Americans rely on.

The vast majority of Medicaid recipients are insured by for-profit companies, which contract with states to provide services to low-income people. Doctors make care recommendations, which must then be approved by these Medicaid managed care organizations, or MCOs. That approval is known in the industry as the “prior authorization of services,” which is required for a health care provider to treat a patient.

After looking into 115 MCOs nationwide, the report from the inspector general’s office of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that, in 2019, one out of every eight requests for the prior authorization of services were denied. Investigators also learned that, despite the high number of denials, states did not routinely review their appropriateness.

“The absence of robust oversight of MCO decisions on prior authorization requests presents a limitation that can allow inappropriate denials to go unchallenged in the system,” the investigators wrote in the report, adding that the appeals process to remand the Medicaid for their health care, but income Americans rely on.

The report notes concerns about the payment model for Medicaid, under which MCOs receive a fixed amount of money per enrollee regardless of the number of services provided to them. Investigators said the model could incentivize some insurers to favor care, especially to cancer and cardiac patients, seniors and people with disabilities who need in-home care and medical devices, to increase profits.

Half of Medicaid enrollees are people enrolled in 2019.

Seven of Molina’s 12 MCOs, representing a total of 15 million enrollees, had denial rates greater than 25%, according to the report.

The report found that Molina had the highest overall denial rate at 41.4%, followed by Capital HealthCare (37.4%), UniteHealth (35.5%), Anthem (32.1%), Centene (32.0%), Aetna (24.5%) and AmeriHealth (8.6%).

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Miller Children’s and Women’s Hospital aims to reduce inequities among Black mothers

The impetus for a new birth equity initiative at Miller Children’s and Women’s Hospital has spurred training for the hospital’s staff, which largely focuses on listening to the needs of pregnant Black women.

By Kat Schuster

“I treat all my patients the same,” is a statement that’s been echoed among health care workers for many years. But a recent push to reduce severe inequities among Black mothers and their babies has revealed this to be the wrong approach.

“We have come to understand that this could be part of the barrier because all patients are not the same,” said Dr. Candace Kelly, birth equity lead at MemorialCare Miller Children’s & Women’s Hospital Long Beach, told the Business Journal. “They are different, and so our patients need individualized care.”

Kelly said that “the ‘aha’ moment came during the early phases of Miller Children’s & Women’s Hospital’s participation in a two-year cohort with Cherished Futures for Black Moms & Babies.

The impetus for a new birth equity initiative has spurred training for the hospital’s staff, which largely focuses on listening to the needs of pregnant Black women, who repeatedly report that they feel unheard, disrespected and excluded from their own birthing plans.

Largely, it is believed that implicit bias and structural racism has long plagued the health care system.

“Recognizing and understanding the historical implications of obstetric abuse and racism and its consequences is essential to the work that we’re doing,” Kelly said.

The hospital, which serves one of the largest numbers of Black mothers across Los Angeles County, was among two other hospitals within the county selected to participate in the cohort.

After a year of research and planning, the hospital is currently in its second year of the program, an implementation phase that involves teaching and training for nursing and hospital staff alike.

“We know from the data and from many stories, Black mothers have increased morbidity and mortality rates,” Susan Herman, chief nursing executive of Miller Children’s & Women’s Hospital said. “How do we make sure that we listen to their unique needs and their perspectives to give them what they would like, in the best possible way for their birth plan?”

Recent data tells a dire story: The preterm birth rate among Black women is 50% higher than for white or Asian women, according to the LA County Department of Public Health Maternal Child Health. According to the LA County Lamb Survey, Black women are four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related complications compared to white women.

“We need to change practices forever to eliminate these things,” Kelly said.

Black women also report discrimination when getting medical care more than other racial and ethnic groups, according to the Lamb Survey.

“We’re trying to overcome all of these barriers to make them feel heard,” Herman said.

One clear example of this has been the prioritization of vaginal deliveries for patients over cesarean sections, which requires general anesthesia for the surgical delivery of a baby through the abdomen.

“There’s a tendency to perhaps rush things along and maybe say, ‘Let’s just do a C-section. It’s easier, it’s more convenient,’” Herman said.

“There’s less risk to the mother if they have a vaginal delivery.”

A vaginal delivery is the most natural form of labor, and when it’s feasible, it’s the safest way to deliver a baby. Alternatively, a C-section should ideally be reserved for emergencies. Hospitals are also rated, on a measure that reports the proportion of babies born through a cesarean section procedure.

Last year, Miller reported that its cesarean birth rate was about to meet the statewide target of 23.6%, down from 35.6% nearly four years ago.

“Our task is to honor and to sit with our patients to find out exactly what they need, and then we can treat them accordingly—with respect and dignity,” Kelly said. “But the effort isn’t just focused on the delivery of the baby. Promoting prenatal care and post-birth care should also be we’re integrated into a healthy plan for pregnant mothers.

“Someone that comes in just needs to speak to us to find out exactly what they need, and then we can treat them accordingly—with respect and dignity,” Kelly said.

Within the hospital, through a partnership with W2HNN, an association that helps provide training and support for nurses, the hospital has adopted the Hospital Maternity Care initiative to help retain staff in five areas.

“Agreeing to sit with our patients, provide evidence-based medicine, breastfeed and so we’re working with Cherish Futures, who have women advisors in the community,” Herman said.

“And so how do we redirect them, retrain our staff?” Herman said.

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“And so how do we redirect them, retrain our staff?” Herman said.
in which there is a request for additional information that is promptly resolved within applicable deadlines,” the emailed statement said. “Regardless, Molina is continuously working to improve our processes and create the best possible experience for members and providers.”

The Medicaid denial rate is roughly double the rate under Medicare Advantage, which in a similar program reserved for people over 65 years old, according to the report. Medicare enrollees also have access to automatic external reviews of denials to appeal the decision, investigators noted.

“Those differences in oversight and access to external medical reviews between the two programs raise concerns about health equity and access to care for Medicaid managed care enrollees,” investigators said.

The report states more action is needed to improve patient protections and state oversight of denials “to help ensure that enrollees have access to deliver medically necessary and covered services.” The report recommends the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services “to partnering with states to strengthen oversight of the program.

In its response to the report, CMS indicated it concurred with the fifth recommendation but did not indicate whether or not it agreed with the first four, the report states. In a May 2 letter to the inspector general’s office, CMS did, however, state it was committed to partnering with states to strengthen oversight of the program.

CMS noted it would consider the findings and recommendations, noting that “the increased prevalence of the use of managed care delivery systems over the past several years underscores the continued need for strong federal and state oversight of Medicaid managed care.”

Molina is continuously working to improve our processes and create the best possible experience for members and providers,” the emailed statement said. “Regardless, Molina is continuously working to improve our processes and create the best possible experience for members and providers.”

Community of Long Beach partnered with Families in Good Health at St. Mary Medical Center to create Educated Men with Meaningful Messages, or EM3, an advocacy and health education program for young men ages 14 to 19. Chan was among EM3’s first cohort.

The program, Chan said, focuses on leadership development, community organizing, paths to higher education — “just really being able to understand the landscape of issues of social justice here in Long Beach around violence, housing and school.” EM3 is meant to prepare youth for the future through mentorship and counseling.

One of the most important aspects of the program, however, is its focus on creating healthy relationships, a topic not previously focused on enough in many young men’s lives—especially in the Cambodian community, Chan said. “It’s very important just being able to have meaningful conversations about healthy relationships and being able to express your feelings,” he said.

Each school year, the program works with a group of 15 to 20 students from the area’s high schools. While some students only participate one year, Chan said some students are part of the program for four years of high school.

After he graduated from Long Beach Poly, Chan went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in sociology from Cal State Dominguez Hills, something he said would not have been possible without the guidance from EM3. While attending the university, he took an internship with the organization. When he graduated in 2014, wanting to give back to the Long Beach community, he took a position at EM3 as a youth organizer. Since then,

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“EM3 helped me to become a leader, have a voice in their community to address the social justice issues,” he said. If not for going through the program himself, Chan said his life likely would have turned out much differently. “EM3 helped me to become a leader, have a voice.”

EM3 2023 summer camp students pose for a photo before canoeing at YMCA Camp Ojibwa in Big Bear.

By Ladine Chan, Program Coordinator for EM3

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Teen Mental Health
Costales says, “I feel it’s about that modeling, and setting that example.”

Beyond COVID
Although the pandemic certainly exacerbated and brought to light many issues, mental health concerns among teens have been rising since prior to the pandemic, Costales of The Guidance Center said. “COVID got a lot of people实实在在地 原件无误无歪曲地转述。
JetZero currently occupies a small space at Long Beach Airport, just north of Donald Douglas Drive. A relocation is already in the works, however, O’Leary said, adding that he could not give specific details, but that the larger headquarters will also be at the airport.

Long Beach’s aerospace sector has taken several big hits over the last few years. JetBlue, which used to be the city’s leading air carrier, left in October 2020. They were followed closely by Gulfstream, which unexpectedly announced it was leaving the city that same month, taking nearly 700 jobs with it in a move that blindsided city officials.

Earlier this year, satellite launch system developer Virgin Orbit, one of the city’s first small satellite launch endeavors, collapsed spectacularly. The Richard Branson company filed for bankruptcy in April and ultimately laid off nearly 800 workers before selling the operation off in pieces.

“We’ve seen way more positives than negatives,” Mayor Rex Richardson said in an interview, noting specifically Rocket Lab’s move to purchase assets from Virgin. Richardson, who toured JetZero’s facility earlier this month, praised the innovation of the company, saying the startup’s ambitious goals are “historic.”

During his visit, Richardson said he got to experience the company’s custom flight simulator. “I took off on the first shot, I was banking my turns—pretty sure you can’t do the things I was doing with an actual aircraft, but in the simulator you can get bold and do some ‘Top Gun’ stuff,” Richardson said, adding that he completely missed the runway on his landing attempt.

“This is a significant investment,” Richardson said on a more serious note. “The size of the government contract is a big thumbs up on the design.”

Richardson also was impressed on the designs he saw that he said will be more comfortable for passengers than current commercial flights. He said he is looking forward to the future of commercial air travel aboard these BWBs as well as the jobs that will be created the company.

JetZero has about 35 employees and direct contractors, O’Leary said, but he added that the figure is expected to double over the next year.

“We’re just happy to be in Long Beach, where there’s such great aviation history,” O’Leary said, noting that founder and Chief Technology Officer Mark Parks was a former McDonnell Douglas program manager who, along with Bob Ludwick and Blaine Ranson, is credited as the inventor of the blended wingbody.

“We’re happy to be bringing new opportunities to the community in the aviation space.”

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