

# LONG BEACH HEALTHY FOOD INITIATIVE

*"Making the healthy choice the easy choice"*

## Food Policy

- All beverages and snacks sold in vending machines located on City property that are accessible to the public are required to be healthy.
- All beverages and snacks served at City sponsored youth oriented meetings/classes are required to be healthy.

## Why should Long Beach adopt a healthy food policy?

### Obesity is a serious and growing health problem.

- 31% of Long Beach adults are obese and 37% are classified as overweight.
- 27% of 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Long Beach are considered obese.
- 40% of low-income 2-5 year olds in Long Beach are overweight or obese.
- Obesity is a major risk factor for most chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease.
- Obesity is costly. In LA County, the economic costs associated with overweight and obesity was \$6 billion dollars in 2006.

### The environment in which we live has a major impact on the choices we make.

- There is growing evidence that what we choose to eat is influenced by what is available locally. Studies also show a relationship between available food outlets and health.
- Access to unhealthy food and beverages is abundant in our community, including sugar-sweetened beverages, which has been associated with obesity.
- While education is important in increasing awareness, the most effective way to reduce obesity at the population level is to focus on changing the environment. A healthier food environment allows individuals to practice healthier behaviors and more easily choose the healthiest options.

### Local government can play an important role in addressing obesity.

- As a strategy to prevent obesity, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Institute of Medicine recommend that local government entities implement policies and practices to promote healthy food and beverages and reduce or eliminate the availability of calorie dense nutrient poor foods.
- The federal Let's Move Campaign encourages local governments to adopt policies that aim to reduce childhood obesity. Specifically, it recommends healthier vending machine policies and healthier foods purchased with government funds.
- The City can play a key role in increasing access to healthy food options among community residents who utilize city facilities and programs.
- The City can act as a strong leader by setting an example for other city departments, local businesses, and community residents. Additionally, the City can support the policies of other agencies, such as the school district and the YMCA, that are already implementing healthy food standards in their vending machines and programs.
- The City can remain consistent in its messages and commitment to obesity prevention and health.



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