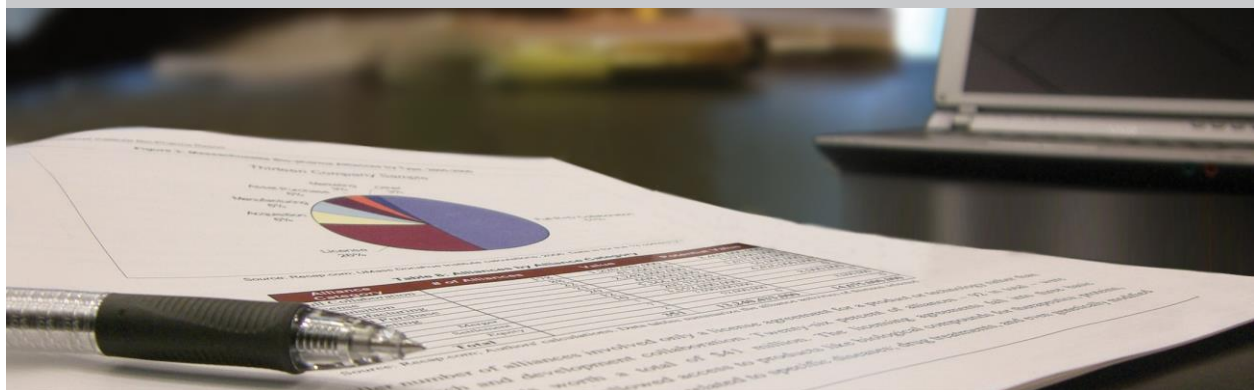


Northern Essex Community College-Whittier Technical High School Collaboration Study

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Northern Essex Community College-Whittier Technical High School Collaboration Study

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Executive Summary

The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (UMDI) has completed an initial feasibility and planning study exploring the potential for a shared campus between Northern Essex Community College (NECC) and Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School on NECC's Haverhill campus, on behalf of NECC and Whittier Tech in Essex County, Massachusetts. UMDI deployed a mixed method approach to explore the potential for a shared campus between Northern Essex Community College (NECC) and Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School on NECC's Haverhill campus, and to examine what types of mixed campus models would be a good fit for both schools. This research approach combines qualitative data from interviews with community members and quantitative data on regional workforce, industry, demographics, and labor market information to help ensure all relevant pieces of data are made available, to help inform decisions by NECC and Whittier Tech as they consider important considerations regarding the overall planning of a shared campus.

The concept of a shared campus between NECC and Whittier Tech has been in public discourse for the last few years, with some level of controversy over the initial proposal of this project. Broadly, members of the community acknowledge the potential benefits of a shared campus model because of recognition for the need for a new physical space for Whittier Tech that is cost saving, and a recognition of the importance of CTE trades and programs offered at these schools to both students and the regional workforce. That said, interviewed members of the Essex County community frequently describe having a vague understanding of the details behind NECC and Whittier Tech's proposed shared campus, and many noted they need more information about the proposal, to develop support for it. To help relay information around a collaborative shared campus model between NECC and Whittier Tech, and in this relay the value of career technical education (CTE) training for students and regional workforce demands, UMDI recommends both schools increase transparency towards the general community around the project. This could be accomplished through actions such as working with a public relations firm to help relay project goals, and describe the overall value, importance, and needed expenses of CTE training. Increasing communication regarding the shared campus' objective and relevant logistics with both the public and local community leadership is an effective approach observed in UMDI's research on best practices and has been frequently recommended by members of the community during interviews and listening sessions.

Financial concerns remained salient to the community members UMDI spoke with. Though the overall price is an issue noted by those interviewed, many specifically expressed apprehension towards how the project's cost will be distributed among communities and taxpayers. Community members recommend addressing financial concerns by quantifying individual costs, breaking down the reality of paying for a

new Whittier Tech building by both emphasizing the value of the shared campus for all community members, and by searching far and wide, especially through the state, for funding sources. Based on the research UMDI has completed, and at the suggestion of many interviewed community members, we recommend that NECC and Whittier Tech consider a collaborative shared campus model where both schools share some amount of physical space and services such as security and maintenance. In this recommendation, Whittier Tech and NECC could continue to have two separate identities, maintaining their own unique institutional missions.

Important to note, research has also shown that a Fully Integrated School Model in which both schools merge into a single, newly created entity can also be beneficial to the community, students and regional labor market, in that it fills needs within the regional workforce. This would likely involve more rounds of planning and coordination than UMDI's primary recommendation of the collaborative shared campus model. Additionally, this would involve merging all school identities, missions and resources together. Examples of successful models of fully integrated schools may be reviewed in the report's literature review section.

From this report's findings, data shows that the student population (15 to 29-year-olds) in Essex County is projected to shrink from 18.7 percent in 2020 to 15 percent in 2050. Reflecting the larger trend of a shrinking working population and a growing 65+ population, workforce development challenges will be exacerbated as more of the population moves to non-working ages. Additionally, UMDI's data shows that Health Care and Social Assistance is the largest industry by employment in Essex County with 67,212 jobs in 2024. Health Care and Social Assistance is also a priority industry according to the Northeast Massachusetts Regional Labor Force Blueprint 2023-2027. If NECC and Whittier Tech were to consider UMDI's recommendation for a collaborative shared campus model, ensuring programming continues to meet regional workforce needs now and, in the future, will be more important than ever. Additional information on the current and future regional labor market trends as well as data on regional economic and demographic benchmarking can be accessed in the report's following sections.

To conclude, the objective of this report has been to provide NECC and Whittier Tech with information and guidance on an overarching vision of a potential shared campus, offer best practices for approaching campus collaboration, provide relevant information and considerations around the regional labor market, highlight community concerns, and suggestions towards a possible shared campus model. From our data analysis, NECC and Whittier Tech should consider a shared campus model in which both schools maintain their own unique identities but share some resources together. For more information on the data that has led to this recommendation, the following sections in this report may be reviewed.

Introduction

Northern Essex Community College (NECC) serves approximately 8,000 students throughout Essex County and the surrounding region. Offering over 60 certificates and associate degree programs, NECC helps students gain the skills needed to advance in the workforce or transfer to a four-year university or college. Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School (Whittier Tech) serves approximately 1,250 students from across 11 cities and towns¹, offering students the opportunity to choose a major from one of 22 vocational-educational tracks and gain the skills and specialized training necessary to graduate with both a high school diploma and industry certifications.

As the physical building of Whittier Tech has continued to serve students over the years, its aging has created numerous issues structurally, causing the high school's leadership to examine potential options that address these challenges. One innovative path forward involves exploring the potential for a shared campus between NECC and Whittier Tech on NECC's Haverhill campus, a move which has been done only a handful of times between community colleges and technical high schools across the United States. To better understand the feasibility and planning for this proposed shared campus, NECC and Whittier Tech engaged the expertise of the UMass Donahue Institute's Economic and Public Policy Research unit.

NECC and Whittier Tech commissioned this report from the Donahue Institute with the aim of informing an initial feasibility and planning study that examines the potential for a shared campus between NECC and Whittier Tech on NECC's Haverhill campus, which is in its exploratory stage. To accomplish this, a mixed methods approach was deployed, with both qualitative and quantitative forms of data collected and analyzed. To develop this report, UMDI conducted:

1. Community listening sessions and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders within the local community, to collect direct feedback, concerns and recommendations regarding the proposed shared campus.
2. A literature review of best practices, case studies and potential funding sources for shared campuses.
3. A labor market scan of Essex County which examines the current state and demands of the regional labor force.
4. Demographic and economic benchmarking of Essex County and the 11 communities served by Whittier Tech.

The sections that follow analyze data from the four primary components described above and will discuss all findings from each component, in turn.

¹ Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School serves a district comprised of eight towns and three cities: Haverhill, Newburyport, Amesbury, Georgetown, Ipswich, Groveland, Merrimac, West Newbury, Newbury, Rowley, and Salisbury.

Community Feedback on the Proposed Shared Campus

From October and November of 2024, the Donahue Institute facilitated a total of four confidential community listening sessions, open to participation from all community members who wish to participate. Participants had the opportunity to sign up for any and/or all of the four publicly offered listening session dates using a short online survey, which was advertised widely by NECC and Whittier Tech across their social media networks and platforms to encourage community participation. For ease of participant access, all listening sessions took place over Zoom, and reminder emails with the meeting's zoom link were sent out to all participants one week from their session date, as well as the morning of their scheduled listening session. Listening session discussion questions focused on topics that examine participant's general support, thoughts, questions toward and concerns around the proposed NECC-Whittier Tech shared campus.

Additionally, UMDI conducted 10 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders within the local community, as identified by the NECC-Whittier Tech planning group. While listening sessions are an effective way to gather a large volume of qualitative community feedback, not everyone may be comfortable speaking freely among a large group. Conducting one-on-one interviews allows UMDI to include the input of key stakeholders who may not feel comfortable expressing their thoughts openly. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality and were informed that pseudonyms would be used for all names in the report, allowing them to speak freely. This in turn addresses research concerns for response bias.

Both listening sessions and one-on-one interviews used the same interview guide, which focused on topics which examine people's general support, thoughts, questions toward and concerns surrounding the proposed NECC-Whittier Tech shared campus.

The following section on community feedback is broadly organized into the three following subsections: Community support for the shared campus, community concerns surrounding the shared campus, and recommendations from the community. Each topic will be discussed in turn, using analyzed data from all listening sessions and interviews. For more information on interview methodology, see Appendix A: Methodological Approaches.

Community support

During both interviews and community listening sessions, many members of the community expressed their support for Career Technical Education (CTE) and the proposed shared campus between Whittier Tech and NECC. Participants pointed out the potential for long term cost saving and strengthening of

programs for both schools on a shared campus. Many community members also emphasized the importance of trades and programs offered at these schools to both the students and the local community. As one participant comments:

It's gonna cost a lot of money...But what the end product is, you will be comfortable. The kids will be comfortable. You will have a positive experience when you're here, your students will have a positive experience. The ability for your students to grow and develop and to continue to give back to their community, because this exists, will keep on going. And I think when you look at all the trades that get offered, all the skill sets that can offer between both Northern Essex and Whittier, you're covering a workforce for generations. If this is done well and is put on the same campus and the industry, the amount of industry that you grow out of this would be huge.

The two salient reasons behind community member support of the proposed shared will be discussed below.

Recognition of the need for a new physical space that is cost-saving

There are several benefits focus group and interview participants highlight regarding the proposal for a shared physical space between Whittier Tech and NECC. Some community members argue it would be cost effective to use the same physical space for both institutions, particularly because Whittier Tech's building is in poor physical condition. Other benefits mentioned include saving costs on operations and administration, increasing enrollment capacity for admitting students at Whittier Tech, the ability to have a modernized and larger facility, and potential synergies between programming. One participant stated, "I think having (Whittier Tech) on that shared campus is a big selling point for the adult community as well. And so, it becomes...a good 12-to-15-hour day at of utilization of the building for the entire community, not just high school." This participant notes that a shared campus has larger benefits for the wider community to utilize. A resident of the local area adds:

A huge public benefit is the concentration of both capital and operational resources for two institutions at one campus. Pay for it once, not twice with limited resources, it would be much better to have world class facilities and educators at one location, rather than merely adequate at two.

This comment emphasizes the potential for lower cost and providing higher quality education for both institutions if the campuses were combined.

Value of investing in Career Technical Education

Community members frequently voiced their support for Career Technical Education as a concept, and specifically how it could interact with community college programs. Participants in focus groups and interviews mentioned the need for workers in industries related to CTE, the value of having the choice to immediately enter the workforce or continue their education for students, and the potential for CTE students to have access to community college programs and resources. During one community listening session, a parent observed:

The trades are very physical work, and to have the opportunity to learn, perhaps an office side or something that (participant's teenage son) can fall back on, should he not be able to perform the physical work required in a trade. And I think having a collaboration with the college could introduce him to that.

The vision of a more balanced education coming from a shared campus was a sentiment shared by other participants as well. Many participants emphasized the shared campus as a way to strengthen vocational education at Whittier Tech and college education at NECC due to pooling resources. Additionally, many participants viewed the potential shared campus as an opportunity to make vocational education more accessible by increasing enrollment and therefore expanding access so that more students may receive career technical education. One participant framed this in terms of workforce development, stating, "A larger, more comprehensive institution can attract stronger industry relationships, leading to more internship, apprenticeship, and job placement opportunities for students. This can foster better alignment with local workforce needs." It was a common sentiment that CTE, and specifically the shared campus model, is valuable for students, businesses, and the local community. There was also a widely shared emphasis in the focus groups and interviews that the trades and programs students train for through CTE are highly valued and necessary to local communities and will continue to be needed in the future.

Community concerns and questions surrounding the shared campus

This subsection describes concerns towards the proposed NECC-Whittier shared campus described by community members during interviews and listening sessions. The following includes specific questions respondents requested answers for in order to develop a more informed opinion of the topic.

Operationalizing a 'shared campus'

A major concern shared frequently by participants was that they felt unclear about what the shared campus would look like, logistically. They said that they did not have a clear idea of what the plan was for integrating the schools, how it would be operationalized, and what the benefits were. Participants shared

that they had trouble expressing support for something that they did not have enough concrete information on to make an informed decision. During one listening session, a participant asked:

Are we talking about structurally moving a building, and are we talking about having Whittier on the campus, adjacent or together? Is it combined-structural and curriculum? I mean, I think they're kind of two separate conversations, but they also require very much information that we so we can answer your questions in an educated way.

This comment highlights several topics of concern that repeatedly came up throughout conversations with the community. Participants were unclear about the physical building structure of the shared campus, they were unsure if the current Whittier Tech building would still be used in addition to the new space on the NECC campus. Another concern was about the curriculum and whether this would change marginally or drastically. One community member asked, “What is the curriculum going to look like? What is the plan like? Are these kids going to be taking college classes? Are they going to take classes uniquely designed for each of their trades? Are they going to take general classes?” Participants were not sure if the same classes currently at Whittier would continue or if the classes would be mixed across high school and college programs. A related concern was about school definition between Whittier Tech and NECC. One comment, noted by a parent from the area was:

My biggest concern, as a (parent), would be the set-up and how to keep a cohesive school unity and school pride within the class. You know, it's like, I've heard some ideas floated around that perhaps one building might be shops and the other would be like the academics. And so, if it was split up like that, my concern would be not knowing a whole half of your peer group.

This person voices concern about how school identity might be affected by a shared or split campus. These concerns all describe a lack of clarity around how the shared campus plan will work in practice. As one participant asserts, “right now, it's just a topic, and we need a plan.”

Programming Concerns

There were concerns highlighted by the focus group and interview participants about the programming and curriculum for Whittier Tech on a shared campus. Individuals with a professional background in education expressed concerns about the logistics for student enrollment and resources. Other concerns from the perspective of parents and community members addressed access and programming for high school and college students and how the two schools might interact on a shared campus. Stakeholders for the cities and towns whose students enroll at Whittier Tech expressed worry about how increasing

capacity might affect their districts. One community member described this concern for how the proposal could impact surrounding districts:

I think a shared campus with NECC is a wonderful idea. But it's also really scary for administrators of the cities and towns and schools in terms of how attractive that's going to be to a greater number of students who are looking at wanting a vocational technical education...it's also opening a lot of avenues to them, and the schools are already struggling at trying to keep students in their district.

Concern about the sustainability of smaller districts losing students to a larger Whittier Tech was shared by several participants. There was also concern about keeping true to the mission of Whittier Tech and how a potential change in mission might affect the experience for students. Some participants were concerned about a lack of clarity about what classes might look like for the students in terms of whether they would be taking college and general education and if the trade specific classes would continue. Others were concerned that a merged campus might dilute the focus on vocational education, as one community member observes:

A community college's broader academic scope might reduce the focus on vocational and technical programs, potentially leading to less specialized training for trades students. The culture and needs of trade-focused students may become secondary in a larger, more generalized academic environment.

People were broadly concerned about mixing an academic and CTE environment, worried that one environment might take precedent in terms of resources and focus over the other. There were related concerns about access as admission to Whittier Tech has historically been more restrictive than NECC. One participant said, "I have questions around enrollment to Whittier and how that might affect the Northern Essex model of taking all the kids that apply." With a shared campus, community members and stakeholders worried that NECC might become more exclusive, and that traditionally underrepresented students or those with disabilities might have less access to either program. A participant expressed their frustration during a listening session:

Some people clearly say Whittier and other vocational schools are selecting students of a higher potential, whatever the right word is, than in the past, and it is left out a lot of students who would have benefited from a vocational education...I think we have to be very cognizant of that and anticipate how to deal with that and make sure we have the mechanisms that allow us to, you know, make sure that that's not really happening.

The question of equitable access was also raised in relation to enrollment by the community. Many participants emphasized that larger enrollment in general for Whittier Tech was needed. Others pointed specifically at the smaller communities within the area. One person said regarding the previous proposal, “If you look at each community and how many students, they allowed versus how many slots they use, if they were using them up to their maximum, you probably would have gotten a different kind of vote.” The sentiments of larger enrollments being beneficial are at odds with the perspective of stakeholders presented in the beginning of this section that sending more students would be difficult for local districts. This difference in perspective from educational professionals and community members is important to note. Parents and community members are speaking to providing the most choice for students to find an educational structure that works for them, while educational professionals also must consider the operational implications for their districts.

Another programming concern voiced was about how Whittier Tech and NECC programs might interact with each other. Participants were concerned about the high school to college pipeline and how that would work. One participant stated:

Some vocational schools may have highly specialized, industry-specific programs that don’t easily align with community college systems. This could result in complications in transferring credits or maintaining the relevance of certain courses. Merging institutions might lead to delays or challenges in updating course offerings to meet evolving industry standards.

Participants wanted to know how they might share physical space and resources while maintaining their distinct identities as a vocational high school and a community college and also protecting the interests of their students.

Environmental and local neighborhood impacts

Participants brought up several concerns about the impact of building a new Whittier Tech building or a larger NECC campus on the surrounding area. Participants express concern that these campuses may have a negative effect on the nearby residential neighborhoods, the utility infrastructure, and the land it is built on. Some participants brought up the fact that both the Whittier Tech and NECC campuses are near the water supply for the city of Haverhill. One participant added:

Both campuses are on watershed areas. Both campuses, when they were being constructed, had a great deal of opposition, well as particularly Whittier, because of where it was. If you try to expand the Haverhill campus on the primary drinking water source of the city of Haverhill, there's going to be a bunch of issues.

This person brings up concerns shared by several other community members about how an expanded campus would impact the watershed it is located on and how it may potentially impact the water supply for the city. Some participants were also concerned about overdevelopment in general. Participants mentioned increased traffic as a concern for the area. One person said, “I don't think that that region can sustain the traffic that will come with people coming and going in droves and putting a strain on the neighborhoods as well.” This is a common concern to do with the effect on the residential nearby neighborhoods of adding a large number of students and staff to one campus. These concerns are summarized generally by this question from a participant, “What can we do with the campus to make it acceptable for the residential neighborhoods that surround it?”

Financial concerns

One primary concern that arose during every listening session and interview was about the financial aspects of the proposed shared campus. Frequently, community members questioned how the project's total cost would be delegated among communities. Community members often asked researchers whether funding sources aside from taxpayers would be utilized. For those who had reservations about supporting the proposed shared campus, financial concerns were often the main reason for these hesitations.

Broadly, financial concerns voiced by participants revolved around general details on the actual cost breakdown of the proposed shared campus. Participants wondered how much of the cost would fall on individual towns in the community, and further, what portion would be allocated to individual taxpayers. Others also wondered how the cost of this proposal compares to the earlier shared campus proposal. Wary of undertaking such a costly project, one interviewee with political expertise observed, “I think we need to figure out what the cost drivers are and the cost benefits of doing this.” Community members with knowledge of the administrative and overhead costs in education warned about the upfront costs with this kind of project related to integrating systems, infrastructure, and faculty. “Maintaining both trade-specific programs and general education courses could lead to administrative complexity and increased operational costs,” one participant added, “which may not be immediately offset by increased revenue or efficiency.”

Diving into the cost breakdown for individual communities, community members and political leaders alike have major concerns on how the costs would be shared across towns and taxpayers. While the overall price tag was of concern to communities, one participant stressed “it's not just a total cost that is of concern to the communities, but also what proportion of that total cost each community would be responsible for.” Many community members referenced the regional agreement, which currently allocates funding responsibility, in their concerns about dividing up the cost of this project. One

community member with a professional educational background acknowledged the concerns for the regional agreement that stands, commenting “There's such a small percentage of kids that go to school at Whittier from each town. So, their fight is always, ‘why do we want to fund something when we can't even fund our own school?’” Residents echo these concerns and warn of the previous proposal's failures, reminding the listening groups “if we don't solve that problem and get over that hurdle, whether we build a new facility on the existing campus or on a shared campus, I fear that we're going to go down the same road we went down before.” Other participants raised concerns about the willingness of some of the communities' cities and towns to agree to pay a portion of the cost while their own public-school systems need financial relief. One participant shared that they believe the only way to get buy-in from some of the cities in towns is through funding from the state, adding “the incentive will be a significant cost contribution by the state of Massachusetts to alleviate the burden on the sending cities and towns.”

Overall, many participants stressed the degree to which cost concerns will be a deciding factor in the passing of the proposed shared campus. “My sense is that (a shared campus) would be, it would be supported by the communities...” one participant added, “the cost is the most critical element of getting to yes.” Not only do participants recognize cost as a critical element, but others also added that without more detail on how the cost will be financed, other points are essentially moot. “How will (NECC-Whittier Tech) address the financial concerns that community members and leaders have?” questioned one resident, adding “and until we address that, it's kind of hard to address other issues because the financing comes before the programming.” Those in the community with business backgrounds report similar sentiments from other groups, relaying the message “I'm on a new school building committee in (one of the towns served by Whittier) right now, and everyone is concerned about the cost of every educational facility. There's no doubt about that; cost is always an issue.” Participants with political background echoed the same, adding that “people will want to know at least roughly what this new facility is going to cost.” As evidenced by these and many other comments, cost has been regarded as the number one issue for community members.

Beyond splitting costs among communities and taxpayers, participants raised concerns about other potential funding sources. Those who have expertise politically recognize that the full cost cannot fall on taxpayers, stressing that priority “number one is going to be exploring better financial pathways that would help lower the overall cost.” Exploring state funding concerns further, participants raised concerns about the percentage of funding that the state would cover if there were an agreement. “What level of, you know, state subsidy are we talking about here?” questioned one participant, “Are we talking about a few million dollars, 10s of millions of dollars, \$100 million? I have no idea, but I'm sure it will certainly be of interest to me [and] for everybody else to know what level of state financial commitment might be [...] forthcoming.” Among questions about the state's level of input are inquiries as to whether the governor and her administration are actively working on financial projections for school funding. “I believe all the

pieces currently exist to achieve all the goals of collaboration, cooperation, etc.,” one participant added, “the only thing that's missing is money to build an updated facility for vocational technical education in the area.”

Overall, financial concerns remain top of the list for the majority of the community members who participated in this study. Though the overall price is a concern, many expressed concerns about how the cost, whatever it may be, will be distributed among communities. Other financial concerns are in regard to taxpayers and lessening the burden for individuals in the community. Questions about state funding sources and amounts were surfaced in discussions, and a constant refrain to the severity of these concerns remained in all sessions, with participants urging NECC and Whittier Tech to address questions regarding finances first and foremost.

Building related concerns

Though many participants support the proposed shared campus in concept, logistical questions and concerns regarding the physical building that the school will operate from were presented. Some participants wondered if NECC and Whittier Tech intend to build any new buildings with this proposal, and others questioned what features the new campus would have or questioned how they would be used as well as what tentative plans for the current Whittier Tech building are.

In the broadest sense, building related concerns revolve around the question of whether or not the proposed shared campus includes any new buildings on NECC’s campus. Participants questioned whether or not the proposed shared campus would make use of any existing buildings at NECC, and if so, what the cost would be to update a preexisting building to meet new needs. If the plan does include new construction, others questioned how that might materialize, questioning if it would be more than one building as well as asking “Where such a structure would be built, on the NECC campus, and what exactly its functions would be?” In light of the messaging suggesting that the current NECC campus is underutilized, residents have concerns about paying for new construction on an already underused campus, with one participant sharing:

I really don't understand what we're talking about here, as far as the underusage of the Haverhill campus, underusage in the sense that the buildings that exist are underused. If we're talking about open space being underused, then I'd like to know where they intend to build something because that's not clear.

Given that a new building is part of the plan, participants questioned whether there would be enough land to support the idea of a joint campus. In addition, participants raised concerns about how a new building on the NECC campus would change the configuration for students, especially in terms of the

time it will take to traverse the campus to class. “The more you move people from one location to the other, you essentially get a built-in inefficiency in the process,” one participant remarked, “as you move [the] student body from one building to another building, there is loss of time.” Some participants questioned whether the NECC campus would be able to handle the influx of students that this shared campus model would bring. And others questioned if the NECC campus is the right place for this shared campus, asking “Is building on this campus a more efficient model than building [or] rebuilding where Whittier is because you have access to utilities and some other things that aren't on the existing site?” Other concerns regarding a new building were raised by those with knowledge of preexisting partnerships with NECC, such as the bid placed by the YMCA to utilize space on campus and how this new proposal would affect those efforts.

In terms of labs and shop spaces that the Whittier Tech building currently has, questions about how these spaces would exist on a new campus were raised. Some participants wondered if the Whittier Tech building would still be utilized in this plan, asking “Are they planning to try to refurbish the old Whittier tech or classrooms, and looking at just building their labs or work, workspace, training workspace here on this campus?” Considering a model that makes use of both campuses, questions about travel logistics were posed. Concerned participants asked, “Will the distance students need to travel from one class to another (and its impact on in class learning time) be considered if this proposal involves more than one building?”

Other concerns around building logistics focus on what will happen to the current Whittier Tech building in the event that the school relocates to the NECC campus. Generally, many participants wondered if the building would be abandoned once the school relocates. Concerned participants proposed making use of the building to avoid it becoming abandoned, recognizing:

Clearly it has been made evident that there are significant challenges with that building... I think it's really important to really plan for the buildings that are no longer going to be occupied [...], and what do you do with it. Because you don't want it to just sit there for years and now you got to tear it down, or it could have served a better purpose.

In discussing the potential abandonment, participants reported community members having questions about who ultimately owns the building. Depending on ownership, questions about selling the property were raised, with one participant asking, “Another question would be, [...] if the property is abandoned and it's going to be sold, you know, could that money be used to help with the town's assessments in the future?”

Overall, concerns regarding building logistics built upon questions of the shared campus definition. Participants wondered if there would be new construction or new uses for existing buildings on the NECC campus. In imagining this new shared campus, some participants raised concerns regarding the impacts that a larger or spread-out campus would have on students and learning. Others still raised concerns about the fate of the current Whittier Tech building, and how the building's fate could be utilized to the school's advantage.

Additional Community Concerns

In addition to the concerns raised throughout this section, several concerns were raised during interviews and community listening sessions that do not fit explicitly within the themes previously addressed.

Concerns regarding the multi-town agreement, not directly related to cost as discussed above, have been raised in regard to how the agreement may be impacted by the proposed shared campus. For example, the issue of landownership was raised, with additional concerns about how the proposed campus may change the governing body that oversees the finances of the project. The regional agreement was debated in multiple settings, with many community members raising concerns about re-drawing it and how the current district will be changed in doing so. Many assert that amending the regional agreement is a priority, while others believe that the process to do so will need to be more involved, such as the concern raised by one participant who notes, "the regional agreement will likely have to be brand new, not 'fixed', with everyone at the table to re-draw it." Amidst the concerns that were subsequently raised about the regional agreement, other participants warned "nitty gritty issues [like these] will derail the conversation without proper messaging", as some participants felt that these policy or practice questions are beyond the vision of the shared campus but will ultimately need to be addressed before moving forward. "I think if this is going to move forward," one participant added, "then the Whittier agreement has to be redrafted and to reflect the 2020s...I'm all for vocational education, but the agreement has to be reasonable and fair and redrafted."

Logistical and safety concerns arose in listening sessions when discussing the topic of having high school students on the same campus as young adults. The general concern, particularly raised by parents within the community, revolves around how these groups of students will be integrated, with one participant asking, "How can you ensure the safety of our students, some which could be as young as 14 years old, you know, potentially mixing in some way, shape or form with someone who's in their 30s or 40s?" Given the large age range of community college students, many parents who participated brought up this issue. One participant warned that "being able to have a cogent answer is going to go a long way in making sure that people realize that you know their number one resource, their children, are being thought of, and their safety is a priority." Given that safety is accounted for, others wondered what kind of interaction the students would have with one another. "How is this model going to operate on this campus?" asked

one participant, “What are the interactions between these college students along with these high school students? And are there sort of parameters set around that?”

Participants recognize the major difference between the two campuses in terms of logistics is that Whittier Tech is a “closed” campus while NECC is presumably an “open” campus where anyone can be on campus regardless of their affiliation with the school. “You're going basically from a closed campus, which most high schools are, to what I assume at Northern Essex is an open campus,” warned one participant, “And that's, that's not a small move, and it's, it's one that needs to be seriously considered.” Some of these concerns could be addressed through a more detailed definition of the proposed shared campus and how it might be operationalized, though safety concerns are likely to remain no matter what the configuration may be.

In conclusion, many participants, especially those involved in local politics, raised concerns about the regional agreement while many others, especially parents, raised concerns about safety on a shared campus. Questions about land ownership, re-drawing the district agreement, and policy/practice inconsistencies were raised in regard to the regional agreement. Those who raised concerns about safety on the shared campus wondered how to keep students safe on a campus with a large age difference between the groups of students and voiced concerns about the logistics of the shared campus model given the differences in the current, separate models.

Recommendations and suggestions

This subsection details the recommendations community members have brought up during interviews and listening sessions for the proposed NECC-Whittier shared campus. Recommendations include suggestions to help address common concerns participants have towards the proposed shared campus, future considerations and desired features for the shared campus, and additional information about the community requests received from NECC and Whittier Tech regarding this proposal.

Dispelling Misperception about the Value of CTE training

Throughout our community listening sessions and interviews, community members brought forward concerns related to commonly held beliefs and misperception towards the value of CTE training. As many community members passionately asserted how truly valuable CTE training can be, several recommendations related to dispelling this information were proposed.

Generally, community members felt that educating the public on how careers in trades are positive opportunities for students that can offer them a good quality of life would help dispel misinformation around CTE. To do so, the consensus is that educating the community on the good things already happening at Whittier Tech and NECC is a good place to start. If the communities can understand the positive benefits NECC and Whittier Tech have in the community and workforce, there would likely be

more support for the proposal. For example, one member proposed “Why not start with creating a value argument for why it would be beneficial to have career education in the first place, why it’s expensive to do it and then try to move forward?” This participant has reason to believe that some community members may be uninformed of the role vocational technical education plays in the workforce, the nature of the programs, the value of the programs, and in this, may lack understanding of the students in these programs. Others echoed this sentiment with testimonials of the benefits of CTE and success stories of students who have made use of it already, such as one Whittier Tech alumni:

I am a tradesperson... Every single trade that I went through at Whittier prepared me for it...and I think it's really a missed opportunity to continually say that trades people do not want education. It is [a part of] every single trade, every single union [with] apprenticeship programs where people have to study that for years and to be working on your apprenticeship credits at the same time as you're learning electrical skills per se, you know you're coming out leaps and bounds ahead of your peers who maybe just went into the trades. And so, I think that is a really golden opportunity.

Participants also recognized CTE as an accessible path for those who are not well suited for traditional academic training. The message of valuing CTE is explained by the following community member:

The experiences that they have in CTE programs are a way to engage students who oftentimes in traditional academic high schools are not engaged, and they find new ways to become engaged because of the hands-on learning opportunities that open up the opportunity for them that they never even considered before, if they were to attend a traditional academic high school.

Community support for the proposed shared campus would benefit from an expansion of approaches designed to reach community members from a wide range of backgrounds. The collaboration between NECC and Whittier Tech can further this messaging since the educational opportunities will only grow with both schools working in tandem. One participant stressed the extensiveness of programs that Whittier tech offers, commenting “normally they [students] do the traditional vocational jobs of like carpenter, electrician, all that, but they're getting involved in some unique ideas for jobs of the future. And I think that's what needs to be stressed.”

Focusing on those involved in the school system, participants suggested increasing messaging and educational outreach directed towards parents and educational leaders. Generally, community members suggested that these groups should be the target audience for messaging concerning the value of CTE. For example, one participant noted:

If [...] education[al] leaders at the local level don't value vocational technical education, and if the parents don't, the kids not going to end up going there. So that's one of the things you have to do. You have to be able to build a sense of value in the community for what's happening at the at the Voc tech school and at the community college.

Interviewed workforce development experts assert that there is not a shortage of students and parents who want to go into the trades, but rather that there is a lack of access to it. One suggestion to address this lack of access, and to bolster the messaging, is to provide workforce development specialists with data on the demand for enrollment, specifically parsed out by shops and programs, in order to target those who are interested in these fields. Several workforce development experts suggest that a local career fair could guide the message to the parents and community that students who graduate the school could be giving back to the community by working directly with local businesses. One interviewed workforce development expert recalled an experience in which they hosted a similar type of event, which was received successfully:

We hosted a career fair with the community college, hospital, trades, employers of all types in the area in one room. Parents and students show up and see the variance in opportunity, the potential for themselves if they take this route, and the real faces of people in their community which really helps.

Overall, participants argue that if more of the community understood the value of CTE, and specifically how a shared campus between Whittier Tech and NECC could enhance value by bringing the two groups together, then community support for this proposal would increase considerably.

Addressing financial questions and challenges

Financial questions and challenges were frequently discussed by community members both partial and impartial to the shared campus proposal. As a result, a range of recommendations were made during interviews and listening sessions, with the aim of addressing these financial questions and challenges.

Predominantly, participants suggested messaging to describe how the overall cost of the project will be absorbed by taxpayers, specific town, and by individuals. Many who described themselves as being in opposition to the project described feeling negatively surprised by the initial cost that was proposed, such as one community member who frustratingly recalled: “When you see hundreds of millions, there's sticker shock, and people don't really know what exactly does that mean for me in my pocketbook?” This same individual suggested that describing the cost in incrementally smaller units may help address this challenge: “boiling it [overall project cost] down to that monthly or even a weekly cost, I think is helpful.”

Community taxpayers gave their opinion on what might soften the blow of the sticker shock, with one participant adding “as a taxpayer, it'd be awesome for me to hear, hey, we're going to have this new Whittier school building that's going to be on Northern Essex campus, but that's going to increase your taxes by about \$70 a month.” By breaking down the million-dollar number to explain what portion will trickle down to the taxpayers, and even how much taxes might go up per person, NECC and Whittier tech can help ease some of the financial concerns and pushback from the community.

Another recommendation raised during listening sessions is to further describe the cost required to fix the current Whittier Tech building, which will need to be repaired regardless of what organization may use it in the future and compare that to the cost of the shared campus. This messaging can help taxpayers understand that this is a cost that will have to be paid, but a shared campus could maximize the dollars invested, describing the value that the shared campus would provide for the community.

On the value of the shared campus to the community, participants suggested emphasizing how this shared campus can benefit anyone in the community, regardless of their direct involvement at either school. NECC and Whittier Tech can emphasize the benefit of having local students trained at NECC-WT, as suggested by a participant who described the benefits as “high demand, high salary, hands on training. The opportunity to own your own business, the flexibility that comes with that, etc.” In pursuing this argument, participants suggested meeting community members where they're at in terms of presenting arguments in favor of the project to the general public in a clear and straightforward manner that is easy to understand, regardless of educational background. The project is broad and packed with benefits, but community members are of the opinion that “it [project information] just needs to be basic language, you know, because it's going to be basic language that the taxpayer can understand”. This participant continued, adding that it is important to address these concerns head-on, “this is going to be very expensive proposition, and they need to understand how they [taxpayers] benefit directly.”

Finally, additional recommendations to address financial concerns focus on strategies for finding funding sources. Overall, participants recommend searching for and applying for many types of funding sources. Some suggest the state should be responsible for “chipping in” a portion of the funds, such as the participant who added, “I think the opportunity to build a new building for Whittier on the Northern Essex campus may afford the district the opportunity to take advantage of additional state funding, and if that state funding is applied to the cost of the new building, it will reduce the net cost to the communities.”

Different perspectives for approaching the state were suggested. One participant recommended emphasizing and framing the Commonwealth as a potential leader in this kind of innovative education model. In this, NECC and Whittier Tech could reach out to state administration to “see what they can do

to help garner more grants, whether it's at the state level then federal level, to really put Massachusetts on the map for this type of vocational joint venture with Community Colleges.” Others suggested reaching out to the state to understand the school funding allocations through DESE and if it is possible to receive any “additional grants for this type of hybrid campus, because that's truly what it is.” Others still suggested funding by way of the state’s budget for workforce training, given that the school will be supporting workforce training at the high school level.

Overall, community members recommend addressing financial concerns by quantifying individual costs, breaking down the reality of paying for a new Whittier Tech building, emphasizing the value of the shared campus for all community members, and by searching far and wide, especially through the state, for funding sources.

Accessibility for students

The topic of increasing accessibility for students at the proposed shared campus arose in many listening sessions, along with recommendations to address it. Participants shared their concerns about ensuring access to transportation for students, and many suggested that guaranteeing robust, low-cost public transportation to campus would help ensure students from all surrounding communities can access classes. In this same vein, suggestions for increasing access to enrollment focused on reaching students in all communities. For its host community Haverhill, community members reported “the big question that I hear in Haverhill is the ‘can they expand the admission for Haverhill residents?’ That's the big [...] number one question for Haverhill.” Community members also expressed concerns about Whittier Tech’s admission rate and that currently, many students are left on the waiting list. Suggestions to increase enrollment numbers in order to allow more students to attend Whittier Tech’s programs were discussed frequently. Participants suggest that “NECC and Whittier Tech really think through a more holistic approach to student enrollment and the general criteria for even getting into the school.”

Additionally, many participants recommend increasing programming and resources for students with disabilities. Participants reported that “Whittier doesn't have the special education programming for them...” and several parents felt that their children with special needs are left out on the opportunities Whittier Tech provides because:

So many of our students [who] aren't going to college because they don't have the capacity to or they're not [able to] book wise, could possibly go into a trade or some type of a pathway where they'll thrive, but they just are never given the opportunity, because those programs don't exist there, and there are so many parents I talk to of students who have special needs (like my kid) that will never get in.

Solutions to begin making headway in this direction include specialized staffing and programming designed with students of all abilities in mind. Overall, community members suggest increasing enrollment to include all students of all abilities from all communities as well as expanding the infrastructure to get students to campus to address issues of accessibility at the proposed shared campus.

Increased transparency and communication from NECC and Whittier Tech

An overwhelming majority of community listening session and interview participants raised concerns about a need for NECC and Whittier Tech to increase both their transparency and communication with the community throughout the process of pursuing a shared campus. Participants across all listening sessions suggested that the definition of and logistics regarding a shared campus be made clearer, mentioning vague understanding of proposal aspects that were presented to the general public. Many who shared these concerns expressed a need to receive additional information regarding the proposed shared campus in order to feel comfortable supporting the project. It should be noted that the public's desire for increased clarification and transparency surrounding the proposed shared campus is a driving force behind the scoping of this project, and the volume of responses reiterating this need for further clarification and information regarding the project should be considered significant in and of itself. Recommendations to mitigate this issue include requests that NECC and Whittier Tech provide detailed descriptions of how they operationalize and define their idea of a shared campus, requests to increase the sharing of information presented to the public in a digestible manner, requests to include local community leaders in the process, and requests to improve the marketing and public relations of this project.

Participants reflected on their knowledge of the project and suggested increasing communication with the public in ways that help clarify and operationalize the concept of a shared campus. For example, many community members felt the proposal was too vague, as one participant illustrates by sharing "I support the idea in the abstract, but it's too vague at this point to know really what's being proposed, and that is a sentiment that has been echoed throughout today's discussion." Many were confused as to where the new building will be built and whether the two schools would share programming and schedules. Participants suggested that they could support the proposed shared campus, and could imagine others supporting it as well, so long as the vision for this proposal is fleshed out fully. "What is the vision?" one participant added, "it kind of goes back to the how, but it's even more than that. It's, you know, what is the vision so that people can just grab on to it and support it?" In terms of solving this issue, one local resident suggested NECC and Whittier share "a detailed plan for how the shared campus would work, detailed being the key word, possibly with options that include different levels of integration and cost" as a necessary step in gaining approval from the community. "The neighborhood will need appropriate and realistic information about how a new building will impact their quality of life," they

added. This information could include “explaining how a shared campus proposal benefits traditional adults, students, high school students and taxpayers” as well as consideration for protecting the water supply. While many within the community support the concept of NECC and Whittier Tech proposing a shared campus, many also have reservations on supporting the shared campus itself without having an available plan to assess.

Once the shared campus has been defined, participants recommend improving communication of the project proposal to the general public. Many participants suggested getting more of the community involved in all parts of the process. Although the community listening sessions UMDI hosted were intended to include public input on the proposed shared campus, many participants want to have input on the project itself. “I think that we should do more to open up the discussion with the community,” one participant offered, “to allow space for them to talk about their concerns or their thoughts and how to make this a better project.” Participants also suggest including folks across different ages and groups to garner the support needed. Beyond the benefits that NECC and Whittier Tech will reap with this project, participants felt “if you're trying to get a new campus, you like, you really need to talk to folks at an at every level.” It should also be noted that participants suggest increasing this communication and collecting feedback before proceeding with the next steps.

Other suggestions for transparency and communication from NECC and Whittier Tech relate to the messaging used when proposing the initial project. Participants felt that the presentation of the cost of the project was difficult for residents to break down and suggested communicating the cost on a more incremental, individual basis. One participant suggested:

I would never say this is a [multi] million project [...] I would always say, here's a calculator. This calculator tell you how much you would pay on a monthly basis, and I'm guessing it'd be something like 20 bucks a month. [...] 436 million, the brain can't comprehend that much money.

It is not necessarily that the cost is too high for most community members, but that the project’s cost was not communicated to them in a digestible manner. Participants also suggested that messaging should directly address community members who may not think they benefit from the project, such as those outside of Haverhill or residents who aren’t parents or students. One local resident suggested:

I think having that outreach to the other communities and making them feel like this isn't just a Haverhill thing- this is for all of you [...] this can benefit everybody. This isn't just about benefiting NECC. It's not just about benefiting Whittier Tech. It benefits your

communities and your students, and it opens up an opportunity for them that they wouldn't otherwise have.

Suggestions for messaging also included communication between NECC and Whittier Tech leadership. Attempts to conjure the vision of the two schools as one shared campus begins with public facing communication, and it may be important to have the two schools present a united front with regards to messaging. One participant suggested that communication between the president and the superintendent are critical, reasoning “you know, just because the president is higher ed and the superintendent is secondary, they should be colleagues and work together and really give a shared message out there.” The pertinent messaging that ought to be collaborative, according to participants, includes explaining to the community where the actual Whittier Tech model fits into the current educational environment, which some felt was not successfully done previously.

Finally, suggestions for capturing more community feedback include a confidential Google form. One participant suggested that the feedback could be richer if participants had time to sit on the questions asked during the listening sessions UMDI facilitated, proposing “to potentially make available a confidential Google form or something like that, with the same questions you just asked us that people maybe can fill in later, just when they have more time to think about it.” Related to messaging recommendations, many participants offered feedback on the gaps that can be filled in terms of marketing and public relations. Reflecting on the initial proposal, community members felt:

There was no big sale. There was no pitch, there was no connection...when you put a PR person who's talking in a language that's foreign and talking to people, they don't know...it's not a good situation, especially when you're asking for millions and millions of dollars.

Suggestions surrounding language in marketing the proposal include creating a straightforward, comprehensible pitch for all audiences to understand, and to present the pitch and “explain the facts in a conversational way, not an adversarial way”. It was proposed by multiple participants that lack of awareness and education on the project has largely contributed to the lack of additional community support. To address this, participants argued, “there needs to be a very strong educational and marketing campaign to raise awareness of this topic.” Others echoed support for this recommendation, suggesting “I think that they, they should market it so that it's a benefit by being together, and it's not being done just to save money...it actually brings education better for the kids and for those that are going to be in different age groups and different opportunities.” Participants raised concerns about addressing risks in this marketing as well, adding “there has to be clearly demarcated goals for what is the public good and making sure that your marketing is doing a really good job of selling that message while also then

mitigating or at least explaining the mitigation of risks.” Some suggestions for presenting this messaging include the development of a website explaining the proposal to dispel misperceptions, as well as an articulation of what the shared campus might look like using examples, so that the public can get on the same page as the schools even if the end goal has yet to be drawn up. Many suggest marketing angles which include emphasizing savings accrued from consolidating programs as well as the idea of getting a head start or leg up on the workforce for free at the shared campus.

Additional recommendations for transparency and communication include getting involved with local leaders, mayors, town managers, town councils and select people as well as school committees. Participants emphasized the need for leadership from all cities, towns, and member districts to be engaged in the process from the beginning. This engagement could involve NECC and Whittier Tech asking community leadership what the community needs from them, in the form of questions such as:

What can we help you with? What were your concerns? What’s your perception of the role of Whittier and of Northern Essex in the Merrimack Valley? What could we provide you with legitimate information that would help to get you on a board supporting it by help us to make some changes?

One of the issues participants agree with is the biggest sticking point for town leadership support is financing the proposal. Suggestions for addressing the cost with community leaders was for NECC and Whittier Tech to “have a sit down with them and say, ‘Here, let’s talk about what didn’t go well the first time’,” because “everything’s going to come down to money at the end of the day, it’s all going to come down to the cost.” In order to get communities on board with the shared campus proposal, participants stress the need for more local leaders to speak in favor of the project. “I think what you have to do is, is educate...Start with the town councilors, start with the mayors and city main town managers,” one participant suggested, “get them aboard so they see it as the asset it is.” Others feel that the initial shared campus proposal may have gone differently had there been more, influential voices in favor among local leadership.

Overall, it cannot be overstated how strongly participants felt towards the need to increase transparency and communication between NECC and Whittier Tech to the public. Primarily, participants suggested the definition of a shared campus be clearly defined and communicated to the general public. Recommendations also include a range of approaches which could be used to market the project, including a more individualized look at cost and the benefits for all community members. A need for community feedback on actual logistics of the shared campus before the process moves forward was stressed throughout our listening sessions and interviews. Finally, many participants suggest getting community leaders educated, involved, and on board with the project to send a message of support to the community.

Programming suggestions

Inspired by the prospect of a shared campus, many participants offered recommendations and suggestions for different career pathways and programming the schools could offer. Some suggestions are related to CTE shops or trades, while others suggest programs outside of the school day involving other community members.

In terms of new shops and trade programs, participants felt that expanding programming to keep up with growing employment fields is a necessary consideration for the proposed shared campus. Specifically, suggestions to offer dynamic programming for the future to meet changing needs of the region were consistently suggested across groups, a sentiment echoed by a participant who added, “we need to consider that modern vocational technical high schools should and do offer nontraditional trade education programs such as biotech and environmental science.” In pursuit of dynamic programming, several community members suggested considering this flexibility when the new buildings are designed. Given that the current Whittier Tech building is not equipped to meet changing programming needs, both in its design and current physical condition, participants urged NECC and Whittier Tech to address the ability of these spaces to accommodate new programs. “I think the flexibility is as an essential consideration,” one participant added, “the flexibility of spaces to be able to accommodate new programs over time that we will need to accommodate our regional workforce needs.” Overall, participants recommend that the shared campus ought to prioritize specific, expanded programming access for advanced skill training for those already in the workforce and also early college.

Diving further into expanded programming, participants proposed making use of the shared campus buildings after hours, such as offering adult classes. Recognizing the work that NECC already does in this space, participants shared hopes for Whittier Tech’s facilities to be used in that way, commenting “some NECC programs are run during evening hours for working students. I would expect that shops could be open days for Whittier Tech High School students and evenings for NECC students with NECC faculty supervising the evening sections.” Whether the users of the facilities after hours are adults from the community or students enrolled in some capacity by either school, these recommendations aim to maximize the community’s return on investing in the shared campus.

Broadening the look at programming, many interviewees offered suggestions around establishing mentoring programs or collaborations for students with industry partners to meet workforce needs in the region. Those who echoed this sentiment did so from a workforce development perspective, arguing that a big selling point for the shared campus proposal could be for the schools to say:

‘We’ve collaborated with these local companies and sat down with them and said,
‘Okay, as we expand, as we look to the future, what do you need? What do you know?’

What do our students need to have in their tool belt, literally and figuratively, that they don't have walking out the door?

Not only does this suggested approach give the shared campus proposal a good look for prospective students, but it also fulfills a practical need for jobs after graduation, which one participant emphasized by adding “if [local] industry[ies] [aren’t] going to be hiring, does it really matter that you've created a bunch of training and programs?” Painted in yet another light, participants added that collaboration with local industry partners can bolster support for the shared campus, exemplified by a participant who commented “We need to get business much more invested in all of this...if we could get more business, more engaged and more involved in it [...] they [could] recognize this is for their benefit too, we're there to help them.” Other suggestions for collaboration with local businesses involve utilizing space on the shared campus to bring in industry partners. “If you're aligning to regional workforce needs, there needs to be a third place for industry on the campus,” one participant added, “it's a great opportunity to bring industry close have them be a part of like co-ops and learning experience.” Bringing these partnerships on campus can act as a resource for students who are looking to work with businesses in the future and as a pipeline for bringing skilled workers into local businesses. Mentoring opportunities among business leaders or students in more advanced training may also complement this suggestion.

Overall, programming recommendations for the proposed shared campus are entrenched in meeting the regional workforce needs. Achieving this pairing between training and the workforce could be done through adding new and dynamic shops, adding after-hours and adult training programs, and partnering with local industry leaders. These suggestions can be concluded through a statement made by a workforce development expert:

I think a relationship involving the workforce, Investment Board, MassHire and other entities, community-based entities, are really important, because if you don't have a workforce, or if you don't know what the workforce demands are, you're not going to be able to know what training opportunities there are.

Additional suggested features of the proposed shared campus

In addition to the suggestions discussed in this section, UMDI captured several recommendations that do not fit neatly within the themes illustrated above but that are still valuable to consider and came up numerous times during interviews and community listening sessions.

In terms of features that the shared campus could capitalize on, participants suggested continuing to expand features that Whittier Tech currently offers, such as a culinary student-run publicly open restaurant to draw in community members and an early childhood programming to train students while

meeting the childcare needs of the region. Other participants suggested segmenting the population of the region by generation to determine needs, desires for learning, and explore other opportunities to make the building useful for a range of community members. One participant suggested envisioning the campus as a destination point for community members to come and participate in activities. In particular, they suggested considering the 55 and older population, asserting:

Those are going to be the people who control the vote. So, you have got to get out there and make sure there's something for them that's a value in this, whether it's in the old building becomes something, or the new building has whatever it has like for seniors that is going to be super important that they see the value.

Although the new campus is ultimately going to benefit students, it is important to accommodate other groups. As one local resident explains, “because many of our folks would vote for education because it's education. But there's always going to be more than a handful that are like, “I've already paid my kids. [...] My kids don't go to school. This has got nothing for me.”

While considering what a shared campus would look like, some participants suggested creating programs for certain students to work on teams with older students or adults. “Under really good supervision, I actually can see also an added benefit of 9 through 12 students working with adults on teams,” one participant suggested, “because when you turn to the job force, the reality is, it's a mixed bag. And so, learning to communicate cross generationally, both from a curricular perspective, but also just from a human development perspective, is a wonderful opportunity.”

On the other hand, some participants, particularly those who are parents, expressed hesitancy around young students sharing facilities with adults and suggested a more separate set-up when it comes to policies and logistics. Focusing on security as well as capitalizing on the benefits of a shared campus, one participant suggested:

I think there should be a separation of the schools...Making sure that, although it's a shared campus, that there is some autonomy to it, where you have distinguishable handbooks and policies. And so, you might have some shared policies as it relates to the campus itself; from one building to the other, it should have some separation.

In conclusion, many participants suggested NECC and Whittier tech thoughtfully consider the logistics of student interaction and integration across the shared campus. Participants shared support of bolstering community facing features of the campus such as a student-run restaurant and childcare facility as well as exploring features that could be utilized by a range of community members.

Literature Review of Interinstitutional Collaboration

To supplement the secondary data analysis within this study, the Donahue Institute has conducted a literature review of best practices, case studies, and available funding opportunities for career technical education. UMDI has compiled and analyzed published articles from both academic and public media sources examining specific instances across the United States where technical high schools have collaborated and/or consolidated their resources with higher education institutions, in approaches that are purposively responsive to the shifting labor market and training demands within their region's economy.

In the following section, UMDI will first discuss various cases in which vocational high schools have navigated collaborations with institutions of higher education, similar to what NECC and Whittier Tech are proposing. Next, UMDI will describe recommended best practices for approaching collaborations similar to what NECC and Whittier Tech are considering, organized topically. In this, the research team examined the ways in which institutional missions may change when such collaborations occur and what best practices are implemented when navigating such collaborations. The literature review section will conclude with an examination of funding opportunities available for a shared campus project, and a range of funding opportunities that support the development of Career Technical Education (CTE) programming.

Case Studies

This UMDI has examined cases throughout the United States in which higher education and vocational high schools have consolidated resources through various forms of collaboration. In these cases, many include consolidated programming, expansion of programming aligned to regional workforce demands, detailed and innovative planning approaches, and positive media coverage. Through the close examination of case studies within these interinstitutional collaborations, UMDI seeks to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the logistical navigation involved within collaborations similar to what NECC and Whittier Tech seek to accomplish.

The following subsection describes relevant case studies UMDI has compiled. Within the literature there exists limited instances across the United States in which technical high schools and higher education institutions consolidate resources together. As Northern Essex Community College and Whittier Tech look

towards a potential future shared campus for Whittier Tech on NECC's Haverhill campus, this innovative move would be one of the first of its kind within the United States.²

1. Metropolitan Community College and Platte County R3 School District (Platte City, Missouri).

The Metropolitan Community College (MCC) of Missouri partnered with the leadership from the Platte County R3 School District to collaboratively build the Northland Workforce Development Center, which will replace the region's former workforce center (Northland Career Center). This center will relocate career and technical education programs closer to the center of Platte City, with a location that expands student accessibility to bus lines and the public school district. This collaboration was developed in direct response to a need for increasing workforce opportunities which address regional workforce shortages, issues with student accessibility, and aging facilities that contained outdated equipment and technology. Partners of this project lobbied local, state, and federal legislators with a proposal which led the Missouri state legislature to appropriate \$30 million of its FY23 budget to the new facilities' price tag of \$60 million. As this project was recently funded, ground has not been broken yet at the new facility's location, and an advisory committee is in the process of refreshing the curriculum.³

2. Morris County Vocational School District and the County College of Morris (Randolph, NJ).

In 2023, the Morris County Vocational School District (MCVSD) broke ground for a new training center on the campus of the County College of Morris (CCM). The new center is expected to expand vocational school operations by 30 percent and has the potential to add about 500 students to the school district.⁴ The training center builds on the long-standing collaborative partnership between MCVSD and CCM and will give high school students in the region access to career technical education programming that aligns with regional workforce demands. The new MCVSD facility expands a preexisting partnership with CCM which gives their students an opportunity to earn college credits, industry-specific credentials, and access to an associate degree. The new facility curriculum is developed and built on strong community partnerships both institutions have developed with local businesses and industries. The new training center will offer up to 18 college credits to students, focusing on workforce development, work, and

² Clark University has a 4+1 Accelerated Master's Degree program in which students can achieve a graduate degree in five years. There are 21 programs offered, each with their own academic requirements and fees. Students apply in their third year and begin taking graduate courses in their fourth year. Students completing their undergraduate degree at Clark are eligible for a partial tuition scholarship (if a transfer student with less than 24 academic units completed at Clark) or complete tuition scholarship for their fifth year. (Clark 2025)

³ "Northland Workforce Development Center," Clay County Economic Development Council, September 25, 2024, <https://www.clayedc.com/northland-workforce/>.

⁴ Allyson Roberts, "Morris County Vocational District Partners with CCM on Career Center (TAPintoDenville)," *Career Tech NJ* (blog), September 28, 2023, <https://careertechnj.org/morris-county-vocational-district-partners-with-ccm-on-career-center-tapintodenville/>.

project-based learning opportunities. The project is funded through Morris County and the Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act, approved by the New Jersey Legislature.⁵

3. East Valley Institute of Technology and Chandler-Gilbert Community College (Mesa, Arizona).
The East Valley Institute of Technology (EVIT) college offers a Career Technical Education (CTE) program available to high school students within the region, in which they receive skills-based training within the field of aviation. Originally Chandler-Gilbert Community College (CGCC) hosted this program on their campus until 2011, when EVIT built and established a physical campus of their own. Recognizing the workforce needs of the surrounding region which has an Air Force Base, Air force Range, defense contractors, and several airports, EVIT founded the CTE aviation program through the partnership of ten local school districts named the Joint Technical Education District. Students who attend EVIT may earn up to 24 credits for an associate's degree in CGCC's aviation program, and many of the program's alums have gone on to become aircraft mechanics, flight instructors, air traffic controllers, and pilots. The collaboration between CGCC and EVIT did not change either institution's mission. The program has several partnerships with other organizations including Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association which sits on their advisory council of industry representatives.⁶
4. The Sturm Collaboration Campus between the Colorado State University, Aurora Community College and Dayton School district (Aurora and Castle Rock, Colorado).
This collaboration allows students to earn an associate degree from Arapahoe Community College and a bachelor's degree from Colorado State University in one location. The Arapahoe Community College Sturm Collaboration Campus, located between Castle Rock Adventist Hospital and Castle Rock Middle School, opened in August 2019. The campus is a joint venture between Arapahoe Community College, the Town of Castle Rock, the Castle Rock Economic Development Council, Colorado State University, and the Douglas County School District. Colorado has a concurrent enrollment program through which high school students can take college classes for high school and college credit. Credits are originally applied to an associate degree at ACC and then can be transferred to CSU Fort Collins, CSU Global, or CSU Pueblo. Classes may be taken in high school, online, or on an ACC campus. After opening phase one in 2019, Arapahoe Community College will continue with phase two of building a \$40 million campus on a 14-acre site, consisting of two buildings that will be 54,000 square feet in total. Castle Rock's Town Council agreed to make an in-kind investment of \$3 million over three to five years. The in-kind investment includes some site improvements such as utilities, grading and parking. Colorado

⁵ "P.L. 2018, c.0119 (S2293 4R)." Accessed January 28, 2025. <https://pub.nileg.gov/bills/2018/PL18/119 .HTM>.

⁶ CeCe Todd, "In Arizona's Desert, Partnerships Make CTE Aviation Training Soar," *Techniques*, January 2018.

State University leases space on the campus. CSU faculty and students can perform research, obtain internship opportunities, and complete hands-on project work at the new campus (ACC 2025). The Sturm Collaboration Campus is part of the “Big Blur,” an initiative to blur the lines between secondary education, post-secondary education, and the labor market. The Big Blur aims to address the disconnect between education and the workforce, offering students opportunities like dual enrollment and work-based learning to create a seamless transition. Colorado state legislation has passed several forms of funding policies to help with the labor force and education credentials. Multiple initiatives through the state supported by Governor Polis have supported connections between high school, post-secondary education, and the workforce. One such example is the formation of the Office of Education and Training Innovation, which supports work-based learning. The “Higher Education Student Success Legislation” produced more funding to support education models in the state. The HB 1330 task force was also created to assess where to move in the future when it came to workforce and education.⁷

5. The Quad County Career Pathways Consortium partnership between Indian River State College in Fort Pierce, Florida and the Florida school districts (Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee).

The Quad County Career Pathways Consortium (QCCPC) is an education-to-workforce partnership between Indian River State College (IRSC) in Fort Pierce, Florida and Florida school districts Martin, St. Lucie, Indian River, and Okeechobee. High school students have the opportunity to gain practical experience through jobs or apprenticeships and earn credits toward a degree at Indian River State College. Dual enrollment is also offered, allowing high school students to take college-level classes that count toward their high school diploma and toward an associate degree or technical certificate. Classes may take place at IRSC or at a participating high school. High school students receive free tuition and textbooks and all fees are waived. IRSC has five separate campuses, giving students in every area of the QCCPC access to CTE opportunities.⁸

6. Innovation Center of St. Vrain Valley School (Longmont, Colorado).

The Innovation Center of St. Vrain Valley Schools in Longmont, Colorado offers high school students the opportunity to take classes, earn professional/technical certifications, and work real jobs for wages in their chosen vocation. This was made possible through the Race to the Top Grant, which St. Vrain was awarded in 2012, supplying the school with \$16.6 million to establish

⁷ Libuse Binder, Eric Dunker, and Kyle Hartung, “The Sturm Collaboration Campus Blurred and Found Overwhelming Success: How the Campus Plans to Implement a 2.0 Vision,” Arapahoe Community College, July 10, 2024, <https://www.arapahoe.edu/blog/big-blur-and-south-denver-regional-talent-ecosystem>.

⁸ “Quad County Careers Pathway Consortium,” Indian River State College, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://irsc.edu/community/quad-county-career-pathways-consortium.html>.

the Innovation Center, which provides “professional STEM experiences to students through industry partnerships and paid work for students”.⁹ St. Vrain found that STEM-based work was beneficial to students, but since many of them already had paid jobs outside of school, they needed to offer paid opportunities so that students could benefit from applied STEM work without having to give up their paycheck. St. Vrain partners with over 200 organizations, including IBM, Google, Lockheed Martin, and University of Denver. The Innovation Center is a 50,000 square foot building that accommodates 750 students and is equipped with labs for manufacturing, robotics, and biomedical science, a metal shop, a wood shop, a community makerspace, and more. The Innovation Center offers classes in the following areas: aeronautics, artificial intelligence, bioscience, cybersecurity, entrepreneurship, information and communication technology, music innovation, pathways to teaching, robotics, video arts, virtual and digital design, online industry certifications. Classes can be taken by high school students in grades 9-12 during the school year or during the summer. Additionally, camps are offered for grades 1-12 during the summer.

As discussed, there are few instances in which technical high schools and higher education have collaborated to develop a shared campus similar to the shared campus NECC and Whittier Tech are proposing. While the impact to date on these cases has been positive overall, the long-term success of these collaborations is too recent to accurately measure. From the cases UMDI analyzed, institutions were able to successfully leverage connections with surrounding communities and their knowledge of regional workforce demands to develop programming that help meet the workforce demands of their region.¹⁰

Best Practices

To understand what best practices are recommended for collaborations between technical high schools and higher education, UMDI conducted a content analysis of literature from prior research, academic scholars, and institutions on the subject matter. Reviewed literature of best practices includes approaches from successful collaborations and consolidations between technical high schools and higher education institutions, relevant examples of fruitful public-private partnerships involving career technical education, and strategies that contribute to successful collaborations. The following best practices include actionable and effective approaches to addressing common challenges that often arise within collaborations like what NECC and Whittier Tech are proposing. All best practices will be discussed, in turn.

⁹ “Our Story,” Innovation Center of St Vrain Valley Schools, accessed 2025, <https://innovation.svvsd.org/about/our-story/>.

¹⁰ For additional information on attracting skilled workers through social initiatives and urban planning, read [Knowledge Towns: Colleges and Universities as Talent Magnets by Endicott and Staley \(2023\)](#).

Practice 1: Improving Communication and Public Perception of Career Technical Education

Career Technical Education (CTE), which encourages students to gain experience in fields involving skilled labor and trades, has historically faced challenges in combating the general public's lack of knowledge surrounding its programming. According to one research survey, many students are unaware that CTE and college education are not mutually exclusive; CTE can be used as a foundation for college.¹¹

Increasing general communication between institutions and the communities they serve to address the public's misperceptions regarding the value of CTE programming is one approach proven to be effective at addressing this challenge.¹²

Strategic public relations through either a PR firm or a publicly known and trusted community leader is recommended to assist in the guidance of relaying the critical role CTE programming can plan for a local community and their workforce development.¹³ In addition to strategic public relations, advertising or positive promotion through newspapers, television, and social media would also help.¹⁴ Public promotion should be tailored to different audiences such as using social media to reach students and deploying mailed letters to reach parents.¹⁵

Practice 2: Leveraging Community Connection

CTE programming is in a unique position to help address current gaps in regional workforce demands and helping industries meet their immediate needs while supporting the local economy in the process. As many state residents working in skilled trades approach the age of retirement, one challenge the Commonwealth will continue to face is the need for more individuals to enter skilled trade careers.¹⁶ An intervention that would help this problem would be to invest in community colleges that are trying to fill

¹¹ Robert Russell and Mark C. White, "Perceptions of Career and Technical Education in Missouri" (University of Missouri Institute of Public Policy, 2019), <https://truman.missouri.edu/sites/default/files/publication/white-paper-perceptions-of-career-and-technical-education-in-missouri-w.pdf>.

¹² Walter Ecton, "Framing Parents' Attitudes Toward Career and Technical Education," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 31 (September 2023), <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.31.7980>.

¹³ Kamina Fitzgerald, "The Value of Career and Technical Education in Addressing College and Career Readiness and the Ill-Prepared Workforce" (Ed.D. diss., Gardner-Webb University, 2018), <https://www.proquest.com/education/docview/2247904383/abstract/31EF96B8E77D4210PQ/62>.

¹⁴ Julie Jordan et al., "Confronting the CTE Stigma" (Mississippi State University Research & Curriculum Unit, 2017), https://issuu.com/rcumedia/docs/cte_perceptions_brief.

¹⁵ Kamina Fitzgerald, "The Value of Career and Technical Education in Addressing College and Career Readiness and the Ill-Prepared Workforce" (Ed.D. diss., Gardner-Webb University, 2018), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <https://www.proquest.com/education/docview/2247904383/abstract/31EF96B8E77D4210PQ/62>.

¹⁶ Branner Stewart et al., "Engaging Hidden and Future Workers to Grow the Local Economy" (University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute Economic & Public Policy Research Group, 2022), <https://www.northcentralmass.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Workforce-Study-Engaging-Hidden-and-Future-Workers-to-Grow-the-Local-Economy-11.29.2022.pdf>.

in regional workforce gaps which would help the region economically.¹⁷ Skilled career training such as what Whittier Tech offers and NECC currently supports would offer a way to help fill in the local gaps within the skilled trades workforce. To ensure the continued growth and success of such CTE programming, it is necessary to continue building connections and partnerships within the local community, particularly within key industries and relevant skilled trades that may offer additional opportunities for hands-on internships and work-based learning.¹⁸

It's also important to note that for students to graduate and fill regional workforce needs, school curriculum should be tailored by both educators and employers so that students are well prepared to join the workforce after graduation. Making sure that students are connected to industry stakeholders and ensuring there is some curriculum around social-emotional learning would bring the most benefit to students. Perkins V, otherwise known as the Perkins Collaborative Resource Network, has guidelines to help CTE programs adjust to regional workforce needs.¹⁹ As seen in case studies, many vocational high schools have partnered with local companies to provide paid work opportunities to students.

Practice 3: Expanding programmatic inclusion and equity

Ensuring specific, actionable plans are in place to address student barriers to participation in CTE programming is important to incorporate into future consolidation programming, to ensure all students within the region have access to CTE training. Implementation of approaches such as advertising offered programming widely through a multi-step outreach plan and ensuring adequate staffing for students with special needs and non-English language learners is one recommendation described by.²⁰ Ensuring that the rotation between classroom, lab-based, and work-based learning is based on a student's mastery and skill is crucial.²¹

During interviews and group discussions, accommodating the needs of students with disabilities/special education has been brought up, along with the enrollment of English language learners and communities

¹⁷ Rachel Lipson and Robert B. Schwartz, *America's Hidden Economic Engines: How Community Colleges Can Drive Shared Prosperity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2023).

¹⁸ C. Luger, "Catalyst for Community Change: The Story of Career and Technical Education at Turtle Mountain Community College," *Tribal College: Journal of American Indian Higher Education* 35, no. 2 (2023): 1–7, <https://tribalcollegejournal.org/catalyst-for-community-change-the-story-of-career-and-technical-education-at-turtle-mountain-community-college/>.

¹⁹ Daniel Aguayo, "Insights of Career and Technical Education Graduates to Address the Labor Market Shortage: A Narrative Qualitative Study" (Ed.D. diss., University of Phoenix, 2022), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <https://www.proquest.com/education/docview/2721355339/abstract/D1315425399E4F44PQ/33>.

²⁰ Robert Schwartz and Kerry McKittrick, "From Margins to Mainstream: Bringing Career-Connected Learning to Scale," *American Federation of Teachers*, June 2024, https://www.aft.org/ae/spring2024/schwartz_mckittrick.

²¹ Daniel Aguayo, "Insights of Career and Technical Education Graduates to Address the Labor Market Shortage: A Narrative Qualitative Study" (Ed.D. diss., University of Phoenix, 2022), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <https://www.proquest.com/education/docview/2721355339/abstract/D1315425399E4F44PQ/33>.

that want to send kids but are unable to due to financial hardship. Logistical aspects of addressing access such as ensuring that there is adequate public transportation from more urban areas to the campus also ensures CTE programming can be accessed by a more diverse range of students, particularly those from low-income and underrepresented backgrounds.

Practice 4: Emphasize the regional importance of CTE training to the workforce

To help support expanded access and availability of CTE training, it is crucial to share information with local community members and leadership regarding regional workforce trends and future demands of the region for specific trades. Data should be presented in a format that is accessible to a broad audience, and that findings remain accessible regardless of audience to ensure transparency.²² It is important to ensure that the people presenting the information are trusted and respected by the community. This practice is described in further detail within the *Dispelling Misperception about the Value of CTE training* subsection of the report, which includes suggestions from the community.

Practice 5: Transparently describe overall cost to community

Describing cost estimates in incremental amounts, such as price per taxpayer, is recommended to help ease the general public's concerns over final project cost. In this practice, suggestions include clearly describing plans for obtaining supplemental funding to support the project, and clearly describing (to the public) the total amount funding sources would contribute to the overall cost. Research has shown that taxes around CTE were the most supported when they are linked to workforce development and jobs in the area that CTE was taught in.²³

After numerous interviews were done, one of the most popular discussions was about transparency of the cost to the community. One of the biggest suggestions from group discussions was the concept of breaking down costs on a monthly or annual basis per citizen to help taxpayers understand what they are paying for. It was generally believed that introducing the cost of the project by stating the overall cost would be intimidating and hard for taxpayers to grasp. In discussion it was also brought up that towns in the state are struggling to keep up with the financial costs of everything. For commentary on communication please refer to the Community Feedback section in the report to see suggestions from the community.

²² Kamina Fitzgerald, "The Value of Career and Technical Education in Addressing College and Career Readiness and the Ill-Prepared Workforce" (Ed.D. diss., Gardner-Webb University, 2018), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, <https://www.proquest.com/education/docview/2247904383/abstract/31EF96B8E77D4210PQ/62>.

²³ Walter Ecton, "Framing Parents' Attitudes Toward Career and Technical Education," *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 31 (September 2023), <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.31.7980>.

Funding Opportunities

UMDI has compiled a list of potential funding opportunities available for a shared campus projects such as what NECC and Whittier Tech are proposing, which includes funding opportunities that support the development of Career Technical Education programming. To develop this list, a review of legislation and related documents outlining the availability of relevant private, federal, and state funding, in addition to municipal grants, loans, and other funds which may be applicable to this project. The following section details funding sources, requirements, deadlines, intended purposes and other relevant information.

There are currently no available grants for CTE programs in Massachusetts. We have included a description of common grant requirements, as well as a compiled list of past grants that may offer more funding in the future.

Common Grant Application Requirements:

1. **Letter of Intent/Inquiry (LOI):** This is a letter expressing interest in applying for the grant. In addition to the organization's general information, an LOI commonly requests a brief explanation of why the organization is interested in applying for a specific grant, and an overview of how the money will be used as well as mentioning any outside partners. It is a succinct version of the grant proposal and helps determine both eligibility and fitness of grant proposals. It allows the funders to get a sense of what types of organizations are interested in applying and how many there are. The LOI is frequently due one month before the proposal due date and is frequently optional but highly encouraged.
2. **Proposal:** Grant proposals offer justifications for why an organization is applying for a grant and how such funds would be utilized if awarded. Proposals should be as descriptive as possible, identifying the organization and its members as well as a mission statement if applicable. There should be a detailed statement of need identifying why this particular grant is being sought out and how the proposal's broader impacts will help address the needs of the organization and wider community. Well-defined objectives should be stated with an explanation of how the grant will aid in achieving this. There should be an itemized budget, including a description of how every dollar will be spent, a project timeline, and a description of any external funding sources which may be utilized. A large section of the proposal should be devoted to data collection and measuring success, and should include a description of the methodology, why this methodology was chosen with relevant literature and/or past case studies, and a description of who will be collecting/measuring the data along with their credentials.
3. **Commitment from Partners:** Many grants require partnerships with either the organization that is offering the grant or with outside organizations. In this case, there will need to be a written

commitment from any partner organizations rationalizing their role in the project that the grant is funding.

Potential funding sources:

The following are past and present funding sources relevant to supporting CTE programming or the shared campus model between NECC and Whittier Tech. Past sources for funding have been included in the following section, as many grants may be offered in the future by the original granting institutions.

5. **Alumni Donations:** Given the thousands of NECC and Whittier Tech alumni both schools have, it would be beneficial for both institutions to organize fundraising campaigns targeted at the school's alumni. This may involve organizing in person fundraising events such as silent auctions or galas. Additionally, implementing social media campaigns to help fundraise could help ensure the campaign and information about the project is widely distributed among alumni networks.
6. **Sale of current assets:** Selling current assets that will be upgraded or would go unused in the event of a shared campus between NECC and Whittier Tech may help offset a significant portion of the cost to develop a shared campus between the schools on NECC's Haverhill location. Allocating the funds from sale of the current Whittier Tech building and land the school is housed on could directly go towards the shared campus project. Additionally, the sale of outdated but functional program equipment to other institutions such as local technical businesses and shops could be an additional source of revenue.
7. **Funding from municipalities:** UMDI examined funding opportunities within the eleven municipalities that Whittier Tech currently serves for available grants that support the development of new programming, expansion of current CTE programming, and/or acquirement of equipment for CTE programs. While there are few organizations offering grants that may align with NECC and Whittier Tech's proposed shared campus, the [Ipswich Education Foundation](#) and the [Haverhill Education Foundation](#) are two nonprofits that offer microgrants aimed at supporting the development of educational programs and local student learning.
8. **State earmarked funding:** Oftentimes there are state earmarked funds for grants for improving education facilities and equipment and addressing workforce needs through education. An act was filed by the Massachusetts Governor on January 21st, 2025 for higher education capital needs called the BRIGHT Act: An Act to Build Resilient Infrastructure to Generate Higher-Ed Transformation. This act could likely result in potential grants or other funding that NECC would be able to take advantage of. Programs from previous years that relate to Whittier Tech and NECC are outlined below.

- a. **Career and Technical Education Partnership Grant from Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE):** The Career and Technical Education Partnership Grant is a state funded, competitive grant of up to \$3,500,000. The purpose of this competitive Career and Technical Education (CTE) Partnership Grant is to support regional and local partnerships to expand existing and/or develop new CTE programs and initiatives that increase student access to opportunities, primarily through more effective use and integration of existing capacity and resources. Services provided are to supplement currently funded local, state, and federal programs. Eligible applicants include districts, charters, or collaboratives, especially those in Gateway Cities. Applicants must identify which partner agency will serve as the project lead for this initiative, as well as proposed partners. Partner agencies may include employers, school consortia, educational collaboratives, community colleges, other publicly funded educational institutions, workforce development boards, or community-based organizations that provide publicly funded educational services but cannot include private proprietary schools or private post-secondary institutions. Applicants may pursue funding to plan or to implement a CTE Partnership, but implementation awards are not contingent on prior receipt of grant funding. Signed letters of commitment from all partner agencies must be uploaded along with the online application.
- b. **Career Technical Initiative - FY24 Planning Grant:** The Commonwealth Corporation Career Technical Initiative provides a state funded grant of up to \$2,000,000, up to \$50,000 for individual schools. To address the persistent demand in construction/trades and manufacturing, the Workforce Skills Cabinet (WSC) announced an initiative in January 2020 to transform vocational high schools into Career Technical Institutes which would run three consecutive waves of classes per day to expand enrollment of high school students and adults. This Request for Proposals (RFP), in addition to previously awarded grants, will establish vocational high schools as Career Technical Institutes and provide funding to deliver adult training, credentialing, and placement services. This RFP makes available up to \$2 million to fund Planning Grants to support vocational technical schools, in partnership with industry and community stakeholders, who are not yet ready to implement adult training programs through the Career Technical Initiative (CTI). The purpose of these funds is to provide schools with time and capacity for planning and program design. Eligible lead applicants are Massachusetts High Schools with designated Chapter 74 vocational programs aligned to the occupation for the adult training program that have not previously been awarded a Career Technical Initiative implementation grant. Additionally, Massachusetts High School DESE approved CTE Career Connection (Perkins) programs may be considered but will be required to complete a shop preparedness process prior to a grant award. The

lead applicant must: have a commitment to work collaboratively with Commonwealth Corporation to ensure that the planning grant is successful; collaborate with regional partners; including MassHire Workforce Boards and MassHire Career Centers, who are engaged in similar work to ensure alignment of program goals to labor market; ensure effective employer engagement and to develop a long-term strategy to support the needs of the target industry; and have operational and fiscal capacity to manage public funds. Schools will be required to identify intentions of applying for FY '25 Career Technical Initiative grant opportunities (released between 7/1/24 and 6/30/25) to provide training, certification, and placement to adults, pending availability of funding. All applications must include, in this order: Application Summary Form (to be completed online at time of submission); Application Narrative Form (a 2-page-maximum proposal outlining how the grant will help your school implement CTE programs); Budget Form (detailing the proposed use for requested grant funds); Letters of Commitment from MassHire Workforce Board and MassHire Career Center (agreeing to work together during the planning period to outline their roles and responsibilities in advance of applying for FY '25 Career Technical Initiative funding rounds); and Certifications. Applications were released January 16, 2024, and were due February 29, 2024. Decisions were released in April 2024.

- c. **Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program:** The Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant Program from the MA Workforce Skills Cabinet is a state funded grant with two award options. Option one is a FY24 award – ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Applicants seeking support of Innovation Pathway programs are limited to a maximum of \$75,000 per designated pathway program and a total of two pathways (\$150,000). Option two is a multi-year award request (FY24 and FY25) ranging from \$750,000 to \$1,500,000. Applicants seeking multi-year funding are required to meet matching resources and budgeting requirements identified on the multi-year funding budget sheet. The Workforce Skills Capital Grant Program will award grants for the purchase and installation of equipment and related improvements and renovations necessary for installation and use of such equipment to support vocational and technical training. This equipment will upgrade and expand Career Technical Education (CTE) and training programs that are aligned with regional economic and workforce development priorities for in-demand industries, provided that grant applications facilitate collaboration to provide students with training pathways to career opportunities in high-skill, high-demand industry sectors. Eligible applicants include community-based and correctional organizations, including adult basic education and English Language Learner programs providing career technical instruction; Non-profit education, training, or other service providers; Vocational education institutions and Labor organizations; Regional vocational schools or High Schools; and Community colleges. For FY24, applications opened mid-January 2023, with an optional

LOI due in mid-February. Proposals were due mid-March, and decisions were released mid-April. Grant proposals should include detailed information on CTE programs that will benefit from grant funds and how the money will be used to expand/improve these programs. Applicants must demonstrate sustainable partnerships with relevant employers and partners. For every \$3 of Workforce Skills Capital Grant funds requested, applicants must secure a minimum of \$1 of cash match to support related equipment or infrastructure from employers or other sources besides state funding. Documentation of a grantee's available matching resources will be required prior to contracting.

9. **Federal earmarked funding:** The federal government has offered funding specifically for CTE in the past that may be offered again in the future. One program from the most recent year funding was granted is outlined below.

- a. **Career Connected High Schools Perkins Innovation and Modernization Grant from Perkins Collaborative Resource Network:** The Career Connected High Schools Perkins Innovation and Modernization Grant is a federally funded grant that can range from \$1,100,000 to \$1,475,000 for 12-month projects, up to \$3,425,000 to \$4,425,000 for a three-year project, with possibility of a two-year renewal. The purpose of this grant program is to identify, support, and rigorously evaluate evidence-based and innovative strategies and activities to improve and modernize Career Technical Education (CTE) and ensure workforce skills taught in CTE programs funded under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins V) align with labor market needs. The grant is intended for schools with underserved communities of students. Applications were made available August 14, 2023. Applicants were strongly encouraged, but not required, to submit a LOI by September 13, 2023. Applications were due October 13, 2023. Decisions were released sometime after December 12, 2024. Applicants must submit a written plan detailing how the grant funds will predominantly serve students from families with low incomes. Grant recipients must show proof of the ability to match funds from non-federal sources. This requirement may be waived on a case-by-case basis upon demonstration of exceptional circumstances.

6. **Foundation grants:** An array of private and public foundations offer grant opportunities for higher education institutions, typically focused on supporting targeted factors related to education. Some foundations are geared towards fields of study, such as liberal arts or science, technology, engineering and math generally, or nursing or agriculture specifically. Others may offer funding for different cohorts of students, such as early college programming or workforce readiness training. Others still award grants for projects that generally improve student outcomes, allowing for more generalized use of funds. Some examples of specific foundation

grants include the [Massachusetts Life Sciences Center's STEM Equipment and Professional Development Grant Program](#), which offers grants between \$15,000 and \$85,000 for equipment, supplies, and professional development to advance and expand life sciences education at Massachusetts public schools through implementation of project and inquiry-based curriculum. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture has grant money available ranging from \$30,000 to \$750,000 through the [Higher Education Challenge Grants Program](#) for institutions with at least one discipline area of food and agricultural services to address some level of educational need. Another example of a more broad grant program is the [Arthur Vining Davis Foundations' Private Higher Education Program Area](#) which offers grants between \$25,000 to \$300,000 for single or multi-year projects that involve and intervention or program intended to improve a measurable outcome at 501(c)(3) institutions that prioritize undergraduate education and emphasize the liberal arts.

7. **Higher ed capital:** Capital available for higher education institutions, usually allocated from public sources separately from general operating funding, are typically used for a range of purposes including new building construction, renovations, purchasing new equipment and information technology. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has compiled [a table of current grant funding opportunities](#), and though some due dates have passed, this table is regularly updated with new opportunities for higher education capital.
8. **Shared space:** For current or future buildings on the NECC campus, capitalizing on the opportunity to share spaces with community organizations could generate additional revenue for the project. This could be achieved by renting spaces such as gyms, auditoriums, meeting rooms or classrooms outside of school use hours to clubs, teams, or organizations. [Somerville Public Schools](#) provides a detailed account of their guidelines and rate schedule which could be used for reference. Additionally, targeting senior centers and 65+ clubs or organizations for shared space partnerships may be a fruitful source of funding and community engagement. Whether shared space involves sharing kitchen spaces or pickleball courts, integrating intergenerational uses for campus buildings could provide funding in the form of rental revenue and increased community support from generations who may not have otherwise benefited from the shared campus proposal. Aside from the social benefits for both students and seniors, programming for senior citizens could also be used to leverage funds from other grant opportunities that the school might not otherwise be qualified for.²⁴

²⁴ <https://www.ltsscenter.org/how-to-share-campus-space-for-the-good-of-young-and-old/>

9. **Massachusetts School Building Authority Core Program:** The MSBA Core Program is a state funded, non-entitlement, competitive grant program through which at least 31 percent of the cost of construction or renovation projects are reimbursed. The grant program is funded by a 1% sales tax in Massachusetts that is collected into the School Modernization Trust Fund and distributed to MSBA for capital grants. Grants are distributed by the MSBA Board of Directors based on need and urgency, as expressed by the district and validated by the MSBA. The Core Program is intended for new construction, addition, and/or renovation projects. The application typically opens mid-January and closes mid-April, but exact dates may change year-to-year. Applicants are notified of an acceptance or rejection between August and October (time frame may vary). Statutory Priority 1 is the replacement or renovation of a building which is structurally unsound or otherwise in a condition seriously jeopardizing the health and safety of the school children, where no alternative exists. If the district selects Statutory Priority 1, an electronic version of the engineering or other report detailing the nature and severity of the problem and a written professional opinion of how imminent system failure is likely to manifest itself are required. Statutory Priority 3 is the prevention of a loss of accreditation, or a process to review educational program standards. If the district selects Statutory Priority 3, an electronic summary of the accreditation report(s) focusing on the deficiencies as stated in the SOI.
10. **MassWorks Infrastructure Program:** The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a competitive grant program that provides the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities primarily for public infrastructure projects that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.²⁵ There is a predevelopment grant with a typical range of \$100,000 - \$500,000, and a direct infrastructure grant with a typical range of \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000. This is a highly competitive grant program with a full application deadline of June 4, 2025, for FY26. The total funding for FY26 is approximately \$95,000,000.
11. **MassDevelopment Investment:** MassDevelopment, functioning as the Commonwealth's development finance agency and land bank, offers a range of creative funding and financing opportunities to support impactful projects across Massachusetts. While a central aspect of their mission is geared toward growing companies and financing real estate projects, there are several financing solutions available that would be applicable to the shared campus initiative for NECC and WT.

²⁵ The MassWorks Infrastructure Program guidelines can be accessed here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/fy26-massworks-program-guidelines/download>

- a. **Cultural Facilities Fund Grant:** Funded jointly by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, there are three types of grants available to the end of increasing public and private investment in cultural facilities that are 501(c)(3) organizations engaged in the arts, humanities, or interpretive sciences. Grant types available include: Capital grants for the acquisition, design, construction, repair, renovation, and rehabilitation of a cultural facility; Feasibility and technical assistance grants for the planning and assessment of a cultural facility; and System replacement grants for 20-year capital needs assessments of buildings and mechanical systems. Eligible facilities include auditoriums, classrooms, concert halls, exhibition spaces, and theaters as well as other facilities unrelated to NECC and WT. Public or private institutions of higher education that own cultural facilities must provide service and direct access to the community and the public beyond their educational mission and demonstrate financial need. Facilities owned by municipalities must be at least 50 percent devoted to cultural purposes. All grants require a match by contributions from the private or public sector. The application window has passed for FY25 but will become available again in the fall for FY26.

- b. **Pilot Family Child Care Facilities Grant:** The Family Child Care Facilities Grant is a competitive program run in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Grants can be used for projects that are “fixed and integrated” into the physical environment and are critical for helping the provider meet the following objectives: Increase enrollment up to current licensed capacity; Enable providers to increase their current licensed capacity; and Meaningfully improve the quality of care and education that can be provided in the program’s physical space. Good projects have active licenses or are actively in the renewal process with the EEC, are in good regulatory standing, have been actively providing licensed childcare for at least two years prior to application, and operate a minimum of four days per week. The application process has passed for this year, grant notifications will be provided in spring of 2025, but there is another round to be expected in 2025.

- c. **Underutilized Properties Program Grant:** Broadly targeting underutilized, abandoned or vacant properties, good candidates for projects funding provide a public purpose in one of the following areas: creating jobs; driving innovation; eliminating blight; increasing housing production; supporting economic development projects; increasing the number of commercial buildings accessible to persons with disabilities; conserving natural resources through targeted rehabilitation; and/or reuse of vacant and underutilized property owned by the applicant. Applications are reviewed holistically for their total impact on increased public benefits. This program is a part of MassDevelopment’s Community One Stop for Growth

program with a streamlined application portal for a number of their grant programs. The FY26 round of One Stop opened on January 24, 2025, and the guidance phase runs through April 30, 2025. The deadline to submit expressions of interest is March 26, 2025.

- d. **Community One Stop for Growth Grants:** MassDevelopment manages several programs that are part of the state's single application portal and collaborative review process of community development grant programs – making targeted investments based on a development continuum. Developers, nonprofit partners, and municipalities can apply for funds to advance projects that address housing shortages, eliminate blight, and stimulate local economies.
- e. **TechDollars Loan:** Loans ranging from \$25,000 to \$500,000 are available to help nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations in Massachusetts purchase and install technology equipment. Funds may be used to finance 100 percent of the cost of new or used telecommunications and information technology equipment, software, and related installation costs. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and there is a \$250 application fee.
- f. **Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program Financing:** Beyond the standard grants and loans mentioned above, the PACE program is an innovative program to help commercial and property owners in Massachusetts finance energy improvements. Through non-recourse, long-term financing, PACE can provide the capital needed to construct or upgrade buildings now and repay overtime using savings from the upgrades. The program allows applicants to agree to a betterment assessment and lien on their property, sufficient to repay the financing extended by a private capital provider on a quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis. Interested property owners can submit a completed PACE Massachusetts application detailing the type of energy improvement project they want to undertake – and demonstrating that the energy savings from the project will be greater than the cost (a requirement of the program). It is also a requirement that the municipality in which the project takes place opts-in to the program, and while Haverhill and other selected communities have not yet adopted the PACE program, Amesbury has. PACE can be used to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements such as boilers and furnaces, chillers, motors and drivers, lighting, solar panels, insulation, air sealing, geothermal, solar hot water, energy management systems, energy recovery, and redistribution systems. More details are available [here](#).

12. **Chapter 70 State aid and higher education appropriation funding:** [Chapter 70](#) state aid funding is the state funding for public elementary and secondary education. Schools will get funding

based on enrollment. It also sets minimum requirements for each municipalities share of school costs. [Higher education appropriation funding](#) is the state budget line for the Department of Higher Education that includes all programs and funding related to public colleges and universities, including community colleges. If the plan for the shared campus includes increased enrollment for either Whittier Tech or NECC or both, there would also be increased state funding for the relevant school.

Regional Labor Market Scan

This section describes the regional labor market surrounding Northern Essex Community College and Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School. To accomplish this, UMDI uses industry and occupational data from Lightcast, a proprietary labor market analytics tool. The data described in this section is presented for Essex County.

This section explores the local job market and how it relates to the programs offered by NECC and Whittier Tech. Many large sectors of the Essex County labor market are represented in educational programs offered by NECC and Whittier Tech, particularly in healthcare and other direct care trades. This section also discusses future trends in the local labor market and how NECC and Whittier Tech programs are aligned with them.

Regional Labor Market

Table 1 shows the largest industries in Essex County and their location quotients. Location quotient is a measure of the employment concentration of an industry or occupation locally compared to the nation, calculated by taking the percentage of jobs locally divided by percentage nationally. When an occupation makes up the same proportion locally as the U.S., the location quotient, or LQ, would be 1.0. In instances with the LQ is over 1.0, there is a higher concentration of those jobs locally compared to U.S. When the LQ is under 1.0, it signals that occupation is under-concentrated in the local economy. Health care and social assistance is the largest, making up 18% percent of jobs in the county. It also has a high location quotient at 1.38, meaning it is highly concentrated in Essex County. This industry includes medical and dental services, hospitals, day care, and services for elderly persons and persons with disabilities including outpatient services and inpatient care facilities. Health services and day care facilities make up significant employment in the region as well. Manufacturing is a highly concentrated industry in the region, with a location quotient of 1.45. The largest industries within manufacturing are advanced manufacturing of aerospace products and parts and manufacturing of navigational and control instruments, along with other advanced industrial manufacturing industries. Other large sectors include government, which is mainly related to the administration of governmental education departments and local and state government administration, and retail trade.

Table 1: Top Employment Industries in Essex County

Industry	2024 Jobs	% of Total Jobs	Location Quotient
Health Care and Social Assistance	67,212	18%	1.38
Government	44,550	12%	0.85
Manufacturing	41,242	11%	1.45
Retail Trade	36,995	10%	1.07
Accommodation and Food Services	29,972	8%	0.97
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	23,104	6%	0.88
Construction	22,500	6%	1.06
Other Services (except Public Administration)	19,874	5%	1.10
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	19,836	5%	0.89
Educational Services	11,675	3%	1.29

Source: Lightcast

Table 2 shows the top occupations by employment in Essex County and their location quotients. will exist in multiple industries. For general and operations managers and information technology support occupations will be in many industries. The largest occupation in Essex County is home health and personal care aides. This occupation, as well as registered nurses, is contained within the health care and social assistance industry. Other large occupations include fast food and counter workers, and retail salespersons.

In terms of location quotient, most of the jobs are within 20 percent of the national average employment concentration. The standout is home health and personal care aides with a value of 1.86. This means that the employment concentration is 86% higher, or almost double, the national average. This is an important occupation due to its large number of jobs in the region, and it also represents a relatively large share of the total employment in the region.

Table 2: Top Occupations by Employment in Essex County

	Occupation	2024 Jobs	Location Quotient
1	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	17,505	1.86
2	Fast Food and Counter Workers	9,601	1.19
3	General and Operations Managers	9,520	1.20
4	Retail Salespersons	8,732	1.07
5	Cashiers	7,313	1.03
6	Registered Nurses	6,371	0.90
7	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	6,218	1.16
8	Stockers and Order Fillers	5,304	0.85
9	Waiters and Waitresses	5,219	1.06
10	Customer Service Representatives	5,076	0.81

Source: Lightcast

Occupations Requiring Less than a Four-Year Degree

Table 3 shows occupations in Essex County that generally require a high school degree or equivalent or higher, but do not require a four-year degree. Some of the top occupations requiring less than a four-year degree are also included in the top occupations overall. A number of the top occupations, particularly those that require specialized education, are represented in Whittier Tech and NECC's current programming.

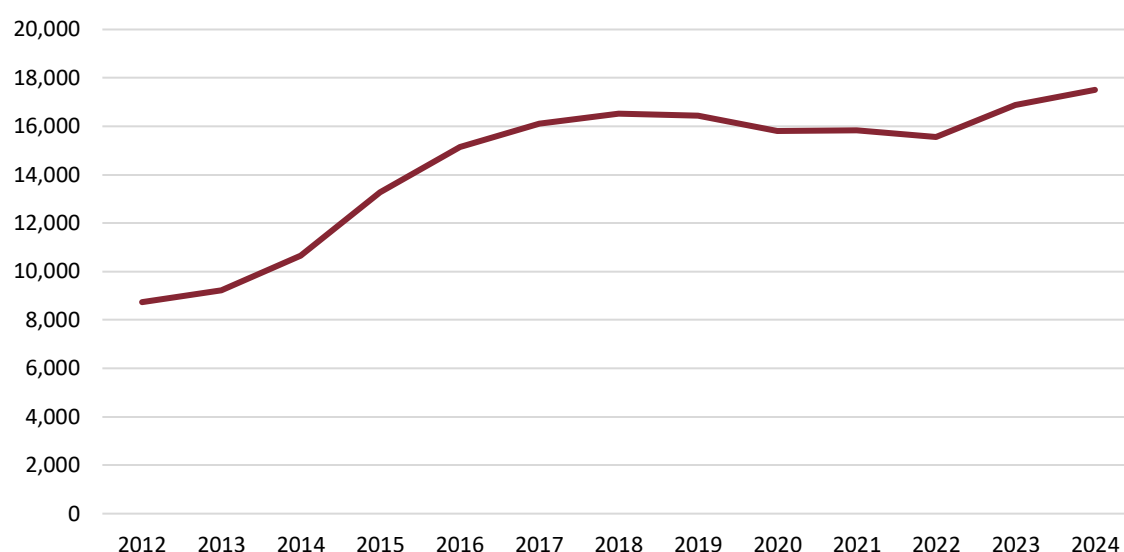
Table 3: Occupations Requiring At Least High School but Less than a Four-Year Degree in Essex County

	Occupations	2024 Number	Typical Entry Level Education
1	Home Health and Personal Care Aides	17,505	High school diploma or equivalent
2	Stockers and Order Fillers	5,304	High school diploma or equivalent
3	Customer Service Representatives	5,076	High school diploma or equivalent
4	Office Clerks, General	4,896	High school diploma or equivalent
5	Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	4,352	Some college, no degree
6	Nursing Assistants	3,585	Postsecondary nondegree award
7	First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	3,452	High school diploma or equivalent
8	Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	3,336	High school diploma or equivalent
9	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	3,284	Some college, no degree
10	Childcare Workers	3,192	High school diploma or equivalent

Source: Lightcast

Home health and personal care aides is the largest occupation by a large margin. Whittier Tech students in the Health Occupations program are prepared for the direct care that this occupation requires. NECC also offers Health and Human Services programs that prepare students for this and other health care occupations. This occupation is growing at an exceptional rate in the region. Between 2012 and 2024 it has increased from 8,737 estimated jobs to 17,505 estimated jobs, showing that this occupation has more than doubled. Figure 1 shows the growth over time of the home health and personal care aide occupation in Essex County. This growth reflects the shifting demographic trends in the region, particularly an aging population. This trend is likely to continue into the future which will promote further potential growth in this occupation.

Figure 1: Home Health and Personal Care Aide Occupation Growth 2012-2024



Source: Lightcast

There are other relevant occupations that have grown significantly over the last decade. These include construction trade supervising, plumbing and electrical work, and food preparation supervising. These are all occupations that Whittier Tech prepares students for in their current programmatic offerings.

In an interesting contrast to the dramatic increase in home health and personal care aide employment, both the Nursing Assistant and Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurse occupations have declined by 25 percent since 2012. These are both post-secondary award requiring in demand occupations in the region that are relevant to programs at NECC and Whittier Tech. Other notable declining industries are Production Workers and Childcare Workers.

Job Postings

Lightcast also provides data on current job postings, or the positions that employers are currently looking to fill. Table 4 shows the top 10 job titles posted in Essex County over the last year. The top five titles are all various direct care jobs that Whittier Tech's Health Occupations program and NECC's Health and Human Services programs prepare students for. All the top ten most posted jobs are represented in Whittier Tech's programming. Outside of healthcare, NECC also offers early childhood education programming.

Table 4: Top Job Titles Posted for Hire in the Last Year (2023-2024)

	Job Title	Unique Postings in the last Year
1	Medical Assistants	440
2	Direct Support Professionals	422
3	Dental Assistants	255
4	Caregivers	252
5	Home Health Aides	232
6	Automotive Technicians	123
7	Preschool Teachers	115
8	Hair Stylists	94
9	Direct Care Workers	81
10	Carpenters	73

Source: Lightcast

Lightcast also scraps job posting to identify the most commonly required skills. Table 5 shows the top skills that were included in job postings over the last year for jobs requiring less than a four-year college degree. Medical assistance and computer literacy are notable because they are the specific focus of Whittier Tech and NECC programs. Communication, customer service, management, problem solving, and operations are more general employment skills that are covered across multiple programs.

Table 5: Top Skills in the Last Year

	Skill or Qualification	Instances in Unique Job Postings in the last Year
1	Communication	1,987
2	Valid Driver's License	1,387
3	Customer Service	1,250
4	Management	906
5	Lifting Ability	890
6	Medical Assistance	868
7	Problem Solving	866
8	Computer Literacy	764
9	Operations	721
10	Housekeeping	675

Source: Lightcast

Table 6 shows the employers in Essex County with the highest number of unique job postings requiring less than a bachelor's degree in the last year. Most of these employers are hospitals or other companies

within the sphere of healthcare. This is consistent with the largest industries and occupations by employment being within the health care and social assistance sector.

Table 6: Top Employers by Job Postings Requiring less than a Four-Year Degree in the Last Year

	Company	Unique Postings in the last Year
1	Beth Israel Lahey Health	531
2	Lawrence General Hospital	448
3	Bridgewell	427
4	Salem Hospital	414
5	CVS Health	351
6	Randstad	205
7	Vinfen	193
8	Haverhill Public Schools	186
9	Holy Family Hospital	178
10	State of Massachusetts	176

Source: Lightcast

Table 7 shows a ten-year projection of jobs requiring at least high school but less than a bachelor's degree to 2034 and how employment is projected to change over that time. Home health and personal care aide jobs are projected to continue growing with a projected growth of 17 percent over the next ten years, representing an increase of over 2,500 jobs. Teaching assistants are also expected to grow by 9 percent. Many of the other large occupations, including nursing assistants, are projected to decrease over the next ten years.

Table 7: Projected Change in Employment for Jobs 2024-2034

Occupation	2024 Jobs	Projected 2034 Jobs	% Change
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	16,126	18,821	17%
Stockers and Order Fillers	5,179	5,534	7%
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	4,095	4,467	9%
Customer Service Representatives	4,766	4,295	-10%
Office Clerks, General	4,445	4,284	-4%
Nursing Assistants	3,531	3,348	-5%
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	3,275	3,040	-7%
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2,708	2,901	7%
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	2,741	2,859	4%
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	2,872	2,730	-5%

Source: Lightcast

The Northeast Massachusetts Regional Labor Force Blueprint 2023-2027

The Northeast Massachusetts Regional Labor Force Blueprint 2023-2027²⁶ discusses the current and future workforce conditions and needs in the Northeast region of Massachusetts, which includes the region around NECC and Whittier Tech. The Blueprint presents the following priority and notable industries and occupations:

Priority Industries:

1. Manufacturing
2. Health Care and Social Assistance
3. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

Notable Industries:

1. Clean Energy or Climate Tech industries
2. Construction
3. Education

Priority Occupations:

1. Software Developers

²⁶ [Northeast Massachusetts Regional Labor Force Blueprint 2023-2027](#)

2. Industrial Machinery Mechanics
3. General and Operations Managers
4. Behavioral health occupations
 - a. Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors
5. Nursing occupations (with emphasis on a nursing career pathway)
 - a. Nurse Practitioners
 - b. Registered Nurses
 - c. Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses

Notable Occupations:

1. Construction occupations
 - a. Carpenters
 - b. Electricians
 - c. Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters

While some of these industries and occupations require higher levels of education than an associate's degree, most of them are relevant to programs offered at Whittier Tech and NECC. Many of the priority occupations are related to health care and social assistance, which is a priority industry. This is particularly relevant to NECC and Whittier tech programs that prepare students for careers in nursing and behavioral health. The construction occupations; carpenters, electricians, and plumbers; are directly relevant to Whittier Tech programs. Overall, Whittier Tech and NECC programs align well with the workforce goals and priorities set forth by the Northeast Massachusetts Regional Labor Force Blueprint 2023-2027.

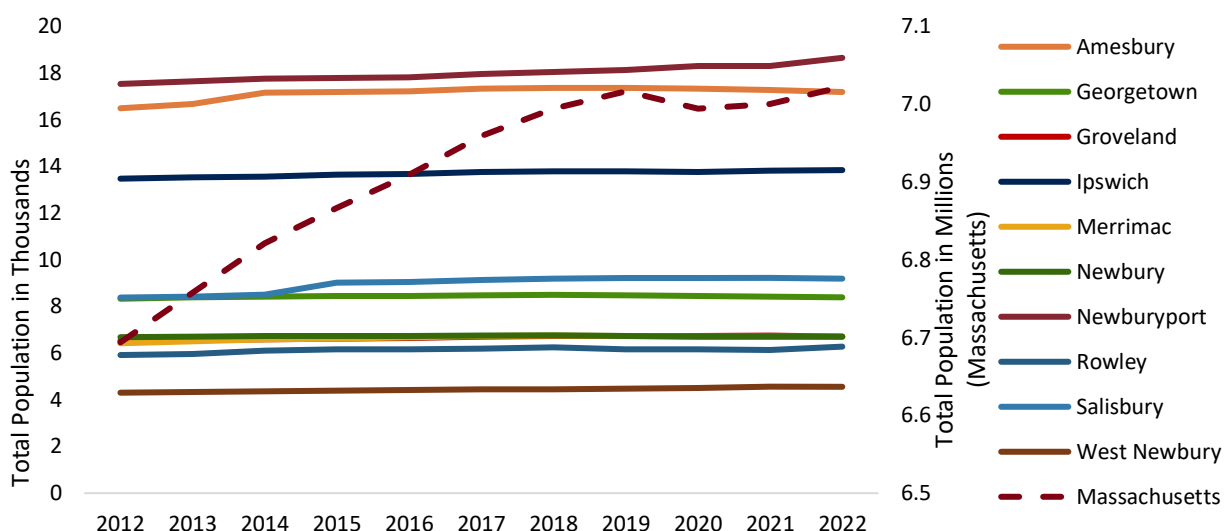
Demographic and Economic Benchmarking

The following section will provide a baseline assessment of the demographic and economic characteristics of the region and communities served by NECC and Whittier Tech. Secondary data describing employment, workforce, and demographic characteristics are leveraged to provide a comprehensive overview of the region in which NECC and Whittier Tech operate. This section analyzes a subset of 11 towns in the northern part of Essex County including: Amesbury, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Ipswich, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salsbury, and West Newbury.

For context, most indicators examined by UMDI are analyzed for Essex County and the Commonwealth, when appropriate. The following indicators are analyzed either over a 10-year period from 2012 to 2022 or in 2022 alone.²⁷ Indicator sources include the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey's (ACS) 5-year estimates and Intercensal Estimates, the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research's Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) including labor force and unemployment data, and the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employment and Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), accessed through their OnTheMap tool, and the UMDI Population Estimates Program's population projections.

²⁷ At the time of analysis, 2022 data were the most recent data available. ACS 5-year estimates for 2023 were released in December of 2024.

Figure 2: Total Population in Selected Towns and Massachusetts, 2012-2022

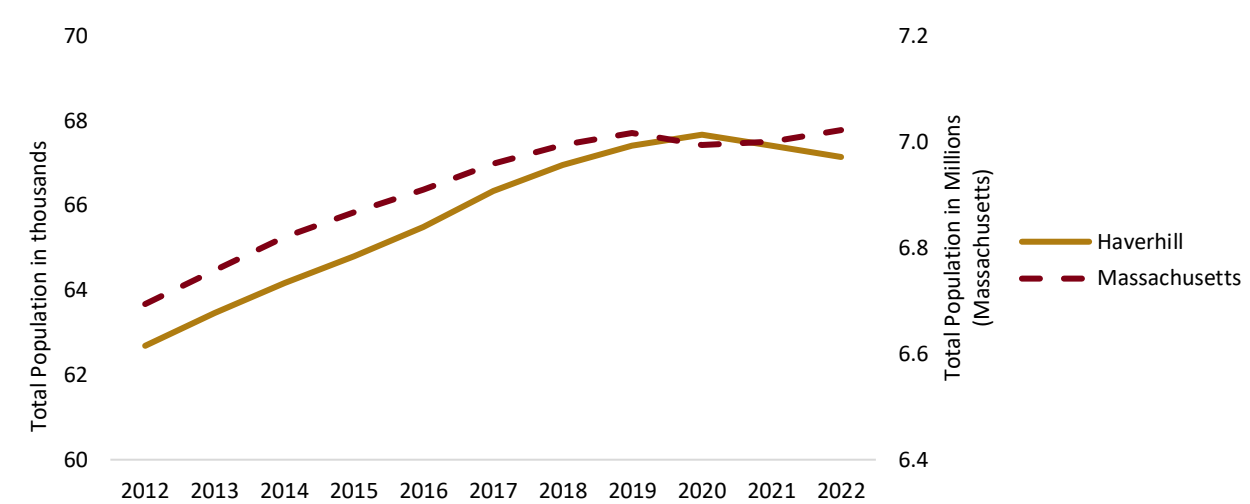


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Intercensal Estimates

Over the 10-year period, the total population in most selected towns did not change significantly, as seen in Figure 2 above and Figure 3 below. Most towns saw a slight decline between 2019 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic but have since stabilized. Haverhill has grown the most over the 10-year period, climbing by over 4,000 residents and following the growth overall trend in Massachusetts. The population of native-born residents ranged from 88 to 97 percent of the population in these selected communities in 2022, which is higher than both the Commonwealth (82.4%) and Essex County (81.5%) during the same year. Haverhill has the lowest percentage of native-born residents at 88 percent in 2022.²⁸

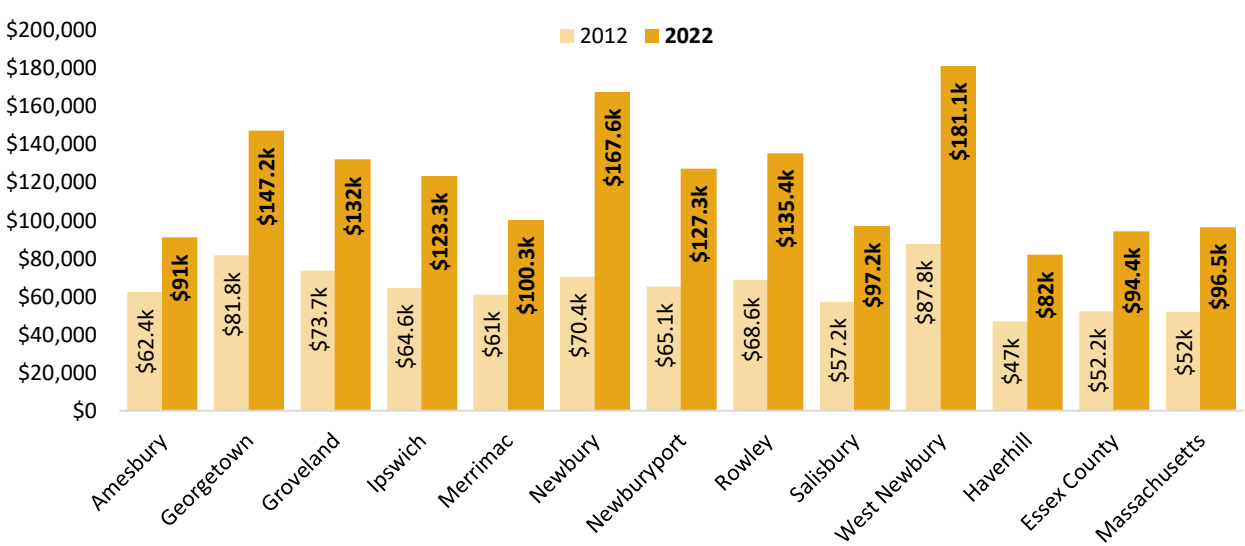
²⁸ Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 5-year estimates

Figure 3: Total Population in Haverhill and Massachusetts, 2012-2022



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Intercensal Estimates

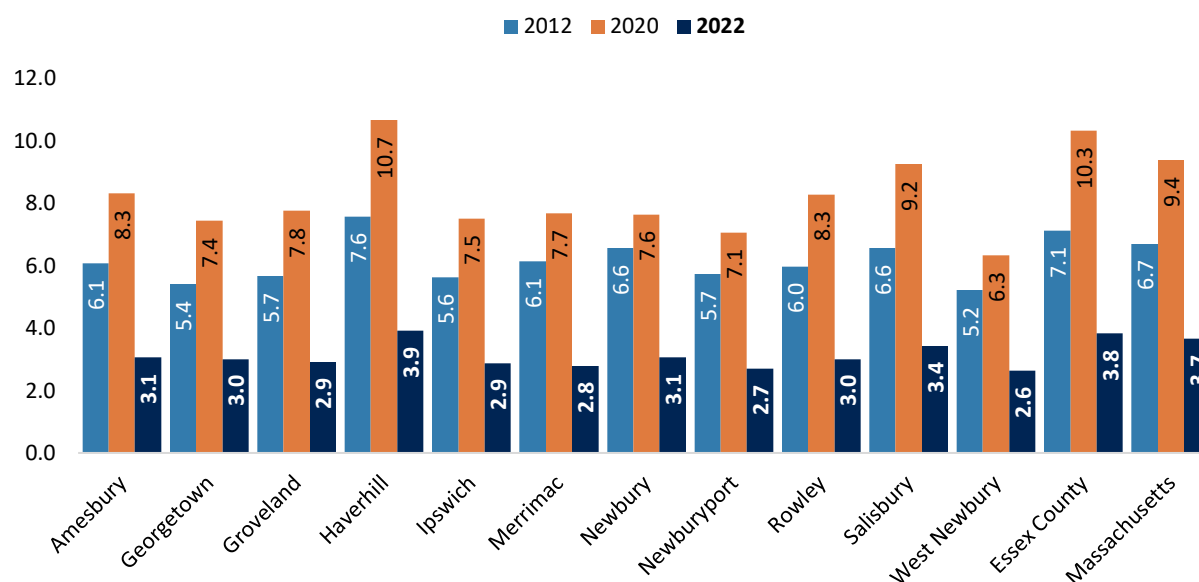
Figure 4: Median Household Income in 2024 dollars for Selected Towns, Essex County, and Massachusetts. 2012 vs 2022.



Source: ACS 5-year estimates.

Figure 4 shows median household incomes in 2012 and 2022, adjusted to 2022 dollars.²⁹ Median household incomes in every town increased between 2012 and 2022, in some cases as little as \$28,600 (Amesbury) and on other cases as much as \$97,200 (Newbury) and \$93,400 (West Newbury). Essex County saw an increase similar to the state, with the county's median household income increasing from \$52,200 in 2012 to \$94,400 in 2022 and the state increasing from \$52,000 to \$96,500 over the same period.

Figure 5: Unemployment Rate by Selected Towns, Essex County, and Massachusetts. 2012, 2020, 2022.



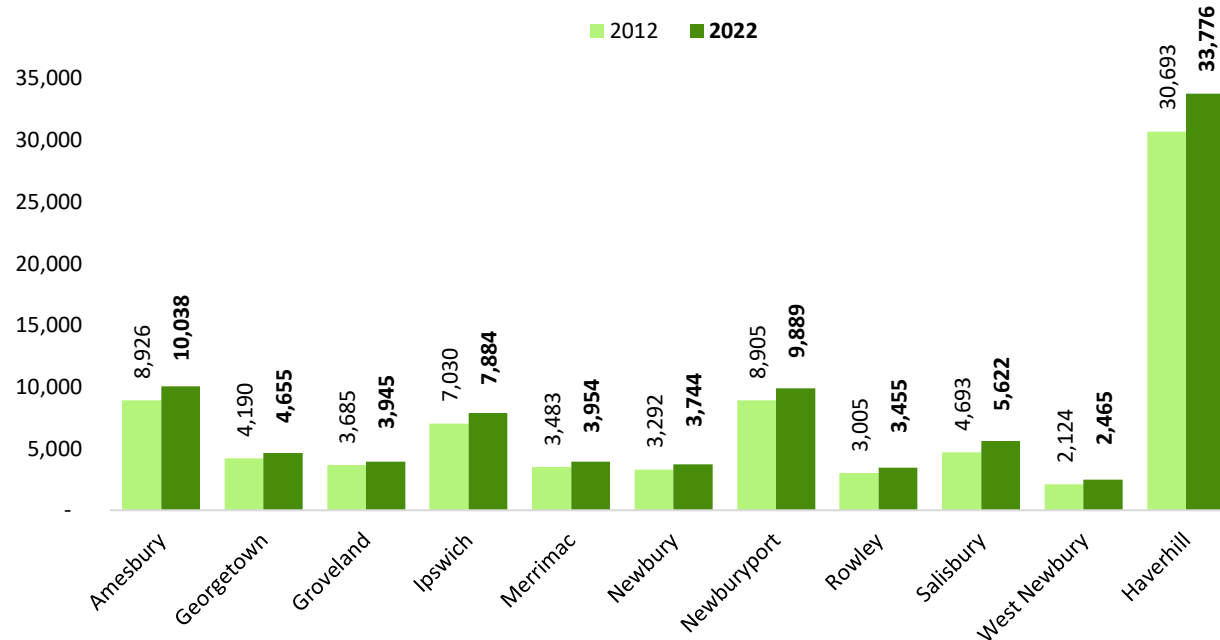
Source: Massachusetts DER, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

As shown in Figure 5, unemployment rates dropped substantially throughout the region and state between 2012 and 2022. It is important to note that unemployment rates across the nation were elevated in 2012 given the country was still recovering from the Great Recession, and these rates gradually decreased until the pandemic. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 shot unemployment rates to record highs, with annual rates as much as 10.7 percent in Haverhill and 10.3 in Essex County, with the state averaging 9.4 percent. Comparing 2012 to 2022, Essex County dropped from 7.1 percent in 2012 to 3.8 percent in 2022 in tandem with the Commonwealth (6.7 percent to 3.7 percent). Aside from Haverhill, every town in the region experienced unemployment rates lower than the

²⁹ After adjusting for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, the incomes in 2012 are expressed in 2022 dollars to create a basis for comparison.

state in 2022. However, Haverhill did experience the largest decrease in unemployment over the same period, dropping 3.66 percentage points between 2012 and 2022.

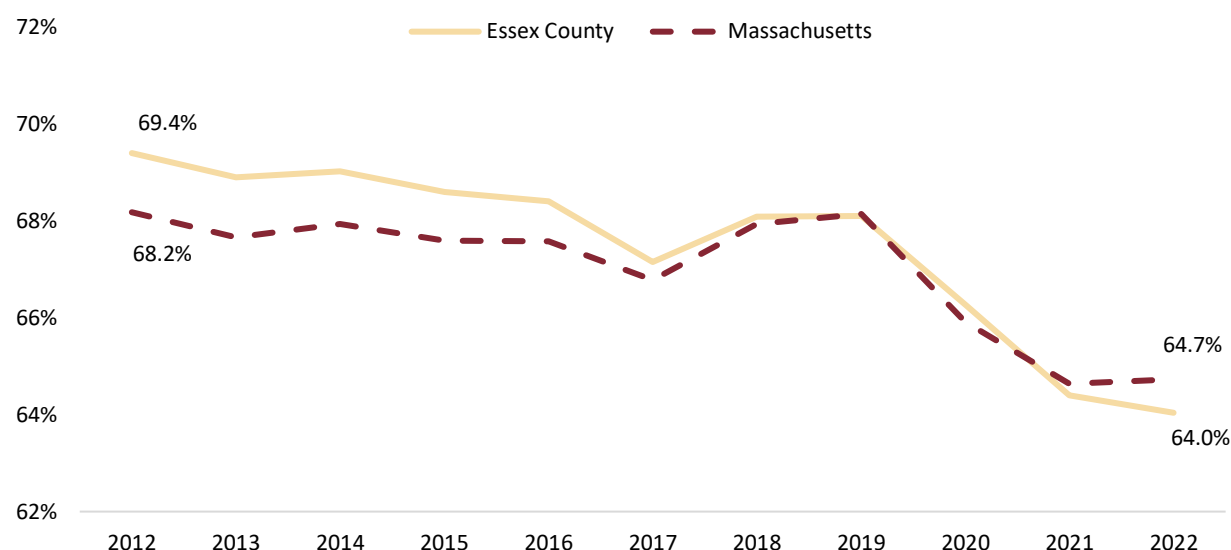
Figure 6: Total Employment in Selected Towns, 2012 vs 2022



Source: LAUS

Total employment levels across all towns in the region increased between 2012 and 2022, depicted in Figure 6 above. Though smaller towns may appear to have changed very little over the 10-year period when compared to Haverhill, Salisbury, West Newbury, and Rowley experienced the largest percent increase, growing 19.8, 16.0, and 15.0 percent, respectively. Not depicted in this figure is a deviation from the upward trend due to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which all towns and the state experienced a gradual increase until 2019, a decline into 2020 reflecting the effects of the pandemic, followed by another gradual increase.

Figure 7: Labor Force Participation Rate for Selected Towns and Massachusetts, 2012 through 2022



Source: ACS 5-year estimates; LAUS.

An additional indicator of economic health in a region is the labor force participation rate (LFPR). The LFPR refers to the share of the population who is actively engaged in the labor force and is measured by taking the percentage of the population that is employed or seeking employment divided by the total working age population.³⁰ Figure 7 above shows the trends in LFPR for Massachusetts and Essex County between 2012 and 2022.³¹

Despite some volatility between 2012 and 2022, LFPR for Essex County and the state has declined. In 2012, the LFPR in Essex County was 69.4% while the Commonwealth's was 68.2%. In 2022, LFPR declined 5.4 percentage points in Essex County and 3.4 percentage points in the state, dipping to 64.0% and 64.7% respectively. Essex County's LFPR followed a trend similar to that of the state over the 10-year period, though the county was trending higher than the state between 2012 and 2019 and lower than the state in 2022.

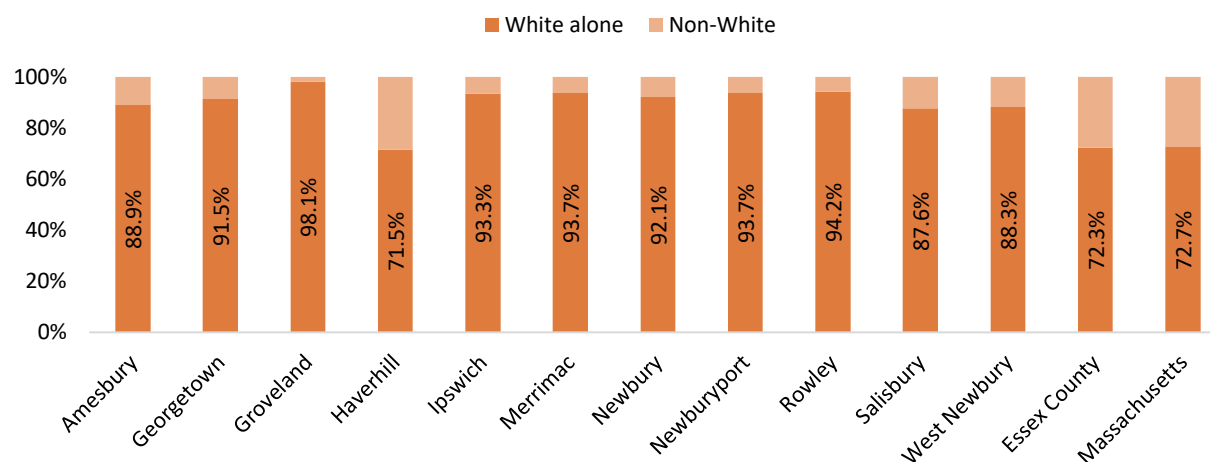
Demographics can play a key role in LFPR, as people with advanced education tend to participate at higher levels and for longer than people with lower educational attainment, young adults (16-24) tend to participate at lower rates because they are more likely to be in school, and older adults (55 plus) participate less as they approach traditional retirement ages. The latter is a particularly salient issue right now with the overall aging of the state's population, as baby boomers and older generation X workers

³⁰ The working population is made up of civilians aged 16 and over who are not institutionalized.

³¹ State and county level LFPR are featured due to data limitations for town-level estimates over this period.

transition into older cohorts. Many of these older workers are even retiring sooner than 65, the typical age for retirement, with the median age for retirement in the US being 62 years old³² in 2022.

Figure 8: White and Non-White distribution in Selected Towns, Essex County, and Massachusetts, 2022.

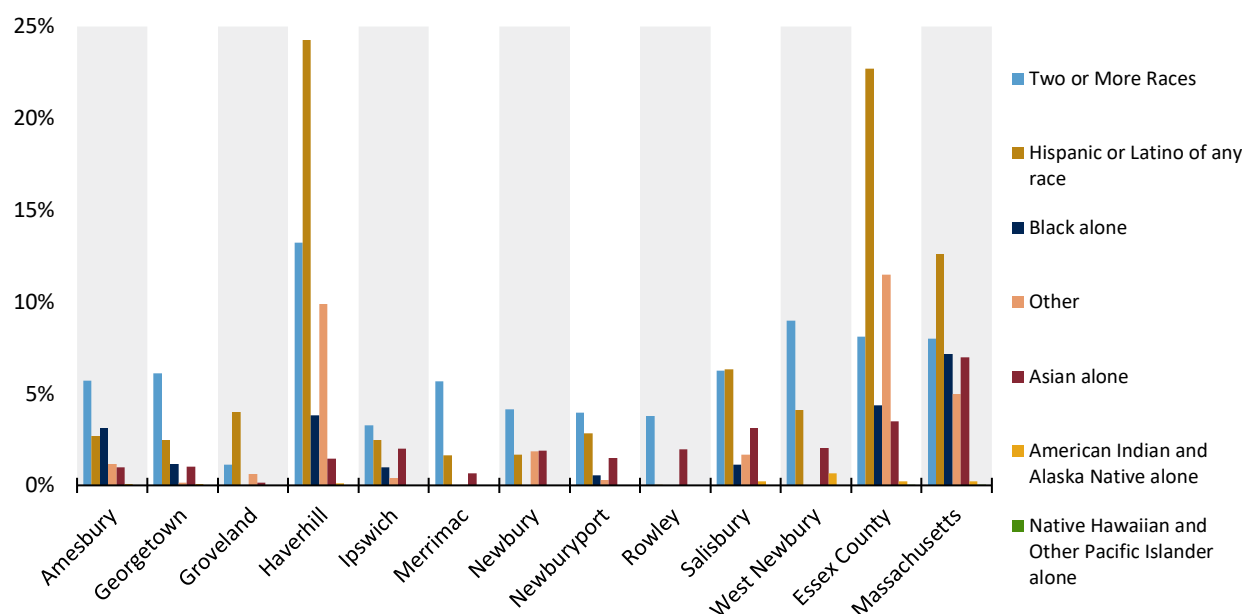


Source: ACS 5-year estimates

Much like the Commonwealth, all municipalities in the region are primarily made up of white residents. As shown in Figure 8, the share of white residents' range across municipalities from 72.6 and 98.1 percent of the population. Diversity has increased, however, in nearly every city and town between 2012 and 2022, most notably in Haverhill, West Newbury, and Salsbury, which experienced a decrease in the share of white residents at 12.8, 11.6, and 10.7 percentage points, respectively.

³² https://www.ebri.org/docs/default-source/rcs/2022-rcs/2022-rcs-summary-report.pdf?sfvrsn=a7cb3b2f_12

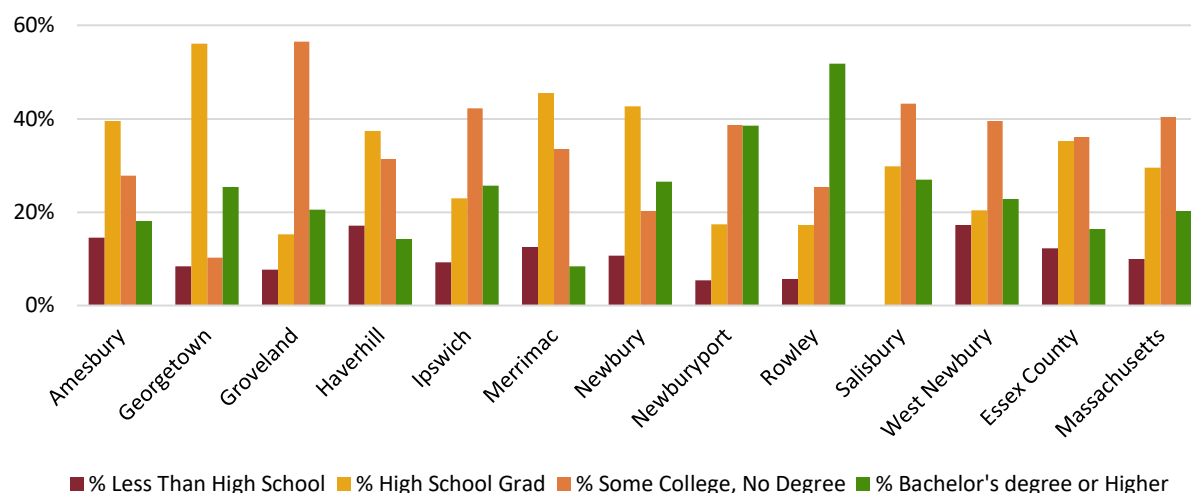
Figure 9: Non-White Racial Distribution of Selected Towns, Essex County, and MA, 2022



Source: ACS 5-year estimates

Focusing on people of color in Figure 9 above, residents who identify as two or more races make up the majority of the non-white population across the selected towns in 2022, accounting for nearly 14 percent of the population in Haverhill, nearly 9 percent in West Newbury, and 6.3 percent in Salisbury. The second largest race group among non-white residents in Amesbury and Georgetown are those who identify as Black, while those who racially identify as ‘other’ make up the second largest share in Groveland and Haverhill, and those who identify as Asian make up the second largest non-white racial group in the remainder of the selected towns. Almost all towns in the region are not as diverse as Massachusetts or Essex County as a whole. Residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino of any race make up small shares of the population in most selected towns in the region, with most towns having less than 6.5 percent of the population made up of Hispanic or Latino residents. Haverhill, however, has a higher share of Hispanic residents at 24.2 percent in 2022, higher than that of the state or county (12.6% and 22.7% respectively).

Figure 10: Educational Distribution of 18 to 24-year-olds in Selected Towns, Essex County, and Massachusetts. 2022

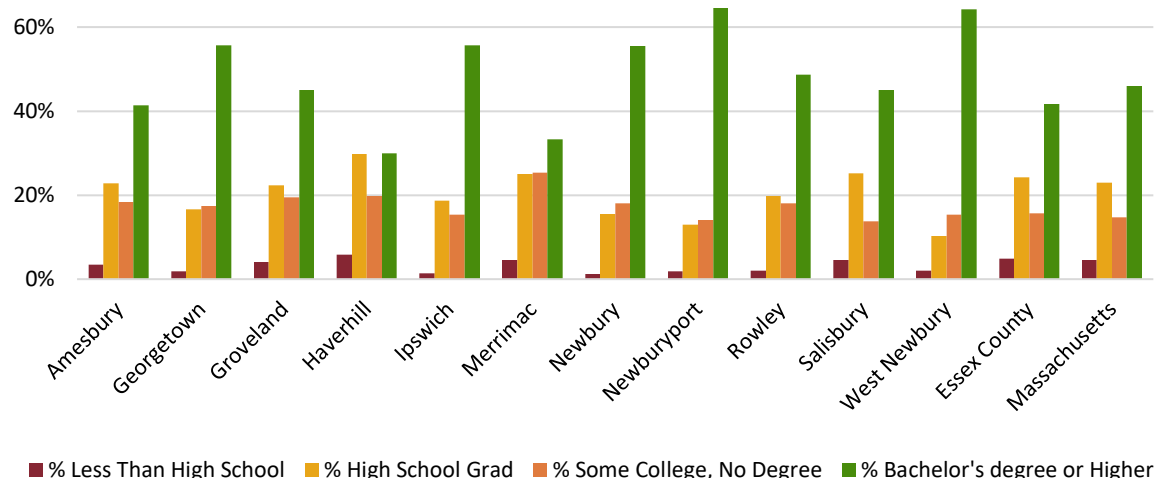


Source: ACS 5-year estimates

For the population aged 18-24, shown in Figure 10, those with high school diplomas or some college and no degree make up the highest shares of the population in 2022. In Rowley, most 18-to-24-year-olds have a bachelor's degree or higher and in Salisbury, the population with less than a high school diploma is negligible. In Spring of 2024, the majority of NECC students belonged to this age group (71.3% are age 25 or younger), though roughly a quarter of the student body was between the ages 26 and 45.³³ In comparison, Figure 11 below shows residents aged 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher make up the highest shares of the population across municipalities in 2022. Given college students are typically between 18 and 24, the shares of those with a college degree are larger in the 25-and-over population. It should be noted that Massachusetts is the most well-educated state in the country, with nearly 48 percent of the population having a college degree. Aside from Haverhill, Merrimac, and Amesbury, the share of the population aged 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher is larger in every town in the region than in the state or Essex County.

³³ <https://www.necc.mass.edu/about/fast-facts/>

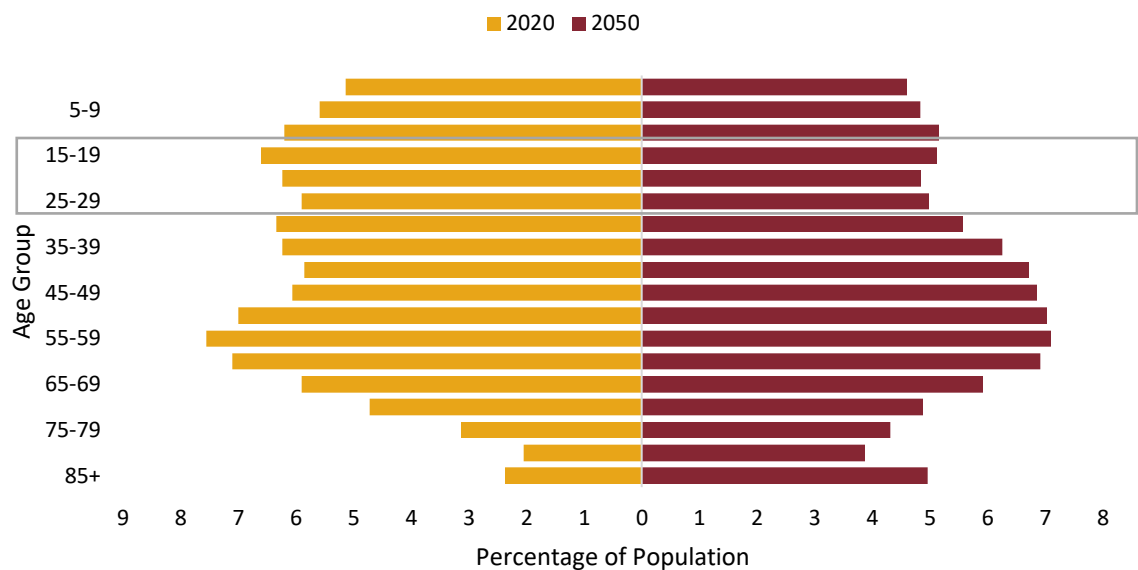
Figure 11: Educational Distribution of 25-year-olds and up in Selected Towns, Essex County, and Massachusetts. 2022



Source: ACS 5-year estimates

One of the featured products from UMDI are the town level population projections developed by the Population Estimates Program. The latest population projections for Massachusetts were developed in 2024 and project age and gender for cities and towns out to 2050. Figure 12 depicts the distribution of the population in Essex County across age cohorts. On the left in yellow is the distribution of the population in 2020 while on the right in maroon is the distribution of the projected population for 2050. The gray box highlights the cohorts between 15 and 29 to indicate the population of interest, those who are most likely to be attending either a secondary or post-secondary educational institution.

Figure 12: Population Pyramids for Essex County, 2020 vs 2050 (projected)

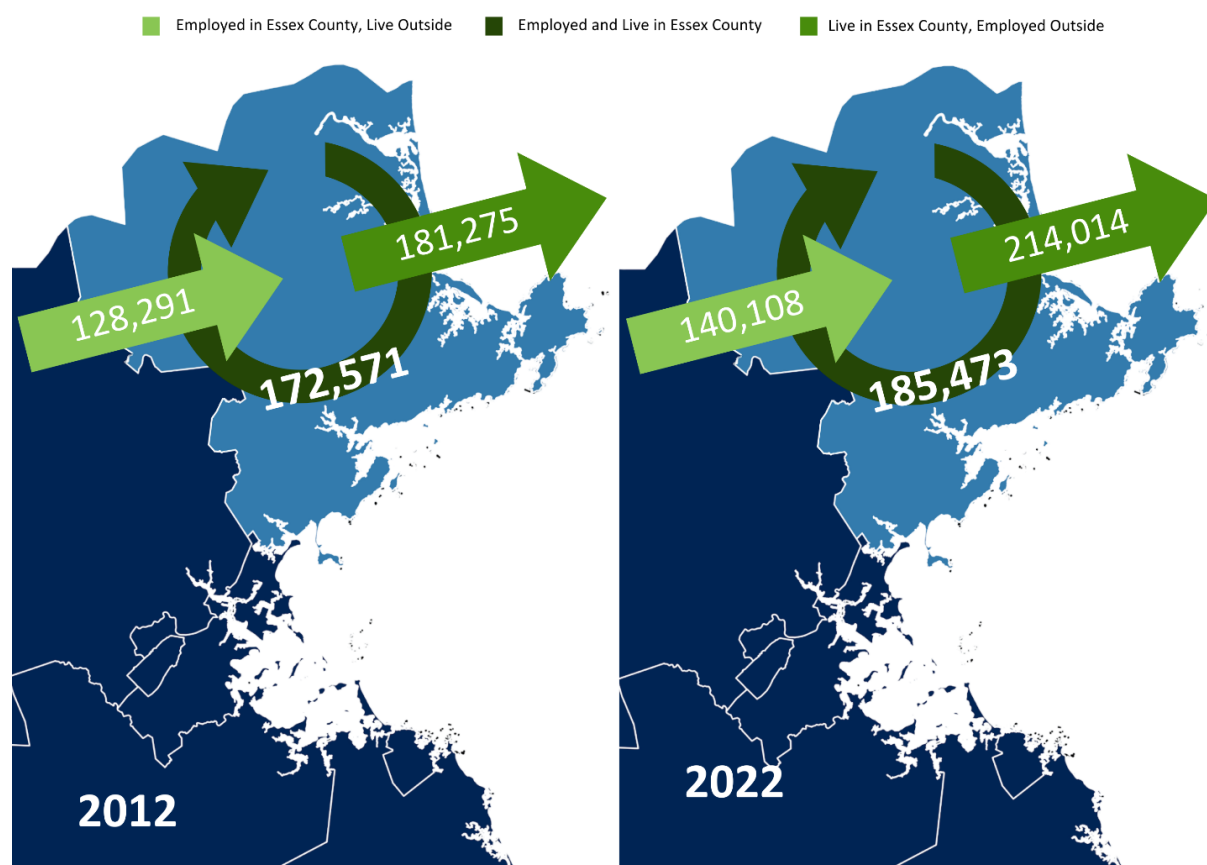


Source: UMDI V2024 Population Projections

In 2020, the 15-19 age group made up 6.6 percent of the population, the 20-24 age group made up 6.2 percent, and the 25-29 age group made up 5.9 percent, totaling 18.7 percent of the total population. The largest age cohort was 55–59-year-olds making up 7.6 percent of the population. The 65+ age group in 2020 made up 18.3 percent of the population while the prime working age population made up 64.9 percent.

In 2050, the 15-19 age group is projected to make up only 5.1 percent of the population, the 20-24 age group is projected to be only 4.9 percent, and the 25-29 age group is projected to make up 5.0 percent, totaling a smaller share of the population at just 15 percent. The largest age cohort is again projected to be 55–59-year-olds, making up 7.1 percent of the population. The 65+ age group is projected to grow to 24 percent of the population in 2050, while the working population is projected to shrink to 61.4 percent. As more of the population moves to non-working ages, workforce development challenges are exacerbated. The need for credentialing available workers and having options for upskilling the labor force that are affordable and less time consuming, such as 2-year degrees, certificates, and micro credentialing, will become increasingly important.

Figure 13: Commuting Patterns for Essex County, 2012 vs 2022.



Source: OnTheMap

The map in Figure 13 displays employment and commuter flow data. This measure is a useful indicator in understanding who makes up the labor force within Essex County and where those who live in Essex County ultimately find employment. It is important to note that remote workers are included in these data and are designated as working in the location in which their employer is located, even if they work entirely remotely.

In 2012, of the workers who lived in Essex County, 48.8 percent also worked in Essex County, while 51.2 percent worked elsewhere. Simply put, the share of residents who sought work outside of Essex County was slightly greater than the share who found work inside of the county.

In 2022, the share of these residents who live and work in Essex County declined slightly to 46.4 percent. It follows that the share of workers living in Essex County but working elsewhere rose to 53.6 percent. Looking at where the residents of Essex County work, the highest share (13.6%) were working in Boston.

The second highest share of workers found work in Lawrence (4.3%), followed by Beverly (4.2%). Outside of the region, and Boston, residents found work in Cambridge (2.5%), and Woburn (2.2%).

Overall, there is a bit of a churn taking place in the region with a significant number of workers leaving the area for work, while a large number of people commute into the region for work as well. These data suggest that increasing employment opportunities, as well as the skills and credentials of residents in the region, can lead to more Essex County residents staying in the region for work.

Conclusion

The UMass Donahue Institute's initial feasibility and planning study exploring the potential for a shared campus between Northern Essex Community College (NECC) and Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School on NECC's Haverhill campus develops detailed data aimed at helping inform the continued exploration of and decisions around a shared campus model for Whittier Tech and NECC.

To inform the potential for a shared campus between NECC and Whittier Tech, UMDI deployed a mixed method research approach combining quantitative data on regional workforce, industry, demographics, and labor market information with qualitative data from interviews with community members, to ensure all relevant pieces of data help inform decisions and considerations towards the feasibility and planning of a shared campus.

Through analysis of data collected from demographic and economic benchmarking, interviews with community members, labor market scans, literature review of funding sources, similar cases of shared campus models and recommended best practices for successfully navigating such collaborations, it is clear that a NECC-Whittier Tech shared campus model would be an innovative move and would be one of the first of its kind within the United States.

From UMDI's scan of relevant academic literature and case study analysis of similar instituted shared campus models across the nation, a blended campus model between NECC and Whittier Tech is recommended. In this, both institutions would be housed in the same physical location, sharing resources with each other, while maintaining separate missions. Several of this project's case study examples have managed to accomplish a blurred campus model successfully, with students enrolled in programming that helps meet regional workforce needs. Future considerations for this proposed shared campus should examine examples of merged institutions outside of higher education, such as the Texas Medical Center, which is currently the largest medical complex in the world.

In conclusion, the innovative opportunity for NECC and Whittier Tech to develop a blended campus model would be an opportunity to develop a modern, innovative learning environment that will benefit students, communities, and regional workforce needs for generations to come.

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Appendix A: Methodological Approaches

Community Listening sessions and Interviews

To help better understand concerns, recommendations and questions that the local community has towards the proposed shared campus, UMDI conducted ten one on one interviews, and a total of four group interviews for this study.

Interview data provides a unique and illustrative viewpoint of the specific perspectives local Essex County residents, educators, workforce development experts and political leaders have towards the proposed shared campus. For this qualitative methodological approach, all ten one on one interview participants were identified for interviews by a planning group assembled collectively by NECC and Whittier Tech leadership. Interviews were conducted with a UMDI project member over zoom for a maximum duration of 45 minutes. The community listening session group interviews were open to participation by all community members interested in sharing their thoughts towards the proposed project. There was a publicly accessible webpage to sign up for any and all of the sessions, and this signup form was shared across NECC and Whittier Tech's social media accounts. Each listening session was conducted with a UMDI project member over zoom for 90 minutes. All interviews and listening sessions were audio recorded on zoom for accuracy. Questions were designed to better understand the concerns, recommendations and questions community members have towards the proposed shared campus. See Appendix B in this report for the full set of interview questions.

Using the interview and listening session audio recordings, a verbatim transcript of all conversations was generated. This transcript was then coded thematically for data analysis using NVivo coding software. The names of all participants throughout this report are pseudonyms, to protect participant confidentiality.

Literature Review

Extensive literature review was done to identify the breadth of available data on the subject of shared campuses across the United States. The focus of the literature review is threefold and examined best practices, funding sources and case studies surrounding the topic of shared campuses across the country. Themes explored the range of funding sources potentially available to support projects such as NECC and Whittier Tech's proposed shared campus. Literature on best practices examined what approaches to shared campus development is recommended and effective. For case studies, UMDI compiled a list of different examples in which technical high schools have shared a campus and resources with a higher education institution, in similar ways to what NECC and Whittier Tech are proposing. Literature on

funding sources examined the range of state, national, private and nonprofit funding sources available to support shared campus development.

The literature review process involved reading and cataloging the major takeaways from each piece. While reviewing this literature, it became clear to the research team that there are very few shared campus models between technical high schools and higher education institutions in the United States- NECC and Whittier tech's innovative proposed shared campus would be one of the first of its kind in the country. For more information on the sources used for this report, see the Bibliography section of this report.

Labor Market Scan

The labor market scan aimed to identify current workforce trends and how they relate to the educational programs at Whittier Tech and NECC. Data on employment by industry and occupation, job postings, job skills, employers, and location quotient were downloaded from Lightcast, a proprietary employment data source. Data was collected and analyzed for Essex County rather than by municipality in order to minimize margins of error due to small sample sizes. Most data were filtered to include only occupations that require between a high school degree and an associate's degree on average. These data were compared with programs offered and Whittier Tech and NECC. They were also considered with respect to the Northeast Massachusetts Regional Labor Force Blueprint 2023-2027.

Economic and Demographic Benchmarking

The economic and demographic benchmarking section aims to provide a baseline assessment of the demographic and economic characteristics of the region and communities served by NECC and Whittier Tech. To provide this information, secondary data describing employment, workforce, and demographic characteristics are leveraged to provide a comprehensive overview of the region in which NECC and Whittier Tech operate. To understand the communities served by NECC and Whittier Tech, this section analyzes a subset of 11 towns in the northern part of Essex County including: Amesbury, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Ipswich, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salsbury, and West Newbury.

For context, most indicators examined by UMDI are analyzed for Essex County and the Commonwealth, when appropriate. The following indicators are analyzed either over a 10-year period from 2012 to 2022 or in 2022 alone. Indicator sources include the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey's (ACS) 5-year estimates³⁴ and Intercensal Estimates, the Massachusetts Department of Economic Research's

³⁴ 5-year estimates were used for precision due to the size of geographies analyzed. More detail on ACS estimates here: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html>

Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) including labor force and unemployment data, and the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employment and Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), accessed through their OnTheMap tool, and the UMDI Population Estimates Program's population projections.

Appendix B: Interview Guide

NECC- Whittier Tech Collaboration study

Hello and thank you for your time. The UMass Donahue institute is working with both Northern Essex community college, and Whittier tech high school to better understand the future possibilities and current concerns around a potential shared campus model for Whittier Tech and NECC, ON NECC's Haverhill campus. My research team is particularly interested in your perspective, concerns, questions and input on considerations for this proposed campus.

A few things to note before we begin:

- I will audio record this conversation for note taking purposes, to accurately capture what you say.
- The recordings will not be shared outside of the UMDI research team.
- Your participation is totally confidential. My research team will not make any quotes directly attributable to you unless we have your consent to do so.
- Our team will destroy the recordings at the end of the project.

Do you have any questions before we begin this interview, and I start recording?

[BEGIN RECORDING ON ZOOM]

1. Currently, would you support a proposed shared campus between NECC and Whittier tech, and why?
 - a. What factors have influenced your support/lack of support for this proposed shared campus?
 - b. Do you think your community would support a proposal for a shared campus currently? Why is this?
2. What is your biggest concern regarding the potential shared campus and why is this?
 - a. What actionable interventions would address your concern?
 - b. What do you think needs to happen next (next steps)?
3. What do you think would help build the communities confidence and interest in this proposed shared campus?
 - a. What specific information (provided by NECC-Whittier Tech) would help build community confidence in the proposed shared campus?
 - b. What specific actions would build community confidence in the proposed shared campus?
4. What do you want to know more about with regards to the proposed NECC-WT shared campus?
 - a. Any specific questions you need answered, that have gone unanswered to date?

My final set of questions will focus on exploring future possibilities and considerations for a shared campus model for Whittier Tech and NECC, on NECC's Haverhill campus. There are many considerations to incorporate into an effective and cost saving shared campus. Several consideration's currently on NECC-WT's radar are expanded programming/training aligned with regional workforce needs; expanded access to skilled trades programs; expanded access to non-degree credentials such as certificates and apprenticeships; expanded access to Early College programs; reduced new building construction cost; reduced operational expenses, and exploring better financial pathways that would help lower overall cost (especially state sources). I'll add this list to the zoom chat for your reference:

5. All of these considerations are important. In your opinion, which of the listed considerations should be prioritized and focused on when thinking about an innovative shared campus between NECC and Whittier tech? Why is this?
 - a. Do you have any specific suggestions on how to address this consideration?
6. Are there any additional considerations not mentioned on this list that you think should be prioritized?
7. Do you have any additional suggestions, or feedback for the proposed NECC-Whittier tech shared campus that you think my team should know about?

Thank you so much for all your valuable input and if you think of other suggestions after today, please do not hesitate to contact me directly. Have a great day.

Appendix C: Compiled Community Concerns

The following appendix contains a compilation of community concerns towards the proposed shared campus that have been brought to our teams attention during one-on-one interviews, community listening sessions and through direct email with the UMDI research team. All concerns are listed below in the form of anonymized quotes, to maintain participant confidentiality and are organized topically.

CONCERNS AROUND OPERATIONALIZING WHAT A 'SHARED CAMPUS' INVOLVES:

- What is the vision (of a shared campus)? It kind of goes back to the how, but it's even more than that. It's, you know, what is the vision so that people can just grab on to it and support it?
- What is the intent of this shared space? I mean, is it an intention that our kids are going to have college classes? Is it an intention of, like, we're running out of space in Whittier tech, so we need a building over there. Is it both? Is it neither? Is it, you know, coming up with a completely different curriculum? I'm a parent, I have a kid in school, and I'm kind of unclear about what the whole point is anyway. Are we just bussing kids back and forth because, you know, we're out of classroom space? Or will there be a whole separate curriculum for Whittier tech kids? Or is there, an assumption that some of the kids are going to take college English class and get some of those credits...What is the collaboration?
- It's hard to give (support for the collaboration) a solid answer without having more information in regard to the how and what it might look like.
- The earlier proposal was unaffordable, and many voted against it. How can we express support for this plan without knowing how it would work?
- Right now, it's just a topic, and we need a plan.
- I'm a parent, I have a kid in the school, and I'm kind of unclear about what the whole point is anyway...what is the collaboration?
- Are we talking about structurally moving a building, and are we talking about having Whittier on the campus, adjacent or together? Is it combined-structural and curriculum? I mean, think they're kind of two separate conversations, but they also require very much information that we so we can answer your questions in an educated way.
- I do not understand what shared campus means.
- It's never been made clear exactly what this partnership is.
- I continue to have a great difficulty answering these questions without it being defined what a shared campus is. (asks listening session attendees) Can anyone define what that is?
- The idea of shared campus and the idea of a shared building are two different things, and I'm guessing that the sharing of space is not as broad, I think as people might believe it.

- I support the idea in the abstract, but it's too vague at this point to know really what's being proposed, and that is a sentiment that has been echoed throughout today's discussion. A few other questions that people do have is, how are we operationalizing a shared campus? How specifically is it being defined?
- I sat through a lot of the sessions in the previous cycle where the vote went down. It seems to me that the group that was closing the rebuild did a very poor job of explaining to the community where the actual Whittier model fits into the current educational environment....what are we voting for? This could be a great solution, but it's, right now very nebulous.
- I think people would like to know what advantages to Whittier are there by having the building on campus, other than just the fact that it could be built for less money?
- I think that the concept sounds great. How it will all work out is where I would want to learn more.
- How is this model going to operate on this campus? What are, what are these classes going to look like?
- What is the curriculum going to look like? What is the plan like? Are these kids going to be taking college classes? Are they going to take classes uniquely designed for each of their trades? Are they going to take general classes?
- My biggest concern, as a (parent), would be the setup and how to keep a cohesive school unity and school pride within the class. You know, it's like, I've heard some ideas floated around that perhaps one building might be shops and the other would be like the academics. And so, if it was split up like that, my concern would be that not knowing a whole half of your peer group.

PROGRAMMING CONCERNS:

- I think a shared campus with NECC is a wonderful idea. But it's also really scary for administrators of the cities and towns and schools in terms of how attractive that's going to be to a greater number of students who are looking at wanting a vocational technical education...it's also opening a lot of avenues to them, and the schools are already struggling at trying to keep students in their district.
- In the proposal, the initial proposal that was sent to the MSBA for this project, it talks about increasing student enrollment. And I just think that's a scary word for a lot of our smaller communities.
- I think there's still a lot of anxiety in our communities around it, because our communities are trying to hold on to their students, with the exception, I think, of the city of Haverhill, but most of our smaller cities and towns are desperately trying to hold on to their students, because parents have so many choices now in education, and kids are going in multiple directions.
- I think they (Maureen Lynch and Lane Glenn) they want to make sure that they may sustain that deep commitment to minority communities and communities of people who would historically, maybe not make it to college. So, there's a lot of those kinds of mission, mission driven statements that need to make sure that they're preserved.

- What would programming look like? How would this change enrollment?
- Can you add more kids? Can you get more kids admitted?
- What is the curriculum going to look like? What is the plan like? Are these kids going to be taking college classes? Are they going to take classes uniquely designed for each of their trades? Are they going to take general classes?? That information, I think is important to know ahead of time.
- Will programming include training in new/growing industries like clean energy?
- The support services (e.g., career counseling, tutoring, job placement) might need to be expanded to serve a wider range of student needs, which could stretch resources thin. Vocational students may find that their needs are overshadowed by students pursuing more academic or general degrees.
- Community college's broader academic scope might reduce the focus on vocational and technical programs, potentially leading to less specialized training for trades students. The culture and needs of trade-focused students may become secondary in a larger, more generalized academic environment.
- As a parent I'm still trying to understand what the intent of this shared space is. I mean, is it an intention that our kids are going to have college classes? Is an intention of, like, we're running out of space in Whittier tech, so we need a building over there. Is it both? Is it neither? Is it, you know, coming up with a completely different curriculum?
- I go back to the lens of, how does any of this benefit anybody over the age of 18?
- There are issues about the college credits, and how do you work that out with the students who are maybe dual enrolled there? Is there a way that the traditional college students might also access programs that are at the vocational school?
- Northern Essex takes all the kids. One of the issues with vocational schools is that they test the kids to get in. Any conversations around that, I think I'd be interested in knowing, because I think it's it can be if we're only, if this is only applying to a certain group of kids, then I think we, we become a little bit more of an elitist institution than I think Northern Essex has been over the course of the last several decades.
- I have questions around enrollment to Whittier and how that might affect the Northern Essex model of taking all the kids that apply.
- How will this expand access for students w disabilities?
- Some people clearly say Whittier and other vocational schools are selecting students of a higher potential, whatever the right word is, than in the past, and it is left out a lot of students who would have benefited from a vocational education...I think we have to be very cognizant of that and anticipate how to deal with that and make sure we have the mechanisms that allow us to, you know, make sure that that's not really happening.
- It is like 2% of their budget goes to special education, over 30% of everyone else's budget goes to special ed. So, it's, I think it's wonderful if you have the building, it's wonderful if you have the kids there. Who are your kids? Are they all kids? Are they just kids with mild disabilities and kids who are

smart and that's what they want to do. And are you excluding a group of students? Is your school reflective of the communities it represents?

- A friend with (a speech disorder) wasn't able to be accepted (to Whittier) because of less than stellar grades and absences...those students need trade school the most.
- Will enrollments be spread more evenly across the towns?
- What I have heard people say is they'd like the attendance and participation from the city of Haverhill be greater. You know, I have heard that, and that's a continual, continual wish on the city of Haverhill's part to be able to put more kids into the school.
- If you look at each community and how many students, they allowed versus how many slots they use, if they were using them up to their maximum, you probably would have gotten a different kind of vote.
- My main concern... is the number of students that are currently allowed to enroll (at Whittier). We have disproportionate attendance from Haverhill, which is understandable. The campus is in Haverhill but opening up enrollment to the campus so more students who want to go can go will be hugely beneficial for the trades.
- Some vocational schools may have highly specialized, industry-specific programs that don't easily align with community college systems. This could result in complications in transferring credits or maintaining the relevance of certain courses. Merging institutions might lead to delays or challenges in updating course offerings to meet evolving industry standards.
- And I would like to keep true, or like the school to keep true to its roots of a 9 through 12 system for high school with an easy transition into post-secondary opportunities at Northern Essex.
- We know we need more young people to work in the trades. How will the shared campus facilitate entry into the trades for students who want to enter them?

ENVIRONMENTAL AND LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS:

- What can we do with the campus to make it acceptable for the residential neighborhoods that surround it?
- (NECC campus) is very close to Kenoza Lake. That's our drinking water, you know. So now you make that a bigger campus, a more dense campus...does that cause any issues with the water supply, which is literally across the street from the campus?
- My biggest concerns are the physical effect of a large campus building on the current Northern Essex campus...over development of the region in general and proximity to the water supply.
- Both campuses are on watershed areas. Both campuses, when they were being constructed, had a great deal of opposition, well as particularly Whittier, because of where it was. If you try to expand the Haverhill campus on the primary drinking water source of the city of Haverhill, there's going to be a bunch of issues.

- The current site where Whittier is located is in a very isolated part of Haverhill that has no access, for example, to the Haverhill sewer system. So, the current building, or any new building on that site would have to build its own sewer treatment plant, and that, in and of itself, is a huge cost, whereas if you located it on the Northern Essex campus that could tie into Haverhill existing sewer system and reduce the cost of that total project by millions of dollars.
- How will (a shared campus) affect the traffic pattern...what does that look like?
- I don't think that that region can sustain the traffic that will come with people coming and going in droves and putting a strain on the neighborhoods as well.

FINANCIAL CONCERNS

- How much will this cost individual towns?
- How much will this cost individual taxpayers?
- How would the cost compare to the earlier proposal?
- I think we need to figure out what the cost drivers are and the cost benefits of doing this.
- The merger process may involve significant upfront costs related to integrating systems, infrastructure, and faculty. Maintaining both trade-specific programs and general education courses could lead to administrative complexity and increased operational costs, which may not be immediately offset by increased revenue or efficiency.
- (There has been) A big disagreement on the funding apparatus of how the building is funded- mainly between payroll and the rest of the towns, because the way the formula is based on how capital projects are funded...that's through the total student population versus the actual attending population. So, the total number of students who live in Haverhill versus the number of kids who actually attend who live from (a neighboring town) is different. I think that that's just one of those things that's been brought up (in opposition to the shared campus proposal). The agreement itself has stated that they're not willing to change it, mainly because it'd be stupid for them to, because they would lose money when it comes to funding, and they would have to pay a lot more. I think that that's just one of those things...a lot of people have talked about since the election happened in January.
- The cities and towns and the sending cities and towns need massive financial relief for their own public-school systems. And it is just, I hate to be that person that has to say this, but the incentive will be a significant cost contribution by the state of Massachusetts to alleviate the burden on the sending cities and towns. And I mean, I'm sorry, but that that's what it's going to be, I think that's going to be the way to get to yes.
- There's such a small percentage of kids that go to school at Whittier from each town. So, their fight is always, 'why do we want to fund something we can't even fund our own school?'

- Well, in the latter case, that is the issue of the proportion of cost unless the regional agreement is changed, that current formula is not going to change...If it's a very, very large cost, and they don't change the funding formula, this problem is not going to go away.
- I think that it's not just a total cost that is of concern to the communities, but also what proportion of that total cost each community would be responsible for.
- I think there's a big disagreement on the funding apparatus of how the building is funded, mainly between payroll and the rest of the towns, because the way the formula is based on how capital projects are funded, that's through the total student population versus the actual attending population. So, like, the total number of students who live in Haverhill versus the number of kids who actually attend who live from Haverhill is different. I think that that's just one of those things that's been brought up, and the agreement itself has stated that they're not willing to change it.
- I think at the end of the day, what tanked this proposal (initially) was not just the price tag, which, while seemingly high, is probably what it will cost to build a new school, but the regional agreement and how it allocated those expenses. And if we don't solve that problem and get over that hurdle, whether we build a new facility on the existing campus or on a shared campus, I fear that we're going to go down the same road we went down before.
- How will (NECC-Whittier Tech) address the financial concerns that community members and leaders have? And until we address that, it's kind of hard to address other issues because the financing comes before the programming.
- I'm on a (school building) committee in (one of the towns served by Whittier) right now, and everyone is concerned about the cost of every educational facility. There's no doubt about that; cost is always an issue.
- My sense is that (a shared campus) would be, it would be supported by the communities... the cost is the most critical element of getting to yes.
- The public is always concerned about cost. I hate to sound like a broken record, but without knowing the cost- cost is the number one problem. How much will this cost?
- People will want to know at least roughly what is this new facility going to cost?
- I think the financial aspect is definitely going to be a top question for the community.
- I think just based on the feedback from the communities in the area, the cost is going to be the top question and priority.
- What is the financial impact on the community?
- The overall price tag on (the proposed new Whittier building), and how it's going to affect the average homeowner in Haverhill.
- I believe all the pieces currently exist to achieve all the goals of collaboration, cooperation, etc. The only thing that's missing is money to build an updated facility for vocational technical education in the area.

- Number one is going to be exploring better financial pathways that would help lower the overall cost.
- What level of, you know, state subsidy are we talking about here? Are we talking about a few million dollars, 10s of millions of dollars, \$100 million? I have no idea, but I'm sure it will certainly be of interest to me. I'm sure it would be for everybody else to know what level of state financial commitment might be, might be forthcoming.
- it all comes down to the money...The cities and towns and the sending cities and towns need massive financial relief for their own public-school systems. And it is just, I hate to be that person that has to say this, but the incentive will be a significant cost contribution by the state of Massachusetts to alleviate the burden on the sending cities and towns. And I mean, I'm sorry, but that that's what it's going to going to be, I think that's going to be the way to get to yes. The state has to chip in a lot of this portion of the money.
- I think a huge piece is. Is the state going to be kicking in a massive percentage or what? I mean it just keeps coming back to that. And so, I guess I want to hear that the governor and her administration are actively working on financial projections of some sort.
- Money is key here. Either the agreement has to get changed or the state has to come up with some money. I think the most pressing from my perspective is exploring better financial pathways that would help lower the overall cost...There's literally only so much money the sending communities have, and no matter how valuable the programming is at Whittier, that doesn't change the fact that there's only so much money the sending communities have, and that is the reality.

BUILDING RELATED CONCERNS

- Does this involve a new building in NECC's campus?
- Where will the building be placed?
- Will this shared campus just be one building?
- Will this proposed shared campus be making use of an existing NECC building?
- If this is the case, what would the cost be to update a preexisting building?
- Where would it be located? If the YMCA follows through with its bid there, where would that be located? How will that affect the campus area?
- Where such a structure would be built, on the NECC campus, and what exactly its functions would be?
- I really don't understand what we're talking about here, as far as the underusage of the Haverhill campus, underusage in the sense that the buildings that exist are underused. If we're talking about open space being underused, then I'd like to know where they intend to build something because that's not clear.
- Is this a brand-new campus?
- Is there enough land for a joint campus?

- If the YMCA follows through with its bid there, where would that be located? How will that affect the campus area? ...There are construction issues about where it all of that goes.
- (concern from resident regarding the increase in time it'll take students to travel to classes if their classes are in different buildings across the NECC campus) The more you move people from one location to the other, you essentially get a built-in inefficiency in the process...As you move people's student body from one building to another building, there is loss of time.
- Logistics and travel. How does that change the configuration for students?
- Can the community college handle an influx of students for a shared campus?
- Is building on this campus a more efficient model than building where rebuilding, where Whittier is, because you have access to utilities and some other things that aren't on the existing site?
- Will the distance students need to travel from one class to another (and its impact on in class learning time) be considered if this proposal involves more than one building?
- Are they planning to try to refurbish the old Whittier tech or classrooms, and looking at just building their labs or work, workspace, training workspace here on this campus?
- Will the current Whittier Tech building be abandoned or turned into something useful?
- What do you do with the old Whittier tech building? I think that also needs to be planned, because clearly it has been made evident that there are significant challenges with that building... I think it's really important to really plan for the buildings that are no longer going to be occupied with it, and what do you do with it? Because you don't want it to just sit there for years and now you got to tear it down, or it could have served a better purpose.
- If you have the shared campus now, what becomes of the current Whittier building?
- People have spoken to me, and some (Select Board members) have spoken to me about the possible abandonment of the current school location, and the concern being that what's going to happen to that property and who owns it?...Another question would be, once the if the property is abandoned and it's going to be sold, you know, could that money be used to help with the town's assessments in the future?

ADDITIONAL CONCERNS:

- How does the multi town agreement play a role in this proposed shared campus?
- Issues with the regional agreement and governance – how does that shake out?
- The regional agreement will likely have to be brand new, not “fixed”, with everyone at the table to re-draw it
- I am still kind of confused of where the process is in revamping the agreement between the 11 communities, which hasn't been I don't know if it's been addressed. I think there's been talk of it, but that seems like a monumental task to change that scope.

- So, I think if this is going to move forward, then the Whittier agreement has to be redrafted and to reflect the 2020s, not the 1970s...I'm all for vocational education, but the agreement has to be reasonable and fair and redrafted.
- Actual logistics of having students on campus w young adults-how will they be kept safe?
- How is this model going to operate on this campus? What are the interactions between these college students along with these high school students? And are there sort of parameters set around that?
- You're going basically from a closed campus, which most high schools are, to what I assume at Northern Essex is an open campus. And that's, that's not a small move, and it's, it's one that needs to be seriously considered.
- How can you ensure the safety of our students, some which could be as young as 14 years old, you know, potentially mixing in some way, shape or form with someone who's in their 30s or 40s. You know, I think those are valid concerns, and how this project, or how any project, would seek to create guardrails around that it would be helpful...Being able to have a cogent answer is going to go a long way in making sure that people realize that you know their number one resource, their children, are being thought of, and their safety is a priority.
- I think the only concerns people are going to have are, how do you secure a college campus? How do you keep my kids secure in the Whittier section of it? But all of that is so easily, like in a new building that's so easily controlled about who gets access in and out between, you know, fobs, codes, vestibules, hitting a button coming in. You know, gone are the days of any new building where you can just walk in and just talk some of the front like you have to be beeped in before you even get to the front. So, I think those concerns will come up, but they're easily addressed.

Appendix D: Compiled Community Recommendations

The following appendix contains compiled community interventions, suggestions and recommendations towards the proposed shared campus that have been brought to the research teams attention during one-on-one interviews, community listening sessions and through direct email with the UMDI team. All suggestions, interventions and recommendations are listed below in the form of anonymized quotes, to maintain participant confidentiality and are organized topically.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO DISPEL MISPERCEPTION ABOUT THE VALUE OF CTE TRAINING:

- Address how careers in the trades are positive opportunities for students, and can give them a good quality of life
- Clearly describe the value of a shared campus, and the value of bringing the two (NECC-WT) groups together
- Address misperceptions of the role of vocational technical education, the nature of the programs, the value of the programs and do so in an understanding, positive view of the students
- On (respondents region of Massachusetts), we hosted a career fair with the community college, hospital, trades, employers of all types in the area in one room. Parents and students show up and see the variance in opportunity, the potential for themselves if they take this route, and the real faces of people in their community which really helps
- On the building trades issue, I don't think there's a shortage of people who want to go into those trades, but rather the lack of access to it. Tech schools aren't providing us with the data on demand and what shops are chosen though
- If you need a tradesman, you know, they're very, very expensive today, and they're very hard to find. And that's one thing that Whittier does. Normally they do the traditional vocational jobs of like carpenter, electrician, all that, but they're getting involved in some unique ideas for jobs of the future. And I think that's what needs to be stressed.
- More testimonials of students who are really benefiting from the vocational education.
- If the school is if the high school, assuming the elementary schools and at the education leaders at the local level, don't value vocational technical education, and if the parents don't, the kids not going to end up going there. So that's one of the things you have to do. You have to be able to build a sense of value in the community for what's happening at the at the voc tech school and at the community college.
- But what is it that we really want for our Whittier Tech students? I think it's beyond just workforce development. I think it's supporting whatever pathway, and for me trade the trade experiences, the experiences that they have in CTE programs are a way to engage students who oftentimes in traditional academic high schools are not engaged, and they find new ways to become engaged

because of the hands on learning opportunities that open up the opportunity for them that they never even considered before, if they were to attend a traditional academic high school.

- I am a tradesperson... Every single trade that I went through at Whittier prepared me for it. And I think it's really a missed opportunity to continually say that trades people do not want education. It is every single trade, every single union has apprenticeship programs where people have to study that for years and to be working on your apprenticeship credits at the same time as you're learning electrical skills per se, you know you're coming out leaps and bounds ahead of your peers who maybe just went into the trades. And so, I think that is a really golden opportunity
- Convince the parents that their kids going down this path are going to have a great life. Working with their hands but having that finishing piece that's missing. I think you got a win, win for everybody. How do we help that?
- Why not start with creating a value argument for why it would be beneficial to have career education in the first place, why it's expensive to do it and then try to move forward. I think the comments that I've heard from people in the community that indicated to me a total ignorance of the role of vocational technical education, the nature of the programs, the value of the programs and in an understanding view of the students.
- But what's really needed, I want to be a broken record purposely, is just enlightening people as the value of these schools.
- I think we really need to educate our communities on the great things that are happening at Whittier so that they know they're getting a return on their investment.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO HELP ADDRESS FINANCIAL QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES SURROUNDING THE PROPOSAL:

- As a taxpayer, it'd be awesome for me to hear, hey, we're going to have this new Whittier school building that's going to be on Northern Essex campus by but with that campus on that's going to increase your taxes by about \$70 a month. Your taxes are going to go up. If that, like, it won't even be that, but you can say if that, it might be 25 like, it's not going to be staggering, right? ...But I would never say "this is a \$436 million project." I would always say, here's a calculator. This calculator tell you how much you would pay on a monthly basis, and I'm guessing it'd be something like 20 bucks a month. And when that's put in those terms, nobody cares.
- There was some ambiguity around how much it was actually going to be the first time around. And so, there was sticker shock. And so, to your point, when you see hundreds of millions, there's sticker shock, and people don't really know what exactly does that mean for me in my pocketbook? And so, boiling it down to that monthly or even a weekly cost, I think is helpful.
- Describe the extent to which Whittier Tech needs repairs and what the cost of those repairs would be.

- Emphasize the value of this shared campus to public... We've created a new position to get that point across. High demand, high salary, hand on training. The opportunity to own your own business, the flexibility that comes with that, etc.
- I think when they go public with their marketing campaign, or whatever it is they're going to be doing, I think it just needs to be basic language, you know, because it's going to be basic language that the taxpayer can understand... this is going to be very expensive proposition, and they need to understand how they benefit directly.
- Reach out to the State administration to "see what they can do to help garner more grants, whether it's at the state level then federal level, to really put Massachusetts on the map for this type of vocational joint venture with Community Colleges."
- The state has to chip in a lot of this portion of the money
- High School trade school is workforce training, and it makes sense for the state to be addressing and financially supporting workforce training at the high school level.
- I think the state really should be looking at the costs of these school buildings and thinking about pitching in a little bit more than what they're currently pitching in
- Has anyone reached out to the current Massachusetts administration to see if there's a way of sort of navigating around DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) and how they allot for school funding to look at additional grants for this type of hybrid campus, because that's truly what it is.
- Money is key here. Either the agreement has to get changed or the state has to come up with some money.
- I think the opportunity to build a new building for Whittier on the Northern Essex campus may afford the district the opportunity to take advantage of additional state funding, and if that's state funding is applied to the cost of the new building, it will reduce the net cost to the communities

SUGGESTION TO EXPAND STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY:

- Ensure robust, low-cost public transportation to campus
- Increase access to programming/enrollment and resources (such as specialized staffing) for students with disabilities
- The big question that I hear in Haverhill is the can they expand the admission for Haverhill residents? That's the big that's the number one question for Haverhill.
- Every other parent I talk to who gets (upset) that their kids aren't in Whittier, has to do with Whittier and other technical schools not running robust special education programming in their public schools.
- Whittier doesn't have the special education programming for them... So many of our students aren't going to college because they don't have the capacity to or they're not book wise, could possibly go

into a trade or some type of a pathway where they'll thrive, but they just are never given the opportunity, because those programs don't exist there, and there are so many parents I talk to of students who have special needs (like my kid) that will never get in.

- Have NECC and Whittier Tech really think through a more holistic approach to student enrollment and the general criteria for even getting into the school.
- Higher enrollment because there's, there's almost always students that are left on the wait list from Haverhill.

RECOMMENDATION TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND COMMUNICATION FROM NECC AND WHITTIER TECH:

- Vision. What is the vision? It kind of goes back to the how, but it's even more than that. It's, you know, what is the vision so that people can just grab on to it and support it?
- I support the idea in the abstract, but it's too vague at this point to know really what's being proposed, and that is a sentiment that has been echoed throughout today's discussion.
- So, a detailed plan for how the shared campus would work, detailed being the key word, possibly with options that include different levels of integration and cost. The neighborhood will need appropriate and realistic information about how a new building will impact their quality of life. Explaining how a shared campus proposal benefits traditional adults, students, high school students and taxpayers. Protecting the water supply is also something being mentioned.
- Improve communication of project proposals to the general public, presenting information in an easily understandable format
- Increase communication w towns and community members before proceeding to next steps
- A major concern of a lot of residents, was communication with the (general) population leading up to this entire question or the last question.
- The neighborhood will need appropriate and realistic information about how a new building will impact their quality of life. Explaining how a shared campus proposal benefits traditional adults, students, high school students and taxpayers.
- I think that we should do more to open up the discussion with the community, to allow space for them to talk about their concerns or their thoughts and how to make this a better project.
- I think if you can relate it to the public in terms of, you know, what, what are their needs as individuals, and then what is the need of the community at large, which is the workforce in general?
- If you're trying to get a new campus, you really need to talk to folks at every level. But zoom, webinars like this, or in-person events that are more structured.
- "The group that was closing the rebuild did a very poor job of explaining to the community where the actual Whittier model fits into the current educational environment.

- I think collaboration between the President and the superintendent is critical. Open lines of communication. I think when conversations are had, they should be had together in a shared message. You know, just because the President is higher ed and the superintendent is secondary, they should be colleagues and work together and really give a shared message out there
- I would never say this is a \$436 million project. I would always say, here's a calculator. This calculator tell you how much you would pay on a monthly basis, and I'm guessing it'd be something like 20 bucks a month. And no one's gonna when that's put in those terms, nobody cares. 436 million this brain can't comprehend that much money.
- if you're trying to get a new campus, you like, you really need to talk to folks at an at every level.
- I think having that outreach to the other communities and making them feel like this isn't just a Haverhill thing- this is for all of you. This can benefit everybody. This isn't just about benefiting NECC. It's not just about benefiting Whittier Tech. It benefits your communities and your students, and it opens up an opportunity for them that they wouldn't otherwise have.
- To get more answers is to potentially make available a confidential Google form or something like that, with the same questions you just asked us that people maybe can fill in later, just when they have more time to think about it.
- “What do you need to know and What? What? What can we help you with? What were your concerns? What’s your perception of the role of Whittier and of Northern Essex in the Merrimack Valley? What could we provide you with legitimate information that would help to get you on a board supporting it by help us to make some changes?”
- Everything about this will be financial. So a question is going to be, you need to you certainly need to get the big mouths like the mayors of each of the towns or the chairs of the selectmen, depending if it's a big if it's a city or a small town, but just have a sit down with them and say, “Here, let's talk about what didn't go well the first time”, and everything's going to come down to money at the end of the day it's all going to come down to the cost.
- Each of the cities and towns, each of the member districts, their leadership has to be engaged in the process right from the beginning.
- There needed to be some leadership from the local communities, and that there were no people on the local level speaking in favor. I think what you have to do is, is educate...Start with the town councilors, start with the mayors and city main town managers. Get them aboard so they see it as the asset it is.
- I think the whole issue of whether there should have been a new Whittier might have come out differently if more employers were stepping forward and...advocated for a new facility. I think their voice would have been, could have been heard louder.
- Marketing, marketing, marketing, marketing, marketing.

- There has to be clearly demarcated, like goals for what is the public good and making sure that your marketing is doing a really good job of selling that message while also then mitigating or at least explaining the mitigation of risks.
- I think when they go public with their marketing campaign, or whatever it is they're going to be doing, I think it just needs to be basic language, you know, because it's going to be basic language that the taxpayer can understand...This is going to be very expensive proposition, and they need to understand how they benefit directly.
- I think that they, they should market it so that it's a benefit by being together, and it's not being done just to save money...it actually brings education better for the kids and for those that are going to be in different age groups and different opportunities.
- (Describing why the first proposed collaboration failed) There was no big sale. There was no pitch, there was no connection...when you put a PR person who's talking in a language that's foreign and talking to people, they don't know...it's not a good situation, especially when you're asking for millions and millions of dollars.
- You have to have people that are able to explain the facts in a conversational way, not an adversarial way
- A website that would list here's where you can find all the answers, so that there isn't all of this disinformation that's out there.
- There needs to be a very strong educational and marketing campaign to raise awareness of this topic. I think the good public relations effort would be helpful on the part of the communities and the state and Northern Essex, if we all were on the same page. Promoting this as a positive opportunity for kids throughout the 11 member communities to take advantage of this new campus. I think, you know, educating people about this would be a very important thing, but just ultimately the community, communities are going to have to re vote as to whether they're going to support a new facility. So, the more people are educated up front, I think the better chance they would be that it would pass.
- The biggest takeaway for me from the community sessions was the “What do you mean by a shared campus?” question. Maybe we need to begin articulating what that looks like, perhaps with 3 examples. It’s difficult for people to engage in the financial conversation without that
- +1 to (listening session participant) point, to bring this home, you need to think about the student journey
- We have the potential to create a 9-14 institution her, it’s an enormous challenge. To market- use the early college argument, i.e. “get a head start/a leg up, for free, in the post-secondary world”
- Emphasize the savings and consolidation of programs
- For pathways – emphasize not specifically the trades, medical, IT, etc., but that it’s about high demand occupations.

PROGRAMMING SUGGESTIONS

- Make WT's building dual use- after school hours, the building could be used for night classes where adults would use the equipment
- In the off hours, then the college would use the available new facilities that were being built.
- some NECC programs are run during evening hours for working students. I would expect that shops could be open days for Whittier Tech High School students and evenings for NECC students with NECC faculty supervising the evening sections.
- I would hope that the technical facilities be used by Whittier during the day and by the college, after high school hours.
- Consider offering dynamic programming in the future, as programs should change based on regional need
- (Reminds session that current Whittier building is old and isn't designed to handle the new kinds of programs needed for upcoming and growing occupations like clean energy) They weren't designed to accommodate those types of programs, and that seems to be a real limiting factor, not just the condition of the building, but the ability of these spaces to accommodate new programs. So, I think the flexibility is as an essential consideration, the flexibility of spaces to be able to accommodate new programs over time that we will need to accommodate our regional workforce needs.
- Prioritize specific, expanded programming access for advanced skill training for those already in the workforce and also early college.
- We need to consider that modern vocational technical high schools should and do offer nontraditional trade education programs such as biotech and environmental science. These are growing employment fields.
- Look into establishing mentoring programs/ collaborations for students with industry partners
- As we talk about expanding and enrollment, and it applies to these certificates and apprenticeships like it's just speaking to the community members and saying, how can we best turn out students that you want to hire?
- It's a great opportunity to bring industry close have them be a part of like co-ops and learning experience project days. And I think in the end, if industry isn't going to be hiring, does it really matter that you've created a bunch of training and programs? So having them be a part of the vision casting for students.
- I think that's a huge selling point for the students, for the communities, to say, 'We've collaborated with these local companies and sat down with them and said, "Okay, as we expand, as we look to the future, what do you need? What you know? What do our students need to have in their tool belt, literally and figuratively, that they don't have walking out the door?" I think that's huge, especially as we talk about expanding and enrollment...just speaking to the community members and saying, how can we best turn out students that you want to hire?

- mentoring program between maybe somebody who is going for their master's level to have an active apprentice mentee.
- If you're aligning to regional workforce needs, there needs to be a third place for industry on the campus...It's a great opportunity to bring industry close have them be a part of like co-ops and learning experience
- I think we can, you know, use our space more effectively through partnerships...if you do build new buildings, you can do it in a way that it has multi-purpose use and that it's not just a single purpose use so then both the campus at both the college and voc school have adult learning.
- We need to get business much more invested in all of this...if we could get more business, more engaged and more involved in it so that they recognize this is for their benefit too, we're there to help them.
- I think a relationship involving the workforce, Investment Board, mass hire and other entities, community-based entities, are really important, because if you don't have a workforce, or if you don't know what the workforce demands are, you're not going to be able to know what training opportunities there are. So vocational schools and community colleges must work very closely with mass hire.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED SHARED CAMPUS:

- Under really good supervision, I actually can see also an added benefit of 9 through 12 students working with adults on teams, because when you turn to the job force, the reality is, it's, it's, it's a mixed bag. And so, learning to communicate cross generationally, both from a curricular perspective, but also just from a human development perspective, is a wonderful opportunity.
- If there were some type of early childhood programming that was done somewhere on that site, I think that would be huge, because it's just places have shut down, left and right, and parents, I think, struggle to find a place to go.
- A culinary student-run publicly open restaurant would be a community draw.
- Segment the population (by age/generational groups) and see what their needs would be, what would be their opportunities, and what would be the desires to learn, you know, in this new facility.
- I think there should be, although it's a shared campus, I think there should be a separation of the schools...Making sure that, although it's a shared campus, that there is some autonomy to it, where you have distinguishable handbooks and policies. And so, you might have some shared policies as it relates to the campus itself, from one building to the other, it should have some separation.
- I think if, if that's something, that's if it becomes a destination point where people can come to participate in activities. When I say people, I'm always going to say, you're 55 plus. Those are going to be the people who control the vote. So, you have got to get out there and make sure there's something for them that's a value in this, whether it's in the old building becomes something, or the

new building has whatever it has like for seniors that is going to be super important that they see the value. Because many of our folks would vote for education because it's education. But there's always going to be more than a handful that are like, "I've already paid my kids. I don't my kids don't go to school. This has got nothing for me."