

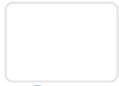
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## Featured

# Barrio Logan Community Plan Back in the Spotlight

October 12, 2018

**By Marielena Castellanos**

Energizing citizens to act on continued threats in Barrio Logan and learning about the history of the resistance were among several reasons residents and community leaders gathered together recently for a community forum at the Logan Heights Library.

The discussion entitled *Varrío Si, Yonkes No!: Community Leaders for a Healthy Neighborhood* was hosted by the non-profit the Environmental Health Coalition (EHC).

"The history depicted in most murals lives around us every day," Jorge Gonzalez of the EHC told the crowd at the beginning of the forum.

Gonzalez was referring to the murals painted on the concrete pillars holding up the Coronado Bay Bridge in Barrio Logan, which form the national historical landmark Chicano Park.

He explained the more time he spent looking at the murals, "The more I realize how murals speak to us and present challenges and solutions."

One of the murals Gonzalez was speaking of shows people protesting and holding up placards with the message "Varrio Si, Yonkes No!" or Neighborhood Yes, Junkyards No, painted across the mural. This mural depicts a community struggle where residents fought to get junkyards out of the neighborhood.

Legendary muralist and cofounder of Chicano Park [Victor Ochoa](#) was one of the artists that painted this mural, and on the panel at the forum he told Gonzalez the title was an open call to action for the community and students from San Diego City College to go to City Hall in support of the Barrio Logan Community Plan from the 1970s.

The community forum was moderated by Francisco "Panchito" Martinez, a student at San Diego State University and member of the Barrio Logan Community Planning Group.

Martinez said, "Junkyards were not so prevalent in the community, but recycling centers, development projects, metal plating businesses, large trucks, gentrification are," and were among several issues panelists talked about.

Other ongoing issues include encroachment of industry into residential areas, the destructive effects of highways and bridges and substandard housing.

The solution supported by the organizers and the panelists, the 2013 Barrio Logan Community Plan Update, was also discussed at the forum.

Martinez also said the adoption of the 2013 community plan "Was a huge victory" because it aimed to separate polluting businesses from homes.

However, the plan adoption was a short-lived victory because it was rescinded in 2014 by a city-wide referendum and left the earlier plan from the 1970s in place. Mayor Kevin Faulconer was running for mayor at the time and he supported the referendum and agreed with claims from the local maritime industry that approving the plan would result in thousands of jobs lost and a hit to the San Diego economy.

Jerry Rivero, the campaign director for toxic free neighborhoods with the EHC, reviewed how the community plan update came together in 2013, explaining it took five years, 50 community meetings, and millions of dollars invested.

"The community supported it, the Barrio Logan stakeholder group supported it, the planning commission of San Diego supported it. Essentially this was community supported."

Data from California's Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development shows children from Barrio Logan are almost three times more likely to end up in hospital emergency rooms for breathing problems than the average San Diego child.

[Patricia Aguayo](#), the director of the Sherman Heights Community Center and member of the Chicano Park Steering Committee, said, "We need the City of San Diego and other big organizations to understand that Barrio Logan is constantly attacked not just environmentally, but in other ways."

Civic engagement was another theme of the forum.

Hector Villegas, who lives in Barrio Logan, explained why he is involved with numerous organizations.

"I can be out there yelling, getting in fights with people over stuff that I don't like, but that's not the way to go about it."

He added, "I found that going to those meetings and advocating for my community, there's been a lot of positive things for my family that's gonna help out."

Victories in Barrio Logan were also discussed, including efforts from the EHC to reduce pollution, shut down master plating, defend the Barrio Logan community plan update and separate polluting industries from homes to schools.

Aguayo also said unity is a victory, "It's the unity of people that makes things possible."

With the upcoming elections a few weeks away, attendees were encouraged to vote on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 and become more involved.

Tina Camarillo grew up in the Logan community and is involved with several local organizations. She is also the daughter of Tommie Camarillo, a long-time advocate of Chicano Park with Tina right alongside her. "It's sad because, to this day, it seems we still have everything going on and nothing has changed."

Camarillo also told the group, "There's still a fight ahead of us," and "We need to start sticking together."

"We need you on Chicano Park Day. We need you at meetings, every single one of you we need. We can be stronger and we can be better than we are already," Camarillo said.

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