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# Barrio Logan Plan Update Faces Referendum Drive

By Gene Cubbison | Thursday, Oct 3, 2013 | Updated 5:46 PM PDT

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NBC 7 San Diego

Councilman and mayoral candidate David Alvarez speaks with NBC 7's Gene Cubbison about the Barrio Logan Plan on October 3, 2013.

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The emotional battle over the future of Barrio Logan may wind up going into overtime.

And city voters, weighing in on a community plan change that pits waterfront industries against residents and environmentalists.

Thursday morning, San Diego's maritime companies and defense establishment launched a referendum drive to overturn the City Council's 5-4 vote on the [Barrio Community Plan](#) update last month.

They warn that it jeopardizes an industry worth 46,000 jobs and \$14 billion a year to the local economy.

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Nearly 34,000 valid signatures of San Diego voters are needed within 30 days, for the measure to qualify.

Backers warn that the [Council-approved land use changes](#) will stifle maritime firms and their suppliers.

"The only outcome that I can see, if the suppliers are affected, is increased costs to the Navy," Larry Blumberg, executive director of the San Diego Military Advisory Council told reporters at a news conference in Barrio Logan's shipyard district.

Added Blumberg: "Increased costs to the Navy to maintain, repair and build their ships is not the message that San Diego wants to be sending at this time of decreasing budgets."

Dozens of ship-building hard-hats were on hand for the kickoff event, signing poster-board petitions against the community plan changes.

Barrio plan supporters say critics are grossly exaggerating potential impacts to business expansion.

They point to a prime tract of industrial land that's been designated, blocks away from core residential areas.

"So if they choose to expand and get larger, those companies can go over there; they can have more jobs," says Diane Takvorian, executive director of the Environmental Health Coalition. " And as a result of the increase in industrial space, we're anticipating a 10 percent or more increase in jobs that could be found."

It's a decades-old turf war, over toxic fallout and traffic issues.

But in a citywide petition and possible ballot campaign, will it resonate among voters as did the movement to recall Mayor Bob Filner?

"This is a really 'niche' issue," says Andrew Keatts, who covers land-use issues for Voice of San Diego. "It's really hard to get people to the point that they understand, and then decide that they want to vote for you. You have to inform them. And that costs a lot of money."

Referendum backers, led by the billion-dollar corporations that operate the bayside industries, have plenty of money.

But if they want contributions, they'll be competing with fundraisers for the mayoral race and various 2014 primary campaigns.

The two mayoral candidates who took part in the Barrio plan vote, Kevin Faulconer and David Alvarez, chimed in on Thursday's discussion.

"I firmly believe my City Council colleagues -- including Councilman David Alvarez, who represents Barrio Logan -- want to find a fair and equitable solution," said Faulconer, who cast a dissenting vote when the question came before the Council Sept. 17th. " So I'm supporting this effort to insure constructive conversation continues at the City Council level."

Said Alvarez, who supported the plan update: "We've got to have an honest conversation with San Diegans about what this plan does and does not do. And I'm afraid scare tactics -- unfortunately when you have political campaigns, that's what you use to get the votes to support your position. But let's be honest."

If the referendum petitions qualify, the City Council has ten days to repeal the Barrio plan -- or, it has to go on the ballot in the next available citywide election.

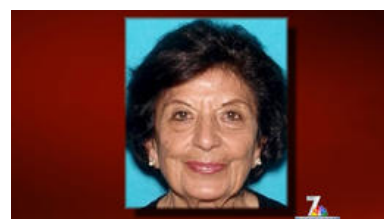
The Nov. 19th mayoral primary is out of the question.

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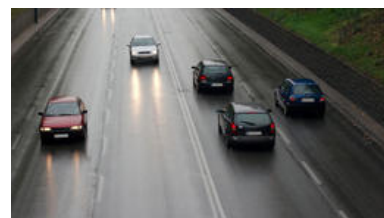
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