

# EDITORIAL

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## Press-Telegram

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## Not a site for the homeless

**L**ong Beach, which tried for many months to find a site for a homeless facility, has ended up with three proposed centers, thanks to the U.S. Navy. But the city thinks that three is at least one too many.

It is too many. The irony is that the city has been beating the bushes to find an agency willing and able to operate 200 units of surplus Navy apartments as transitional housing for the homeless. The original sponsor, Christian Outreach Appeal, lost its major financial partner and can't handle it alone. Fortunately, the Salvation Army is interested, and has applied for a \$2 million federal grant to finance the project.

Then with that project in trouble, along came two competing homeless advocates trying to snag the Navy Hospital on the east side, where the city wants to develop a retail center. The last-minute application was possible only because of errors by both the Navy and the Department of Housing and Urban Development - the property was not supposed to be listed again as available last February.

Long Beach had been authorized to decide on reuse of Navy property within city limits. But the McKinney Act, which gives preference to homeless uses, continues to complicate orderly transfer of the property. An amendment that would give communities more say in reuse of surplus property has been passed in the House, but is hung up in the Senate.

Much of the confusion about the hospital

site could have been avoided if the Navy had agreed in advance, when Long Beach gave it the property years ago, to give it back when it was no longer needed. Now, the Navy ought to support Long Beach's request for a reversion, or for cleanup legislation that would straighten out the problem.

A third facility for the homeless, a multiservice center, has been proposed for surplus Navy property on Terminal Island. The City Council will deal with that one on Sept. 20. It deserves support.

Two out of three of the proposed sites for homeless projects are enough. It's not that Long Beach is inhospitable toward the homeless, but remedies - just like the problem - should be distributed regionally.

The proposed facilities on the west side and on Terminal Island have been a long time in coming, but 200 units of housing plus a multiservice center, along with services already provided by religious and non-sectarian organizations, will be, at the very least, a strong beginning, and a model for other communities.

Whatever your personal views are on homelessness - whether you lean more toward personal accountability or toward social responsibility - you will have a much harder time believing that there are any simple solutions after you have read the account on the facing page, "Where are their families," by Cerritos resident Phyllis S. Gray.

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## PRAISE AND PILLORY

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# Corridor, Shore and Air Force

### The praise

**T**he cities of Vernon, Compton, Lynwood and South Gate have dropped a lawsuit that not only blocked the proposed Alameda Corridor, but threatened to tie up expansion of the Port of Long Beach. The cities' concerns were valid: the Corridor someday will funnel a high volume of rail and truck traffic through those communities, and they want to be sure that the rumbling trains will travel below grade. Still, the lawsuit wasn't the best way to get what they want. Thanks to Long Beach Councilman Jeff Kellogg, vice chairman of the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority, who acted as intermediary, and several others, the port has agreed to tweak its environmental impact report on Pier J projects in such a way as to offer the four cities more reassurance about the trains in their future.

Pine Avenue's entrepreneurs get, and deserve, a lot of praise; but save a few kind words for Long Beach's Belmont Shore, which has been flourishing, especially in the last few years. One newly arrived merchant, who moved here from Newport Beach, says he is delighted with his new location on Second Street, which has some of the best foot traffic in these parts. The

Shore's latest nifty idea is a public art project directed by Craig Lee Stone: shadow-like images on sidewalks and median boulders of such seashore themes as seagulls and sunglasses. (Got an idea for a theme? Send it to Shadows Casting on the Shore, 5318 E. Second St. No. 176, Long Beach 90803.)

### The pillory

**T**he Air Force continues to thwart efforts to close down a 50-acre fuel storage facility that is a menace to residential neighborhoods in Norwalk. Officials say the Defense Fuel Supply Point, located at Norwalk Boulevard and Excelsior Drive, is a critical link between refineries in the harbor and the Santa Fe Pacific Pipeline, which distributes oil throughout the Southwest. All of which is bunk. A positive note, however: Rep. Esteban Torres, the Norwalk Democrat, has asked the Defense Department a question it may find hard to answer: If surplus Navy housing in San Pedro is unsuitable for a homeless shelter because it is too close to two aviation fuel tanks, why shouldn't residents of Norwalk be entitled to the same standards? More power to him. The facility, as Torres says, is not just a costly relic but a source of fear and danger.