



Public Speaks Out At KNSD Forum

By *Melanie Nickel*
The Beacon

Peninsula residents had a chance to speak out about their concerns and hopes for their community on March 19, and about 100 of them showed up to do just that. KNSD-TV and local elected officials came to listen.

In a town meeting hosted by the Point Loma Association (PLA), residents talked about traffic problems, plans for the Naval Training Center (NTC), airport expansion and, above all, a sense of being excluded from the process while important decisions about the community's future are being made.

Many speakers said they have tried to stay informed and give input on issues like NTC, but their efforts have been frustrated.

"Meetings (of the NTC Re-use Committee) often get changed or postponed at the last minute," PLA board member Maureen Summers said. "Actions or discussions are repeatedly continued (put off until the next meeting) until people get discouraged and stop attending. Public comment is put off until the last 10 minutes of the meeting, and then you get 30 seconds to talk, while half the committee members are leaving and the other half are talking among themselves."

City Councilman Byron Wear agreed that it is too hard to find out basic information such as meeting times. "NTC is going to be the most significant land use decision the City Council will make this year," he said. "We need a lot more communication."

The audience was urged to attend the next Re-use Committee meeting, when a consultant's plan for the base is scheduled to be unveiled. As if to prove the point about lack of communication, no-one was quite sure when that meeting would be.

Even a subsequent telephone call to Carolyn Roberts, the city staffer in charge of NTC re-use issues, provided only tentative information. The next confirmed meeting date for the NTC Re-use Committee is Wednesday, April 24, 9 a.m. to noon in the Copper Room of the downtown Community Concourse, 202 C St. Roberts was unsure what the agenda for that meeting would be, or whether there might be any addi-

tional meetings prior to April 24. Several insiders said there will probably be a meeting on April 17 as well.

There will also be a meeting of the NTC Steering Committee to discuss the economics of competing proposals for Camp Nimitz, on Wednesday, April 3, from 9 a.m. to noon at the NTC Support Center (Building 623), Roberts said. The NTC Steering Committee is made up of the chairmen of the various subcommittees.

The closing of the Naval Training Center is both a loss and an opportunity, according to PLA chairman Ray Broady. "We all feel the Navy is good for San Diego," he said. "We do have a problem with the traffic — unmitigated, heavy traffic along Rosecrans. The Navy has been remiss in not running shuttles, encouraging carpooling and so on. When NTC is reused, the traffic will be worse."

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base will create unacceptable traffic congestion, several residents said. KNSD sales manager Mike McCarthy, a Loma Portal resident and co-facilitator of the meeting with news anchor Marty Levine, agreed. "My concerns are very much NTC and traffic," he said.

Heavy Navy traffic has created an unsafe situation on Rosecrans for a long time, said Dr. Homer Peabody, a 50-year Point Loma resident. He said he has witnessed 50 accidents and 17 deaths on Rosecrans near his home.

Current changes at the airport are making Harbor Drive traffic worse, other residents said. "The Port is very concerned about the

80 percent of the airport traffic which heads to downtown, and they paid little or no attention to the 20 percent which goes toward Point Loma," said Loma Portal resident Greg Doherty.

The business climate in Point Loma was another area of concern. "The economic downturn has hurt our community and the Point Loma Village area very seriously," Broady said. New businesses are moving into that area now, but there are problems — parking, traffic and transients, he said. He urged Peninsula residents to support their local businesses, adding that "we'd all like to see a better choice of retail in the Village."