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## **‘SMART HOUSING 101’ at SCAG’s 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Summit**

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### **State, Local Leaders Explore Regional Strategies To Overcome Housing Affordability, Accessibility Challenges**

**LOS ANGELES** – Nearly 200 policymakers and housing leaders from throughout the six-county Southern California region convened at the Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Housing Summit today to develop new strategies to address the region’s increasing housing crisis. A running theme of the day’s proceedings revolved around the need to produce housing with the context of a more coordinated, comprehensive approach to planning that incorporates land use, transportation, resource preservation and other related policies.

With California’s median home price at \$428,000 (250% above the national average), households earning the median state income of \$52,000 would have to virtually double their income to afford such a home. Of the nine largest metropolitan areas, Southern California has the highest percentage of both homeowners and renters who spend more than one-third of their income on housing.

San Bernardino City Councilmember Susan Longville and Executive Director Mark Pisano discussed how *Southern California Compass*, SCAG’s growth visioning initiative, provides the region with the blueprint for accommodating future growth. Relatively small changes in land-use planning decisions can reap tremendous results in terms of making housing more accessible, improving the efficiency of transportation systems and preserving open space. She recommended a combination of policies, including greater housing development near transit corridors and the employment of mixed-use and in-fill development where possible.

“We must strive to strategically locate housing where it is needed the most, near jobs, along mixed use corridors, in downtown and suburban centers and at transit stops and stations,” said Deborah Robertson, Rialto City Councilmember and CEHD Committee member. “By focusing more development in these housing opportunity areas, we can reduce commutes and protect environmentally sensitive places.”

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Senate Housing Committee Vice-Chair Dennis Hollingsworth discussed the importance of forging more effective partnerships between state and local governments. “The state legislature lacks consensus and a clear vision over how to address our state’s housing needs. We need a working system that results in greater collaboration between the state and local governments and, ultimately, produces progressive changes in housing development policy.”

“We have to find ways to build more innovative public/private partnerships that make housing more affordable and more accessible to the state’s economically diverse population,” said Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco Senior Vice President Lawrence Parks. “Private financial institutions with a public mission must be at the forefront of bringing public and private housing leaders together for the greater good of our residents.”

Another key strategy identified at today’s summit, which was organized by SCAG’s Community, Economic and Human Development (CEHD) Committee, was the development of various incentives to make it more feasible for local governments to zone for residential development at a pace that keeps up with growth. Also discussed was the importance of forging more effective partnerships between state and local decision-makers to meet future housing demands. A major factor behind the dramatic rise in housing prices is an inability to zone and build enough homes to keep up with current and future demands.

Summit participants identified a number of legislative and land use strategies to address the regional housing crunch, including:

- *Increase coordination of housing development with transportation, water resource management, and other local planning efforts.*
- *Identify additional state funding for infrastructure and local government general plan development.*
- *Reformulate municipal finance and revenue sources to ensure that local governments have the resources necessary to develop adequate housing stock.*
- *Focus residential development in areas near major transit centers or corridors.*
- *Support greater mixed-use and in-fill development, particularly in urban areas.*
- *Reduce zoning restrictions that can add to housing costs.*