



**CONTACT: Don Rhodes, 213/236-1840
Jeff Lustgarten 323/466-3445**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2005**

“WHERE WILL OUR CHILDREN LIVE?”

*** * ***

State, Local Leaders Present Strategies To Improve Housing Affordability and Availability

TORRANCE, CALIF. – More than 200 policymakers and housing leaders from across the region convened at the Southern California Association of Governments’ (SCAG) 6th Annual Housing Summit in an effort to devise new approaches to address the growing housing crisis. Summit leaders emphasized the need to plan for long-term housing needs with cost-effective, sustainable strategies such as mixed-use development in urban areas and controlled development in open areas. With median home prices more than \$500,000 and household annual incomes remaining around \$55,000, residents are being forced to devote increasing portions of their income to housing. Southern California’s population growth continues to far outpace construction, placing additional pressures on the housing market and resulting in higher costs and increased congestion.

Rialto City Councilmember Deborah Robertson, Chair of SCAG’s Community, Economic and Human Development Committee, and Executive Director Mark Pisano discussed how *Compass Blueprint*, SCAG’s growth visioning initiative, can provide cities and counties with the tools they need to accommodate housing demand over the next 30 years by employing relatively small changes in land use planning decisions to reap tremendous results in housing availability and affordability.

“For too long, land use and housing planning has been undertaken without adequate consideration of the transportation impacts associated with those decisions,” said Robertson. “We need to strategically develop housing where it is needed most; near jobs, in suburban centers and near transit stations and corridors.”

Dowell Myers, Professor of Public Policy, Planning and Development at the University of Southern California, presented the findings of a study completed for the Fannie Mae Foundation focusing on the how much additional housing construction will be needed just to house the children of today’s Southern California residents. “If we don’t keep building, where will our children go? Unless we pick up the pace, I’m pretty sure my kids will not be able to buy single-family housing,” said Myers.

- more -

“In many ways, local governments operate as local corporations, and they can really be the economic savior of Southern California, but it is critical that you form strategic partnerships with neighboring cities and the private sector,” said Newhall Land and Farming Company President Gregory McWilliams. “It is only through these partnerships that cities can make visions for future growth a reality.”

The Summit also included a dynamic video presentation by the Western Riverside Council of Governments, which demonstrated the tremendous challenges facing local leaders in California’s fastest growing county. The video emphasized the importance of not only providing sufficient housing stock to accommodate 800,000 new residents in the county, but also increasing housing choices and placing new housing in the right locations.

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.*
- *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.*

“The key question raised here today is where will our children live,” said Torrance City Councilman Paul Nowatka. “It is our hope and intent that they will continue to live in Southern California, if our local leaders employ the tools and strategies discussed at today’s summit.”

(Editor’s Note: For more information about the SCAG Regional Housing Summit, contact Jeff Lustgarten or Dan Witzling of Cerrell Associates at 323-466-3445. For more information about Professor Myers’ report conducted on behalf of the Fannie Mae Foundation, visit www.fanniemaefoundation.com)