

# Cooperation Urged to Meet Housing Needs

## Teamwork by Cities, County Will Help Solve Shortage, Planning Unit Told

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A plea for cities' cooperation with the county in solving a housing shortage for low-to-moderate income families was made Friday to the West San Gabriel Valley Planning Council.

"Today's new housing construction is not meeting the needs of two out of three Los Angeles County residents," Russell G. Chase, principal regional planner for the Regional Planning Commission, told the council.

West Valley cities have zoned land for apartments which would accommodate more than twice the apartment units expected to be built by 1985, he said.

To solve the overall housing problem, Chase asked the 15-city council to work for county-cities cooperation to supplement the Valley area general plan being developed.

### Specific Request

He specifically asked that city planning directors work through the County Assn. of Planning Officials to establish a housing committee.

The critical problem is that the median price for new tract homes in the county last year was more than \$33,500 — prices geared to the top 30% of county family incomes, Chase said.

A combination of high interest rates — nearing 8% — and stiff down payment demands for new housing has slowed construction so that the county vacancy rate for single-family units is less than 2%, compared to a normal 5%, he said.

The result has been a housing shortage that hits the poor, elderly and racial minorities who are kept from moving to better quarters. This in turn tends to accelerate slum creation, the council was told.

### Poverty Category

"Most residents in the poverty category live in the worst of the county's substantial supply of older housing, which is concentrated in and around central areas," Chase said.

But he emphasized that

what affects the county as a whole eventually affects each city.

Some relief in the housing impasse could come from the work through the 15 council cities, Chase predicted.

The cities include Alhambra, Arcadia, Bradbury, Duarte, El Monte, Monterey Park, Monrovia, Pasadena and Rosemead. Other members are San Gabriel, San Marino, Sierra Madre, South El Monte, South Pasadena and Temple City.

Urban sprawl in the past decade has given the greater Los Angeles area a spacious look but has also made space a speculative commodity, Chase said.

### County Problem

To help solve problems, the county has started on a three-phase, four-year planning program.

The preliminary plan is expected for completion in early 1970, to be followed by 1971 public discussions. In 1972 previous findings are expected to be consolidated into a long-range comprehensive county general plan.

A housing plan is part of the preliminary plan for the county. In addition, cities are required by law to have housing standards and plans for housing improvement as well as provisions for housing sites-by July 1.

### Land Use Inventory

In addition, federal law requires the housing plan for cities which seek federal aid for planning projects.

The county is developing an inventory of land use and zoning with an analysis of alternative uses. Part of the county's overall planning is expected to include a housing analysis.

City-county help could outline housing needs first and then help evolve solutions, Chase said.

He said the county seeks plans for rehabilitation or replacement of housing without hardships to the occupants and has launched experimental projects including the Hicks Camp area near El Monte.