

JAMES LENTS, Acting Director, Edward J. Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development:

Good morning. I am Jim Lents. I am the Acting Director of the Ed Blakely Center. Many of you may know me in my previous life. I am an old air pollution control workhorse in the area. But I'm very pleased to be working with the University of California, Riverside in helping to get this incredible program started. We are called the Ed Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development. I think Ed is here. Ed, where did you sit down? Oh, Ed is right here. Stand up a minute, Ed. (Applause.) We felt like we needed to introduce him, because when we started taking applications for the permanent director, many people spoke of him in the past tense. So we wanted to let you know that he's not the past tense.

We also want to thank our co-host, the Metropolitan Institute of Virginia Tech. Rob Lang is over here and played a big role in getting this program started. The Orange County District Council of the Urban Land Institute. And I don't have a name for that. I know we have some representatives here. We also have a whole list of sponsors we wanted to recognize that make this possible. I wanted to go through those. The Empire Companies; Pete & Sons Construction; First American Title Insurance; The Inland Empire Economic Partnership; the law firm of Gresham, Savage, Nolan & Tilden; PFF Bank & Trust; Coussoulis Development; Sukut Construction; The Press-Enterprise, A to Z Printing; Young Homes; Best, Best & Krieger; the Riverside County Economic Development Agency; the Fannie Mae Foundation; The Business Press; the City of Riverside; Creative Digital Solutions; KB Home; Bob Wolf and Harley Knox; Tavaglione Construction; Haider Spine Center; Grubb & Ellis; The Flowerloft; EuroRSCG Magnet; the Western Riverside Council of Governments; the Baldy View Chapter of the Building Industry Association; the San Bernardino Associated Governments; the Riverside County Transportation Commission; the Inland Empire Chapter of the American Planning Association; SEC Corporation; and the Dos Lagos Development.

Quite a list there, but we got through it. Our response today has been very overwhelming. And we apologize if you are a little bit crowded. We love this facility. We felt when we started we could comfortably sit 180 or so people in here. The response got way beyond that. In fact, in the end, we had to turn 50 people down from the area who would liked to have come because we felt like we just could not fit any more people in. But I think the program is worth it and you will find that the crowding is not too bad.

Before we have our welcoming speaker, I wanted to recognize a few other people in the audience. We have with us Nancy Hart of the Riverside City Council. (Applause.) Lupe Ramos Watson from the Indio City Council. (Applause.) Alan Wapner from the Ontario City Council. (Applause.) Jackie McHenry from the Claremont City Council, Todd Ridgeway from the city of Newport Beach. One of them, I'm having trouble reading. Melanie Fesmire from the Indio City Council. (Applause.) Barbara Hanna from the Banning City Council. (Applause.) Anne Mayer, District Director of Caltrans District 8. (Applause.)

We always like to give a prize for the person who traveled the furthest for this. So we decided the prize ought to go to Laurie Rose. He's from Sydney, Australia. (Applause.) We thank you all for being here and joining in this process with us.

As you'll see in the program, UCR Chancellor France Córdova was supposed to welcome you this morning. But, as these things happen, she had some schedule conflicts and problems, and so we switched her. She's going to welcome you at lunch. But we wanted to have our Vice Chancellor and, actually, the person who oversees the Blakely Center, give you a welcome. He's Dr. Charles Louis. We had put everyone's bio in the book, and so in the future we are not going to try to go through everyone's bio. But, Dr. Louis is not in there, so I'd like to tell you a little something about him. As Vice Chancellor for Research, he is responsible for assisting campus researchers secure funding, coordinating development of proposals, and helping with multi-disciplinary research. And that's one of the reasons we are in his office, is the multiple-disciplinary nature of our work. He oversees the office's sponsored programs. He most recently served as Vice President for Research at Georgia State University. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in chemistry from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and his Doctor of Philosophy in biochemistry from Oxford University, England, followed by postdoctoral training at Stanford. I would like to welcome Dr. Louis. (Applause.)

CHARLES LOUIS: Jim, thank you so much, indeed. Good morning. And on behalf of the University of California at Riverside, I really want to welcome you all to this First Annual Conference on Suburban Issues. UCR's Blakely Center for Sustainable Suburban Development is very proud to be a co-host along with the Metropolitan Institute of Virginia Tech and the Orange County District Council of the Urban Land Institute in sponsoring this event. And I want to thank Jim Lents, the Interim Director of the Blakely Center, for his leadership in putting this program together and for his kind introduction. I want to thank Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley and San Bernardino County Supervisor Josie Gonzalez for coming over here and welcoming you on behalf of our two-country region. I am also pleased to introduce to you my colleague from UCR. I arrived in July of this year, so I'm very new to the campus and to the region. But my colleague, Dr. Bill Boldt, joined the campus as Vice Chancellor for University Advancement only in September. And we round out our Chancellors' team, leadership team, on the campus, and very much look forward to working not only with the Center but many of the other exciting activities in the community.

Finally, I want to acknowledge and thank Ali Sahabi, without whose support the Center would not have come into existence and whose vision and generosity has made this Blakely Center possible. (Applause.)

This is the first regularly scheduled conference to be focused solely on the suburbs. And throughout the day, you will be hearing how the smart growth principles developed in urban areas can be translated to developments on the edge of growing metropolitan areas. And, really, what better place to do this than here in Riverside? The University of California, Riverside is squarely in the middle of the fastest-growing region in the state and one of the fastest-growing regions in the nation. The Inland Empire, comprised of Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, has a population larger than 22 states in the Union. It's larger than Massachusetts. And in March of last year, "Inc. Magazine" cited the Inland Empire as among the hottest of the hot economies of the U.S., second only to Atlanta. And having just lived in Atlanta, that, too, is a very exciting city, and so I can appreciate the excitement from this region, too, as I'm learning more about it.

But with this growth comes challenges, and that's what this conference and UCR's Blakely Center are here today to address with the speakers. This is in keeping with one of the strategic goals of our campus to forge closer ties with our communities. Our vision is that UCR will organize and coordinate with others to achieve common goals for the prosperity and sustainability of the Inland Empire through technology transfer and responsiveness to regional issues. The Blakely Center was established to provide research and analysis with a policy focus on the wide range of issues the suburbs confront -- with an emphasis on our region. And while the Inland Empire offers an unrivaled laboratory for studying issues related to suburban growth, the Center's research will be applicable to communities around the globe. And the theme of today's conference -- Smart Growth on the Edge: Suburban Growth and Planning for the Next 20 Years -- shows the Center's commitment to concentrate on policies that will affect the future. And your presence here today shows that you share this commitment. And I hope you have a productive and meaningful conference. I look forward to sitting through many of the sessions myself, and want to thank you for your participation. Thank you. (Applause.)

JAMES LENTS: Andy told me it is a little hard to hear in the back, so I'll pick up the microphone. Maybe it's a combination of my Southern and my height. We also wanted to introduce Charles Dradejovich, I guess. Should have learned my Russian better. But Charles is with Henry Cisneros' office. And we appreciate your attendance. (Applause.) I apologize if we're missing anyone. We are trying to watch and find people in the audience we think should have special recognition and that you would be interested in knowing who was here. Next, I would like to introduce San Bernardino County Supervisor Josie Gonzalez to provide a welcome from San Bernardino County. Her biography is in the program so we won't go any further here.

SUPERVISOR JOSIE GONZALEZ: Good morning, everyone. It's really nice to see so many of your familiar, and especially unfamiliar, faces that represent new interest, new investment. And I am here this morning to welcome you. As was spoken, "the edge," "the cusp," "the rim." That is where we stand. We call ourselves the Inland Empire; Riverside County, San Bernardino County. Supervisor Marion Ashley and I both represent the Fifth Districts of our respective counties, and I will tell you that regardless of geographical location, sooner or later we share the same obstacles, the same dilemmas, and look for similar solutions in order to provide the needed services and the much-needed controlled and managed growth. This conference is a much-needed and long-awaited event. I welcome you wholeheartedly. Bring your ideas. Bring your creativeness. Do not be afraid to participate with what you bring from your points of origin. Whatever you have experienced there, whatever you've seen in other places, bring it, share it, because it will be here. If it's not in this area yet, it will be here. And we need to be prepared.

This area was very much overlooked for a very long time, because, as the old adage was, "Go West, young man. Go West." That West has now become the Pacific Ocean. That wall they have hit has become the coastline. And as they hit it hard on their way West and come up against this block wall, they ricochet, and where they fall is right here, right in our lap. It is not difficult to get in our cars and commute an hour, an hour and 45 minutes a day. I know many, many a person who does this. And it is to the point of being unbearable. They sit in parking lots we used to call freeways. It is awful. It has diminished the quality of life in many a home. And you all

coming together signifies a new direction and hope that, as we manage the new growth, the new development, that you keep all of these diverse elements in mind as you prepare to share.

We must keep business, science, politics, development, advertising, banking at the forefront of what is going to be discussed today. Science: We have endangered species situations that tie our hands when it comes to innovative developments. We have circulation issues. We need to create a better relationship with the Department of Transportation, whether it be here, on the state level, or on the federal level. But in order for us to open the avenues that are going to be discussed here, we must establish good relationships with -- another example -- the Department of the Interior, when it comes to the endangered species mitigation. Failing to do this, we will only be building castles in the sand. Get smart. Get going. Plan our future. I want my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren to be the recipients of all of the ideas and projects that are going to be conceived through events such as this.

We have land, ladies and gentlemen, a commodity that has disappeared with our neighbors to the West. And, the minute we think that our land is not valuable, I will tell you that you have committed a grievous, grievous crime to the very thing that you are here to promote and to explore today. I like the fact that I see so many of you. I am very blessed to be able to be here and give these opening remarks, set you on your way. I want to instill the energy, the dedication, and the desire that you can bring to these projects so that the vacant land we have one day can become beautiful parks, beautiful community centers, beautiful developments that attract and retain jobs, that attract and retain an economic base, that will keep our families intact where they can shop and they can work and they can play in these given areas versus spilling out to other -- how should I say? -- other areas that offer better opportunities. We need to be competitive. We need to be partners. And we need to be very grateful for this opportunity. I thank you all very much for coming. I wish you great success, great brainstorming. And, don't forget. You are on the edge. You are the ones that are opening the envelope with the surprise that is inside being left up to you to determine for the rest of the future life of the Inland Empire. I'm very proud to be with you. Congratulations on this opportunity that you have today. And have a great time brainstorming. Thank you. (Applause.)

JAMES LENTS: I'd like to invite Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley to come up. (Applause.)

SUPERVISOR MARION ASHLEY: Welcome to the fabulous Mission Inn. I use that word "fabulous" a lot because I represent the fabulous Fifth District of Riverside County. And welcome to Riverside County and, of course, the Inland Empire. As I sit here, we think Riverside County right now has 1.8 million people, on our way to around 4 million within about 20 years. If you take the two counties, the Inland Empire together, we are around 3.7 million, on our way to 8 to 10 million people in 20 years.

Just think about that a little bit. If that's not enough to get your attention, nothing will. And that's why Riverside County completed the only comprehensive plan of its kind in the nation, the Riverside County Integrated Project. Many of you participated in it, but many of you don't know.

We took the entire county, all the cities in the county and we did a new general plan. At the same time, we did a transportation plan with new corridors going not only within the county, north, south, east, west, but also the corridor to Orange County, and a new corridor to San Bernardino County. And we came up with a habitat plan to mitigate this transportation corridor plan so you can actually build it, not spend ten years chasing the rat or whatever, you know, that U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service or California Fish & Game -- whatever bureaucracies -- want. And so we can actually take a project and process it in about a third of the time. And we are well underway. And that's what we've done. Now we face the challenges of implementation. And we will need to continue to find ways to improve upon and implement the existing laws and try new approaches.

Transportation, the creation of quality jobs, diversity, affordable housing, and air quality are all issues that we're constantly trying to deal with. We, as leaders of local government, will need to understand these challenges and keep one step ahead. Communities of the future will be very different from the ones we live in today. And we're creating these communities right here, right now. These communities will need to be different, because, as we plan to develop over the next few decades, we face a whole new set of socioeconomic, technological, and global forces that are unlike those that brought us to where we are today. Only by working collectively as a region can we sustain our communities. The challenges we face as a region -- economic vitality, economic viability, deteriorating infrastructure, natural disasters, environmental pollution, crime and violence, rural sprawl -- you heard of "urban sprawl." The big enemy of sustainable growth, I think, is rural sprawl, not urban sprawl. It used to be urban sprawl. It's now rural sprawl -- and unmanaged growth which can be viewed either as our shared doom or as our common call to action, a universal opportunity to change, improve, and optimize.

Smart growth, anti-dumb growth, and sustainable communities are nothing less than the key to optimizing our future. What issues do we in the suburbs face? How can we grow smarter? How can smart growth work on the edge? What benefits do these communities bring and how can we create them? This room here today will address these questions and provide us with a framework of knowledge that we can use to sustain our communities through the planning and development process in the coming years. So it's vital we get our development right the first time. We really only get one more chance. This is it. So I want to thank the Center for all the good work that they've done and are doing. And I wish you the very best in your conference today. I know you're all going to go away smarter and energized, and we have to go out and do God's work and build this region the way it should be. And like I said, this is our last chance. (Applause.)

JAMES LENTS: And finally this morning, I would like to recognize Ali Sahabi. It's his vision and his commitment that have allowed us to get this program started, and we would like to give him a chance to be recognized. (Applause.)

ALI SAHABI: Thank you all for being here. I was very enthused this morning when I saw the list of the participants that is actually listed on our Website at the Center. It reinforced my enthusiasm about the Center. In this room here today, we have business leaders, we have political leaders, we have city officials, we have academicians, and other important decision-makers in our society. And what I always hoped that the Center will do is to truly bring together

all parts of our society in order to create an open communication for all of us in order to solve our future problems dealing with growth. I talk a lot about the Center. I am very excited about my small participation in the beginning of establishment of the Center. And people usually ask me, "What is the Center for Sustainable Suburban Development?" And most people have a hard time visualizing what the Center is all about. And in simple terms, my response is that, We are experiencing tremendous growth, not only locally here in the Inland Empire -- and we heard Supervisor Ashley share with us the statistics -- but also globally. Within the next 10 years, our global population, according to Norman Foster, British architect, is going to increase from 6.4 billion to 7.5 billion. And this is a very different type of growth than what we have experienced in the past. These are people who are going to demand consumer products like we have had the opportunity to have. And so what the Center can do is going to not only make a difference here locally. It can make a difference globally. And my response, as I tried to complete my explanation of the Center, is that, with all of these issues and problems coming up that we are dealing with, we have to take a very honest approach of looking at these issues and finding a solution in a balanced way. What is a balanced way? How do we look at finding solutions in a balanced way? It's very simple, in my opinion. We look at the problems from three points of view. And we do that consciously every day, honestly.

We look at problems from environmental impact, air, water, pollution, sensitive habitat, natural resources. We look at it from social impact: How do our decisions make a difference in people's lives? Whatever business we're in or whatever decisions that we are making, how do those decisions make a social impact? And the third, the last but not the least, is economic impact: We need to be very conscious of how our decisions can work economically. If it doesn't work economically, if it doesn't work for our businesses, these businesses that are here today supporting this event, they cannot work. So I challenge all of you as you listen to the participants here today, make a conscious effort to look at the issues from these three points of view: Environmental, social impact, and economic impact. Thank you very much, and thank you for being here. (Applause.)

JAMES LENTS: I would like to invite the panel up for, "The Changing Edge - A National Perspective." I declare our meeting begun. Thank you very much.