



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE MAY 11, 2006

Contact: Diane Brossart
Valley Forward Association
(602) 240-2408

Zenobia Mertel
Olson Communications
(602) 595-6992

**VALLEY RESIDENTS CLAIM URBAN SPRAWL IS A PROBLEM
YET MOST WON'T LIVE IN MORE COMPACT COMMUNITIES**

Valley Forward Survey Also Shows Residents Believe They Have No Voice in Land Planning

PHOENIX (May 11, 2006) – The majority of Valley residents, 85 percent, believe that sprawl is a problem in Maricopa County, with 41 percent indicating it is a “big” problem, 31 percent deeming it a “moderate” problem and 13 percent saying it’s a “small” problem, according to a recent Valley Forward telephone survey of more than 400 residents conducted by WestGroup Research.

At the same time, more than three-fourths of the respondents, also indicated they would oppose high-density development, such as smaller lot sizes, apartments or condos, in their own neighborhood.

In addition, only one in five Valley residents, 19 percent, believe local communities have plans in place to effectively handle the continued rapid growth projected for Maricopa County. Conversely, residents do not feel that they have the ability to influence planning decisions in their community, with 67 percent saying they have no voice.

On a more positive note, the majority of Valley residents, three in five, indicated their quality of life had either been positively impacted by the county's rapid growth or said growth has not affected them at all.

“The research suggests that while most Valley residents feel growth and land use patterns negatively impact the livability and sustainability our region, residents are still positive about their own personal lifestyles,” said Diane Brossart, president of Valley Forward. “It’s clear we need to do a better job of educating the public about the planning process and how they can get involved. Apparently, most people do not feel empowered to make a difference and we’re here to say they most definitely can.”

Another finding of the research is that three in five residents, 61 percent, feel there is not enough land in the county dedicated to open space and recreation.

Add 1/Valley Forward Land Use Survey

Valley Forward released results of the telephone survey at a luncheon today for its Board of Directors and general membership. Nearly 150 public and private sector leaders attended the program, featuring a panel discussion on the planning and development process – what’s working and what’s not. Panelists included: Tempe Mayor Hugh Hallman, Phoenix City Councilwoman Peggy Neely and infill developer Eric Brown, of Artisan Homes. Land use attorney Stephen Anderson, of Gammage & Burnham, moderated the program.

A 37-year-old environmental public interest organization, Valley Forward has historically advocated for a balance between economic growth and environmental quality, and its Land Use & Open Space Committee focuses on such issues as desert preservation, infill development, brownfields revitalization and transit-oriented design.

For more information about Valley Forward and the telephone survey it commissioned through WestGroup’s monthly omnibus study – WestTrack Market Monitor, call (602) 240-2408 or visit www.valleyforward.org.