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Speaking in turn at BCA's Candidate's night Oct. 8 are, from left: District 4 incumbent Leon Williams; District 6 challenger Tom Gade; District 8 incumbent Jess Haro; Co-moderator Len Frank of Pardee; and District 2 incumbent Maureen O'Connor.

Also featured were Leon Williams (at podium); Norm Foster of Knoth & Meads, co-moderator; John Flowers, challenger for District 8; Ray Lussa, challenger for District 6; Jesse Albritten, challenger for District 4; and Lou Ridgeway, challenger for District 2.

Candidates Air Divergent Views at General Dinner

Councilmanic candidates for the City of San Diego squared off at the Oct. 8 BCA General Dinner Meeting at Vacation Village, and the primary issue was once again centered on policies of growth.

Maureen O'Connor, incumbent from District 2, began by reaffirming her support for city policies which are intended "to control the timing and location of city growth." She stated that she was not in favor of no growth. "A no growth philosophy is not feasible. Anyone who depicts city policies as "no growth" is being untruthful."

Councilwoman O'Connor indicated her intention to strive for greater certainty for developers, to more definitely determine where and how builders can build in San Diego. She voiced her dismay at the constant string of delays and red tape encountered in the development review process.

O'Connor did not believe that it was realistic to blame most of the economic downturn in the building industry on city government, but cited state legislation induced by proposition 20 and the *Friends of Mammoth* Decision, as well as rising costs in building materials, as primary reasons for problems in the housing industry not initiated by the City.

"I think our differences are honest," stated O'Connor in reference to her views and those of many developers.

Lou Ridgeway, challenger to Miss O'Connor, cited statistics revealing the dramatic downturn in the construction economy in San Diego. The self-employed electrical equipment manufacturer's representative felt that high taxes, crime, lack of new industry, and his opponent's "absenteeism" were primary factors in the campaign.

Ridgeway believed that a freeze should be made on homeowner taxes, that Lindbergh Field should be retained with a re-routing of the landing strip (as opposed to his opponent's support for a site in Otay Mesa), and that it should be the right of the voter to determine whether or not Lindbergh Field should be moved in the first place.

Incumbent councilman **Leon Williams** of District 4 focused on the growth issue in terms of what costs are incurred by the city for new development. "It costs a lot of money to provide urban services,"

said Williams, but that the city budget, which was already $12 million in deficit for this coming fiscal year, had to be balanced. He cited a study which indicated that urban sprawl cost city budgets enormous amounts just in terms of the energy which is wasted annually.

Williams indicated his commitment to a "more responsive citizenry interest" that is now represented before council meetings than with previous city councils. "I am extremely interested in working with all factions of the City," said Williams.

Jesse Albritten, operator of his own income tax preparation agency for the past 15 years, insisted that his opponent in the 4th District was as responsible for urban sprawl as anyone else because of the high cost of housing created by city policies. He felt that one of the chief problems of the city "was the lack of ability to attract new industry into our area." He felt that there was not one decent shopping center in councilman Williams' district, nor enough low income, affordable housing.

"It's time for you businessmen to reaffirm your pledge to free enterprise," said Albritten.

Racing for the 6th District councilmanic seat vacated by incumbent Bob Martinet, challenger **Tom Gade** noted that he was "dedicated to San Diego." Having worked as a civil engineer with CalTrans in past years, he felt that current city growth policies were in error, that "population in San Diego is going to increase . . . we're talking about *how* we are going to accomodate that growth."

Gade felt that crime and job creation were the most important issues in the campaign, as well as housing. "We need a balance, a mix of housing" close-in as well as in the suburbs. "We need to realize we have people who don't want to live in-town," said Gade. He also indicated his staunch opposition to binding arbitration.

Ray Lussa, a marketing director for Pacific Property Exchange, believed that high crime and housing costs were key issues in the campaign. Lussa supports a program similar to one initiated in San Carlos, in which police officers go door to door in each precinct and advise residents of ways in which they can prevent burglaries. He also felt that offenders should receive definite punishment. "A perpetrator must feel that when he gets caught, he will go to jail."

Lussa also noted the dramatic rise in housing costs, with an average selling price in San Diego now of $42,000. The problem is that one needs an average income of $17,000 to make payments, and San Diego's average income is only $12,500 per year. "We are destroying upward mobility" says Lussa.

In the final race for District 8, incumbent **Jess Haro,** appointed by the Council last spring over several candidates, believed that control over the cost of government and the cost of public services "is the common thread that runs through my work as a councilman." Haro believed that unrestricted development would lead to a larger tax rate, and that "we need to move aggressively to renovate the downtown area" of San Diego.

Haro, echoing many of Mayor Wilson's positions, believed that in terms of public services, "we need to learn how to deliver the same services at fewer dollars." He cited his adamant opposition to binding arbitration, and believed that in dealing with the crime rate it was unwise to merely add numbers of police officers as a solution to the problem. "We need to check the cost-effectiveness of each proposal," said Haro.

John Flowers, contesting Haro for the 8th District seat and an attorney actively involved with Common Cause, believed that major land use decisions at the city were erroneously made "on an emotional, rather than on a rational basis." Flowers called for "a fair, logical approach to decision making at the council."

Dewain Davis of Davis Concrete receives well-deserved 25 spike award from John Clark of San Diego Fence.

He felt that there were not sufficient guidelines regarding development review and approval in the political arena. He believed that red tape was a major deterrent to rational development processes. Flowers called for analysis of all projects on an equitably balanced review of fiscal, economic, and environmental impacts collectively.

Flowers criticized his opponent for even considering the possibility of reviewing a city-wide income tax as a means for covering the city budget deficit. He stated his unequivocal opposition to such a review, and believed that "most people would support cutting services before raising taxes."

While the debate had its moments of natural enmity, Len Frank of Pardee aptly noted, "although we do differ on many issues, it's good that we can still get together and discuss the issues in a reasonable way."

ering of certain fees, encouraging redevelopment and remodeling of existing homes.

Williams also suggested an unusual alternative. "We ought to subsidize people to live close in to town, even the well-to-do." The reason for recommending a subsidy for wealthier people is that large acres of land are not being utilized in areas such as Williams' district "because currently, there are no incentives for people to live there." "It would be cheaper to subsidize the rich in southeast San Diego, than it would to subsidize the poor in La Jolla."

County Supervisor Dick Brown took issue with the comments of Gilbert Ferguson of CEEED, feeling that "they do not meet the objectives of the symposium." Brown recognized the fact that the County's population could very well be doubled by the turn of the century, "but I am concerned about the *way* we go about planning it." Brown felt that it was erroneous for builders to put too much emphasis on government regulation as being the chief cause for the high cost of housing in the region. The essential cost factor, according to Brown, was labor. "The chief obstacle to leveling housing costs," said the supervisor, "is a lack of management acting like management at the bargaining table. What you have done is priced yourself out of the market place."

Brown's feeling was that communities should develop their own master environmental development plans as soon as possible. "Ideally, then, a builder could come in with his project, and once it is checked against the master plans, if it is in conformance to those plans, he should get all of his permits right over the counter."

The final panel discussion of the day centered on the possibility for "practical problems and potential solutions" to the housing crisis. Phil Walling of the Construction Industry Advancement Fund cited figures which indicated that while significant, labor costs to housing were "not as great a factor as it may initially appear." "Managed growth sounds good to the person who is secure in his own home," said Walling. He called for greater consideration of the economic impacts of developments in government review, and for clarification by government as to what is meant by "availability of adequate public services" required for developments.

Don Nasland, President of Nasland Engineering, noted that a primary cost to housing, land, needed to be more adequately addressed.

He cited figures showing that in an area such as Mira Mesa, land costs

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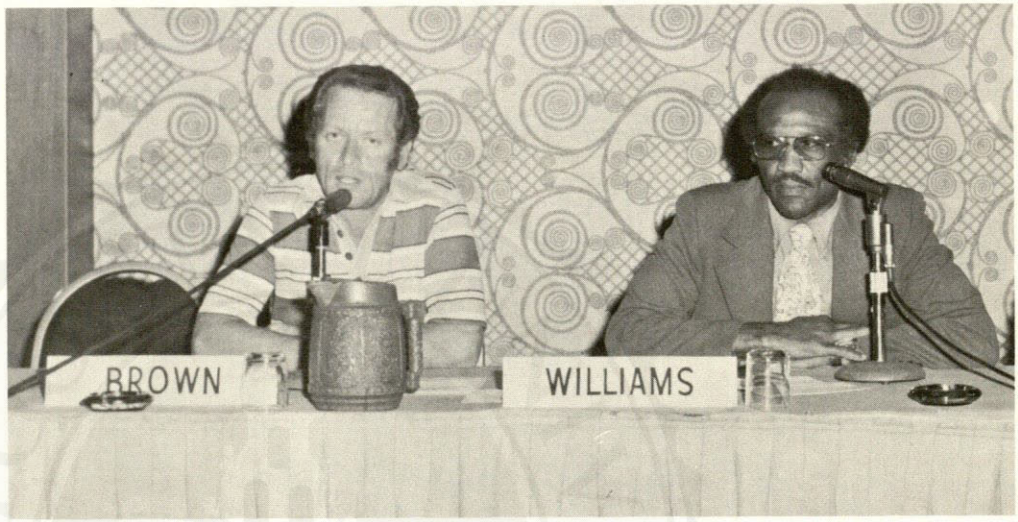

Government response to the housing situation came from County Supervisor Dick Brown (left) and San Diego City Councilman Leon Williams at the recent Housing Symposium.

COMPONENT SALES PRICE

Typical 3-bedroom, 2-bath production house containing 1,200 sq. ft. without extras such as fireplace or yard fencing, and built on a scale of 100 units or more:

	Amount	% Total
Land (government impacted)	$ 8,500	18.9%
Site improvements (government impacted)	6,500	14.4%
Construction materials (estimated)	8,400	18.6%
Construction labor (estimated)	8,400	18.7%
Permit Fees (government impacted)	1,500	3.3%
Marketing and Sales	1,800	4.0%
Financing	4,390	9.8%
Administration	1,050	2.4%
Pre-tax Profit	4,450	9.9%
TOTALS	$44,990	100.0%

Panel session dealing with "Why is Needed Housing Not Obtainable?" included (from left): Thomas Carter, Loan Division Manager, San Diego Federal S & L; Howard Burke, President of the San Diego Board of Realtors; and Lee Grissom, General Manager of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce.

Symposium:

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ernment review of development projects, and for time restrictions to be placed on government review of projects. "It is time that the hostility existing between the development industry and government officials be broken down," said Grissom.

Howard Burke, President of the San Diego Board of Realtors noted that environmentalists and planners have gone too far in demanding the"perfect" housing concept for San Diego. "In order to appreciate some of the things that are free in life, such as clear skies and clean water, we are going to have to face up to the reality of having some ink spill, some sewer smell." Further, Burke stated the need for accurate communication: "If we're going to have 'controlled growth', then let's call it that and not something else. If it's 'managed growth', then let's call it that and get on with the job."

Thomas Carter, from San Diego Federal Savings and Loan Association, gave a review of the causes for currently high interest rates on lending, but sounded a cautiously optimistic note by stating that in his opinion, interest rates should not rise above 9% over the next two years. While this figure is high, noted Carter, the available supply of money is also greater than in recent years.

Gilbert Ferguson, Executive Director of CEEED in Orange County, sounded the keynote at the symposium by indicating that "the concept of the American Home will undergo a drastic change in the next ten years, and perhaps cause a drastic change in our society and in our government as well."

Ferguson noted that the problem with planners today is that they are causing housing to be "gold plated" as never before, causing a boost in home prices through the frequent imposition of new regulations and building codes. "So now we've come from building houses, to building cities, to building gold plated houses in the Garden of Eden that no one can afford!"

Ferguson said that one cause of the problem lies with the media. "The ignorance of the media is spread to the ignorance of the people, which is in turn spread to the ignorance of the politician," said Ferguson. "As developers, you are using up land ten times faster in 1975 than you did in 1960 with park land dedications and so forth." Ferguson noted that this creates a shortage of buildable land which "prematurely" pushes up the value, and thus the cost, of remaining land.

"I don't understand people who say we're paving over America, when only 2% of the total continental United States is currently urbanized. In fact, it has been stated that we could take the entire population of the world and place it inside the boundaries of our country, including China, and we would find that our density would *still be less than what exists in Europe today."*

"The way trends are going, it will be impossible for our industry to build housing under these current conditions in the next four to five years," said Ferguson.

"We need to educate the public," stated Ferguson, "We can't educate the government until the people are educated to the point where they understand the problem. The more you do to educate the public, the sooner you can bring the pendulum of decision making back to the center."

In response to criticism by the development industry towards government regulations on housing, City Councilman Leon Williams offered a variety of solutions, including encouragement of city incentives for builders to develop in the inner city, perhaps through awarding of higher densities, participation by the city in providing recreational amenities, low-