Veteran Parks Leader Selected as new Parks & Community Services Department Director

Costa Mesa City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison announced that Brian Gruner, a 24-year veteran of municipal government, has been appointed as the new Director of Parks & Community Services.

“After conducting a nationwide search, Brian quickly became our top candidate to lead our Parks & Community Services Department,” Farrell Harrison said. “I look forward to working with him as we continue to provide high-quality recreational services to the Costa Mesa Community.”

Gruner has worked in the field of Parks, Recreation and Community Services for over 24 years, starting as a part-time recreation leader and promoting through the supervisory ranks. He has extensive experience in the management of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, including the oversight of multimillion-dollar budgets, capital improvement projects, strategic planning, community outreach, partnership development and arts and cultural programs.

Mayor John Stephens welcomed Gruner to the City of Costa Mesa.

“Parks and Community Services is a vital function in Costa Mesa and our residents expect top-notch facilities and services,” Mayor Stephens said. “I’m confident Brian will be a great fit here and I look forward to working with him on our recreation initiatives.”

Prior to his arrival in Costa Mesa, Gruner served as the Parks and Recreation Superintendent for the City of Fairfield, where he managed the after school and pre-school programs, including a $800,000 ASES Grant, oversight of activities, programs, and

events at the Adult Recreation Center and a $3 million budget.

He has also worked for Laguna Woods Village as Recreation and Special Events Director and for the City of Mission Viejo as the Community Services Supervisor.

A graduate of Mission Viejo High School, he has lived in Orange County for 37 years and is happy to be returning to Southern California.

“I’m excited to be relocating back to Orange County and being part of the City of Costa Mesa team,” Gruner said. “Having grown up in Orange County, I have fond memories of Costa Mesa from competing in tennis tournaments at the Costa Mesa Tennis Center, enjoying the Orange County Fair and Swap Meets, shopping at South Coast Plaza, playing golf at the Costa Mesa Country Club and enjoying the natural beauty of Fairview Park.”

Gruner holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Cal State Fullerton in Business Management and a Master’s in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

City brings aboard three new managers for Public Works, Emergency Services and Finance

The City of Costa Mesa is happy to announce the appointment of three new top-level government veterans, Patrick Bauer as the City’s new Deputy Director of Public Works, Delcie Hynes as

the new Emergency Services Manager and Mark Khou as the new Budget and Purchasing Manager in Finance.

“I am so thrilled to bring aboard these three outstanding professionals who will fill critical roles here in Costa Mesa,” City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison said. “Their experience and background will help guide us for many years in public works, emergency services and budgeting and finance.”

Deputy Director of Public Works Patrick Bauer



Bauer has over 18 years of experience within public works and has worked on projects including facilities construction, street projects, storm drains, and more.

In his new role, he will be responsible for developing a Facilities Management Master Plan for all City facilities and managing the City’s fleet of vehicles rolling stock valued at more than $8.5 million and solid waste programs. The City will further benefit from his experience in managing projects and working with consultants and contractors to modernize City facilities such as fire stations, community centers and our

City assets.

Bauer comes to Costa Mesa via the Orange County Fire Authority, where he served as the Construction and Facilities Division Manager for nine years. Prior to that, he was an Associate Engineer in Costa Mesa Public Works from 2005 to 2014.

Bauer has a Master of Business Administration from Arizona State University and a Master of Environmental Health and Safety from the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Emergency Services Manager Delcie Hynes



Hynes has worked in the Emergency Management field for over 20 years in various municipalities and is a National Emergency Management Advanced Academy graduate.

In her new role, Hynes will be responsible for the City's disaster preparedness in coordination with all City departments, and other state and local agencies and organizations. She will oversee disaster planning, trainings and exercises to keep staff and the community updated on preparedness strategies and systems. Hynes will also manage

the City’s Emergency Operations Center.

Prior to joining Costa Mesa, Hynes was the Emergency Manager for the Orange County Social Services Agency for 12 years. She oversaw the county’s mass care and shelter efforts where she collaborated with 34 cities, multiple special districts, numerous non-profit organizations and other county, state and federal partners to help ensure the needs were met in a county with a population of over 3 million.

Previously, Hynes was the Emergency Services Coordinator for the cities of Gardena and Stanton. She was previously an instructor of Emergency Management at Cal State University, Long Beach.

Hynes holds a Master’s Degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland, and a Bachelor’s Degree in Justice Studies from Arizona State University.

Finance Budget and Purchasing Manager Mark Khou



Khou has over 20 years of finance experience, with 13 years of budget management experience with multiple Southern California

agencies with extensive experience in management of budgets, procurement/purchasing, strategic planning, contracts, special projects, grant writing, communications, social media, and marketing.

In his new role, Khou will oversee the Budget and Purchasing Divisions in the Finance Department with an annual combined operating budget of $180 million in all funds.

Prior to joining Costa Mesa Khou worked for the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services in multiple finance roles, the Long Beach Marinas and Beaches and the City of Laguna Beach.

He holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration (MPA) and a Bachelor's Degree in journalism both from California State University, Long Beach.

Costa Mesa residents sought to apply for Planning Commission seat

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking one resident to serve on the Planning Commission:

The Planning Commission functions as an advisory body to the City Council on issues related to the long-term growth and development of the community, on requests for general plan amendments, rezones, specific plans, environmental impact reports and amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Commission has authority to take final action on a variety of planning applications, including conditional use

permits, variances, planned development projects, and tentative tract and parcel maps. The Commission meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The City is recruiting for one member (Appointment by Council Member Arlis Reynolds), for a term expiration of January 2027. For further information, contact Gladys Gonzalez at (714) 754-5327.

Application Process – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Commission Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website (www.costamesaca.gov/apply).

The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; emailed to cityclerk@costamesaca.gov; or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. The deadline is 5 p.m., Friday, April 5, 2024. The appointment is tentatively scheduled for the April 16, 2024 City Council meeting.

Associate Engineer Cristina Oquendo is the City Manager Leadership Award recipient for March

Assistant City Manager Cecilia Gallardo-Daly presented the March City Manager Leadership Award to Associate Engineer Cristina Oquendo.

"Cristina is well-known, admired, and respected by all her coworkers due to her unselfish, warmhearted, creative, and

enthusiastic personality," Gallardo-Daly said. "She always plays a pivotal role in the planning and successful execution of team building activities and events for the Public Works Department. I was thrilled to present her with this award."

Oquendo began her career with the City of Costa Mesa in November of 2003 as an Engineering Intern.

Thanks to her motivation, commitment, and dedication, Oquendo has risen high, currently holding the title of Associate Engineer in the Engineering Division of the Public Works Department.

Her responsibilities include the oversight and management of CIP projects, from design to construction, such as the Parkway Maintenance, Street and Alley Rehabilitation Project.

Oquendo also manages and oversees the updating of the City's Pavement Management Plan through the comprehensive reporting and surveying of pavement conditions citywide.

She is also known as a "foodie," and enjoys playing tennis, snowboarding, and mountain hiking. She has hiked to the peaks of Half Dome in Yosemite and Angel's Landing in Zion National Park.

She graduated from California State University of Fullerton with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering with an emphasis in construction management and is currently pursuing her Professional Engineer's license.

Captain Maldonado blazes trail for City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison presented Fire Captain Eliasar Maldonado with the February City Manager Leadership Award.

Maldonado is a Costa Mesa native and a graduate of Estancia High School, where he played basketball for four years.

“I admire Captain Maldonado’s dedication to the youth of this very community where he was raised and attended school,” Farrell Harrison said. He is passionate about the fire profession and has been an outstanding mentor to our Fire Cadets. We are lucky to have him, and I am thrilled to give him this award.”

Maldonado became a Fire Explorer for the Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue department (CMFR) during his junior year of high school. After being in the program for two years, he decided this was the path he wanted to follow and registered at Santa Ana College for the Fire Technology Program.

He became a reserve fighter with Santa Ana Fire Department after completing the fire academy in 2002. After testing with numerous departments, as luck would have it, it was his hometown of Costa Mesa who offered him a firefighter position in July 2004. He was promoted to Captain in February 2019

Throughout his tenure with the City and the Fire & Rescue Department, he has remained active with many committees within the department and has a strong passion for teaching and training. He was a part of the department’s legacy Fire Explorer Program, now updated to the Fire Cadet Program, and he continues to be at the helm of the program, coaching,

leading, and mentoring Costa Mesa youth.

Chief Stefano said this about Captain Maldonado, “he is an exceptional individual on all levels, highlighted by his exceptional ethical leadership, inspiring work ethic, and his powerful example of what success looks like, particularly as it relates to a healthy work-life balance and placing the highest priority on his family. Eliasar is a shining example of our absolute best and what the Costa Mesa Fire Family is all about.”

Maldonado holds an Associate’s degree in Fire Science and Fire Administration from Santa Ana College. He is actively pursuing his Bachelor of Arts degree in Organizational Leadership at Bradman University.

Costa Mesa awarded over $7.9 Million in OCTA grants for expanded bike lane network

COSTA MESA – The City has been awarded three Complete Streets Program grants totaling $7.9 million from the Orange County Transportation Authority to create three interconnected, separated bike lanes as part of a major expansion of the City’s bicycle network.

Costa Mesa is the only jurisdiction in Orange County to receive three separate Complete Streets Program grant awards, with a total funding allocation of $7,918,000.

“We are grateful for these grants from OCTA, which will make our streets safer, including for bikers and pedestrians,” said Mayor John Stephens, who also serves on the OCTA Board of

Directors. “Costa Mesa’s Public Works department did a wonderful job positioning the City for this needed funding. These funds will improve our connectivity throughout the City, especially through our growing bicycle network.”

The first grant valued at $1.76 million will provide the City with funds to construct a multipurpose Class I bicycle trail along Adams Avenue from the Santa Ana River to Royal Palm Drive.

A second grant valued at $4.2 million will provide funds to construct a Class IV separated bike lane along Adams Avenue from Harbor Boulevard to Fairview Road.

Finally, a third grant, totaling $1.94 million will provide funds to design and construct a Class IV separated bicycle lane along Fairview Road from Fair Drive to Adams Avenue.

The three connected projects will enhance the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on streets used by residents of all ages and abilities to access the Santa River Trail, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa High and Middle Schools, Mesa Verde Center, and the Orange County Fairgrounds.

In August 2023, the OCTA Board of Directors approved guidelines for the $55 million Complete Streets call for projects using federal Surface Transportation Block Grant Program and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds.

The OC Complete Streets Program is intended to support local-agency projects in Orange County that further a complete streets goal and have a transportation nexus. The City of Costa Mesa submitted three projects and secured grant funding for all.

The Adams Avenue project between Fairview and Harbor will begin construction next fiscal year. The Fairview Road project will begin design next fiscal year and construction the following year. The larger Adams project between Santa Ana River and Royal Palm will start in Fiscal Year 2026-27.

MEDIA CONTACT
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City extends recruitment of volunteers needed to serve on City Committees until March 18

The Costa Mesa City Council is currently seeking residents to serve on City Committees.

Application Process – Residents who are interested in getting involved in local government are encouraged to complete a Committee Application Form from the City Clerk's Office or from the City's website (www.costamesaca.gov/apply). The completed application may be submitted online; mailed to Costa Mesa City Clerk at Post Office Box 1200, Costa Mesa, California, 92628-1200; emailed to cityclerk@costamesaca.gov; or hand-delivered to the City Clerk's Office at City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa. The deadline is 5 p.m., Monday, March 18, 2024. Appointments are tentatively scheduled for the April 2, 2024 City Council meeting.

The committees needing volunteers are listed below:

Animal Services Committee: This committee meets monthly and provides advice and recommendations to the City Council on animal services issues, promotes pet licensing, and assists with planning and execution of animal-related community events. The City is recruiting four members for a 2-year term.

For further information, please contact Recreation Coordinator Jessica Torrejon at (714) 754-5128.

Active Transportation Committee: This committee meets monthly and helps plan and implement an Active Transportation network for the City by improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the City. The committee also assists with the review, update and implementation of the city's Active Transportation Plan and evaluates the bikeability and walkability for the City in order to make recommendations to the City Council. The City is recruiting six members for a two-year term. For further information, please contact Active Transportation Coordinator Brett Atencio Thomas at (714) 754-5275.

Finance and Pension Advisory Committee: This committee meets monthly and provides advice to the City Council on issues related to significant financial matters. The committee advises annually on the adoption of the City's budget, the allocation of any budget surpluses, the City's investment performance and policies, multi-year forecasts presented by City staff to the City Council, and adjustments under consideration at the time of the mid-year budget report. The City is recruiting four members for a four-year term. Applicants shall have pension knowledge or shall be residents or individuals that conduct business within the City and have a background that includes experience in securities trading, financial planning, banking, auditing, accounting, or a closely related and relevant field. For further information, contact Executive Assistant Dina Wild at (714) 754-5243.

Housing and Public Service Grants Committee: This committee meets twice a year and helps to promote understanding of the community development process and activities funded by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Additionally, the committee rates and ranks applications for CDBG public service grants, ultimately developing funding recommendations for City

Council recommendations. The City is recruiting four members for a two-year term. For further information, contact Grant Administrator Mikelle Daily at (714) 754-5678.

Mobile Home Park Advisory Committee: This committee meets quarterly and addresses issues that will help improve the quality of life in mobile home parks and review matters concerning mobile home parks in the City. The City is recruiting for one park owner or their representative, two mobile home park residents, and one independent citizen at-large, all for a four-year term. For further information, contact Principal Planner Phayvanh Nanthavongdouangsy at (714) 754-5611.

Sandbags are available for residents to combat flooding

The rain is not done yet. Another torrential downpour is expected tonight Feb. 7.

To combat with flooding around your home, the city's maintenance service crews have made sandbags available for free to Costa Mesa residents in the southeast corner of the City Hall parking lot at 77 Fair Drive.

The location is self-service and bringing your own shovel is suggested as supplies could be limited. The number of sandbags is limited to 15 sandbags per household.

❌ No commercial use please.

City crews will patrol potential flooding spots to make sure catch basins are clear of debris and operational. Crews are also ready to respond to other weather-related incidents. Please report flooding issues to 714-754-5252 or on our Costa

Mesa 311 mobile app.

City Council meeting canceled due to inclement weather

The Feb. 6, 2024 City Council meeting has been canceled due to the continuing severe weather conditions in the region that have a formal Emergency Declaration by the governor for nine counties including Orange County. Further, the National Weather Service extended its Flash Flood Advisory through Wednesday and issued warnings for the public to avoid all travel unless absolutely essential.

All items on the agenda will be moved to the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting on February 20, 2024.

City employees are attending to emergency operations and response as needed and our public safety and Public Works teams are monitoring the situation and working to respond to road incidents, clear downed trees and debris and to assist those in need. #CostaMesaNews

For emergencies, please call 911. Here are important safety tips and resources:
✔ Don’t drive or travel during heavy rain or flooding, if possible.
✔ Stay away from streams, rivers and flood channels and do not walk, bike or drive through high water.
✔ If you must drive, please drive safely and slowly, don’t tailgate, and don’t drive into high water.
✔ Be prepared for possible power outages.
✔ Stay informed by following the City’s social media and signing up for emergency alerts including warnings and evacuation notices at CalAlerts.org.
✔ Sandbags are available for residents and businesses at the Costa Mesa City Hall, 77 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa.

Governor declares state of emergency for Orange County and seven other counties

Governor Gavin Newsom has proclaimed a state of emergency for eight counties in Southern California as a series of winter storms began impacting much of the state with high winds, damaging rain and heavy snowfall.

The proclamation covers Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. The emergency proclamation includes provisions authorizing a California National Guard response if tasked, facilitating unemployment benefits for impacted residents, and making it easier for out-of-state contractors and utilities to repair storm damage.

5 things you can to do stay safer:

☎ Stay connected. Dial 311 to get help or ask questions. If you have a critical emergency, call 911. Stay informed by signing up for emergency alerts including warnings and evacuation notices at org.
 Get your information from trusted sources. Check state and local government or emergency management websites and social media accounts for trusted information specific to your area. Local news outlets and meteorologists are also a good source of information. Be wary of posts from unknown sources on social platforms or from online ‘experts’ without credentials.
 Prepare for high winds. Before a high wind event: remove any dead trees or overhanging branches near structures, remove loose roofing material, bring in unsecured objects from patios and balconies, secure outdoor objects that could blow away, shutter windows securely and brace outside doors. During a high wind event: take cover next to a building or under

shelter, stay away from windows, stay clear of roadways and train tracks, avoid elevated areas such as roofs, watch for flying debris.
 Travel safely. Avoid non-essential travel during the peak of the storm expected Sunday and Monday. If you must drive, download the QuickMap app or visit QuickMap (ca.gov) to learn up-to-the-minute information on road conditions, traffic, closures, and more. Do not walk, swim or drive through flood waters. Turn Around, Don’t Drown! Remember, just six inches of moving water can knock you down, and one foot of moving water can sweep your vehicle away.
 Be ready in case of power outages. Take inventory of the items you need that rely on electricity. Keep your devices charged. Plan for batteries and other alternative power sources to meet your needs if the power goes out such as a portable charger or power bank. Have flashlights for every household member.

Click here for more information.

New ‘Mariposa Garden’ to be unveiled in Westside Costa Mesa

Costa Mesa will unveil its new “Mariposa Garden,” the City’s first butterfly garden featuring the first City-funded public art project on Tuesday Jan. 30 at 10 a.m. on a hillside adjacent to Marina View Park located at 1035 W. 19th St.

The City’s Public Works crews planted eight different varieties of drought tolerant plants that are a mixture of naturalized and native plants. The flora is designed to attract a variety of butterflies, including the famous monarch

butterfly that migrates 3,000 miles south for the winter from the western United States to the Sierra Madre mountains in Mexico.

Mariposa Garden is part of a larger Westside Restoration Project and West 19th Street corridor enhancements for the District 4 and District 5 neighborhoods. The project was launched to enhance neighborhoods, improve pedestrian and bicycle accessibility, repair aging infrastructure, and enhance lighting and safety.

“The restoration of the Westside is an important goal for the community,” said City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison. “We are undertaking an overall revitalization of Costa Mesa’s Westside, promoting active transportation, providing an enriching environment, and creating more open space. Mariposa Garden will be a beautiful addition to that.”



The revitalization efforts address sidewalk and curb painting maintenance, an increase of visible trash receptacles, installation of artistic bike racks, maintaining the corridors' light poles, and reducing speeds on 19th Street to make it bike and pedestrian friendly. Additionally, the City is investing in promoting the arts through place-making, murals and utility box art.

The Mariposa Garden will include a City-funded public art project that features four large butterfly sculptures and several smaller butterflies created by renowned artist Marisabel Bazan. The artist titled the sculptures "La Magia de Colleta."

Bazan is known for her colorful organic artwork and public commissions such as the Dance of the Butterflies commissioned by the Arts and Cultural Affairs Commission of West Hollywood and the Dream Big Collection at Times Square in New York City.

Work is underway to create additional butterfly gardens throughout the City in the coming months and years. Each garden will feature the word butterfly in different languages to embrace the diversity that exists in Costa Mesa.

Case is built for Carpenter to get City Manager Leadership Award

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison has presented the City Manager Leadership Award for January to the Police

Department’s Property and Evidence Supervisor Barbara Carpenter.

“This is a critical job in the department when it comes to prosecuting those who commit crimes in our City. Her commitment to excellence, proactive approach to challenges, and dedication she has shown for our organization and those she has served before us, is one to be commended. I very much appreciate her expertise in this area, and I am happy to present her with this award.”

Carpenter has been in this role for the past 13 years. Her career in Property and Evidence has spanned over 25 years, where she has made lasting impacts on the multiple agencies she has served.

Carpenter is an active member of the California Association for Property & Evidence and has served as the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Carpenter initially began her near career as a Cadet with Westminster Police Department before serving as a Community Services Officer with the Newport Beach Police Department for 10 years.

She then transitioned into the world of Property and Evidence where she worked as a P&E Technician for the Tustin Police Department before being hired as a P&E Supervisor in 2010 with the Costa Mesa Police Department.

Carpenter has excelled in maintaining a well-organized and secure property and evidence facility. Her in-depth understanding of chain of custody protocols, ensures the integrity of evidence throughout the entire process and aids in the successful prosecution of some of the most violent offenders.

Most recently, Carpenter successfully managed a large-scale project to reconfigure the agency’s offsite P&E rooms as a

result of grant funds awarded to our agency through Proposition 69. She and her amazing team successfully navigated the complicated logistics of remodeling a 2,000 square foot location.

That is no easy task to safely secure and move thousands of items of evidence that are critical to the mission's success. In addition, Carpenter has championed to procure new P&E software for the agency which was successfully adopted and will be implemented this coming year.

Carpenter holds a bachelor's degree in family development and family studies from Cal State Long Beach