

Costa Mesa Announces New Director of Economic and Development Services

Costa Mesa City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison announced that Carrie Tai, a development services expert with more than 20 years of local government experience, will be the City's new Director of Economic and Development Services.

"We conducted a nationwide search to find the right person, and Carrie quickly became our top candidate to lead this important City department," Farrell Harrison said. "I'm excited about Carrie's focus on servant leadership and developing strong relationships with residents and the business community. She is experienced in creating and implementing organization efficiencies that expedite permit processing and improve customer service."

As Director of Economic and Development Services, Tai will oversee the City's economic development, building and safety, code enforcement, planning, housing and cannabis operations. She will also be working closely on the development of the master plan for the State-owned Fairview Developmental Center property as well as manage the planning and visioning for future housing opportunities in Costa Mesa.

"Planning, economic development and code enforcement are vital functions in Costa Mesa," Mayor John Stephens said. "Our residents and businesses are entitled to outstanding service and thoughtful land-use planning. I'm confident Carrie will deliver results in these areas, and I look forward to working with her."

Tai comes to Costa Mesa from the City of Hermosa Beach, where she was the Director of Community Development, overseeing planning, building and safety and code enforcement while

leading the certification of the City's Housing Element. She also served in the City of Manhattan Beach as the Community Development Director where she launched the City's successful outdoor dining program and implemented process efficiencies throughout the department.

Prior to that, Tai was the City of Long Beach's Zoning Administrator overseeing the day-to-day planning services during one of the most extensive development periods in the City's history, including projects that resulted in more than 3,000 dwelling units. She also worked for the Port of Long Beach, the nation's second largest port, where she developed the first comprehensive update of the Port Master Plan in 30 years.

"It is an honor to join the City Manager's team and guide Costa Mesa's future growth and development for all segments of the community," Tai said. "I look forward to advancing major planning initiatives and furthering the City's ongoing efforts to ensure excellent customer service."

A native of Boston, Tai graduated from Boston Latin School, the first public high school in the United States. She holds a Bachelor's Degree with dual majors in Urban Studies and Music, as well as a Master's of Urban Planning degree from Hunter College of the City University of New York. She has been a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and is a popular speaker at industry conferences regarding state housing law, environmental review, land-use planning and leadership development.

Tai will start with the City of Costa Mesa on Wednesday, Oct. 16.