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New Leadership in San Mateo Retirements Prompt Changes to Executive City Staff

San Mateo, CA – Continuing a tradition of strong executive leadership, several key positions will be filled to protect San Mateo’s legal interests, plan for the future of the community and ensure the City is a good steward of public infrastructure.

San Mateo will soon have three new department heads including a new City Attorney, Community Development Director and Public Works Director.

“Our community has been served well by passionate and experienced executives in City leadership. I’m confident we’ll continue to retain and recruit some of the best staff who tirelessly dedicate their careers contributing to the quality of life here in San Mateo,” said Mayor Joe Goethals.

City Attorney’s Office



**Shawn
Mason**

After nearly 18 years serving San Mateo, City Attorney Shawn Mason announced he will retire in April 2021. Along with the City Manager, the City Attorney is the only other position hired directly by the City Council. This week, the Council agreed to fill Mason’s vacancy by consulting with a recruiter and forming a Council subcommittee to review applicants. The full Council will discuss and ultimately vote on who to hire as San Mateo’s new City Attorney in the coming months.

Mason, who is responsible for overseeing the City’s legal team, has a wealth of experience having been a lawyer in California since 1984. He upholds San Mateo’s legal interest on a variety of topics while representing the Council and the diverse City departments. With a primary focus in municipal land use law, Mason has worked on intricate development and planning projects such as the Bay Meadows redevelopment and Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan. He’s also overseen the managing of a number of complex entitlement, construction and financing issues for major infrastructure projects, such as the San Mateo Police Headquarters, Main Library and the Clean Water Program, which will have lasting benefits to the community.

Public Works Department

Public Works Director Brad Underwood, who has had a 34-year career in local government and came to San Mateo in 2014 after previously working as Foster City’s Public Works Director, announced he will retire at the end of the year. This critical position oversees the capital improvements and maintenance of San Mateo’s infrastructure including its wastewater treatment system, streets, public facilities, levee system and much more.

During his tenure with San Mateo, Underwood has achieved a variety of accomplishments including championing the largest infrastructure project in the City’s history – the Clean Water Program, a \$1 billion modernization of the wastewater treatment system that will



**Brad
Underwood**

serve residents for decades to come. He's also helped finalize plans for the \$180 million 25th Avenue Grade Separation Project, and Flood Zone Improvement Project that will remove hundreds of residents from the flood zone.

City Manager Drew Corbett announced he will promote Azalea Mitch to fill Underwood's vacancy as Interim Public Works Director. A current deputy director, Mitch has been with San Mateo since late 2018 and previously worked for Menlo Park's Public Works Department. She has a bachelor's degree in civil and environmental engineering, and a master's degree in environmental management with a focus in water science. She currently oversees the City's Field Maintenance, Data Management and Wastewater Treatment Plant divisions, as well as the Clean Water Program.



**Azalea
Mitch**

Community Development Department

Christina Horrisberger will become San Mateo's new Community Development Director after serving as interim. Corbett chose Horrisberger, who was the previous deputy, to fill the vacancy left by former director Kohar Kojayan earlier this year.



**Christina
Horrisberger**

Horrisberger will continue leading the department that has broad responsibilities including long-range planning, review of applications for new developments, implementation of the City's affordable housing policies, administering civic programs, fostering civic engagement, and ensuring the health, safety and maintenance of neighborhoods. The department is also in the midst updating of the City's General Plan, a multi-year community effort to plan for the future of San Mateo through 2040.

Horrisberger has 15 years of municipal experience in San Mateo and Alameda counties, and a master's degree in geography with a focus on environmental planning and natural resources management.

City Manager Corbett said these recent promotions are a testament to the value of succession planning in the competitive Bay Area.

"I'm proud to work alongside skilled and passionate employees who allow us to promote internally and retain some of the best staff in municipal government," Corbett said. "These are key positions that support quality of life in the community and their enthusiasm for public service make the City of San Mateo a wonderful place to work."

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