



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Rafael Guzman Named Director of Community and Economic Development

Guzman brings 15 years of experience in Bellflower and Whittier to Riverside

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Rafael Guzman, who has 15 years of planning and community development experience, most recently as Planning Director in Bellflower, has been named Community and Economic Development Director in Riverside. He starts on Sept. 28.

Guzman will oversee several departments that have a direct impact on the quality of life for Riverside residents and business owners, including the Office of Economic Development, Planning, Building and Safety, Code Enforcement, Real Property Services, Housing Authority, and Historic Preservation, Neighborhoods and Urban Design.

While in Bellflower, Guzman changed the Planning Department’s approach to make the department more business friendly. As a result of his work, the Los Angeles Economic Development Council named Bellflower a finalist in 2014 for the Most Business Friendly City Award. He also implemented the state’s first Self-Certification Building Plan Check program this year.

“Rafael Guzman brings the right mix of entrepreneurship and a solid background in planning, building and economic development to his new job in Riverside,” City Manager John A. Russo said. “He will be an active partner with our local community to create jobs and facilitate investment that ensures our business districts and our neighborhoods thrive.”

Guzman has worked in Bellflower for 10 years, starting as Assistant Director of Community Development and working the past three years as Planning Director. For five months in 2011, he was Bellflower’s Acting Assistant City Manager.

Prior to working in Bellflower, Guzman started his career in Whittier as an assistant planner and progressed to associate planner, senior planner, interim planning manager, and principal planner.

“Riverside is a growing and dynamic city, and I look forward working on behalf of the residents and business owners who are so strongly committed to their home,” Guzman said. “Riverside is uniquely

positioned as a leader in Inland Southern California, and I am excited about my role in creating jobs and enhancing neighborhoods.”

Guzman received his Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Analysis and Design from the University of California, Irvine. He earned his Master of Science in Environmental Policy from the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science in Syracuse.

Guzman fills the position formerly held by Al Zelinka, who was promoted earlier this year to the job of Assistant City Manager. Guzman’s salary will be \$180,000.