

AL ZELINKA, FAICP, CMSM

CAREER SUMMARY

Al Zelinka is the City Manager (and former Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director) for the City of Riverside, California. Prior to this, he was Community Development Director (and Planning Manager) for Fullerton, California. Before serving the City of Fullerton, Al was Vice President with RBF Consulting and served as Principal of RBF Consulting's Urban Design Studio. For the past thirty one years, Al's professional practice has upheld his original career objective: to "make a difference" in communities and the profession. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners, is a Certified Main Street Manager, and is certified in Community Economic Development. Al has been highly successful leading efforts for towns, cities, and developers that improve and/or revitalize neighborhoods, commercial districts, downtowns, and corridors by working with community members in meaningful ways to facilitate desired investment and achieve envisioned outcomes. Al has played an active part in well over 150 planning and development projects (nearly 30 of which have received awards), practiced planning and delivered presentations or training in more than 28 states (plus the District of Columbia), co-authored two books and wrote or co-wrote more than 30 articles, and has lectured at 15 universities. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Planning from Northern Arizona University and a Master of Regional Planning from Cornell University. Al's career highlights include:

Leadership

- Al has 20 plus years executive-level leadership experience guiding initiatives, programs, and projects for public benefit.
- He is currently 2nd Vice President for the League of California Cities, Riverside County Division, City Managers Group.
- Al is currently serving as an Advisory Board/Committee member for: Orange Home Grown, The Charles A. Bibbs African American Museum and Cultural Center, UC Riverside School of Business, USC Price Graduate Planning Program, California Baptist University School of Business, and Olive Crest.
- Northern Arizona University will induct Al into the Hall of Fame for the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences in October 2021 for his public service, service to NAU, and contributions to past, current, and future Planning students.
- He is featured in John Forester's How Spaces Become Places: Place Makers Tell Their Stories, Chapter 3: Community Building in Place—Analysis, Design and Collaboration: Preface and a Profile of Al Zelinka, (New Village Press in 2021).
- Al received the 2019 Government & Community Relations Award from the NAACP.
- Riverside Branch Al was a TEDx speaker at *The Other Things* 2016 La Sierra University TEDx event in Riverside.
- He is currently a member and a Past President of the California Planning Roundtable (served as President in 2011 and 2012), a 40-year organization dedicated to advancing the practice and profession of planning for a better California.
- He received the Kenneth Jones Excellence in Training Award from the NeighborWorks® Training Institute in May 2007 for being an "Innovator, Mentor, and Collaborator."

Authorship

- Al is a recognized thought leader on public safety through planning and urban design, on which he has authored many publications, co-authored a book for the American Planning Association entitled SafeScape: Creating Safer, More Livable Communities Through Planning and Design (March 2001), and delivered innumerable presentations and trainings.
- He co-authored an APA Planners Advisory Service Report with Susan Jackson Harden, entitled Placemaking On A Budget (December 2005) and has provided training, workshops and presentations on placemaking to thousands.
- Al has written or co-authored more than 30 articles for various publications on a range of topics.

Student Education

- He established the first scholarship endowment for planning students at Northern Arizona University.
- He has instructed courses or lectured at/for UC Irvine, Cornell University, Northern Arizona University, Sonoma State University, University of Southern California, California State University Long Beach, California State University San Bernardino, California State University Fullerton, Cal Poly Pomona, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, UC Davis Extension, UCLA Extension, UC Riverside, and University of Southern New Hampshire and has served on 10 graduate student thesis committees.

Community Service

- Al was Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 1475 in Orange from 2018-2021. (His son, John, earned the rank of Eagle Scout.)
- In his neighborhood, Al led efforts to establish a Neighborhood Watch Program and a produce exchange (called the Palmyra Produce Exchange), whereby neighbors share fruits, nuts, and vegetables grown in their yards, etc.
- He has many years board member experience with the California Downtown Association, Northern Arizona University National Alumni Association, American Planning Association chapters/sections and Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America.
- He served as a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) where he led the Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students in northern Alaska, securing and coordinating natural resource apprenticeships for 25 at-risk Alaska Native youth.

EDUCATION

MASTER OF REGIONAL PLANNING – Cornell University, May 1991. Emphasis in downtown and neighborhood revitalization, land use planning, urban design, and computer applications in planning. Two-year graduate assistantship/fellowship.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC PLANNING, MINOR IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION – Northern Arizona University, May 1989. Graduated with honors (Cum Laude). Four-year academic scholarship. *College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Hall of Fame (Induction on October 15, 2021)*. Recipient of the 2000 Rising Star Alumnus distinguished recognition by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Geography and Public Planning.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

CITY MANAGER (JUNE 2018 TO PRESENT)

CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

Reporting to the Riverside City Council, leads 2021/2022 budget of \$1.2 billion (of which \$287 million is general fund and \$116 million is capital projects), 12 departments and staff of over 2,500. Responsible for implementing the *Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan*, City Council policy and all Riverside City Charter-defined responsibilities. Specific areas of note:

- ***Financial Health.*** Established the CalPERS Challenge to address an inherited structural deficit by engaging the entire City team to assess opportunities for revenue generation and cost savings through refinancing bond indebtedness, establishing various revenue generation policies, capturing cost savings, improving the City's processing of new development, establishing Pension Stabilization Fund/Section 115 Pension Trust Account, putting in place one-time revenue policy, and issuing pension obligation bonds – all resulting in balanced budgets for Fiscal Years 2020/21 and 2021/22, including annual savings of approximately \$7+ million in CalPERS annual cost reductions. Current projections are an elimination of the structural deficit and anticipated surplus of nearly \$50 million between FY 2020-21 and FY 2021-22, not including any state or federal COVID-related funding. Presently utilizing priority-based budgeting to inform 2-year budget for 2022/23 through 2023/24. Facilitated 50% increase in year-over-year planning, building and development customers via on-line portal for the One Stop Shop (and a reduction of more than 70% of walk-in customers), achieved five-year average of record-setting new private sector building valuation in the City (\$300 million+), and rolled out a state-of-the-art GIS system.
- ***Transition of City Leadership.*** Effectively transitioned a newly elected City Council majority leadership (i.e., five of 7 City Councilmembers and a new Mayor were newly elected) by establishing comprehensive onboarding system, conducting strategic planning process (*Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan*), and putting into place protocols and systems throughout the organization that reinforce public interest and public trust in local government. Additionally, worked collaboratively to transition two new charter officers – City Attorney and City Clerk – onto the City Team.
- ***Stability During Challenging Times.*** Navigated the political, economic, community, and organizational impacts of Homelessness, the Covid-19 Pandemic, Wildfires and Social Unrest. Facilitated nearly 1/3 of City workforce working remotely or hybrid, accomplished balanced budget for Fiscal Year 2021/22, transitioned to a fully state-of-the-art GIS system, stood up and achieved third year of record-setting investment in the City (exceeding \$300m of building valuation), and worked with the Chief of Police to develop a community-based policing strategy based on the pillars of 21st Century Policing, that included establishing a system of Public Safety Engagement Teams (PSET) comprised of police, code enforcement, homeless outreach and street nurse, as well as the Park and Neighborhood Specialist (PANS) program of 20 non-sworn professionals traversing the City's parks and neighborhoods on foot or electric-assisted bicycles 7-days a week to “keep the peace through peaceful means,” build relationships with residents, businesses, and visitors, enforce park rules, and serve as eyes and ears for the Police, Homeless Outreach, Code Enforcement, PSET, and other City functions.

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER (FEBRUARY 2015 TO JUNE 2018)

CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

On behalf of the City Manager, oversaw City services pertaining to infrastructure, investment, and engagement, including Community & Economic Development Department; Public Works Department; Innovation & Technology Department (beginning December 2017); Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department (beginning December 2017) and, Office of Communications. Oversee 2017/18 budget of \$201 million (including Successor Agency debt service, CDBG, etc.) and staff of 655. Key initiatives of responsibility:

- ***Streamline Riverside, Build Riverside & One Stop Shop.*** Through Streamline Riverside, oversaw reformation of planning and development regulations and procedures, and consequently revised most fees downward, to efficiently facilitate private investment without sacrificing quality outcomes in the built environment. Through Build Riverside, directed effort to improve customer service and enhance the performance of all inspection and field service staff to improve in-the-field efficiency for all activities occurring between building permit issuance through grand opening/ribbon-cutting. Through the One Stop Shop, relocated nearly 100 staff from all development-related departments and aligned processes and timelines, to create a single City Hall location in-person and on-line that serves the public's investment needs. The

One Stop Shop, after more than 18 months of service, maintained an all-time average of 97% positive feedback via the HappyOrNot system. More than 100 state, county, and local government representatives have toured or received presentations on the Riverside One Stop Shop as a model for California.

- **Grow Riverside.** Expanded upon the initial 2014 Grow Riverside conference by establishing more components of a strong local food system as a significant economic development opportunity. This initiative takes advantage of Riverside's heritage, advantageous geographic location, local water and electric resources, as well as its 7½-square miles of permanently protected agricultural land, its supply of industrial land (for indoor agriculture, food processing, and food distribution) and significant rail and truck transportation network. Outcomes included the establishment of the non-profit Riverside Food Systems Alliance, establishment of a Food Hub, creation of a new farmer education program, and partnerships among Riverside's 3 universities and 1 college to expand academic, experiential learning, and research in the local food system.
- **Downtown Riverside.** Attracting and facilitating infill mixed use housing, cultural and entertainment attractions, hotel and visitor-serving features, unique food and retail settings, and public space enhancements. Nearly 1000 dwelling units and 350 hotel rooms in the pipeline or under construction. Riverside Live!, the new Main Library, the Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art, Industry & Culture, the Food Lab and Game Lab, Centerpointe, The Mark, and innumerable public art projects are examples of the investment in-process or facilitated.
- **Sustainable Economic Development.** Facilitated a strong and resilient local economy by maximizing the opportunities for entrepreneurship and strategic recruitment of uses. This responsibility includes serving on the leadership team that resulted in Riverside being selected by the California Air Resources Board for relocation of its nearly \$450 million LEED Platinum Net Zero research and testing facility (including 440+ scientist, engineering and technical research jobs); implemented a strategic approach to developing prosperity through leverage of local assets and local talent; and, identified and developed of catalyst projects that connect existing resources and industries.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR (JULY 2012 TO FEBRUARY 2015)

CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA

As a member of the City Manager's economic development team, managed a \$9.3 million General Fund budget (\$44.5 million including Successor Agency debt service, CDBG, etc.) and direct the efforts of 100-person plus team to facilitate investment that is consistent with the City's objectives and the community's expectations. Oversee operations of city planning, building, code enforcement, neighborhoods, historic preservation, urban design, housing authority, successor agency, real property, grants, and homeless services. A range of strategic actions were implemented:

- **Instill Alignment Within City Hall and With Community.** Successfully merged Development Department (i.e. former Redevelopment Agency) into Community Development Department and reorganized blended departments into new work teams and aligning mission with the City Manager's Office of Economic Development. Formed OneTeam Committee to allow staff members to identify new and better ways to work together and deliver services. Co-established Collaborative Development meeting to allow interdepartmental leaders to discuss strategic development opportunities. Conducted daily 30-minute dialogues with employees to get to know each better, hear ideas and concerns, and reinforce a positive rapport. Supported expansion of Code Enforcement's Service Driven Initiative to enhance customer/public service, called the Service Excellence Program. Successfully built partnerships with public, private, non-profit, and faith-based organizations to advance strategic planning and economic development initiatives. Participated on City Manager's transparency committee and led effort to integrate *MindMixer* as a central part of *EngageRiverside* ~ the City's transparency portal on its website.
- **Integrate Technology & Private-Sector Services.** Using AB2766 Subvention Funds, procured and implemented Avolve Software's ProjectDox online plan submittal and plan check system (renamed with the working title of "ePlan Review" for use and promotion within the City of Riverside) - resulting in \$10,000 per month of combined savings to the City and customers. Led extensive multi-departmental effort to identify and select a permit tracking software program to replace antiquated system. Through a State Historic Preservation Office Grant, supported creation of Riverside Landmarks, a free and fun mobile application that identifies the City's Landmark buildings. Instituted use of contract planners and planning firms to supplement current and advanced planning capacities and expertise of staff. Oversaw Building & Safety Division enhancements including on-call consultants retained to address extra plan check volume and other building services; expanded over-the-counter plan check options (as a result, named 2013 "Building Department of the Year" for California).
- **Inspire Reinvestment & City Building.** Secured more than \$1 million in grants to conduct fixed guideway transit feasibility study and an integrated Climate Action Plan with an Economic Prosperity Plan. Recruited a Heroes restaurant as a catalyst for revitalizing a challenged location within Downtown Riverside. Attracted Ratkovich Properties to Downtown Riverside to undertake adaptive reuse and mixed-use infill development for the historic Imperial Hardware building. Led creation of a March 19-20, 2014, GrowRiverside: Citrus & Beyond! conference that resulted in a sold-out crowd of 425

people and inspired renewed interest in local agriculture as well as expanded food-related economic development. Championed Business Ready Riverside, which focused on integrating efficiencies in processing planning and building applications, updating the sign code, and putting in place a reliable funding program for ongoing technology enhancements. Initiated Our Riverside, Our Neighborhoods, the most significant ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) neighborhood strategy effort occurring in the United States at that time (in partnership with Riverside Neighborhood Partnership, the Davenport Institute, John McKnight, and others). Led adoption of or amendments to several significant specific plans: California Baptist University Specific Plan; Riverside Community Hospital Specific Plan/Environmental Impact Report; and Riverside Auto Center Specific Plan.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR (JUNE 2010 TO JUNE 2012)
PLANNING MANAGER (JULY 2008 TO JUNE 2010)

CITY OF FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA

Managed \$6 million budget and led 26-person (plus interns and contract staff) department comprising planning and development services division, building and code enforcement division, and housing and community rehabilitation division. Accomplishments included:

- ***Created a More Effective and Efficient Department.*** Reorganized department and re-aligned operations to achieve efficiencies and performance: merged building and code enforcement divisions to result in seamless coordination that achieves faster resolution of building-related code violations; merged planning division and development services (i.e. customer service counter) to fine-tune customer service and ensure applications are processed effectively and efficiently from the start; integrated contract building plan check and inspection services to respond to fluctuating service demands; established reforms to development review process and processing of environmental review (i.e., CEQA) to implement the Permit Streamlining Act while streamlining efforts to facilitate investment while not compromising quality outcomes; facilitated efforts to integrate ProjectDox (by Avolve) on-line plan submittal and plan check system to reduce costs of doing business and increase staff productivity; and, right-sized and restructured department to address staff performance, dissolution of redevelopment, and general fund revenue reductions while maintaining exceptional customer service.
- ***Planned for a Vital Future.*** Oversaw significant planning and resource development achievements: Directed *The Fullerton Plan* general plan update from start to finish, including broad support from the community and other interests; adoption of multi-hazards mitigation plan; adoption of housing element; adoption of *Fullerton Transportation Specific Plan*, which includes a form-based code and institutes administrative approval of projects through consistency review by an extension-of-staff “Town Architect;” completed and/or initiated two SCAG Compass Blueprint Demonstration Projects: *Fullerton Downtown3D*, a three-dimensional GIS- and SketchUp-based digital model of Downtown Fullerton and *Fullerton Smart Growth 2030*, a guide to the next generation of funding and financing strategies for public infrastructure and development. Directed efforts to: secure nearly \$3.5 million in grant funding for planning and capital projects; received designation in 2010 as the only Gold-level Catalyst Community in the Southern California region (and 1 of only 5 in California); received awards from Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association (California Chapter and Orange County Section), and Southern California Association of Governments.

VICE PRESIDENT AND SHAREHOLDER (MAY 1997 TO JULY 2008)

RBF CONSULTING, IRVINE, CALIFORNIA

PROMOTIONS: ASSOCIATE (2000), SENIOR ASSOCIATE (2003), STOCKHOLDER (2004), VICE PRESIDENT (2007)

- As Principal of RBF Consulting’s Urban Design Studio, managed division with 20 team members company-wide and approximately \$15 million in annual contracts. Project director and project manager for the preparation of community-based urban design, neighborhood, and downtown revitalization plans, community involvement processes, and implementation programs. Led or played an active role in more than 80 projects, for which 25 professional awards were received. Sample projects include: Pasadena, CA—Green Building Outreach and Education Program; San Jose, CA—Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Demonstration Projects; Glendora, CA—Route 66 Specific Plan; Yorba Linda, CA—Town Center Blue Ribbon Committee Report; and Tustin, CA—Legacy Park (MCAS Tustin) Design Guidelines.

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICE

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION – Fellow of the American Institute of Certified Planners (March 2010); American Institute of Certified Planners (1994, #11175); Certificate in Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (June 1996); Certified Main Street Manager (March 2000); Professional Certificate in Community Economic Development (June 2004).

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES GLADLY PROVIDED UPON REQUEST