

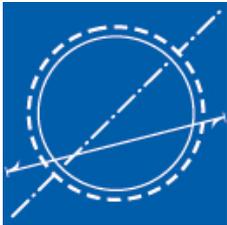
# 2026 PLANNING OFFICIALS FORUM



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# PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

8:00 AM - 8:30 AM	Registration and Breakfast	East Room
8:45 AM - 9:30 AM	<b>Morning Keynote Speaker: Vince Bertoni,</b> <i>AICP Rebuilding after 2025 LA Fires</i>	East Room
9:30 AM - 9:40 AM	Networking Break	Exhibitor Hall
<b>SESSION BLOCK 1</b> 9:40 AM - 11:10 AM	<b>Resiliency to Climate Change Through Building and Fire Codes</b>	East Room
	<b>Partnering for Resiliency: Anaheim Riverwalk</b>	Presidential Room
11:10 AM - 11:20 AM	Networking Break	Exhibitor Hall
<b>SESSION BLOCK 2</b> 11:20 AM - 12:50 PM	<b>Building Resilience: Advancing Infill Housing and Navigating CEQA Through AB 130/SB 131 for a More Resilient Orange County</b>	East Room
	<b>Water and Fire: San Clemente's Dual Approach to Coastal Resilience and Wildfire Risk Reduction</b>	Presidential Room
12:55 PM - 1:40 PM	<b>Lunch Keynote Speaker: Jocelyn Gubler</b> <i>Economic Resilience</i>	East Room
<b>SESSION BLOCK 3</b> 1:45 PM - 3:15 PM	<b>California's Housing and Planning Landscape: Legislative Dynamics, New Statutes, and What Comes Next</b>	East Room
	<b>From Legacy Burden to Regulatory Equity: Righting Historical Wrongs in Santa Ana's Transit Zoning Code</b>	Presidential Room

# MORNING KEYNOTE SPEAKER INFORMATION

8:45 TO 9:30 AM · EAST HALL



**Vince Bertoni, AICP**  
*Director of Planning,*  
*City of Los Angeles*

Vince Bertoni is the Director of Planning for the City of Los Angeles and has over 33 years of professional planning experience. Vince leads the largest city planning department in the nation, with over 400 employees, that is charged with developing policies that shape the future of the City and guide development decisions for a diverse and dynamic metropolis of over 4 million people. In this role, he has led the Department's efforts to increase the production of housing, emphasizing affordable housing, through the creation and implementation

of the Priority Housing Project Program, the Transit Oriented Communities (TOC) Program, and preparation of the Plan to House LA (General Plan Housing Element); imbed equity in the City's land use practices through the establishment of the Office of Racial Justice, Equity, and Transformative Planning; expand community engagement by setting up the Department's Community Liaison program and the Office of Communication; and advance data-informed decision-making by forming the Department's Performance Management Unit.

Prior to this, Vince was the Director of Planning and Community Development for the City of Pasadena where he successfully managed Pasadena's city planning program through a General Plan update, a comprehensive visioning process that happens just once every 20 years. He also served previously as Deputy Director for Los Angeles City Planning and held lead planning posts for the cities of Beverly Hills, Santa Clarita, and Malibu.

Vince is a member of the Big City Planning Directors Association and the California Planning Roundtable. He served on the Board of Directors of the League of California Cities and as President of the League's Planning & Community Development Department. Vince has been active on statewide housing legislation, having served on the Housing Element Reform Working Group formed by the State Assembly and Senate and testified before the State Senate on infill housing development strategies. In addition, he held several leadership positions with the California Chapter of the American Planning Association including President, Vice President for Policy & Legislation, Director of the Los Angeles Section, and Co-Chair of the American Planning Association's 2012 National Planning Conference.

Vince has a Bachelor's Degree in Transportation and Urban Geography from San Diego State University and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

# SESSION 1

9:40 AM TO 11:10 AM

## Resiliency to Climate Change Through Building and Fire Codes

As California faces increasing climate-driven risks which include: wildfires, extreme heat, flooding, and power reliability issues, local jurisdictions play a critical role in protecting communities. While high-level climate policy often focuses on general plans and climate action plans, the most immediate and enforceable tools for resiliency are the California Building Standards Code and California Fire Code.

This session will demonstrate how building and fire officials, planners, and decision-makers can integrate climate resiliency into development review, entitlement processes, and local amendments. Using real examples from Orange County and Southern California, this session will highlight practical strategies for strengthening community resilience through construction standards, WUI requirements, defensible space, energy systems, emergency power, and heat-mitigation measures. The session aligns with the forum theme by showing how climate goals become real through the built environment.

### LOCATION: EAST ROOM

#### SPEAKERS

**David A. Dent CASp, CBO, MCP, AICP**  
*Deputy Director/ Chief Building Official,  
City of Garden Grove*

**John Bowden**  
*Asst. Fire Marshal, Orange County Fire Authority*

**Karyn Beebe**  
*International Code Council*

**Daniel Fox**  
*MHP Structural Engineers*

## Partnering for Resiliency: Anaheim Riverwalk

The OC River Walk project will transform a section of the Santa River into the new Downtown of Orange County through close partnerships resulting in environmental, economic, recreational and visual benefits.

### LOCATION: PRESIDENTIAL ROOM

#### SPEAKERS

**Ana Straabe**  
*Principal Project Planner, City of Anaheim*

**JJ Jimenez**  
*Parks Manager, City of Anaheim*

**Ryan Bouley**  
*Orange County Water District*

**Matthew Hicks**  
*OC Vibe*



# SESSION 2

11:20 AM - 12:50 PM

## **Building Resilience: Advancing Infill Housing and Navigating CEQA Through AB 130/SB 131 for a More Resilient Orange County**

California's evolving regulatory landscape, including AB 130 and SB 131, offers both new opportunities and challenges for developing resilient, sustainable communities. This panel features a developer, a city official, a CEQA consultant, and a land use attorney who will discuss the impact of these laws and infill initiatives on the future of housing and land use in Orange County. They will examine strategies for balancing environmental and economic resilience, streamlining CEQA compliance, and promoting infill development to address climate adaptation and the region's critical housing needs.

Attendees will receive practical insights on risk management, regulatory best practices, and collaborative approaches to leveraging these tools for long-term community vitality, sustainable growth, and expanded housing opportunities.

**LOCATION: EAST ROOM**

### **SPEAKERS**

#### **Konnie Dobрева**

*JD, VP of Environmental Planning,  
EPD Solutions*

#### **Laurel Reimer, AICP**

*Principal at Sagecrest Planning & Environmental*

#### **Louisa Felleto**

*Forward Planning Manager, Meritage Homes*

#### **Sean Matsler**

*Cox, Castle & Nicholson LLP*

#### **Ben Zbeda, AICP**

*Planning Manager for City of Newport Beach*

## **Water and Fire: San Clemente's Dual Approach to Coastal Resilience and Wildfire Risk Reduction**

A joint presentation from City of San Clemente staff responsible for coastal management, wildfire mitigation, and emergency preparedness.

**The panel will describe:**

- The history of San Clemente's coastal erosion challenges, the role of the Coastal Administrator, and the strategic projects underway to restore and protect five miles of public beaches that serve more than 2 million visitors annually.

- Pre-fire management and defensible-space operations conducted in partnership with OCFA, including thousands of annual inspections, HOA fuel-modification oversight, and public education programs.

- The expansion of the City's wildfire-fuel-reduction initiatives, including goat grazing, which expand upon the City's annual Weed Abatement Program.

- How emergency management and planning staff coordinate to appropriately update the LHMP and Safety Element to address emerging fire threats, prepare for wildfire response and maintain continuity during high-risk events.

Attendees will leave with replicable tools, strategies, and planning frameworks for managing both coastal and wildfire hazards in a rapidly changing climate.

**LOCATION:  
PRESIDENTIAL ROOM**

### **SPEAKERS**

#### **Adam Atamian, MPA, AICP**

*Community Development Director,  
City of San Clemente*

#### **Leslea Meyerhoff, AICP**

*Costal Administrator, City of San Clemente*

# LUNCH KEYNOTE SPEAKER INFORMATION

12:55 PM - 1:40 PM · EAST HALL



## **Jocelyn Gubler**

***Simon Property Group, Inc.***

Vice President, Development

Ms. Gubler has served as the Vice President of Development with Simon Property Group, Inc. (Simon) since September 2015. In her role, Ms. Gubler actively manages development for a portfolio of twenty-seven (27) outlet and regional mall properties in fourteen (14) states. She also identifies new development, re-development, and economic incentive opportunities for over 40 million square feet of commercial space in both urban and suburban areas. Additionally, her responsibilities include managing compliance with state and local development ordinances and requirements for new and existing development. She appears before local and regional bodies as ownership representative in governmental proceedings.

Prior to her tenure in development, Ms. Gubler served as Senior Legal Collections Attorney for Simon where, for six (6) years, she negotiated the settlement of or oversaw litigation of over 400 concurrently active matters, developed and implemented internal policies and procedures relative to the handling of commercial litigation, and provided legal analysis and recommendations to management in the following areas of law: commercial, bankruptcy, landlord-tenant relations, real estate development, and contracts.

Ms. Gubler earned both her Juris Doctorate and a Masters in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from Indiana University. She also holds a Bachelors of Science in Business Administration from the University of Nevada, and is a certified civil mediator. She currently resides in Los Angeles, California.

Simon is a global leader in retail real estate ownership, management and development and a S&P 100 company (Simon Property Group, NYSE: SPG). Our industry-leading retail properties and investments across North America, Europe and Asia provide shopping experiences for millions of consumers every day and generate billions in annual retail sales.

# SESSION 3

1:45 PM - 3:15 PM

## **California's Housing and Planning Landscape: Legislative Dynamics, New Statutes, and What Comes Next**

This session provides planning professionals with a forward looking, technically grounded briefing on the most consequential state legislation enacted in 2025, with particular attention to SB 79 (Wiener), AB 130 (2025 Housing and CEQA Trailer Bill), and related reforms reshaping land use authority, CEQA streamlining, housing element oversight, and development processing.

Rather than offering a simple implementation checklist, the discussion frames these new laws within the political dynamics that produced them, including the Legislature's shifting housing bloc, evolving negotiations around local control, early signals from the Governor's Office, and the growing tension between state production mandates and regional planning constraints.

Participants will gain clarity on what these bills actually require, how cities should prepare for the coming year, and which legislative themes are already emerging for the 2026 session. The goal is to provide Orange County planning directors with a realistic understanding of the State's policy trajectory and its implications for local planning strategy, entitlement processes, and interagency coordination.

### **LOCATION: EAST ROOM**

#### **SPEAKERS**

**Carlin Shelby**

*Deputy Director, Townsend Public Affairs*

**Elisa Arcidiacono**

*Senior Associate,  
Townsend Public Affairs*

## **From Legacy Burden to Regulatory Equity: Righting Historical Wrongs in Santa Ana's Transit Zoning Code**

For decades, the vibrant Logan and Lacy neighborhoods endured entrenched Environmental Justice (EJ) conditions. This stemmed from a legacy of past planning decisions that deliberately concentrated noxious land uses within these communities of color. Staff and City leadership, inspired by years of persistent neighborhood advocacy, accepted a major challenge: to fundamentally update the Transit Zoning Code (TZC) zoning district, making it the ultimate regulatory framework for equity. This action was essential to right past wrongs and usher in a new future. The journey required addressing the history of environmental burden and analyzing past successes and failures in earlier attempts at reform. Ultimately, the new strategy focused on zoning code amendments and the crucial legal tool of amortization, designed to initiate the responsible and equitable phase-out of non-compliant noxious land uses. This complex effort demanded critical political courage and navigated the challenge through extensive outreach and coalition building among City staff, residents, and elected officials.

Attendees will leave with actionable insights on outcomes and next steps for implementation, and detail the lessons learned from this pioneering model. The new TZC stands as a testament to the necessity of political will and collaboration, ensuring regulatory updates become profound acts of historical rectification and environmental justice.

### **LOCATION: PRESIDENTIAL ROOM**

#### **SPEAKERS**

**Ali Pezeshkpour**

*Executive Director of Planning and Building,  
City of Santa Ana*

**Ricardo Soto**

*Planning Manager, City of Santa Ana*

**Margarita Macedonio**

*Principal Planner, City of Santa Ana*

# SPEAKER INFORMATION



## **Elisa Arcidiacono**

Elisa Arcidiacono brings more than 14 years of legislative, budget, and public policy experience advancing housing, homelessness, land use, and surplus land redevelopment initiatives for local governments across California. Her background includes senior leadership roles in the California State Assembly, the League of California Cities, Los Angeles County government, and Townsend Public Affairs, where she manages complex legislative and funding strategies for municipal clients.

Elisa has secured major state housing investments through the budget process, including \$10 million for transitional housing for youth experiencing homelessness and \$3.5 million tied to the redevelopment of state surplus property into locally driven housing and community facilities at the Fairview Developmental Center. She has drafted and shepherded budget trailer bill language governing state property disposition and local reuse, working directly with the Department of General Services and the Department of Housing and Community Development to align state asset strategy with local housing and service delivery priorities.

## **Adam Atamian**

Adam serves as the Community Development Director for the City of San Clemente, California, where he oversees the City's land use planning, zoning, building, code compliance, real estate asset management, and emergency management functions. His work focuses on the intersection of long-range planning, regulatory implementation, and hazard mitigation, with an emphasis on aligning local land use policy with evolving state mandates, environmental constraints, and community resilience objectives.

Adam has led or overseen major initiatives including the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update, wildfire fuel-reduction and vegetation management programs, and emergency preparedness/response planning and training. His efforts reflect core planning principles such as risk-informed decision-making, interagency coordination, adaptive management, and balancing public safety with environmental stewardship and economic vitality. He works closely with elected officials, public safety agencies, and community stakeholders to translate complex technical and regulatory issues into implementable local policy. Adam holds a Master of Public Administration degree, and is a certified planner with the American Institute of Certified Planners.



## **Karyn Beebe**

Karyn (Bailey) Beebe is the Regional Manager of Government Relations for the International Code Council (ICC), where she leads outreach and policy engagement efforts with state and local jurisdictions to support the adoption, implementation, and effective use of model building codes. In her role, Karyn works closely with public officials, building and fire departments, and allied organizations to advance building safety, resilience, and sustainability initiatives.

Based in San Diego, California, Karyn brings a strong background in public-sector collaboration and stakeholder engagement. She holds a degree from Purdue University and has built an extensive professional network across the code, construction, and government communities. Her work focuses on strengthening partnerships between ICC and jurisdictions, providing technical resources, and supporting policy discussions that promote safe, sustainable, and resilient built environments.



# SPEAKER INFORMATION



## **Ryan Bouley**

Ryan Bouley is Director of Engineering for the Orange County Water District where he oversees a team of Engineers that manage District projects from initial stages of concept and feasibility to the final stages of design, construction, and commissioning. Ryan has extensive expertise in civil and groundwater recharge related projects, spanning 25 years of construction and project management.

Since joining OCWD in 2014, Ryan has directed various stages of planning, design, construction, and commissioning of various capital and maintenance projects, and more recently, Ryan and his Team have coordinated with various stakeholders including consultants, contractors, State regulators, and groundwater retail agencies to further the District's efforts to develop cost effective PFAS treatment processes, all with the goal of providing a reliable supply of high-quality water for more than 2.5 million residents in north and central Orange County.



## **John Bowden**

John Bowden is a senior fire protection professional with the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA), where he works closely with cities, building officials, and development teams on fire prevention, life-safety requirements, and fire code implementation. His role focuses on ensuring consistent application of fire and building codes across jurisdictions while supporting safe and efficient project delivery.

John is well regarded for his collaborative approach and deep practical knowledge of fire protection systems, emergency access, and development review. He regularly partners with local agencies and regional organizations to address complex code issues, promote public safety, and support resilient community development throughout Orange County.



## **David Dent**

David Dent, AICP, CBO, CASp, serves as Deputy Director of Community Development for Building & Safety with the City of Garden Grove, where he provides executive leadership over building inspection, plan review, code enforcement coordination, and permitting operations. David oversees the implementation and enforcement of the California Building Standards Code and local ordinances, while advancing organizational efficiency, customer service, and interdepartmental collaboration. He is known for his pragmatic, solutions-oriented leadership style and his commitment to building safety, accessibility, resilience, and equitable development outcomes.

David brings a multidisciplinary background as a certified planner, building official, accessibility specialist, licensed architect, and contractor. His professional experience spans both the public and private sectors, including municipal leadership, project management, and design-build practice. He is deeply engaged in policy development, sustainable construction, and community-focused development initiatives throughout Southern California.

# SPEAKER INFORMATION



## **Konnie Dobreva**

Konnie Dobreva brings more than 25 years of public- and private-sector planning and legal experience, making her an expert in land use entitlements, environmental and policy planning, and strategic project development. She has managed and prepared environmental documents for a wide range of projects and clients, including small-scale residential developments, large master-planned communities, commercial office, industrial, mixed-use projects, and schools. Konnie's professional planning experience includes roles with the City of Lake Forest and as a planning consultant for the cities of Irvine, Anaheim, and Rancho Santa Margarita. Konnie holds a Juris Doctor from Pepperdine University School of Law and a Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution from the Strause Institute for Dispute Resolution.

Konnie's diverse background provides her with a unique and practical understanding of planning and zoning law and CEQA. She is a frequent lecturer for the Association of Environmental Professionals, teaching both the Advanced and Basics CEQA Workshops, and serves as the organization's Executive Vice President.



## **Louisa Felletto**

Louisa Felletto brings over 15 years of design and project management expertise to her role as leader of the Meritage Homes entitlement team. With a strong foundation in residential architecture and a proven track record of designing innovative infill projects, Louisa ensures that every community reflects thoughtful, high-quality placemaking.

At Meritage Homes, she directs the entitlement team through some of the company's most complex projects, combining creativity and strategic thinking to navigate intricate design challenges. Her collaborative approach fosters productive partnerships with design professionals, city staff, and community stakeholders. Louisa's leadership and organizational skills drive an integrated design process that aligns vision, compliance, and execution.

Beyond her professional role, Louisa is deeply engaged in advancing the building industry. She serves as a Board Member for the Building Industry Association of Southern California – Orange County Chapter and is an active member of the Urban Land Institute, where she leads various programs for the Orange County / Inland Empire District Council.



## **Daniel Fox**

Daniel (Dan) Fox is a licensed Structural Engineer and Associate / Project Manager at MHP Structural Engineers, where he oversees project production within the firm's Design and Renovation group from predesign through construction completion. With more than 20 years of professional experience, Dan has led a wide range of projects including education facilities, multi-family housing, and retail developments.

Dan's technical expertise spans wood, steel, masonry, cast-in-place concrete, and prestressed concrete systems. His work includes both new building design and complex seismic evaluation, strengthening, and renovation projects, including performance-based seismic evaluations and retrofits in accordance with ASCE 41 standards. He works closely with architects, owners, and contractors to identify structural systems and retrofit strategies that balance performance, constructability, budget, and program requirements.

In addition to his project work, Dan is actively engaged in advancing the structural engineering profession. He currently serves as President-Elect of the Structural Engineers Association of Southern California, contributing to professional development, advocacy, and technical leadership within the industry.

# SPEAKER INFORMATION



## **Matthew Hicks**

Matthew Hicks is Vice President of Public Affairs for OCVICE, the transformative mixed-use entertainment and community development in Anaheim's Platinum Triangle. In this role, he leads communications and stakeholder engagement for the project — which includes parks, housing, entertainment venues, restaurants, and cultural spaces around the Honda Center and ARTIC transit hub — helping to articulate its vision and community benefits. He also serves as Secretary on the OC Forum Executive Committee, connecting civic and business leaders across Orange County. Matthew brings deep experience in public affairs and development advocacy, engaging with government partners, community stakeholders, and media to support one of Southern California's most ambitious urban projects.



## **JJ Jimenez**

JJ Jimenez, Parks Manager for the City of Anaheim's Community Services Department, manages parks operations, facility scheduling, and capital planning. With over 20 years' experience working in Anaheim, including previously as Principal Planner, he is responsible for overseeing more than 70 full-time and part-time employees, 68 urban and natural parks, and 700-acres of parkland. He has a BA in Business Administration and a Masters in Public Administration. Through collaborative relationships, his goal is to maintain clean, green, and safe parks in an effort to create strong and equitable communities and meet the needs of a growing, aging, and changing population.



## **Margarita Macedonio**

Margarita G. Macedonio is a Principal Planner who has been working for the City of Santa Ana since June 2007. She supervises the Neighborhood Initiatives and Environmental Services section, which provides training, grant support, and public engagement for development projects and citywide public policies. Margarita serves as the Environmental Justice (EJ) staff person overseeing the implementation of the City's General Plan EJ policies. She collaborates with disadvantaged communities, regulatory agencies, and other departments on investigating pollution exposure concerns, technical assistance, and funding to help reduce harmful pollutants and associated health risks in the community. Margarita worked with the Los Angeles Community Development Authority and Housing Authority City of Los Angeles. She holds a Master's Degree in Urban Planning from UCLA.



## **Sean Matsler, Esq.,**

Sean Matsler is a land use partner in the firm's Orange County office. His practice focuses on securing entitlements for controversial and complex real estate development projects.

Sean advises clients on compliance with the myriad local, state and federal laws and regulations that govern the development of real property, including local planning and zoning regulations, the California Coastal Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. Sean guides his clients through the entitlement process, from site selection to project approval, and regularly appears before both state and local administrative bodies to secure approvals on behalf of clients.

# SPEAKER INFORMATION

## **Leslea Meyerhoff**

Leslea is current serving the City of San Clemente as the Coastal Administrator. Leslea is a certified coastal planner and CEQA practitioner with 20+ years of professional experience and the Founder of the Summit Environmental Group. Summit was established in 2006 to provide premier coastal policy, resiliency planning and environmental compliance services to public agencies throughout California. Leslea's areas of expertise include coastal resiliency building, policy development, impact assessment, permitting, project management and adjunct staff services. Leslea is committed to consistently providing the highest level of client service and functioning as adjunct public agency staff.



Leslea has represented a wide variety of public agencies throughout Southern California and successfully managed public beach restoration projects in the City of San Clemente and City of Solana Beach. Leslea is also assisting LA County in building coastal resilience on some of the beaches where she grew up. Leslea is a first generation Californian and has spent the majority of her professional career as a coastal consultant assisting public agencies restore their shorelines to prepare for long term resilience. Leslea has also worked as a legislative aide in the California State Assembly and LA City Council.

## **Ali Pezeshkpour**

Ali Pezeshkpour serves as the Executive Director of the Planning and Building Agency for the City of Santa Ana and is a member of the AICP. He has been working for Santa Ana since February 2011, where for the majority of his career in the Planning Division he oversaw efforts in long-range and advance planning, development processing, public counter, historic preservation and urban design, neighborhood initiatives, environmental justice efforts, and cannabis programs. His environmental experiences include environmental impact reports of various sub-types, mitigated negative declarations, complex exemptions, and various addenda, including a successful addendum to a 1983 EIR. As Director, Ali now oversees the Planning, Building Safety, Code Enforcement, and Administrative Services divisions, which are in place to ensure the highest standards of development and neighborhood quality in the City. In addition to working for the City, Ali served as a part-time adjunct professor for the RSCCD where he taught courses on urban planning and ordinance writing to aspiring code enforcement professionals. Ali holds bachelor's degrees in Community & Regional Development and French from UC Davis and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from UC Irvine. Outside of work, he enjoys playing the piano, writing Wikipedia articles, traveling and camping, and cooking.



## **Laurel Reimer**

Laurel Reimer has worked in the public and private sector since 2008 focusing on entitlements, compliance, and supporting jurisdictions and private clients through creative problem solving. She has worked with dozens of jurisdictions throughout the West Coast and has a keen understanding of government procedures, laws, ordinances, and zoning related to housing development. Laurel has managed complex residential developments in jurisdictions throughout southern California and is adept at analyzing residential developments to determine if new state laws and provisions, as it relates to environmental review, are appropriate for a project. Laurel has worked with a number of cities on their housing element implementation efforts and served as the Project Manager for the City of Santa Fe Springs Comprehensive General Plan update and Targeted Zoning Code update in 2022. Most recently, she serves as the Project Manager for the City of Temecula Comprehensive General Plan Update. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography and Environmental Studies from University of California, Los Angeles and a Master of Urban and Regional Planning from University of California, Irvine.



# SPEAKER INFORMATION



## **Carlin Shelby**

Carlin Shelby brings a decade of experience in California state legislative advocacy focused on housing production, land use regulation, municipal finance, and infrastructure policy. At Townsend Public Affairs, she leads housing and land use strategies for cities navigating the state's expanding housing mandate framework, including Builder's Remedy exposure, transit-oriented development upzoning, CEQA streamlining, wildfire constraints, and statewide housing bond implementation. Carlin maintains strong working relationships with legislative leadership, committee consultants, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and local government coalitions, enabling her to operate effectively at every stage of the legislative and budget process.

Carlin has extensive experience working on California housing and land use policy, with a focus on how statewide housing mandates interact with local planning authority, infrastructure capacity, and wildfire risk. Her broader portfolio includes budget and funding advocacy to support local housing, homelessness, and infrastructure programs.



## **Ricardo Soto**

Ricardo Soto serves as the Planning Manager for the City of Santa Ana. He is also member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Throughout his tenure with Santa Ana, which began in 2014, Ricardo has worked on a wide range of projects, including development project processing, historic preservation initiatives, ordinance updates, the City's first update to its General Plan since 1982, and served as the project lead for the 6th cycle housing element update. Ricardo is currently overseeing the comprehensive update of Santa Ana's zoning code, which has not been undertaken since the 1960s. He holds a Master of Planning degree from the University of Southern California. In his free time, Ricardo enjoys exploring new restaurants, discovering interesting neighborhoods in the greater Los Angeles area, and spending time outdoors.



## **Ana Straabe**

Ana Straabe is the Principal Project Planner for the City of Anaheim's Parks Division. She is responsible for identifying, planning, and implementing park capital improvement projects throughout the City. She works directly with the community, staff, agency partners, and funders on planning needs and funding strategies. She has a BA in Geography with a focus in Environmental and Land-Use Planning and has over 15 years of experience in park planning.



## **Ben Zbeda**

Ben Zbeda serves as the Planning Manager and Zoning Administrator for the City of Newport Beach, where he has proudly worked for over 15 years. Over that time, he has led and contributed to a wide range of current and advanced planning efforts, from evaluating the keeping of urban chickens and recreational horses to implementing progressive commercial parking standards and other forward-thinking policies. More recently, Ben has played a central role in bringing the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element into compliance with State law, overseeing its implementation through a Citywide rezoning to expand housing opportunities, and helping guide the comprehensive update of the community's 2006 General Plan. Outside of work, Ben loves spending time with his wife and two young daughters, discovering and sharing music, and unwinding as an avid hockey fan.

# PDAOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## **Niki Wetzel, President**

Niki Wetzel is the Community Development Director for the City of Garden Grove, overseeing Planning Services, Building and Safety, and Code Enforcement. She previously served as Deputy Director of Planning and Building for the City of Anaheim, where she oversaw major historic and multi-billion-dollar projects including OCVIBE and Disneyland Forward. Niki's career in community development began in 1995 and includes roles with the cities of Laguna Niguel, Anaheim, Rolling Hills Estates, and Lake Forest. She holds a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Cal Poly Pomona, and a Bachelor's degree in Communication and Psychology from UC Santa Barbara. She is a member of the American Planning Association and a certified AICP planner.



## **Matt Foulkes, Immediate Past President**

Matt Foulkes serves as the Community and Economic Development Director for the City of Buena Park, a position he held for the past two-years. Prior to joining Buena Park, Matt was the Community and Economic Development Director for the City of Fullerton. Matt has spent his career in Orange County local government starting as a planning intern for the City of Santa Ana. He received his Bachelor's degree in Environmental Analysis and Design and his Master's degree in Urban & Regional Planning from the University of California, Irvine. When not at work, you can usually find Matt working on a DIY project in his garage or chasing around after his two young children and dog.



## **Jason Killebrew, Vice President**

Jason Killebrew currently serves as the Assistant City Manager/Community Development Director for the City of Brea. Jason is approaching two decades of planning, policy, and economic development experience serving various municipalities in the Southern California region. Prior to his work in Brea, Jason served as the Planning Manager for the City of Eastvale, Principal Planner for the County of Riverside, Planner for the City of Pasadena, and Assistant Planner for the City of Santa Clarita.

Jason's professional roots were established in Orange County obtaining a Bachelors of Arts degree in Public Administration from California State University, Fullerton and interning for the City of Irvine Redevelopment Agency. Jason enjoys traveling with his family and is an avid Lakers fan.



## **Alicia Velasco, Vice President**

Alicia Velasco is an accomplished professional with extensive municipal experience, currently serving as the Planning Director for the City of Cypress. In this role, she manages multiple divisions, including planning, code enforcement, economic development, and housing. Prior to this position, Alicia was the Director of the Community and Economic Development for the City of Lomita. Her very first position was as a planning intern for the City of Mission Viejo. Her educational background includes a Master of Public Administration from California State University, Long Beach, and a B.A. in Geography from California State University, Fullerton.

Alicia resides in Long Beach with her husband, two daughters, and her chihuahua mix - Jojo. While she enjoys going to the beach and walking her dog, most of her time is spent shuttling her daughters to various sports events, and she humorously considers herself the lowest-paid Uber driver.

# PDAOC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



## **Alexa Smittle, Vice President**

Alexa Smittle currently serves as the Director of Community Development for the City of Tustin, and previously served in that capacity for the Cities of Seal Beach and Westminster. Prior to her career in the public sector, she was a Principal at RSG, Inc. working her way up over more than a decade with the firm, consulting for communities throughout the state in economic development, municipal finance, real estate, and affordable housing.

She holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UC Irvine, and an undergraduate degree in Regional Development from the University of Arizona. She worked in the restaurant industry throughout her educational experience, meeting her husband, and eventually opening a deli together for a short period of time.

She enjoys walking, kayaking, and Pilates, especially when she can get at least one of her two children to accompany her.



## **Nate Farnsworth, Vice President**

Nate Farnsworth is the Community Development Director for the City of Yorba Linda. With 25 years of experience in municipal planning, Nate has a proven track record of managing complex land use issues and delivering thoughtful, community-centered development solutions. Before his current role, Nate served in a variety of planning and leadership capacities at the City of Yorba Linda, including Planning Manager and Principal Planner. He was instrumental in advancing Yorba Linda's 2021–2029 Housing Element.

Nate's public service career also includes various planner roles with Rancho Santa Margarita, Westminster, Costa Mesa, and Springville, Utah. He has also served in various leadership roles with the Orange County Council of Governments Technical Advisory Committee.



## **Russell Bunim, Vice President**

Russell Bunim serves as the Community Development Director in the City of Orange overseeing Planning, Building and Safety, Code Enforcement, and Housing. With over 20 years working in the cities of Newport Beach, Santa Monica, and Laguna Beach, his previous experience centered around planning vibrant and sustainable coastal communities. Russell has a wealth of knowledge in urban development, public policy, and community engagement. Additionally, he has a strong commitment to enhance the use of technology for city staff and the community. Russell earned his bachelor's degree in urban and regional planning from Cal Poly Pomona and master's degree in public administration from Cal State Long Beach.



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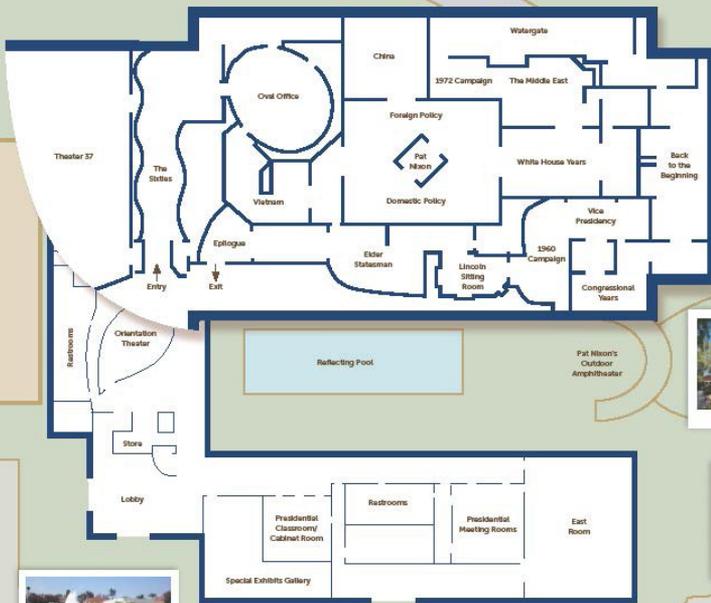
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