



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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**Contact:**

Phil Pitchford  
Intergovernmental and Communications Officer  
951-826-5975  
[ppitchford@riversideca.gov](mailto:ppitchford@riversideca.gov)

## **City Manager John Russo Completes Executive Team With Hiring of Alex Nguyen**

*Nguyen joins Al Zelinka and Deanna Lorson as Assistant City Managers in Riverside*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – City Manager John A. Russo, who started work today, immediately completed his executive leadership team with the hiring of Alex Nguyen as Assistant City Manager.

Nguyen joins Assistant City Managers Al Zelinka, who was promoted by Interim City Manager Lee C. McDougal in mid-February from his job as Community Development Director, and Deanna Lorson, who has been in the post for four years and previously served two years as Development Director.

Nguyen, who also started today, replaces Interim Assistant City Manager Steve Badgett, who retired. His salary will be \$211,536.

“Alex Nguyen has a demonstrated track record of excellence in municipal management, and I am pleased he agreed to join me in Riverside,” Russo said. “Alex will bring a fresh set of eyes to a city that already is benefitting from a strong history of good management.”

Nguyen comes to Riverside from Alameda, where he was Assistant City Manager while Russo was City Manager there before Russo was hired by Riverside in mid-February.

Nguyen worked nearly four years in Alameda, supervising Public Works, Information Technology, and Public Information and Public Engagement. He also supported the City Manager’s Office on police and fire issues and worked with the Mayor’s Office on legislation, public outreach and other issues.

Prior to joining Alameda, Nguyen was Chief of Staff to Russo during the final four years of Russo’s 11-year term as the elected City Attorney of Oakland. Nguyen also served as executive director of Neighborhood Law Corps, supervising five attorneys who practiced community law in Oakland’s poorest neighborhoods.

“I am excited about the opportunity to get to know and serve the Riverside community,” Nguyen said. “In the time that I have spent driving its neighborhoods and business districts, I have been impressed by the ‘pride of ownership’ that Riverside residents and business owners have in their community.”

Nguyen, a graduate of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, started his career as a social worker in that city, working primarily with immigrant communities. He also served as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, or CASA, on behalf of abused and neglected children. He speaks English, non-academic Vietnamese and conversational Spanish.

Since 2011, Nguyen has served on the Board of Directors for Thrive Networks. He also served on the boards of the Family Violence Law Center from 2000-2010, including as President from 2003-2006; the San Francisco Asian American Theater Company from 1997-98; and on a variety of boards and foundations in Worcester from 1995-97.

Nguyen’s hiring completes the team of three Assistant City Managers who will work closely with Russo and supervise the operations of all City departments. Responsibilities have been divided up thusly:

Nguyen – Police, Fire, Library, Museum, and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services departments.

Lorson – Administration, Communications, Finance, General Services, Human Resources, Innovation and Technology

Zelinka – Community and Economic Development, Riverside Public Utilities, Internal Audits, Public Works

The hirings, promotions and reorganizations are part of an overall effort to set Riverside’s course for the future. As part of that, the Riverside City Council recently approved the “Riverside 2.0 Strategic Plan” that will guide Riverside’s municipal workforce moving forward.

“The Riverside Renaissance boosted our fortunes dramatically, and the Riverside 2.0 Strategic Plan is the next step in our evolution as a world-class city,” Mayor Rusty Bailey said. “Riverside is positioned very well to reap the rewards of years of infrastructure investment and the development of intellectual and organizational excellence. There’s truly never been a better time to be in Riverside.”