

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **New Leaders for Finance, Community Development Departments**

**San Mateo, CA** — Positions overseeing San Mateo’s \$170 million annual operating budget and a department that charts the course for future development in a City of 105,000 residents will be the responsibilities of two new leaders appointed this week by incoming City Manager Drew Corbett.

Corbett, the current assistant city manager/finance director, has hired South San Francisco’s Finance Director Richard Lee to succeed him in San Mateo’s finance department. Lee will be responsible for overseeing the City’s budget and a 5-year \$810 million capital improvement program.

Kohar Kojayan, who has served as San Mateo’s deputy director of the Community Development Department for the last two years, will take over as director of the department.

Lee has over a decade of municipal experience including time with Los Altos Hills and Millbrae, before he spent the last five years in South San Francisco. His accomplishments include a comprehensive update of South San Francisco’s fee schedule that significantly increased the city’s ability to recover costs, and earning his department the Government Finance Officers Association’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

“Long-term fiscal sustainability has been my predominant focus as a municipal finance professional,” Richard Lee said. “I’m looking forward to the opportunity to work with the City Council, the executive team and a great finance department on priorities such as balancing San Mateo’s pension obligations while maintaining a high level of services for the community.”

Lee, who lives with his wife and two young sons in Redwood City, is also an accomplished freelance trombonist who has played with the San Francisco Opera orchestra. Lee will start with the City of San Mateo on January 8, 2019.

Kojayan previously worked for Contra Costa County before serving 10 years in Foster City’s Planning and Code Enforcement Division. She was hired as deputy director in San Mateo two years ago and will officially become director of the Community Development Department on December 30, 2018. Her background includes a bachelor’s degree in Community and Regional Development as well as a master’s in Public Administration. Kojayan will oversee the department responsible for the City’s General Plan 2040 update, code enforcement, planning and building divisions, a variety of permitting and San Mateo’s neighborhood improvement and housing programs.

“Public service is a commitment to putting citizens first. It’s being efficient, responsive and accessible to advance the community’s common good. I live by my late uncle’s motto, ‘your attitude determines your altitude,’” Kojayan said. “I’m looking forward to continuing to serve the San Mateo community, modernize the City’s development review services and plan for our future.”

When not working, Kojayan enjoys spending time with her husband and their two young children in their San Carlos home. Corbett, who City Council appointed as the next city manager beginning Dec. 24, is pleased to appoint Kojayan and Lee to serve on the organization’s executive team.

“I am thrilled to be bringing two highly qualified professionals into these important leadership positions. Richard’s experience in government finance will be invaluable to us as we continue to evaluate and implement strategies to maintain a strong financial position for the San Mateo community. Kohar has already had a tremendous impact on the Community Development Department and the organization as a whole, and I look forward to her continued leadership in her new role.”

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