

Published July 8th, 2020

Senior planner Mayank Patel moves on

By Sora O'Doherty



Mayank Patel Photo provided

Mayor Darlene Gee announced at the June 16 city council meeting that Orinda is losing senior planner Mayank Patel, who has been the lead planner on the downtown precise plan. "We are really going to miss him," Gee said. "He has gotten a lot of good reviews and has fans here in Orinda." The mayor publicly thanked him and wished him all the best, recalling that among his other talents, he helped the city set up Zoom as the pandemic forced all meetings to suddenly become virtual. "We will always have a warm spot for you and look forward to hearing great things about you in the future," Gee told Patel.

While Patel said Orinda will always have a special place in his heart, when an opportunity to work closer to home arose, Patel said that COVID being around made his choice clear. He and his wife, an attorney, live in Fremont with their two little boys. Patel's new job, although a step down, working for the city of Newark, is just two miles from his home. Patel will start in Newark as an associate planner.

Patel said he was giving his all to the Orinda downtown precise plan, but wasn't being good about fulfilling his responsibilities as a father and husband. "It is only right," he says, "that I step away and allow the right

amount of resources to be devoted to the community and the organization." The downtown precise plan will continue, although it has not yet been determined who will lead the project in Patel's absence.

Patel started with Orinda at the end of August, 2015. His last day was June 23. Patel brought to the job experience in the private sector that made him invaluable to Orinda. He used his knowledge of GIS (geographic information systems) to help the public works department, wore different hats and helped different departments, including helping with the new website, and the transition between the old and the new. "I've learned a lot," Patel said, "and because it is a small agency, I was able to."

Patel was honored with a proclamation read by the planning commission chair Brandyn Iverson at the joint meeting of the planning commission and the downtown development subcommittee on June 23. He was recognized for his four years and nine months as an employee, starting as an assistant planner and leaving as a senior planner. He was said to be so tech savvy that his coworkers preferred his help to that of the IT department. Other attributes that garnered praise were being a great listener with a great sense of humor who grew spectacularly as a professional, willing even to argue with the city manager. The proclamation concluded that Patel epitomizes the Latin motto, ductus exemplo (lead by example).

Patel was surprised to find his young sons as guests of the Zoom meeting. He was delighted with the proclamation, noting that the "very kind words were almost as if I wrote them myself and paid somebody to read them."

Downtown subcommittee members Inga Miller and Nick Kosla joined in the praise of Patel. Miller said, "You brought us so much, and I am very, very grateful. You helped pave the way for downtown development," she said. Kosla told Patel that he was personally disappointed he is leaving. "Getting an assignment like the precise plan is a massive task and you were doing the bulk of the work," Kosla told him, "and I have been so impressed at how far you have gotten us. I can't thank you enough for your work. The graphics have been extremely helpful for us to see this stuff. I'm so excited about your future. Your ability during the COVID crisis to keep everybody connected through Zoom, to keep government functioning, I don't know what we would have done without you." Kosla concluded that Orinda would keep an open internship for Patel's children whenever they are ready.

Reach the reporter at: sora@lamorindaweekly.com

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA