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## Orinda loses senior planner Adam Foster to a new job

By Sora O'Doherty

After four years with the city of Orinda, senior planner Adam Foster has moved on to a new job in private industry. Foster, who came to Orinda as a consultant before being hired permanently, will be with D R Horton, a national home-building company, working out of its Pleasanton offices. Foster, who was known for biking to work from his home in Walnut Creek, will have a little longer commute now.

Foster came on board to help Orinda with the Connect Orinda Streetscape Plan, which is the project he is most proud of from his work for the city. He was very actively involved in Orinda's latest push for downtown development, and Foster says that Orinda is catching up on a lot of downtown planning. "It's going to take a while," he notes, "but Orinda has so many wonderful volunteers who are pushing for progress." He says that it was fun to help with the project during his tenure, and he particularly enjoyed working with the city council. He believes that the experience of working with city regulatory requirements will help him in his new position as a forward planner, where he will work on such matters as managing housing projects, getting entitlements and design review.

Foster is very interested in opportunities to expand low to moderate income housing opportunities. He gave a shout out to Council Member Amy Worth, whom he praised as being philosophically engaged with the issue of housing needs. Recently, Foster built a tiny house in his own backyard, which gave him experience of being on the other side of the planning process, as well as doing the construction largely by himself. Foster earned his degree in environmental policy analysis and planning at UC Davis. He explained that working in the planning department he had to become a generalist, learning to wear a lot of hats and learn a lot of disciplines.

The past year was a tough one for Foster, who contracted COVID-19, as did his son. His wife was on quarantine, but Foster kept working remotely through it. He assumed the role of tech assistant, previously held by Mayank Patel. Foster felt very comfortable with assisting the city to quickly convert to virtual meetings, and helped with meetings he wasn't even involved with. He volunteered to stop watching sporting events and would drop everything to jump online and help manage a virtual meeting for the city. He felt very proud of how the city managed the transfer to online, and saw the benefits for people who perhaps in the past had been unable to attend meetings in person but could now participate without leaving home.

Worth returned the praise, saying, "In his thoughtful work with homeowners, his enthusiasm for the Connect Orinda initiative, and his help to Miramonte students in developing the ordinance banning Styrofoam use in restaurants, Adam shared his deep commitment to local planning and community development."

Planning Director Drummond Buckley said that Foster will be missed, but wished him the best in the new job. The city is currently recruiting for a replacement.

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