

For Immediate Release

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Media Contact: Heather Sumagaysay, Public Information Officer,
hsumagaysay@cityofventura.ca.gov**Ventura City Economic Development Manager Announces Departure**

Ventura, Calif. – The City of Ventura's Economic Development Manager, Estelle Bussa, has announced her departure from her position effective October 1, 2021.

"It is with a heavy heart that I share I'm leaving the City to join a technology company based in Austin, Texas. This new career venture provides an opportunity for me to work exclusively from home and devote more time to raising my two girls," said Economic Development Manager Estelle Bussa. "As a fourth-generation Ventura native, it has been an honor working at the City for the last three years in a role that I have loved. Serving as the Manager of Economic Development has been incredible, both personally and professionally. I have had the opportunity to work alongside inspirational leaders, devoted City staff, and innovative community partners and stakeholders. I cannot underscore enough how much I am going to miss being part of the impactful and important work the City is doing every day."

Since joining Ventura in May 2018, Estelle has supported the City Council's priority of creating and maintaining economic development and vitality for over 12,000 local businesses. In this role, her accomplishments included executing a multi-year lease agreement with The Trade Desk to occupy an underutilized City building and working closely on the terms of a potential development agreement for the Olivas Park Specific Plan, which will allow for new business and job growth in the City.

She also supported local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, expanded outdoor dining in Ventura, partnered with City departments in streamlining the development review process, and enhanced inter-departmental collaboration as recommended by the City's Matrix Report.

"Estelle has had a significant impact in the organization and expanded internal and external partnerships to enhance the economic strength of our great City," said City Manager Alex D. McIntyre. "Her leadership role in Ventura built a strong foundation for future opportunities and continued growth in the community. We wish her all the best in her next endeavor."

A recruitment effort will be conducted to fill the economic development manager vacancy. City Safe & Clean Manager Meredith Hart will serve as interim economic development manager until the position is filled. She brings 10 years of experience in working closely with Ventura's business community. Prior to her current tenure, Meredith worked at Downtown Ventura Partners, where she served as the deputy director. In this role, she focused on fostering a vibrant commercial district through business engagement and created retention, expansion, and attraction programs for restaurants and retailers. She also hosted a business development conference for downtown businesses and enhanced safety measures through the implementation of Downtown Ambassador Programs. Operations of the Safe & Clean Program will continue as usual while an interim program manager is identified.

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