

Fifth District Council Member Arlis Reynolds awarded a Walking College Fellowship

COSTA MESA, CA – America Walks, a national advocacy organization working to empower communities to create safe, accessible, and enjoyable places to walk and move, announced today that Council Member Arlis Reynolds has been awarded a Walking College Fellowship as part of the 2019 program.

The Fellowship will enable Reynolds, who represents Costa Mesa's Fifth District, and other advocates from around the country to participate in a five-month training program designed to strengthen local efforts to make communities more walkable and livable.

"We are thrilled to welcome Arlis Reynolds as a member of the Walking College," said Emilie Bahr, Walking College Manager with America Walks, "This year's application process was extremely competitive and rich with unique professionals, and she will make a fitting addition to our 2019 class. We look forward to developing her skills and are excited to see all fellows grow their knowledge, share experiences, and prepare plans to expand their work for bolstering walkability at home."

Council Member Reynolds will complete a six-module training program this summer, followed by an independent study project in Costa Mesa. They will also engage with the national network of America Walks and meet one another and other walking champions at various events throughout the year.

"Our residents are asking for safer streets for walking, and we know that increased pedestrian activity boosts both community health and the local economy," Reynolds said.

The City Council recently adopted its 2019 priorities, which include supporting the Active Transportation Plan (adopted in 2018) and initiating a Pedestrian Master Plan.

“As we open our new library, to invest in our parks, and support local businesses, and we need to make it safe and enjoyable for people and families to access those spaces,”

Reynolds said. “I look forward to learning from experts and others about strategies and opportunities to improve walkability and quality of life in Costa Mesa.”

Reynolds hopes to engage community members in the Walking College program through shared learning, community discussions, and neighborhood activities such as walking street clean-ups. You can follow Reynolds’ journey on social media @arlis4costamesa or email her at arlis.reynolds@costamesaca.gov.

The Walking College curriculum has been designed to expand the capacity of local advocates to be effective community change agents. Topics include the science behind the benefits of walking, evaluation of built environments, as well as communication skills and building relationships with stakeholders and decision makers. Fellows work with other members of their class and a set of experienced mentors to develop the knowledge and skills needed to create community change. At the conclusion of the Walking College, Fellows will develop a Walking Action Plan for implementation using their new skills.

About America Walks: America Walks, a nonprofit national organization, is leading the way in empowering communities to create safe, accessible, and enjoyable walking conditions for all. We provide a voice for walking and walkable communities with federal agencies, provide strategy support, training and technical assistance to statewide, regional, and local organizations, and serve as the convener of the national Every

Body Walk! Collaborative. Together, America Walks and the Every Body Walk! Collaborative boast 700 allied organizations who across the nation are working to increase walking and support walkable communities for all members. More at www.americawalks.org.

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