



John Kessel

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS PLANNER

BIOGRAPHY

John Kessel is an experienced local government professional who has spent his career engaged in building better communities. He brings 25 years of planning, city management, economic development, and emergency management expertise to the firm.

John's broad expertise provides a bridge of knowledge that connects both developer and city management perspectives. This knowledge base makes him an exceptional negotiator. He understands the ins-and-outs of zoning requirements and regulations as well as practical community concerns and how to build consensus and support. He is comfortable working on the most complicated development agreements for win-win solutions.

Working in multiple states and cities across the nation has given John a distinct understanding of overall project commonalities as well as project-specific complexities. He understands there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach, therefore, he partners with clients to create unique solutions relative to specific needs and considerations

EXPERIENCE & HIGHLIGHTS

John spent seven years as City Manager of Schertz, Texas, where he managed a staff of 350. He played a major role in solidifying the employment and commercial tax base during his tenure, including acquiring a 1.2 million square foot Amazon fulfillment center bringing 350 new jobs. He also re-envisioned an 850-acre undeveloped portion of a subdivision into a major master-planned community that featured open spaces, pedestrian connections, mixed housing types, and a series of design criteria which created a distinctive sense of place. The result redefined master planning in Schertz and set the bar for the northeast corridor of the San Antonio region.

EXPERIENCE & HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

John served as Director of Planning, and ultimately Executive Director of Development Services for McKinney, Texas. One of the fastest-growing cities in the nation, the population grew from 55,000 to 132,000 in the 10 years he served. Despite rapid growth the community was consistently ranked as one of the Best Places to Live in America by multiple national publications.

John also previously served as a Recovery and Resiliency Coordinator for the County of Sonoma, California, where he co-wrote the County's Recovery and Resiliency Framework and led the multi-agency Watershed Task Force to address regional fire prevention and erosion control concerns.

AFFILIATIONS & HONORS

John received his Master of City and Regional Planning from the University of Texas at Arlington, graduating with honors. He received his Bachelor of Arts in American studies and art history from Whitworth University. He holds a GIS Certificate from Saint Paul College.

In his spare time John enjoys spending time with his wife. They enjoy ballroom dancing and spending time outdoors. They particularly enjoy hiking in the nature center within walking distance of their home where they can enjoy picturesque views, lakes, and watching wildlife.

- American Planning Association
- International City/County Management Association
- Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD) Steering Committee
- Honorary Commander, 12th Flying Training Wing, 435th Fighter Training Squadron
- Texas City Managers Association Region 8 Board of Directors (Board President)