

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

Approved: July 2016

FLSA: Exempt

Unit: AFSCME



Definition
Under general direction, plans, organizes, oversees, coordinates, and reviews the work of staff performing professional and technical planning work in support of programs, projects, and activities of the Planning Division in the Community Development Department such as long-range planning, current planning, and environmental compliance; supervises and participates in the implementation of the General Plan; manages the effective use of the City's planning resources to improve organizational productivity and customer service; provides highly complex and responsible support to the Director of Community Development, Assistant Community Development Director – Planning, and others in areas of expertise; and performs related work as required.
Supervision received and exercised
Receives general direction from the Assistant Community Development Director – Planning and Director of Community Development. Exercises direct supervision over professional, technical, and/or clerical staff.
Class characteristics
This is the supervisory-level class in the Planner classification series. Incumbents are responsible for supervising programs, projects, and staff within the Planning Division. Incumbents are also expected to independently perform the full range of planning duties. Responsibilities include performing diverse, specialized, and complex work involving significant accountability and decision-making. The incumbent organizes and oversees day-to-day activities and operations of assigned division. Successful performance of the work requires an extensive background in planning, as well as skill in coordinating work with other City departments and external agencies. This class is distinguished from the Assistant Community Development Director – Planning in that the latter has oversight for all planning programs, projects, functions, and activities, as well as implementing and interpreting public policy and serving as “second-in-command” to the department head.
Examples of typical job functions (illustrative only)
Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plans, organizes, assigns, supervises, and reviews the work of staff assigned to the Planning Division including current and long-range planning, environmental compliance, and interagency coordination; trains staff in work procedures; evaluates employee performance, counsels employees, and effectively recommends initial disciplinary action; assists in selection and promotion.• Monitors activities of the Planning Division; recommends improvements and modifications and prepares various reports on activities, programs, and projects; recommends and assists in the implementation of goals and objectives; implements policies and procedures.• Determines and recommends staffing needs for assigned activities and programs; participates in the annual budget preparation; prepares detailed cost estimates with appropriate justifications, as required; maintains a variety of records and prepares routine reports of work performance.• Supervises and participates in the development, monitoring, implementation, and update of the City's General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, specific plans, and other land use studies; provides guidance to staff on appropriate community engagement and outreach tools and approaches and data collection methodology, analysis, and management; continuously evaluates long-range planning documents and recommends revisions to the Assistant Director.• Supervises the professional review and processing of proposed development projects to ensure applications for land use entitlements are complete and in conformance with City policies and regulations and local, state, and federal requirements; coordinates the technical processing of development proposals.• Supervises and participates in the preparation of documents to ensure compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and federal environmental requirements.• Coordinates Division programs, projects, and activities with other City departments, local jurisdictions and agencies, and regional, state, and federal agencies during the development review process of projects.• Serves as secretary and/or staff for assigned boards, committees, and commissions; represents the interests of the City; provides advice and explains and interprets planning policies and regulations.• Negotiates, administers, and manages contracts for services; reviews documents, reports, and other work products prepared by consultants and provides feedback and corrections; reviews and oversees consultant invoices and progress payments.• Conducts a variety of organizational studies, investigations, and operational studies; recommends modifications to programs, policies, and procedures, as appropriate.• Prepares, reviews, and presents staff reports, management and information updates, and reports on projects to the City Council, boards, committees, and commissions, and at public meetings.

- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in planning; researches and monitors changes in regulations and technology that may affect operations; implements policy and procedural changes after approval.
- Receives, investigates, and responds to problems and complaints in a professional manner; identifies and reports findings and takes necessary corrective action.
- Assists the Assistant Community Development Director - Planning and Community Development Director with special projects, as needed.
- May serve as the Assistant Community Development Director - Planning in his/her absence.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

Knowledge of

- Administrative principles and practices, including goal setting, program development, implementation, and evaluation, and project management.
- Principles and practices of budget and contract development and administration.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, either directly or through subordinate levels of supervision, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Operations, services, and activities of a comprehensive planning program including current and long range planning.
- Modern principles and practices of technical and legal issues of urban and regional planning, zoning, urban economics, demographics, and environmental planning and program management.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, environmental compliance, and other elements related to planning.
- Federal, state, and local laws, codes, rules, regulations, and standards affecting planning, zoning, land development, and other planning programs.
- Methods and techniques of conducting public meetings and presentations.
- Authority and the role of the Planning Commission in approving planning related projects.
- Site planning and architectural design principles.
- General concepts of architecture, landscaping, grading, drainage, and traffic and transportation engineering as they relate to the process of urban planning.
- Practices of researching planning and land use issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Planning terminology and technical report writing techniques.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, and educational organizations.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and City staff.

Ability to

- Recommend and implement goals, objectives, and practices for providing effective and efficient services.
- Administer complex, technical, and professional planning programs, projects, and activities in an independent and cooperative manner.
- Plan, organize, assign, review, and evaluate the work of staff; train staff in work procedures.
- Evaluate and develop improvements in operations, procedures, policies, or methods.
- Research, analyze, and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures, and techniques.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Analyze, interpret, summarize, and present administrative and technical information and data in an effective manner.
- Perform complex current and long range planning duties.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with federal, state, and local policies, procedures, laws, and regulations.
- Conduct complex research projects, evaluate alternatives, make sound recommendations, and prepare effective technical staff reports.
- Effectively represent the department and the City in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, and various businesses, professional, and educational organizations and in meetings with individuals.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record keeping, and tracking systems.

- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical deadlines.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and software programs.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and experience

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

- Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in urban planning, environmental studies, or a closely related field.
- Five (5) years of increasingly responsible professional planning experience including two (2) years of lead experience. A Master's degree in a field as listed above may substitute for one (1) year of the required experience.

Licenses and certifications

- Possession of a valid California driver's license and a satisfactory driving record.

Physical demands

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, to inspect City development sites, including traversing uneven terrain, climbing ladders, stairs, and other temporary or construction access points; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various City and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects weighing up to 25 pounds.

Environmental elements

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. When conducting site visits, employees may work in the field and occasionally be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, and road hazards. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.