



June 2008

ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, performs various professional field and office planning work in the field of current and long range planning, including review of development and land use applications, zoning, site plan, and environmental review; provides project management and administration; completes technical assessments and prepares written project analyses; provides professional advice and assistance to the public on planning, community development, zoning, permits, and environmental review; may provide project management and administration; provides staff assistance to management staff, other departments, and the public in areas of expertise; performs a variety of studies and prepares and presents staff reports; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from the Planning Manager and/or technical and functional direction from higher-level planning staff. Exercises no direct supervision of staff. May provide technical direction and training to lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the journey-level class in the professional planning series. Incumbents are expected to perform the full range of professional and technical planning work in all of the following areas: current, long-range, and/or environmental planning activities, and daily departmental operations, in addition to providing project management and administration. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit. This class is distinguished from the Senior Planner in that the latter is responsible for technical and functional direction over lower-level planning staff and is capable of performing the most complex duties assigned to the department.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the rights to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations where appropriate so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Reviews routine to complex commercial, industrial, and residential development proposals, plans, and applications for issuance of development permit; reviews for compliance with appropriate regulations and policies.
- Reviews permit applications and building plans for completeness and compliance with current City codes and regulations; provides interpretations of the state and local environmental guidelines; identifies corrective actions to be taken by owners; recommends improvement and rehabilitation programs; conducts follow-up and recheck and approves or denies submittals.

- Serves as project manager for routine application projects, including analyzing and evaluating site and architectural plans, performing technical review, making recommendations, ensuring plans and applications receive appropriate signatures, and coordinating in-house review with contractors.
- Compiles information for a variety of studies and reports; researches, analyzes, and interprets social, economic, population, and land use data and trends; develops recommendations and prepares written reports on various planning matters.
- Participates in the periodic update, implementation, and administration of the City's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.
- Researches, collects, records, analyzes, interprets, and summarizes statistical information; prepares Geographic Information System (GIS) maps, analyses, and reports; prepares spreadsheets and establishes and maintains a comprehensive database.
- Prepares staff reports for the City Council, various committees, and advisory boards as directed; prepares research, reports, maps, and conducts briefings.
- Confers with and advises architects, builders, attorneys, contractors, engineers, and the general public regarding City development policies and standards; provides and clarifies information relative to zoning, general plan compliance, signage, and other issues.
- Conducts studies and needs assessments for the development of programs to address significant development issues.
- Researches and assists in preparing ordinances for review.
- Participates in coordinating City planning and development related activities with other City departments and with outside agencies.
- Receives and records zoning and code compliance complaints, establishes appropriate files, performs inspections to document violations, coordinates actions as needed with those of other agencies, and implements appropriate procedures to correct or resolve each violation.
- Coordinates with and provides assistance to the larger City organization in data development, analysis, and planning activities.
- Answers questions and provides information to the public.
- Engages in constructive dialogue with the public and coordinates citizen involvement activities regarding City proposals and programs.
- Keeps immediate supervisor and designated others accurately informed concerning work progress, including present and potential work problems and suggestions for new or improved ways of addressing such problems.
- Attends meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions and reviews publications and audio-visual materials to become and remain current on principles, practices, and new developments in assigned work areas.
- Communicates and coordinates regularly with appropriate others to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of interdepartmental operations and activities.
- May be required to apply for, administer, and manage grants.
- May provide technical direction and training to other planning and technical staff.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles, practices, and procedures related to urban and regional planning, development, and zoning administration.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, and other elements related to urban planning.
- Comprehensive plans and current planning processes and the development process.
- Site planning, architectural design principles, and the practice of sustainable principles and/or urban design.

- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes, and regulations, as well as community development program rules and requirements and related reports.
- Project management and contract administration principles and techniques.
- Researching and reporting methods, techniques, and procedures.
- Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to planning and zoning.
- Modern office methods, practices, procedures, and equipment, including computer hardware and software necessary for graphic presentation, mapping, and database management, such as Microsoft Office, Microsoft Project, City permitting software, and basic GIS concepts and applications.
- Practices of researching planning issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Modern developments, current literature, and sources of information regarding planning.
- Principles of advanced mathematics and statistics and their application to planning work.
- Methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for dealing effectively with the public, vendors, contractors, and City staff, in person and over the telephone.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service to public and City staff, in person and over the telephone.

Ability to:

- Interpret planning and zoning programs to the general public.
- Read plans and specifications and make effective site visits.
- Identify and respond to issues and concerns of the public, City Council, and other boards and commissions.
- Interpret, apply, and explain applicable Federal, State and local policies, procedures, laws and regulations.
- Perform analysis of site design, terrain constraints, circulation, land use compatibility, utilities, and other urban services.
- Conduct research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Read and understand technical drawings and specifications.
- Perform mathematical and planning computations with precision.
- Respond to inquiries, complaints, and requests for service in a fair, tactful, and timely manner.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, and other written materials.
- Make effective public presentations.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record-keeping, and tracking systems.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer and related word processing, database, and spreadsheet software and applications.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities and meet critical time deadlines.
- Comprehend and use English effectively including producing all forms of communication in a clear, concise, and understandable manner to intended audiences.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent sound judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience, which 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, community development, business or public administration, or a related field, and three (3) years of responsible public agency planning experience.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of a valid driver's license with 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; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various City and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen, and make inspections; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. 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 partially in an office environment with moderate noise levels and controlled temperature conditions, and partially in the field and are occasionally exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, road hazards, vibration, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, and hazardous physical substances and fumes. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives, and contractors in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures. May be required to work outside of normal work hours such as evenings, early mornings, and/or weekends.