



April 2011

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general direction, plans, organizes, oversees and coordinates a major planning program that includes complex technical work programs related to transportation planning, development planning, comprehensive planning or community revitalization; reviews the work of professional, technical and administrative staff performing a variety of tasks related to the implementation of the planning program; responsible for the technical accuracy, cost effectiveness and community acceptability of the program's policies and projects; provides highly complex and responsible support to the Community Development Director and Assistant Community Development Director; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from the Community Development Director or Assistant Community Development Director. Exercises general direction and supervision over professional, technical and administrative support staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is a management classification that supervises a major planning program. Responsibilities involve accountability and decision-making for the assigned work group or functional area. Incumbents provide day-to-day oversight of current and long range planning activities and are responsible for planning, organizing, budgeting and performing diverse, specialized and complex technical work programs and provide management-level support to the Community Development Director or Assistant Community Development Director in a variety of areas. Successful performance of the work requires a professional background as well as skill in coordinating work within the department and with other City departments and public agencies.

The Principal Planner classification is distinguished from the Senior Planner classification by the greater degree of responsibility for technical, administrative and public policy elements of the department's work program and supervisory responsibility. The Principal Planner may be a member of the department management team.

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.

- Plans, manages and oversees the daily functions, operations and activities of an assigned major planning program. Program area assignments may include current planning, long range planning, code compliance, urban forestry, development services, land use review coordination, Comprehensive Plan and Development Code updates and others.

- Participates in the development and implementation of goals, objectives, policies and priorities for the planning program; assists in recommending appropriate service and staffing levels; administers policies and procedures.
 - Participates in developing and implementing policies, procedures, methods and performance standards to assure a high level of technical accuracy, cost effectiveness and community acceptability for the work products of the assigned program; participates in developing and implementing efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of planning services, projects and activities.
 - Manages, directs and participates in highly complex planning activities related to land use, transportation, natural resources and parks; design and conducts studies to develop policies, plans and codes.
 - Participates in selection of, supervises, trains, motivates and evaluates assigned personnel; provides or coordinates staff training; works with employees to correct deficiencies; participates when discipline and termination procedures are warranted.
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- Manages and coordinates the work plan for the assigned program; meets with staff to identify and resolve problems; assigns work activities, projects and programs; monitors work flow; reviews and evaluates work products, methods and procedures.
 - Acts as technical and policy advisor to subordinate personnel in performing difficult assignments and in reviewing the objectives, feasibility, techniques and findings of their work.
 - Organizes, supervises, performs or coordinates major studies, analysis and preparation of documents for assigned planning and development activities; develops specific recommendations for the drafting or revision of City policies and legislation related to assigned area. Assures effective City plans to meet current and long-range needs.
 - Coordinates, supervises, prepares and presents written, oral, and visual reports to hearing bodies, committees, community groups and private organizations to explain City policy and the impact of assigned planning and development issues on the community.
 - Develops and reviews staff reports related to planning activities, projects and services; advises and mentors subordinate staff on effective techniques for presentation of reports to the City Council, commissions, committees and boards; performs a variety of public relations and outreach work related to assigned activities.
 - Serves as primary contact for other agencies and jurisdictions at regional, state and local level regarding assigned planning program and activities; coordinates assigned planning program and activities with federal, state, county and other local governmental agencies as necessary; represents the City on advisory committees and other planning groups.
 - Participates in the development and administration of and oversees program budget, including tracking revenue against projections.
 - Advises City staff and Council on policy issues, procedures, special and comprehensive plans, as well as regulatory ordinances related to assigned functions.
 - Serves as staff liaison to citizen committees and advisory groups; facilitates discussions, provides technical advice and information, assists with development of agendas and recommendations for public hearing.
 - Coordinates the selection of consultants, administers agreements and contracts with agencies and monitors work done by consultants, contracting agencies and other organizations as appropriate.
 - Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in planning; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to City needs.
 - 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 Community Development Director and Assistant Community Development Director with special projects, as needed.

- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Administrative principles and practices, including goal setting, program development, implementation, and evaluation, project management and budget administration. Principles and practices of employee supervision, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Organization and management practices as applied to the development, analysis and evaluation of programs, policies and operational needs of the assigned program or functional area.
- Principles, practices, policies and techniques related to city and regional planning, development and code administration and enforcement including knowledge of applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes and regulations.
- State and local rules and regulations relating to long range and current planning processes including public hearing and decision making.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political and other elements related to city planning.
- Development, maintenance and implementation of Comprehensive Plans.
- The development process including site planning, basic engineering needs and architectural design principles. Recent and ongoing developments, current literature and sources of information for land planning activities and projects.
- Methods, materials and technique used in planning public improvement projects, including land use, transportation, natural resources and parts.
- Modern office practices and technology, including personal computer hardware and software applications related to the work.
- Modern developments, current literature and sources of information regarding engineering.
- Principles of advanced mathematics and their application to planning work.
- Practices of researching, planning and design issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports; methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation; English language usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, educational, and regulatory organizations and with property owners, developers, contractors and the public.
- 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:

- Recommend and implement goals, objectives and practices for providing effective and efficient services; research, analyze and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures and techniques; evaluate and develop improvements in operations, procedures, policies or methods.
- Administer complex, technical and sensitive planning, development and related programs in an independent and cooperative manner.
- Plan, organize, assign, review and evaluate the work of staff; train staff in work procedures.
- 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.

- Interpret, explain and ensure compliance with City policies and procedures, complex laws, codes, regulations and ordinances.
- 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 regulatory organizations and in meeting with individuals.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record keeping and tracking systems.
- Plan, schedule, assign, and oversee activities of assigned personnel; train staff in work procedures.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.
- 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.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- 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 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, geography, architecture, environmental design or public administration, or a related field, and three (3) years of progressively responsible experience in public agency professional planning or related 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 various construction 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 in an office environment with moderate noise levels and controlled temperature conditions, but 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,

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.