

ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under direct or general supervision, performs a variety of professional and technical routine to complex activities in the field of current and advanced planning, including review of development and land use applications, zoning, site plan, and environmental review; may serve as project manager for development applications; completes technical assessments, prepares written project analyses; provides professional advice and assistance to the public on planning, community development, zoning, permits, and environmental review; assists with preparation of City ordinances; assumes primary role in enforcement of zoning regulations; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direct or general supervision from the Community Development Director or designee. May exercise technical and functional direction over assigned staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Assistant Planner: This is the entry-level class in the professional planning series. Initially, under direct supervision, incumbents learn the more routine planning, zoning, and related functions encountered by the City. Responsibilities include providing a range of routine customer service to the public at the front counter and on the telephone regarding policies and procedures, ongoing projects, zoning regulations, permit requirements and related building and development issues. This class is alternately staffed with Associate Planner and incumbents may advance to the higher-level class after gaining the knowledge, skills, and experience that meet the qualifications and demonstrating the ability to perform the work of the higher-level class.

Associate Planner: This is the journey-level class in the professional planning series. Incumbents may be assigned the full range of routine and complex planning, zoning, and related functions encountered by the City. Responsibilities include providing a range of routine and complex customer services to the public at the front counter and on the telephone regarding policies and procedures, ongoing projects, zoning regulations, permit requirements and related building and development issues. This class requires the frequent use of independent judgment as well as a knowledge of departmental and City activities. This class is distinguished from the Senior Planner in that the latter is the advanced-journey level class in the series, providing administrative support and day-to-day supervision to departmental staff in addition to performing the most complex planning and related duties.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL 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.

- Reviews routine to more complex commercial, industrial, and residential development proposals, plans, and applications for completeness and accuracy; issuance of zoning clearance; reviews for compliance or consistency with appropriate regulations and policies.
- Reviews permit applications, site plans and architectural plans for completeness and compliance with current City codes and regulations; provides interpretations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and local environmental guidelines; approves, or denies administrative submittals.
- May serve as project manager for routine application projects, including site and architectural plans, use permits, tentative tract maps, variances, performing technical review and analyses, coordinating in-house review with applicants, and making recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council, .
- 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 and the City's General Plan.
- Participates in the implementation administration and update of the City's General Plan, including Housing Element, and development regulations, including Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map.
- Researches, collects, records, analyzes, interprets, and summarizes statistical and demographic information; prepares spreadsheets and establishes and maintains a comprehensive database on identified planning issues.
- Prepares staff reports for the Planning Commission, City Council, various committees, and advisory boards as directed; prepares research, reports, maps, and conducts briefings.
- Confers with and advises architects, builders, attorneys, contractors, consultants, and the general public regarding City development policies and standards; provides and clarifies information relative to zoning, general plan compliance, CEQA and other issues.
- Conducts studies and participates in the development of programs to address significant planning and 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.
- Answers questions and provides information to the public concerning planning and zoning regulations.
- Maintains accurate records and files.
- 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 and architectural design principles.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes, and regulations.
- Project management 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, including Microsoft Office, Microsoft Project, PowerPoint, and basic GIS concepts and applications.
- Practices of researching planning issues, evaluating alternatives, making appropriate recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.

- Methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, and regulatory organizations and with property owners, developers, contractors, and the public.
- 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 site plans and architectural plans and make effective site visits.
- Identify and respond to issues and concerns of the public, Planning Commission, City Council, and other boards and commissions.
- Interpret, apply, and explain complex laws, codes, regulations, and ordinances.
- Analyze site design, terrain constraints, circulation, land use compatibility, utilities and other urban services.
- Enforce ordinances and regulations effectively and tactfully.
- Make effective public presentations.
- Conduct routine research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Prepare clear and concise technical and staff reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Learn City permitting software, information sources, and research techniques in the field of urban planning.
- Prepare accurate display maps, plans, charts, and tables.
- Effectively represent the Department and the City in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, and regulatory organizations, and individuals.
- Analyze and compile technical and statistical information and prepare reports.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and software programs.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence and independent judgment within general policy, procedural and legal guidelines.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of the 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:

Assistant and Associate Planner: 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.

Assistant Planner: One (1) year of professional experience in planning, zoning, and related community development activities.

Associate Planner: Three (3) years of professional experience in planning, zoning, and related community development activities. A Master's degree in a related field may be substituted for one (1) year of experience.

License:

- Valid California class C driver's license with 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 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, typewriter 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 necessary to perform job functions.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.