

SENIOR PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general direction, plans, schedules, assigns, and reviews the work of professional and administrative planning staff within the City's Planning and Building Services Department and Engineering Department; administers advance and complex current planning activities, assists and coordinates public policy development and implementation, including serving as project manager for complex and special projects; administers specified activities in such areas as zoning, advance planning, transportation programs, traffic engineering, and environmental impact studies, and code compliance; provides information and assistance to property owners, developers, contractors and the public; provides complex professional assistance to the Planning and Building Services Director, City Engineer, City Council, Planning Commission, Circulation Commission, Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), Design Review Commission, and others in areas of expertise; participates in and represents the City's interests on a variety of intergovernmental boards and committees on regional policy and grant funding matters; oversees, reviews and 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 and Building Services Director and/or City Engineer. Exercises direct supervision over, provides training to, or takes lead role on team assignments involving peers or lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the full supervisory-level and/or advanced-journey level class in the professional planning series. Incumbents are responsible for planning, organizing, supervising, reviewing, and evaluating the work of professional planning and administrative staff, as well as providing professional-level support to assigned management staff in a variety of areas of expertise. Performance of the work requires the use of considerable independence, initiative, and discretion within established guidelines. This class is distinguished from the Associate Planner in that the latter by the greater complexity of assignments received and by the greater independence the Senior Planner is expected to operate. This class is further distinguished from the Planning and Building Services Director and City Engineer in that these classifications have overall responsibility for all departmental functions and for developing, implementing, and interpreting public policy.

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.

- Serves as project manager for multiple complex current and/or long-range planning projects and special planning studies, including in-depth application and plan review, coordination with applicants to obtain additional information and project changes, preparing legal notices, posting notices on sites, background research, preparing staff reports, attending public hearings and making presentations, monitoring implementation measures and conditions of approval, checking submittals for building plan check, and inspecting development sites at the beginning and upon completion of the project; reviews project applications and plans submitted for Design Review, Planning Commission, and City Council considerations at public hearings.
- May autonomously oversee programs within the department as delegated by the Planning and Building Services Director or City Engineer.
- Interprets and applies Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and regulations to ensure that public and private projects are in compliance, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Subdivision Map Act, Stormwater Quality Control Act, Public Resource Code, City of Lafayette General Plan, Specific Plans, Design Specifications, and Local Guidelines and procedures.
- Prepares and evaluates the conclusions of initial studies, mitigated negative declarations, environmental impact reports, and uses the evaluation to formulate a recommendation on projects; monitors project compliance with environmental document mitigation measures and conditions of approval.
- Performs specialized planning functions such as environmental review.
- Conducts plan check of building permit-level plan submittals associated with complex projects to verify compliance with project approvals and zoning requirements; conducts over-the-counter plan check of less complex development proposals and land uses; approves minor development plans.
- Prepares and releases requests for proposals for technical consultant services; establishes selection criteria; evaluates proposals and conducts interviews in conformance with City policy; negotiates and recommends award of contracts; coordinates with and recommends needed contract management provisions and controls; manages and oversees technical consultants' work products to ensure adherence to City standards and legal provisions; ensures that deliverables are submitted on time and budget and that progress and payment requests are consistent with City policy and contract provisions
- Coordinates project reviews by other City departments and outside agencies and consultants.
- Interacts and communicates with a variety of individuals and groups at the public service counter, in the field, over the telephone, at public hearings, and in discussion forums, including other City departments and public agencies, elected and appointed City officials, developers, consultants, architects, engineers, attorneys, appraisers, real estate agents, property owners, and the general public for the purpose of obtaining or providing information, coordinating activities, processing projects, negotiating plan changes, and formulating recommendations.
- Conducts and supervises planning studies in the community; gathers data for implementing or evaluating current and advance planning projects; makes recommendations.
- Participates in General Plan amendments and updates; participates in and makes recommendations regarding policy development; observes, identifies, and responds to policy and procedure-related questions and concerns; communicates any observed deficiencies to management; participates in creating new policies and procedures as necessary.
- Staffs and assists limited-duration committees tasked with providing policy direction on advance planning studies.

- Conducts site and policy background research to obtain information for the preparation of staff reports, correspondence, memoranda, policy documents, procedure documents, and presentations to supervisory, inter-departmental staff, or governing bodies; reads, interprets, analyzes, and explains a wide variety of technical documents, studies, and practices related to traffic, transportation planning policies, noise, plant and animal resources, archaeological resources, paleontological resources, cultural resources, geotechnics, water quality, air quality, and legislation that may impact the City's planning and transportation studies and/or projects.
- Oversees the Planning Intern program; organizes, assigns, supervises, and reviews the work of Planning interns in the Planning and Building Services Department; trains interns in work procedures; evaluates performance, mentors interns, and assists in selection and promotion.
- Plans, organizes, assigns, supervises, and reviews the work of professional and administrative planning staff in the department; 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 work unit; recommends improvements and modifications and prepares various reports on activities 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 projects; 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.
- Represents the City and presents oral reports at public meetings and hearings as necessary.
- Provides staff support to a variety of boards and commissions; attends and participates in professional groups and committees; provides technical and professional support to departmental management staff and other City departments and the public; advises other departments regarding planning and/or environmental review requirements, budgets, and timelines to facilitate adequate project planning. Assists in the development and administration of goals, objectives, policies, and procedures related to the division; drafts formalized policies and procedures with supervisory confirmation.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

When performing the duties related to transportation planning and traffic engineering:

- Serves as project manager on transportation planning and development projects, which includes overseeing development and plan review, coordination with project sponsors and agencies, background research, environmental review, preparation of public notices and staff reports, scheduling meetings and hearings, and monitoring project development to verify conformance with approved plans, grant/loan requirements, conditions, and mitigation measures.
- Plans, organizes, and participates in a wide range of complex transportation plans, programs, projects, and studies, including Traffic Calming Program; participates on the BPAC Committee, makes recommendations to the Circulation Commission regarding Land Use and Transportation Programs that impact pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Performs funding/grant development and administration, including conducting grant research, identifying regional, State, and Federal funding sources, writing proposals, preparing grant applications, and programming and administering awarded grant funds.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Modern principles and practices, 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, and other elements related to city planning.
- Comprehensive plans and current planning processes and the development process.
- Site planning and architectural design principles.
- General concepts of architecture, landscaping, grading, drainage, traffic and transportation engineering as they relate to the process of urban planning.
- Operational characteristics, services, and activities of a comprehensive environmental planning program.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, codes, and requirements and related reports.
- Project management and contract administration principles and techniques.
- Research and reporting methods, techniques, and procedures.
- Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to planning, zoning, and environmental review.
- Modern office methods, practices, procedures, and equipment, including computer hardware and software necessary for graphic presentation, mapping, and database management.
- Practices of researching planning and land use issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Principles of advanced mathematics 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 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 providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors and City staff.

Ability to:

- Interpret and explain planning and zoning programs to the general public; identify and respond to issues and concerns of the public, City Council, and other boards and commissions.
- Read plans and specifications and make effective site visits.
- Assess, monitor, and report environmental impact on and of various City programs and services.
- Analyze site design, terrain constraints, land use compatibility, utilities, and other urban services.
- Conduct complex research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Read, interpret, apply, and explain technical written material and complex Federal, State, and local policies, procedures, laws, regulations, ordinances, and City planning policies and procedures.

- Read and understand technical drawings and specifications.
- Perform mathematical and planning computations with precision.
- Effectively represent the department and the City in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, and regulatory organizations and individuals.
- Coordinate assigned activities with other City departments and agencies as required.
- Direct the work of contract consultants.
- Prepare and present clear, concise, and logical written and oral reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record-keeping, and tracking systems.
- 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.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications 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, 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, community development, business or public administration, transportation planning or engineering, civil engineering, or a related field and five (5) years of professional experience in planning, zoning, transportation, and related community development activities in a public agency setting. One (1) year of supervisory experience is highly desirable.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment.

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 in work areas 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. Employees may work in the field and occasionally be 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.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Must be willing to work a varied schedule of hours, which may include evenings, and/or weekends, as needed.