

ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under direct and general supervision, performs various professional field and office planning work related to current and advance planning, including review of development and land use applications, zoning, site plans, and environmental documents; provides professional support work in managing, implementing, and monitoring traffic and transportation related projects and programs; provides project management and administration; conducts studies and analyses; compiles data and research; completes technical assessments and prepares written project analyses; and special projects in advance planning; provides professional advice and assistance to and addresses service requests by the public on development and transportation planning, traffic engineering, community development, zoning, permits, and environmental review; provides complex professional staff assistance to the Senior Planner and Planning and Building Services Director or City Engineer, 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 direct and general supervision from the Planning and Building Services Director, City Engineer, or a Senior Planner/Engineer. Exercises no direct supervision over staff. May exercise technical and functional direction over and provide training to lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Assistant Planner: This is the first experienced-level class in the professional planning series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents with basic planning experience perform professional and technical planning work in current, advance, and/or environmental planning activities. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Positions at this level usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the Associate level, but are not expected to function at the same skill level and usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise.

Associate Planner: This is the full 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, advance, and/or environmental planning activities, and daily departmental operations, in addition to providing project management and administration. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Assistant level by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working independently and exercising judgment and initiative. 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 the advanced journey-level class in the series and is responsible for organizing, assigning, and reviewing or leading the work of departmental and/or contract staff involved in a major area of the Department, in addition to performing the more complex planning and project management activities, and having a highly-developed and clearly-distinguishable skillset in an area of expertise.

Positions in the professional planner class series are flexibly staffed and positions at the Associate level are normally filled by advancement from the Assistant level requiring two (2) years of experience at the Assistant-level and after gaining the knowledge, skill, experience, licenses, and certifications which meet the qualifications for and after demonstrating the ability to perform the work of the higher-level class. When filled from the outside, the employee is required to have three (3) years of experience that allows the employee to meet the qualification standards for the Associate level.

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. Job functions may differ depending on the department to which position is assigned.

- Reviews permit applications and building plans for completeness and compliance with current City codes and regulations; provides interpretations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Subdivision Map Act, and local environmental guidelines; conducts follow-up and re-check and approves or denies submittals.
- Serves as project manager on planning and development projects, which includes some combination of contract administration, application and plan review, coordination with project applicants, outside agencies, and other City departments, preparation and posting of legal notices, background research, environmental review; preparation of staff reports, scheduling meetings and hearings, monitoring of project implementation to verify substantial conformance with approved plans, conditions and mitigation measures, ; suggests revisions to design plans and architecture; inspects project development sites.
- Reviews routine to complex commercial, industrial, and residential development proposals, plans, and applications for issuance of zoning clearance and for compliance with appropriate codes, ordinances, standards, laws, rules, regulations, and policies.
- Prepares and presents staff reports for the City Council, Planning Commission, Circulation Commission, Design Review Commission, and various other committees and advisory boards as directed; prepares research, reports, maps, and conducts briefings and meetings.
- Refers to and applies numerous documents, including the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, California Environmental Quality Act, Subdivision Map Act, Stormwater Quality Control Act, State Planning laws, California Vehicle Code, the City of Lafayette's Municipal Code, Specific Plans, Redevelopment Guidelines, emergency operations manual, historical preservation guidelines, County tax assessor's maps and records, building and architecture plans, etc.
- Prepares or assists in preparing and reviewing environmental impact reports; prepares written initial studies, negative declarations, and staff reports related to development projects or City projects.
- Reviews and signs off on plans submitted for Building Plan Check and permits.

- Assists the public at the front counter, on the phone, and via email, answering questions and providing information regarding zoning, land use, development standards, approved development proposals, and the City's entitlement process; performs plan check functions for various projects; receives and reviews applications for building permits for completeness;
- Receives and records zoning and code compliance complaints, establishes appropriate files, performs inspections of document violations, coordinates actions with those of other agencies, and implements appropriate procedures to correct or resolve each complaint and violation.
- 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 land use, zoning, code interpretation, general plan compliance, signage, and other issues.
- Compiles information for a variety of studies and reports; researches, analyzes, and interprets social, economic, population, and land use data and trends; researches and reviews previous entitlements and City records; develops recommendations and prepares written reports on various planning matters; participates in the implementation and administration of the City's General Plan and development regulations.
- Researches, collects, records, analyzes, interprets, and summarizes statistical and demographic information; prepares spreadsheets and establishes and maintains a comprehensive database.
- Researches and assists in preparing ordinances for review.
- Staffs and assists limited-duration committees tasked with providing policy direction on advance planning studies.
- Participates in coordinating City planning and development related activities with other City departments and with outside agencies.
- Assists the Senior Planner in oversight of interns; organizes, assigns, supervises, and reviews the work of interns in the Department; trains interns in work procedures; evaluates performance, mentors interns, and assists in their selection and promotion.
- Attends meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions; attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of urban and transportation planning, traffic engineering, and other types of public services as they relate to the area of assignment.
- May provide technical direction and training to other planning and technical staff.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Modern principles and practices, technical and legal issues, applicable laws, codes, and industry standards of urban and regional planning, zoning, urban economics, demographics, environmental planning, transportation planning and traffic engineering, and program management.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political and other elements related to city planning.
- Comprehensive plans, current planning, and master planning processes, land development and policy 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 and transportation planning.
- Operational characteristics, services, and activities of a comprehensive environmental planning program.
- 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, 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 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 routine research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Read, interpret, apply, and explain technical written material and complex Federal, State, and local policies, standard practices and procedures, laws, regulations, ordinances, and City planning policies and procedures.
- Read and understand, analyze, interpret, summarize and present technical drawings, data, 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.
- Act in lead role in working groups to facilitate understanding of problems and finding of solutions.
- Be resourceful, creative, and assertive in finding and pursuing grant funding opportunities for established projects and needs.
- 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. Maintain accurate logs and basic written records of work performed, databases and vast amount of technical data from multiple sources.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Work independently, 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:

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, transportation planning, traffic engineering, civil engineering, or a related field.

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

Associate Planner: Three (3) years of professional experience in planning, zoning and related community development activities, or transportation planning and traffic engineering; or two (2) years of experience as Assistant Planner at the City of Lafayette.

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.