

APPROVED: 07/31/2021
FLSA: EXEMPT
Unrepresented

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general direction, the Principal Planner performs the most complex and sensitive planning duties; and serves as staff resource in technical areas to plan, organize and coordinate programs and projects for professional, technical and clerical staff. The Principal Planner provides supervision of the current and long-range planning projects and programs.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Provides direct supervision of Assistant Planner, Associate Planner, Permit Technician, Permit Services Coordinator, and regular and temporary administrative support staff.

Receives direction from the Community Development Director.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is a single incumbent position responsible for overseeing the City's current and long-range planning projects. Reports to the Community Development Director and has supervisory/management responsibilities over subordinate personnel.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Depending upon assignment, duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Direct, coordinate, supervise, train, review, and participate in the work of professional, technical, and clerical personnel in data collection, analysis, plan and policy formulation, and implementation of a wide variety of planning, zoning, and environmental review activities.
- Manage, participate in, and direct the development and implementation of the overall work activities of the Planning Department and the City's Long Range and/or Current Planning projects, plans, and programs.
- Train, motivate, and evaluate assigned personnel; provide or coordinate staff training; work with employees on performance issues; respond to staff questions and concerns; make discipline recommendations; Investigate grievances not resolved at lower levels, resolve when possible, and escalate to the next level if unresolved.
- Monitor and evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and procedures; assess and monitor workload, administrative and support systems, and internal reporting relationships; identify opportunities for improvement and reviews with the Director; manage the implementation of improvements.
- Ensure completion of division work activities in a manner consistent with City policies and procedures, and applicable plans, guidelines, laws, codes, statutes, and regulations; identify revised or new policies and procedures to address changes in work processes, legal requirements, and regulatory considerations.

- Interpret, implement, and enforce the General Plan, zoning codes, and other codes related to the maintenance of community standards.
- Develop and recommend changes on zoning regulations and the City's General Plan.
- Conduct research and analysis of land use and related issues.
- Prepare environmental review documents and direct the work of consultants in preparation of environmental documents. Prepare written reports.
- Produce and/or coordinates public events, committee meetings, and community workshops.
- Act as Zoning Administrator when assigned.
- Supervise, train, and evaluate subordinate staff. This includes developing individual planner work programs, monitoring progress and preparing performance evaluations. Implement goals, objectives, policies and priorities; assist in their development; and initiate recommendations for changes in codes, plans and policies.
- Act as liaison and present reports to the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, City Council, and various citizen committees as assigned.
- Confer with developers regarding development applications and processes; complete processing of the most difficult and complex planning applications; and advise staff on processing of applications.
- Perform the most complex and sensitive planning duties, prepare documentation and responses for appeal hearings; and serve as staff resource in technical areas.
- Assist in the preparation and administration of the annual budget.
- Makes presentations before the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, City Council, Community Groups and other organizations.
- Receive, coordinate, investigate, maintain records, and resolve questions and complaints relating to planning and zoning matters.
- Work closely and effectively with other City departments and governmental jurisdictions to coordinate the department's programs and projects.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Federal, state, and local statutes pertaining to planning and zoning. (California Planning Law, Environmental Quality Act and Subdivision Map Act).
- Principles, methods and practices of Urban Planning and Zoning Administration.
- Effective supervisory and leadership skills.
- Public involvement, communication, and negotiation methods.

- Research methodology, statistical analysis and evaluation of research data.
- Current and long-range Planning.
- Principles of administration and of personnel and budget management.

Ability to:

- Plan, organize and coordinate section personnel, programs and projects.
- Formulate and implement administrative procedures.
- Collect, analyze, interpret and apply complex zoning and planning data.
- Make effective decisions regarding planning and zoning.
- The ability to convey complex concepts and rules in a readily understandable manner to a diverse stakeholder and customer base.
- The ability to objectively review plans, materials, applications, and requests, and provide clear recommendations and decisions.
- Communicate effectively, orally and in writing.
- Possess sufficient command of the English language, syntax, spelling, grammar, and comprehension to create clear and effective reports, plans, and presentations.
- Plan for and facilitate effective community meetings.
- Work effectively with the public, community groups, boards and commissions, other City personnel and governmental jurisdictions.
- Ability to attend and make clear and comprehensive presentations at meetings at all hours of the day and night, as scheduled and required.
- Ability to process and manage complex development applications or long-range planning studies
- Lead by example, promote professional growth and development of subordinate staff and peers.

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:

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in Urban Planning or City/Regional Planning, Public Administration or related field is required. A Master's degree in a Planning related field is desired.
- At least Five (5) years of increasingly responsible municipal planning and management experience, preferably in current and long-range planning. At least Two (2) of the five years in a supervisory role is required.
- An equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the knowledge and abilities necessary to perform the work of a Principal Planner may also be qualifying.

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS:

- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification or the ability to obtain certification within one year of appointment.
- The ability to convey oneself to and from geographical locations frequently and timely, or possession of a valid CA driver's license.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; 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 mostly in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may periodically make site visits to building or planning sites for review and may traverse on uneven ground, in riparian habitats, and in inclement weather conditions. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.