



June 2023
FLSA: EXEMPT

SENIOR PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general direction, leads, oversees, and performs professional planning activities, such as reviewing development and entitlement applications and serving as project manager for development and land use applications; provides technical planning, information, and assistance to the Planning Manager, the Director of Community Development, the Planning Commission, the City Council, developers, contractors, and the general public; performs a variety of environmental and technical studies and prepares and presents staff reports; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general direction from assigned management and supervisory personnel. Exercises technical and functional direction over and provides training to lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the advanced journey-level classification in the professional planning series. Incumbents work under general direction and exercise a high level of discretion and independent judgment in performing the full range of routine to complex planning services for the City. Incumbents also provide lead direction to professional, technical, and administrative support staff. This class is distinguished from the Planning Manager in that the latter is responsible for planning, organizing, and managing the staff, operations, and activities of the Planning Division.

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.

- Provides lead direction to consultants, subordinate professional, technical, and clerical staff; trains assigned staff in their areas of work including planning methods, procedures, and techniques; verifies the work of assigned employees for accuracy, proper work methods, techniques, and compliance with applicable standards and specifications.
- Reviews planning projects for consistency with applicable rules and regulations, including ordinances, general plan, environmental compliance, and other related areas; assists in code enforcement activities and special projects.
- Serves as project manager for complex planning projects, including analyzing and evaluating site and architectural plans, performing technical review for project plans and applications, and making recommendations.
- Provides analysis and recommends actions on various aspects of planning; develops statistics and engages in research in preparation of various phases of planning projects; establishes and maintains appropriate files, and prepares correspondence as required.
- Confers with and provides information at the public counter and over the telephone to the public, developers, property owners, contractors, engineers, architects, other departments, and outside agencies regarding conformance to standards, plan specifications, and codes; explains codes, requirements, and procedures; evaluates alternatives.

- Reviews development applications for residential, commercial, and industrial development and identifies appropriate land use policy, design issues, and environmental requirements; makes recommendations for action.
- Prepares and presents staff reports to the City Council, Planning Commission and various commissions, committees, and boards.
- Updates and creates long-range planning documents such as the City's General Plan and other assigned plans; prepares modifications to General Plan Elements, the Zoning Code, and other applicable ordinances and policies.
- Gathers, analyzes, and presents data in the form of written, graphic, or oral reports for the use of the Director, Planning Commission, City Council, or special committees on a varied range of urban planning matters.
- Schedules project meetings for planning entitlement projects with applicants and property owners for project updates; meets and discusses projects with other department/divisions, and outside agencies.
- Observes and complies with City and mandated health and safety rules, regulations, and protocols.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Principles of providing functional direction and training.
- Principles and practices of leadership.
- Practices, principles, procedures, regulations, and techniques of City planning, zoning, and land use.
- Modern principles, practices, and techniques of private and public property development including finance, appraisal, market analysis, and property acquisition.
- Development financing techniques and private sector lending requirements.
- Community involvement methods and practices.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, environmental, and other elements related to city planning.
- Comprehensive plans and current planning processes and the development process.
- General concepts of architecture, landscaping, grading, drainage, and 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 laws related to general plans, subdivisions, zoning and development codes, building/housing codes, and environmental laws including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Permit Streamlining Act.
- Geographic Information Systems and their application to planning.
- Principles of basic mathematics and geometry and their application to planning work.
- Methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.
- Record keeping principles and procedures.
- City and mandated health and safety rules, regulations, and protocols.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and City staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination, including computers and software programs relevant to work performed.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

Ability to:

- Plan, organize, and coordinate the work of professional, technical, and administrative support staff.
- Effectively provide staff leadership and work direction.
- Analyze site design, terrain constraints, land use compatibility, utilities, and other urban services.
- Conduct complex planning research projects, evaluate alternatives, make sound recommendations, and prepare effective technical staff reports.
- Manage projects.
- Conduct zoning studies and interpret City zoning laws, regulations, and codes.
- Read blueprints and site plans and conduct site inspections.
- Evaluate architectural proposals and urban design/site plans.
- Write and review complex CEQA documents.
- Perform plan checks.
- Perform mathematical calculations.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record-keeping, and tracking systems; read, interpret, and record data.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Effectively represent the department and the City in meetings with individuals; governmental agencies; community groups; various business, professional, and regulatory organizations.
- Learn and understand the organization and operation of the City and of outside agencies as necessary to assume assigned responsibilities.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and procedural guidelines.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications relevant to work performed, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax. 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 a bachelor's degree in urban planning, regional planning, geography, architecture, or a closely related field and three years as a Planner for the City of Foster City or equivalent or four (4) years of professional experience in planning, zoning, architecture, or a related field.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or the ability to obtain, a valid Class C California driver's license upon appointment.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer; to operate a motor vehicle and visit various City sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person 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 up to 25 pounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

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.