



March 2019
FLSA: Assistant: Non-Exempt
Associate: Exempt

ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general supervision and direction, 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 project management and administration; completes technical assessments and prepares written project analyses; provides environmental review and project analysis for Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and special projects in advance planning; provides professional advice and assistance to the public on planning, community development, zoning, permits, and environmental review; provides complex professional staff assistance to the Planning Manager, other departments, and the public in areas of expertise; performs a variety of studies and prepares and presents staff reports; and performs related duties, as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision and direction from the Planning Manager. Exercises no supervision of staff.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Assistant Planner: This is the first experienced-level class in the professional planning series. Initially under general 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 the work of departmental and/or contract staff involved in a major area of the Planning Division, in addition to performing the more complex planning and project management activities.

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.

- 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.
- 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; identifies corrective actions to be taken by owners; recommends improvement and rehabilitation programs; conducts follow-up and re-check and approves or denies submittals.
- Reviews and signs off on plans submitted for Building Plan Check and permits.
- 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.
- Assists the public at the front counter and on the phone, 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.
- Serves as project manager on planning and development projects, which includes application and plan review, coordination with project applicants and other City departments, preparation and posting of legal notices, background research, environmental review, preparation of staff reports, scheduling meetings and hearings, and monitoring of project implementation to verify substantial conformance with approved plans, conditions, and mitigation measures; suggests revisions to site plans and architecture; inspects project development sites.
- 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 and the City's General Plan; 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.
- Prepares and presents staff reports for the City Council, Planning Commission, Design Review Committee, Zoning Administrator, Staff Review Committee, and various other committees and advisory boards as directed; prepares research, reports, maps, and conducts briefings and meetings.
- 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.
- 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.
- Refers to and applies numerous documents including the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, California Environmental Quality Act, Subdivision Map Act, State Planning laws, Municipal Code, redevelopment guidelines, emergency operations manual, historical preservation guidelines, County tax assessor's maps and records, building and architecture plans, etc.

- 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 planning 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 related duties as assigned.

JOB-RELATED QUALIFICATIONS

Some knowledge, skills, and abilities may be performed by positions at the entry (I) level in a learning capacity:

Knowledge of:

- Modern principles and practices of technical and legal issues of urban and regional planning, zoning, urban economics, demographics, and environmental planning and program management.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, 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, 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 Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

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.

- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Read and understand technical drawings and specifications.
- Perform mathematical and planning computations with precision.
- 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.
- 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 governmental agencies; community groups; various business, professional, and regulatory organizations; and in meetings with individuals.
- Learn and understand the organization and operation of the City and of outside agencies as necessary to assume assigned responsibilities.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, 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.
- 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 a bachelor's degree in Urban Planning, Geography, Public Administration, Business Management or a closely related field.

Assistant Planner: One (1) year of full-time 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, or two (2) years of experience as Assistant Planner at the City of East Palo Alto.

Possession of a master's degree in City Planning, Architecture, Public Administration, Business Administration, or closely related field is desirable, and will substitute one-year of professional experience.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of a valid California Class C Driver's License and a good driving record, at the 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 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 CONDITIONS

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.