



March 2019  
FLSA: Exempt

## SENIOR PLANNER

### **DEFINITION**

Under general direction, administers complex current and advance planning activities, including serving as project manager for complex development applications and special projects; administers specified activities in such areas as zoning, advance planning, and environmental impact studies, protection, and compliance, as well as the capital improvement program (CIP); provides technical direction to lower-level staff; provides information and assistance to property owners, developers, contractors, and the public; provides complex professional assistance to the Planning Manager, Community and Economic Development Director, City Council, Planning Commission, Design Review Committee, and others in areas of expertise; oversees, reviews, and performs a variety of studies and prepares and presents staff reports; and performs related duties, as assigned.

### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED**

Receives general direction from the Planning Manager. Exercises technical and functional direction over and provides training to lower-level staff.

### **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS**

This is a professional advanced journey-level classification in the Planner series. Incumbents work under general supervision from the Planning Manager and exercise a high level of discretion and independent judgment in performing the full range of routine to complex planning functions, with a primary emphasis on current and advance planning and environmental impact, protection, and compliance issues. Incumbents also provide lead direction to clerical, technical and professional level staff. Successful performance of the work requires a broad professional background as well as skill in coordinating assigned work with that of other City departments and public agencies. Responsibilities may include assisting with performing specified departmental day-to-day administrative functions. This class is distinguished from Planning Manager in that the latter is the highest-level class in the professional planning series and may provide supervisory review to staff in addition to handling the most complex and sensitive planning projects

### **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 and capital improvement sites at the beginning and upon completion of the project; reviews project applications and plans submitted for Design Review Committee, Planning Commission, and City Council considerations at public hearings.
- 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, Public Resource Code, General Plan, Specific Plans, Design Specifications, and Local Guidelines and procedures.

- 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 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, 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 projects.
- Prepares and releases requests for proposals for technical consultant services; establishes selection criteria; evaluates proposals and conducts interviews in conformance with City policy; 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
- 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.
- Coordinates project reviews by other City departments and outside agencies and consultants.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- Reviews project applications and plans submitted for Design Review Board (DRB) hearings; hold and conduct DRB meetings, under supervision, providing background and technical assistance to Board members.
- 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 related duties as assigned.

## **JOB-RELATED QUALIFICATIONS**

### **Knowledge of:**

- Modern principles, practices, and 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, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- 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.
- 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 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 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.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures, 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 businesses, 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.
- 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.
- Independently organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- 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.
- Select staff, provide training, ensure work is performed effectively, and evaluate performance in an objective and positive manner.
- Assist in developing and implementing goals, objectives, practices, policies, procedures, and work standards.

**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, community development, business or public administration, or a related field and five years (5) years of professional experience in planning, zoning and related community development activities, or two (2) years of experience as Associate 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.