



Assistant/Associate Planner

Definition

Under direct and general supervision, performs various professional-level work in current and/or advanced planning and special projects. Completes technical assessments and studies and prepares written analyses and reports. Performs community outreach and education. Performs code enforcement duties, and performs related work as required.

Class Characteristics

Assistant Planner – This is the entry-level class in the professional planning series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents learn to apply concepts and work procedures and perform professional planning work. 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. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Positions at this level are trained to represent the City to the Planning Commission, City Council, and other stakeholders and usually perform most of the duties required of the positions at the Associate level, but usually exercise less independent discretion and judgment in matters related to work procedures and methods.

Associate Planner – This is the fully competent-level class in the professional planning series. Incumbents independently manage the more complex planning projects such as mixed use, multi-jurisdictional, and/or larger projects, and researches, analyzes, and develops solutions to planning issues. Employees at this level have experience that enables them to represent the City to the Planning Commission, City Council, and other stakeholders. Employees 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. Assignments are given with general guidelines and incumbents are responsible for establishing objectives, timelines, and methods to deliver work products. Work is typically reviewed upon completion for soundness, appropriateness, and conformity to policy and requirements, and the methodology used in arriving at the end results are not reviewed in detail. This class is distinguished from the Senior Planner in that the latter is the advanced, lead-level class in the series and is responsible for organizing, assigning, and reviewing the work of planning staff, in addition to performing the more complex, long-term planning and project management assignments.

Positions in the Planner class series are flexibly staffed and positions at the Associate level are normally filled by advancement from the Assistant level after gaining the knowledge, skill, and experience which meet the qualifications for and after demonstrating the ability to perform the work of the higher-level class.

Supervision Received and Exercised

Receives direct and general supervision from the Planning Manager or Assistant Director of Community Development. Exercises no supervision of staff. Exercises technical and functional direction over and provide training to interns.

Typical Job Functions

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 on planning and development projects, including processing applications and reviewing plans for routine to complex commercial, industrial, residential, mixed use, and tree removal projects. Writes staff reports and collects supporting documentation for submission to the Planning Commission, City Council, and other committees and commissions. Schedules and facilitates meetings and community hearings, and monitors project implementation to ensure conformance with approved plans, conditions, and mitigation measures.

Interprets and ensures compliance with City codes, General Plan, Specific Plan, and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Reviews plans and descriptions of proposed projects and land uses for completeness and compliance with City standards. Provides interpretations and advises applicants on corrective actions.

Reviews business license applications and ensures consistency with land use standards and prior development and entitlement approvals.

Performs plan check functions for various projects. Receives and reviews applications for building permits for completeness.

Assists the public at the front counter, on the phone, and via email, answering questions and providing information regarding zoning, land use, code interpretation, development standards, project status, and the City's processes.

Receives and responds to complaints for potential code violations. Makes site visits, investigates complaints, and documents violations. Coordinates actions with those of other departments and/or agencies and implements appropriate procedures to correct or resolve each complaint and violation.

Organizes and facilitates community outreach and public education events to provide information on planning, community development, zoning, permits, and environmental review related issues and to collect information on community priorities in order to develop and prioritize goals and policies for development and land use planning.

Researches, analyzes, and interprets data and trends. Researches and reviews previous entitlements and City records. Assists in developing long-range planning policies and documents.

Participates in coordinating City planning and development related activities with other City departments and with outside agencies.

Attends and participates in meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions. Stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of planning and other types of public services as they relate to the area of assignment.

Performs other duties as assigned.

Qualifications

Assistant Planner

Knowledge of:

Principles, practices, theories, and trends of urban, land use, and regional planning, zoning, and environmental review.

Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, and other elements related to city planning. Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to planning, zoning, and environmental review.

Principles of advanced mathematics and their application to planning work.

Statistical and research methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.

Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.

English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.

Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, 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:

Learn and interpret City planning and zoning programs to the general public.

Learn and apply federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, standards, and procedures relevant to zoning and planning.

Learn to research planning and zoning issues, evaluate alternatives, make sound recommendations, and prepare and present effective staff reports.

Read and interpret architectural and engineering plans and specifications.

Prepare clear and effective reports, correspondence, and other written material.

Make accurate arithmetic and statistical computations.

Effectively represent the department and the City in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, and regulatory organizations and individuals.

Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.

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 and legal guidelines in politically sensitive situations.

Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Associate Planner

In addition to the qualifications of the Assistant Planner:

Knowledge of:

Principles and practices of project management.

Applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, standards, and procedures relevant to zoning and land use planning.

Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to planning, zoning, and environmental review.

Practices of researching planning and zoning issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.

Ability to:

Manage complex planning projects such as mixed use, multi-jurisdictional, and/or larger projects.

Interpret planning and zoning programs to the general public. Identify and respond to issues and concerns of the public, City Council, Planning Commission, and other stakeholders.

Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, standards, and procedures relevant to zoning and planning.

Assess, monitor, and report environmental impact on and of various City programs and services.

Independently conduct research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.

Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner.

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, environmental studies, engineering, or a related field.

Assistant Planner – Prior experience in planning or a related field is preferred.

Associate Planner– Two (2) years of professional experience similar to the Assistant Planner at the City of Cupertino.

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 and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter 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 10 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 occasionally work in the field and 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.