



JULY 2019
FLSA: NON-EXEMPT
Bargaining Unit: PL
JCN: 4201/4202

ASSISTANT PLANNER / ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general supervision or direction, performs professional office and field work involved in planning, zoning, and land use matters; interprets and enforces various zoning regulations of the County; completes technical assessments and prepares written project analyses; provides professional advice and assistance to the public on planning, community development, zoning, and permits; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision or direction from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff. May provide technical and functional direction to lower-level staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

Assistant Planner: This is the entry-level classification in the professional Planner class series. Initially under close supervision, incumbents learn and perform a variety of professional office and field work related to the interpretation, application and enforcement of County planning codes, ordinances and regulations and the County's General Plan. 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 journey-level (Associate Planner), 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 fully qualified-level classification in the professional Planner class series able to perform the full scope of general planning duties required. Positions at this level are distinguished from the entry-level (Assistant Planner) 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 Sr. Planner in that the latter is the advanced journey-level class in the class series and is responsible for organizing, assigning, and reviewing the work of departmental staff involved in a major area of the Planning Division, in addition to performing the more complex and politically sensitive planning and project management activities.

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

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Receives and processes land use applications for conditional use permits, rezones, parcel and subdivision maps, site development or site review permits, general plan amendments, and other requests related to County planning activities.
- Reviews applications for consistency with the County's General Plan, codes, and ordinances.
- Conducts site inspections to collect pertinent information regarding site conditions.
- Collects, researches, reviews, and organizes field and office data for the development of staff reports, analysis of planning elements, and/or development or modification of current land use policies.
- Conducts environmental review and analyses.
- Compiles findings and prepares recommendations in written form for projects, including project analysis and conditions for permit approval.
- Interprets federal, state, and local laws, codes, and ordinances associated with current and advanced planning activities.
- Prepares and updates maps, charts, and graphs for visual presentations related to planning activities.
- Prepares a variety of periodic and special reports regarding assigned activities; makes presentations to the public, special districts and agencies as requested.
- Confers with and advises architects, builders, contractors, engineers, and the general public regarding County development policies and standards; provides and clarifies information relative to land use, zoning, code interpretation, general plan compliance, signage, and other issues.
- Participates in coordinating County planning and development related activities with other County 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, Specific Plans, historical preservation guidelines, County tax assessor's maps and records, building and architecture plans, etc.
- Researches and assists in preparing ordinances for review.
- 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.
- Performs related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Some knowledge and abilities may be gained by employees at the entry (Assistant) level while 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.
- Federal, state, and local laws, codes, rules, regulations, and standards affecting planning, zoning, land development, and other programs of the department.
- Comprehensive plans, and current planning processes and the development process.
- Site planning and architectural design principles.
- Methods, practices, and procedures used in current and advanced planning operations.
- Practices of researching planning and land use issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology.
- Environmental and biological issues impacting planning activities.
- General concepts of architecture, landscaping, grading, drainage, and traffic and transportation engineering as they relate to the process of urban planning.
- Geographic, socioeconomic, transportation, political, and other elements related to planning.

- Operational characteristics, services, and activities of a comprehensive environmental planning program.
- Planning terminology and technical report writing requirements related to planning.
- Project management and contract administration principles and techniques.
- Researching and reporting methods, techniques, and procedures.
- Principles and techniques for working with groups and fostering effective team interaction to ensure teamwork is conducted smoothly.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and County staff, and anticipating and resolving customer needs and potential issues in the planning process.
- 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 draft land use maps and legal descriptions of property.
- Collect, interpret, and analyze field and office planning data accurately.
- Perform technical planning operations and studies.
- Process a variety of land development applications.
- Read plans and specifications and make effective site visits.
- Effectively use basic GIS technology.
- Analyze site design, terrain constraints, land use compatibility, utilities, and other urban services.
- Assess, monitor, and report environmental impact on and of various County programs and services.
- Maintain accurate records of work performed.
- Perform mathematical and planning computations with precision.
- Conduct routine research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Prepare and present clear, concise, and logical written and oral reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written material.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Coordinate assigned activities with other County departments and agencies as required.
- Direct the work of contract consultants.
- Interpret and explain planning and zoning programs to the general public; identify and respond to issues and concerns of the public, Board of Supervisors, and other boards and commissions.
- Understand, interpret, and apply all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to the work performed.
- Effectively represent the department and the County in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, and regulatory organizations, and in meetings with individuals.
- 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.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of the required experience, education, and training that would provide the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying.

Assistant Planner:

Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in city, regional, urban, or transportation planning, or a closely related field.

Associate Planner:

Equivalent to a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in city, regional, urban, or transportation planning, or a closely related field;

AND

Two (2) years of professional planning experience at a level equivalent to the County's class of Assistant Planner.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment and maintenance of a satisfactory driving record.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, to inspect development sites, including traversing uneven terrain, climbing stairs, and other temporary or construction access points; to operate a motor vehicle and to visit various County 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 with frequent field work such as inspecting development sites. 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. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees also work in the field and may 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 members of the public or with staff under emotionally stressful conditions while interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.