



CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA JOB DESCRIPTION

Senior Planner
FLSA Status: Exempt

DEFINITION

Under the general direction of the Development Services Director, the Senior Planner performs a variety of current and advanced planning functions, as well as management of various long and short range planning initiatives. The Senior Planner completes all of the duties of the Associate Planner position; however, work assigned to the Senior Planner will include larger and more complex projects.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is an advanced level classification in the professional planning series. The Senior Planner is distinguished from other Planning classifications by the performance of the more complex planning tasks requiring a higher degree of knowledge related to all areas of current and advanced planning and responsibility for an assigned area such as zoning administration, general plan administration, and special projects. Assignments are broader in scope and require the use of independent judgment in making technical decisions and guiding work to completion. Employees at this level are required to be fully trained in all operating procedures and policies related to assigned areas of responsibility, to work independently, and to exercise judgment and initiative.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

The essential duties of this classification include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide general and technical information to property owners, developers, business owners, residents, the general Public, and other agencies concerning land use policies, zoning regulations, development standards, and City procedures with respect to the submission of planning applications and other Department provided services
- Receive planning applications, development plans, documents, technical studies and reports and review for completeness and compliance with the City's General Plan, Zoning Code, ordinances, regional plans, and pertinent federal and State law; coordinate plan checking and review by various City departments and other agencies
- Analyze assigned discretionary planning applications, reports, and correspondence submitted by applicants, including but not limited to:

development plans, traffic reports, noise studies, and environmental assessments, for conformance with applicable codes, rules, and regulations

- Conduct environmental review for moderately complex projects for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under supervision, prepares and/or oversee initial studies, negative declarations, and other CEQA documents
- Compile and analyze information, develop and present recommendations on various development permits and applications, and prepare appropriate reports; inspect properties and structures for compliance with current zoning codes, approved construction plans, and other City regulations; identify corrective actions to be taken by owner and/or applicant; recommend improvement programs; conduct follow-up inspections and rechecks as required; and process permit applications and calculate appropriate fees
- Research, analyze, interpret, and summarize statistical and demographic information including social, economic, population and land use data and trends
- Prepare and present reports to the City Council, the Planning Commission, other City committees or external commissions, boards, and/or community groups
- Assist in maintaining the Development Services Department web pages, permit applications, and handouts
- Assist Code Enforcement officer in analysis of moderate to complex Code Enforcement cases
- Assist in research and preparation of General Plan Amendments and Zoning Amendments, along with any corresponding studies for review
- Perform research regarding implementation of policies established by the General Plan, Zoning Code or other land use and development ordinances; conduct studies and needs assessments for the development of programs to address significant or complex development and/or planning issues
- Assist with Economic Development projects, perform various research assignments related to Economic Development
- Analyze and administer GIS applications to support City Departments and Divisions

- Assist in preparing Department budget and monitoring and tracking the approved budget
- Respond to and resolve difficult and sensitive inquiries and complaints
- May serve as project manager for moderate to complex projects. Coordinate assigned Department activities with other City departments or divisions; monitor, review, evaluate and revise assigned project schedules; and prepare progress reports
- As needed, calculate fees, collect deposits and issue building permits according to City and Department rules, regulations and policies
- Provide excellent customer service to both City staff and the public
- Assist with the development and implementation of the Department Policies and Procedures Manual
- Maintain and update electronic and physical records in accordance with City Records Retention Policy. File and maintains plans, permits, property records and inspection records; coordinate the imaging of planning records and applications for the Department
- Respond to requests for public information; makes copies for records requests and maintains log of responses
- Maintain supplies including permit applications, forms and related documents; requisition additional supplies as required; and maintain development assistance forms
- Observe, identify and help resolve problems related to counter operations in cooperation with other City staff
- Establish, maintain and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with City staff and all those contacted in the course of work
- Perform related work as required

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Operations, services, and activities of a municipal community planning and development department

Modern principals, practices, and techniques of current and advanced planning

Zoning administration practices and methods

Principles and practices of regional and urban planning including urban design and neighborhood revitalization

Current developments and legal requirements for local planning

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The Subdivision Map Act

The National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements as it relates to the entitlement process

Pertinent federal, State, and local laws, codes and Community Development Block Grant regulations

Proper English, spelling, grammar, punctuation use, and business letter writing

Modern office equipment operation including computer equipment, software programs, and GIS systems; modern office practices, procedures, and methods

Ability to:

Effectively administer a variety of moderate to complex land use and development applications and activities

Perform professional planning work with minimum supervision

Receive, review, analyze, and process building and planning permits

Research, analyze, and evaluate public service methods and techniques

Analyze zoning requirements and policies and make recommendations

Provide customers with accurate information on building, planning, and zoning codes, and City and Department policies and procedures

Operate office equipment including computers and supporting software programs such as permit processing, word processing, spreadsheet and database applications

Gather and prepare data for use in report preparation

Evaluate situations, identify problems, provide solutions, and implement selected recommendations

Analyze and compile technical and statistical information, and prepare clear and concise reports

Analyze problems, identify alternate solutions and project consequences of proposed actions, and implement recommendations in support of goals

Interpret and apply federal, State and local policies, procedures, laws and regulations

Maintain tactfulness and courtesy in handling potential conflict situations

Follow oral and written instructions

Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing, with the general public, developers, architects, contractors, office staff and other departments

Work under pressure with frequent interruptions and a high volume of public contact by phone and in person

Attend night and/or weekend meetings, events or activities outside normal business hours

Travel to various sites and operate a motor vehicle safely

Training and Experience:

Any combination equivalent to experience and training that provides the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for acceptable job performance. Example combinations include:

A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in planning, architecture, urban studies, geography, public administration, or closely related field; experience in Geographical Informational System (GIS); four years of progressively responsible professional Planning experience; or any combination of education, experience, and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities.

A Master's degree and AICP is desirable.

Desirable Knowledge, Skills And Abilities

- Thorough knowledge of current planning practices, principles and trends
- Demonstrated ability to interpret zoning ordinances, general plan codes, state and Federal laws and follow established policies
- Skills necessary to effectively assemble and organize material in a logical manner including conclusions/recommendations for written and oral presentations
- Skills necessary to deal tactfully with public and others contacted in performance of duties
- Ability to deal tactfully with the public and associates under difficult circumstances.

Physical Standards:

Physical & Sensory Elements: The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this class. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions. While performing the duties of this class, the employee is regularly required to communicate effectively, verbally and in a written manner; observe and interpret data, and analyze and solve problems. (depending on position). The employee may have to move up to 25 lbs. and transport up to 10 lbs. objects. See in the normal visual range with or without correction; vision sufficient to read computer screens and printed documents and to operate office equipment. Hear in the normal audio range with or without correction. The employee may be required to work overtime to complete assignments. Must be able to work a flexible schedule. Use of personal vehicle during employment may also be required.

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 be required to travel to other locations and attend meetings. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing policies and procedures.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Graduation from an accredited college or university with a degree in Urban Planning, Public Administration, Geography, Economics or a related field and four years of experience in Urban Planning; or any equivalent combination of education and experience. A Master's Degree in Urban Planning, Public Administration or a related field is desirable.

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS

Must possess and maintain a valid California Driver's License and have a satisfactory driving record.

SELECTION GUIDELINES

All selection guidelines for this position are subject to City Council determination, and include a formal City application, rating of education and experience, oral interview, and reference check. Job-related tests may also be required. Successful completion of a background review, including fingerprinting, may be required. Selected candidate will be required to provide written identification showing entitlement to legal residence in the United States.

The duties listed above are intended only as illustration of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position.

This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

Note: All employees of the City of Rancho Santa Margarita are designated to be "Disaster Service Workers." In the event of a declared emergency or any undeclared emergency or natural disaster that threatens the life, health and/or safety of the public, employees may be assigned to assist rescue and relief workers. Such assignments may be in locations, during hours and performing work significantly different from the employee's normal work assignments and may continue through the recovery phase of the emergency. (Per City Ordinance 03-04).

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 3100, all public employees are required to serve as disaster service workers subject to such disaster service activities as may be assigned to them by their supervisor or by law.

Classification Status: This is an "At Will" classification and not included in "Competitive Service" as defined in Section 2.04.040 of the Rancho Santa Margarita Municipal Code. Employment can be terminated with or without cause, or notice, at any time by either City or employee.

Approval Date: June 8, 2022