



CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA JOB DESCRIPTION

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general direction of the Development Services Director, the Principal Planner performs complex, advanced level professional planning work in current or advanced planning and environmental analysis; provides technical and functional supervision to professional, technical and clerical planning staff; coordinates and manages all activities related to assigned projects; and provides staff assistance to the Development Services Director.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is the advanced level classification in the professional planning series. The Principal Planner is distinguished from other Planning classifications by the performance of the most complex planning tasks requiring a high 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, special projects, and housing programs. The Principal Planner is further distinguished by the performance of lead supervisory activities such as assigning work, monitoring project progress and providing technical assistance and training to other professional and technical staff. Assignments are broad in scope and require the use of considerable 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, work independently and exercise judgment and initiative. This classification is distinguished from the Director in that the latter has overall management responsibility for the Department. This classification may act as the Development Services Director in his/her absence.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

The duties assigned include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Develop and present recommendations on various development permits and applications and prepare appropriate reports.
- Research, analyze and interpret social, economic, population and land use data and trends; prepare written reports on the General Plan and other planning matters.
- Compile information and make recommendations on special studies and prepare complex planning reports.
- Analyze environmental impacts for projects, prepare initial studies and other relevant environmental documents; interpret and apply environmental quality

laws and regulations to ensure that development, City projects and Code amendments are in compliance.

- Prepare General Plan and Zoning amendments, along with any corresponding studies.
- Review development proposals and work with developers to reach agreement on acceptable site plans; review various development applications for compliance with appropriate regulations and policies.
- Perform extensive research regarding implementation of policies established by the general plan, zoning ordinance, or other land use and development ordinances.
- Provide staff support to a variety of boards and commissions; attend and participate in professional groups and committees.
- Provide information to the public regarding zoning, land use and the general plan; monitor the plan check activities of Department staff; participate in public meetings.
- Provide lead supervision and technical assistance to professional and technical planning staff; monitors work progress, conducts performance reviews and recommends disciplinary actions.
- Participates in the development and implementation of Department goals, objectives, policies and procedures.
- May assist in preparing budget justification; participate in the forecast of additional funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials, and supplies; assist in monitoring and tracking the approved budget.
- Prepare staff reports and graphic displays and make presentations to the Planning Commission or other committees, boards, City Council and/or community groups.
- Plans and oversees daily activities of assigned functional areas, reviews completed work, assess workload and identifies opportunities for improvement.
- Prepare grant applications for new funding sources.
- Draft requests for proposals, interview and select consultants, administer consultant contracts related to planning projects; coordinate activities with other departments or divisions; monitor, review, evaluate, and revise project schedules; and prepare project progress reports.

- Meets with staff, City Council, Commission and community groups to identify and resolve difficult and sensitive inquiries and complaints.
- Research, analyze and recommend policies and procedures for assigned programs.
- Manage and utilize GIS system; analyze, administer and manage applications as support to various Departments and Divisions within the City.
- Provide excellent customer service to both internal and external customers.
- Establish, maintain and foster positive and harmonious working relationships with City staff and all those contacted in the course of work.
- Perform related duties and responsibilities as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

Modern principles and practices, technical legal issues and research methods of City planning, zoning, urban economics, transportation planning, demographics and environmental management.

General concepts of architecture, landscaping, grading, drainage, and traffic and transportation engineering as they relate to the process of urban planning.

Recent development, current literature and sources of information related to municipal planning and administration.

Modern office methods, practices, procedures and equipment, including computer hardware and software necessary for graphic presentation, mapping and database management.

Research and reporting methods, techniques and procedures.

Principles of contract administration.

Principles of supervision, training and performance evaluation.

Relevant Federal, State and Local laws, codes and regulations,.

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

Methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.

Modern office methods, practices, procedures and equipment (including computer hardware and software for graphic presentation, mapping and database management).

Safe driving principles and practices.

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:

Manage, direct and coordinate the work of professional, technical and clerical personnel.

Plan, organize and carry out assignments from the Development Services Director with minimal supervision and direction.

Analyze, interpret, summarize and present administrative and technical information and data in an effective manner.

Evaluate and develop improvements in operations, procedures, policies or methods.

Interpret and apply Federal, State and local policies, procedures, laws and regulations, in coordination with and under the advice of the City Attorney.

Effectively administer a variety of land use and development programs and activities.

Analyze and compile technical and statistical information and prepare reports.

Identify and respond to public, Planning Commission and City Council issues and concerns.

Interpret and apply Federal, State and local policies, procedures, laws and regulations.

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

Recommend and implement goals, objectives, and practices for providing effective and efficient services.

Research, analyze and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures and techniques.

Prepare clear and concise administrative and financial reports.

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

Travel to various sites and operate a motor vehicle safely.

Supervise assigned staff.

Communicate clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing; understand and carry out oral and written instructions.

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

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; expertise in Geographical Informational System (GIS); five years of professional planning experience including at least one year of supervisory experience; progressively responsible professional experience; major experience with a California city is desirable; or any combination of education, experience, and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities. A Master's degree in planning or public administration and certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) are desirable.

Licenses:

Possession of a valid California Driver's License and a safe driving record at appointment is required.

Physical Standards:

Physical & Sensory Elements: The sensory demands of the job typically require speaking, hearing, touching and seeing. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in work areas and walking between work areas may be required. Employee is frequently required to communicate with others, use a telephone and work on a personal

computer. Close vision for reading and working on a visual display terminal screen and the ability to focus on small objects is required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard, typewriter 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. Positions in this classification occasionally lift and carry reports and records that typically weigh less than 25 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 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.

Tools and Equipment:

Personal computer, including word processing, spreadsheet, electronic calendar, power point software programs; telephone, fax, copier, postage machine and other modern office equipment as necessary.

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.

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)

FLSA Status: Exempt

At Will Status: Employment can be terminated with or without cause or notice at any time by either City or employee.

City Council Adoption Date: February 12, 2014