



CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

JOB DESCRIPTION

ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general direction of the Development Services Director, performs a variety of general and specialized professional planning functions in the field of current and advanced planning; coordinates and manages all activities related to assigned projects; provides information and assistance to residents, developers, the business community and the public on planning, zoning, land use, permits and other Department related matters. The Associate Planner will also receive direction from the Principal Planner.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is the journey level classification in the professional planning series. The Associate Planner is distinguished from other Planning classifications by the performance of planning tasks requiring a high degree of knowledge related to the areas of current and advanced planning including routine zoning administration, general plan administration, plan checking, entitlement processing and other special projects. This classification is distinguished from the Principal Planner by the lower level of responsibility assumed and the lesser complexity of duties assigned. The position's responsibilities include the application of professional knowledge and skills to various municipal planning, zoning and development problems and projects. Employees at this level are required to be trained in all operating procedures and policies related to assigned areas of responsibility, work independently and exercise judgment and initiative.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

The following functions are typical for this classification. Incumbents may not perform all of the listed functions and/or may be required to perform additional or different functions consistent with business needs and position qualifications.

- 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 and review planning applications, development plans, documents, technical studies and reports for completeness and compliance with the City's General Plan, ordinances, regional plans and pertinent Federal and State law. Coordinates plan review by various City departments and other agencies.

- Analyze assigned discretionary planning applications, reports and correspondence submitted by applicants, including but not limited to traffic reports, noise studies, environmental assessments for conformance with applicable codes, rules and regulations.
- Conduct environmental review for simple to moderately complex projects for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Under supervision, prepares and/or oversees initial studies, and negative declarations.
- 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 the 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; 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 written reports on the General Plan and other planning matters.
- Prepare and present reports to the City Council, the Planning Commission or other City committees or external commissions, boards, and/or community groups.
- Assist in maintaining the Development Services Department web pages.
- Assist in research and preparation of General Plan Amendments and Zoning Amendments, along with any corresponding studies for review; prepare General Plan Annual Monitoring Report.
- 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 development issues.
- Assist with Economic Development projects, perform various research assignments related to Economic Development; prepare, maintain and analyze Business Registration databases; analyze and provide recommendations for enforcement of Business Registration program.
- 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 assigned 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.
- Provide contractors, builders, developers and the general public with information on the City's Construction and Demolition Recycling Program.
- Organize, enter and retrieve planning related and other information in to a computer; maintain and update electronic and physical records in accordance with City Records Retention Policy. Files and maintains plans, permits, property records and inspection records; coordinate the microfilming of planning and related applications and blueprints 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; 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 program.

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

Principles and policies of regional and urban planning.

Zoning administration practices and methods.

Principles and practices of 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 land use and development programs and activities.

Perform professional planning work with minimum supervision.

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

Research, analyze and evaluate public service methods and techniques.

Analyze zoning requirements and policies and make recommendations.

Provide customer 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); three 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.

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, presentation and other specialized 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: **Non Exempt**

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.