

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Classification Responsibilities: A Principal Planner performs advanced-level professional planning and supervisory work. A Principle Planner is responsible for administrative functions, and for managing/supervising professional planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers, and/or paraprofessional/technical staff either directly, or through subordinate supervisors. This class is responsible for directing, overseeing, and assigning work activities and projects, monitoring workflow, and reviewing and evaluating reports, documents, and recommendations. Work assignments are done with considerable independence. Employees in this class may perform any combination of Current or Long-Range Planning duties as assigned. This class performs related duties as required.

Current Planning duties include: developing and implementing policies and procedures related to planning, development, administration of current planning functions for the City including subdivision of land, design review, zoning entitlements, and planning; interpreting planning codes; coordinating the development review process, including meetings with the general public, applicants, architects, engineers, attorneys, and other City staff, to advise and prepare recommendations for the Design Review Board, Planning and Zoning Board, Subdivision Technical Review Committee, General Plan Update Committee, ad hoc committees, citizen groups, City management, and the City Council; setting up and conducting regular staff meetings to review current planning cases and assigning research and case management to the planning staff; overseeing staff to prepare board, committee, and Council packets, citizen participation plans and reports, legal advertisements, notifications, and maps; reviewing reports and assists in the development of technical and revenue projects including the City's Five-Year Capital Improvement Program etc., as requested by the Development and Sustainability Department Director or Planning Director; developing and implementing planning unit and department strategic plan through management of staff; and representing the City as a planning expert in various legal issues, and on various regional planning committees.

Long-Range Planning duties include: preparing and coordinating the implementation of various projects such as the General Plan Update with the Current Planning unit; coordinating area and neighborhood plans and special planning projects and developments; overseeing compilation of the City's demographic data and works with other City departments providing demographic information and projections; overseeing the creation and revision of complex computerized mapping projects; overseeing the City census program; and assigning annexation projects and reviewing work in progress for compliance with state laws.

Distinguishing Features: Work is performed with general instructions from the Planning Director who reviews work through meetings, conferences, and results achieved. This class is FLSA exempt-administrative.

QUALIFICATIONS

Employee Values: All employees of the City of Mesa are expected to uphold and exhibit the City's shared employee values of Knowledge, Respect, and Integrity.

Minimum Qualifications Required. Graduation from an accredited college or university with a Bachelor's Degree in Urban Planning, Geography, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Geographic Information System (GIS), Civil Engineering, or a related field. Extensive (5+ years) professional experience in urban planning (example: current or long-range planning), including good (1 - 3 years) supervisory experience. Considerable (3 - 5 years) experience with computerized databases and GIS.

Special Requirements. None.

Substance Abuse Testing. None.

Preferred/Desirable Qualifications. A Master's Degree from an accredited college or university in an appropriate field, and certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners are preferred.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Communication: Conducts conferences with customers and applicants to explain the City planning policies, general planning principles, development standards, regulations, policies and procedures, planning case law, Arizona State Statutes, and long-term vision for the City. Produces complex staff reports, policy and research documents, which involve the establishment or implementation of new policies, analysis of design or development proposals. Makes oral presentations to the public, boards, task forces, committees, and the City Council. Facilitates policy and public discussions, design charettes management meetings. Meets with citizens, planners, City staff, agency representatives, and developers to review and discuss planning policies, state law, general plan, and procedures. Planning expert for the City and liaison with the City Attorney regarding planning issues, lawsuits, and development agreements. Provides clear and effective communication to subordinate staff in the performance of supervisory functions.

Manual/Physical: Uses a personal computer in order to view, revise, or create reports, databases, maps, graphics, or spreadsheets. Reads, creates and interprets legal descriptions for accurate representation on zoning maps. Perceives the full-range of the color spectrum in order to review building elevations and site plans for compliance with City esthetic standards and design guidelines and to accurately determine multiple colored zoning patterns. Uses graphic materials such as blueprints, as-builts, and site plans in order to illustrate or clarify information. Visits various sites for conducting on-site inspections, annexations or long-range planning considerations, and attends meetings throughout the metropolitan area. Meets scheduling and attendance requirements.

Mental: Plans and directs activities of assigned area of responsibility within the Planning unit. Supervises, manages, and evaluates the work of subordinate personnel to ensure compliance with City policies. Prioritizes and assigns work to personnel, and prioritizes own work. Resolves procedural and operational work-related problems for assigned section(s) by coordinating staff meetings and providing appropriate direction to staff. Conducts research and analysis and formulates recommendations to the Planning Director. Comprehends and makes inferences from written materials (example: state legislation and regional reports, census reports, and various planning reports to monitor regional and national trends from impact to the City).

Knowledge and Abilities:

One position may not include all of the knowledge and abilities listed, nor do the listed examples include all the knowledge and abilities which may be found in all positions of this classification.

Knowledge of:

the geography, demographic, and development patterns of the City of Mesa and its surroundings;
the theories, principles, and practices related to land use planning and development;
the accepted practices and applicable state and local laws and regulations relating to zoning, entitlements, esthetic standards, design guidelines, annexations, land subdivision, and land use control;
the City of Mesa standards for locating streets, utilities, recreational, educational, protective, and other public services, and residential, commercial, and industrial areas;
the construction and zoning codes, ordinances and development requirements as adopted by the City of Mesa;
subdivision design principles and land use relationships;
leadership and team styles and skills;
the construction and zoning codes, ordinances and development requirements as adopted by the City of Mesa including the format, content and purpose;
building construction materials, methods, building trade codes and terminology;
construction codes and related laws and ordinances as adopted by the City of Mesa including the format, content and purpose;
site planning, building and landscape design;
the principles and practices of public administration, economics, civil and traffic engineering, architecture, municipal finance, demographics, statistical analyses, sociology, and technology as applied to urban planning; and
Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) products and software.

Ability to:

supervise, train, manage, and develop employees effectively;
monitor and review programs and determine their effectiveness;
determine the most effective utilization of equipment and human resources;
communicate effectively verbally and in writing;
work effectively with both elected officials and appointed boards of the City;
listen to and communicate effectively with citizens and representatives of the development sector having varying educational backgrounds and values;
communicate complex technological information in layman's terms; and
establish and maintain effective working relationships with management, City staff, vendors, contractors, and the general public.

The duties listed above are intended only as general illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. Specific statements of duties not included does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related, or a logical assignment to the position. Job descriptions are subject to change by the City as the needs of the City and requirements of the job change.

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