City of Desert Hot Springs
Job description

PRINCIPAL PLANNER

Class specifications are intended to present a descriptive list of the range of duties performed by employees in the class. Specifications are not intended to reflect all duties performed within the job.

DEFINITION: Under general direction of the Community Development Director, performs a variety of advanced level management and planning functions, including managing planning division projects and staff; overseeing and administering complex land use and related projects, making presentations before various City and Community groups; and performs related tasks as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This job class functions at a full journey level within the planning series. Employees in this classification work within a framework of standard policies and procedures. This job class is assigned complex projects requiring knowledge of current and advanced planning practices and principles and related laws, ordinances and regulations.

REPORTS TO: Community Development Director

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

The following duties are normal for this position. These are not to be construed as exclusive or all-inclusive. Other duties may be required and assigned.

- Plans, organizes and directs activities of the Planning Division; develops plans and recommend changes in policies and procedures.
- Manages and participates in complex and sensitive professional planning projects, conducts research, analyzes problems; evaluates alternatives and makes sound recommendation.
- Oversees and participates in specialized planning functions such as large-scale development proposals and environmental studies.
- Conducts and oversees technical investigations regarding planning projects; reports conclusions and recommendations.
- Manages, evaluates, and supervises the work of professional and support staff; counsels staff on performance issues; and provides training and professional development.
- Makes presentation before the City Council, Planning Commission, community groups, and other organizations.
- Identifies, prepares and submits grant applications, administers grant funds.
- Serves as the Environmental Coordinator for the City insuring compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Serves as advisor to the Community Development Director and the Planning Commission.
- Assists Community Development Director in preparing and monitoring the department budget.
- Negotiates contracts with consultants; monitors and coordinates consultant activities.
- Prepares various reports; state and federal applications; correspondence, tabulations and summaries.

MINIMUM TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Graduation from a recognized four-year college or university with specialization in Urban Studies, City and Regional planning, Environmental Planning, public administration or a related field; at least 5 years progressively responsible experience in local planning, overseeing the preparation and certification of Environmental Impact Reports (EIR's) and development and adoption of planning and zoning documents including Specific Plans and zoning districts including two (2) years which involve the supervision of professional staff and/or professional consultants. A Master's Degree in Urban Planning and AICP certification is highly desirable but is not as critical as a solid history of productive experience.

Required Licenses and Certification
Requires a possession of or ability to obtain a valid Class C California Drivers License with an acceptable driving record at time of employment.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS:**

*Knowledge of:*
- Principles, procedures, standards, practices and trends in the field of urban planning;
- Land use, physical design, demographic, environmental and social/economic concepts as applied to municipal planning;
- Theories, principles and practices of City Planning, Climate Change and Greenhouse gas impact of proposed development and modernization projects;
- Municipal government structure and how City Planning relates to and interfaces with other city functions.
- Statistical and research methodology;
- Federal, State and local laws, ordinances and regulations related to planning and community development;
- Understanding of quality architecture and landscaping with regard to urban development;
- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel;
- Understanding of the Brown Act with regard to Public Hearings and Agendas;
- Understanding of GIS and project tracking systems.

*Typical Skills:*
- Must be innovative, detail-oriented, experienced in highly visible/controversial projects
- Capable of managing multiple, high-priority assignments
- Strong interpersonal skills to develop good working relationships at various levels and to resolve complaints
- Strong analytical skills to interpret research data for reports and apply mathematic techniques in practical situations
- Reading comprehension to understand technical and legal materials.
- Ability to work on several projects or issues simultaneously
- Ability to provide effective supervision and staff management
- Ability to manage projects effectively and meet firm deadlines

*Physical Requirements:*
- Ability to operate a variety of automated office machines including a copier, fax machine, telephone, office computer and peripheral equipment, calculator and blueprint reproduction;
- Ability to use drafting software, art instruments and graphics tools;
- Ability to use fine and gross motor coordination in performing data entry and in driving a car;
- Ability to exert light physical effort in sedentary to light work involving sitting and walking or moving from one place to another;
- Ability to conduct Site Inspections in the field on a variety of terrains;
- Ability to exert a negligible amount of force periodically to lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects; and
- Ability to perceive and differentiate color, texture and shapes.

*Mathematical Ability:*
- Ability to calculate and apply a variety of formulas and statistics for special reports related to current and long range planning projects.

*Judgment and Situational Reasoning Ability:*
- Ability to apply principles of rational systems such as interpreting and applying planning principles and ordinances;
- Ability to work independently with limited oversight; and
- Ability to use independent judgment in periodically non-routine situations, such as in providing information to the public and making field inspections.
Language Ability and Interpersonal Communication:

- Ability to comprehend and correctly use a variety of informational documents including but not limited to environmental studies (e.g., soils, traffic, noise, air quality and biological), ordinances, architectural and engineering drawings and blueprints, census data;
- Ability to prepare letters of correspondence, memos, graphics and a variety of reports using prescribed format and conforming to all rules of punctuation, grammar, diction and style;
- Ability to comprehend a variety of reference books and manuals including general plan and zoning, subdivision regulations, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and maps;
- Ability to provide excellent customer service and quickly solve customer’s problems; and
- Ability to communicate effectively with coworkers, supervisor, public and private agencies, architects, engineers, developers, Planning Commission and City Council members and citizens orally and in writing.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Ability to work primarily in an office environment, occasionally driving to construction sites to make field inspections and other locations for work related meetings. Must be able to attend evening or weekend meetings and events, as required.

FLSA STATUS: EXEMPT

The City of Desert Hot Springs is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Desert Hot Springs will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities and encourages both the prospective employees and incumbents to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.

Revised: February 2020

Approved by: ___________________________ Date: ________________

City Manager