



CITY OF PACIFICA ASSISTANT PLANNER/ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, the Assistant/Associate Planner performs professional-level work in current and/or advanced planning and special projects. Completes technical assessments and studies and prepares written analyses and reports. Provides community outreach and education.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Assistant Planner

This is the entry-level class in the Planner series. Initially under close supervision, Assistant Planners learn to apply concepts and work procedures and perform professional planning work. Work is usually supervised while in progress and fits an established structure or pattern. Exceptions or changes in procedures are explained in detail as they arise. As experience is gained, assignments become more varied and are performed with greater independence. Positions at this level usually perform duties required of the positions at the Associate level, but usually exercise less independent judgment and discretion in matters related to work procedures and methods.

Associate Planner

This is the fully qualified journey-level classification in the Planner Series. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Assistant Planner by the elevated performance of a full range of duties as assigned, working independently, and exercising judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit. Provide general assistance and advice to the developers and the public on current planning and zoning matters, both orally and in writing.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives direct and general supervision from the Community Development Director or designee. Exercises no supervision of staff. Exercises technical and functional direction over and provide training to interns.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS - INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO THE FOLLOWING:

Assistant and Associate Planner

- Serves as project manager on planning and development projects, including processing applications and reviewing plans for routine to complex commercial, industrial, residential, mixed use, and/or tree removal projects.
- Provide general assistance and advice to the developers and the public on current planning and zoning matters, both orally and in writing.
- Process development permit and subdivision applications for hearing in accordance with State law.
- Performs plan check functions for various projects. Receives and reviews applications for

building permits for completeness.

- Reviews business license applications and ensures consistency with land use standards and prior development and entitlement approvals.
- Prepare and present reports for Planning Commission and City Council action on current advanced planning projects.
- Prepare periodic major and minor revisions to the Zoning Ordinance, General Plan and Coastal Land Use Plan.
- Formulate, prepare and present ordinances, projects and studies addressing special planning problems and issues related, for example, to Community Development funding, redevelopment, commercial development, provision for low and moderate income housing, or coastal access.
- Periodically work with community groups and committees on special projects with Zoning Ordinance and General Plan revisions. May be asked to represent City at regional meetings related to Community Development.
- Provide general assistance and advice to the developers and the public on current planning and zoning matters, both orally and in writing.
- Assists the public at the front counter, on the phone, via email, and answering questions and providing information regarding zoning, land use, code interpretation, development standards, project status, and the City's processes.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

In addition to the Assistant Planner duties, Associate Planner duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Writes staff reports and collects supporting documentation for submission to the Planning Commission, City Council, Open Space and Parkland Advisory Committee, and other commissions and committees.
- Interprets and ensures compliance with City codes, General Plan, Specific Plan, and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
- Attends meetings, conferences, workshops and training sessions. Attends and participates in professional group meetings. Seeks and maintains knowledge of new trends and innovations in the field of urban planning and other types of public services as they relate to the area of assignment.
- May serve as liaison to the Planning commission and other commissions and committees.
- Represents the Community Development Department and City of Pacifica in regional planning working groups, including but not limited to countywide storm water and housing working groups.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of

Assistant and Associate Planner

- State and local laws related to current and advanced planning including CEQA, the Subdivision Map Act, Planning and Zoning Law, and the California Coastal Act.
- Principles, practices, theories, and trends of urban, land use, and regional planning, zoning, and environmental review.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications GIS and mapping data.
- Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, and regulatory organizations, and with property owners, developers, contractors, and the public.

- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, and other elements related to city planning. Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to planning, zoning, and environmental review.

In addition to the qualifications of the Assistant Planner, Associate Planner knowledges include:

- Principles and practices of project management.
- Familiarity with applying federal, state, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, standards, and procedures relevant to zoning and land use planning.
- Practices of researching planning and zoning issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.

Skill/Ability to:

Assistant and Associate Planner

- Organize and coordinate complex zoning and planning projects and to prepare sound recommendations; ability to write clearly and concisely, to perform basic statistical and mathematical procedures, and to prepare graphic materials in the form of maps, charts, matrices, etc.
- Communicate effectively at public meetings, with the general public, and with staff of other City divisions, departments and governmental agencies.
- Learn and interpret City planning and zoning programs to the general public.
- Organize and coordinate complex zoning and planning projects. Prepare sound recommendations.
- Write clearly and concisely and to make technical information easily understood.
- Apply accepted principles and standards of planning in a creative manner and with initiative.
- Perform basic statistical and mathematical procedures.
- Site planning and architectural design principles.
- Prepare graphic materials in conjunction with written work in the form of maps, charts, matrices, etc.
- Analyze and interpret regional data within the local setting.
- Communicate effectively at public meetings, with the general public, and with staff of other City divisions, departments and governmental agencies.
- Coordinate assigned activities with other City departments and agencies as required.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, on the telephone and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy and legal guidelines in politically sensitive situations.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

In addition to the qualifications of the Assistant Planner, Associate Planner skills/abilities include:

- Manage complex planning projects such as mixed use, multi-jurisdictional, and/or larger projects.
- Interpret City planning and zoning programs for the general public.
- Identify and prepare responses to address issues and concerns of the public, City Council, Planning Commission, and other stakeholders.
- Assess, monitor, and report environmental impact on and of various City programs and services.
- Independently conduct research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.

- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner.

Experience and Training

Any combination of education and experience that would likely provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to qualify is:

Assistant Planner

Experience

One (1) year of professional experience in planning, zoning, and related community development activities.

Training

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major course work in urban planning, environmental studies, engineering, or a related field.

Associate Planner

Experience

Three (3) years of professional experience in planning, zoning, and related community development activities.

Training

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major course work in urban planning, environmental studies, engineering, or a related field.

Certification

Certification by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) is desirable.

License

Possession of a valid California driver's license and a satisfactory driving record.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Physical Skills

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, to inspect City development sites, including traversing uneven terrain, climbing ladders, stairs, and other temporary or construction access points.

To operate a motor vehicle and to visit various City and meeting sites.

Vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups and over the telephone.

This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard 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. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects weighing up to 25 pounds.

Working Environment

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. When conducting site visits, employees may work in the field and occasionally be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions and road hazards. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing City and departmental policies and procedures.

Job Title: Assistant / Associate Planner
Reports To: Senior Planner
Job Type: Full-time (40 hours per week / 2080 hours per year)
FLSA Status: Exempt
Bargaining Unit: Assistant Planner – Teamsters Misc Local 856 (Misc 856)
Associate Planner – Teamsters Mgmt Local 350 (Mgmt 350)

Adopted: 05/27/2025
