



PRINCIPAL PLANNER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Department:	Community Development Services	Division/Section:	Planning
Work Location:	City Hall	Percent Time:	Full-time
Job Type:	Civil Service	FLSA Status:	Exempt
Reports To:	Director of Community Development Services	Union:	Non-Union

JOB SUMMARY

The Principal Planner oversees advanced, highly complex professional planning activities and manages Planning Division activities and staff. Responsible for personnel administration, coordinating work programs and priorities, and ensuring that decision-making within the Planning Division is internally consistent and in accordance with state and municipal statutes and the City's priorities, mission, and values.

In conjunction with the Director, the Principal Planner is responsible for comprehensive planning, historic preservation, neighborhood planning, subdivision/development review, annexation, research, and long-term planning studies. Provides staff support to the City Council, Urbana Plan Commission, Urbana Historic Preservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Design Review Board. Represents the City on a variety of intergovernmental committees and teams. Supervises and leads staff to accomplish the planning goals of the City. May also be assigned zoning administration duties.

Class Characteristics

This is the advanced, lead level in the professional planning series. Incumbents provide lead direction for assigned Planners and perform highly specialized and difficult planning functions. Incumbents are assigned to either advanced or current planning projects that require considerable professional knowledge and the use of independent judgment. This class is distinguished from Planner II position in that the latter has overall management responsibility for the City's Planning Division.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Actively supports and upholds the City's mission and values.
- Contributes to supporting organizational goals and priorities.
- Administers and enforces of the City of Urbana's Land Development Code (LDC) as it applies to subdivisions and developments within the City and the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction, in consultation with the CD Director and the City Engineer. Serves on the Administrative Review Committee.

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- Coordinates and/or oversees zoning issues and enforcement with the Building Safety Division staff and with other City departments. Facilitates joint planning projects between departments.
- Supports the development of the City's comprehensive plan, planning programs and policies.
- Directs the Planning Division, which includes implementation of the comprehensive plan, planning programs and policies; preparing staff recommendations regarding development, amendment, and implementation of City's Comprehensive Plan; and other long-range planning studies.
- Provides lead direction and work assignment to professional and technical staff; assists in the selection of assigned staff; instructs staff in work procedures, reviews work performed and provides periodic performance evaluations to assigned staff.
- Prepares and directs special planning studies as needed. Such studies may include use of maps, graphs, reports, field studies, statistics, tabulations, computations, graphs and charts for illustration and analysis.
- Serves as project manager for major planning activities and specific projects.
- Serves as, or delegates, project management for the Design Review Team (DRT) meetings, which convene key city personnel on planning and development questions.
- Provides staff support to City Council on planning related matters and attends Council meetings as needed. Provides or assigns staff support for the Plan Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Design Review Board, and other boards, commissions or committees as needed. Attends or assigns staff to attend meetings.
- Coordinates planning efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, such as Champaign County, City of Champaign, Village of Savoy, Urbana Champaign Sanitary District (UCSD), Park District, School District, etc.
- Coordinates the solicitation and gathering of input from various civic and neighborhood groups to aid staff in planning projects.
- Analyzes requests and recommends appropriate action for a wide variety of plan cases, including, but not limited to, zoning text amendments, zoning map amendments, land development and subdivision requests, subdivision regulation amendments, special use permits, conditional use permits, variances, annexation agreements, planned unit developments, and comprehensive plan amendments.
- Reviews the recommendations and packet materials prepared by division staff prior to their submittal to the Director for final review and distribution.
- Prepares and supervises preparation of Plan Commission and City Council packet materials for meetings including memos, maps, and other information as needed.
- Reviews Plan Commission agenda and cases, including recommendations, providing alternate recommendations if applicable.
- May serve as, or delegate: Secretary of the Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Design Review Board.
- Makes presentations to public groups and City boards and commissions, including the Urbana Plan Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Historic Preservation Commission, Design Review Board and Urbana City Council.
- Prepares, reviews, and presents Council legislation such as ordinances and resolutions.
- Fosters and develops a culture of positive customer service in working relationships with key staff, division and departmental employees, other governmental organizations, and

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with external services such as consultants, citizens, legal counsel, boards, and commissions, and City Council.

- Provides direct technical staff assistance and support to Director, as necessary.
- Works with the Director to research, recommend, and implement process improvements.
- Develops and revises applicable City codes, policies and procedures in consultation with the Director and other key staff or elected officials.
- Provides regular reports on the status of projects and ensures that City officials are informed on a timely basis.
- Works with the CD Director on developing a vision for neighborhood organizations and community engagement, including identifying and monitoring performance measures.
- Responds to public inquiries regarding general planning, zoning, and subdivision regulations.
- Facilitates data management and related tasks with U.S. Census Bureau on as-needed basis.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

Education & Experience

- Knowledge typically acquired through completion of a bachelor's degree in urban planning or a closely related field.
- Five (5) years of progressively responsible experience managing or directing professional planning work, including at least two (2) years of supervisory experience.
- A master's degree is strongly preferred and may substitute for one (1) years of the experience requirement.
- Local government planning experience, including working with public boards and commissions is preferred.

Note: The word "experience" referenced in the minimum qualifications means full-time paid experience; part-time experience including internships may be accumulated and pro-rated to meet the total experience requirements.

Knowledge of

- Principles and practices of urban planning and land use.
- Specializations such as housing, zoning, historic preservation, and economic development.
- Methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.
- Pertinent federal, state and local laws, codes and regulations including recent changes; familiarity with City of Urbana ordinances or the ability to learn and apply these accurately.
- Recent developments, current literature and sources of information related to municipal planning.
- Local government procedures and practices.
- Citizen involvement techniques and processes.
- Software programs including Microsoft Office applications and GIS.

Skills

- Strong interpersonal skills to develop good working relationships at various levels and to resolve complaints.
- Excellent written and oral communication and presentation skills.
- Must be innovative, detail-oriented, experienced in highly visible/controversial projects.
- Strong analytical skills to interpret research data for reports and apply mathematical techniques in practical situations.
- Reading comprehension to understand technical and legal materials.
- Supervisory and performance management skills.
- Sound independent judgment and decision-making skills.

Ability to

- Effectively prepare technical reports, present public recommendations orally and in writing.
- Respond to inquiries and complaints with courtesy and professionalism.
- Represent the City in a variety of forums.
- Work with and maintain maximum security of confidential information.
- Manage multiple, high-priority assignments.
- Work on several projects or issues simultaneously and meet firm deadlines.
- Develop and maintain collaborative working relationships with a variety of stakeholders, disciplines, elected officials and agency officials at all levels of government, non-profit organizations, developers, civic groups, and others involved in planning, community and economic development.
- Manage or facilitate complex, multi-year projects involving multiple stakeholders and a wide array of disciplines, sensitive political issues and challenges, and diverse communities.

Licenses, Certifications and Memberships Required

- Must possess or obtain AICP certification within 18 months of hire and maintain certification.
- Must possess or obtain a valid State of Illinois driver's license within 15 days of employment.

Job Dimensions

- Work at this level requires specific professional skills and/or skills in managing a variety of complex processes beyond those of the Planner II because the levels of independent judgment and process complexity require more breadth and/or depth of skills to perform the complex processes required by the job, and higher levels of difficulty or responsibility are involved. Examples include advanced skill in administering programs, processes, or services with limited

supervision; skill in utilizing an in-depth knowledge of applicable City, state, or federal regulations affecting programs or processes administered by the incumbent; and the ability to manage projects or programs or handle day-to-day administrative responsibilities independently.

- Interactions with others are somewhat unstructured. The purpose may be to influence or motivate others, to obtain information or to control situations and resolve problems. Interactions may be moderately unstructured and may involve persons who hold differing goals and objectives. Individuals at this level often act as a liaison between groups with a focus on solving particular unstructured problems. Interactions at this level require considerable interpersonal skill and the ability to resolve conflict. Interactions will regularly occur with diverse audiences, including elected and appointed officials, property owners, and the public.

Level and complexity of supervision received

This position works under the close direction of the Community Development Services Director. Incumbent receives guidance in terms of broad goals and overall objectives and is assigned responsibility for establishing the methods to attain them. Generally, the incumbent is in charge of an area of work and typically formulates policy for this area but does not necessarily have final authority for approving policy. **Level and complexity of supervision exercised**

This position is responsible for supervising Planning Division staff, including employees at the Planner I and Planner II levels.

Security Level

- Level MVR: Essential functions require frequent use of City vehicles.
 - Level LIC: Essential functions require the employee to possess a license, credential, or other certification in order to meet minimum job qualifications and/or qualify for continued employment in a particular occupation or position.

Physical Demands and Working Conditions

- Work typically occurs in a standard, onsite office setting. Normal work schedule is from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. Must also be available for meetings and special events occurring beyond standard business hours as required. Work may occasionally require lifting up to ten (10) pounds (files, banker's boxes, etc.)

Vision: Vision sufficient to read computer screens and printed documents; visually inspect work in progress, with or without correction.

Hearing: Hear in the normal audio range with or without correction.

The work environment characteristics described herein are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Class Specification History:

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New class:
General revision: December 3, 2023

For HR/Finance Use

Job Class Code	Pay Grade
5150	112
EEO Category	
1– Officials and Administrators	