



## Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

### SENIOR PLANNER

#### **DEFINITION**

Under general direction, plans, organizes, oversees, coordinates, and reviews the work of professional, technical, and administrative staff performing difficult and complex professional and technical support related to all current and advanced activities and programs for one or more major open space planning function within a larger department, including facilities, capital improvement, land purchasing planning, long range planning, and natural and cultural resource management planning; manages the effective use of assigned resources to improve organizational productivity and customer service; coordinates planning efforts among other District staff and outside consultants, contractors and regulatory agencies; provides highly complex and responsible support to assigned management staff in areas of expertise; and performs related work as required.

#### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED**

Receives general direction from assigned management staff. Exercises general direction and supervision over professional, technical, and administrative support staff through subordinate levels of supervision.

#### **CLASS CHARACTERISTICS**

This is the highest-level classification in the professional planning series that provides advanced specialized expertise in open space planning that is applied to the administration and management of large, complex, and diverse projects or a focused major area of responsibility. Incumbents make decisions of critical impact involving the development and implementation of policy and/or long- and short-term goals and objectives in a focused area of responsibility or assigned project area(s). Responsibilities include performing diverse, specialized, and complex work involving significant accountability and decision-making responsibility. The incumbent organizes and oversees both day-to-day current and long-term advanced planning activities and is responsible for providing professional-level support to assigned management staff in a variety of areas. Successful performance of the work requires an extensive professional background as well as skill in coordinating departmental work with and providing technical support to other District departments and other public agencies. This class is distinguished from the Planning Manager in that the latter has overall management responsibility for all planning programs, functions, and activities and for developing, implementing, and interpreting public policy.

#### **EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)**

*Management reserves the right to add, modify, change or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.*

#### **For all assignments:**

- Assumes management responsibility for all planning functions and activities of an assigned open space planning area.
- Participates in the development and implementation of strategic goals, objectives, policies, and priorities for the assigned area; recommends within departmental policy, appropriate service and staffing levels; recommends and administers policies and procedures.

- Develops, administers, and monitors budgets for the assigned functional area; forecasts funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials and supplies; monitors and approves expenditures; recommends adjustments as necessary.
- Develops and standardizes procedures and methods to improve and continuously monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of assigned programs, service delivery methods, and procedures; assesses and monitors workload, administrative and support systems, and internal reporting relationships; identifies opportunities for improvement and recommends to the Planning Manager.
- Participates in the selection of, trains, motivates, and evaluates assigned personnel; provides or coordinates staff training; works with employees on performance issues; implements discipline and termination procedures.
- Recommends and administers policies and procedures such as procedure guidelines, design standards, and standard plans and specifications while ensuring that environmental, financial, regulatory, and legal requirements are met.
- Researches and compiles information for the preparation of use and management plans for District preserves and other planning activities; conducts or directs field or background research; meets with outside agencies and District personnel, field staff, members of the public and neighbors to solicit input, and identify concerns, problems and opportunities.
- Oversees the development of consultant requests for proposal, advertising, and bid processes for professional and/or construction services; evaluates proposals and recommends project award; administers contracts after award.
- Meets and confers with contractors, a variety of outside agencies, and the general public in acquiring information and coordinating assigned planning projects and programs; provides information regarding District planning policies and procedures.
- Prepares, reviews, and completes various reports, including Board agenda reports and planning project related documentation and correspondence; oversees, reviews and prepares California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance documents.
- Provides technical information and instruction regarding applicable procedures and methods; interprets and explains rules, regulations, and procedures; answers questions and resolves concerns.
- Serves as a liaison for assigned function to outside agencies, neighborhood groups, and concerned citizens; performs a variety of public relations and outreach work related to assigned activities.
- Provides highly complex staff assistance to the Planning Manager; develops and reviews staff reports related to assigned activities and services; presents information and staff recommendations to the Board of Directors and various commissions, committees, and boards; provides staff support to commissions, committees, and task forces, as necessary.
- Conducts a variety of organizational studies, investigations, and operational studies; recommends modifications to capital improvement planning and natural resource management programs, policies, and procedures.
- Attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of open space and preserve planning; researches emerging products and enhancements and their applicability to District needs.
- Provides technical and professional support to departmental management staff and other District departments and the public; advises other departments regarding planning and/or environmental review requirements, budgets, and timelines to facilitate adequate project planning.
- Monitors changes in regulations and technology that may affect assigned planning programs and projects; implements policy and procedural changes after approval.
- Receives, investigates, and responds to difficult and sensitive problems and complaints in a professional manner; identifies and reports findings and takes necessary corrective action.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

**When assigned to the Resource Planning function:**

- Plans, supervises, and reviews the work of staff involved in planning work focused on the protection and restoration of natural, historical, and cultural resources on District properties, as well as the containment and elimination of hazardous waste.
- Oversees research regarding site conditions, protection, and restoration; surveys field sites and analyzes environmental impacts of projects and recreational use on District lands; prepares restoration plans for specific areas and reserves; prepares recommendations regarding rare species protection and invasive species control.
- Develops and maintains resource inventories of District lands; oversee the collection of field-based data by staff and consultants; work with the GIS Coordinator to populate the GIS with data related to the distribution, abundance and habitat conditions for listed species.
- Directs contaminated site management and remediation projects, including ensuring regulatory compliance, developing and implementing remediation plans, and overseeing the response to spills or hazardous waste finds out in the field.

**When assigned to the Capital Improvement function:**

- Oversees and participates in the development, implementation, and completion of the District's most complex and politically sensitive capital improvement projects, including erosion control, ecosystem restoration, and trail construction.
- Addresses stakeholder groups to answer questions and concerns, and ensures regulatory and legal regulatory and legal compliance for all projects.
- Coordinates and leads the preparation and implementation of site improvement and repair plans; prepares or directs studies and designs, evaluate alternatives; obtains necessary permits; prepares project budget estimates and schedules.

**When assigned to the Real Property Planning function:**

- Develops acquisition strategies and terms for complex acquisition projects; oversees and performs due diligence for properties being considered for purchase; performs research on various property rights, title, zoning and development potential, code compliance, and regulatory requirements; advises on potential stewardship implications; collaborates with District counsel to develop and terms of easements and exchange agreements with property owners; negotiate planning issues with property owners; oversees resolution of encumbrance and encroachment issues.
- Prepares reports and documents relating to obtaining or exchanging interests in District lands; prepare and present land acquisition reports.
- Coordinates and prepares acquisition grants; develop scope and direct the work of consultants for conducting resource studies and grant writing.
- Directs, coordinates, and reviews the work plan for the Land Protection Program; provide direction to staff for monitoring and resolving conflicts of interest arising from easement and encroachment issues on District lands.
- Conducts comprehensive open space acquisition planning studies and maintain land acquisition priorities.
- Coordinates and reviews California Environmental Quality Act compliance on acquisition and land protection projects; prepare documents for acquisition and land protection projects.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Knowledge of:**

- Administrative principles and practices, including goal setting, project management, and the development, analysis, and evaluation of programs, policies, and operational needs of the assigned functional area.
- Principles and practices of budget development and administration.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, either directly or through subordinate levels of supervision, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Operations, services, and activities of an open space management, resource management and protection, and land use planning program.
- Advanced principles and practices of resource management and site planning.
- Advanced principles, practices, and trends in environmental and open space planning, analysis and design.
- Contract management practices in a public agency setting.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Practices of researching issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- General principles of risk management related to the functions of the assigned area.
- Recent and on-going developments, current literature, and sources of information related to open space protection and management.
- Record keeping principles and procedures.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the District in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, educational, regulatory, and legislative organizations.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and District staff.

**Ability to:**

- Recommend and implement strategic goals, objectives, and practices for providing effective and efficient services.
- Administer complex, technical planning projects and related programs in an independent, collaborative, and cooperative manner.
- Plan, organize, assign, review, and evaluate the work of staff; train staff in work procedures.
- Organize, implement, and direct assigned open space planning activities.
- Evaluate and develop improvements in procedures, policies, or methods.
- Research, analyze, and evaluate new service delivery methods, procedures, and techniques.
- Prepare clear and concise reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Analyze, interpret, summarize, and present administrative and technical information and data in an effective manner.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with Federal, State, local, and District policies, procedures, laws, and regulations.
- Conduct complex research projects, evaluate alternatives, make sound recommendations, and prepare effective technical staff reports.
- Effectively represent the department and the District in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, and various businesses, professional, and regulatory organizations and in meetings with individuals.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record keeping, and tracking systems.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.

- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

**Education and Experience:**

*Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:*

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in urban or regional planning, environmental design, landscape architecture, architecture, natural resource management, ecology, biology, or a related field, and five (5) years of increasingly responsible project management experience in open space planning preferably in a governmental, non-profit land trust, land management, or similar organization, including three (3) years of supervisory or managerial experience. A Master's Degree is desirable.

**Licenses and Certifications:**

- Possession of a valid California Driver's License.
- Planning certification (AICP or equivalent) is desirable.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, to inspect District 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 District 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 partially a sedentary office and partially a field classification and standing in and walking between work areas, development sites, and remote rural lands is 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.

**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 also work in the field and occasionally be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, or road hazards. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

EFFECTIVE: December 2011  
REVISED: N/A  
FLSA: Exempt