CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **Senior Planner**

UNION:231
SG:7
DEPARTMENT: **Planning and Community Development** **CS:N**
FLSA:N
EEO4CODE:PR

JOB SUMMARY:

Responsible for performing a wide range of complex urban planning functions. Manages current and long-range planning and permitting processes, including long-range land use, economic and community development, environmental planning activities as well as development of the comprehensive plan, neighborhood plan and other policy-level documents. Reviews and processes complex development proposals; manages the review process, identifies and evaluates issues and makes final approval decisions. Develops, reviews and updates City land use plans; recommends, researches and drafts legislative actions for City Council.

Serves on the Department's management team and assists with budget preparation and tracking. Supervises Planners I, II and other lower level staff. Makes work assignments, evaluates and monitors work, recommends hire and discipline and conducts annual performance appraisals. Works with the general public, other City departments, outside agencies, City Council and the Mayor's office in performing job duties.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to assigned Division Manager, Assistant Director or the department Director. Works under general supervision and the guidance of City and Departmental policies and procedures. Supervises and assigns work to Planning and Community Development Department staff and consultants and takes an active role in the department management team. Works independently and in teams (as assigned) on major projects and initiatives with limited need for oversight or day-to-day direction.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Manages the planning process for and develops current and long-range plans, such as the comprehensive plan, neighborhood plan, and other policy-level documents that provide the basis for land use, capital facility, and budgetary decisions. Plan development includes forming a staff project team; establishing and implementing public involvement processes; and determining project timelines and budget. The planning process may also include coordinating interagency review, completing State Environmental Policy Act review, developing meeting packets with staff recommendations, presenting information

to the Planning Commission and City Council, and working with legal staff on responding to legal challenges.

2. Manages land use and environmental permitting processes, which may include working with the general public, applicants and other departments or agencies to ensure compliance with adopted regulations, plans, policies and good planning practice.

3. Reviews and processes complex development proposals, including annexations and rezone requests. Includes managing the review process, identifying and evaluating issues, considering public comments, recommending conditions of approval, drafting decisions for the Director or Hearing Examiner and making final decisions on permits with limited discretion.

4. Supervises staff and evaluates work. Makes hiring recommendations, assigns and prioritizes work assignments, conducts performance appraisals, and recommends disciplinary actions.

5. Makes recommendations to the Mayor on potential members of City advisory boards and commissions. Develops training materials and advises boards and commissions on planning issues.

6. Manages land use and environmental code compliance through permit review, interagency coordination, construction monitoring and enforcement actions. Analyzes environmental impacts and identifies and applies mitigation strategies.

7. Reviews, develops and updates City land use plans. Provides interpretations related to code compliance and enforcement of land use laws.

8. Recommends, researches and drafts legislative actions for City Council review and approval which includes developing, amending, and updating plans, regulations and programs. Identifies and recommends regulatory and programmatic elements to implement local goals and policies.

9. Prepares legal documents for review by the Director, City Attorney, Mayor, and City Council, including Hearing Examiner, Planning Commission and City Council findings of fact, ordinances, resolutions, development agreements, interlocal agreements and contracts.

10. Serves as a consultant and information resource to the Mayor, City Council, other City departments, public agencies, special interest groups and members of the public on community planning issues, policies and legal interpretations.

11. As a member of the department's management team, participates in preparing the Planning and Community Development Department's annual budget and department work program. Assists the Director during development of the Mayor's budget and budget presentations to the City Council. Monitors and tracks budget expenditures, identifies program needs and budget alternatives for consideration by the Director.

12. Prepares requests for qualifications and proposals for the intent of hiring paid consultants to assist the City with work program items such as code updates and special projects.

13. Makes public presentations to City boards and commissions and City Council, as well as the general public, neighborhood groups, nonprofits and special interest groups. Represents the department's position on identified issues in meetings with community groups and project/process proponents and opponents.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. May serve as acting Division Manager and/or SEPA Responsible Official, as assigned.

2. May manage special projects that include interdepartmental teams.

3. Performs related work of a similar nature or level.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

Knowledge of:
- Current planning theories and concepts related to comprehensive land use planning and community development at regional, county, city and neighborhood levels;
- Public participation techniques;
- Project management;
- Transportation and capital facility planning;
- Supervisory methods and concepts;
- Federal, county, state, and local planning and environmental laws, ordinances, methods and policies;
- Environmental science;
- State Environmental Policy Act;
- State Growth Management Act;
- Subdivision law;
- Statistics; and,
- Budget concepts.

Skills in:
- Spreadsheet, database, word processing and related software applications;
- Monitoring and evaluating performance of personnel;
- Building teams and motivating staff;
- Composing correspondence, reports, plans, and regulations, including technical and descriptive styles;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills for interaction with co-workers, supervisors, managers, other City personnel and the general public;
- Prioritizing tasks and managing time;
- Making decisions;
- Solving problems;
- Researching complex issues;
- Coordinating diverse interdepartmental and public work teams;
- Assigning mitigation for environmental impacts;
- Reading and interpreting maps, site plans, architectural and engineered/civil drawings, and technical reports;
- Giving public presentations;

- Developing marketing materials for plans and projects;
- Negotiating.

Ability to:
- Use permitting software and geographic information systems;
- Use mathematics including algebra, geometry, and trigonometry to perform statistical and budgetary calculations and analyses.
- Willingness and ability to frequently attend and participate in evening meetings.
- Maintain consistent and punctual attendance.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.
- Physically perform the essential functions of the job, including:
  - Correctable visual acuity to read a computer monitor and typeset page;
  - Fine finger dexterity to manipulate computer keyboard and mouse;
  - Communicate verbally, in person and over the phone;
  - Traverse difficult and undeveloped terrain.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is primarily performed in an office environment with extensive work at a computer workstation. Requires frequent attendance and participation in evening meetings, field work and site visits to locations, including urban undeveloped and developed areas and open space, underdeveloped land parcels, and project development sites. Travel to professional seminars, meetings and court attendance as needed. May interact with frustrated and difficult members of the public.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Bachelor's degree in Planning or related field and five (5) years of experience related to job tasks.
- Completion of an accredited Master's degree in urban planning or related field may substitute for two years of the experience requirement.
- AICP certification is preferred.
- An equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to provide the applicant with the knowledge, skills and ability to successfully perform the essential functions of the job will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Valid Washington State Driver's License and good driving record. Candidates must submit a three-year driving abstract prior to hire.
- Employment contingent upon passing a criminal conviction and local background check.

PREPARED BY:

P. Decker **REVIEWED BY:**_____

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1/01

REVISED BY: Bell/Cowles/Pool
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