



Date: January 14, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Hedieh Khajavi, Human Resources Director

By: Civil Service Commission | [CivilServiceCommission@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:CivilServiceCommission@TorranceCA.Gov)  
Leallani Stewart, Human Resources Analyst | [LStewart@TorranceCA.Gov](mailto:LStewart@TorranceCA.Gov)

Subject: Civil Service Commission and Human Resources – Approve Proposed Class Specification for Senior Planner. Expenditure: None.

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## RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation of the Civil Service Commission and Human Resources Director that City Council approve the proposed class specification for Senior Planner.

## FUNDING

None required.

## DISCUSSION

The Community Development Director requested that a new job classification be created to oversee the day-to-day activities of the Planning division and staff, engage in complex planning projects, and provide expert support to the Community Development Director and Planning Manager in order to better serve the Community Development Department. The Senior Planner will manage, direct, and participate in highly complex planning projects and activities, and will organize, coordinate, and review the work of professional, technical, and administrative staff in the Planning Division. At the meeting on December 9, 2024, the Civil Service Commission approved the proposed class specification which is submitted for your review and approval.

## ATTACHMENT

1. Civil Service Commission Item – Approve Proposed Class Specification for Senior Planner

Honorable Chair and Members  
of the Civil Service Commission  
City Hall  
Torrance, CA

Honorable Members:

**SUBJECT: APPROVE PROPOSED CLASS SPECIFICATION FOR SENIOR PLANNER**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Recommendation of the Human Resources Director that your Honorable Body approve the proposed class specification for Senior Planner and forward it to the City Council for approval.

**BACKGROUND**

The Community Development Director requested that a new job classification be created to oversee the day-to-day activities of the Planning division and staff, engage in complex planning projects, and provide expert support to the Community Development Director and Planning Manager in order to better serve the Community Development Department. The Senior Planner manages, directs, and participates in highly complex planning projects and activities, and plans, organizes, oversees, coordinates, and reviews the work of professional, technical, and administrative staff in the Planning Division. The proposed class specification for Senior Planner is submitted for your review and approval.

**ANALYSIS**

The Senior Planner manages, directs, and participates in highly complex planning projects and activities; plans, organizes, oversees, coordinates, and reviews the work of professional, technical, and administrative staff in the Planning Division of the Community Development Department, and provides expert and complex support to the Community Development Director, Planning Manager, City Council, Commissions, and other stakeholders.

The **Examples of Duties** section reflects principal job duties such as:

- Manages, directs, and participates in highly complex planning projects and activities including updates and amendments to the City's General Plan, project-specific plans, preparation of ordinances, and other assigned projects
- Designs and conducts studies to develop policies, plans, and codes; performs field inspections of planning and development projects to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Subdivision Map Act, Public Resource Code, General Plan, Specific Plans, Design Specifications, and Local Guidelines and procedures.
- Plans, prioritizes, assigns, reviews, and supervises the work of staff engaged in planning duties; trains staff on procedures and protocols; offers policy guidance and clarification.
- Contributes to the development and execution of goals, objectives, policies, and priorities for the division; suggests appropriate service and staffing levels in accordance with departmental policy; recommends and enforces policies and procedures.
- Develops and standardizes procedures and methods to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of division services, projects, and activities; evaluates and monitors

workload; identifies areas for improvement and makes recommendations to the Planning Manager.

- Reviews staff reports and other work products prepared by professional planning staff; assigns tasks and offers guidance and direction on work plans and methods.

The **Qualification Guidelines** section reflects the Knowledge and Core Competencies required for performing the duties of the position such as:

#### **Knowledge of**

- Principles and practices of local planning
- Techniques and processes involved in the preparation and implementation of long-range and General Plans, redevelopment plans, and housing programs.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Zoning principles practices techniques and standards.
- Techniques of zoning administration and development review.
- Housing and Community Development trends, goals, and objectives.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation, and the training of staff in work procedures.

#### **Core Competencies**

- Decision Making – Exercising discretion and judgment in choosing courses of action
- Gathering and Analyzing Data – Fact finding, analyzing and interpreting quantitative and/or qualitative data
- Leadership – Guiding and encouraging others to accomplish a common goal
- Legal and Regulatory Navigation – Knowing the paths and boundaries of the legal/regulatory environment
- Managing Performance – Taking responsibility for improving the effectiveness of others
- Oral Communication – Engaging effectively in dialogue
- Presentation Skills – Formally delivering information to groups
- Project Management – Ensuring projects are on-time, on-budget, and on-specifications
- Teamwork – Collaborating with others to achieve shared goals

The **License or Certificate** section reflects the following requirements:

Must possess and maintain a valid California Class C Driver's License.

The **Experience and Education Section** describes the required experience and certification for the position as follows:

*Any combination of education and experience that provides the required knowledge and skills is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the knowledge and skills would be:*

Bachelor's Degree in regional planning, urban planning, community development, architecture, landscape architecture, geography, business or public administration, engineering, or a closely related field and two (2) years of progressively responsible professional experience which includes technical work in at least two (2) of the following areas: General Plan preparation and maintenance, design review administration, California

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) administration, redevelopment administration or housing administration.


A Master's Degree in Planning may be substituted for one year of the required experience.

The **Special Requirements** section reflects the essential duties of this position including the physical demands and/or working conditions.

The **Career Ladder** section provides information about career movement for the classification.

Respectfully submitted,


HEDIEH KHAJAVI  
HUMAN RESOURCES DIRECTOR

By   
Leallani Stewart  
Human Resources Analyst

CONCUR:

  
Hedieh Khajavi  
Human Resources Director

NOTED:

  
Brianne Cohen  
Civil Service Manager

- Attachment    A) Proposed Class Specification Senior Planner  
                    B) Community Development Department Organizational Chart (Current)  
                    C) Community Development Department Organizational Chart (Proposed)

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## SENIOR PLANNER

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### Definition

Under general direction, manages, directs, and participates in highly complex planning projects and activities; plans, organizes, oversees, coordinates, and reviews the work of professional, technical, and administrative staff in the Planning Division of the Community Development Department; provides expert and complex support to the Community Development Director, Planning Manager, City Council, Commissions, and other stakeholders; oversees, reviews, and performs various studies and prepares and presents staff reports; and performs other related work as required.

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### Distinguishing Characteristics

The Senior Planner is distinguished from the Planning Manager in that an incumbent is not responsible for organizing and managing a major division of the Community Development Department. The Senior Planner is distinguished from the Planning Associate in that an incumbent organizes and oversees day-to-day current or advance planning activities of staff and is responsible for providing professional-level support to the Planning Manager and Community Development Director in a variety of areas.

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### Supervision Exercised/Received:

Receives general supervision from the Planning Manager. Exercises technical and functional supervision and training to staff engaged in the daily operations of the Planning Division.

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### Examples of Essential Duties

*The following duties represent the principal job duties; however, they are not all inclusive.*

- Manages, directs, and participates in highly complex planning projects and activities including updates and amendments to the City's General Plan, project-specific plans, preparation of ordinances, and other assigned projects
- Designs and conducts studies to develop policies, plans, and codes; performs field inspections of planning and development projects to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Subdivision Map Act, Public Resource Code, General Plan, Specific Plans, Design Specifications, and Local Guidelines and procedures.
- Plans, prioritizes, assigns, reviews, and supervises the work of staff engaged in planning duties; trains staff on procedures and protocols; offers policy guidance and clarification.
- Contributes to the development and execution of goals, objectives, policies, and priorities for the division; suggests appropriate service and staffing levels in accordance with departmental policy; recommends and enforces policies and procedures.
- Develops and standardizes procedures and methods to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of division services, projects, and activities; evaluates and monitors workload; identifies areas for improvement and makes recommendations to the Planning Manager.
- Contributes to the management of assigned budgets, ensuring proper oversight and administration.
- Reviews staff reports and other work products prepared by professional planning staff; assigns tasks and offers guidance and direction on work plans and methods.

- Participates in employee performance evaluations by providing valuable feedback and insights to the Planning Manager, as well as drafting detailed written evaluations.
- Provides complex and specialized staff assistance to the Director and Planning Manager; under direction, presents reports to the City Manager, Commissions, and City Council.
- Serves as source of information for developers, engineers, property owners, and contractors regarding land use applications and general municipal planning programs, projects, and functions; represents the department and City to outside agencies, public and private groups, and the general public.
- Negotiates, administers, and manages contracts for services; reviews documents, reports, and other work products prepared by consultants and provides feedback and corrections; reviews and oversees consultant invoices and progress payments.
- Receives, investigates, and responds to problems and complaints in a professional manner; identifies and reports findings and takes necessary corrective action.
- Provides division oversight and direction in the absence of the Planning Manager.
- Participates in interdepartmental and intradepartmental teams, committees and boards as required.
- Keeps abreast of current planning principles and practices, regulations and literature that apply to City projects.

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**Examples of Other Duties:**

*The following duties represent duties that are generally performed by this position, but are not considered to be principal job duties.*

- Assists the Planning Manager and Community Development Director with special projects, as needed.
- May participate in emergency callout and after hour support coordination.
- Participates in EOC operations as needed.
- Performs related duties as required.

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**Qualifications Guidelines****Knowledge of:**

- Principles and practices of local planning
- Techniques and processes involved in the preparation and implementation of long-range and General Plans, redevelopment plans, and housing programs.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Post Redevelopment Dissolution Laws.
- California Subdivision Map Act.
- Zoning principles practices techniques and standards.
- Techniques of zoning administration and development review.
- Housing and Community Development trends, goals, and objectives.
- Principles and practices of employee supervision, including work planning, assignment, review and evaluation, and the training of staff in work procedures.
- Basic principles and practices of budget development and administration.
- Practices of researching planning and land use issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Principles of basic mathematics and geometry and their application to planning work.
- Hazards and generally accepted safety standards.

- Office procedures, methods, and equipment including computers and applicable software applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, and databases.
- Computer software applications related to data analysis and report preparation.
- Project management and contract administration principles and techniques.
- Research and report writing methods and techniques.
- Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to municipal planning and administration.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and City staff.
- City codes, ordinances, and administrative rules and regulations affecting departmental operations and personnel matters.
- City and Department Mission including strategic goals and objectives.
- General City operations.

### **Core Competencies:**

- Attention to Detail – Focusing on the details of work content, work steps, and final work products
- Critical Thinking – Analytically and logically evaluating information, propositions, and claims
- Decision Making – Exercising discretion and judgment in choosing courses of action
- Gathering and Analyzing Data – Fact finding, analyzing and interpreting quantitative and/or qualitative data
- Leadership – Guiding and encouraging others to accomplish a common goal
- Legal and Regulatory Navigation – Knowing the paths and boundaries of the legal/regulatory environment
- Managing Performance – Taking responsibility for improving the effectiveness of others
- Oral Communication – Engaging effectively in dialogue
- Presentation Skills – Formally delivering information to groups
- Process Improvement – Controlling and improving processes and workflow
- Professional and Technical Expertise – Applying technical subject matter to the job
- Project Management – Ensuring projects are on-time, on-budget, and on-specifications
- Reading Comprehension – Understanding and using written information
- Relationship Building – Establishing rapport and maintaining mutually productive relationships.
- Strategic View – Maintaining the big picture and long-range objectives as a guide for decisions
- Teamwork – Collaborating with others to achieve shared goals.
- Written Communication – Communicating effectively in writing.

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### **License and/or Certificate**

- Must possess and maintain a valid California Class C Drivers' License.

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### **Education and Experience**

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

Bachelor's Degree in regional planning, urban planning, community development, architecture, landscape architecture, geography, business or public administration, engineering, or a closely related field and two (2) years of progressively responsible professional experience which includes technical work in at least two (2) of the following areas: General Plan preparation and maintenance, design review administration, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) administration, redevelopment administration or housing administration.

A Master's Degree in Planning may be substituted for one year of the required experience.

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**Special Requirements**

*Performance of the essential duties of this position includes the following physical demands and/or working conditions.*

Requires the ability to exert a small amount of physical effort in sedentary to light work involving moving from one area of the office to another. requires sufficient hand/eye coordination to perform semi-skilled repetitive movements, such as using a computer keyboard. Tasks require sound and visual perception and acuity, as well as oral communications ability. Tasks are regularly performed without exposure to adverse environmental conditions.

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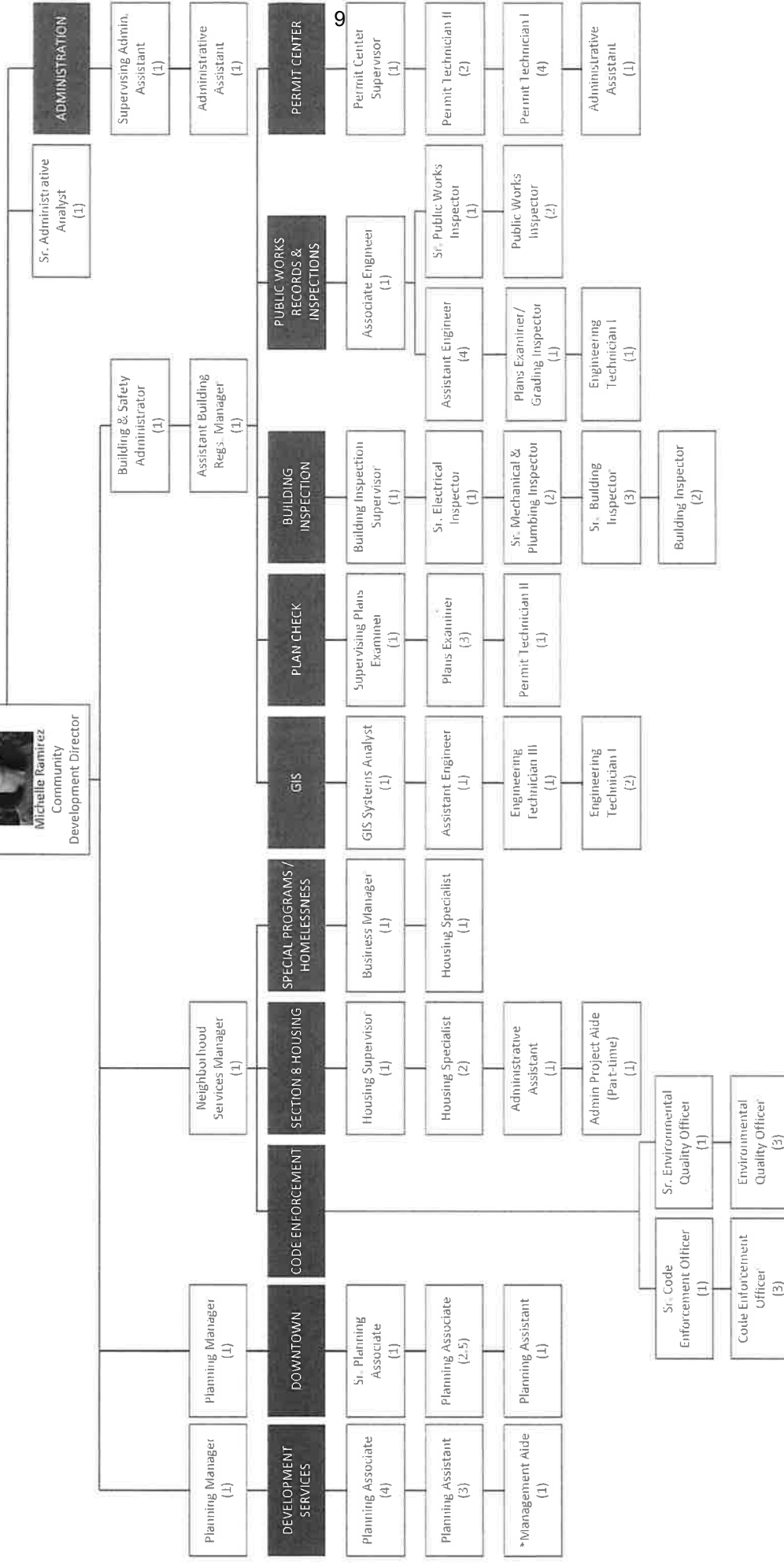
**Career Ladder Information**

Experience and/or education gained in this classification may serve towards meeting the minimum requirements for promotion to Planning Manager.

# CITY OF TORRANCE

## Organizational Chart

### Community Development Department





**Michelle Ramirez**  
Community  
Development Director

