

City of Bellingham

Classification Specification

CLASS TITLE	Planner 1
DEPARTMENT	Planning
UNION:	231
SG:	S-5
CS:	N
FLSA:	N
EE04CODE:	PR

NATURE OF WORK:

Responsible for a variety of urban planning duties. Provides information and assistance to the public on land use and planning issues. Reviews permit applications for compliance with land use codes and regulations. Performs field inspections for compliance with permits and codes. Investigates complaints of code violations and conducts enforcement. Prepares and presents reports in a public hearing context on individual land use applications. Incumbents research and gather field and other information for use in the planning process.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS:

The Planner 1 classification is the entry-level Planner position. The Planner 1 work focuses on information and assistance to the public, permit review, code enforcement and other support assignments for the planning process. Planner 1 relies on assistance from Planner 2 and Senior Planner positions on more complex assignments. The Planner 2 is responsible for the full range of professional urban planning responsibilities on projects and assignments of considerable complexity requiring exercise of independent judgment.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS:

Reports to Senior Planner. Works independently under the direction of Senior Planner and the guidance of applicable federal, State, City and departmental laws, regulations, rules, policies and guidelines.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

1. Provides information and assistance on permit applications, land use development codes, shorelines, subdivision, and other planning regulations/matters over the counter, by phone and written correspondence to the public, city departments and other governmental agencies.
2. Provides code interpretation orally and in writing in areas of assignment by senior staff. Researches code for preparation of written or oral information/explanation.
3. Reviews building permits for compliance with land use codes.

4. Acts as enforcement officer to assure compliance with codes. Assesses complaints or violations using oral information, research, and site visits. Assesses, prioritizes, and documents enforcement issues according to potential threat to health, safety, and the welfare of the public. Takes enforcement actions and works with City Code Enforcement Officer to resolve uncorrected violations.
5. Prepares staff reports for Hearing Examiner with review and approval by the Senior Planner. Reviews applications and assesses whether applications meet variance/conditional use criteria. Assesses accuracy and significance of information supplied by proponents and opponents and recommends action by the Hearing Examiner such as approval or denial of conditional use.
6. Reviews and recommends issuance of permits for accessory dwelling units, legal lot determinations, nonconforming uses, over-height fences, temporary home occupations, sidewalk vendors, planned contracts and environmental impact statements.
7. Participates in special research projects related to growth management and comprehensive planning (such as the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance).

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. Performs related duties within the scope of the classification.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

- Knowledge of:
 - Urban planning principles and theories;
 - Zoning ordinances and policies
 - Environmental policies;
 - State and local regulations related to land development;
 - City government organization, procedures, methods, and policies;
 - City ordinances, procedures, methods, and policies;
 - Neighborhood planning; and,
 - Wetland, shoreline, and marine ecology; wildlife and fish needs; water quality and wetland regulations.
- Strong skills in:
 - Technical and business writing;
 - Using spreadsheet, database, word processing and related software applications;
 - Reading and interpreting maps and drawings;
 - Reading and interpreting land use and related codes;
 - Public presentation skills for reporting to staff, boards, and neighborhood groups;
 - Providing clear explanations on procedures and regulations;
 - Analyzing problems and assessing information;
 - Managing time and prioritizing tasks; and,
 - Preparing, arranging, and reporting data.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills for interaction with co-workers, supervisors, managers, other City personnel and the general public.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is primarily performed in an office environment with extensive work at a computer work station. 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.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Positions in this classification acquire requisite knowledge and skills through completion of a bachelor's degree in urban planning or related field or a bachelor's degree in an unrelated field plus one year of planning experience.
- Knowledge of planning principles and practices required. Experience in the field of planning preferred.
- A combination of experience and training that provides the applicant with the knowledge and skills to perform the job will be considered.

NECESSARY SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- Some positions in this classification may require a valid Washington State driver's license and good driving record. Candidates must submit a three-year driving abstract prior to hire.
- Willingness and ability to frequently attend and participate in evening meetings.

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1/01

REVIEWED BY: _____
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