

ORANGE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ACTION AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT
Meeting Date: December 15, 2009

Action Agenda
Item No. 6-g

SUBJECT: Restructuring of the Planning and Inspections Department

DEPARTMENT: Planning & Inspections **PUBLIC HEARING:** (Y/N) No

- ATTACHMENT(S):**
- 1. Current Organizational Chart
 - 2. Restructured Organizational Chart
 - 3. Planning Technician Job Description

INFORMATION CONTACT:
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Planning and Inspections Director
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Human Resources Director
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PURPOSE: To acknowledge the restructuring of the Planning and Inspections Department.

BACKGROUND: The existing Planning and Inspections Department is divided into six functional sections: Building Inspections, Erosion Control, Administration/Planning GIS, Engineering, Comprehensive Planning and Current Planning and Zoning which previously consisted of two small divisions: Subdivision and Zoning (Attachment 1).

Retirements in the department as well as the opportunity to relocate into a new building have permitted a reassessment of department functions. This reassessment will permit the streamlining of department and division operations, reorganization for efficiency, clarity in communicating with customers (both residents and economic development) and prioritization and implementation of tasks related to Board of County Commissioners Goals and Objectives.

The planning divisions, over the years, has included more than the processing of development permits (i.e. subdivisions, rezonings, and special use permits, etc.) to becoming an integral part of intergovernmental coordination, special planning task forces, and unique regulations.

Recently the department has lost five employees to either resignations or through the retirement incentive program. The vacant positions include: Planner III- full-time, Planner II full-time, Planner II- part-time, Planner I- full-time and County Engineer- full-time. The department will take advantage of these vacancies by reorganizing the Current Planning and Zoning division in order to address current resource deficiencies and develop more efficient means to provide services to the division's customers. (Attachment 2)

The reorganization involves:

1. Consolidating the two Current Planning Divisions, Subdivision and Zoning, into one section. This consolidation will eliminate the need for the vacant Planner III Supervisor position. Consolidating these two divisions will allow the department to provide concentrated support to oversee the implementation and interpretation of land development regulations as staff proceeds with the development of the BOCC goal of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This consolidation will also lead to more organizational consistency and clarity in communications to the public and developers as well as allow the department to better adjust to the ebb and flow of activity in the division.
2. The department will reclassify the vacant Planner III position to a Planner II position to take on the increased duties in the Comprehensive Planning Division. Over time, the work of the part-time Planner II (transportation and socio-economic, demographic focus) position has increased, resulting in the need to increase the position to full-time. To address this need the vacant Planner III position will be reclassified to a Planner II position and take on duties in the Comprehensive Planning division. The department will then eliminate the part-time Planner II position, which was vacated. This change will allow the department to better address the increased transportation planning duties as well as provide assistance with the Unified Development Ordinance consultant and be an important liaison with interdepartmental interaction in the implementation of various advisory board objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. The vacant Planner I position will be reclassified to a Planning Technician classification. (Attachment 3) The position will be cross-trained in the customer service central permitting function and serve as a presence at the second floor counter in the new development services building. Other duties will include minor subdivision help to local property owners and minor zoning building permit review. This position will allow entry-level employees to grow within the organization by learning a variety of sections of the department.
4. In August 2009 the Engineering Division was assigned to the Planning and Inspections Department. This originally included two positions: County Engineer and Assistant County Engineer. The County Engineer participated in the retirement incentive program and the position will be eliminated with some duties being absorbed by the Assistant County Engineer, which will be re-titled Staff Engineer. The role of this position will be re-evaluated over the next year.

The Staff Engineer will work as a separate but integrated function within the larger Planning and Inspections Department under the direct supervision of the Planning and Inspections Director. The engineering functions of the County planning jurisdiction include water and sewer plan oversight, Lake Orange responsibilities of water flow monitoring and structural integrity, Efland sewer system operation licensure, maintenance contract monitoring and a liaison role with utility authorities (City of Mebane and Town of Hillsborough, City of Durham, Orange Alamance Water System).

The integration of the engineering review function will greatly improve the communication and review regarding public water and sewer projects related to development review within the County's growth areas including economic development zones.

SUMMARY

The Planning and Inspections reorganization will lead to better communication with the department's customers in terms of timeliness, consistency and comprehensiveness. The outcome also includes reductions in personnel and cost while providing more streamlined and integrated functions. The department plans to fully implement this reorganization by January 1, 2010.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The Planning and Inspections reorganization will save the County a total of \$159,228.

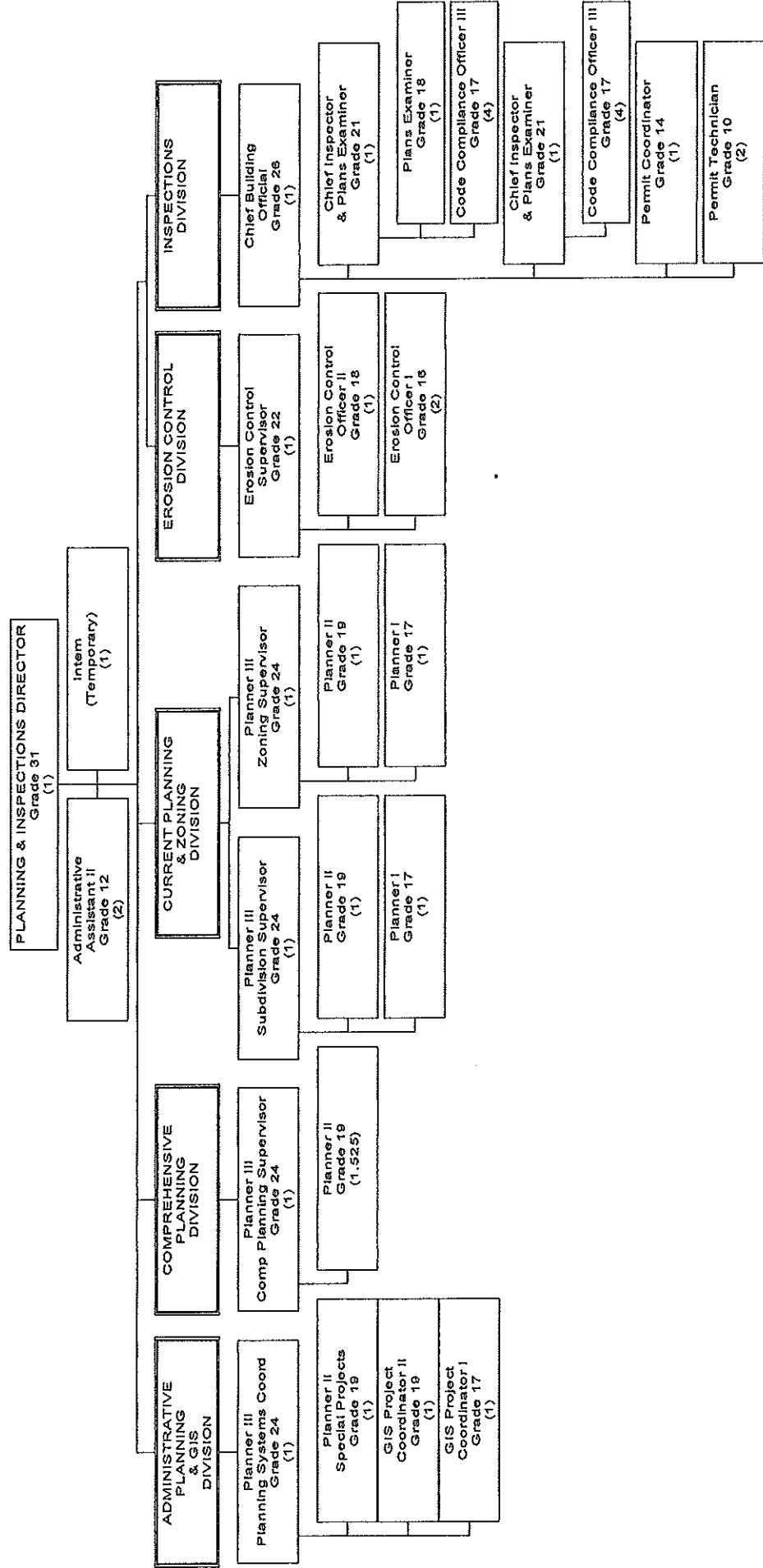
Reclassifications/Eliminations				
Current Position Classification/Salary Grade	Rehire Rate* Annual Salary and Benefits	Proposed Position Classification/Salary Grade	Proposed* Annual Salary and Benefits	Net County Savings
Planner III/Grade 24	\$77,635	Planner II/Grade 19	\$60,680	\$16,955
Planner I/Grade 17	\$54,976	Planner Technician/Grade 14	\$47,406	\$7,570
Planner II 0.5 position/Grade 19	\$30,342	Eliminate	\$0	\$30,342
County Engineer/Grade 30	\$104,361	Eliminate	\$0	\$104,361
				\$159,228

* Salary rates are based on the first quarter of the salary grade scale

RECOMMENDATION(S): The Manager recommends the BOCC acknowledge the proposed changes to the structure of the Planning and Inspections Department and approve:

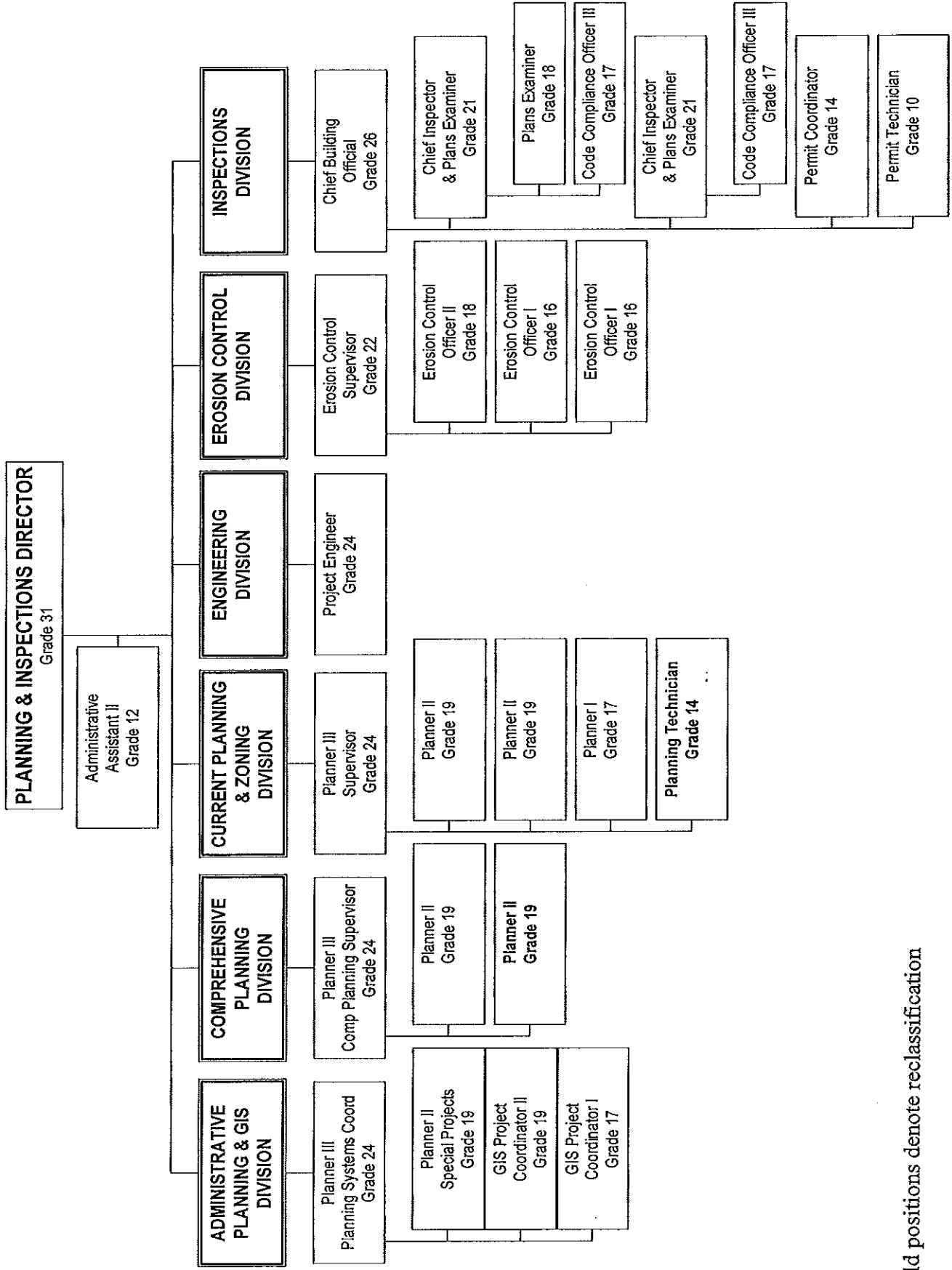
- The new Planning Technician Classification – Grade 14; and
- The title change of Assistant County Engineer to Staff Engineer.

Planning & Inspections



Planning & Inspections

Reorganization January 2010



Bold positions denote reclassification

**CLASS CODE: 1435
FLSA: NON-EXEMPT**

**ORANGE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
JOB DESCRIPTION**

**CLASS TITLE: PLANNING TECHNICIAN
PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS DEPARTMENT**

GENERAL STATEMENT OF JOB

Under regular supervision, provides technical and administrative support to the Planning and Inspections Department. Work involves providing customer service to the general public and being able to answer basic planning questions as well as reviewing for completeness, and data entry of development applications including, but not limited to: subdivisions (i.e. exempt, minor, major), site plan, special use permits, zoning actions (i.e. variances, appeals, text amendments, rezoning, etc) as well as the processing of associated application fees as part of the County's central permitting function. Review for compliance with land development regulations. Correspond with appropriate departments, divisions, and agencies to assure compliance with all applicable regulations. Present projects at bi-weekly development review meetings. Distribute maps to County departments for assignment of addresses, emergency services for location of subdivisions, and land records for pre-assignment of properties. Maintain records of all activity. Assist with the preparation of quarterly reports and other data as needed for budgeting as directed by supervisory personnel. Conducts basic planning research. Will be cross-trained in the central permitting function to have a basic understanding of other development disciplines beyond the stronger focus of planning. Reports to the Planner III – Current Planning Supervisor.

SPECIFIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

Review, process, and issue Zoning Compliance Permits for single-family residences in accordance with the various County regulations. This function includes coordinating permit review with other members of the planning staff and other departments to ensure compliance with various regulations (i.e. Flood Damage Prevention, Erosion Control, Engineering, etc),

Reviews development applications for compliance with Subdivision and Zoning regulations relating to application submittal guidelines and enters completed applications into existing permit tracking software.

Prepares daily updates to immediate supervisor on permit applications that have been submitted for assignment to various planners.

Provide information and assistance to the public regarding subdivision and zoning regulations; including information about both land development standards and approval procedures. Inform applicants of the steps required in order to have a subdivision approved and recorded.

Discuss with citizens alternative designs and foreseeable problems with designs presented.

PLANNING TECHNICIAN

Maintain Permits Plus software for specific applications. (Work with immediate supervisor and designated Permit Plus Power User within the Planning Department with the upkeep, maintenance, and updating of Planning data entry screens within the Permits Plus program.)

Review plats with supervisor input to assure subdivision approval is not required and zoning requirements are met.

Maintain records of all plats, forwarding them to Planning/GIS Division and prepare quarterly reports.

Prepare correspondence to citizens, surveyors, and attorneys as needed for immediate supervisor.

Distributes maps to Emergency Services Department for the assignment of address, location of subdivisions and properties with the County, and Land Records for the pre-assignment of properties within the County.

Prepare informational handouts regarding segments of process, such as soil suitability, private road certification, and road sign information.

Research property through Land Records, GIS, Register of Deeds.

Attends classes and seminars.

Refers to Zoning Regulations, Subdivision Regulations, State statutes, Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, policy and procedure manuals, publications and reference texts, etc.

Operates a vehicle and a variety of office equipment and machinery such as computer, digital camera, digital projector, printer, scanner, etc.

Uses a variety of tools such as engineer scale, drafting tools, GIS tools, etc.; a variety of supplies such as writing instruments, ruler, paper, general office supplies, etc.; and a variety of computer software such as Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Arc/GIS, Permit Plus, Microsoft PowerPoint, etc.

Interacts and communicates with various groups and individuals such as developers, real estate professionals, coworkers, Planning Board, Environmental Health, surveyors, Board of Education, contractors, Department of Transportation, and the general public.

ADDITIONAL JOB FUNCTIONS

Performs related duties as required.

PLANNING TECHNICIAN

MINIMUM TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE

Requires any combination of education and experience equivalent to an Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS) degree in planning or urban studies, or closely related field and two years experience in property development, real estate, or related field. Local government planning experience preferred. Possession of or ability to readily obtain a valid driver's license issued by the State of North Carolina for the type of vehicle or equipment operated.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS OR STANDARDS REQUIRED TO PERFORM ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

Physical Requirements: Must be physically able to operate a variety of machines and equipment including a computer, calculator, telephone, copier, etc. Must be able to exert up to five pounds of force occasionally and/or a negligible amount of force frequently or constantly to lift, carry, push, pull or otherwise move objects. Sedentary work involves sitting most of the time, but may involve walking or standing for periods of time. Must be able to lift and/or carry weights of five to ten pounds.

Data Conception: Requires the ability to compare and/or judge the readily observable functional, structural or compositional characteristics (whether similar to or divergent from obvious standards) of data, people or things.

Interpersonal Communications: Requires the ability of speaking and/or signaling people to convey or exchange information. Includes receiving assignments and/or directions from supervisor.

Language Ability: Requires ability to read a variety of policy and procedure manuals, construction drawings, plats, technical and statistical reports, etc. Requires the ability to prepare correspondence with proper format, punctuation, spelling and grammar, using all parts of speech. Requires the ability to speak with and before others with poise, voice control and confidence.

Intelligence: Requires the ability to apply principles of common sense understanding to carry out instructions furnished in written, oral or diagrammatic form; to deal with problems involving several concrete variable in or from standardized situations. Requires the ability to make routine independent judgments in absence of supervision; to acquire knowledge of topics related to primary occupation. Must have the ability to comprehend and interpret received information and to understand and implement basic computer and office machinery functions.

Verbal Aptitude: Requires the ability to record and deliver information, to explain procedures, to follow oral and written instructions. Must be able to communicate effectively and efficiently in a variety of technical or professional languages including engineering, legal, and tax terminology.

Numerical Aptitude: Requires the ability to utilize mathematical formulas; to add and subtract; multiply and divide; utilize decimals and percentages; understand and apply the theories of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and statistical inference.

Form/Spatial Aptitude: Requires the ability to inspect items for proper length, width and shape.

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Motor Coordination: Requires the ability to coordinate hands and eyes rapidly and accurately in using office equipment.

Manual Dexterity: Requires the ability to handle a variety of items such as office equipment. Must have minimal levels of eye/hand/foot coordination.

Color Discrimination and Visual Acuity: Requires the ability to differentiate colors and shades of color; requires the visual acuity to determine depth perception, peripheral vision, inspection for small parts; preparing and analyzing written or computer data, etc.

Interpersonal Temperament: Requires the ability to deal with people beyond giving and receiving instructions. Must be adaptable to performing under stress and when confronted with persons acting under stress.

Physical Communication: Requires the ability to talk and hear: (Talking: expressing or exchanging ideas by means of spoken words. Hearing: perceiving nature of sounds by ear.) Must be able to communicate via a telephone.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Knowledge of Job:

Has basic knowledge of the methods, policies, and procedures of the Planning and Inspections Department as they pertain to the performance of duties of the Planning Technician Has knowledge of the functions and interrelationships of the County and other governmental agencies.

Has knowledge of the laws, ordinances, standards and regulations pertaining to the specific duties and responsibilities of the position. Has knowledge of the principles and practices of planning, zoning, and land use. Has knowledge of the County's Zoning Ordinance and land use, subdivision, and landscape regulations.

Is skilled in the use of a personal computer and word processing, spreadsheet, graphics design, geographic information system, and database software packages.

Is skilled in the use of office equipment such as a calculator, copier, scanner, facsimile machine, telephone, and standard audiovisual equipment.

Is able to research and undertake projects related to County planning and development. Is capable of accepting a project from start to completion.

Is able to help ensure that standards of the department are met in all work performed.

Has basic knowledge of planning and development and land use terminology.

Is able to coordinate efforts of the department with other County departments in order to accomplish goals and complete projects.

Is able to use independent judgment in routine situations.

PLANNING TECHNICIAN

Has knowledge of the technical and routine reports, which must be prepared and has the knowledge and skills to prepare same.

Is able to perform required mathematical calculations with accuracy.

Is able to make sound, educated decisions.

Is able to work under moderately stressful conditions related to balancing multiple projects within the constraints of time available, personnel capabilities, financial resources, and political considerations.

Is able to react professionally at all times, dealing with sensitive situations with fact and diplomacy.

Is able to plan, organize and prioritize daily assignments and work activities. Have good organizational, technical and human relations skills.

Is able to learn and utilize new skills and information to improve job performance and efficiency.

Has knowledge of how to operate and maintain a variety of office equipment as necessary in the performance of daily activities.

Has knowledge of how to maintain effective relationships with personnel of other departments, professionals and members of the public through contact and cooperation.

Has knowledge of how to perform duties in a courteous manner and with the utmost integrity in the best interest of the public.

Has knowledge of how to react calmly and quickly in emergency situations.

Quality of Work: Maintains high standards of accuracy in exercising duties and responsibilities. Exercises immediate remedial action to correct any quality deficiencies that occur in areas of responsibility. Maintains high quality communication and interaction with internal and external entities with whom the position interacts.

Quantity of Work: Maintains effective and efficient output of all duties and responsibilities as described under "Specific Duties and Responsibilities."

Dependability: Assumes responsibility for completing assigned work. Completes assigned work within deadlines in accordance with directives, policy, standards and prescribed procedures. Maintains accountability for assigned responsibilities in the technical, human and conceptual areas.

Attendance: Attends and remains at work regularly and adheres to policies and procedures regarding absenteeism and tardiness. Provides adequate notice to higher management with respect to vacation time and leave requests.

Initiative and Enthusiasm: Maintains an enthusiastic, self-reliant and self-starting approach to meet job responsibilities and accountabilities. Strives to anticipate work to be accomplished, and initiates proper and acceptable action for the completion of work with a minimum of supervision and instruction.

PLANNING TECHNICIAN

Judgment: Exercises analytical judgment in areas of responsibility. Identifies issues or situations as they occur. Identifies or assists in identifying alternative solutions to issues or situations. Implements decisions in accordance with prescribed and effective policies and procedures and with a minimum of errors. Seeks expert or experienced advice where appropriate and researches issues, situations and alternatives before exercising judgment.

Cooperation: Accepts supervisory instruction and direction and strives to meet the goals and objectives of same. Questions such instruction and direction when clarification of results or consequences are justified, i.e., poor communications, variance with established policies or procedures, etc. Offers suggestions and recommendations to encourage and improve cooperation intra- and inter-departmentally.

Relationships with Others: Shares knowledge with managers, supervisors and co-workers for mutual benefit. Contributes to maintaining high morale among all employees. Develops and maintains cooperative and courteous relationships inter- and intra-departmentally, and with external entities with whom the position interacts. Tactfully and effectively handles requests, suggestions and complaints in order to establish and maintain good will. Emphasizes the importance of maintaining a positive image.

Coordination of Work: Plans and organizes daily work routine. Establishes priorities for the completion of work in accordance with sound time-management methodology. Avoids duplication of effort. Estimates expected time of completion of work elements and establishes a personal schedule accordingly. Attends required meetings, planning sessions and discussions on time. Implements work activity in accordance with priorities and estimated schedules.

Safety and Housekeeping: Adheres to all established safety and housekeeping standards. Ensures such standards are not violated.

DISCLAIMER: This job description is not an employment agreement or contract. Management has the exclusive right to alter this job description at any time without notice.