**OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH**

**DUTY STATEMENT**

**Assistant/Associate Planner**

**Classification: Assistant/Associate Intergovernmental Project Analyst**

**Salary Range: $4,933 - $6,127 monthly**

**LOCATION: Sacramento**

The Office of Planning and Research (OPR) is an equal opportunity employer open to all, regardless of age, ancestry, color, disability (mental and physical), exercising the right to family care and medical leave, gender, gender expression, genetic identity, genetic information, marital status, medical condition, military or veteran status, national origin, political affiliation, race, religious creed, sex (includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and related medical conditions), or sexual orientation of any person.

**OFFICE OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH**

The Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) serves the Governor and his Cabinet as staff for long-range planning and research and constitutes the comprehensive state planning agency. OPR operates a variety of programs and initiatives, hosts tools and clearinghouses, and leads a range of activities related to land use and community planning/development, climate adaptation and resilience, sustainable economic development, military affairs and coordination, and other activities that support long-range planning and research across the state. For more information about OPR’s roles and responsibilities, see <http://www.opr.ca.gov>.

OPR’s Planning and Community Development Team is a diverse group of dedicated colleagues who collaborate across disciplines to advance planning and development practices that foster equitable and sustainable communities for all Californians. The Team works to develop and implement innovative State policy solutions and to deliver guidance and support to local governments and other partners. A key focus of the Team is on promoting the State’s planning priorities by centering the principles of equity, resilience, and sustainability; prioritizing location-efficient, compact infill development and housing development; promoting conservation of open space, including protecting and enhancing natural and working lands; and aligning strategic investments in infrastructure and services.

**SCOPE**:

Under the supervision of the Deputy Director for Planning and Community Development, the Assistant/Associate Planner is an entry- to mid-level position that will support and take direction from senior staff on a variety of assignments involving research, policy analysis, and contributions to planning guidance and technical advisories across a wide spectrum of topics that affect planning and development in California.

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

Specific examples of initiatives and projects that the candidate could support include, but are not limited to:

* Research to address evolving **transportation, land use, and housing issues** **in light of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic**, such as the significant increase in teleworking/telecommuting, impacts to transit systems, impacts to office and retail uses in central business districts, public health impacts, and other long-term trends that may influence future planning and policy;
* **SB 743[[1]](#footnote-1) implementation support**: Review local agency examples of the use of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) thresholds and impact analyses, identify best practices, and develop case studies;
* **Increasing housing production to address the State’s housing crisis**: Research and developing guidance and recommendations to support the State’s housing goals, in alignment with the State’s planning priorities and climate goals;
* **Protecting and enhancing California’s natural and working lands**: Research and analysis to support integrated land use, housing, conservation, open space, and hazard mitigation planning, including analysis and development of recommendations and guidance for avoiding land conversion and prioritizing compact development, consistent with the State’s planning priorities and climate goals;
* **Regional and local climate planning support**: research, analysis, and development of resources, tools, and technical assistance to support local climate planning activities focused on climate change (both GHG emissions mitigation and adaptation/resilience);
* **Supporting updates to OPR’s planning guidance and technical advisories**, including the General Plan Guidelines, Specific Plan Guidelines, and other planning and CEQA technical advisories, to reflect recent legislation and changes in state policy.

OPR is a fast-paced, creative work environment. Assignments may involve high-visibility and politically sensitive subjects that are of critical importance to the Governor of California and to the State. As such, this position requires a high degree of independent judgement, strong collaboration skills, flexibility, a positive attitude, and a sense of humor.

**Typical duties:**

*Note: The percentages provided are estimates and are subject to change as needs arise.*

**25% Policy Research and Analysis.** Analyze existing or proposed policies at the state, regional, or local government level. Perform independent research on a variety of issue areas as assigned. Consult with colleagues, subject area experts, and stakeholders to gain diverse perspectives on potential impacts of policies. Interpret and summarize potential impacts of government policies or actions as relates to: sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions, climate adaptation and resilience, land use and development, housing affordability, transportation, social and racial equity, environmental justice, and other related topics.

**25% Support Collaboration with State Government Partners**. Support the Planning Team’s efforts to work collaboratively with partners at other State departments and agencies to research, recommend and implement policy changes pertaining to State programs and operations to advance more sustainable, equitable growth.

**15% Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement.** Support outreach to and engagement of stakeholders and end users of OPR’s work, especially local government officials and planning staff. Participate in and assist with scheduling and developing content for conference calls, webinars, video conferences, and in-person meetings in Sacramento and throughout the State to learn about local government and other stakeholder priorities; identify needs and challenges in implementing State policies and best practices that advance sustainable, equitable growth; and, share information about new or modified guidance, grant programs, and tools available to support local planning and implementation.

**15% Writing and Communications.** Develop clear visual and written summaries of research findings and data analysis that effectively convey key findings and complex topics to policymakers and to a broad range of audiences. Create memos, policy briefs, reports, online content, presentations, and other materials. Strong communications skills are particularly important for this position.

**10% Quantitative and Spatial Analysis.** Proficiency in Excel (required), GIS or scenario planning tools (a plus), and/or other analytic tools to perform quantitative and spatial analysis of policies or issue areas as assigned.

**10% Support Technical Assistance to Local Governments.** Support the Planning Team’s efforts to develop and provide technical assistance to local governments in implementing State requirements for planning, housing, transportation, environmental protection, and other state planning priorities.

**Minimum Requirements:**

Bachelor of Arts or Science degree in public policy, government, urban planning or a closely related field, with at least 2 years of relevant experience; OR, equivalent combined work experience in public policy, government, urban planning, or a related field.

**Desirable Qualifications:**

In addition to evaluating each candidate's relative ability, as demonstrated by quality and breadth of experience, the following factors will provide the basis for competitively evaluating each candidate:

* Education: Master of Arts or Science degree in planning, policy, public administration or a related field. (Preferred but not required.)
* Subject-Area Knowledge: Knowledge of principles and practices of urban planning, with applied knowledge in relevant subject areas and practices in a local planning agency or similar organization, e.g.: professional planning, local government roles and processes, land use planning, transportation planning, sustainable development, housing, community development, economic development, social and racial equity, environmental policy and greenhouse gas reduction, and environmental protection. Ability to connect and draw parallels between various planning subject areas together in order to meet State climate and equity goals. Transportation and land use planning knowledge with applied planning experience is preferred.
* Collaboration: Track record of successfully collaborating with diverse teams and fostering positive working relationships with colleagues and partners. Be passionate about community engagement and providing the highest quality of stakeholder and partner engagement.
* Organization and Personal Accountability: Ability to prioritize assignments, manage multiple simultaneous projects, ask for assistance when needed, and provide regular progress updates to collaborators, supervisors, and colleagues. Possess the ability to learn laws underlying general plans, zoning, land use and methods of assessment.
* Communication skills: Superior written and oral communications, especially the ability to write succinctly and clearly. (See Writing Sample requirements below)
* Analysis: Ability to research and analyze quantitative and qualitative information and prepare and present results orally and in writing.
* Independent Judgement: Ability to understand and effectively respond to cultural and political context. Ability to implement sound professional judgement and critical thinking.
* Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Demonstrated personal and professional commitment to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion.
* Travel: Ability to travel occasionally as needed. (The State of California reimburses employees for qualifying travel-related expenses.)
* Bilingual a Plus.

**Compensation and Benefits**:

The State of California benefit package may include:

* Retirement contributions into the California Public Employees’ Retirement System.
* Vacation and Sick Leave or Annual Leave.
* Flexible work hours with prior agreement from Supervisor.
* Professional Development Days – two day per fiscal year.
* Medical, dental, and vision insurance.
* Life insurance basic coverage of $50,000 for managers and $25,000 for supervisors, confidential, and excluded employees.
* Voluntary enrollment into a deferred compensation program for Long-term Disability Insurance, Long Term Care Insurance, Group Term Life Insurance, and a Legal Service Plan.
* This position is at-will and exempt from Civil Service.

**Final Filing Date:**

January 9, 2021

**Review and Selection Process:**

Candidates with the most desirable qualifications will be invited for interviews. Initial interviews may be held by phone, with final candidates interviewed via videoconference. In-person interviews will not be conducted due to the State’s public health and safety directives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Assistant/Associate Planner serves at the pleasure of the Governor and is an “Exempt” position; therefore, appointment to this position and salary are subject to executive approval.

**How to Apply:**

Submit the following materials:

* CalHR Application
* Resume
* Cover Letter: No more than one-page total.
* Writing Sample: At least one writing sample that illustrates Applicant’s independent writing and research abilities. Please include only independent work (not collaborative projects). If the writing sample is part of a broader project, please clearly indicate which portion is the Applicant’s own independent work. Maximum 5 pages, please.

Questions may be directed to [Joanna.sledge@opr.ca.gov](mailto:Joanna.sledge@opr.ca.gov).

1. SB 743 (2013) became effective on July 1, 2020 and changed how transportation impacts are analyzed under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) from automobile delay to vehicle miles traveled (VMT). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)