

County of  
**HENRICO**  
Virginia

**CLASS SPECIFICATION FOR**  
**Principal Planner**

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**GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES:** Performs professional supervisory-level activities in a major Planning division such as Community Development, Comprehensive Planning or Code Administration; does related work as required.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:** Plans, organizes and directs the staff of the Planning Office in connection with examining and making recommendations concerning current planning activities, long-range planning studies, zoning issues and enforcement, compiling and analyzing research data and other matters pertaining to planning. The incumbent demonstrates relevant knowledge of the principles and practices of planning, landscape architecture, code administration, civil engineering, law and the economic concepts underlying planning work. Under general supervision of the Assistant Director of Planning, the incumbent exercises considerable latitude in independent judgment in technical decisions and organizing planning matters. The employee exercises supervision over inspection, technical and/or professional planning personnel in the Planning Office.

**EXAMPLES OF WORK** (illustrative only):

- Develops work programs and provides direct input into the budgetary process;
- Supervises and directs the preparation of highly detailed studies and comprehensive plans;
- Develops long-range and community development planning policies;
- Oversees Planning's Code Administration division, working zoning complaints, certifying certificates of occupancy and checking for compliance with conditional permits and variances;
- Presents and interprets planning programs to the public;
- Supervises the review of building permits, POD'S, subdivisions and other applications processed by the Planning Office;
- Interprets zoning regulations and researches and drafts amendments to these regulations as needed;
- Maintains personal contact with responsible governmental officers, civic organizations and the general public concerning data collection, goal formulation, and explanation and interpretation of the plan;
- Supervises and directs the development of technical data and reports concerning master planning, capital improvement programming, urban renewal, planning legislation, development policies and other planning activities;
- Serves on various regional technical committees and boards as the representative for the County;
- Participates in personnel interviewing, selection, training, evaluation, and supervision;
- Serves as Secretary to the Board of Zoning Appeals, coordinating all of their work and meetings;
- Serves as the acting Secretary of the Planning Commission and signs approved plans;
- Reviews special and controversial plans and conducts investigations, makes recommendations and gives approval to plans;
- Reviews, evaluates and makes recommendations on requests for vacation of rights-of-way, easements, and for the sale of surplus County-owned property and chancery suits;
- Appears in court as an expert witness to give testimony in zoning and planning cases;
- Keeps abreast of legislation and new developments in the field of planning and design for urban development;
- Prepares and presents reports to the County Manager, Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission;
- Supervises the implementation of programs and projects and monitors, assesses and reports on progress;
- Meets with citizen groups regarding problems to elicit information needed in planning studies;
- May serve as Acting Director of Planning in absence of the Director and Assistant Director;
- Performs related work as assigned.

**REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:** Extensive knowledge of principles and practices of planning and zoning; relevant knowledge of landscape architecture, law enforcement, civil engineering and/or building construction, depending upon position to which assigned; extensive knowledge of laws and regulations related to planning; exceptional ability to express ideas clearly and concisely; ability to establish and maintain effective relationships with staff, other agencies and the public; ability to effectively supervise and coordinate the work of professional, non-professional and technical assistants; good professional judgment.

**MINIMUM EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:** Possession of a master's degree in urban planning or a related field and four (4) years of professional planning or zoning experience, including at least two (2) years at a supervisory level; OR, any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

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This is a class specification and not an individualized job description. A class specification defines the general character and scope of duties and responsibilities of all positions in a job classification, but it is not intended to describe and does not necessarily list the essential job functions for a given position in a classification.