



Date: November 28, 2023

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Author and title: Denyelle Nishimori, Community Development Director

Title: **Request the Addition of a Senior Planner Position**

Jen Callaway, Town Manager

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**Recommended Action:** That Council approve the addition of a Senior Planner to the Planning Division starting as of January 2024.

**Discussion:** The Planning Division has been actively recruiting for Senior Planner since 2021. Hiring a Senior Planner was envisioned to build capacity within the division to address high workloads and to focus on Council priorities including General Plan implementation. Currently, the Planning Division has eight staff members and one vacant Planner position for a total of nine budgeted positions.

With the most recent Senior Planner recruitment process, the Division has an opportunity to offer employment to two qualified Senior Planner candidates. Staff believe that the workload justifies the addition of a second Senior Planner, which is a journey-level position. Hiring an additional Senior Planner will allow staff to prioritize additional housing policy implementation, to process complex land use applications, be staffed to begin work to update the Housing Element in a couple of years, to focus on customer service delivery, and to increase staffing for inter-departmental projects (e.g.-R2SC, Climate Action Plan Element update, Housing Programs and Climate Action Plan Element implementation), among other aspects. Upon analysis of workload staff anticipates sufficient, high-level work, would be available for the foreseeable future as we continue to advance Town Programs, simplify town practices, recommit to customer service, and stay informed of and in compliance with regularly changing state laws regarding land use and housing specifically. In addition, positions within Planning are often hard to fill, as demonstrated by our three-year effort to fill the Senior Planner position, and this is a unique opportunity to advance our Planning Division and build capacity for future work.

Analysis of the General Fund budget and five-year financial forecast support the addition of this position without any financial concerns. Therefore, staff recommend that the Town Council approve the addition of a Senior Planner to the Planning Division.

**Priority:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced Communication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climate and Greenhouse Gas Reduction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Housing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Infrastructure Investment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Emergency and Wildfire Preparedness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Core Service

**Fiscal Impact:** An additional Senior Planner position will add around \$180,000 annually to the General Fund operating budget. It is anticipated that both Senior Planner positions, if approved, would be filled by the 1<sup>st</sup> of year. As such, staff propose using the savings (~\$90,000) from the half a year unfilled Senior Planner position to fund one half year of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Senior Planner position for the remainder of FY2023/24.

The quarterly financial update for the period ending September 30, 2023, is included as a separate staff report at this meeting. Staff have analyzed the ongoing impacts of an additional Senior Planner to the General Fund and believe that there is sufficient capacity for this proposed change over the five-year budget horizon.

**Public Communication:** Publication of this staff report.

**Attachments:** None