

Civil Service Form

Extraordinary or Superior Qualifications, Experience, Credentials

Appointing Authority Name: New Orleans City Planning Commission

Appointing Authority Department: City Planning Commission

Appointing Authority Phone Number: X7018, X7004

Appointing Authority E-mail: rdrivers@nola.gov; chantae.barre@nola.gov

Employee Information

Name: Rachael Berg

Current Class: Principal City Planner 4305

Proposed Class: Assistant Planning Administrator 4306

Promotion or New Hire: Promotion

New Job Class: Assistant Planning Administrator

Job Posting and Appointment

Duration of job posting: Continuous

How the position was advertised: City Website

Date of appointment: 1/1/2022

Type of appointment: Probationary

Detailed Position Description:

Administrative, professional and supervisory work directing and supervising planning surveys, investigations, studies and the preparation of planning recommendations for City Planning Commission; and related work as required.

Qualifications

- 1. How many applicants were on the eligible list?** 6
- 2. How many of them possessed this extraordinary qualification?** 2
- 3. Minimum qualifications exceeded and description of credentials (experience, education, certifications, etc.) that exceed the minimum qualifications:**

Minimum Qualifications (from job announcement):

Four (4) years of professional city planning experience. One (1) year of this experience must have been in a responsible administrative or supervisory capacity.

AND

EITHER: A Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university in Architecture, Landscape Architecture or a closely related field.*

OR: A Master's Degree from an accredited college or university with at least twenty-four (24) semester hours of coursework in Urban and Regional Planning, Urban Design, Urban Studies or related coursework.

* Master's Degree transcript must be submitted to the Civil Service Department within two (2) weeks of filing your application.

Employee's qualification(s) that exceeds the minimum:

1. 11 years in the field of Urban Planning/Urban Studies, specifically related to housing, 5 of which have been with the City Planning Commission
2. Handles many upper-level comprehensive text changes and all housing related initiatives which are often high-profile and contentious, and is the only planner on staff who is assigned larger-scale housing-related assignments
3. Leads the Housing Opportunities Study, which is the largest study to come through the City Planning Commission and will oversee and manage a FUSE fellow, who is an senior level employee (10-15 years experience) in the field of Urban Planning to complete the Housing Opportunities Study.
4. Participates in public engagement and stakeholder meetings that included presentations and fielding questions from the public.
5. Fills in for Planning Administrator when necessary by attending and presenting at City Council meetings.

Details:

The Assistant Planning Administrator position that Rachael will fill is specifically geared towards overseeing the Master Plan Amendments, presenting comprehensive land-use items to City Council and completing higher-level comprehensive zoning assignments including overseeing the Housing Opportunities Study and managing a FUSE fellow. The position will require the planner to work closely with the Planning Administrator who oversees the Comprehensive Division, and the Director and Deputy Director of the City Planning Commission. Rachael is the only planner on-staff who is assigned larger housing-related initiatives, the only planner left on the Housing Opportunities Study (the largest study to come through the City Planning Commission), and one of only a few planners assigned upper-level comprehensive text change reports. Rachael's ability to manage larger studies and reports and her unique skillset in housing policy make her extraordinarily qualified for the Assistant Planning Administrator position.

Rachael has worked with the City Planning Commission (CPC) for a total of 5 years, exceeding the required 4 year minimum for a Planning Assistant Administrator. These five years of experience bring institutional knowledge unique to the City and department. Rachael has worked on numerous studies during her time at CPC, including the Environmental Impact Study, the 2018 and 2019 Short Term Rental Study, the

University Area Parking Study and the ongoing Housing Opportunities Study. The last two years of Rachael's work included moving into a managing role for the Housing Opportunities Study and being the sole planner on four high-profile and contentious text amendment requests, some of which were the largest land-use assignments to ever come through the City Planning Commission. These assignments included the University Area Parking Overlay District, the Protect Tremé Interim Zoning District, The Small Multi-Family Affordable Text Amendment and the Accessory Dwelling Unit Text Amendment. All four assignments necessitated work above and beyond a typical land-use assignment, including meetings with stakeholders, attending public engagement meetings and fielding questions, data analysis, research and synthesis, best practices from other cities, and meetings with City Council members and council staff to explain staff's recommendations. These two years of supervisory experience managing major projects exceed the required minimum. Throughout Rachael's five-year tenure with the City Planning Commission, she's gained the trust of upper management and fellow colleagues to complete her work exceedingly well, with little oversight and with little need for extensions.

In addition to the 5 years at the CPC, Rachael has a combined six years of experience working on housing initiatives and policies through other housing-related positions that allow Rachael to have a more holistic and nuanced approach to the housing assignments she works on at CPC. Rachael has over two years of experience as an Americorps member with a disaster relief and assistance non-profit where she physically worked on home construction and then facilitated the sale of homes to first-time home buyers utilizing the City of New Orleans' soft second program and the New Orleans Redevelopment Authorities' (NORA's) gap financing. Rachael has a year and a half experience working in the housing division of a different New Orleans' non-profit (formerly) called the Advocacy Center. Rachael managed and oversaw a program that worked with the City of New Orleans' Office of Community Development (OCD) to retrofit homes for individuals with mobility impairments.

In the two years between working for the Advocacy Center and for the CPC, Rachael had an internship with NORA, CPC, and worked as a compliance specialist for Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties while completing her Masters in Urban and Regional Planning where she received a 4.0 GPA. As an intern with NORA, Rachael collected data and researched for the Façade/ReNew Program, culminating in a presentation, to help inform grant decisions. As an intern with CPC, Rachael worked on a variety of housing related initiatives including research of inclusionary housing best practices and incentive zoning policies that were ultimately included as part of the research for the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Policy that is currently in effect. Lastly, Rachael worked as a LIHTC compliance specialist, learning the intricacies of LIHTC properties, HOME and CDBG grant monies, and how project-based vouchers intersect with LIHTC properties.

4. Description of how similar qualifications are not readily available in the labor market at a minimum entrance rate:

The City Planning Commission lost over half its staff over the past 2.5 years, leading to an increased workload for the remaining staff. The increased workload was not combined with increase in pay or bonuses. Consequently, the remaining staff has experienced increased burnout which has led to more staff finding work elsewhere or who are actively seeking other employment. The learning curve to fully integrate into any of the planner positions - but particularly the upper-level planning positions such as the

Assistant Planning Administrator - is steep. It takes an estimated two years to work fully autonomously and understand the intricacies of the department. When a staff member leaves the department, it takes about two years of time for their replacement to gain the institutional knowledge lost from the former employee. In addition, it taxes the already overburdened staff to facilitate onboarding and trainings, field questions and oversee the work of the new employees which disrupts operations within the department and can lead to deferrals of applications. These disruptions can delay or even stymie developments in the City that are on strict timelines, hurting New Orleans' economic development.

Rachael's varied work experience with the City Planning Commission, past work experience in the private sector and with non-profits is unique and is not readily available in the labor market at minimum entrance rate. In addition to handling high-profile, upper-level land-use assignments and excelling in her work, Rachael was one of five city employees to receive an Innovation Stipend initiated through the Mayor's administration. The Innovation Stipend was awarded to city employees who proposed feasible ideas to save the city money, and/or generate income for the city. A new employee to the City Planning Commission would not have the experience or knowledge to better the systems in place, streamline processes or simply think outside the narrow confines of the work with which the City Planning Commission is tasked.

In addition to Rachael's 4.0 GPA received in her Master's Program, she also received a grant to visit Mexico City through the University of New Orleans, where she took Spanish courses and studied their robust transit system. More recently, Rachael received a scholarship from the Jewish Federation to become an American Planning Association (APA) Member. When the APA conference was held in New Orleans, Rachael guided a bus full of planners around the City to provide history and context of New Orleans' built environment. A new planner entering this position would not have the same institutional knowledge and experience as Rachael and could simply not perform at the level typical of Rachael's work without several years of CPC experience.

5. How are the duties of the position relevant to the advanced qualification?

The duties of the Comprehensive Planning Administrator Assistant position require the individual to oversee Master Plan amendments, new policy initiatives within the department, assist and lead CPC studies and continue to work on general planning recommendations for the BZA, Land Use, and Comprehensive Sections. Rachael's five years at the City Planning Commission have all been within the Comprehensive Division of CPC. Up until recently, Rachael was the only staff member who was still in the Comprehensive Division; every other employee within the Comprehensive Division left the department during the pandemic. Consequently, Rachael is the most qualified planner for this position, with at least four more years of experience in the Comprehensive Division than any other employee within the department (with the exception of the Planning Administrator).

Rachael has received outstanding performance reviews throughout her tenure with the City. She has demonstrated great aptitude for complicated zoning matters, professional and timely communication with colleagues and the public, and an ability to effectively handle an exceedingly large workload. She is intimately familiar with the processes required of this position and will continue to excel in the new role.

6. How will hiring this person at the rate specified below be a financial advantage to the City? Please Provide an objective financial analysis.

It takes years to fully understand the nuances of working at the City Planning Commission. New hires require a substantial amount of training, utilizing time of their colleagues to understand the convoluted processes imbedded into the job functions of a city planner. Rachael's ability to lead and manage larger projects independently and her institutional knowledge of existing CPC and City policy will allow her to perform this position with little supervision.

CPC struggles to locate and hire qualified candidates for all planner positions, including the Planning Administrator Assistant position. Moreover, CPC struggles to retain its existing staff. The pandemic has exacerbated both issues; there is an ever-greater dearth of qualified candidates on the registry and the department lost over half of its staff during the pandemic. Most people left for higher-paying work found in other cities or in the private sector for similar roles with similar qualifications. There is no one currently on staff qualified for the role of a Comprehensive Assistant Planning Administrator other than Haley Delery, who has declined to pursue this position and does not have the same work experience in housing, CPC studies and text amendments as Rachael. Consequently, the department would need to hire someone from outside the department to fulfill this role which could result in slow-downs for applicants and construction developments, as well as potential deferrals of cases due to the required onboarding and trainings necessitated by the new hire. The City Planning Commission is a continual stream of revenue for the city and the backbone to the City's economic development. Disruptions, including hiring of staff from outside the department, can affect this revenue stream by slowing down business.

Rachael's knowledge and excellence of work has continued despite the setbacks over the past two years (e.g. lack of resources, loss of half the staff, and a workload that was split between two employees prior to the pandemic). In addition to typical responsibilities, Rachael also wrote, researched, and presented several extensive, controversial and upper-level text amendments in this time period, demonstrating her ability to handle multiple deadlines and responsibilities simultaneously. Rachael's ability to work autonomously with little help from supervisors allows the department to be more efficient as a whole, and Rachael's abundance of knowledge allows her to help the public effectively and timely.

The relatively small increase in pay raise requested would have negligible effect on the City but could be a financial advantage to the City by ensuring continued and smooth operations in the City Planning Commission department.

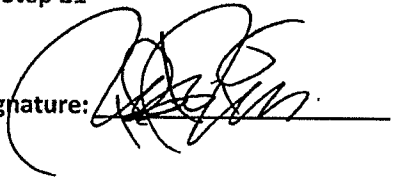
7. List other departmental employees in this classification. Do they also possess the exceeded qualification and is it job-related? Please attach copies of this form for people with the same or equivalent extraordinary qualifications.

Sabine Lebailleux also possesses the exceeded qualifications and is seeking extraordinary qualifications.

Rate granted (in steps; % must be in increments of 1.25):

Percentage in steps: Step 21

Appoint Authority Signature: _____



Date: _____

