

TOWN PLANNER

JOB DESCRIPTION

Shaping the development of towns and cities is a balancing act between the economic and social needs of a community. Environmental concerns and housing, economic development, and cultural and recreational interests are all considered. As a town planner, you must examine and balance these issues, and make a judgment on planning applications proposed by individuals and companies.



SALARY

Assistant town planner ★★☆☆☆
Chief planning officer ★★★★★

INDUSTRY PROFILE

Jobs dependent on growing population and need for housing • Economic fluctuations affect the rise or fall of planning applications

CAREER PATHS

After graduation, town planners usually start their careers in local or regional government. With experience, they can progress to more senior planning roles within government agencies, or choose to work with developers and construction firms in the private sector to help them negotiate complex planning regulations.

SENIOR PLANNING OFFICER Takes on complex planning projects, such as landscape conservation and large-scale urban developments. This involves supervising junior staff and keeping on top of larger budgets.



GRADUATE You can start with a town planning degree recognized by a professional planning body. Alternatively, you can study for a degree in geography, architecture, statistics, environmental science, or followed by graduate training in town planning.



TOWN PLANNER Once qualified as a town planner, you will generally start work as an assistant. After gaining experience, you have a choice between several career routes.



PLANNING CONSULTANT Works as a private consultant with property developers, government, charities, and other agencies on a range of major planning projects.



SKILLS GUIDE



Good writing and presentation skills to communicate with a wide range of people.



Time-management skills to meet deadlines on several projects running at once.



Excellent problem-solving skills for analyzing planning applications from clients.



Knowledge of any new business developments, political initiatives, and environmental issues.



Clear understanding of planning rules and regulations to be able to prepare detailed reports.



CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER

Manages a local or regional planning office and works with other branches of government to prepare the designs necessary to shape a town or region.

Town planners have been around since the world's first towns and cities arose in Mesopotamia around 4500 BCE.

RELATED CAREERS

- ▶ **ARCHITECT** *see pp. 194–195*
- ▶ **COST ENGINEER** *see pp. 198–199*
- ▶ **HISTORIC BUILDINGS INSPECTOR** Ensures that a wide variety of historic buildings are preserved and maintained appropriately. Historic building inspectors usually hold at least a bachelor's degree in a relevant subject.
- ▶ **HOUSING MANAGER** Supports the development of new housing for local authorities and housing associations. Housing managers also work with people living in existing local authority-owned housing programs to ensure that the buildings are maintained properly.

AT A GLANCE



YOUR INTERESTS Urban design • Geography • Environmental studies • Mathematics • Landscape design • Computer-aided Design (CAD)



ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS Employers typically look for candidates with a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and professional accreditation.



LIFESTYLE Work hours are regular, but town planners may have to work overtime to meet clients, view sites, and attend public meetings.



LOCATION Town planners work in an office some of the time, but travel is required to view potential sites and meet with developers and the public.



THE REALITIES Dealing with tight schedules and budgets can be stressful. Town planning decisions may also be unpopular with local people.