



CITY OF SIGNAL HILL

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal
Hill, California 90755-3799

STAFF REPORT

8/26/2025

AGENDA ITEM

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO
CITY MANAGER**

**BY: COLLEEN T. DOAN
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**PATRICIA AHUMADA
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY PERSONNEL ADJUSTMENT IN THE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT TO SUPPORT PLANNED STAFFING
TRANSITIONS**

Summary:

The City Council will consider approving a temporary adjustment to the Community Development Department Personnel Summary contained in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-26 Operating Budget due to the impending separation of the Principal Building Inspector before the end of the calendar year. The proposed temporary personnel adjustment would result in the overlapping employment of the outgoing Principal Building Inspector and an incoming future Senior Building Inspector. The overlap between the Principal Building Inspector and Senior Building Inspector is intended to enable unique job knowledge transfer and specialized training specifically in the area of oil services. This proposed temporary personnel adjustment would ensure the City retains appropriate job knowledge, skill level and capacity to deliver quality public service for a period not to exceed the end of the FY 2025-2026.

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal No. 5 High Functioning Government: Strengthen internal communication, recruitment, retention, systems, and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City services.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve an additional full-time equivalent (FTE) employee in the Community Development Department through June 30, 2026. This temporary personnel adjustment to the Community Development Department will allow the outgoing Principal Building

Inspector to cross train with the incoming Senior Building Inspector, who will underfill the Principal Building Inspector upon their departure.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action of this report. The planned transition from a Principal Building Inspector to a Senior Building Inspector would result in salary savings; the salary savings are projected to fully offset training costs associated with the recommended cross-over training.

Background:

In conjunction with the development of the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operating Budget, City management evaluated operations, staffing levels, and made informed recommendations based upon department workplans and strategic priorities. At the June 10, 2025 meeting, the City Council approved amendments to the City's classification plan to better position the City to continue meeting its overarching strategic plan goals, enhance public safety and service delivery, and attract and retain talented candidates in essential positions. The approved class plan amendments included revisions to the Senior Building Inspector job specification (Attachment A). The City amended the Senior Building Inspector job specification to include the essential function of Oil Services Coordinator. This position is currently responsible for oversight of the oil field and compliance with the City's Oil and Gas Code. The Senior Building Inspector also coordinates oil field related activities with other City departments and oil operators.

Analysis:

In July 2025, the current Principal Building Inspector formally notified the City that he will separate from employment in November 2025. On July 24, 2025, Human Resources opened the recruitment for a Senior Building Inspector to allow for successful recruitment and avoid potential delays in filling this critical position. The update to the classification specification enabled staff to conduct a targeted recruitment that included the full spectrum of responsibilities required for the position, which not only involves standard building inspection and code enforcement, but also includes highly specialized duties related to the coordination and oversight of local oil operations. These responsibilities are integral to the role and require specific expertise in both the California Building Code and the Signal Hill Municipal Code (SHMC), as well as a thorough understanding of oil and gas regulations unique to Signal Hill.

Due to the unique nature of this role, staff determined that an overlapping training period with the current Principal Building Inspector would provide the incoming Senior Building Inspector with the essential knowledge and background to successfully transition into the role upon the separation of the Principal Building Inspector. Importantly, due to the rapport and relationships the Principal Building Inspector has established with key community partners, local businesses, and community members, the ability to introduce the future Senior Building Inspector to key stakeholders and establish immediate trust will be critical to the success and transition of the new employee. Succession planning is key to ensuring that staffing transitions do not negatively impact the continuity or quality of customer service. In order to create a transition plan and assure the continuity of services, the City proposes to underfill the Principal Building Inspector position with a Senior Building Inspector that meets the required International Code Council (ICC) certifications and has relevant

experience and knowledge of the California Building Code.

The City adopts the California Building Code by reference every three years but also adopts local Building Code regulations. The duties and responsibilities of Oil Services Coordinator as part of the Building Inspector position are unique to Signal Hill, as are the relationships with key community stakeholders. There are only a handful of cities throughout California that have oil operations and oil services assigned to the Building Inspector role. Although the majority of oil operations throughout the City are overseen and regulated by the State Division of Geologic Energy Management (CalGEM), the Building Inspector is expected to have knowledge and understanding of the State regulations and day-to-day oil operations.

The Building Inspector, serving as the City's Oil Services Coordinator, must understand City regulations and standards as established in Chapter 16 of the SHMC, the Oil and Gas Code. The Building Inspector must inspect local oil facilities, issue local permits, communicate with local oil operators, and document inspections and communications on a regular basis each year. Due to the lack of a recognized professional training program for the role of Oil Services Coordinator, succession planning and on-the-job cross training is critical to ensure the City remains compliant with all local, state, and federal regulations.

The duties and responsibilities of the Oil Services Coordinator include but are not limited to knowledge of the following:

- The City's Oil and Gas Code (Chapter 16 of the SHMC)
- Inspections of all oil operations (421 active and idle wells throughout the City)
- Local oil and gas operations and operators
- Well maintenance and abandonment procedures
- Methane mitigation analysis and procedures
- Well abandonment, re-work, and re-drill procedures
- Tank de-commissioning and re-commissioning

The City has retained specialized petroleum and oil operations related to on-call consultants to provide expertise as needed for oil related activities, inspections, and permits. The City also has an on-call Contract Building Official with familiarity in these areas; however, the on-call consultants have limited local knowledge and familiarity with local conditions, operations, procedures, and operators compared to the current Principal Building Inspector. Therefore, in anticipation of the planned employment separation, the Principal Building Inspector has prepared written reference information, contacts, and guidance, and has developed a training methodology to share their strategic workplan, organizational tools, and unique knowledge with the new Senior Building Inspector. This requested overlap in staffing would serve as an opportunity to train, share, and guide the incoming Senior Building Inspector with the necessary information to ensure the succession of the transition. The overlap in staffing would ensure a smooth transition with continued high volume of productivity and customer service.

The Personnel Summary includes the FTE count by department and is included in each year's adopted operating budget. The addition of the Senior Building Inspector position temporarily increases the Community Development Department's total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions from 7.5 to 8.5 during FY 2025-26:

Current Positions	Current FTE	Proposed FTE	FTE Increase
Director	1	0	0
Planning Manager	1	0	0
Management Assistant	1	0	0
Associate Planner	1	0	0
Assistant Planner	1	0	
Principal Building Inspector	1	0	0
Senior Building Inspector	0	1	1
Code Enforcement Officer	1	0	0
Part-Time Permit Technician	0.5	0	
Total			1

The proposed temporary increase in FTE positions to the Community Development Department and the simultaneous employment of the Principal Building Inspector and Senior Building Inspector is intended to allow for training for a temporary period that will be reduced upon the completion of the transition. The transition is expected to be completed before the end of FY 2025-2026 and staff will update the Personnel Summary in June 2026 to reflect the intended, ongoing staffing levels.

In order to facilitate a smooth transition, staff are requesting a cross-over training program that entails the simultaneous employment of both the current Principal Building Inspector and the newly hired Senior Building Inspector for a period of time not-to-exceed the end of the fiscal year. The budgeted salary savings associated with the transition from the Principal Building Inspector position to the Senior Building Inspector position will result in a budget-neutral fiscal impact.

Department management will assess the transition and evaluate the need and performance of the Senior Building Inspector annually. Underfilling the Principal Building Inspector position would create an opportunity for growth and is intended to support retention of the position in future years.

Reviewed for Fiscal Impact:

Siamlu Cox

Attachment:

A. Senior Building Inspector Job Description