

SAN ELIJO JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY
PRINCIPAL ENGINEER/SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER

Department: Infrastructure & Sustainability	Accountable to: Director of Infrastructure & Sustainability	FLSA Status: Exempt
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DEFINITION

The Principal Engineer/Senior Project Manager is an advanced-level exempt classification in the engineering and project manager series and assumes all of the abilities listed in the engineering and project manager series description as well as a high level of complex duties and specialized engineering activities that require the use of independent judgment and decision-making, initiative, and project management. Incumbent serves in the capacity of a leadership role, and performs difficult and responsible types of duties, including providing direction over agency personnel in alignment with the agency's vision and mission. SEJPA employees may be required to work outside of normal office hours including weekends, evenings and holidays to accomplish assigned duties, in addition to responding as a Disaster Emergency Service Worker.

SUPERVISION EXERCISED

May exercise technical and functional supervision over lower-level staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work, conducting performance evaluations, ensuring staff are trained, and making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

The duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The exact duties performed will depend on the needs of the SEJPA.

- **Program Leadership & Project Lifecycle Management:** Coordinate programmatic oversight and reporting on the Agency's multi-year capital program delivery. Lead, organize, and direct all life cycle stages of capital projects to ensure alignment with agency strategic objectives, scope, schedule, budget, and quality standards.
- **Team Supervision & Staff Development:** Provide technical and functional supervision over personnel, including work prioritization, performance reviews, mentorship, training, and recommendations for hiring, discipline, or termination.
- **Risk Management & Problem Resolution:** Identify capital project risks, formulate mitigation strategies, and resolve escalated issues from design consultants, contractors, regulators, and internal departments.
- **Procurement, Solicitations & Contracting:** Develop RFPs and scopes of work, assist in consultant selection, and manage contract administration for complex, multi-consultant design and construction projects.
- **Design, Permitting & Construction Oversight:** Oversee and contribute to facility planning, design, quality assurance, permit acquisition, construction, startup and commissioning, on-site leadership, and project closeouts (including archiving record drawings and manuals).
- **Budget Administration & Forecasting:** Assist in developing capital budgets, participate in departmental/divisional budget administration, forecast funding needs, and monitor/approve expenditures.
- **Interagency Coordination & Representation:** Represent SEJPA at public events, speaking engagements, and committee meetings, serving as a primary liaison with external agencies, contractors, utility companies, and local groups.

SPECIFIC TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PHYSICAL ABILITIES REQUIRED FOR THESE ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS

- **Advanced Project Planning & Execution:** Superior proficiency in creating, managing, and tracking complex project plans involving multiple supporting professionals and shifting timelines.
- **Engineering & Technical Expertise:** Advanced knowledge of civil engineering principles and practices as applied to wastewater treatment, recycled water, and utility infrastructure. Develops and reviews engineering studies, designs, plans, specifications, estimates, reports, and technical recommendations. Using common engineering tools perform calculations, analyze and graph process data, assimilate operational information, and present findings to support recommendations.
- **Engineering Standards & Regulatory Compliance:** Applies engineering judgment and knowledge of applicable laws, regulations, codes, and standards to the planning, design, construction, and modification of facilities. Reviews engineering work for technical adequacy, constructability, operational compatibility, and regulatory compliance.
- **Multidisciplinary Engineering & Controls:** Working knowledge of treatment process, civil, structural, mechanical, electrical, and instrumentation and controls engineering as applied to water and wastewater facilities. Experience with SCADA systems, industrial automation, and process control systems, including their integration with treatment plant equipment and operations.
- **Public Works Construction & Contract Administration:** Working knowledge of public works construction and contracting practices. Interprets and applies plans, specifications, and contract requirements in administering construction projects, resolving issues, evaluating changes, and supporting successful project delivery.
- **Technical & Stakeholder Communication:** Ability to communicate directly and competently with contractors, engineers, regulators, and designers regarding project costs, staffing, scheduling, and strategic alignment.
- **Leadership & Adaptability:** Self-motivated and decisive approach, capable of adapting to shifting priorities, resolving technical impasses, and motivating teams to hit project goals.
- **Public Agency Compliance & Customer Service:** High-level customer service skills combined with strict adherence to SEJPA procedures, purchasing guidelines, and record retention policies. Demonstrated knowledge of principles and practices of public administration.
- **Physical & Mental Capabilities:** Ability to navigate quiet office settings and dirty, loud, or odorous field work environments; manage constant interruptions; handle strenuous physical exertion; and interpret complex technical data under tight deadlines. Capable of resolving escalated issues arising from design consultants, contractors, regulators and internal departments.

EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

A Bachelor of Science Degree in the field of Civil Engineering or a related field from an accredited college or university. A Master's Degree is desirable.

EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS

Typically requires 5+ years of project management and 10 years of wastewater industry, construction or other applicable industry experience. A combination of certification and experience will be considered.

LICENSE/CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Possession of a valid California Class C Driver's License and insured in accordance with at least minimum coverage and liability standards established by the State of California. Failure to maintain a valid Driver's License, liability insurance, and the ability to be insured under the SEJPA's automobile insurance carrier constitutes possible cause for termination.

A Professional Engineering (PE) license is required for Principal Engineer. For Senior Project Manager role, a combination of equivalent certifications, education, and demonstrated experience in engineering, project management, construction, or related fields may be considered in lieu of a PE.

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL DEMANDS/WORKING CONDITIONS

Physical Demands:

While performing the duties of this position, an employee is regularly required to walk; talk, or hear by telephone and in person; sit; smell; use hands and fingers to handle, feel, or operate standard office equipment, objects, tools, or controls; reach and lift with hands or arms. The employee is frequently required to stand, stoop, and kneel for prolonged period of time.

Ability to withstand strenuous physical activities for extended periods of time includes bending, crawling, squatting, twisting, climbing, pushing, and pulling.

Specific vision abilities required by this job include close and distance vision and the ability to adjust focus.

Mental Demands:

While performing the duties of this position, the employee is regularly required to use written and oral communication skills; read and interpret complex data, information, and documents; analyze and solve problems; observe and interpret people and situations; use math and mathematical reasoning; learn and apply new information or skills; perform highly detailed work on multiple, concurrent tasks with constant interruptions; work under intensive deadlines and interact with other managers, board members, government officials, regulators, employees, and the public.

Work Environment:

The employee works under typical office conditions as well as construction or work sites in the course of inspecting and monitoring work, exercising oversight over work crews or conducting investigative assignments. The noise level in the office environment is usually quiet; work sites may be dirty, loud, and odorous.

QUALIFICATIONS

Ability to pass SEJPA pre-employment physical examination; the ability to read, write, speak, and comprehend English.

RIGHT TO WORK

Documentation of eligibility to work in the United States will be required as a condition of employment.

To perform this job successfully, the employee must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, the SEJPA will make a good faith effort to provide reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified employee with a disability, unless undue hardship would result to the SEJPA. To request such an accommodation, please refer to the SEJPA employee handbook.

The list of essential job duties contained in this job description is not exhaustive, and may be supplemented as necessary. This position performs other related duties as assigned that may become essential to the position.

The San Elijo Joint Powers Authority does not discriminate against any applicant for employment on the basis of race, religious creed (which includes religious dress and grooming practices), color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, and related conditions), gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws, ordinances, or regulations.

Last Updated: September 2026