CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS
INSTITUT CANADIEN DES URBANISTES

THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS DRAFT POLICY STATEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

ABOUT THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF PLANNERS

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) is a professional body that works on behalf of over 6,900 members nationally and has served as the voice of Canada's planning community since 1919. Planners work to enhance the health and well-being of urban and rural and remote communities, by addressing the use of land, resources, facilities, and services to optimize environmental, economic, and social outcomes. Our members work in the public service, voluntary, and private sectors and are engaged in general planning, land use planning, environmental planning, natural resource management, land development, heritage planning, conservation, housing and social planning, health and human service planning, transportation planning, urban design, and community and economic development.

ABOUT THIS POLICY STATEMENT

This policy statement was developed by the Canadian Institute of Planners, in partnership with its consulting team. The statement is based on input gathered from CIP members, climate change researchers, advocates, and other partner organizations using interviews, surveys, and focus groups. CIP acknowledges and appreciates the invaluable contributions provided by its Climate Change Committee in developing this policy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) recognizes that the global climate is changing, leading to increased hazards, extreme weather conditions, and changes to the physical environment in Canada and beyond its borders. Targets and frameworks have been adopted globally and by various levels of government; however, addressing climate change requires immediate and committed action at every level of government and society, and across all communities and sectors.

CIP recognizes that climate change planning (or, more accurately, climate change-informed planning) is the domain of all planners, including those working on energy, land-use, transportation, infrastructure, and community planning. Climate change-informed planning includes the mitigation of future climate change, primarily by reducing greenhouse gas emissions; adaptation to existing and projected environmental changes; and disaster risk reduction measures. The complexity and breadth of climate change requires an integrated approach, with planners uniquely positioned to bring together officials, citizens, and allied professions cohesively.

CLIMATE CHANGE-INFORMED PLANNING

CIP uses the term *climate change-informed planning* interchangeably with *climate change planning* to signal that planning for climate change is not simply the work of a specialized few, but should inform all aspects of planning.

Planners have a professional obligation to act in the public interest by taking measures to mitigate climate change and to address its impacts. In order to do so, they must be knowledgeable about Canada's climate commitments, and they must have access to climate and energy data and forecasts, as well as adequate training and resources. CIP also recognizes the importance of equity considerations in addressing climate change, from the inclusion of vulnerable populations in adaptation plans, to support for climate change planning in small and remote communities, as well as larger urban centres.

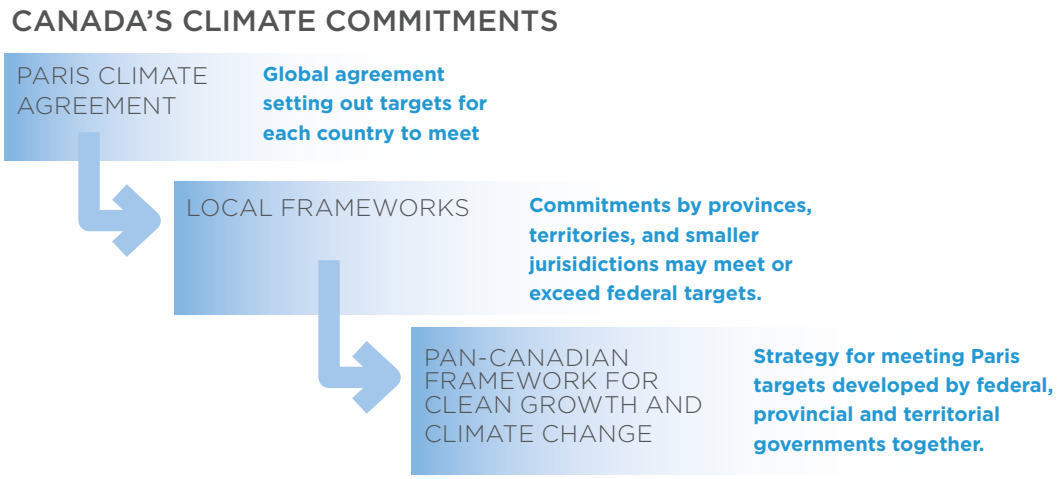
This policy statement presents CIP's vision for climate change planning, the responsibilities of its members, and the Institute's organizational commitments. CIP envisions a future where planners are knowledgeable about climate change and routinely practice climate change-informed planning; local and global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions targets are met; and through mitigation and adaptation efforts, communities are more livable and successful.

CIP is committed to working to ensure that practicing planners have access to the resources, training, and support they need to fully account for climate change in their work; collaborating with other professions to build unified leadership on addressing climate change; and advocating for policy environments that support planners in addressing climate change in every aspect of their work.

INTRODUCTION

It is now a matter of scientific consensus that the world's climate is changing, and in recent years, great strides have been made in understanding the mechanisms of climate change and predicting its impacts. Public awareness and global support for taking action on climate change are increasing, creating new opportunities for CIP and its members.

The Government of Canada set out its commitments to addressing climate change through the Pan-Canadian Framework for Clean Growth and Climate Change. This Framework was developed in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, which are in turn establishing their own climate goals and policies. These all align with the global framework of the Paris Climate Agreement, which Canada signed in 2016. Climate change adaptation and mitigation also both figure prominently in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and New Urban Agenda.



Our evolving understanding of climate change science underscores the importance of planning decisions, which affect key climate change determinants, such as land use change and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Several global initiatives are focusing on climate change action at the local level[1], and an increasing number of initiatives and resources are available to support planners as they incorporate climate change in their work.

At the same time, the complexity of climate change and the human and natural systems it interacts with mean there are few easy and clear solutions. One of the challenges involved, is that climate change planning relies on a rapidly-growing and multi-disciplinary literature, often outside of planners' traditional knowledge base. Planners need support in pinpointing resources relevant to their work and in identifying best practices for incorporating climate change into local planning processes. Planners also need access to current, standardized, and easily understood data on issues ranging from local energy use and emissions, to local

1 See, for example, the Global Covenant of Mayors, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, and Partners for Climate Protection.

climate and hazard predictions; however, critical data held by utilities and by provincial and national organizations, agencies, and governments, is often unavailable in a consistent format. Planners require further guidance on data interpretation and appropriate use.

A second challenge comes from the need to balance multiple considerations in climate change-informed planning processes. Actions taken to mitigate climate change may come into conflict with adaptation measures, and addressing different climate-related risks, may entail seemingly contradictory solutions. Planning processes must provide for ways to integrate these concerns effectively. At the same time, climate change will disproportionately impact vulnerable groups and under-resourced areas, including Indigenous communities, northern districts, rural and coastal areas, communities reliant on a single climate-sensitive industry, seniors, and low-income people. Without careful equity-oriented planning, mitigation and adaptation solutions can exacerbate these vulnerabilities rather than reducing them.

Finally, reducing emissions and preparing for climate change requires a drastic shift in the way our communities are built and function. To guide this transformation, planners need enabling policy frameworks at all levels of government, as well as support from the private, academic, and non-profit sectors. Public perceptions of climate change are mixed and include opposition and apathy toward the importance of mitigation, so planners and their allies must effectively communicate the value of climate change planning to garner support for the complexity and size of the task.

CALL TO ACTION

The global climate is changing, leading to increased hazards, extreme weather conditions, and changes to the physical environment in Canadian communities. CIP recognizes that all planners have an ethical obligation to consider climate change in their practices and will strive to ensure that members have access to the resources, data, training, and public and political support they need to do so.

Climate change-informed planning must include a wide range of interconnected approaches, including mitigation of future climate change through community energy planning and other greenhouse gas reduction strategies, adaptation to existing and projected environmental changes, and disaster risk reduction measures. CIP is committed to collaborating with other professions to build unified leadership on addressing climate change at the federal level, working with provincial and territorial planning institutes and associations to build regional capacity, and contributing to international discussions of best practices.

This *Policy Statement on Climate Change* represents CIP's response to the challenges outlined above. The policy statement speaks to all planners, highlighting principles and professional responsibilities to guide their actions, as they strive to integrate diverse and competing priorities in their professional practice. The policy statement also identifies priorities for CIP, as it engages with governments and other organizations to advocate for climate change-informed planning in Canada.

VISION AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

CIP envisions a future for the planning profession, in which planners recognize and are knowledgeable about climate change and climate change considerations are integrated in all forms of community planning. As a result, national, provincial, and local greenhouse gas emissions targets are met, and communities realize other economic and social benefits of energy planning, while adapting to avoid devastating loss of life or property damage due to climate change. Through this integrated and collaborative response to climate change, led by planners in collaboration with other professions, Canadian communities are transformed to be more livable and successful.

As a part of this broader vision, CIP supports the following desired outcomes for the built, natural, social, policy, and professional environments:

Built environment

- Communities are integrating mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction considerations into all regional and local planning and intentional design.
- Urban areas are compact and walkable, and neighbourhoods in all communities have a mix of land uses, to reduce transportation-associated emissions and infrastructure.
- Communities have robust multi-modal transport systems in place, including infrastructure for active transportation, public transit, and evolving zero-emissions technologies.
- New and existing residential, commercial, and industrial developments have near- or net-zero energy and/or emissions profiles, and avoid introducing climate vulnerabilities (e.g., no buildings on coastlines or in flood plains).
- Regional and metropolitan bodies have robust strategies in place to incorporate climate change considerations for new developments, as cities grow and boundaries change.
- Waste management systems are configured to reduce GHG emissions from the transport of waste materials and their disposal.
- Communities are designed to support the circular economy, which minimizes the use of virgin materials, the energy used in manufacturing, and the production of waste over the full life cycles of material goods.
- Communities work collaboratively with utilities to facilitate energy conservation, efficiency, and the integration of distributed energy resources. This may include renewable energy and thermal technologies and systems.

Natural and rural environments

- Communities assess, prioritize, and mitigate the risks posed by extreme events (e.g., flooding, wildfires) impacting their regions.
- In areas facing changing physical surroundings (e.g., sea level rise, thawing permafrost), land use and infrastructure are adapted to new and evolving circumstances.
- In response to changing precipitation patterns and temperatures, water resources are protected and usage is planned.
- Natural areas and their ecological characteristics, including biodiversity, are recognized as playing a vital role in mitigating impacts of climate change and are protected accordingly.
- Planners support sustainable food systems and strive to mitigate agriculturally-related emissions.

Social environment

- Public and professional attitudes about climate change widely recognize scientific evidence, contributing to a broad societal commitment to reduce impacts from climate change.
- Solutions to climate change address and reverse current and historical inequalities, rather than entrench vulnerabilities.
- Communities are more livable and successful, as they adopt climate change solutions that reinforce other principles of good planning.
- Local Indigenous knowledge and planning traditions are integrated into planning processes, respecting the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Policy environment

- Policy environments exist at local, regional, provincial, and national levels to support mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- By taking a long-term view and maintaining corporate knowledge, planners in the public sector are able create continued momentum notwithstanding changes in political leadership.

- Local, provincial/territorial, and federal jurisdictions take steps to manage the long-term health effects associated with climate change (e.g., vector borne diseases, increased pathogens, decline in nutritive value of foods).

Professional environment

- Canadian planners are engaged in local, regional, national, and international conversations related to climate change planning and Sustainable Development Goals, including sharing best practices.

- Planners participate in networks of like-minded professions to support collaborative solutions for meeting emerging challenges.

- Planners are collaborating within and across regions, so that their responses to climate change are compatible and mutually supportive.

- Communities are using common approaches to monitoring and evaluating their climate change planning efforts, so that best practices can be shared and validated.

THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS IN REALIZING THE VISION

The impacts of climate change are already affecting Canadian communities, with more significant changes predicted over the next decades. Planners have a key role to play in acting to reduce GHG emissions from energy, transportation, waste management, and agriculture, and must consider climate change projections to safely plan for the future.

PRINCIPLES OF CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING

The following principles of climate change planning should be integrated into all aspects of planning practice, including energy planning, natural areas protection, asset management, urban design, emergency planning, and community preparedness:

- Planners should approach planning for climate change as an opportunity to strengthen communities and incorporate principles of good planning, with associated economic, environmental, and social benefits.

- Planners should foster an integrated approach to addressing climate change that brings together many different professions and stakeholders.

- Planners and planning practices should be inclusive and respectful of Indigenous peoples, and recognize that Indigenous knowledge and planning traditions represent profound understandings of the natural environments across Canada.

- Climate change solutions must be intentionally planned to counteract, rather than exacerbate, impacts on vulnerable groups and under-resourced areas.

- Mitigation and adaptation efforts must work together: adaptation efforts that do not consider mitigation may in fact aggravate climate change, and mitigation efforts that do not consider adaptation, may not be sustainable.

- Planning recommendations should be based on authoritative climate and energy data and predictions.

- As climate-related projections and risks evolve and change, climate change solutions should be regularly evaluated and implementation plans adjusted.

- Although scientific research can help to project the impacts of climate change, many are characterized by increased variability and cannot be fully predicted; therefore, planners should provide allowance for uncertainty when considering solutions.

- In line with the precautionary principle or "no-regrets" approach, planners should plan for worst-case scenarios and proactively address possible harms. Planners should strive to include risk-reduction measures, while ensuring that the principles above are not compromised.

CAPACITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PLANNERS

Planners have the capacity to shape communities' contribution to, and ability to withstand, climate change. Accordingly, they have a professional obligation to:

- Act in the public interest, which must include taking measures to mitigate climate change and address its impacts as a key consideration;

- Be familiar with federal emissions reduction targets and frameworks, as well as provincial, territorial, regional, and/or local targets where they exist, and to advance policies and regulations that work towards achieving those objectives;

- Know what the climate and hazard projections are for their regions and to make decisions accordingly;

- Evaluate plans' contributions to both adaptation and mitigation, as an essential part of planning processes;

- Account for increased disruption and unpredictability, incorporating flexibility and redundancy into their plans;

- Model environmentally responsible decision-making in their professional practices.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PUBLIC AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Climate change-informed planning requires a collaborative process that integrates perspectives from multiple local government agencies, other jurisdictions, key stakeholders, and the general public. Accordingly, planners should:

- Collaborate across sectors, departments, and jurisdictions to ensure an integrated and comprehensive approach to climate change planning, as well as effective implementation of climate change, energy, sustainability, or other similar policies;
- Engage with other professionals – including landscape architects, architects, engineers, environmental scientists, public health practitioners, and first responders – along with elected officials, the private sector, affected communities, and the general public on climate change adaptation and mitigation;
- Seek to adopt shared language with others working on climate change and avoid siloed or compartmentalized approaches;
- Strive to engage the public in all aspects of planning for climate change and ensure that the perspectives of vulnerable communities and individuals are actively considered in planning processes and reflected in the climate change solutions adopted;
- Work with relevant partners to develop effective communication strategies that will inform the public of any mitigation, adaptation, or disaster response measures that require the public to be informed and prepared;
- Communicate the urgency, value, and impacts of climate change planning to elected officials and to the public;
- Build on CIP's national-level work to improve public awareness of, and support for, climate change planning by promoting the multiple benefits of climate change solutions;
- Encourage local and provincial governments to update their development standards, planning regulations, and incentives to address emissions;
- Encourage the development sector and utilities to update their business models and planning processes to incentivize climate change mitigation and adaptation.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring, evaluating, and sharing the impacts of climate change planning measures is essential to effective adaptation and mitigation. Accordingly, planners should:

- Establish clear monitoring and revision processes for climate change plans and policies;
- Use established metrics and approaches to data collection, wherever possible, to facilitate sharing data with other communities;
- Document successes, challenges, and lessons learned and share these with CIP, affiliated professions, elected officials, and citizens.

THE ROLE OF CIP IN REALIZING THE VISION

CIP strongly believes that addressing climate change is an essential part of planning in the public interest, and that climate change-informed planning adds both short and long-term value to communities. This belief will be integral to CIP's work under this policy statement and is reflected in the following commitments:

INTER-JURISDICTIONAL AND INTER-SECTORAL COLLABORATION

Recognizing that addressing climate change requires interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation, CIP will make developing and deepening partnerships with other professional organizations a priority in its approach to climate change. Therefore, CIP will:

- Actively work to collaborate with other national and international associations and professional bodies to develop common messages, positions, and recommendations;
- Seek to collaborate with other national associations, professional bodies, and academic institutions on tools, training, and other capacity-building efforts that enable planners to better collaborate across professions;
- Participate in national and international conversations on climate change, in order to develop a cohesive and comprehensive approach;
- Support provincial and territorial planning institutes and associations (PTIAs) in developing their own climate change policies and/or sharing new and existing policies.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

To provide training and resources to support its members in fulfilling their professional obligations, CIP will:

- Expand its provision of continuous professional learning opportunities and resources, to support climate change-informed planning;
- Develop tools and training resources to assist planners in understanding the implications that national and international climate change agreements and frameworks have on their practice;
- Advocate for data-holding institutions (e.g., federal and provincial departments, universities, partner organizations) to release data in formats planners can use;
- Collaborate with PTIAs and partner organizations to keep planners abreast of key issues and useful resources for climate change-informed planning;
- Regularly monitor and determine the information and training needs of practicing planners to implement and excel in climate change planning.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

CIP recognizes that supportive research initiatives, networks, and policy environments are necessary for planners to fully implement climate change-informed planning practices, and will take the following steps to encourage and support action by several levels of government:

- Monitor and communicate key federal initiatives, including budgets, bills, and policies of interest, to the planning profession;
- Support federal government and agency action that contributes to realizing CIP's vision on climate change planning, including in areas such as data preparation and technical guidance;
- Advocate for, and support the Government of Canada in, efforts to uphold significant international climate targets, as established through the Paris Agreement;
- Advocate for an integrated federal policy on climate change that strengthens the links between climate change solutions and other key issues;
- Work with PTIAs in support of common policy goals at provincial and territorial levels.

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

To execute this policy statement effectively, CIP will:

- Develop an Implementation Plan – including a monitoring and evaluation plan – to translate this policy statement into specific and timely action points;
- Update the Implementation Plan regularly, based on the monitoring and evaluation findings;
- Develop a method for sharing the successes and challenges experienced by planners, as they implement the policy statement;
- Maintain the capacity and expertise necessary to implement this policy.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional resources on climate change produced by CIP, including thematic annotated bibliographies, model climate change adaptation plans, and a range of case studies and resources, please see the CIP Climate Change webpage. An Implementation Plan and supporting documents, which aim to outline specific components of the policy in greater detail, provide examples of best practices and guidelines, and list key stakeholders relevant to climate change planning in Canada, will be developed following this policy statement.

APPENDIX:
KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Adaptation describes interventions to natural or human systems intended to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities from current or anticipated weather conditions, environmental conditions, and other risks.

Climate change describes any systematic change in climate elements (e.g., temperature, pressure, or winds) sustained over several decades or longer. Although the climate can change for reasons, including internal processes of the climate system or changes in solar emission, scientific consensus confirms that the current warming trend is largely due to anthropogenic (human-caused) factors.

Climate change planning or **climate change-informed planning** is used throughout this document to refer to all planning activities which seek to mitigate or adapt to climate change. This includes, but is not limited to, energy planning, land-use planning, and community planning, in addition to the development of specific climate change adaptation or mitigation plans.

Disaster risk reduction is described by the UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction as "aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risk and managing residual risk, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development."

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are gases in the atmosphere, both naturally occurring and produced by human activity, that absorb and emit radiation at specific wavelengths within the spectrum of thermal infrared radiation. This property causes the greenhouse effect, trapping heat within Earth's atmosphere and causing climate change. The primary greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere are water vapour (H_2O), carbon dioxide (CO_2), nitrous oxide (N_2O), methane (CH_4), and ozone (O_3).

Impacts are effects on lives, livelihoods, health, economic, social, and cultural assets, ecosystems, and services (including environmental) produced by the interaction of climate changes or hazardous climate events and the vulnerability of a society or system. Impacts are also referred to as consequences and outcomes.

Mitigation describes interventions to reduce the forcing of the climate system caused by human activities, which includes measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enhance greenhouse gas sinks. Mitigation measures are used to slow the rate of climatic change and have economic and social co-benefits.

The **no-regrets approach** is explained by the Adaptation to Climate Change team at Simon Fraser University and Green Resilience Strategies, as follows: "plan ahead to avoid the 'I wish we would have ...' regret: use scarce funding wisely to maximize adaptation and mitigation benefits." Similarly, the Canadian Environmental Law Association defines the **precautionary principle** as "a duty to prevent harm, when it is within our power to do so, even when all the evidence is not in."

Renewable energy is energy produced by renewable resources. **Renewable resources** are natural resources that are replenished by natural processes at a rate comparable to their rate of consumption. Wind, solar, oxygen, freshwater, timber, and biomass can all be considered renewable resources; however, they can become non-renewable resources if used at a rate greater than the environment's capacity to replenish them.

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