



Climate Change

A Policy Paper

“Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global average sea level.”



Cover quote: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Fourth Assessment Report, “Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report – Summary for Policymakers”, p. 1.

In July 2007, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) launched a Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Program funded by Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), in cooperation with NRCan's Earth Sciences Sector, "Enhancing Resilience in a Changing Climate" Program.

CIP's climate change program is made up of the following five components:

- 1.** A National Policy Framework: Development of a CIP policy on climate change
- 2.** Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) Opportunities: Development of climate change educational modules for practicing planners and to be incorporated into university planning program curricula.
- 3.** Research Fellowships and Studio Project Awards: Awarding of ten \$5,000 Fellowship and five \$2,500 Studio Project Awards to planning students for climate change research projects.
- 4.** Community Capacity for Adaptation: Two teams of two planners each travelled to the Nunavut communities of Hall River and Clyde Beach to assist with the development of climate change plans.
- 5.** Northern Symposium Seed funding of \$25,000 in support of a unique symposium entitled "Planning for Climate Change: Weathering Uncertainty", to be held in Iqaluit, Nunavut, from July 20 to 23, 2008.

This draft policy statement on climate change was developed under the first component of the program. The policy was drafted based on input from a focus group comprising some 20 CIP members and 5 NRCan Scientists, who participated in a facilitated workshop in November 2007.

Initial drafts of the policy were reviewed and revised by the focus group participants and the program's Steering Committee before being submitted to CIP Council in February 2008. CIP Council formally received the policy and approved its distribution to CIP's Affiliate organizations, members and stakeholders for comments and feedback. Comments on the policy are encouraged and should be directed to: *Elaine Hamelin-Mitchell at: ehamelin@cip-icu.ca*

1. Declaration

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) believes climate change is real and immediate. The impacts of climate change affect and will continue to affect all aspects of our mission to ensure a sustainable future and to shape better communities.

2. Basis of policy

*“There is **very high confidence** that the net effect of human activities since 1750 has been one of warming. Global atmospheric concentrations of CO₂, methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) have increased markedly as a result of human activities since 1750 and now far exceed pre-industrial values determined from ice cores spanning many thousands of years.”*

- IPCC, Fourth Assessment Report, “Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report- Summary for Policymakers”, p4.



As the professional body representing 7,000 planners across Canada, CIP knows that the role of planners is vital in helping Canada and the world meet the challenges of climate change. Planners think holistically and for the long-term, whether strategizing to manage urban growth, protect natural resources or sustain rural and northern communities. Planners take decisions that influence the way we live – from housing choice to place of work to mode of transport. In carrying out the planning process, planners educate and learn from communities and in turn, provide links among politicians, residents, developers, and other professionals. In launching this policy, CIP is breaking new ground. In the past, CIP has focused its policy activity on reacting to government initiatives rather than creating new policy. However, given that climate change affects every dimension of our profession and adds considerable uncertainty to the planning process, CIP believes the time is right to lead our members on this critical issue. CIP’s climate change policy draws from the fifth core principles established in our Strategic Plan. This principle commits CIP to “reduce the rate of climate change, mitigate its effects, and plan for adaptation”.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change uses the following definitions:

Mitigation: An anthropogenic * intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases.

Adaptation: Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

* “relating to or resulting from the influence that humans have on the natural world.”



3. Statement of Goals & Objectives

The Canadian Institute of Planners endorses the following policy on climate change:

Goal

In acknowledging our share of responsibility to future generations for custodianship of this planet and its habitats, the Canadian Institute of Planners aims to ensure every member is committed to tackling the effects of climate change.

Objectives

To achieve this goal, CIP has set the following objectives:

- *To increase planners' capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change locally, nationally, and internationally;*
- *To increase planners' knowledge about climate change, mitigation techniques, and adaptation strategies;*
- *To raise awareness of the links between planning and climate change among our members, the general public, other professionals, and our international colleagues;*
- *To build networks of professionals to support collaborative solutions for meeting the challenges of climate change.*

4. Policy Directives

“Unmitigated climate change would, in the long term, be likely to exceed the capacity of natural, managed and human systems to adapt.”

- IPCC, Fourth Assessment Report, Working Group III, Summary for Policy Makers, p 20.



CIP endorses the following actions to ensure planners contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change:

1. CIP will facilitate the exchange of information between the scientific community and professional planners to make sure our members have access to the best available information on climate change, in language that is easily understood.
2. CIP expects its members to take responsibility for seeking out information on climate change that is relevant to planning decisions locally, provincially, nationally, and internationally, as appropriate.
3. CIP expects its members to consider climate change in their actions and recommendations within the broad ambit of planning activities (including for example, long-range plan preparation, development approval, infrastructure planning, resource management) in order to:
 - a. minimize risks associated with extreme events and with the cumulative effects of climate change;
 - b. protect natural resources and habitats;
 - c. ensure no adverse public health effects;
 - d. build resilience into communities; and
 - e. take advantage of mitigation and adaptation techniques, whenever possible.
4. CIP expects its members to plan development and infrastructure in ways that mitigate the effects of climate change in the long term, such as energy-efficient and transit-oriented development;
5. Given that mitigation efforts alone cannot avoid further impacts of climate change, CIP expects its members to develop suitable adaptation strategies to enable communities to manage the effects of climate change and minimize adverse impacts.
6. In carrying out their responsibilities, CIP members shall make written declarations stating how their recommendations and actions contribute to mitigating, adapting to, or worsening climate change, or have no effect.
7. CIP will work with Affiliates to develop Standards of Practice to assist members in carrying out the assessments required above, and will take into account provincial and regional variations by addressing, among other things:
 - a. Provincial legislation
 - b. Regional geographic and climatic differences
 - c. The scope and variety of planning activities
8. CIP will issue a Report Card to monitor how well this policy is being implemented.
9. CIP will continue to work with Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada for the development and consolidation of reliable data, adaptation tools and mitigation techniques that are usable at the regional and local level.
10. CIP will work collaboratively with universities and other post-secondary institutions to ensure climate change policy is integrated into the curriculum for planners.