

I Wish I'd Known About Planning: Sharing About Our Profession With K-12 Students

CIP World Town Planning Day Webinar
November 6, 2025



CIP-ICU

Canadian Institute of Planners
Institut canadien des urbanistes



The Youth
Engagement
People

reCREATE
place

Land Acknowledgement



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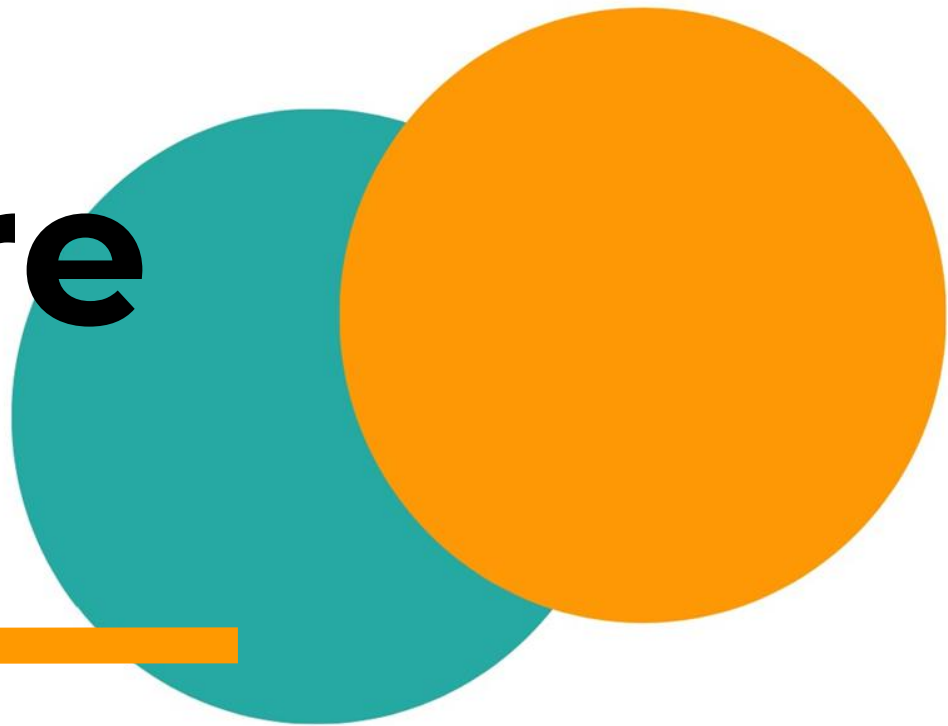
Partner
Recreate Place



Annie Vandenberg

Partner
Recreate Place

**Who are
we?**



What is Urban Minds?

A non-profit organization with a mission to create meaningful ways for youth to shape equitable and sustainable cities.

We help municipalities and organizations create youth-friendly spaces, programs, and services.



What We Do



**Youth
Engagement
Consulting**



**Youth &
Professional
Workshops**



**TUP Youth
City Builders
Program**





What is Recreate Place?

We work closely with children and young people to bring about meaningful change in communities, and to build and maintain connections to place.

Child participation is a fundamental right of every child and lies at the heart of building a child-friendly city.

A photograph of three children sitting on the floor in a workshop, looking at large posters. The posters are titled 'Why Does It Matter?' and 'Tiny Forest' and feature images of trees and landscapes. The children are wearing casual clothing, and the room has a colorful, patterned rug. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter.

Our Approach to child-friendly placemaking

Playful & active

Arts infused

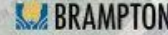
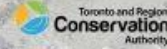
Inclusive & welcoming

Community building

**Regenerative & climate
resilient**

Eastbourne Park Eco Space Concept Plan

For conceptual purposes only. Implementation will be based upon funding availability, feasibility studies and development of detailed planting plans and designs. The exact location of proposed features will be confirmed as part of implementation planning.



Pollinator Habitat

Large areas for the creation of habitat, including host species, food sources, and other habitats (i.e. logs, rocks for water sources, etc.) Pollinator areas to be implemented and maintained in collaboration with the local community.

Mimico Creek Channel Restoration

Mimico Creek channel restoration area, stipulated by TRCA and including removal of the concrete lining and re-naturalization of the creek and its banks.

Lawn

Sodded areas for passive human recreation.

Naturalized Area

Marginal spaces that can be added to naturalization projects (i.e. No Mow Program)

Existing Trees

Proposed Trees

Creek Lookout

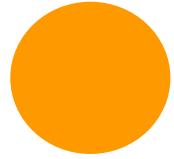
Log Benches

Standard Park Bench

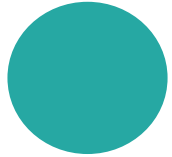




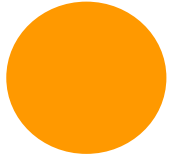
**When speaking
with young
people...**



Child friendly language (ie. avoid jargon)



Be inclusive



Share stories



Centre child and youth voice

Presentation Components

Outline of Classroom Presentation Components

- 1. How to introduce planning to students**
- 2. Share your story**
- 3. Planning is a great career**
- 4. How to get started**
- 5. Interactive activities**
- 6. Get involved now**
- 7. Tips for success**

1.

**How to introduce
planning to
students**

1. What is planning?

Define planning

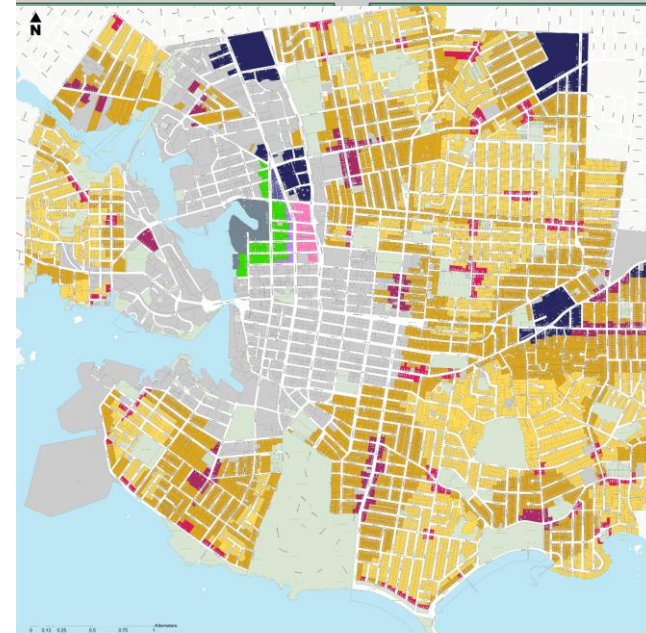
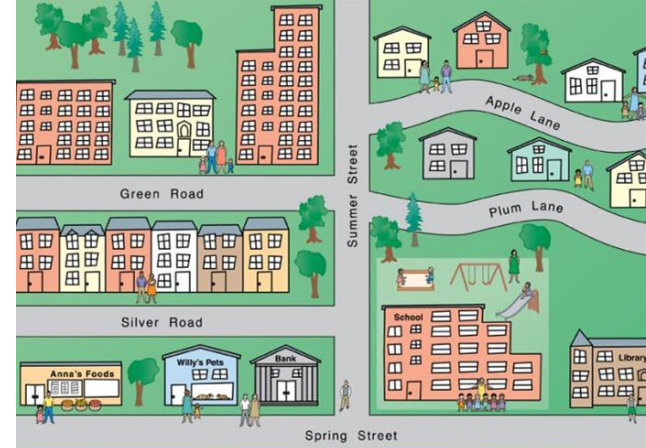
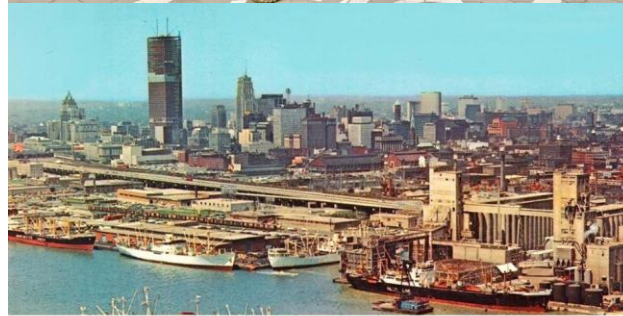
**What do
planners do?**

**How does planning
affect you?**

**Career paths in
planning**



dreamstime.com ID 56342131 © Warrengoldswain



2.

**Share your
story**

2. Share your story: prompts for sharing

Grades K- 8

Story format:

“When I was young, I loved walking to the corner store to get popsicles with my grandmother ... “

Growing up, I was really aware that it just wasn't safe to walk or bike to school”

Grades 9-12

You can be more detailed about your career path, challenges, and what keeps you motivated:

“I realized I wanted to be a planner when my town put in a new park and didn't put in anything for teenagers...”

**Keep it visual, conversational and fun.
Include projects and pictures. Encourage questions.**

3.

**Planning is a
great career!**

3. Planning is a great career!

Grades K-5

*Ask: "Do you like to build things?
Help people? Imagine new
ideas?"*

Grades 6-8

*Ask: "Do you like working with
others? Do you want to improve
your neighborhood?"*

Grades 9-12

*Ask: "Do you want a job where
you can make your city greener,
more fair, or easier to get
around?"*

**If the answer is yes, then you should consider planning
as a career path!**

4.

**How to get
started**

4. How to get started

Grades K-5

“Why is the bus stop designed like this?” “Why is there a crosswalk here?” Question everything!

Focus on inspiration!

Grades 6-8

“What are your interests?”, “What do you excel at?” “What do you do enjoy doing outside of school?”

Generate thoughts on career aspirations

Grades 9-12

Talk about planning degrees, accredited programs, and possible paths (direct entry, urban studies, etc.).

Mention RPP in high-level terms:
“It’s like a professional license for planners”

5.

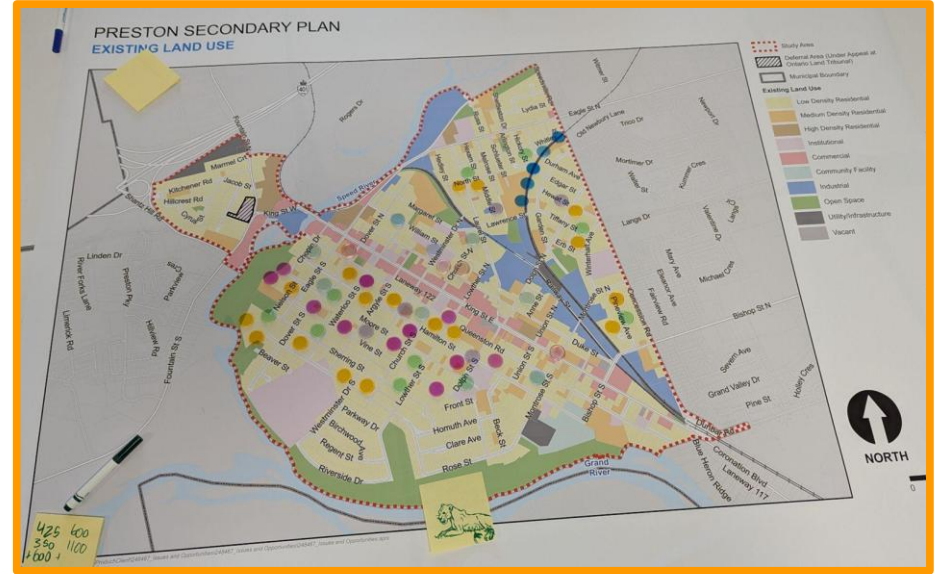
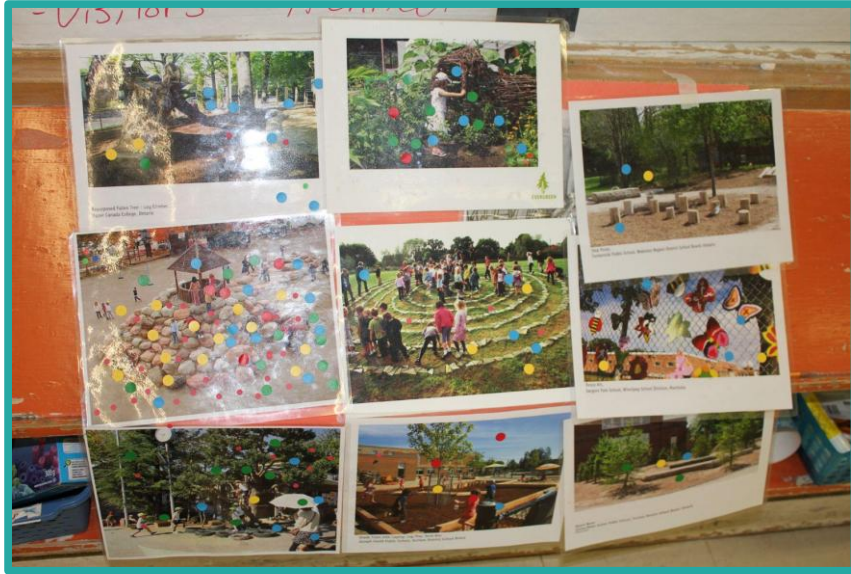
Interactive activities



Community mapping



Dotmocracy

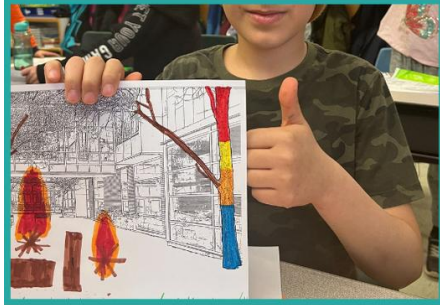


Exploring your neighbourhood





Imagining ideas & collaborating



Think-Pair-Share



6.

**Get involved
now**

6. Get involved now

Grades K-8

Encourage students to look out for changes in their neighbourhoods. *“What is this building going to be used for?” “Who will use it?”*

Potential for an activity
Example: ask students to draw/think about their ideal neighbourhood

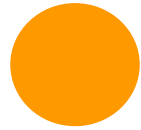
Grades 6-8: 1UP Youth City Builders program

Grades 9-12

Co-ops, internships, placements, volunteering (high school diploma requirement)

1UP Youth City Builders program

Tips for success



Communicate with teachers ahead of time



**Research projects in the nearby community
as examples of relevant projects**



Supplement words with visuals



Prepare discussion/activity prompts



Provide opportunities for questions throughout

Encourage students to look for opportunities in their communities and school to get involved.

Schools encourage building community connections and welcome these opportunities. So jump in!





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