



# “CRIPPING” THE CODES: MAKING A MORE UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE CANADA THROUGH UPDATING PLANNING CODES OF CONDUCT

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## SUMMARY

National planning institutes, such as the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), are responsible for guiding the profession in equitable practice through codes of professional conduct. Planning professionals in Canada have a duty to work in the public interest, providing equal opportunity and respect to all people within our communities. As disabled populations continue to grow in our country and across the world, treating disability as a minority issue can no longer continue. In this Capstone Report, I discuss how planning professionals must be held to higher standards of accountability, and how adding a line item to the CIP *Code of Professional Conduct* that actively includes disability will guide the profession to be more inclusive.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. *How can accessibility requirements be integrated into professional planning codes of conduct, and more specifically, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) Code of Professional Conduct?*
2. *How can planning professionals help create more equitable codes of conduct, and what barriers are presented to updating these codes?*
3. *How are planning professionals guided and influenced by their planning codes of conduct?*

*Responsible application of existing codes should mean that inclusion and disability are properly accounted for, however more clarity with regards to inclusion and disability would be appropriate; planners should be held to the highest standards in regards to inclusion and accessibility due to our responsibility to the public good.  
- MB Planner in Private Consulting*



**22% or 6.2 million**

Canadians aged 15+ identify as having at least one disability.<sup>1</sup>

## RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

The research sought ways of creating a necessary “push” for Canadian planners, by revising the national planning code of professional conduct to include accessibility actively. Informed by disability studies and discourse analysis literature, the research makes an important contribution to our understanding of the social construction of disability within guiding documents for planners. It is hoped that this research will inspire future studies on inclusionary practice in the planning profession for marginalized groups. This Capstone offers several recommendations for the Canadian Institute of Planners (and other provincial organizations) to update their codes of professional conduct to be more equitable, inclusionary, and include disability actively.

1. Morris, S., Fawcett, G., Brisebois, L., & Hughes, J. (2018). *A demographic, employment and income profile of Canadians with disabilities aged 15 years and over, 2017* (Canadian Survey on Disability Reports). Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2018002-eng.htm>



## RESEARCH METHODS

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability has been historically under-prioritized in the planning profession, evidenced by the low quantities of literature on the subject and the treatment of disability as a minority issue. As Canadian planners continue to discuss equity, diversity, and inclusion, we must discover how disability can fit into each of these conversations. Planners have a responsibility to support the communities they work for, including and engaging all stakeholders, and must increase disability inclusion, especially through long-term engagement initiatives. Until planning legislation is updated to be more equitable, it is no longer an option for planners to commit to minimum standards. We must push to increase inclusive practices that will create a more equitable profession.

6.6%

Percentage of CIP members who identify as disabled.<sup>2</sup>



### Provincial and Territorial Planning Institutes (PTIAs) in Canada:

- Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI)
- Atlantic Planners Institute (API)
- Licensed Professional Planners Association of Nova Scotia (LPPANS)
- Manitoba Professional Planners Institute (MPPI)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Professional Planners (NLAPP)
- New Brunswick Association of Planners (NBAP)
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)
- Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC)
- Prince Edward Island Institute of Professional Planners (PEIIPP)
- Saskatchewan Professional Planners Institute (SPPI)
- Ordre des Urbanistes du Québec (OUQ)

### SURVEY DISTRIBUTED TO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS IN CANADA

A survey was distributed to planning professionals across Canada to understand planner perspectives on the existing codes of professional conduct, and their experience working with disabled communities or on projects relating to disability and accessibility.

Surveying was used as a primary research method as it explores relationships between variables and allows participants to complete in their own time and at their own pace.<sup>3</sup>



73 Survey Responses were Completed

(0.9% of the Canadian Planner Population)<sup>4</sup>

*The code of conduct provides direction for dealing with a variety of situations where client, public, and professional interests may be at odds.*

**- MB Planner in Private Consulting**

### CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF PLANNING CODES OF CONDUCT

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used to understand how existing national codes of conduct are phrased and influence planning practices in response to the research questions. In addition to the Literature Review and survey analysis, this research inspired how additions can be made to the CIP *Code of Professional Conduct* to increase accessibility methods in practice.

### CODES OF CONDUCT ANALYZED:

**CIP**

**Canadian Institute of Planners**  
*Code of Professional Conduct and Statement of Values (2016)*

**AICP**

**American Institute of Certified Planners**  
*Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2021)*

**PIA**

**Planning Institute Australia**  
*Code of Professional Conduct (2020)*

**RTPI**

**Royal Town Planning Institute**  
*Code of Professional Conduct (2016)*

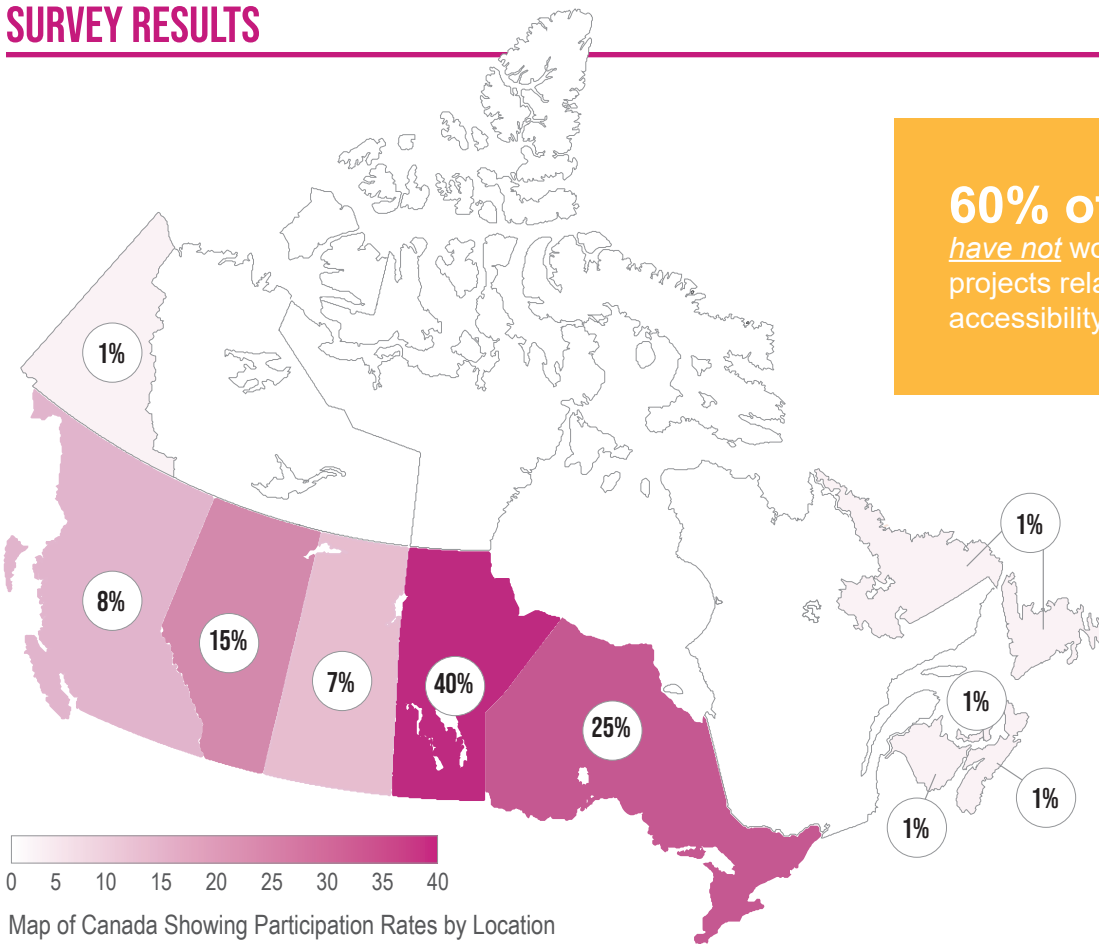
2. HRx Technology Inc & Canadian Institute of Planners. (2021). *Equity, diversity and inclusion insight survey*. [https://www.cip-icu.ca/Files/EDI-Insight-Survey/20211019\\_Equity-Diversity-Inclusion-Insight-Survey.aspx](https://www.cip-icu.ca/Files/EDI-Insight-Survey/20211019_Equity-Diversity-Inclusion-Insight-Survey.aspx)

3. Gray, D. (2014). *Doing research in the real world* (3rd Edition). SAGE.

4. Canadian Institute of Planners. (2021). *2020 annual report*. <https://2020-cip-icu.ca/>



## SURVEY RESULTS



### 60% of Respondents

*have not* worked on planning projects related to disability, universal accessibility, or with disabled people.

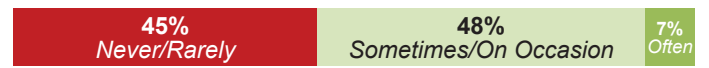
*The Code of Conduct has little teeth right now, but it would be great to see [language on disability] included.*  
- MB Planner in Private Consulting

### SURVEY DISTRIBUTED TO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS IN CANADA

The responses to the survey indicate that planners do not frequently reference the CIP *Code of Professional Conduct* throughout their planning careers. Respondents shared that the required reading of the Code for RPP examinations and the mentorship process is the main reasoning for review, and outside of these examples, the Code is not frequently referenced. This infers two points: 1) the *Code of Professional Conduct* is an important document for guiding new planning professionals in their upcoming practice and, 2) without stricter need for review, planning professionals who did not go through the RPP process have little need to reference the document.

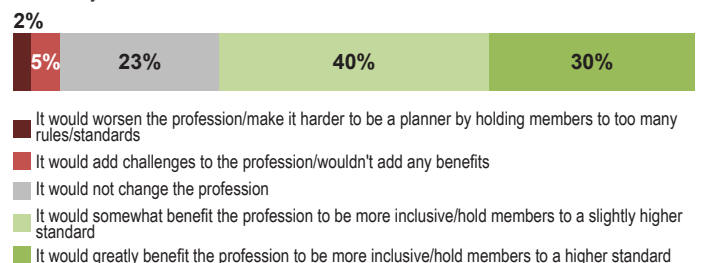
Planning professionals seek more guidance on including disability, accessibility, and universal design, whether or not they have worked on these projects before. Strengthening legislation and guiding frameworks can encourage, support, and enforce planners to increase inclusivity in their daily practice. Adding a line item specifically mentioning disability inclusion can both inspire future generations of planners and hold planning professionals accountable for decreasing marginalization in the profession.

#### How Frequently Respondents Reference the CIP Code



*Now that I am an experienced planner, I draw on the tenets which I have incorporated into my overall ethical approach to my day to day planning work.*  
- ON Planner in Public (Municipal) Practice

#### Perceptions of How the Profession Would Change by adding a Disability-Inclusive Line Item in the CIP Code





# CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL PLANNING CODES OF CONDUCT

## MULLET'S (2018) GENERAL CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA) FRAMEWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH<sup>4</sup>

<b>Stage 1: Select the Discourse</b>
Identify a discourse related to injustice or inequality.
<b>Stage 2: Locate and Prepare Data Sources (Texts)</b>
Select data sources and prepare the data for analysis.
<b>Stage 3: Explore the Background of the Texts</b>
Examine the social and historical context of the producers and texts.
<b>Stage 4: Identify Overarching Themes</b>
Identify major themes and sub-themes using qualitative coding methods.
<b>Stage 5: Analyze the External Relations in the Texts</b>
Find fragments implying ideological positions and compare with other similar texts. Examine social relations that control the production of the text.
<b>Stage 6: Analyze the Internal Relations in the Texts</b>
Examine internal relations, patterns, words, and linguistic devices representing power relations, social context, or positionality. Discuss how the text is structured and organized.
<b>Stage 7: Interpret the Data</b>
Interpret meanings of the major themes, external relations, and internal relations identified noting gaps, questions, and insights.

## CDA OF NATIONAL PLANNING CODES OF CONDUCT

Codes of professional conduct are primarily guidelines for how planners must uphold themselves in practice. A clear explanation of how planners must follow the code can better guide planners in their work. The CIP *Code of Professional Conduct* does not include any explanatory text clarifying the use of the document, where others have introductory paragraphs (AICP) or sections (PIA, RTPPI) describing the purpose, structure, and use of the document.

**Of the four codes analyzed, the CIP Code is the only text to not include any specific mention of disability.**

Each document features language that is weak in enforcement or determination such as, “should seek to,” “may,” “reasonable steps,” “as appropriate,” and “where applicable,” which can allow planning professionals to ignore or gloss over policies.

The CIP *Statement of Values* is not enforceable. The presence of unenforceable sections emphasizes the existing power relationship between planners and the public. Planners are asked to consider the implications of proposed initiatives for marginalized groups; but they themselves are not required to adhere to specific standards. This further pushes the problematic “where reasonable” policies that have been determined as harmful. Unenforceable policies will not create more equitable systems, continuing the cycle of exclusion.

In Canada, the PTIAs are responsible for the regulation of the profession. There is no national by-law or disciplinary resource associated with the CIP *Code of Professional Conduct*. Not having a nationally associated process included with the Code diminishes its power, enforceability, and applicability.

### Most Frequently Used Words in National Planning Codes of Conduct

	CIP		AICP		PIA		RTPPI	
1	member	51	ethics	161	code	16	professional	49
2	professional	29	shall	100	professional	15	members	45
3	planning	19	officer	90	members	15	member	40
4	public	18	committee	64	planning	13	must	39
5	client	17	planning	59	member	12	chartered	37

4. Mullet, D. R. (2018). *A general critical discourse analysis framework for educational research*. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 29(2), 116–142. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1932202X18758260>



## CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

***How can accessibility requirements be integrated into professional planning codes of conduct, and more specifically, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) Code of Professional Conduct?***

Add a line item to the CIP Code of Professional Conduct under Section 1:

**1** ***Members shall: practice equity in planning through active inclusion and consideration of individuals in all communities during planning processes, and must not discriminate on the grounds of race, nationality, creed, income, social status, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, or disability.***

**2** Include this line item in all PTIA codes of conduct.

**3** CIP should assist PTIAs to create codes and enforceable legislation.

Planners must actively apply and encourage inclusivity in their work, to greater inspire the profession to update policy.

**1**

Future research should be completed to understand how equity can continue to be increased in the CIP Code of Professional Conduct.

**2**

***How can planning professionals help create more equitable codes of conduct, and what barriers are presented to updating these codes?***

***How are planning professionals guided and influenced by their planning codes of conduct?***

Planners use the CIP Code of Professional Conduct most when they are preparing for or supporting the RPP process. The Code, therefore, has the power to inspire future generations of planners.

**1**

Increased clarity on how codes are enforced will encourage frequent review, to ensure self and peer compliance.

**2**