



Ten things you need to know right now about the national standards initiative, known as Planning for the Future (PFF)

1. You will be asked to vote yes or no on the proposed national initiative.

It is anticipated that within the next 6-8 months you will be asked to vote on this major national initiative by the Canadian Institute of Planners. If there is support for the initiative, OPPI will hold its own vote to amend the necessary by-laws to allow for implementation. So you need to become informed about what all this means for you and for the future of the planning profession across Canada – and also about what it does **not** involve.

2. The focus of the initiative is on standards – ethical standards, competency (i.e., educational) standards, membership standards – that will apply to all planners and planning schools in Canada.

For the most part, these are the standards that we have always upheld in our codes, in our planning schools, in our disciplinary bodies, in our membership processes. The difference is that with a “yes” vote at the national and provincial levels, a consistent set of agreed-upon standards for entry into the profession and a national ethics code will be formally adopted by all provincial affiliates, making it easier for planners to move from one province to another.

3. A yes vote means the membership process will change for new planners entering the profession after the new standards are implemented.

The proposals include a national, independent Professional Standards Board that will review applications for membership and mark written examinations in accordance with standards set by CIP and its affiliates. As the profession matures, the membership process must too. The existing process has evolved over time, and the profession has now outgrown it. We need a process that can be administered to ever-greater numbers of people who want to enter planning in a way that is both impartial and fair to all and that maintains respect for the planning profession.

4. A yes vote will ensure greater consistency in planning school curricula.

In a mature profession, it is important to train students in a consistent way. Students entering a planning program need to be assured that their credentials will be respected across the country and that their studies prepare them adequately for the work they will do. A panel of senior planners and educators from across Canada, with input from more than 1,100 CIP members across the country, identified the competencies (skills and knowledge) that all planners should acquire in planning school, and Canada’s planning schools will be required to demonstrate how they are helping students build those skills and acquire that knowledge.

5. The oral membership examination (Exam A) will be replaced by a written examination.

The oral examination will be replaced by a written examination to ensure greater consistency, objectivity, and transparency in the membership process across the country. The introduction of the written examination will occur even if national members vote no in the fall, since the oral exam was becoming harder to organize and regulate as the number of candidates increased; however, a yes vote will support the creation of the Professional Standards Board, which will then administer the exam.

6. A yes vote will formalize requirements for Continuous Professional Learning.

This change is a concern for many planners, who fear that meeting CPL requirements will be both expensive and onerous. As part of its contribution to this national initiative, OPPI is strongly committed to supporting its members by providing a range of no-cost or low-cost CPL options, and by making the CPL reporting process as simple as filling out the annual application form.

7. A yes vote will standardize the designation Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Planners (FCIP).

This honorary designation will be retained, and all CIP members who meet certain criteria will be eligible for this honour. The procedure for naming Fellows will be standardized at the national level. The FCIP designation will no longer be a class of membership. Those granted the Fellows designation will be considered as Full Members of the Institute with an honorary title permitting them to use FCIP instead of MCIP.

8. A yes vote is *not* a vote for higher membership fees.

Many planners are concerned that this initiative means higher fees for existing members. This is not the case. Revenue from members' fees will be deployed differently, but a change to the total fees is not part of this proposal. Fees for those entering the profession will be restructured, however, and may be higher, lower, or the same relative to those paid by current provisional members, depending on the individual's path through the membership process.

9. The proposals were developed in consultation with planners across the country.

This initiative has been in the works for four years. OPPI members have participated with members of other affiliates in the three task forces that developed the standards, and feedback has been sought and received on the proposals through membership-wide surveys and focus groups. OPPI has received and considered hundreds of comments from members in framing its position on this initiative.

10. Consultation is continuing.

If you would like to talk about these proposals, either in your workplace or in a district meeting, OPPI would be happy to send a task force member to meet with your group, describe the proposals, answer your questions, and lead a discussion on what the initiative means for the profession and

for you personally. There is also a wealth of information available at <http://www.planningincanada.ca> and on the OPPI website <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca> (follow the link to the fact sheet from the home page). You can let us know your thoughts and concerns by sending an e-mail to planningforthefuture@ontarioplanners.on.ca, by writing a letter to us at OPPI, 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5 or calling Mary Ann Rangam, Executive Director, OPPI at 416-483-1873 or 1-800-668-1448, x 223.

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