



The time to stand up for the Planning Profession is now!

There are times in one's profession when you have to stand up for what you think is fundamentally important about the future of your profession. That time is now! One of our top priorities is to ensure that professional planners have the strong foundation they need to practice in a broad spectrum of areas. Over the few weeks leading to the writing of this article, I have been contacted by members asking the following:

- Why are individuals who are not RPPs able to purport to be planners and take on planning work?
- Why is the planning profession not licensed like engineers, architects, foresters?
- Why do we need to continue to advocate for paralegal licensing exemptions for OPPI members in submissions to the Law Society of Upper Canada? Why is it that the legal profession is determining what planners can do?
- How is it that the engineering profession can seek a broader definition including design and planning under their licensing of what an engineer can do?
- What are the steps needed to move forward with stronger legislation for the planning profession that recognizes our unique skills, competencies and ethical standards and the broad scope of our practice?
- When will we see national standards for the professional practice of planning implemented?

These are important and timely questions!

OPPI is participating in a Canada-wide re-examination of what it means to be a planner- the Planning for the Future Project (PFF). This important work focuses on how planners are trained and how they become members; how planning education is structured; and what are appropriate standards of practice and ethics for planners in a diverse and globalized society. New national standards demonstrate the planning profession's commitment to excellence, provide planning students with a foundation for success, and will benefit professionals at all stages of their careers.

A vote on these by-law changes is expected go out to members over the next six to nine months. OPPI Council will ask you to vote YES (twice) to by-law changes at the Ontario level and the National level to implement the PFF recommendations. It is through these changes that the profession will be able to set nationally consistent and high ethical standards to maintain respect for our profession and to move towards the actions that will address the questions that members are raising. Look for an Alert or Postcard telling you more about these important votes.

Please read the attached brochure. It contains key information on the Planning for the Future project.

There is also a wealth of information available at <http://www.planningincanada.ca> and on the OPPI website <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca>.

We are now in the development implementation phase of this important work - as the saying goes "in the home stretch". The National Affiliate Membership Committee (NAMC) endorsed the PFF Draft implementation reports relating to accreditation of planning schools, certification, and fellows in February 2010. These reports, which include the establishment of a national Professional Standards Board (PSB), were endorsed in principle by CIP Council in March 2010 and by OPPI Council on April 30, 2010. With the release of these reports additional comments are being received.

OPPI values a strong partnership with its six Ontario planning schools. OPPI feels that planners are best educated in planning schools. Planning schools provide the theory and practical experience that trains planners to do the critical, ethically based thinking and formulation of independent professional advice. We are learning more through comments on these draft implementation reports from the Planning Schools and Fellows on areas for further consideration and expect that the NAMC will provide recommendations on revisions/changes this summer that would strengthen this important work and move PFF towards implementation.

The commitment to raising the bar for planners is extraordinary! Students will certainly benefit from this with clarity of standards and process; practicing planners will now be held to a consistent set of national standards and commitment to ongoing learning. As a profession, we are, more credible with the public, adjudicators, decision makers, professional colleagues in other disciplines, and within our own profession when we choose to set higher standards and hold ourselves to those higher standards. To those that have been working on OPPIs behalf for the past four years, this is what PFF is meant to achieve.

On other fronts, this year promises to be filled with many opportunities and challenges and we are fortunate to have at OPPI a hard-working and inspiring volunteer team. OPPI is a relatively small organization with a large mandate. Together we are advancing our strategic actions as laid out in OPPI Strategic Plan: Beyond 2010.

The positive feedback that we have received on the Planning by Design: a Healthy Communities Handbook has lead to new opportunities for our members to present and discuss the ideas contained in the handbook with many other professional organizations, municipal staff, elected representatives and community groups. This is important work and bodes well for the profession. OPPI Policy Committee is contributing to the Provincial Policy Statement 2005 Five Year Review which will build on our healthy communities work. Planning is near complete on OPPI's 2010 Symposium to be held in Guelph. Healthy Communities and Planning for Food - A Harvest of Ideas will take place October 28th and 29th.

OPPI Staff are at the forefront of all that we are able to accomplish. At OPPI we would not be able to achieve what we do without the leadership and commitment of an experienced and dedicated staff. I hope that you will join me in congratulating Loretta Ryan, Manager of Policy and Communications who marks a 10 year milestone with OPPI this year. Loretta manages an extensive government and public affairs portfolio that has been created under her insight and leadership. We owe Loretta much gratitude for her significant achievements on healthy communities and partnership development.

It is my pleasure to work with you as OPPI President. Together we can and we must move the planning profession forward. OPPI Council is committed to listening and to learning and appreciates the feedback that we received through the membership survey completed this past spring. The survey feedback plus input from the District Focus Groups is being used to determine how to best communicate the key issues facing OPPI over the next three years. Our aim is to ensure that communication initiatives have value for you - the member and will resonate with key stakeholders and the broader Ontario Public.

Please contact me anytime at 1-866-611-3715 or at cumming1@total.net

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[Planning For Future Member Brochure](#)