



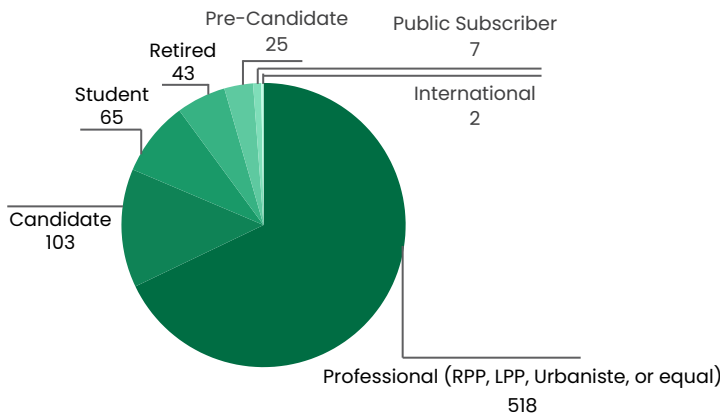
# Planning Policy in Focus: 2025 CIP Member Insights



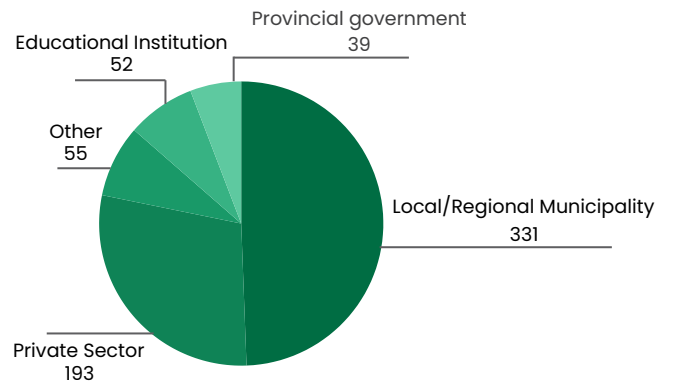
# National Survey Highlights Urgent Issues and Solutions for Building Stronger Communities

In anticipation of a federal election, the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) conducted a national survey of our members from March 21 to April 4, 2025, to better understand the policy priorities of the planning profession. The results revealed members' most pressing issues and potential solutions for building stronger communities. The survey gathered insights from **766** respondents, highlighting the biggest obstacles to their work while also identifying valuable opportunities that can guide future initiatives in the planning field.

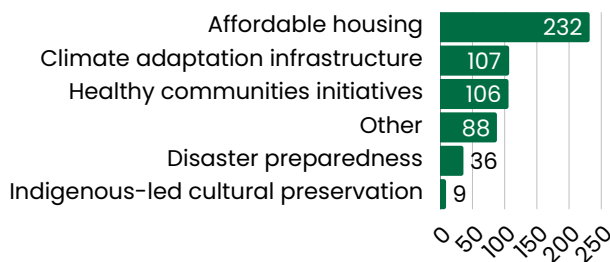
**Who You Are (Membership Type)**



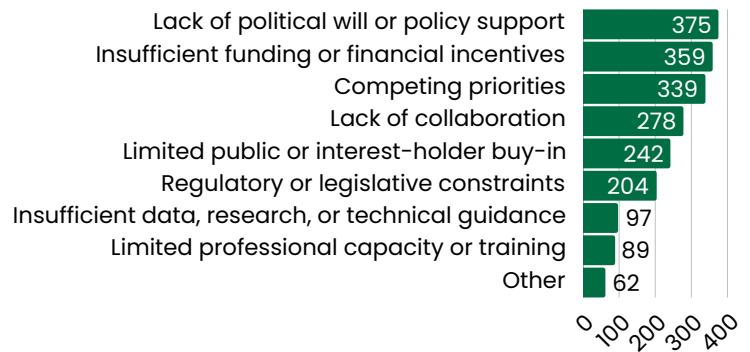
**Where You Work**



**Your Priorities for Federal Investments**



**Biggest Obstacles Impacting Your Work**



**Most Important Issues to You**

1. Housing
2. Healthy Communities
3. Climate Change

**What You Want CIP to Do on Behalf of the Profession**

- Ensure the inclusion of planning professionals in key decision-making processes
- Promote the value of planning in solving critical national issues
- Engage in direct dialogue with policy-makers to influence legislation
- Advocate for stronger planning policies at all levels of government
- Increase public awareness about the role of professional planners



CIP  
**CLIMATE CHANGE**

*CIP envisions a future in which Canadian communities are planned, designed, developed, and managed to contribute to climate stability and to be more resilient in the face of unavoidable changes in the climate. In the process, they will become more liveable, prosperous, and equitable.*

**Most Important Policy Objectives to You**

1. Promoting compact, walkable, and mixed-use communities to reduce emissions
2. Strengthening protection for natural areas and biodiversity
3. Integrating climate mitigation and adaptation into planning policies and expanding federal investment

**Biggest Obstacles Impacting Your Work**



**Political Leadership**

Many planners say climate action is being sidelined by short-term politics. Without clear direction and sustained and consistent commitment from all levels of government, it's hard to make progress on long-term climate goals.



**Consistent Funding**

Even when strong climate policies exist in a municipality or region, local governments and planners often don't have the right or enough financial resources to carry them out. This means critical projects like building resilient infrastructure, improving transit, or supporting green development get delayed or dropped altogether.



**Public Support**

Misinformation, competing priorities, and a lack of awareness make it harder to get community support for climate initiatives. Without widespread buy-in, planners struggle to build momentum for meaningful change.

**Planning Solutions from You**

**Investment in Transit and Active Transportation** – Planners overwhelmingly called for better funding for public transit, commuter rail, and active transportation. They say reducing car dependency is one of the most effective ways to cut emissions and create healthier, more connected communities.

**Big Polluters Aren't Paying Their Fair Share** – 39.6% of planners would advocate for reinstated carbon pricing and policies that hold industrial emitters accountable to accomplish climate progress. Without these tools, they argue, the physical and financial realities of climate action fall unfairly on individuals and communities, and often on those who are most vulnerable. However, 38.7% expressed confidence in still being able to achieve climate progress without a carbon tax, citing other methods in their response to the survey.

**Communities Need Support for Adaptation** – From flood protection to wildfire resilience, planners say federal leadership and funding are essential to help communities prepare for increasingly severe climate impacts. Local governments are left struggling to protect people and infrastructure from the effects of severe weather without federal support.



*CIP envisions a future in which the planning and development of housing in Canada allows for a diverse supply of affordable, accessible, and adequate housing across the spectrum, and accommodates the needs of our multi-generational society.*

### Most Important Policy Objectives to You

1. Addressing houselessness and temporary housing solutions
2. Encouraging missing middle and gentle density housing solutions
3. Expanding the affordable housing supply through planning policies and zoning reforms

### Biggest Obstacles Impacting Your Work



#### High Building Costs

High construction costs, land prices, and interest rates make it nearly impossible to build truly affordable homes. Even when zoning and approval reforms are in place, the financials don't add up, especially for projects beyond high-end or luxury builds. Many respondents said that what is being built is not actually the housing stock that is needed.



#### Investment in Affordable Housing

Planners overwhelmingly said the private market can't solve the housing crisis alone. Decades of underinvestment from federal and provincial governments, especially in social, supportive, and non-market housing, have left major gaps. Without consistent public funding, communities are struggling to meet even the most basic housing needs.



#### Slow, Complex Approval Processes

Planners highlighted how long it can take to get housing approved. Local processes are often inconsistent and overloaded, and provincial changes can create more confusion. These delays add to costs and discourage builders, especially non-profits and smaller developers.

### Planning Solutions from You

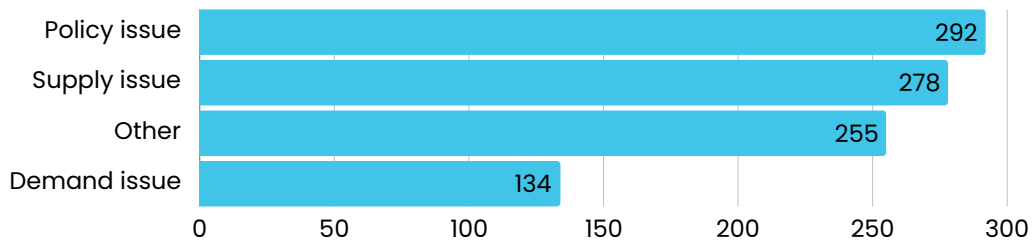
**Build Non-Market and Social Housing at Scale** – We need governments to directly build housing again, similar to the post-WWII era. The private market can't deliver affordability on its own, especially for low-income and vulnerable populations. Many planners called for a return to co-ops, social housing, land trusts, and public housing with stable, long-term funding.

**Legalize and Enable More Housing Forms** – Zoning is holding us back. Many planners called for reforms that allow a broader range of housing like missing middle and multi-unit buildings in areas currently limited to single-family homes. Eliminating parking minimums and enabling "as-of-right" zoning were key suggestions to reduce red tape, unlock supply, and accelerate approvals.



**Fund Infrastructure and Support Municipal Capacity** – Municipalities cannot do it alone. Planners stressed the urgent need for dedicated funding to expand infrastructure, transit, and local planning teams. Federal and provincial investment, especially to support non-profit builders, was seen as an essential measure to match housing targets with real capacity on the ground.

**The Root Cause of Canada’s Housing Crisis from Your Perspective**



**What We Heard from You for “Other”**

**It’s Not Just Supply, It’s the *Right Kind of Supply*** – Many planners reject the idea that more housing alone will fix the crisis. They emphasize that what’s missing is affordable, non-market, and family-sized housing, not more high-end condos or single-family homes. Planners expressed frustration with the overproduction of luxury units and a shortage of homes for people with average or lower incomes.

**Housing as a Commodity Is the Root Problem** – Planners repeatedly cite speculation, financialization, and the commodification of housing as structural barriers. Housing is treated as a wealth-building tool instead of a basic right. This has driven up prices, limited affordable options, and distorted development priorities.

**It’s a Complex, Interconnected Crisis (Not One Issue)** – There’s wide agreement that the housing crisis is multi-causal: supply, demand, policy, affordability, land costs, labour, zoning, and infrastructure funding all intersect. Many planners call for holistic, systemic responses and criticize simplistic narratives that blame one factor alone (e.g. “just build more”).



CIP envisions a future where all communities and cities are planned, designed, developed, and managed to foster vibrant environments and active lifestyles that promote and protect the health of all Canadians, increasing the social and health equity of our communities.

**Most Important Policy Objectives to You**

1. Promoting compact, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development to reduce car dependence and increase active transportation
2. Ensuring access to affordable and accessible recreational facilities, health services, food stores, and amenities for all citizens
3. Supporting actions to improve air, land, water quality, and green spaces to reduce exposure to pollutants and increase health and well-being

**Biggest Obstacles Impacting Your Work**



**NIMBYism and Resistance to Change**

Public opposition to change—particularly increased density, transit investment, and walkable design—were recurring themes. Many planners linked this to misinformation, car culture, concerns around density and/or the fear of the unknown.



**Funding Doesn't Match Vision**

Many planners say there's strong policy ambition but not the resources to deliver. Local governments often lack stable, long-term funding to build infrastructure, expand transit, and support healthy community goals. Tight budgets, staffing shortages, and overreliance on property taxes leave communities struggling to turn plans into real change.



**Car-centric Infrastructure and Culture**

Many planners pointed out that communities have been built around cars, making it harder to transition to active transportation or transit-oriented development.

**Planning Solutions from You**

**Public Education, Awareness, and Engagement** – To overcome resistance to change and misinformation, there is a strong need to build public understanding and support for healthy community initiatives. Empowering residents through inclusive, locally driven processes can foster trust and long-term buy-in.

**Land-use Reform and Legislative Change** – There is widespread agreement that zoning reform and policy updates are essential to enable healthy communities, including streamlining approval processes and reducing red tape.

**Increased and Consistent Funding** – A major barrier to implementing healthy community initiatives is insufficient and unpredictable funding, especially for public transit, infrastructure, and social services that support healthy communities. Many planners emphasized the need for all levels of government to provide sustained financial resources.



## Your Ideas for Bold Change at the National Level

We asked you for one bold yet necessary policy change that Canada should make to prepare for the future of its cities and communities, this is what we heard:

### Climate Resilience & Environmental Sustainability

- Make climate resilience central to all planning and infrastructure projects.
- Protect farmland, natural heritage, and biodiversity through strong urban boundaries and sprawl prevention.
- Invest in renewable energy, green construction, and climate-adaptation strategies.
- Integrate watershed and ecosystem services into land-use planning.

### Housing & Affordability

- Increase density, eliminate single-family zoning restrictions, and encourage mixed-use development.
- Invest in public/social housing, land trusts, and co-ops with federal support.
- Prevent corporate and foreign ownership of housing and cap rental profits.
- Introduce co-governance approaches with Indigenous communities for development approvals.
- Promote high-density, transit-oriented growth in mid-sized cities to curb sprawl.
- Remove barriers to construction and engage in wartime-scale construction efforts.
- Reform tax programs and develop rental incentives.

### Transportation & Infrastructure

- Expand public transit, high-speed rail, and active transportation networks. Prioritize walkable, bike-friendly, and transit-oriented communities.
- Reduce car dependency by limiting automobile infrastructure and highways, eliminating parking minimums and implementing parking maximums in transit-friendly areas, and regulating vehicle size.
- Implement fuel efficiency regulations to curb emissions.
- Focus on long-term infrastructure and development planning beyond 2050.

### Governance & Policy Reform

- Shift development regulations from rigid policies to goal-driven solutions.
- Establish clear jurisdictional responsibilities for all levels of government.
- Reduce political interference in planning decisions and decentralize responsibilities.
- Establish a national land-use strategy with climate-resilient building codes.
- Strengthen municipal fiscal autonomy by restructuring national revenue distribution.
- Improve transparency and combat misinformation in planning and governance.



### **Economic Policy, Social Infrastructure & Tax Reform**

- Invest in Canadian industries, green technology, and innovation to reduce foreign reliance.
- Encourage entrepreneurship and inter-provincial trade.
- Develop a decarbonization sector to drive economic and environmental sustainability.
- Reform taxation policies, including land value taxes, implementing progressive taxation, congestion pricing, and funding infrastructure through federal investments rather than property taxes. Shift taxation on housing profits to curb speculation and promote affordability.
- Use resource royalties to fund public services like education and infrastructure.
- Expand universal healthcare to include mental health services.
- Eradicate homelessness through social housing with support programs.
- Recognize municipalities as key democratic institutions with stable funding.
- Slow down immigration to allow infrastructure and housing to catch up.
- Implement universal basic income to address affordability challenges.

CIP sincerely thanks all members who contributed their insights. With nearly 10,000 members working from coast-to-coast-to-coast, Canada's professional planners are uniquely positioned to develop and deliver innovative, fiscally responsible, and results-driven policies in our communities. Your expertise strengthens our advocacy efforts, helping us speak up for the planning profession. We look forward to working alongside our members to foster vibrant, inclusive, and resilient communities that Canadians are proud to call home.





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