

Member Engagement Survey

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct – Overview

October 29, 2025



BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

The purpose of the Institute's Code of Ethics & Code of Professional Conduct (the Code) is to frame and under-pin the ethics and professionalism of practicing professional members of PIBC. The Code is embedded in the Institute's Bylaws, and all professional members must follow and adhere to the Code in their professional practice as a condition of membership. The Professional Conduct Review Committee (PCRC) held a meeting on June 19th, 2024, and determined to undertake a review of the existing Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (the Code) to determine if the Code still meets the Institute's needs and the needs of the profession and identify any gaps and potential changes or additions to the Code. The PCRC established a working group to undertake the review of the Code.

The following PCRC members were appointed to the working group: Chris Osborne RPP, MCIP (Chair), Jacqueline East RPP, MCIP, Lindsay Chase RPP, FCIP and James Stiver RPP, MCIP.

The working group has held regular meetings since its establishment, and work in a number of key areas have been completed to date:

- an agreed approach to reviewing the existing Code with an aim to developing a new Code,
- conducting background research including a review of other external Codes of Ethics and Professional Conduct and emerging best practices,
- developing an approach to member consultation and engagement with Institute members and interest holders, and the development of a work plan to support the review of the Code, as it moves forward,
- The Working Group developed and issued a survey to seek the input of both members and non-members affected by, or involved in, the planning profession in areas such as the core values of the planning profession and feedback on the existing Code. Input to this survey will help inform the Working Group's review of the Code.

There was a strong level of participation with over 250 responses received (partial and complete). Respondents provided a range of valuable feedback on the existing Code, ranked proposed core values, and provided details relating to potential additional core values for consideration. Among the top-ranked values identified were integrity, accountability, and fairness. The information gathered from the Code review survey will continue to be analyzed and will be used to inform the working group's review as it progresses.

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct Review Working Group would like to acknowledge and thank all who participated in the recent engagement survey on the review of

the existing Code. We also note that the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is an important aspect of the planning profession at both a national and provincial level, and that PIBC is currently collaborating with the Professional Standards Board (PSB) as it updates and modernizes the current national ethical standards.

The following sections aim to provide an overview of the initial findings and input received from the survey.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY & RESPONSE RATE

The survey was issued to PIBC members and non-members on June 6th, 2025, and remained open and live for a period of 5 weeks (closing on July 7th, 2025). As noted, over 254 individuals provided some form of response to the survey (answered a minimum of 2 questions). 145 provided completed responses and 109 partial responses. The response rate was approximately 14% (inclusive of completed and partial responses) of certified RPP and candidate members. 184 responses provided substantive detail (provided general information, ranked core values and / or responses relating to Code content). All survey response information (both partial and complete) was captured and is forming part of the analysis of the survey findings.

The below graph shows some of the general information captured on respondent membership status and professional planning experience.

GENERAL INFORMATION



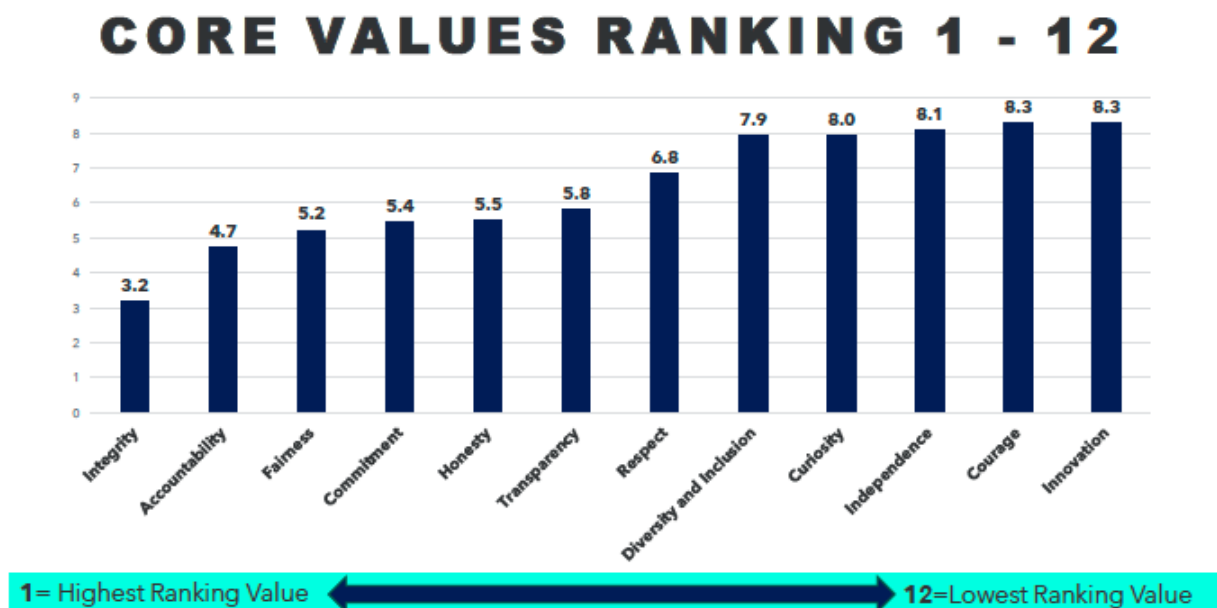
CORE VALUE RANKING

As part of the survey questionnaire, respondents were asked to rank a number of core values based on how they felt they apply to the planning profession. The following values and short descriptions were provided to respondents for ranking:

- **Accountability** – taking responsibility and ownership for actions and work.
- **Commitment** – making a commitment to upholding public interest and profession.

- **Courage** – having willingness to take measured risks in generating and implementing ideas in uncertain times and bravery to uphold the values of Planning.
- **Curiosity** – seeking improved ways to achieve objectives, being open to new ideas and pursuing opportunities to learn and develop.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – respecting the needs of those who contribute to the further diversification of the profession.
- **Fairness** – ensuring decisions are made without discrimination or bias.
- **Honesty** - operating with honesty and openness in communications with your interest holders.
- **Independence** – exercising independent judgement in decision making.
- **Innovation** – encouraging creative thinking, continuous improvement and innovative solutions within the planning profession.
- **Integrity** – operating with integrity, ensuring adherence to ethical principles.
- **Respect** – respecting colleagues in their professional capacity, ensuring stakeholders are treated with dignity, and avoiding ill-considered or uninformed criticism of the competence, conduct or advice of members.
- **Transparency** – ensuring decisions and actions are made with openness, clarity and visibility.

The following table provide an overview of the results of the core value ranking:



ADDITIONAL CORE VALUES

The following graphics provide additional core values that respondents feel apply to the planning profession.

ADDITIONAL CORE VALUES

Core Values Suggested Summarized (1)

- Learning
- Continuous development and improvement
- Solution Focused (once fiscally responsible)
- Competency
- Kindness
- Justice
- Good governance
- Professionalism
- Sustainability and adaptability
- Connection and Comprehensiveness
- Stewardship
- Reconciliation
- Sustainability
- Duty to call out other members whose performance or activities discredit the profession or the making of plans.
- Decolonization



ADDITIONAL CORE VALUES

Core Values Summarized (2)

- Collaboration
- Mentorship
- Reliability
- Trustworthy
- Advocacy
- Autonomy, creativity, sound judgement
- Self reflective
- Flexibility
- Foresight
- Empathy
- Educational support
- Equity
- Leadership
- Political awareness
- Fact-based planning
- Disability and health justice
- Reciprocity, relations, and interdependence
- Contributing to the profession



ADDITIONAL CORE VALUES

Core Values Summarized (3)

- Open-mindedness
- Interpretation /Awareness
- Trust
- Consistency
- Empathy
- Humility
- Freedom of speech
- Devotion
- Commitments to future generations, liveable environments, and addressing climate change
- Understanding the limitations of the planning practice



SURVEY FINDINGS – GENERAL OVERVIEW

The following section provides a high-level summarized overview of the initial findings based on analysis of the survey responses.

The Foundational Problem: A Lack of Authority

The most dominant theme across all feedback is that the current Code lacks "teeth". Members feel it leaves them vulnerable to political pressure and that ethical principles are unenforceable without a credible system of enforcement, discipline, and clear penalties. This is the second most frequent theme overall and is considered a critical missing element. This sentiment is so pervasive that a significant number of planners feel it is a "career-ending move" to report a senior colleague. The solution, according to respondents, is to build a transparent, multi-stage complaints process with proportional sanctions and robust whistleblower protections.

What is Missing: The Modern Mandate

Members identified several urgent omissions that must be added to the Code.

- **Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation:** This was the single most frequently cited missing element, with a strong call for a "fundamental reorientation of planning practice" to align with UNDRIP and the TRC's Calls to Action.
- **Climate and Environmental Justice:** Members feel the current Code is "silent" on this critical issue and want the new Code to explicitly state that addressing climate change is an "always applicable" duty across all planning work, not an optional one.
- **Defined Competence Standards:** The current requirement to "be competent" is seen as "too vague". Members want minimum standards for key practice areas to prevent planners from "hazard[ing] opinions" outside their expertise, such as in financial matters, which can negatively impact project viability and affordability.
- **DEI and Anti-Harassment:** Members demanded explicit, enforceable duties to protect marginalized professionals and ensure workplace safety.

The Experienced Planner's Perspective

Planners with over 10 years of experience consistently place a significantly higher emphasis on key areas than the overall respondent pool. This cohort was three times more likely to emphasize Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and Indigenous Reconciliation, and they were the strongest voice for strengthening competence standards and enforcement. This suggests a recognition among senior practitioners that the profession's social license to operate depends on modernizing its ethical commitments.

What Could Be Removed: A Call for Precision

The most significant finding is that the majority of respondents do not want to remove content. Nearly half (47%) of those asked explicitly stated that nothing should be removed, but rather that the Code should be streamlined and clarified. When removals were suggested, the focus was on specific clauses that were seen as vague, subjective, or outdated, such as:

- The term "**sustainable planning**" which was criticized as "misleading" and "meaningless".
- The clause on "**dishonourable or questionable conduct**" in a planner's private life, which was deemed "so subjective" as to be unworkable.
- The rule against "**supplanting another member,**" which is viewed as out of step with modern transparent hiring practices.

Key Tensions to Navigate

The feedback reveals several contradictions the drafting committee must address:

- **Independence vs. Reality:** The desire for stronger public-interest duties clashes with the real-world constraints of employment and confidentiality.
- **Reporting vs. Collegiality:** A desire for accountability and transparent discipline conflicts with the deep-seated fear of career-ending retaliation for reporting a peer.
- **DEI Integration:** A strong call for robust anti-bias language exists.

Strategic Recommendations

The feedback provides clear, actionable guidance for drafting the new Code. The new Code should:

- **Be Shorter and Sharper:** Streamline the Code into plain language, add a glossary, and include practical examples or case studies to aid in application.
- **Codify Foundational Principles:** Embed explicit duties for Public Interest, Climate & Environmental Justice, and Indigenous Reconciliation.
- **Build a Credible Enforcement Architecture:** Establish a transparent complaints process, whistleblower protections, and publish anonymized case notes to build trust and provide educational value.

REFERENCE:

Existing – PIBC Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct -
https://www.pibc.bc.ca/sites/default/files/internal_pages_pdfs/about-us/Code-Of-Ethics-Professional-Conduct-PIBC-Bylaws-2018-Part-14.pdf