



Code of Ethics
and Professional Conduct

2021 – A New Code of Ethics for Professional Planners

Central Texas Section

September 16, 2022 at Abel's on the Lake

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American Planning Association
Central Section

Making Great Communities Happen



Code of Ethics *and* Professional Conduct

The American Institute of Certified Planners requires its members to adhere to the ethical standards of a detailed Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

**THE PRINCIPLES TO WHICH
WE ASPIRE ARE:**

- To continuously pursue and faithfully serve the public interest
- To do so with integrity
- To work to achieve economic, social, and racial equity
- To safeguard the public trust
- To improve planning knowledge and increase public understanding of planning activities

**OUR RULES OF CONDUCT
ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING:**

- Quality and integrity of practice
- Conflicts of interest
- Improper influence/abuse of position
- Honesty and fair dealing
- Responsibility to employer
- Discrimination/harassment
- Charges of misconduct

I pledge that I will conduct myself in accordance with the principles, rules, and other requirements of the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

Name _____

, AICP

Certified Planner No. _____

More Details in Aspirational Principles for Justice and Equity

- 1. Serve the public interest.
 - 1.1 Understand your biases and privileges.
 - 1.5 Incorporate equity principles and strategies in plans and programs. Develop metrics and track implementation.
- 2. Participate in planning with integrity.
 - 2.4 Identify human and environmental consequences. Preserve social and cultural features as well as nature.

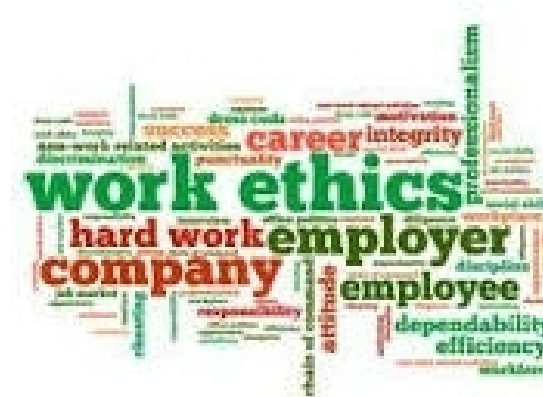
More Details Cont'd

- 3. Work to achieve equity.
 - 3.1 Address access to resources and opportunities. Recognize that planning decisions advanced historic patterns of inequity.
 - 3.2 Expand choice and opportunity. Urge change to promote racial and economic equity.
 - 3.3 Mitigate the impact of existing plans and programs that result in discrimination or injustice.
 - 3.4 Recognize the inherent rights of indigenous peoples.

Still More Details

- 4. Safeguard the Public Trust
- Expose corruption wherever discovered.

- Four parts -- aspirations, rules, Advisory Rulings, and procedures.
- Shift in thinking about aspirational component. Provide the context for rule interpretation.



New Components to Rules of Conduct

- Expanded conflict-of-interest prohibitions. Approval of a supervisor is no longer permitted.
- More specific prohibition on plagiarism.
- Can't ignore an act of harassment or discrimination.
- Must cooperate in an ethics investigation if we have knowledge.

One Major Change to Rules of Procedure

- Only an AICP member can appeal a decision of the Ethics Officer.



Equity is Foundational

- Planning involves distributing public resources and facilities. Some of those have negative externalities. Equity is a fact of planning – someone is better/worse off.
- Zoning and development regulations discriminated based on color, income. Varying degrees of intentionality.
- Some public engagement processes limited participation.

The Facts of Life for Planning

- Public agencies incorporate goals and recommendations (including plan processes, information, and strategies) that can advance equitable outcomes.
- What explains where equity is being embraced in comprehensive plans?



JAPA Survey

Are We Planning for Equity?

Equity Goals and Recommendations in Local Comprehensive Plans

Carolyn G. Loh Rose Kim. Journal of the American Planning Association 1 2020

- Equity is not a main focus of most plans. Fewer than half of plans mention equity at all. *Many plans do not include race and income in their demographic analyses.* Only 42% of plans include a goal that mentions affordable, workforce, or fair share housing, and less than a quarter mention equitable environmental protection.
- Newer plans, plans with more multipronged public participation processes, and plans in coastal communities and communities with more planners on staff have a stronger equity focus.
- Equity planning requires silo busting.

Some things to look for in equity based comprehensive planning.

Equity in Outreach and Participation

- In public participation, the expectation is for an inclusive planning process in which residents, stakeholders, and experts come together to engage in shared plan and decision making where *at least some power is transferred to nonexperts*.
- Did the plan include a variety of techniques?
- Does the plan mention how officials and/or staff incorporated community feedback?
- Does the plan mention efforts to engage historically marginalized groups?

Equity in Data Analysis and Background Conditions

- Demographic analysis which includes race and income?
- Identification of geographic areas that are underserved or that have needs to be addressed?



Equity in Hazard and Safety Planning

- Disadvantaged people are more likely to live in lower quality housing in areas more affected by weather events and less likely to hear and believe warnings, have the means to evacuate, and eventually recover.
- Disadvantaged people are also more likely to be affected by exposure to human-caused environmental hazards
- Disadvantaged people suffer disproportionately in pandemic events.

Equity in Hazard and Safety Planning, Cont'd

- Ensuring equitable protection from identified hazards?
- Are planned areas of multifamily housing adjacent to potentially hazardous or noxious uses?
- Identification of human-caused hazards?
- Include objectives related to crime or crime prevention techniques?

Cities are incorporating social equity and environmental justice into urban resilience planning.

Equity in Environmental Planning

- Does the plan mention environmental justice?
- Does the plan mention environmental protection (air quality, noise mitigation, surface and stormwater quality) in geographic areas that are underserved or that have particular needs?
- Does the plan talk about the impact of climate change?
- Does the plan make recommendations about providing residents or businesses with options for renewable energy?

Equity in Public Facilities

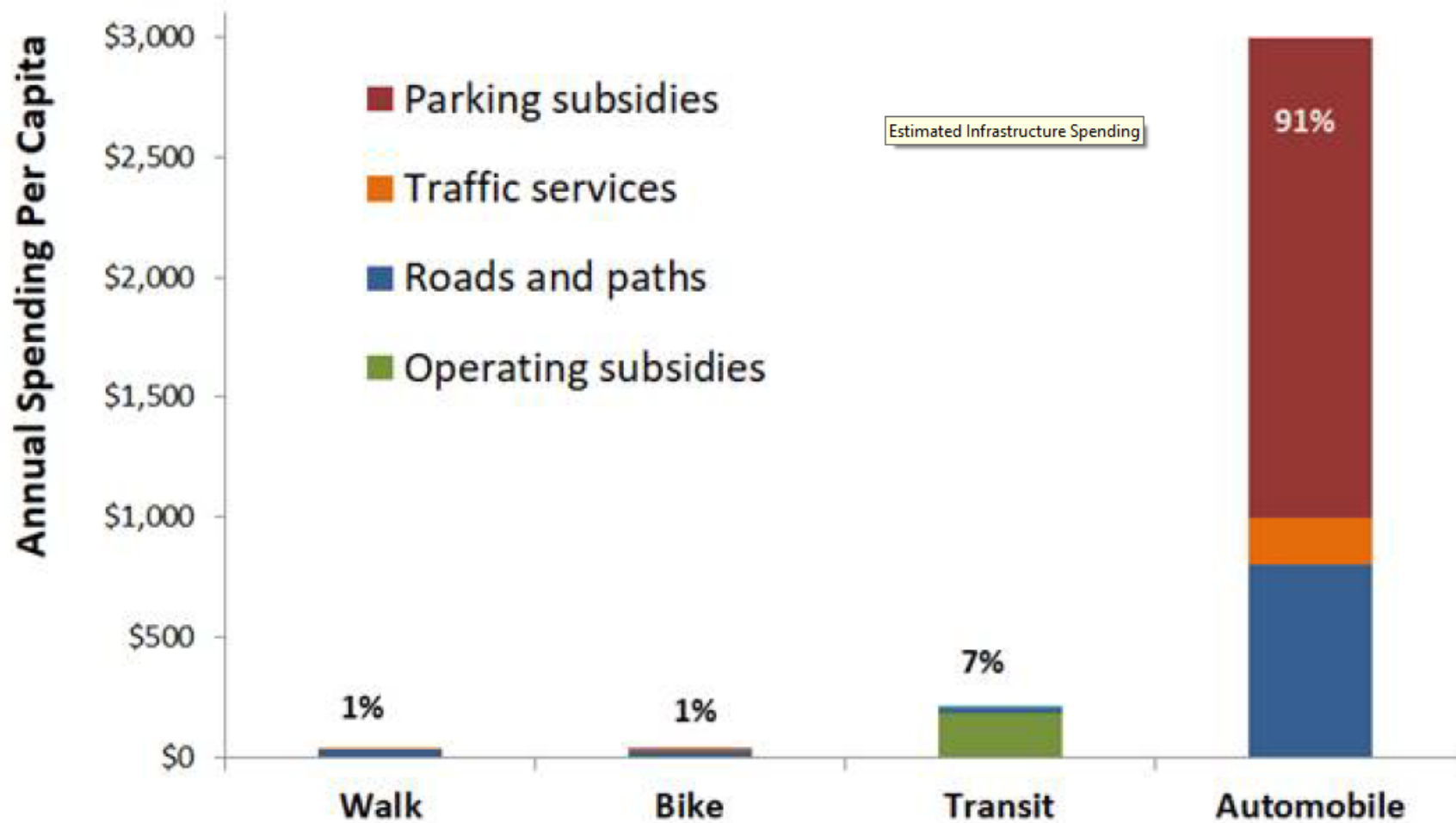
- Does the plan identify any groups of people who are underserved by community facilities?
- Does the plan identify any geographic areas underserved by community facilities?
- Does the plan contain a goal related to food security/access?
- With rising interest in green infrastructure, planners should be watchful about how equitably those investments are allocated.
- Historic patterns of locating public facilities with negative externality in low income areas. Does the plan recognize these issues and address mitigation?

Equity in Transportation Planning

- Equity requires spatially consistent access to transportation.
- Social equity objectives are not as well integrated into urban transportation plans as are environmental and congestion reduction goals.
- Provision of alternatives to private car use, financing, and funding allocations to different modes (such as between road building and transit investment) or different routes.
- Does the plan promote walkability? Require sidewalks with priority
for neighborhoods with low rates of automobile ownership?

Planetizen, July 14, 2022 Todd Littman

[Estimated Infrastructure Spending](#)



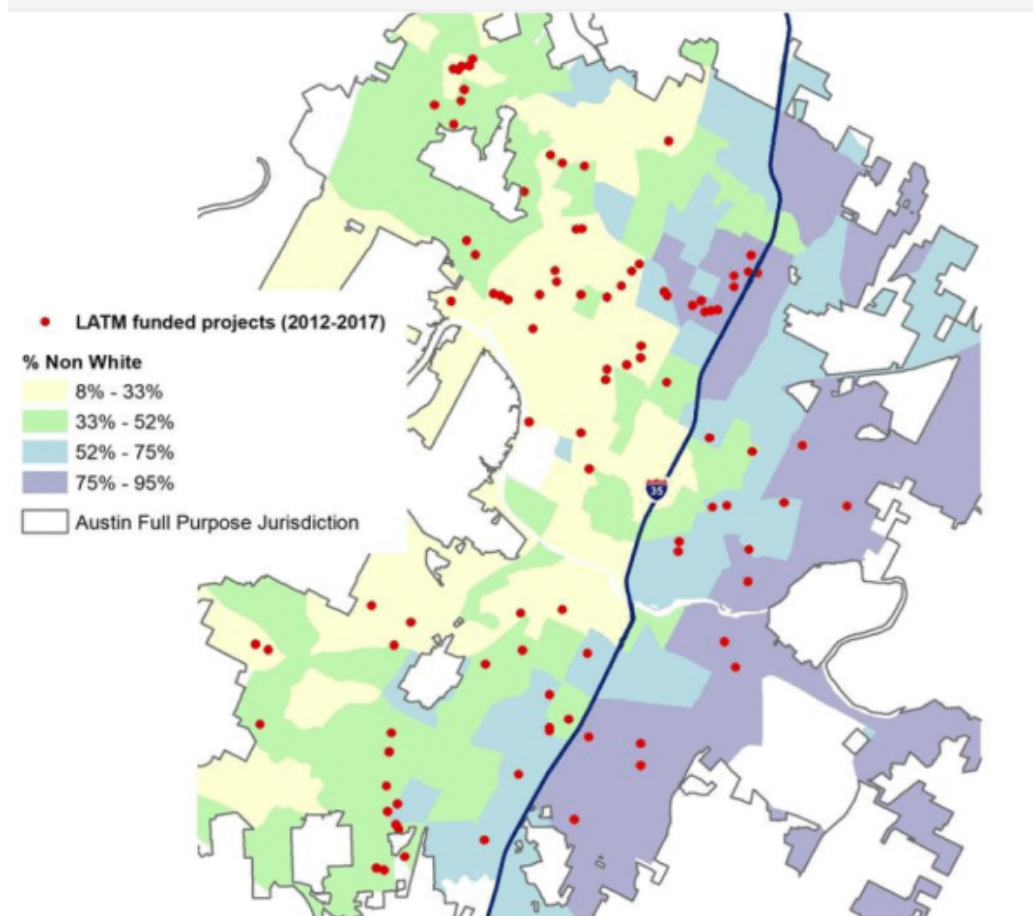
This graph compares infrastructure investments for various modes. Automobiles currently receive far more investments than other modes.

Equity in Transportation Planning Cont'd

- Include public transit, Safe Routes to Schools, Complete Streets?
- Improving transportation access specifically for low-income residents?
- Does the transportation plan include multi-mobility options for first-
and last-mile connections to transit?

Example: Addressing Equity in Accident and Death Rates

- Analyze the data to find patterns of discrimination.
- Austin, disproportionate death rate in accidents and for pedestrians among African Americans and Hispanics.



Why the disparity?

- Traffic calming projects – requests from community, complicated.
- Discouraged people with language/educational barriers or lack of trust from applying.
- New framework based on crash data.

Equity in Housing Planning

- Challenges in creating enough density and mix of housing types to accommodate lower income households.
- Opposition to housing for middle- and low-income residents and local land use regulations add obstacles and expenses.



Equity in Housing Planning Continued

- Include a housing goal that includes affordable housing, workforce housing, and/or fair share housing?
- Define affordability anywhere?
- Recommend increasing allowable residential densities in single-family neighborhoods?
- Innovative planning and regulatory approaches such as the promotion of “missing middle” housing.

Housing Planning Continued

- Recommend increasing the amount of land planned for multifamily housing?
- Recommend density bonuses or other incentives for affordable housing in new developments?
- Recommend accessory dwelling units?
- Address supportive/transitional housing?
- Are the needs of the unhoused identified and addressed?

Equity in Land Use and Development

- Identify historical patterns of zoning or development rooted in discrimination?
- Promote mixed-income neighborhoods?
- Promote mixed-use developments?

Equity in Economic Development

- Concept of a triple bottom line, which compels companies to consider society and the environment along with economy.
- Goal that suggests that economic development be equitable, or benefit the entire community?
- Recommend a community benefits agreement ordinance or similar?
- Missing framework for assessing effectiveness.

Equity in Plan Implementation

- Does the plan include any provisions for monitoring implementation progress?
- Does the plan mention any obstacles (technical, political, legal, etc.)
to implementing equitable policies?
- Have consequences of alternatives been identified? Harms mitigated?

Equity Already Embedded in Some of Our Plans – A Rose By Any Other Name

- Adopting inclusionary zoning. Increasing density. Reducing parking.
- Promoting walkability and complete streets.



Table 5. Good equity practices for local comprehensive plans.

Plan element	Good equity practice
Overall plan organization	Ensure the plan reflects community conditions and good planning practice.
	Make sure the planning committee leadership represents the community's diversity.
	Make plan accessible to all users.
	Make sure plan data and maps comprehensively describe the community.
Overall equity orientation	Make equity an organizing principle for the plan.
	Include a detailed demographic analysis that identifies socially vulnerable populations.
	Identify neighborhoods where there are concentrations of socially vulnerable people.
Forms of public participation	Make sure the community's full range of diversity is represented in the planning process.
	Incorporate feedback into the plan.
Housing and land use	Include housing goals and objectives that provide for housing for all ages and income levels.
Transportation	Make sure there are transportation options for all residents.
	Plan for nonmotorized options.
Environment, hazards, and safety	Identify natural and human-caused hazards.
	Identify areas of high crime and/or areas where residents do not feel safe.
Community facilities	Take inventory of and map community facilities.
Food	Include goals and objectives about food security and food access.
Economic development	Make equitable economic development an explicit goal in the plan.
Future land use plan	Make future land use choices transparent.

Hard to Do . . . But Begin Anyway

- Changing the status quo.
- Data analysis. Who is vulnerable and where do they live?
- Look at plan recommendations. Who benefits by race and income?
- Incorporate metrics to measure changes over time.
- Many changes require only better mapping and analysis or putting existing maps together in new ways.
- Some of these practices do require more effort, but continuing to marginalize equity in plans should no longer be acceptable.

Concluding Thought

Communities should be able to implement most of these changes in their next planning cycle. Many of them require only better mapping and analysis or putting existing maps together in new ways. Some of these practices do require more effort, but especially in the current climate of increased awareness about racial inequality, continuing to marginalize equity in plans should no longer be acceptable.