Official Community Plan
Nelson 2050
Leading the way, together.

Official Community Plan Update: **What You Need to Know**

First, the plan has been updated to reflect the new vision, values & principles

The plan update process started with the creation of a new shared 2050 vision for the community which resulted from extensive public consultation in 2023:

Our welcoming heritage-rich mountain town is committed to community well-being by prioritizing equity, health and climate resilience.

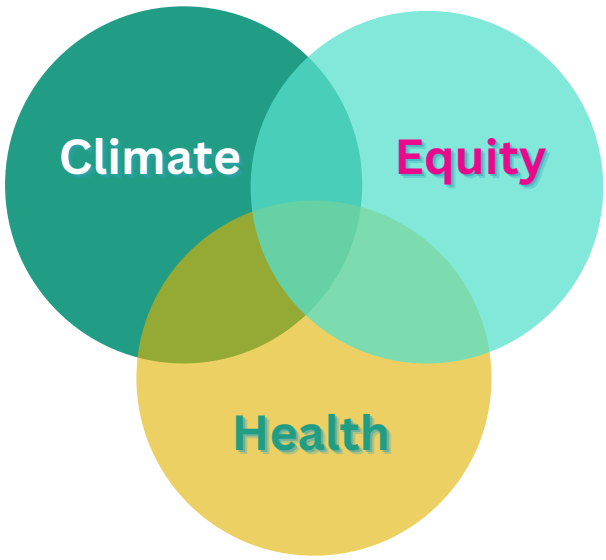


All Nelsonites are able to find affordable housing, live in walkable neighbourhoods, access efficient cost-effective transit and meaningfully participate in public life.

Our collective choices make us climate leaders, safeguarding and regenerating our ecological, economic and social systems for future generations.

Art, education, diverse cultures, reconciliation and recreation enrich our daily lives, infusing our community with an active, healthy and creative spirit that respects and appreciates the land we call home.

Three guiding principles are clearly stated in the Official Community Plan vision statement:



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Second, the draft plan proposes several major changes

If you compare the current OCP with the draft update side by side, it might seem like there are more changes than there actually are.

The draft OCP indeed looks very different: the structure and language have been completely revisited in order to make it more concise and easier to understand, all while adding new sections to better reflect priorities (for example, Indigenous reconciliation, wildfire protection, and the economy) and to meet new legislative requirements. We've taken inspiration from other cities' plans to make the document more policy-focused and ensure alignment between policies and objectives. As such, even if many of the policies remain the same, nearly all of the objectives are new.

This draft embraces and translates the new OCP vision and guiding principles of equity, health, and climate throughout. For example, this means more emphasis on inclusivity (equity) and broadening the scope of recreation (health).

Lots is staying the same, so we're highlighting for you key major and minor proposed changes.

The top two proposed changes that residents would notice the most

Relaxed regulations for non-market affordable housing developments and student housing

What this means:

- The possibility to build multi-unit affordable housing anywhere in the city and height and setback relaxations for affordable housing
- Increased height allowance for student housing near campuses

Neighbourhood mixed-use hubs to improve walkability

What this means:

- Gradually increasing opportunities for neighbourhood-serving commercial uses (like essential services and small stores) in each neighbourhood, near where small-scale commercial uses already exist

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Other Major Shifts

Climate

Significant focus on climate action: embedding the Nelson Next plan, moving towards a low-carbon economy, securing quality water supply, preparing the city to face climate-induced extreme weather, focus on multi-modal transportation (including active transportation, public transit, and vehicles)

Building Design

New, more concise design guidelines for large developments, Baker Street, and the riparian area, with a focus on preserving community character and beautifying the city, while balancing this with the need to facilitate and reduce barriers to new housing creation

Reconciliation

Working towards reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and embedding this throughout City policy

Housing

Increased focus on housing and in particular, affordable housing development

Well-Being

Expanded policies on community well-being, health, and safety (including wildfire safety, emergency planning, safety for all in public spaces, radon awareness, and safety for all road users)

Economy

New economic policy section, with focus on low-carbon economy, local business, and employment opportunities

Heritage

Expanded heritage conservation policies, including a new Baker Street Heritage Conservation Area and exploring regulatory options to promote renovation and additions over demolition

Environment

Reduce human-wildlife conflict and work towards becoming a bear-smart community, and pursue other policies to protect natural habitat, ecosystems, and the watershed that our drinking water supply relies upon

Infrastructure

Policy to explore moving towards a model where development pays for development

Planning

Exploring additional planning exercises: neighbourhood, social, and culture

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Third, there are a few minor changes to highlight

- Redesign of the development permit areas
- An updated road network map that creates new collector road designations on Cottonwood Street, Stanley Street, and a loop in Rosemont, and downgrades Lakeside Drive east of Hall Street from collector road status to local road (no immediate, tangible consequences to these changes)
- Emphasis on accessibility and universal design in the public realm and new housing development alike
- Greater emphasis on public space in general, beyond park space alone
- Introducing a maximum number of storeys for each of the land use designations
- Introducing a new tool, Development Approval Information, to enable the City to request studies and reports from developers to make sure that their project meets regulatory standards and the objectives of the OCP
- A policy stating that we'll explore increasing the riparian development permit area from 15 metres to 30 metres from the Kootenay Lake highwater mark, in line with Kootenay Lake Partnership recommendations

It's important to have your say now, before the new OCP is adopted. New provincial legislation means City Council won't hold public hearings for zoning changes that are primarily residential that align with the OCP, though decisions will still require Council approval with some opportunities for public comment.

It is more important than ever before that the OCP accurately reflects what the community wants.

Tell us what you think: public engagement is open until February 12th, 2025.

Visit www.nelson2050.ca to participate and learn more.