Official Community Plan
*Nelson 2050*
*Leading the way, together.*

# How does the draft OCP impact affordability?

As the blueprint for the city, the draft Official Community Plan proposes numerous policies that would help to make Nelson a more affordable place to live by giving more flexibility to developers (including those of non-market affordable housing), unlocking underused municipal land, and doing what the City can to protect the ability of tenants to remain in their home.

On the other hand, as much as affordability is a pressing concern, some policies being proposed to work towards other important goals (notably climate action and heritage conservation) could slightly increase costs for developers of new housing.

## Proposed OCP changes that would contribute to improving affordability

Explore policies to encourage and support more infill and missing-middle housing, housing diversification and adaptive reuse

Overall, work towards greater zoning flexibility for uses while still regulating building form (height, lot coverage, etc.) – for example, allowing mixed-use residential on institutional lands

Relax regulations for non-market affordable housing developments and student housing, and other policies that support lowered housing costs, such as considering energy efficiency and energy affordability as part of housing affordability

Support and improve active transportation options & allow for some businesses and services to be located in neighbourhoods to improve walkability, thereby lowering transportation costs

Emphasis on harnessing the potential of hard-to-develop vacant and underutilized lands

Consider mandating that developers build more family-sized (multiple-bedroom) multi-unit housing and accessible housing for people with mobility needs

Policy directing the City to continue working to streamline and improve application processes

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## Proposed OCP changes that would contribute to improving affordability *Continued*

Protecting existing housing stock and supporting tenants' rights, within the limited means, powers, and advocacy tools that municipal governments have

Simplified, concise design guidelines for development permits and heritage that are less prescriptive, more predictable, and more objectives-based, making room for more design creativity

Exempting three- and four-unit residential buildings from development permits

A new policy objective striving to improve affordability for residents and businesses

Policies to promote the creation of affordable cultural and artistic spaces

Meeting our objective of preserving heritage buildings through tools like Heritage Conservation Areas and Heritage Revitalization Agreements that aren't expected to raise developer costs; where Heritage Revitalization Agreements are used, they could offer enough flexibility to mitigate additional costs and studies associated with strong heritage protection

## Proposed OCP policies that help meet other important community objectives, but might incur costs for or limit new housing development

New large buildings (5+ units) will require a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) report on the building's embodied carbon footprint (affordable housing exempted). In many cases, this will cost money to produce. Affordable housing projects will be exempt.

The City will be able to, if deemed necessary, require developers to submit reports at their expense to ensure consistency with the OCP. This tool is called Development Approval Information.

The City will continue to restrict building height in the historic downtown and Lower Uphill to preserve heritage character.