



Official Community Plan

Nelson 2050

Leading the way, together.

OCP 1-Page Series: Infill Housing

Infill housing optimizes land use, promotes housing affordability, supports sustainability, and creates vibrant, walkable neighborhoods by redeveloping existing urban areas instead of expanding outward. Nelson is a small-community leader for infill housing ¹ and the Official Community Plan Update will ensure that the OCP policies are sufficient to guide the development of infill housing and achieve our collective vision of Nelson in 2050.

Infill Development

This term refers to any development (residential, commercial etc.) that replaces an existing structure or occurs on underutilized or empty “brownfield” land in a built-up area. Conversely, development that occurs in a new area is called “greenfield development”. Infill housing provides opportunities to increase density with a diversity of housing forms and to more efficiently use existing infrastructure (roads, sewer etc.).

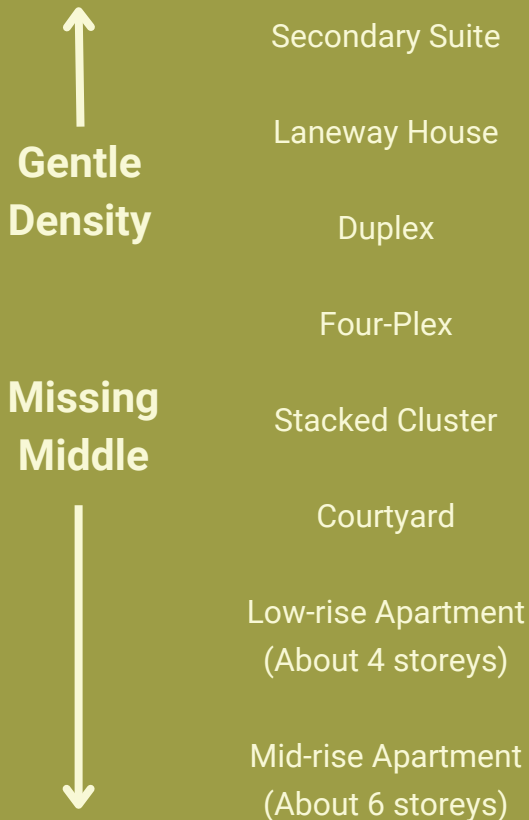
Gentle Density

This term is used to describe denser forms of housing where multiple units on one property do not change the existing massing and scale of a low-density area.

Missing Middle

This term is used to describe denser forms of housing where multiple units are contained in structures larger than a single-family house but with less massing and scale than typical high-density areas seen in many large urban centres today. This form was popular in urban centres during the 60s-70s, but has widely been “missing” from more recent infill housing development.

Examples of Infill Housing Forms



Other Helpful Terms

Massing - A building’s size and shape.

Scale - A building’s height in terms of categories (small-scale or medium-scale, as defined by the City of Nelson).

Greenfield - Land in an area being developed for the first time.

Brownfield - Empty, underutilized, and/or contaminated land in a built-up area.

Low-density - An area with mostly single-family homes or housing similar in size and scale to single-family homes.

Medium-density - An area with low-rise (about 4 storeys) to mid-rise (about 6 storeys) apartments.

High-density - An area characterized by high-rise (8+ storeys).

Challenges



Construction Nuisance/Damage - Noise, manipulation of the ground, and access of the public boulevard/sidewalk can be disruptive and costly. Mitigating these issues requires knowledgeable and collaborative infill builders.



Contaminated Brownfield Properties - Empty or underutilized land may not always be developable if it was used for heavy industry or other contaminating uses that then require years of cleaning/off-gassing.



Heritage Preservation - Infill can complement but also replace heritage buildings which can negatively impact a neighbourhood's character and sense of place.

Opportunities



Active Transportation & Transit - Adding appropriate densities to built-up areas will help ensure the success of investments in biking, walking/rolling and transit infrastructure.



Climate Goals - Nelson's climate action plan, Nelson Next, priority tactics are met by enabling more infill and density throughout the city.



Design Guidelines - These guidelines help to ensure that the design of new developments harmonize with existing neighbourhoods. The OCP Update will entail a review of the guideline policies and their application.



Existing Infrastructure - Infill housing allows us to use existing infrastructure rather than create new roads and utility connections. While upgrading may be necessary to accommodate increased demand, it is still more cost effective than building new infrastructure.



Zoning - A 2020 analysis of Nelson's current zoning demonstrated that there is the potential to build upwards of 6,333 new residential units within the city.

Project Information

OCP Update: [Nelson2050.ca](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/infill-housing)

Email: OCP@nelson.ca

1 Government of British Columbia, Infill Housing
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/infill-housing>

Initiatives Snapshot

Small Housing BC

The OCP Advisory Committee received a presentation from the non-profit SHBC on September 11, 2023 and the City of Nelson collaborated on the Small Housing Accelerator Program in 2022. Visit their website for more information on their work: SmallHousing.ca

Homes for People Plan - Government of British Columbia

This 2020 action plan sets the direction for the province to enable the delivery of more homes for people faster. Learn more at: StrongerBC.gov.bc.ca/housing/

National Housing Strategy - CMHC Government of Canada

This is a 10-year plan to help Canadians access housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. Learn more at: PlaceToCallHome.ca/about-national-housing-strategy

- **Housing Accelerator Fund**

Provides incentive funding to local governments encouraging initiatives aimed at increasing housing supply. It also supports the development of complete, low-carbon and climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive, equitable, and diverse.

The City of Nelson has submitted an application.

Learn more here: [Housing Accelerator Fund](#)