



Official Community Plan

Nelson 2050

Leading the way, together.

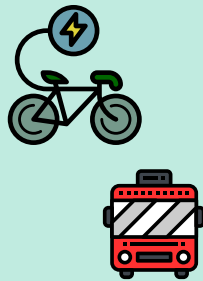
OCP 1-Pager Series: Climate Action

Nelson’s Official Community Plan has addressed climate change since 2008 and our city’s policies have only become more ambitious with the passing years as climate change impacts continue to increase. In 2018, we committed to becoming a 100% renewable energy community by 2050 as part of the West Kootenay 100% Renewable Energy Working Group. In 2020, Council unanimously approved *Nelson Next*, our most ambitious and comprehensive climate action plan yet. As we update the OCP we should consider the direction from *Nelson Next* and decide how its aspirations can be strengthened through OCP incorporation.

The City of Nelson’s Climate Action Plan: *Nelson Next (2020)*

Aspiration 1

Nelson’s residents and tourists conveniently navigate the city and region using the highest per capita rates of public, active, or electric transportation in the country.



Nelson Next sets out aspirations that visualize what Nelson can - and should - look like ‘next’. It prepares for the future by addressing our largest environmental risks and protecting our most vulnerable groups from climate impacts while drastically reducing pollution.



Aspiration 2

Infrastructure and buildings in Nelson are zero carbon and resilient.



Aspiration 5

Nelson is a sustainable economy and renewable energy leader.



Aspiration 3

Nelson is a connected community, where residents are prepared to work collaboratively to prevent or reduce climate change impacts.

Aspiration 6

Nelson has a thriving circular economy and generates the lowest waste per capita in Canada.



Aspiration 4

Nelson’s natural ecosystems and the services they provide us are healthy, abundant, and diverse.

Aspiration 7

We are a model city for integrated climate action and leadership, ensuring all municipal operations are low carbon and resilient, and our priority climate change actions are funded and monitored.

Why does the OCP need to have GHG reduction targets and what does *Nelson Next (2020)* say?

The BC [Local Government Act](#) (LGA) requires that Council ensures all works and bylaws are aligned with the OCP. The LGA also requires the OCP to include targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), and policies and actions to achieve those targets. In addition to having targets that address priority climate risks and protect vulnerable groups, *Nelson Next (2020)* also sets targets for the reduction of Nelson's GHG emissions that are built on robust community engagement and technical analysis:



75% reduction in community-wide GHGs and net zero municipal operations by **2030** net zero community-wide GHGs by **2040**

Opportunities



Nelson Next GHG Targets - The GHG reduction targets from *Nelson Next* could be used in the OCP providing Council with greater power to ensure all bylaws and works undertaken by the City align with the targets.



Design Guidelines - The Official Community Plan is able to designate [Development Permit Areas](#) (DPAs). DPAs require new or re-development projects to receive a development permit and conform with the DPA policies outlined in the OCP. Through the powers granted in the Local Government Act a DPA could be created that requires conformance with design guidelines to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Land Use and Transportation Direction - Municipalities have influence over roughly half of all emissions in Canada.¹ We can make an impact by reducing those pollution sources that *Nelson Next* identifies as contributing the most to GHG emissions, i.e., passenger vehicles. We can reduce our use of passenger vehicles by implementing OCP policies that foster the design of walkable neighbourhoods (i.e., mixing land uses and increasing max. density) and policies that advocate for improvements to the public transit system.

Project Information

OCP Update: [Nelson2050.ca](https://nelson2050.ca)

Email: OCP@nelson.ca

1. <https://www.cleanairpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Final-Climate-Action-Atlas-Report-1.pdf>

Challenges



Nelson Next GHG Targets - The targets from *Nelson Next* are some of the most ambitious in Canada and we are fast approaching the deadlines with very limited analysis or reporting done on the progress made. Without strategic measures in place, the targets may not be met.



Lifestyle Change - While the impacts of climate change are becoming more pressing (longer & hotter summers, drought, wildfire, increased energy costs) the need to shift our lifestyles, such as decreasing daily trips made by personal vehicles, is not widely acknowledged as urgent.



The City Budget - Taking climate action requires funding beyond the historical funds allocated to operational and capital costs. However, as we enable our neighbourhoods to densify (so we can more easily shift our lifestyles such as enabling more daily trips by active transportation), we can expect the co-benefit of an increased tax base. This means our City budget will grow as we densify. Conversely, if we allow sprawl or limit density, the budget will face more constraints.

Initiatives Snapshot

Three Guiding Principles (Climate, Equity, Health)

Climate resilience is one of the OCP Update's three guiding principles and is being used to update the existing OCP policy directions and to create new ones.

C40 - How to design and implement a low emission zone

Low Emission Zones (LEZs) are being adopted by municipalities around the world with varying strategies.