

Friday October 25th, 2024

Hi Nelson Official Community Plan Update E-Panel members,

The last time you heard from us was July, and we apologize for that! We owe you an update.

The Official Community Plan (OCP) update project took an unexpected break this summer due to staff changes and Council's decision to prioritize preparing a major housing grant application that, if successful, would inject significant money into Nelson to help build housing (in particular affordable housing) and the infrastructure needed to support it.

We are now back and have been working hard to study what we've heard from the public, analyze our current OCP's policies, and begin drafting what the next OCP, Nelson 2050, could look like. We are meeting with the OCP Advisory Committee next week. Here's what you'll be able to expect from us in the coming months:

1. Two new policy one-pagers to give us all some food-for-thought on policy matters important to our community.
2. We expect to be able to share with you a draft version of the OCP in January 2025 which will be accompanied by a final round of public engagement to hear your feedback not only on a few key areas where we still need clarity on the aspirations that the community wants to see in their updated OCP, but also (for those of you who are able to find the time) your feedback on the document as a whole.

We hope to present a final version of an updated OCP to Mayor & Council as soon as March 2025. Before Council can adopt the OCP, there will still be one final opportunity to be heard, directly with Council, during the public hearing.

In the meantime, you've probably been curious about how the spring/summer public engagement went. The full report will be presented as part of the draft OCP scheduled to be released in January, but in the meantime, here is a summary of our findings:

Surveys

- We sent out three surveys that received an average of 132 responses each.
 - Respondents were generally representative of Nelson's population with respect to age and gender, however renters were significantly underrepresented amongst survey respondents (only 14% of respondents were renters, whereas we know from the census that 37% of Nelson households are renters).
- The vast majority of the proposed OCP policies policy intentions received the support of the majority of respondents. Some ideas did not, and we have of course taken the public's lack of support for certain ideas into account.
- Here are the top five priorities heard in each of the three surveys:

Social & Climate Resilience	Built & Natural Environments	Utility & Economic Infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordable Housing, for all populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preservation of natural habitats and enhance public green spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance Fire Prevention Measures• Prioritize Infrastructure: be climate resilient, reduce

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Climate and Social Resilience Measures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practical actions, more trees, improve air quality, wildfire mitigation & preparedness • Public Transportation and Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Focus on year-round mobility for all • Fiscal Responsibility and Concrete Action • Equity and Health: Reduce barriers for equity-deserving groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Help ensure that all can meet basic needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Incl. bear-proof garbage systems and the protection and conservation of drinking water • Fiscal responsibility, consider financial implications, affordability • Improved public transportation and infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safety & reducing the reliance on private vehicles • Focus on environmental sustainability in new developments • Affordable, rental, and diversified housing options 	<p>flooding, and ready to sustain a growing city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Reduction: Facilitate a circular economy with initiatives and places to reuse, repair, and recycle. Protect heritage buildings, which will reduce wasteful demolitions. • A Healthy City: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage and retain medical professionals locally ○ Food security • A Walkable City: Enhance the walkability and vibrancy of residential neighbourhoods by allowing small-scale commercial in specific areas.
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Open Houses

Approximately 150 people participated in three open house events that were held this past summer. These events were an opportunity for us to share the OCP update process with you, but also an opportunity for you to share your ideas with us. Countless ideas were shared on sticky notes and we've been careful to note them all. There were too many to share here. We're working on a summary of your ideas and this will be part of the draft OCP released soon.

Workshops

Four land use policy workshops were held, with a total of 36 participants, to solicit input on strategic shifts to slowly introduce mixed-use zoning in neighbourhoods to facilitate neighbourhood-scale businesses. Overall, participants supported the ideas and intentions presented but with the following nuances:

- Keep commercial uses small-scale and minimize disruptiveness
- Choose locations wisely
- Businesses should be local-serving, not be destinations that risk drawing too much traffic in
- Continue to put housing first
- Be intentional in defining what services should be in neighbourhoods
- Make it so that people don't always have to leave their neighbourhood for everything, but be careful to not oversupply space

Thank you for your time. You can count on us to reach out as soon as we reach the next step in this process.

Take care,

OCP (Official Community Plan) Team

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The City of Nelson acknowledges that it resides and operates within the unceded traditional territories of the Sinixt, the Syilx, and the Ktunaxa peoples and is home to the Métis and many diverse Aboriginal persons.

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