



Official Community Plan

Nelson 2050

Leading the way, together.

# OCP 1-Pager 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 <sup>1</sup> 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.

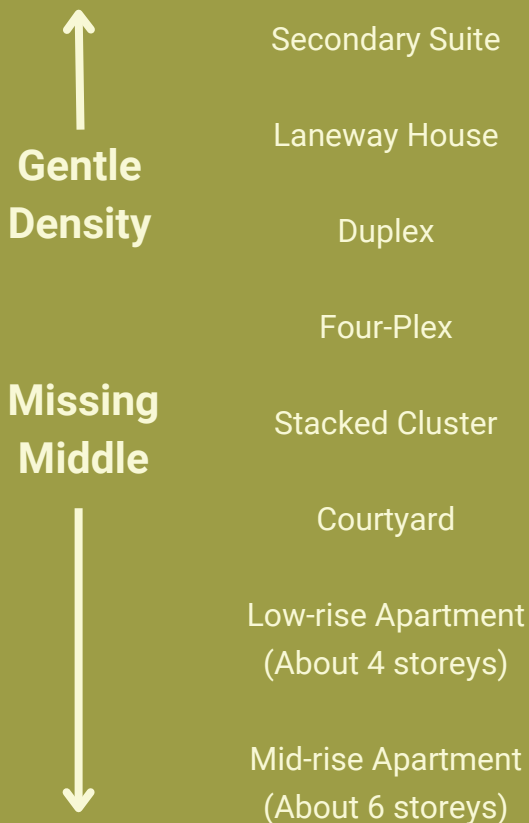
## Infill Development

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.

## Examples of Infill Housing Forms



## 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.

## Other Helpful Terms

**Massing** - A building’s size and shape.

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

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

**Brownfield** - Empty or underutilized 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 need to happen with increased demand there is still a cost savings when compared to 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](mailto: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](https://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/](https://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](https://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](#)