

# OCP

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Nelson 2050  
Leading the way, together.



## What We Heard Report

Phase 3 Engagement

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that Nelson resides on the traditional and unceded territory of the Ktunaxa, the Syilx, and the Sinixt, and is also home to the Métis and diverse Indigenous Peoples. Together, we summon the wisdom embedded in our collective traditions to collaboratively shape a thriving city for both present and future generations. Nelsonites not only inhabit but share a responsibility to steward this Land. Our very presence in this city, its vitality, and existence are indebted to the Land itself and the rich cultures that have contributed to its development. City planning, including the Official Community Plan, is fundamentally about land— the use of land and connections to cultural practices. With the forthcoming update to the OCP, we aspire to deepen the path of reconciliation, acknowledging and celebrating the First Nations who have stewarded this Land for millennia and honoring the Indigenous Communities who proudly call Nelson home today.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 3. REPORT OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

## 4. WHAT WE HEARD AND HOW WE COMMUNICATED

## 5-9. SURVEYS

SURVEY #1 SOCIAL & CLIMATE

SURVEY #2 BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

SURVEY #3 UTILITY & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

## 10-15. OPEN HOUSES AND WORKSHOPS

## 16. YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



# OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

## OCP TIMELINE



## OCP Update Overview

The City of Nelson is currently updating its Official Community Plan (OCP), a strategic statutory document guiding growth and change over the next 25 years. This previous phase of the project (Phase Two: Visioning) involved developing a robust community vision for Nelson in 2050 that will serve as the foundation for future planning and decision-making. A well-supported community-driven vision, grounded in best practices, ensures that new programs, policies, and investments align with the diverse needs of both current and future residents.

## What We Heard Purpose

This report summarizes the tactics used and feedback gathered during Phase 3 of the OCP update. Building on the foundational work completed in ***Phase 2***, which established the community vision, this phase focuses on extending that framework to inform policy review and development. As it builds upon the groundwork laid in the previous phase, this report is less comprehensive in nature. The primary engagement tactics employed during the Summer of 2024 included surveys, open houses, workshops, and youth engagement initiatives. These efforts were instrumental in shaping the policy intentions for Phase 4 of the OCP update.

# HOW WE COMMUNICATED & WHAT WE HEARD

This section provides an overview of the communication approach and details the communication methods employed to raise awareness of the OCP Update and engagement opportunities.

This stage of consultation for the Nelson 2050 Official Community Plan update focused on policy. The following activities were held:



**YOUTH  
ENGAGEMENT**



**ONLINE  
SURVEYS**



**OPEN HOUSES &  
WORKSHOPS**

# SURVEYS OVERVIEW

The three surveys, open during Summer 2024, gathered an average of 132 responses each, for a total of 397 responses. Survey respondents were generally representative of Nelson's population with respect to age and gender, however at only 14%, renters were significantly underrepresented.

The vast majority of the proposed policy intentions received the support of the majority of respondents.

## SURVEY # 1

Social & Climate Resilience Policy Intentions

## SURVEY # 2

Built & Natural Environments Policy Intentions

## SURVEY # 3

Utility & Economic Infrastructure Policy Intentions

**3**

SURVEYS IN  
TOTAL

**132**

AVERAGE  
RESPONSES  
PER SURVEY

**397**

TOTAL  
SURVEY  
RESPONSES

# SOCIAL & CLIMATE RESILIENCE

## TOP 5 PRIORITIES

1

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

There is a need for housing for lower-income, renters, and vulnerable populations. Prioritize the community over tourism.

2

### **EFFECTIVE CLIMATE & SOCIAL RESILIENCE**

Implement practical actions such as making streets more pedestrian-friendly, planting and protecting existing urban trees, improving air quality, and wildfire mitigation and preparedness. Prepare the community for climate impacts and emergencies.

3

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

Develop robust public transportation options and improve active transportation infrastructure to enhance year-round walkability. Ensure that people living with disabilities can move around the city.

4

### **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & CONCRETE ACTION**

Keep municipal expenses in check and focus spending on more concrete action rather than educational campaigns, reputation-building, or symbolic gestures. Have fewer priorities but do them well.

5

### **EQUITY & HEALTH**

Reduce barriers for equity-deserving groups to access City services and live in and move around the city, advocate to increase healthcare services, be an inclusive city, and provide spaces that enable people to have healthy lifestyles. Help ensure that all Nelsonites can meet their basic needs and have access to public spaces and services.

# BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

## TOP 5 PRIORITIES

1

### **PRESERVE HABITATS & ENHANCE GREENSPACE**

Protect and restore natural areas to ensure they remain functioning, accessible ecosystems. Bear-proof garbage systems and the protection and conservation of drinking water are related aspects. Enhancing and increasing green spaces, particularly trees and green spaces in the downtown, was seen as vital for community well-being, providing spaces to relax and reduce the negative impacts of some aspects of living in a growing city.

2

### **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & CONSIDERATION**

Carefully consider the financial implications of new projects and directives. Some respondents emphasized the strain on affordability for individuals and businesses.

3

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE**

Introduce better public transportation options, including more frequent and reliable services that could reduce the reliance on private vehicles and mitigate climate change impacts. Increasing safety is also important.

4

### **ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Prioritize environmental sustainability in building designs, such as providing safe access for taxi passengers, integrating renewable energy sources, and incorporating green building practices. Address noise pollution and ensure quiet places to live.

5

### **DIVERSE HOUSING AND RENTAL OPTIONS**

Prioritize affordable and rental housing in places with access to green spaces and amenities. Housing should come in different shapes and forms to accommodate different people at different life stages.



# UTILITY & ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

## TOP 5 PRIORITIES

**1**

### **ENHANCE FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES**

Given the increasing concern over climate change and fire risks, it is crucial to ensure a reliable water source for firefighting and implement fire prevention measures.

**2**

### **PRIORITIZE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Prioritize essential infrastructure projects, such as upgrading snow removal, water capture, waste collection, and sewage treatment plants to be climate resilient, reduce flooding, and ready to sustain a growing city. The importance of the library was also mentioned. Addressing these fundamental needs is crucial for the city's long-term sustainability and should take precedence over aesthetic improvements. Some respondents suggest engaging citizens more in community benefit projects linked to parks, recreation, nature preservation, and active transportation infrastructure. Diversify our renewable energy sources.

**3**

### **WASTE REDUCTION**

Facilitate a circular economy with initiatives and places to reuse, repair, and recycle. Protect heritage buildings, which will reduce wasteful demolitions.

**4**

### **A HEALTHY CITY**

While municipal government isn't responsible for healthcare, action could be taken to encourage and retain medical professionals locally. Look for opportunities to reduce barriers for small-scale commercial food production.

**5**

### **A WALKABLE CITY**

Enhance the walkability and vibrancy of residential neighbourhoods by allowing small-scale commercial in specific areas.

# OPEN HOUSES OVERVIEW

Three open house events were held in June 2024, on various days of the week and in three different neighbourhoods. The objective was to inform the public about the OCP update and solicit their feedback on various strategies. There were a total of approximately 150 participants.

Participants showed great support for the plan's proposed vision and guiding principles.

Dozens of policy ideas were provided to help follow through on the guiding principles. For health, improving local healthcare services, reducing air and noise pollution, public transportation, protecting the natural environment, and bear-proofing garbage collection were common themes. For climate, there was support shown for improving transit between cities. Other popular ideas included an urban forest strategy, water and riparian area protection, and emphasizing the co-benefits between healthy ecosystems and wildfire risk reduction. A large number of ideas were also proposed to support equity in the city: the most popular were affordable and energy-efficient housing, providing public washrooms and water fountains, reducing the number of vacant homes, improved transit (including 7-day service), and improved walkability, notably with increased snow removal and making Baker Street more pedestrian friendly.

Strong support was shown for the plan's four foundational values at all three open houses. Concern was shown for protecting heritage buildings and the small-town feel of Nelson from gentrification as well as distasteful architecture. Affordable housing was once again brought up as the key way to make the city welcoming and compassionate. Safety for all road users, support for the arts, car-free areas, and emphasis on including Indigenous people in city planning were also discussed. One person suggested that local water and food security are missing from the framework.

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**3**  
OPEN HOUSE  
EVENTS

**150**  
TOTAL  
PARTICIPANTS

# **SOCIAL AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

## **PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK**

To support Social and Climate Resilience, participants placed an emphasis on doing more “out-of-the-box” thinking, taking action faster, and advocating on behalf of Nelson to senior levels of government. In addition to ideas already presented above, ideas included:

**FOREST FIRE  
MITIGATION**

**RESILIENT BUILDINGS AND  
PRESERVING THE ONES WE  
ALREADY HAVE**

**ADDRESSING HATE**

**MEANINGFUL  
PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT,  
PARTICULARLY  
WITH SOCIAL  
AGENCIES**

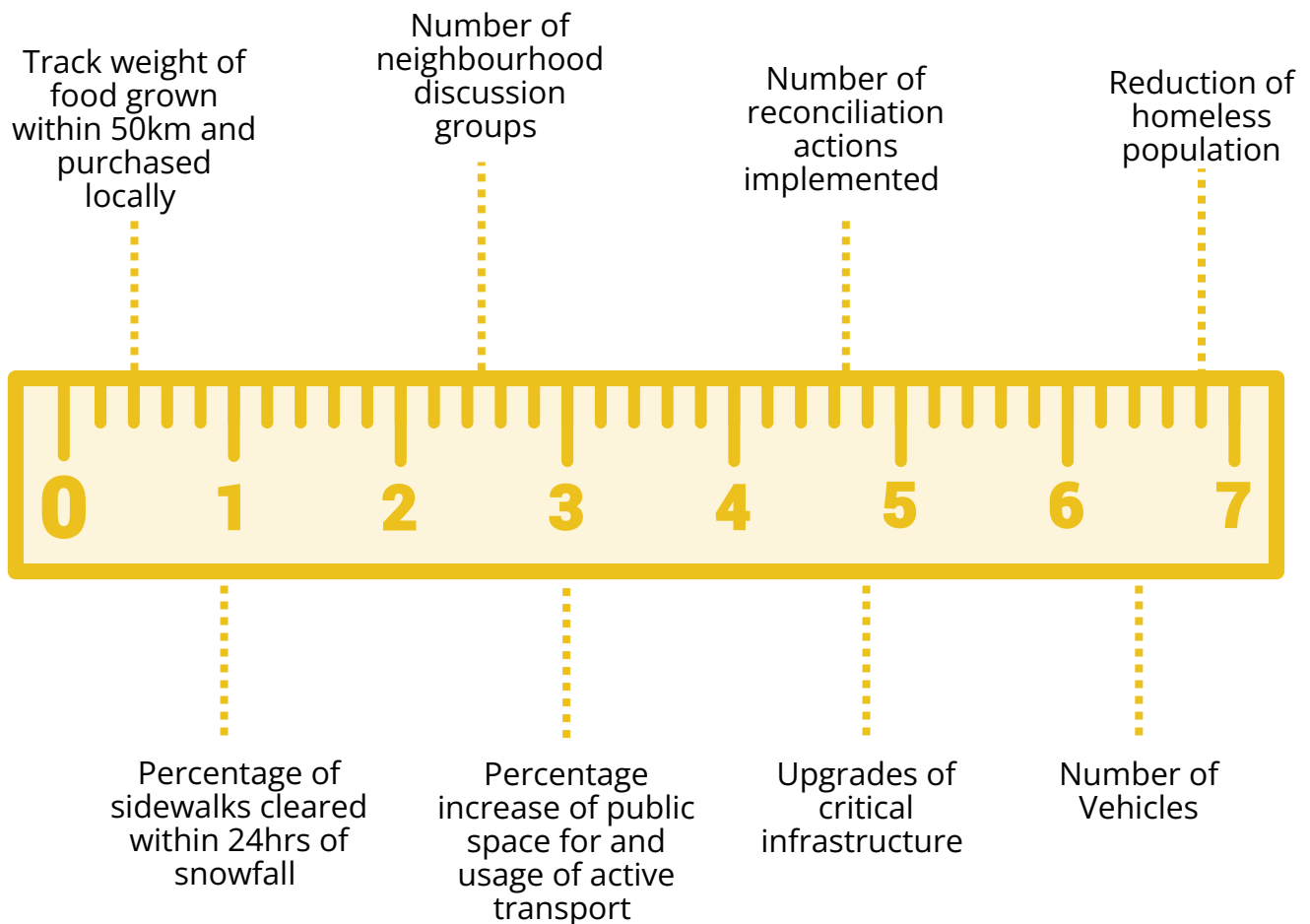
**PROMOTING WATER CONSERVATION AND FIXING  
WATER LEAKS, AS WELL AS PROMOTING ENERGY  
EFFICIENCY AND WEATHERIZING HOMES**

**MORE PUBLIC SPACES AND FLEXIBLE  
COMMUNITY SPACES FOR GATHERING**

**MAKE BIKING AND WALKING  
THE NORM**

# SOCIAL AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

## IDEAS TO MEASURE PROGRESS



# BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

To support our Built & Natural Environments objectives, ideas focused on supporting multimodal transportation, sidewalk safety and comfort, the environmental impact of new development, and protecting heritage assets. Some participants also suggested harnessing traditional Indigenous knowledge in environmental management, promoting land use flexibility, and accepting that money does need to be spent to deal with the climate emergency.

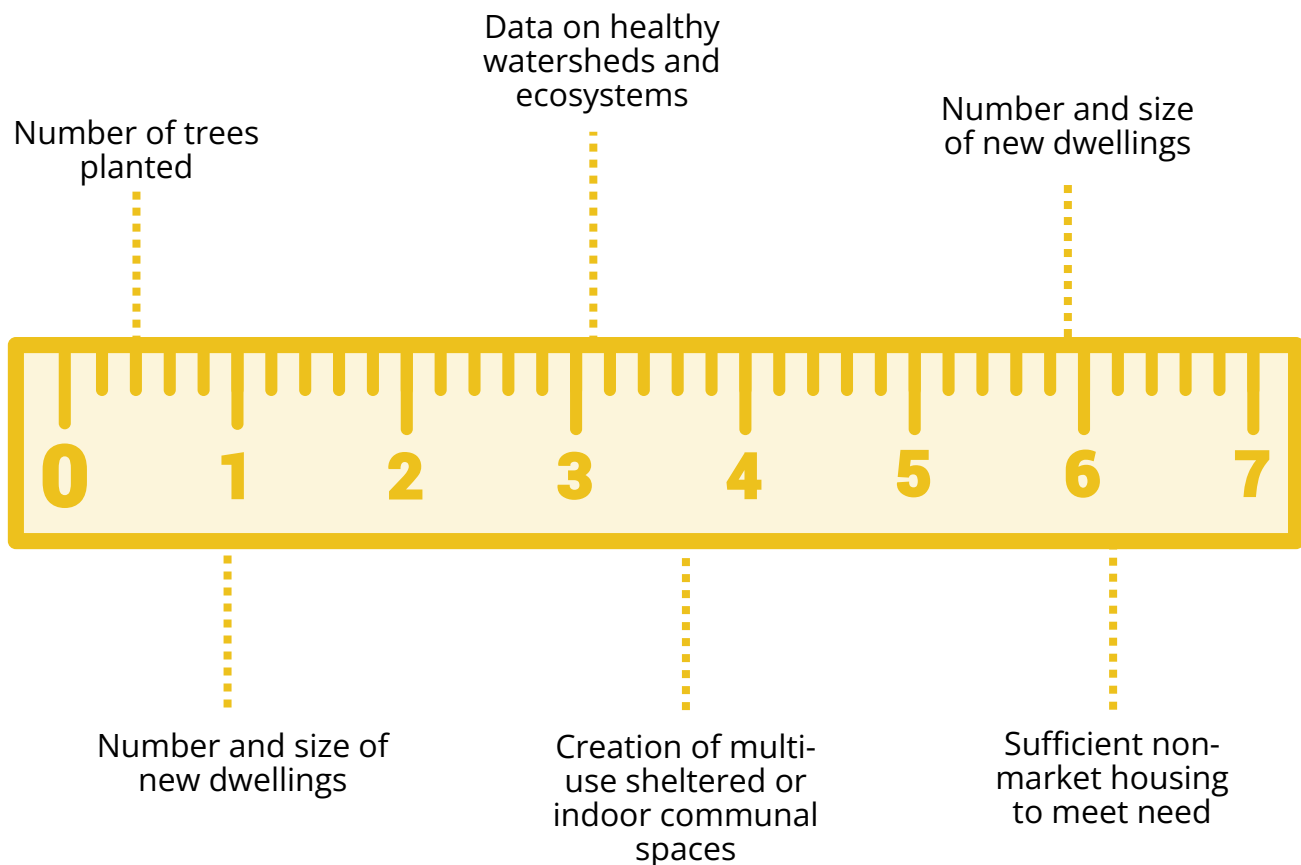
In addition to expressing support for the opportunities and ideas presented on the panel boards for Utility and Economic Infrastructure, participants emphasized the importance of prioritizing upkeep of basic infrastructure and upgrading it now before further growth happens, to avoid higher costs in the future. The idea of seeking to 'balance' tourism and residents was criticized, with the idea that residents' needs should come first. Enforcing water restrictions, reducing water consumption, and securing drinking water supply are also top priorities. As a measure of progress, it was suggested to aim for decreased water use and waste despite a growing population.

Finally, for land use, support was expressed for greater zoning flexibility, incentivizing affordable housing, more diverse forms of housing, and mixed-use neighbourhoods where people have access to key services within a 10-minute walk from their home. Some participants asked if rather than building more, we could get more use out of the buildings that we have already. There was also consideration for being proactive about ensuring that road infrastructure is safe and able to meet community needs as the city grows.



# BUILT & NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

## IDEAS TO MEASURE PROGRESS



# WORKSHOPS OVERVIEW

Four land use policy workshop events were held in June 2024, with one of them held online and three in-person at City Hall. A total of 36 people participated, and the vast majority live in Nelson. The objective was to solicit citizen input on the strategic shifts being considered for the OCP Land Use policies. Relevant information was presented, and participants were invited to provide comments and ideas in response to 10 different questions concerning the introduction of low-rise buildings (up to four storeys) in residential areas and more small-scale commercial and mixed-use neighbourhood nodes.

There was general support amongst participants for the proposed shift towards mixed-use neighbourhoods, but with the following caveats and precisions:

1. Keep commercial uses small-scale. Minimize disruptiveness. Don't negatively impact neighbourhoods and ensure that sense of place is preserved: what landmarks define neighbourhood nodes? Ensure neighbourhoods have a say.
2. It is important to protect views, make transit more attractive, do what is possible to ensure that commercial rents are affordable, and wisely choose locations: blend into surroundings, go where there is more parking and transit access. Businesses should be local-serving, and not be destinations that risk drawing too much traffic in from far away.
3. Consider opportunities to increase green space and protect heritage buildings.
4. Even if commercial uses are allowed, continue to put housing first.
5. Be intentional in defining what services should be in neighbourhoods. It should benefit different ages and types of people. Make it so that people don't always have to leave their neighbourhood for everything, but we need to not oversupply spaces: business survival is important too. Not all types of businesses are suitable everywhere, but at the same time be permissive: "permit everything and prohibit some things".

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**4**  
LAND USE  
WORKSHOPS

**36**  
TOTAL  
PARTICIPANTS

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

## OVERVIEW

Several contacts were made to various schools over the course of 2023 and 2024 to attempt to have a presence in-school to include youth voices. Planning staff visited a Wildflower School in June 2024 to hold an interactive, discussion-oriented workshop on community planning with a special program on urban planning that the school was holding where the students worked in groups to design their ideal city. With City staff, they discussed what they liked most about Nelson, what they would be sad to see gone, and what amenities they would like to have close enough to where they live to be able to walk or bike there. Discussions about sustainability and older heritage buildings occurred. The Nelson & District Community Complex (NDCC) and bookstores stood out as places valued by the students. Amenities that students would like to see closer to home include shops, restaurants, the youth centre, and entertainment amenities.





# OCP

## OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

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Leading the way, together.



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

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