

## **OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE PROCESS**

### **OVERVIEW**

Imagine Nelson in 2050. What does it look like? Is it welcoming? Is it vibrant? Is our community thriving? In order to achieve the vision that the community will build over the course of the OCP update process, we need an overarching framework to steer us toward that shared goal. The Official Community Plan (OCP) is a guide to how we will use our land and grow as a community over the next 15-20 years. It is the roadmap for our collective path forward and sets a foundation for us to respond to future challenges and welcome new opportunities.

An OCP is a bylaw that sets out the broad objectives and policies that guide decisions on planning, land use and provision of municipal services in the community. It also establishes a degree of certainty about the location and nature of community change to residents and landowners while providing a framework for guiding and managing future development and growth. The process to update Nelson's OCP will be done in-house and is anticipated to take two years, spanning 2023 to early 2025.

The OCP is also the strategic foundation for bylaws, which act as the regulatory tool to dictate development procedures, zoning restrictions and building requirements. At its core, the City of Nelson's OCP reflects what we care about and what we strive to be as a community - it describes our community's shared values. These values are directly reflected in the Plan's policies and objectives and will guide decision-making into the future.

### **WHY ARE WE UPDATING THE OCP?**

The City of Nelson, located in the traditional territories of the Sinixt, Syilx, and Ktunaxa peoples, has a history of change, growth and prosperity. As our community has evolved and grown, we have experienced significant changes throughout the City. Our most recent OCP was adopted in 2013, and there have been numerous advancements in areas such as housing, environment, and climate since then, with new plans and best practices emerging to help guide the City. By updating the OCP, we can ensure that it accurately reflects Nelson's diverse needs, identifies potential gaps and dynamic aspirations now and in the future, and incorporates the latest information and strategies to support our City's continued growth and success.

Although the 2013 OCP has served the community well, it's time for an update to ensure it remains relevant to Nelson's context. By updating the OCP, we can build upon the strong foundation of previous plans and create a cohesive and meaningful vision that embodies the values of our community. This updated Plan will serve as a guide for future growth and development in Nelson, helping to ensure that our City remains in line with our community's shared vision.

At its core, Nelson's Official Community Plan embodies the community's aspirations for the future, providing a policy framework that guides decisions related to the use and management

of our land resources. It also provides direction for bylaws such as the Zoning Bylaw; the OCP plays a crucial role in shaping our City's growth. It also helps to establish priorities for the annual budget and provides guidance for other City initiatives. In addition, the OCP integrates Development Permit Areas and associated guidelines to ensure environmental protection, hazard prevention, and built form & character. Through these measures, the OCP serves as a vital tool in ensuring that Nelson develops in a sustainable and responsible manner, in line with the values and aspirations of the community.

## **FRAMEWORK**

The OCP review process will use an integrated approach that considers equity, health, and climate factors to ensure that the Plan is inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the community's needs. The equity lens will ensure that policies in the OCP support diverse groups, especially those who have been marginalized or excluded historically. The health lens will include policies that promote the community's physical, mental, and social well-being, prioritizing those that improve health outcomes. Finally, a climate lens will include policies that support low carbon resiliency and align with Nelson Next's goals. By incorporating these lenses, the OCP can become a comprehensive and equitable framework that supports a healthy and sustainable community for everyone.

## **PHASES**

As part of the Official Community Plan update, we will review the existing Plan to determine which elements should be preserved and which should be revised. Throughout this process, community members will have the opportunity to participate in a fun and meaningful engagement process over the course of eighteen to twenty-four months to help shape the future of Nelson. This process will begin with a focus on visioning for Nelson, identifying key issues, opportunities, and priorities for the OCP. We will then delve deeply into land use and other important topics, exploring various options and scenarios to determine how best to achieve our community's overall vision and goals. Finally, we will draft a plan and gather feedback from the community, refining the Plan before presenting it to Council for consideration. By engaging in this process, we can ensure that the updated OCP is truly representative of the needs and aspirations of our community, providing a solid foundation for the future of Nelson.

The process will progress through the five phases described below. Phases two to five are comprised of specific activities and opportunities for engagement. Updating the OCP means thinking forward as a community about how we can preserve the elements of the community that we love and make improvements to others. Together we can create a plan that supports people, nature and our community today and tomorrow.

- **Phase 1: Background Studies & Reports** January 2023 – July 2023. In Phase 1, the process will begin with stakeholder interviews, background research and analysis to set the foundation for engagement and dialogue on key directions.

- **Phase 2: Develop Vision** July 2023 – October 2023 In Phase 2, the vision will be developed, specific topics will be explored, and key options and trade-offs discussed. Phase 2 starts with the public launch of the OCP review. Upcoming events include an online survey, stakeholder workshop, and participation at community events. At the end of this phase, we'll write a Key Summary report to report back on what we heard and summarize the key policy directions for the OCP.
- **Phase 3: Develop Strategy** October 2023 – March 2024. We'll review the Key Summary report and complete a best practice review to include in the OCP. This phase will also include a review of the Development Permit Areas.
- **Phase 4: Draft Plan** March 2024 – October 2024. We'll write the first draft of the OCP. Through an open house and online survey, we'll share key elements of the draft OCP, make sure we're on the right track, and make revisions and edits.
- **Phase 5: Finalize the Plan** October 2024 – January 2025. In Phase 5, we'll complete the final public review, revise the OCP based on public feedback, and present the OCP at a public hearing for final consideration by Council.

## **ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION & COLLABORATION**

Taking on this type of comprehensive review requires broad community input, collaboration, and knowledge sharing both within and outside of City Hall.

### **Public Engagement Strategy**

Nelson is a vibrant, diverse community shaped by unique voices, perspectives, and ideas. We recognize that to review the OCP, it must truly reflect the collective vision of our City, then we need to hear from as many members of the community as possible. Our aim is to harness our community's talent and expertise and ensure that the aspirations and needs of all members are reflected in the Plan. The comprehensive Public Engagement Strategy will give a voice to residents, business owners, community groups, and people of all ages and backgrounds. By hearing from all members of our community, we can ensure that the OCP review is inclusive, accessible, and responsive to meeting the needs of our diverse community.

The Engagement Strategy will involve holding a number of Public Open Houses; Strategic Visioning / Planning Workshops; Focus Group meetings and interviews with Community Stakeholder Groups; One-on-one conversations; and Public Presentations. The engagement strategy may also include:

- Stakeholder workshops
- An interactive and informative OCP website
- Social media posts
- Educational and informative videos
- Self-led activities/walking tours
- Youth-oriented activities
- Interactive public discussion/display boards

- Thought Exchanges & Surveys
- Community Events
- E-Panel

See the Engagement Strategy for more information.

### **Communications Strategy**

The OCP review will include a communications strategy designed to ensure effective communication between the City and its residents throughout the OCP review process. The strategy will focus on providing clear and concise information to residents about the OCP review process, including timelines, public engagement opportunities, and how to provide feedback. The strategy will also include a variety of communication channels, including public meetings, social media, and an OCP review website, to reach a diverse range of residents and ensure broad participation in the process. By keeping residents informed and engaged throughout the OCP review process, we hope to develop an OCP that reflects the needs and values of the entire community. The communications strategy will include:

- Plan Review Project Branding
- Project Website
- Media Outreach Strategy
- Mailout
- Open House Displays and Materials
- Videos

### **OCP Advisory Committee**

The OCP Advisory Committee (OCP-AC) will play an essential role in providing community feedback and strategic direction on the development of the new Official Community Plan. The Committee will be responsible for representing the community's interest in shaping the draft goals, objectives, policies and implementation strategies for the OCP. The Committee will work with City staff to review and make recommendations on various OCP-related topics. They will also:

- provide guidance at important stages of the project
- identifying opportunities and issues
- review and comment on draft policy
- participate and promote community outreach and engagement

See the OCP-AC Terms of Reference for more information.

### **OCP Internal Working Group**

The OCP Internal Working Group will include a multi-disciplinary team with the aim of promoting greater collaboration, understanding and awareness among different departments involved in the OCP review process. This group is composed of representatives from various departments who bring their unique knowledge, skills, and expertise to the table. By fostering a

collaborative approach that brings together these diverse perspectives, the working group seeks to enhance communication and cooperation between departments and to ensure that each department understands the important role that the OCP plays in the City's overall vision. The group also aims to ensure that the OCP reflects the institutional knowledge of each individual department involved.