



Nelson

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

Report 1 | Housing Needs

July 2010



CITY OF NELSON

C I T Y  S P A C E S

Planning | Project Management | Applied Research

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SUMMARY

This report, one of two reports produced from the 2010 Affordable Housing study, focusses on “need and demand” for affordable housing in Nelson. It contains:

- A description of a wide range of factors that influence the housing market;
- An identification of groups who are least able to access suitable, affordable housing; and
- A commentary on gaps and issues in the market and non-market sectors.

CitySpaces research was conducted between mid-February and June, 2010, involving a review of previously-completed research, in-person and telephone interviews, several discussion groups and an open-access (online) survey with 345 respondents¹. Everyone with whom we had contact was generous with their time and provided many helpful insights. Special thanks is due to the members of the City of Nelson’s Housing Forum and the Nelson Coalition on Homelessness.

Groups with Highest Housing Needs

Our research indicated four groups have the greatest challenges in finding suitable, affordable housing in Nelson:

1. Individuals with mental health, addictions and other disabilities.
 - Nelson Mental Health and Addictions (NMHA) indicates that housing is a “huge barrier” for between 75 and 100 Nelson residents who have severe challenges, requiring ongoing outreach and regular support. Only 16 units are set-aside in non-market housing for NMHA clients.
 - Other service providers that maintain client profiles, including Stepping Stones and the Kootenay Christian Fellowship, confirm that a significant proportion of their clients are challenged by mental health and addictions issues.
 - Canada Mental Health Association (CMHA) has secured a site and a rezoning for a 31-unit building for psycho-geriatric clients over age 55, a group that needs considerable health care support. Despite six years in the planning and approvals process, the project still awaits capital funding.
2. Low and moderate income households who require safe, suitable and affordable rental housing in the private market².



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¹ Appendix A is a list of people who provided helpful input into this research. Appendix B contains the key findings from the open-access (online) survey.

² Private market refers to all housing that is not owned or operated by non-profit organizations.

- This includes single people, students, single parent families, women who leave abusive or unhealthy relationships, and youth leaving Cicada Place. It also includes households (singles, couples) who are relocating to Nelson for stable, well-paying jobs but are not ready to enter the home ownership market.
 - The vacancy rate for purpose-build rental accommodation has hovered at 1% for several years. Rates in all types of rental accommodation have increased but not dramatically, because the supply of rental units has increased, through the secondary market – secondary suites and investor owned rentals.
 - Workers in the private services sector are challenged to find rental housing that is affordable with their wages. For example, a retail clerk's average wage of \$13.29 means that he or she could not afford to spend more than \$558 monthly on housing without paying more than 30% of their income; a nurse aide making \$18.29 could not pay more than \$768.
 - A single parent with two children receiving Income Assistance receives a shelter allowance of up to \$660. There are very few suitable units in the private market that can be rented in Nelson for this amount.
3. Moderate income families who aspire to homeownership without relocating from Nelson and area and families who are considering moving to Nelson if they can find suitable, affordable housing.
- The median income (2009) for couple families is estimated at \$73,100. Spending 30% of this income on housing would allow them to qualify for a mortgage for a home with a maximum price of \$373,000 with a 10% downpayment and minimal other debt. The average selling price of a detached home in Nelson in 2009 was \$340,000.
 - Moderate income households in the range of \$50 –\$70,000 will have fewer choices in Nelson and may consider less expensive housing in rural areas within commuting distance.
4. Seniors on low fixed incomes, especially those who have supportive care needs, including older single men.
- In early 2010, there were 434 seniors in Nelson receiving a part or all of the allowable Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) supplement. This represents 30% of seniors receiving additional income support.
 - Lake View Village is a recent and welcomed addition to supportive seniors' housing, but too expensive for many seniors. Uniquely, through a partnership facilitated by the Columbia Basin Trust, BC Housing and Golden



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Life Management have entered into a 25-year agreement to subsidize 13 studio units for low income seniors. The demand for these units is high.

Main Housing Issues

Six main housing issues cross over the private and non-market housing sectors:

1. **Lack of Supportive Housing Options.** There are few supportive housing options for the most vulnerable groups, including people with mental health and addictions challenges. This also includes youth and women who are transitioning from supportive housing to independent living and who face great difficulty finding and maintaining housing that is safe, appropriate and affordable.
2. **Lack of Market Rental Housing.** The rental housing market is less diversified than many other urban centres, which means a lack of rental housing for low and moderate income households and households who are not ready / interested in purchasing but expect opportunities to rent suitable, quality housing. The “face rate” rarely includes heating costs, which can be substantial during winter months.
3. **Poor Rental Housing Quality and Conditions.** There were repeated indications of people renting housing in unhealthy and unsafe conditions. This is most prevalent at the “lower end of market” housing, including some secondary suites.
4. **Limited Choice of Housing Types and Sizes.** The majority of of Nelson’s housing stock is in the form of detached homes, 85% of which were built before 1986. In a geographically constrained environment, this lack of choice is a detriment, leading people who would like to live/stay in Nelson to make other choices.
5. **Security of Rental Tenure.** Similar to other desirable communities in BC, some renters are displaced during the summer season as the units are used by their owners, or rented as “vacation homes”. This is more prevalent in rural Nelson than within the City. From another perspective, existing renters in mobile home parks may face the challenge of redevelopment. While several of these parks are outside the City’s boundaries in RDCK, if these were to be redeveloped, the impact would be considerable.
6. **Affordable and Appropriate Housing for Seniors.** While there are a number of seniors housing complexes, seniors have reported that it is difficult to find the right combination of care and affordability. Many seniors would also prefer to stay in their homes, but find it increasingly challenging to maintain their housing due to increasing costs and upkeep.



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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Nelson and surrounding area have experienced an “affordability challenge” similar to other desirable communities in BC, where the increase in housing prices has outpaced wage increases. The abundance of outdoor amenities, friendly, community character and availability of lower cost housing have attracted many people to the area. This in-migration – by near retirees and retirees, recreational homeowners, as well as households relocating from less affordable centres such as Metro Vancouver – has been the primary influence on housing demand.

This level of demand in recent years has put considerable pressure on both the rental and ownership markets, making it increasingly difficult for “original” residents of Nelson to find housing that is appropriate and attainable. This situation has been further exacerbated by the downturn in the forestry sector and job losses in the public sector. Many local residents rely on lower wage service sector jobs and many work two or three jobs to make ends meet.

In a 2009 survey conducted by the City of Nelson, affordable housing was identified as a high priority for the community. In terms of Council priorities, survey respondents ranked developing an affordable housing strategy second behind the development of a sustainability plan:

“Housing is a huge issue, [we] need more housing for students and those just entering the workforce.”

“Nelson is an ideal place to raise a family. Let’s keep it affordable, accessible and attractive.”

“Affordable housing is a big priority. I have lived here for 30 years and I am worried about this issue.”³

In response, the City of Nelson, with the assistance of the Columbia Basin Trust and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), has initiated the development of an affordable housing strategy to address both the current and future housing needs of the community. CitySpaces Consulting was commissioned to undertake this project.

1.1.1 Approach and Purpose

A housing strategy is based on an understanding of the current local housing context, and, to the extent possible, the anticipation of future conditions. The report outlines a set of facts, figures and observations that present a picture of the housing context in Nelson today. It also serves to set the stage for an affordable housing strategy including strategic directions and implementation steps for the coming years.

³ City of Nelson. 2009 Citizen Survey Results.



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The scope of work for this report has been the organization of data and analysis to describe community housing needs; the identification of groups who are in housing need; and discussion of issues affecting Nelson residents today and in the future.

It is acknowledged that this study has been preceded by a considerable amount of research, dialogue and activism in relation to housing. To the extent possible, this analysis seeks to build on the work to date and to present a comprehensive overview of local housing issues. Towards this end, the following activities were undertaken in March and April 2010:

- Meetings and liaison with City planning staff, Mayor and Council;
- Review of relevant consultant reports and studies;
- Analysis of relevant statistics related to housing affordability;
- Several focus-group discussions and participation in local committee meetings;
- Key-informant meetings with a range of service agencies, housing providers and local businesses; and
- An online community survey with 300+ responses.

While the primary focus of this study and the subsequent strategy will be directed towards the City of Nelson, it is recognized that housing issues are never contained within jurisdictional boundaries. As such, the discussion focuses not only on the city of Nelson, but also on the areas within Nelson's service area.

1.1.2 *The Affordable Housing Continuum*

The affordable housing strategy will take into consideration a range of housing products and approaches that span the entire continuum of affordable housing. Shown in the accompanying graphic, Figure 1-1, the "affordable housing continuum" illustrates the five main types of housing for people with low and moderate incomes.

At one end of the continuum, emergency shelters provide temporary shelter and basic services to the homeless and at-risk groups. This is followed by housing for people with low incomes who have additional support service needs and then social housing for individuals and families living independently. Below market housing refers to ownership housing that is priced below market and lastly, low end of market housing, which includes both rental and ownership. The continuum also describes the shift from non-market housing on the far left, where housing is largely subsidized by senior levels of government, to market housing on the far right, which is provided entirely by the private market and does not involve any public subsidy.

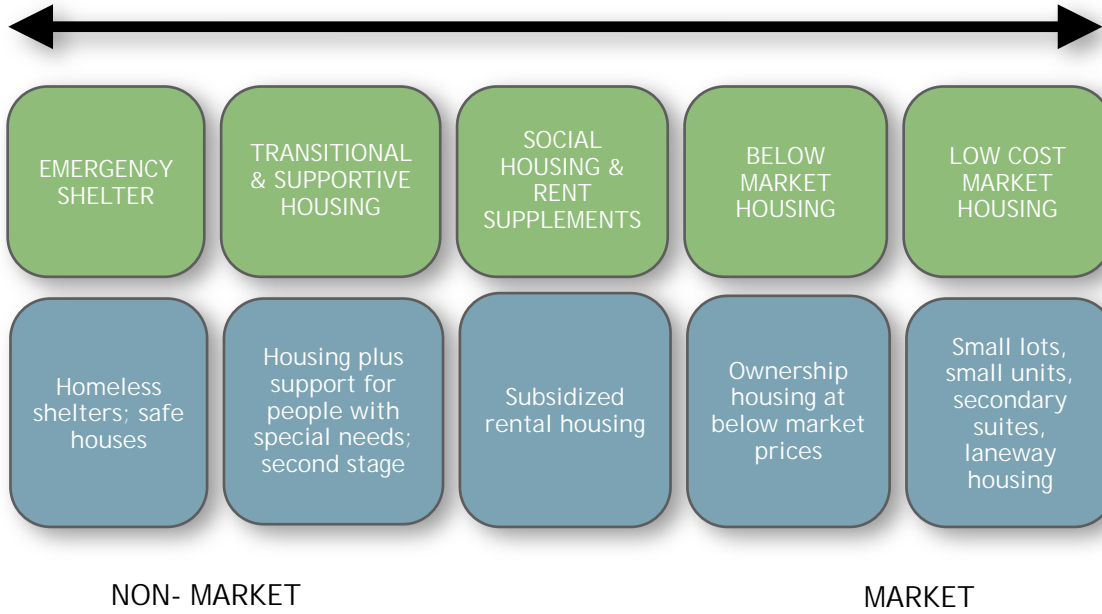


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Figure 1 - 1: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTINUUM



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SECTION 2 MARKET HOUSING

This section sets out the key factors that describe and have considerable influence on the relative affordability of market housing in Nelson – demographic change, employment and income factors, housing prices, the cost of borrowing and, for new housing, the costs of construction. Where possible, the data is presented for Nelson and the Central Kootenay Regional District (RDCK).

2.1 Population Characteristics

2.1.1 Population Change

Nelson and area have not experienced the population growth seen in some other areas of BC, particularly larger urban centres. As reported by the 2006 Census, Nelson had a population of 9,260 residents, which reflects a population decline of approximately 60 people (2.6%) between 2001 and 2006. In fact, the region as a whole realized a loss of approximately 1,500 people during this period, a shift that is uncharacteristic of the province as a whole, which increased its population by 5.3%.

As shown in Table 2-1, BC Stats estimates the Central Kootenay Regional District will increase its population by approximately 13% or 7,500 people by 2016. This reflects population growth estimates at an annual rate of 0.7% per year between 2006 and 2016 and 0.6% between 2016 and 2026.⁴ If the same estimated rates of growth were achieved in Nelson, the city's population would grow by roughly 1,200 people by 2026. On average, using a conservative number of persons per household of 2.0, this would generate an increase of approximate 30 additional housing units per year.



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Area	2001	2006	2016	2026
Central Kootenay RD	58,000	56,480	60,520	64,000
City of Nelson	9,320	9,260	9,900	10,500

Source: Statistics Canada Census; BC Stats P.E. O.P.L.E. 34 Projections

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2.1.2 Age Profile

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One of the other primary factors for housing demand is population change by age. It is anticipated that the aging of the population in BC and Canada as a whole over the next two decades will have significant implications on housing demand, in terms of

⁴ Rates of change from BC Stats PEOPLE 34 - Projections 2009-2036 used to adjust City of Nelson population figures. Please note that differences between BC Stats population estimates and the Population Census are due to adjustments made by BC Stats to account for the Census undercount.

the number of additional units and housing form. As pointed out in Dr. George Penfold's comprehensive report, *Affordable Housing Assessment and Strategic Planning: The Columbia Basin and Boundary Regions*, "As the population gets older, there are fewer children and therefore fewer people living in each household. Because of an aging population, most local areas experienced a decline in the average number of people in each household. As a result, even though the overall population declined, an aging population has resulted in new household formations."⁵

In addition, increasing life expectancies and a trend towards couples living longer together, will lead to a shift in demand away from institutional dwellings and rental apartments to more ground oriented units and apartments in private housing. This would be further facilitated by the availability of home care and other services that enable seniors to stay in their homes for longer periods.

As shown in Figure 2-1, for the years 2001 and 2006, the distribution of Nelson's population by age showed declines in the younger age groups (children and youth). There was also a small drop in the group in the family formation stage of the population (between 25 and 44 years). This may be attributed to a lack of employment opportunities and/or options that were affordable or suitable for young families in that time period. The age group that showed a marked increase was the 45 to 64 age group. This increase is largely reflective of aging of existing residents, but, in part, it may have reflected in-migration by households in the "empty nest" stage, with a desire to make a change in their lifestyle.

Since 2006, the City, together with Community Futures and other economic organizations, have been aggressive in promoting Nelson as a great place to work and raise a family. Results from recent surveys of "new residents" have found that younger people and couples in the family-forming years are increasingly attracted to Nelson. In 2009, the survey canvassed 257 households – the age profile of these new residents is also charted on Figure 2-1. It is a marked contrast to the age profiles of the previous census⁶.



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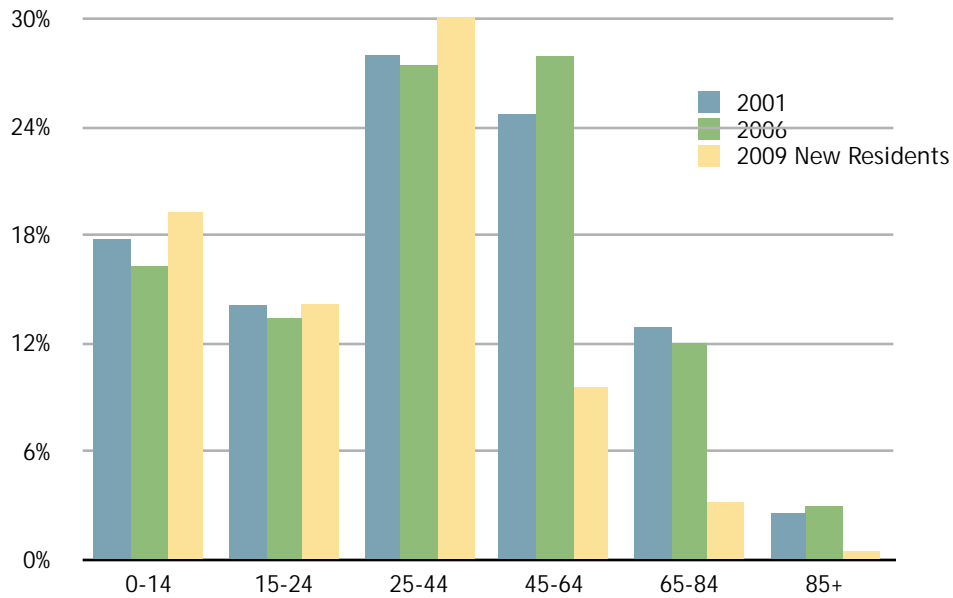
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⁵ George Penfold, *Regional Innovation Chair, Selkirk College. Affordable Housing Assessment and Strategic Planning: The Columbia Basin and Boundary Regions, BC. March 2009*

⁶ Note: Similar data is not available for people who moved away from Nelson and, in that respect, it is an incomplete examination of the population dynamics.

Figure 2-1: Population Distribution by Age Groups



Sources: Statistics Canada Census; Community Futures Central Kootenay

2.1.3 Household Types

Table 2-2 shows that Nelson had fewer couples and families with children, proportionally, than BC as a whole in 2006. There is a greater share of single person households, which corresponds with a smaller average household size. Other households refers to single parent families and multiple family households living together in the same dwelling.

There are over 4,000 households in the Nelson with an average of 2.2 persons per household – compared to the average household size in BC of 2.5 persons per household.



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Household Types	Nelson	BC
Couple households with children	20%	26%
Couple households without children	24%	30%
One-person households	36%	28%
Other households	19%	16%
Average household size	2.2	2.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Population Census

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2.2 Housing Characteristics

2.2.1 Dwellings and Properties

According to the 2006 Census, Nelson had a total of 4,160 occupied private dwellings. The housing stock is comprised entirely of low-rise structures – 59% in single detached dwellings, 17% in other ground-oriented houses such as duplexes and rowhouses, 2% in mobile homes and other dwellings, and 22% in low-rise apartment buildings under five storeys.⁷ Approximately 85% of this stock was built before 1986 and is now more than 25 years old.

It is important to note that the Census only captures the stock that is occupied by a primary resident. It would not capture properties that are used as second homes or recreational property and not rented out to a local resident at the time of enumeration. Table 2-3 presents the assessed properties for the Nelson region as

Residential Property Types	Nelson Region	% of Total
Single Detached	4,951	53%
Acreage	1,895	20%
Multi-family	536	6%
Strata Condominium	292	3%
Seasonal/Recreational	792	9%
Manufactured Home	812	9%
Total Properties	9,278	100%
Vacant	2,591	

presented in a 2008 report for the Central Kootenay Regional District.⁸

Unlike the Census count of dwellings in Nelson, the analysis of the assessment roll data in the 2008 Penfold report shows a greater percentage of single detached properties in the greater Nelson area (73% of single family plus acreage properties compared to 59% in Nelson) and properties with manufactured houses (9% in the

⁷ Due to changes in the Census enumeration process, 2006 housing structure type data at sub-category levels cannot be compared to those from previous Census years.

⁸ Penfold, G. & Dhillon, A. 2008. *Assessment Types, Values and Ownership, 2001 and 2008. Regional District of Central Kootenay. The Nelson region includes the City of Nelson, Village of Slocan and Electoral Areas E, F and the eastern part of Area H.*



Nelson region compared to 2% in the city). Seasonal and recreational property accounted for 9% of all properties in Nelson and area (not included in the Census dwelling count).

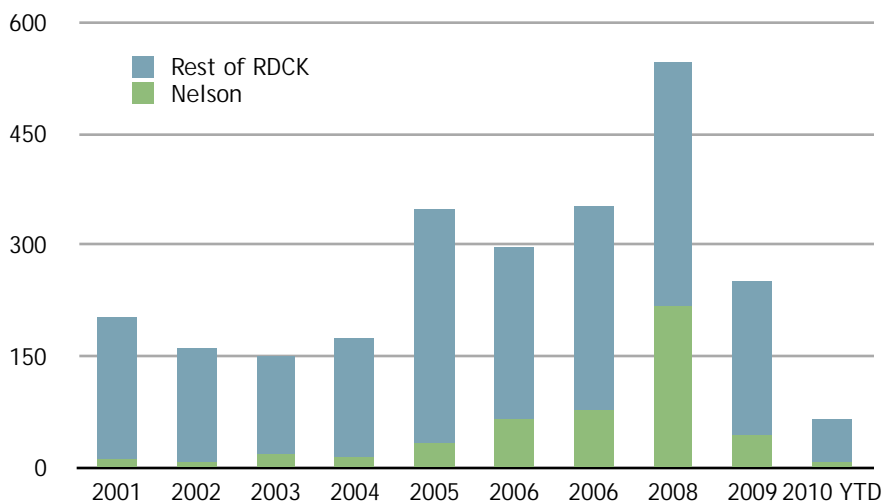
Multi-family properties in this data set include detached homes with basement suites, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, apartment blocks and purpose-built rental buildings. This number of multi-family properties in the BC Assessment data set is lower than the dwelling count in the Census as it refers to the total number of residential properties (titles) and not the number of units.

The 2008 Penfold report estimates that 10% of properties in the Nelson area were owned by non-residents in 2008. While some of these may be rented to people with a local primary residence, others may be held as second homes for seasonal use or as future retirement homes. This ownership pattern could potentially affect price and attainability of housing for local residents.

2.2.2 Residential Building Activity

As is evident from Figure 2-2A, the number of residential building permits in the Central Kootenays soared between 2005 and 2008, a trend that was even more pronounced in the East Kootenays. Statistics for 2009 and year-to-date for 2010 show a considerably different pattern. This is, in part, reflective of global economic events and may also indicate a local “overbuild” in 2008, and, consequentially,

Figure 2-2A: All Residential Building Permits, Nelson and Rest of



Source: BC Stats. Building Permits. YTD = January through April, 2010

prolonged absorption of new units.



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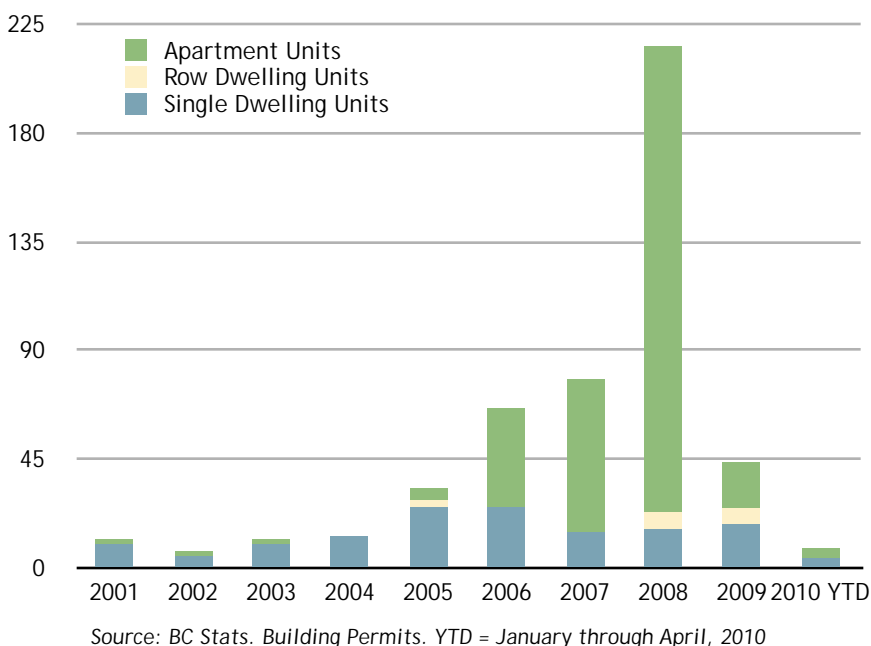
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Nelson experienced a spike in residential development activity, with building permits in the latter part of the decade quadrupling the number of permits issued in the earlier half of the decade as illustrated in Figure 2-2B. The large number of apartment building permits in 2008 reflects the condo and supportive living projects in Lower Fairview.

Despite the economic downturn of 2008-2009, residential development and renovation activity remained relatively strong in 2009, with 44 permits issued at a value of more than nine million dollars. Although 2010 year-to-date statistics reflect only the first quarter of the year, activity was minimal during this period.

Figure 2-2B: Residential Building Permits by Unit Type, City of Nelson



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2.2.3 Rental Housing Stock

The 2006 Census reported that just over 1,500 dwelling units, or about 37% of private dwellings were rented in Nelson and 63% were owned (2,600 dwellings). This proportion of rental was somewhat above average for the province, where 30% of dwellings were rented and 70% owned. In the Nelson region (including Slocan and surrounding electoral areas), there was a 3.3% decline in the percentage of rental households between 2001 and 2006.⁹ This decline in rental housing was experienced in varying degrees in many communities throughout BC during this period. Strong

⁹ Penfold, G. 2009. *Affordable Housing Assessment and Strategic Planning*.

economic conditions and a favourable market context (low interest rates and attractive financing terms) encouraged many renters to become homeowners. Related to this pattern is the limited supply of new rental units being added to the housing supply. The investment context in the past few decades has generally supported the conversion of rental buildings into strata condominiums and created a disincentive for the development of new rental buildings, which has further exacerbated the rental housing shortage.

In the absence of new rental units, secondary suites in detached houses have made a large contribution to Nelson's rental stock. Having Selkirk College in the community creates additional demand for low cost rental housing. With limited construction of new purpose-built rental housing, secondary suites have come to play a major role in the area of lower cost rental. This is a common pattern in all BC communities where there is both a shortage of rental housing and need for extra income for home owners – commonly referred to as the “mortgage helper”.

Established in 1987, the City of Nelson's secondary suite policy allowed suites in all residential zones – a very progressive policy at that time. In 2009, an amendment to the zoning bylaw was revised to permit suites and duplexes on smaller lots. According to the City's records, there are almost 200 legal secondary suites in Nelson, but the number of illegal suites cannot be verified.¹⁰ Disincentives to legalization may include the costs associated with upgrading older suites to comply with the provisions of the *BC Building Code* or the additional utility charges and fees levied by the municipality.

2.2.4 Seniors' Facility – Lake View Village

Lake View Village is a recent and welcomed addition to seniors' housing options in Nelson. The privately-run facility, located in the newly developed Lower Fairview neighbourhood, provides both independent living and assisted living options. There are 90 suites, including studios, one and two bedroom suites. In conversation with a representative of the operator – Golden Life Management – we learned that the facility is almost fully occupied. Residents are predominantly from Nelson and area and generally are aged 75+. Uniquely, through a partnership facilitated by the Columbia Basin Trust, BC Housing and Golden Life Management have entered into a 25-year agreement to subsidize 13 studio units for low income households. To secure this arrangement, BC Housing assisted with capital financing through the Provincial Housing Endowment Fund.



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¹⁰ Personal communication with City of Nelson planning staff, April 2010.

2.3 Income and Employment Characteristics

Employment patterns and opportunities have a strong influence on housing demand and household income levels relate directly to housing affordability.

2.3.1 Employment Patterns

In recent years, Nelson and area has experienced a downturn in the forestry sector and layoffs in the public sector. As a result, the region's reliance on these sectors has declined, while there have been some increases in the tourism and high tech sectors. Overall, labour force participation rates in the region are lower than elsewhere in BC. This may in part be related to the level of dependence on an illegal underground economy based on the production and trade of marijuana. The reliance on this type of a "cash" economy could have serious implications on housing prices, reduction in labour supply as well as other social and community costs and impacts.¹¹

As is evident from the place of work versus place of residence data in the 2006 Census, as shown in Table 2-4, almost as many people live outside the community and commute into Nelson (3,070 people) as there are residents who work and live in Nelson (2,995 people). In addition, about 12% of the population in the labour force and living in Nelson commute to other communities for work (425 people).

Several key-informants reported living in areas outside of Nelson, such as the North Shore or Slocan Valley, in part, because of lower housing costs and property taxes.



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Live in Nelson Commute to Work Elsewhere	Live & Work in Nelson	Total - Live in Nelson	Work in Nelson, Live Elsewhere
425	2,995	3,420	3,070
2006 Census of Canada			

Community Futures Central Kootenay undertakes an annual survey of "New Residents" to Nelson on behalf of the Nelson Economic Development Partnership. During the past three years, the survey has shown that "Nelson continues to attract a disproportionate number of younger new residents (i.e., age groups 0-4, 20-24, 25-44) ... these numbers defy the trend in most Canadian rural communities that are seeing few young migrants and many older ones.¹²" The 2009 survey also revealed that almost two-thirds of new residents cite a "lifestyle change" as a reason to move

¹¹ Penfold, G. January 2010. *Economic Overview: West Kootenay Boundary*.

¹² *Community Futures. Media Release. July 25, 2009.*

to Nelson, followed by one-third wanting to be closer to family. Only five percent indicated to “retire or semi-retire”.

Human Resources personnel from Pacific Insight Electronics and Whitewater Resort spoke with the consultants regarding housing. Pacific Insight Electronics is continually recruiting staff, primarily technical and professional, from the West Coast, Ontario and Calgary. Some new employees prefer to rent for three to six months before moving permanently to the area and find it challenging to find suitable urban-style accommodation. The condominium units at Silver Bay are popular and the firm has an arrangement with Kokanee Glacier Resort for monthly rentals. In terms of home ownership, a number of employees have chosen to commute from Castlegar and elsewhere in the Valley, finding “more house for your money” than in Nelson where prices are higher.

The Whitewater experience is different. The resort hires 40-80 employees for the winter season and have no staff accommodation at the resort. Housing hasn’t been a problem to date since the resort is close to town and seasonal employees are generally agreeable to “living under college conditions”. Management staff have not indicated any problem with housing. The long-term Master Plan¹³ for expansion does identify some staff-type accommodation (e.g., hostel, caretaker suites) but it is not the intention to develop a “village” similar to Whistler or Sun Peaks. It is expected that most employees will continue to live off the hill.

2.3.2 Household Incomes

There is a direct relationship between a household’s income and the ability to pay for shelter. In 2007, families in Nelson (including couples with or without children and single parent families) had a median income of \$60,980, which was 9% higher than the region’s median income for families (\$55,930) and yet 7% lower than the median income for the province as a whole (\$65,780).¹⁴

Table 2-5 shows the differentiation in income level of different household types in Nelson. Couple families earning the median income will have the greatest choice in the housing market as they have a median income that is 2.4 times greater than the median income of single parent families and more than three times that of single person households. The median incomes are based on taxfiler reported data tabulated by Statistics Canada and adjusted to 2009 figures using BC Labour Force Survey wage rates.



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¹³ The Master Plan was given final approval by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts on June 4th, 2010.

¹⁴ Median household income — 50% of households have incomes less than the median income and 50% have more than the median income.

Table 2-5: Median Income (2007, 2009 Estimate)			
Household Type	Number of Households 2007	Median Income 2007	Median Income Estimate 2009
All Families (CF + SPF)	4,390	\$60,980	\$65,300
Couple Family	3,630	\$68,270	\$73,100
Single Parent Family	760	\$28,760	\$30,800
One-Person Household	3,140	\$21,760	\$23,300

Source: Statistics Canada, Small Area Data based on taxfiler reporting adjusted to 2009 levels.

2.3.3 Incomes and Wages

Table 2-6 shows average hourly wages for selected job classifications in the Kootenays and Metro Vancouver.¹⁵ For most of the jobs, particularly the service sector and lower earning jobs, the wages were found to be lower in the Kootenays compared to Metro Vancouver. For two listed occupations, namely secondary school teachers and office clerks, the wages were higher in the Kootenays.

“Often people with low wage jobs can only afford sub-standard housing. Their options are very limited.” -- Survey respondent

Table 2-6 also shows the amount an individual living in the Kootenays could afford to pay for housing without exceeding 30% of their income. This assumes the individual has a permanent position and works 35 hours per week. A single person working in the hospitality, tourism, or early childhood education fields would have a very difficult time finding suitable rental housing, without “doubling up” or sharing housing with friends or family.



Table 2-6: Representative Wages			
Representative Wages	Most Frequent Wage Metro Vancouver	Most Frequent Wage Kootenays	Available Monthly for Housing @ 30% Gross Income
BC Minimum Wage	\$8		\$336
Food and Beverage	\$9.91	\$9.82	\$412
Hotel Front Desk Clerks	\$13.55	\$12.13	\$509
Retail Sales Clerks	\$14.57	\$13.29	\$558
Early Childhood Educator	\$16.39	\$15.69	\$659
Nurse Aides	\$18.88	\$18.29	\$768
Office Clerks	\$19.15	\$19.75	\$830
Truck Drivers	\$23.03	\$23.06	\$969
Secondary School Teachers	\$29.91	\$38.82	\$1,630

¹⁵ The job classification and wages information is based on the Federal Labour Market Information (LMI). www.labourmarketinformation.ca/ The LMI does not report for individual municipalities.

Our research also included employers or employer groups who have a long term interest in attracting and retaining professional, technical and managerial personnel. It was noted that people coming to Nelson are accustomed to more “choice in the market”, particularly in the rental market. For some employers, the lack of suitable housing is a deterrent to attracting personnel. This was particularly notable in mid-decade when the labour market was tight.

2.3.4 Income Assistance

As of 2010, there was an average of 271 recipients of Income Assistance (IA) in Nelson, a 12% increase since 2008. The number of recipients receiving longer term assistance under the two disability categories – Persons with Persistent Multiple Barriers (PPMB) and Persons with Disabilities (PWD) – also increased. The Regional District experienced a greater reliance on Income Assistance with a 21% increase in recipients, as did BC with a 24% increase in recipients between 2008 and 2010.

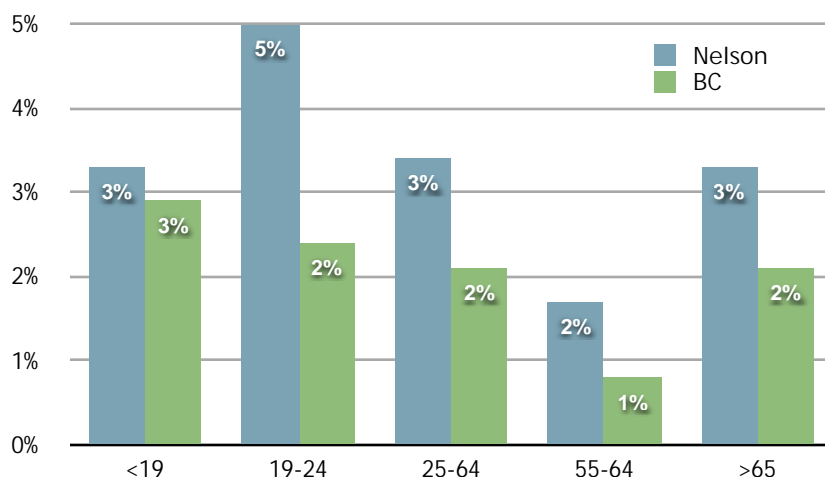
“There is no subsidized housing for single persons on disability. I pay a reasonable rent compared to the area, but housing is 80% of my income. In a rural area, I would need a vehicle due to a lack of adequate transit.” -- Survey Respondent

While the increase in the number of IA recipients was relatively small in Nelson compared to the region or the province, the percentage of the

population relying on IA was notably greater. As shown in Figure 2-3 among all age groups, the percentage of the population that received Income Assistance was one or two percentage points higher than BC. Among youth in the 19 to 24 age group, the difference was greater with 5% of this group receiving IA compared to only 2% provincially.



Figure 2-3: Income Assistance as a Percentage of Population by Age, 2010



Source: BC Stats

As an example of income assistance levels, a single parent with two children who is eligible for IA could receive \$375.58 per month plus a shelter allowance of up to \$660.00. This would be supplemented by the BC Family Bonus program in the amount of \$123.50 per child.

2.3.5 Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement

Almost all of today's seniors receive income from Canada's pension system through the Old Age Security (OAS) program and the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP). For the period of July-September 2009, the maximum monthly benefit from OAS for a retired person age 65 or older was set at \$516.96 (indexed quarterly to the Consumer Price Index). Low income Canadians can also apply for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), which provides a maximum of \$652.51 monthly. In 2010, there were 434 seniors in Nelson receiving a part or all of the allowable GIS supplement. This represents 30% of seniors receiving additional income support.

2.4 Housing Affordability

There are three factors that directly impact housing affordability in every community – the price of housing, household income, and for aspiring home owners, the costs of borrowing. For new construction, a fourth factor is the cost of labour, materials and interim financing.

House prices have increased substantially over the past 10 years in Nelson and area, despite the shift in the economic base away from forestry. Higher prices are, in part, attributed to increasing demand from second home owners and "lifestyle migrants", as well as improved post-secondary educational opportunities, and a more diversified economic base. Since Nelson is a relatively small market, when there is a significant shift – for example, a locally large employer either up-sizing or down-sizing, a major capital project that attracts additional workers – the housing market is very quickly affected. This impact would be more diluted, for example, in a larger market.

2.4.1 Housing Prices

In Nelson, housing prices have risen considerably over the past five years with the average price of a detached home increasing by 80% between 2004 and 2009, as shown on Figure 2-4.

- In 2009, the average sale price for a detached house in Nelson was \$340,000 and \$346,000 in rural Nelson. Between 2008 and 2009, average prices dropped by 5% in Nelson and 24% in rural Nelson. The substantial drop in rural Nelson may be a reflection of over-zealous pricing as a result of heightened demand for recreational/waterfront properties.

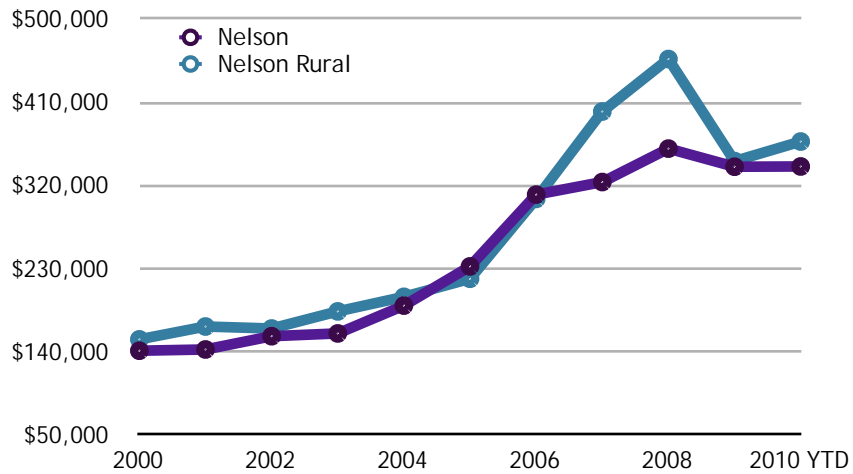


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Figure 2-4: Average Resale Prices, Single Detached Houses



Source: Kootenay Real Estate Board. YTD figures are January through May.

To supplement the data on single detached home sales, the consultants undertook a March 2010 scan of the Multiple Listing Service (MLS). This provides a snapshot on prices for other housing types, including condo apartment, duplex, townhouse and mobile homes.

- The average listing price for a condo apartment was \$261,000 and the average listing price for a duplex or townhouse was \$344,000. Mobile home listings were by far the most affordable with an average price of \$97,000. These listings primarily represent properties that are up for resale and not newly constructed homes.¹⁶
- Noting that the single detached house prices are from 2009 and the listing data for townhouses and duplexes was from 2010, there is still considerable similarity in price between the two housing types. This is likely due to the fact that there are far fewer townhouses and duplexes in Nelson and many are newer properties constructed during the building boom of the past eight years. On the other hand, the majority of the single detached stock is older than 25 years and may be in need of upgrades or repair.



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2.4.2 Rental Units and Rates

Some key informants suggested that land values have put pressure on landowners to redevelop rental buildings that formerly housed Nelson's lower income residents. Overall, there is a reported decline in the number of affordable rental units and

¹⁶ The snapshot of listing prices was captured on April 15, 2010. There were a total of 14 apartment listings with an average size of 996 sf, 16 duplexes and rowhouses with an average size of 1,728 sf and 8 mobile home listings with an average size of 1,112 sf.

there are practically no units available at rents that are affordable to individuals receiving Income Assistance. There was also a concern expressed about the loss of rental units through stratification. However, City staff have indicated that this may more perception than fact, as very few units have been converted in recent years.

The average rent estimates shown in Table 2-7 are based on rental listings information from March and April 2010.¹⁷ Among the 35 active listings, average rents ranged roughly from \$800 to \$1,250. The majority of rental listings did not include utilities (77%), which could add between \$50 and \$150 per month depending on the unit/house and season. The listings were located in Nelson’s residential neighbourhoods and areas immediately surrounding Nelson, e.g., the North Shore and Slocan Valley.

During the same two-week rental market snapshot, for every three listings advertising a place to rent, there were two listings by individuals seeking rental accommodation (“rentals wanted”). In total, there were 35 classified listings advertised by renters seeking housing – 51% by families or couples, 34% by singles and the rest by students (11%) and one senior.



		Apt/ Condo	Suite in House	House/ Cottage
Average	Independent	\$807	\$857	\$1,242
	Shared	—	—	\$543
# of Listings	Independent	10	11	14
	Shared	1	2	12

Source: CitySpaces Consulting

Rents rates for *purpose-built apartment buildings* are shown in Table 2-8A. The source of this data is CMHC based on its annual survey conducted in October.

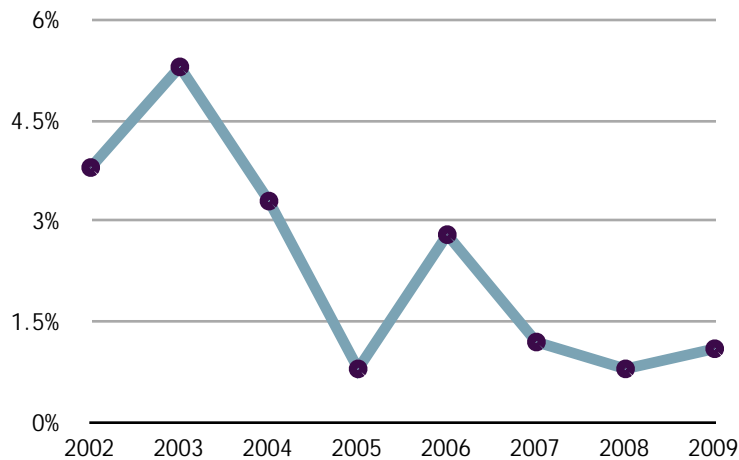
Purpose-Built Apartments (2009)	Average Rent
Bachelor/Studio	\$481
1 Bedroom	\$587
2 Bedroom	\$709
3 Bedroom	\$905

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

¹⁷ Rental listings were taken from classifieds in the Nelson Daily News, ILoveNelson.com, and NelsonGyos.ca. between March 30 and April 13, 2010.

In terms of vacancy, Figure 2-4A shows the pattern from 2002 through 2009. Since 2006, rates have hovered around 1%. Typically, anything less than a 3% vacancy is an indication of a “tight market”.

Figure 2-4A: Vacancy Rate, Purpose Built Rental, 2002 - 2009



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

West Kootenay Landlords Society. A representative of this society confirmed that both the traditional and secondary rental markets have few posted vacancies, and it is particularly difficult for renters to find three-bedroom units. He felt that this was a unique challenge for families with well-paying jobs wanting to relocate to Nelson but not being ready to purchase.

“ As a landlord, we found it hard to find an appropriate renter. There were too many not-serious phone calls. It would be nice to have a free and safe place to go to to find renters - I am sure that renters feel the same. ...” -- Survey Respondent

He noted that there are a number of investor-owned units in the recently constructed Amber Bay and Silver Bay condominiums, with rents for one-bedrooms approximately \$1,100 and for two-bedrooms \$1,500 and up. These units provide a more familiar product for people relocating to Nelson from metropolitan markets.

Student Housing. Currently, most Selkirk College students are housed in the private market, often renting a room or sharing a house with other students. In conversation with several students, it was learned that a small one bedroom in Nelson is generally \$200+ more per month than in Castlegar. Rather than trying to find housing in Nelson, many commute from Castlegar and further afield, including Fruitvale and Trail. The students also noted that landlords are reluctant to rent to them, especially those with pets. Students agree that the renovations to the 10th Street campus residence (underway Spring, 2010) will be very helpful – adding about 100 rooms for students.



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Selkirk College's Tenth Street residence is currently being retrofitted, having been closed since 2003. When the \$7 million project is complete in September 2011, about 100 students will be accommodated in single rooms with central amenities or in 3 and 5 bedroom 'pods' with shared living spaces. This will help alleviate the shortage of housing that is affordable to students, and should free up rental units in Nelson. There is no campus housing planned for couples attending the college and students with families.

Selkirk College links students with landlords through its website – <http://selkirk.ca/students/kootenay-life/off-campus-housing/listings/>. As of early July, 2010, there were 23 landlord listings in the city of Nelson in the range of \$400-\$500, almost entirely in shared accommodation. Twenty-six were listed in the \$500-\$700 range, a mix of shared accommodation or one bedrooms. Four were listed between \$700-\$900, either one or two bedrooms.

In 2006, Selkirk College undertook a "student satisfaction survey" which included a special section on housing. The following are some of the highlights from this survey as they relate to students attending campuses in Nelson.

- 61% of students at the Tenth Street campus rated their experience in finding appropriate housing as "difficult" or "very difficult". The equivalent figure for Silver King was 35%.
- 24% of students at the Tenth Street campus indicated they were "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" with their current living situation. For Silver King the figure was 13%, and for all campuses it was 13%.



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In conversation with the Selkirk College's Director, Student and Enrolment Services / Registrar, it was noted that the highest demand comes during spring and summer when students are considering a placement at Selkirk. Although the college doesn't track statistics, it was noted that prospective students and their parents who have had to turn down a placement due to lack of suitable housing. Finding quality rentals in Nelson has been especially challenging.

In interviews and focus groups, we also heard that good rental units rarely are advertised and the best places are secured through networks of family, friends and co-workers.

2.4.3 *Cost of Borrowing*

The third key factor in housing affordability is the cost of borrowing.

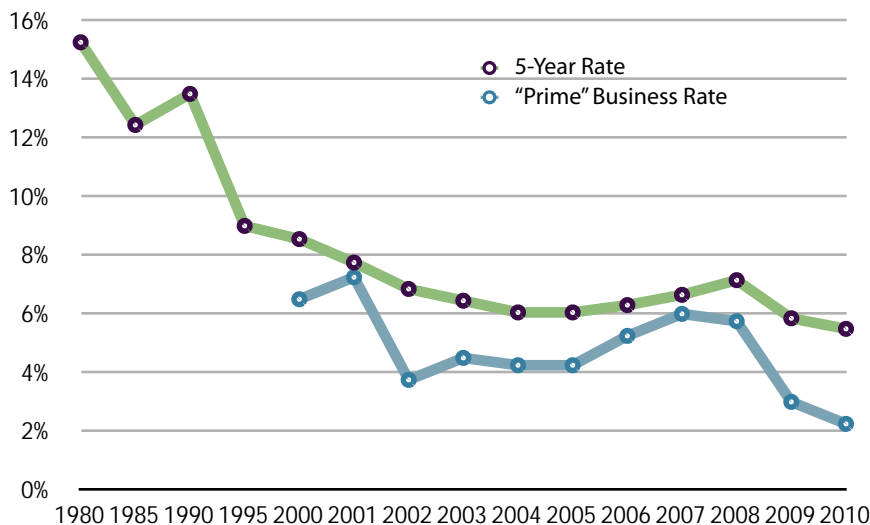
In the context of the "cost of borrowing", aspiring home owners, or home owners planning to move up in the market, this relates to the prevailing mortgage rate – the higher this rate, the fewer households will qualify for a mortgage from conventional lenders – banks, credit unions and mortgage brokers. In early 2010, rates were at a

historic low. At the time of this report, the posted rate for a three-year fixed term is 3.99% and the five-year fixed term is 4.59%.¹⁸

In September 1981, when rates exceeded 21%, a \$200,000 25-year mortgage cost more to carry than a \$500,000 mortgage in 2010.¹⁹ If mortgage rates were to increase faster than labour rates in the coming years, fewer households would qualify for home ownership, but also there would be a risk of housing instability and an excessive debt burden in communities across the country. Young adults who aspire to home ownership have not lived through a period of either high inflation or high interest rates. Figure 2-5 shows the 5-year rate for a conventional mortgage for the period between 1980 and 2010, along with the “prime” business borrowing rate since 2000. The Bank of Canada has been very successful in managing interest rates and inflation, boding well for a young generation of new homeowners.

For developers, builders, trades and suppliers, the cost of borrowing is also a very important consideration. During the “credit crisis” of 2008/09, when the cost of borrowing increased considerably, planned projects were postponed, some indefinitely. As of early 2010, access to more affordable financing has improved, allowing developers to consider reviving dormant projects or considering new ventures.

Figure 2-5: Cost of Borrowing (1980-2010)



Source: Bank of Canada and CMHC



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¹⁸ ING Direct, April 28, 2010.

¹⁹ Bank of Canada.

2.4.4 Cost of Construction

With respect to the fourth key factor “costs of construction”, in major markets in BC during the middle of the 2005-2008 boom, these costs were appreciating about 1% per month. The demand for labour was much higher than supply, resulting in labour premiums. The past two years have seen a pull-back in the residential construction sector and, in some markets, there is more competition, resulting in a decrease in construction costs from their peak in early 2008.

Nelson and other smaller, high amenity communities, such as Fernie and Tofino have unique circumstances in relation to new residential construction. Due to their relatively small size, the specialty trades labour force also tends to be small and, in periods of high demand, labour prices appreciate. Additionally, for larger multi-unit projects, contractors often need to bring in labour from other communities, adding to the costs of construction. The extra costs of materials’ transportation are also a factor that adds to housing costs.

Within the scope of this project, the consultants were not able to secure any reliable, over-time statistics on the costs of construction in Nelson.

2.4.5 The Affordability Context

As established by CMHC, the national affordability threshold is 30% of gross household income. Typically, households who spend less than 30% of their gross income on housing are considered to have “affordable housing”.

In Nelson and surrounding region, house prices increased substantially between 2001 and 2008, although there has been a levelling off since then. Within this context of positive growth in real estate activity and increased demand from second home owners and lifestyle migrants, the cost of purchasing a ground-oriented home has become less accessible to some existing residents, particularly younger couples and families with moderate incomes. As a result, some households choose to live in smaller houses or condominium apartments, or are spending more than 30% of their household income on shelter.

Qualifying Household Incomes for Buyers. The following analysis describes the income levels required for a household to buy an averagely-priced home in Nelson.

- To purchase an averagely-priced single detached house in Nelson at \$340,000 with a 10% downpayment, a household income of \$67,000 would be needed to qualify for a mortgage. The average price for a townhouse or duplexes is more or less the same as that of a single detached house and would thereby require a similar income. This presumes that the household has a downpayment of \$34,000 and no additional debts or liabilities.



- The average-priced condo apartment is far more accessible at \$260,000. A household would require an income of \$54,000 to qualify for financing for this type of unit. While these prices are accessible to many more families and households in Nelson, there is far less supply available in this product type and some families with children may find this housing form to be less desirable than detached homes and townhouses.

Table 2-9 shows the gross median incomes by different household types in Nelson. It is apparent that those with the most choice will be couple households who are at or above the median income of \$73,000. This income level is more than double that of single parent families with median incomes and more than three times that of single individuals at the median income.

Table 2-9: Households by Median Income (2009)		
Household Type	Percent of Households	Median Income 2009
Families (Incl. CF+SPF)	58%	\$65,300
- Couple Families	48%	\$73,100
- Single Parent Families	10%	\$30,800
Unattached Individuals	42%	\$23,300
Source: Statistics Canada Small Area Data . ¹⁶		



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Table 2-10 presents calculations as to how much each household type could afford on a monthly basis on rent (based on 30% of gross income) and how much they could afford to pay for a home, at current interest rates and with a 10% downpayment.

Table 2-10: Households by Ability to Afford Housing (2009) ¹⁶		
Household Type	Income Available for Rent (30%)	Maximum Purchase Price (10% Downpayment)
Families (Incl. CF+SPF)	\$1,630	\$328,000
- Couple Families	\$1,830	\$373,000
- Single Parent Families	\$770	\$125,000
Unattached Individuals	\$580	\$81,000
Source: CitySpaces Consulting		

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- Looked at on a monthly basis – couple families at the median income can afford to spend around \$1,800 on housing, while single parent families can afford \$770 per month.
- In terms of purchasing power, with a 10% downpayment, a couple family earning the median income can afford a home of \$373,000 – higher than the average selling price of a detached home in Nelson in 2009. This indicates that more than half of couple families can afford the average price of a detached home. And, may choose to spend more than 30% of their income in order to accelerate the principal reduction of their home mortgage.

Single people and single parents have considerably less income and, therefore, considerably less choice in any housing market. This holds true in Nelson.

- Without spending more than 30% of their income on housing, single parents can afford to spend \$770 of their monthly income on rent – falling in the range of a one-bedroom unit available through the secondary market (rented by individual owners) or a two bedroom unit in the purpose-built rental stock. These types of units may or may not be suitable to single parent families and, given the low vacancy rates, it may be difficult to attain such rental units in a tight rental market. And, as previously noted, the extra costs of heat and other utilities can add substantially to housing costs.
- At the median income, a single parent family would not qualify for a mortgage to support the purchase of a single detached house or a townhouse in Nelson. While they could afford to purchase a mobile home (at an average price of under \$100,000), they may not qualify if the pad rental rates are high enough to increase their gross debt service ratio beyond 32% of their gross income.
- The median income for one-person households is approximately \$23,000, which means they can afford monthly housing costs of about \$580. This would allow access to shared accommodation in the secondary rental market or a one bedroom unit in one of the purpose-built apartment buildings. This income level effectively precludes single people from home ownership.

“Many landlords in this city discriminate against single parents and children. I have been refused housing many times as a single mother.” -- Survey Respondent



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Other Factors Affecting Home Ownership Affordability. In addition to household income, there are many personal factors that affect a household’s ability to afford a home, including outstanding indebtedness, security of employment, and major planned expenditures. But, there are also some systemic factors that are relevant in the overall BC context.

- The Home Owner Grant helps reduce the amount of residential property tax British Columbians pay. Home owners with an assessed value of up to

\$1,050,000 may claim 100% of this grant. For 2010, the Home Owner Grant is reduced on higher-valued properties by \$5 for each \$1,000 of assessed value over \$1,050,000. The basic grant is eliminated on homes assessed at \$1,164,000.

- In 2007, there were 1,853 claimants of the Home Owner Grant in Nelson who were under 65 years and 703 claimants who were over 65 years.
- The First Time Home Buyers' Program allows eligible buyers to claim an exemption from the Property Transfer Tax if the value of the home is less than \$425,000. Many first time buyers in Nelson should be able to take advantage of program.
- The Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) — a combination of the GST and PST — will potentially increase the cost of newly constructed housing when it comes into effect for new housing on July 1, 2010. However, as this tax is not applicable for new housing under \$525,000, this is not likely to be significant factor in the Nelson housing market.



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SECTION 3 THE NON-MARKET HOUSING SECTOR

This section of the report focusses on the non-market sector. It provides information about Nelson and area residents who are challenged to participate in the regular “supply and demand” housing market, along with information from service and housing providers who work with these residents.

3.1 Core Need

CMHC defines households in “core housing need” as those who are paying more than 30% of their pre-tax income for shelter, live in crowded conditions, and/or if they live in a home in need of major repairs.²⁰ While the number of households in core housing need is not specifically available for Nelson, CMHC has produced statistics for the number of households in core housing need at a regional district level.

Households who do not have a choice, but must spend 30% or more of their gross incomes for suitable, adequate housing are considered to be in “core housing need.”

- In 2006, the number of households determined to be in core housing need in the RDCK was 4,365. By applying the same ratio of total households in core need in the RDCK (19%) to the total households in Nelson (4,160) results in a figure of 790 core need households in Nelson.
- Compared to the province as a whole in 2006, where 15% of households were reported to be in core housing need, households in the RDCK faced a greater level of need.
- The need in RDCK is particularly pronounced among renter households where 37% were found to be in core need compared to 14% among owner-occupied households. (Note: For owner-occupied households, the figures are less evident as some households may choose to pay more than 30% of their income on housing, and have the means to do so, and would not therefore be in core housing need. To illustrate – a couple household with a combined gross income of \$150,000 might choose to spend 40% of their annual income [\$60,000] to accelerate the reduction on their home mortgage, leaving \$90,000 for all other expenditures.)
- Between Census periods, the core need figures show some level of improvement in the region as the total share of households in core housing need dropped from 21% in 2001 to 19% in 2006.



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²⁰ Households where the primary maintainer is 15 to 29 years and attending school full time are considered to be in a transitional stage and therefore not in core housing need.

- There are marked differences in the level of core housing need experienced by different household types in the RDCK. Among couple households, 11% were found to be in core housing need compared to families where 15% were in core need. Single parent households had the greatest level of need at 39% followed by non-family households (singles and individuals sharing accommodation who are unattached) where 27% were in core housing need.

3.2 Non-Market Housing

Non-market refers to housing that is directly managed by a government organization or a non-profit entity, or as a non-profit cooperative. The housing is subsidized by government, either as a capital write-down (as in the case of cooperatives before 1992) or through ongoing subsidies to cover actual operating costs. Rents for residents are set on a “rent geared to income” basis (low income seniors, families) or, in the case of most special needs housing, the government pays a contractor directly to provide housing and services.²¹

“ Options for people who are on disability or social assistance are very limited. It is disheartening to see people caught in the cycle of poverty. People need the stability of stable housing options in order to create a foundation of positive change.” -- Survey Respondent

3.2.1 BC Housing Non-Market Housing

BC Housing is the central Provincial agency that supports and funds efforts to meet the housing needs of BC’s most vulnerable residents. The agency works with non-profit organizations and local governments throughout BC to increase housing options through capital and operating programs for low income households. However, owing to Federal and Provincial budget restrictions, the actual number of new-built “rent geared to income” housing units has been relatively small over the past 15 years, particularly outside of major urban centres.



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²¹ This explanation of non-market subsidies is intended as a general statement only. There are many complex variants on subsidies, depending on the housing program at the time the housing was built.

In part, BC Housing has been funding the current inventory of social housing – about 63% of the agency’s budget is allocated to subsidies to support the operating expenses for non-profit housing. In Nelson, there are almost 500 units of non-profit housing in 13 developments, as shown on Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Units/Beds in Non-Market Housing	
Client Type	Units/Beds
Family/Coop	87
Seniors - Independent Living	117
Seniors - Residential Care	176
Singles	61
Youth	10
Group Home	6
Emergency Shelter	19
Transition/Safe House	8
Total	484
Source: BC Housing	



BC Housing maintains a centralized registry for applicants for non-profit housing. Table 3-2 presents a snapshot of the number of active applications for housing in the RDCK that were on file in March of each year since 2006. The greatest proportion of applications to the BC Housing Registry were for households seeking family units (65%) followed by seniors units (20%) and units for persons with disabilities (20%). At

Table 3-2: Applications to BC Housing Registry						
Client Type	Number of Applications					
	March	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Family		14	21	11	11	15
People with disabilities		4	3	4	3	2
Seniors		1	2	0	5	5
Wheelchair modified		0	0	0	0	0
Singles		0	1	0	0	1
Pending Applications		0	0	0	0	1
Total		19	27	15	19	24
Source: BC Housing, special tabulation						

a provincial level, applications for non-profit housing were more evenly distributed between family units (41%), seniors (26%) and persons with disabilities (25%).

In addition, a number of housing and service providers noted there has been an increase in demand for their accommodation and related services. For example, Cicada Place has had a waitlist of 25 to 30 young people in the past couple of years compared to earlier years when there were 8 or 9 people on the wait list.²²

3.2.2 Low Barrier Housing

One of the challenges identified by front-line service workers is the limited availability of low-barrier housing in Nelson. This refers to housing that can accommodate individuals who face a number of housing barriers such as mental health and substance use issues. Housing maintenance can be difficult for such individuals due to related behavioural characteristics and challenges they may face relating to room-mates or landlords. Ward Street Place has a total of 36 units of low-barrier housing, one of the only locations in the city.

- Nelson Cares Society's Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP) provides up to one year of transitional housing at Ward Street Place for two individuals leaving the emergency shelter. During this period, a tenant support worker offers support services to the individuals to assist them with achieving their life plan goals.
- Also at Ward Street Place, four units of transitional housing are provided to clients leaving the hospital who are supported by a mental health/addictions outreach worker to achieve their personal goals and maintain their housing.
- Through these two programs, a total of six units of supportive housing is available. This combination of housing and supports is reported to be effective at meeting the needs of the city's more vulnerable groups and additional demand for such housing is reported to be in need.



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3.2.3 Second Stage Housing

There are few second stage housing options for individuals leaving transitional housing such as youth leaving Cicada Place or women who stay at the local transition house for women and children fleeing abuse.

- Landlords often prefer not to rent to young people, particularly in a tight rental market with a lot of potential renters. Shared housing is often one of the only available options for young people and some of these housing options are unsafe or exploitative.

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²² Personal communication with Joyce Dahms-Whiffen and Christine Vanlerburg, Cicada Place, March 2010.

- Similarly, some women leaving Aimee Beaulieu Transition House are reported to return to an abusive situation because of a lack of housing alternatives.

3.2.4 Seniors' Care Facilities

There are two public-care facilities in Nelson, operated with funding from the Interior Health Authority. Mountain Lake Senior Community is a 92-room complex care and 40-suite assisted living campus that opened in 1995. Jubilee Manor is an older facility located in the Rosemount area of Nelson. Both facilities are fully subscribed. There is no "wait list" per se for their facilities, as IHA maintains one waitlist for all its care facilities.

3.2.5 Rent Supplement Programs

BC Housing also manages two rent assistance programs – Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) and the Rental Assistance Program (RAP). While the SAFER program has been in place for decades, the RAP program was introduced within the past five years, to help working families find suitable rental housing.

Both programs provide rent subsidies for households paying above 30 percent of their income on rent. Individuals are eligible for SAFER if they are 60 years or older and paying more than 30% of their gross monthly income for housing. RAP is available to families with gross incomes of \$38,000 or less who have at least one dependent child and were employed during the last year. As of February 2010, there were 43 RAP recipients and 42 SAFER recipients in Nelson. Recipients of these rental supplements live independently in dwellings provided by the private market.

3.3 Homeless and At-Risk of Homelessness

As part of our research, we met with a group of women, each of whom has experienced periodic homelessness or is "at risk" of becoming homeless. This group was organized by the Circle of Habondia Lending Society. A number of concerns were raised by these women who, while speaking for themselves, also spoke of others in similar situations:

- Low income women are paying 50% to 80% of their income on housing;
- Landlords are adverse to renting to women on Income Assistance, particularly single mothers;
- The condition of market rental housing that is affordable to women with low incomes is almost always poor and unhealthy – mould, rodents, dust, insecure locks, poor heating; and
- Some continue to live in abusive and unhealthy relationships as no other housing is available. Those who have children are afraid to leave a relationship if they have no alternative housing, as social services will "take my kids".



Service providers reported that many of their clients who have mental health or addictions issues find it hard to get housing and often burn bridges quickly with landlords in a small town. Nelson has very few boarding house or rooming house types of accommodation. There is also no transition housing for individuals leaving institutions. Those individuals are discharged into the community without any planning or support as to their next steps or accommodation alternatives.

“There is a real need to focus on appropriate housing for vulnerable populations including single men, women with children, low income couples and children, those with mental illness and addiction issues as well as minimum income folks of all categories because the housing that is available to them is very limited and generally significantly substandard in nature.” -- Survey Respondent

In a 2009 academic thesis²³, the author estimated the number of chronic homeless individuals in Nelson and area to be 40 people, predominantly men under 30 years of age. This is based on tracking clients with multiple stays per year at Stepping Stones (emergency shelter) between 2005 and 2007. Among the chronically homeless group, 55% had a diagnosed mental illness and 20% self-identified as Aboriginal. Participants in focus groups that were undertaken as part of the author’s research attributed economic factors (under employment, minimum wage jobs etc.) to be the most common cause of homelessness. Mental illness and/or addictions compound the situation, but are not usually the primary cause.

3.3.1 Emergency Shelter

The emergency shelter, Stepping Stones, can accommodate a maximum of 19 people per night and runs almost at full capacity throughout the year. There are 17 beds in five bedrooms for people who find themselves without safe housing in the Central Kootenay area. In addition to the 17 beds, Stepping Stones can accommodate an additional two people per night on an emergency basis.

- According to BC Housing’s emergency shelter guidelines, the shelter operates on a 24-hour basis, seven days per week with a minimum of two staff at all times. A support worker provides additional one-on-one support to frequent shelter users to assist them with locating and maintaining housing in the community.
- 70% of clients are from Nelson and surrounding area and priority is always given to local residents. However, the lack of emergency services elsewhere in the region is acknowledged to be a challenge and the shelter does provide emergency shelter for clients from outside Nelson and area some of the time.



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²³ Mungall, Michelle. March 2009. *Rural Homeless: Ending Homelessness By Building Human Security and Peace*. Prepared for Nelson Committee on Homelessness and Royal Roads University.

- Table 3-3 indicates that a high majority of Stepping Stones clients are not employed and, in recent years, approximately half are clients of BC's Mental Health and Addictions offices.

	Total Number of Clients	Male Clients	Not Employed	Mental Health & Addictions clients
2006	249	78%	78%	36%
2007	235	80%	82%	36%
2008	225	77%	86%	51%
2009	304	77%	87%	47%

Source: Stepping Stones

3.3.2 Supportive Housing for Youth

Cicada Place is the first youth project in BC to combine a support program and housing facility under one roof. It provides supported transitional housing (for 6 months to 2 years) for 10 -13 youths who are participants in the Independence for Youth Program. Youth attend school, work or are actively seeking employment. When there is no space at Cicada House, efforts are made to assist individuals to find safe and affordable housing in the private market.



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3.3.3 Homeless Outreach Program Clients

The homeless outreach worker based out of the Nelson Community Services Centre has been able to work with her clients to find housing and to assist them with maintaining their housing by providing them rent supplement support for a period of time. Average rents for her outreach clients as of March 2010 were:

- Bachelor suites - \$539
- Shared living - \$502
- 1 Bedrooms - \$593

In the absence of a rent supplement, single individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness would be hard-pressed to find housing they can afford at \$375 per month (shelter allowance for BC Income Assistance program recipients).

3.3.4 Support Services

A number of agencies that provide support services for the homeless and at-risk populations noted an increase in the number of clients who have been accessing their services in the past year or two. This includes:

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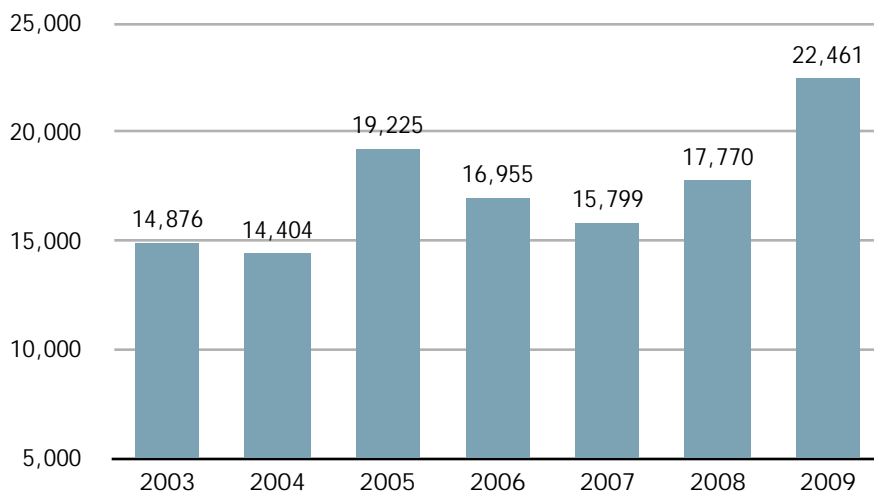
- Nelson Food Cupboard Society;
- The Kootenay Christian Fellowship;
- AIDS Network Kootenay Outreach and Support Society (ANKORS) which provides support and outreach for people at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS or Hepatitis C;
- West Kootenai Women in Need Society (WIN Society) which provides bedding and household goods to households in need;
- West Kootenay Boundary Crisis Line
- Interior Health’s Urgent Response Team which works with people who have mental health and addictions issues.

The Nelson Food Cupboard, located in the United Church on Silica Street, is open part-days, three days a week. As this is a “barrier free” facility, few questions are asked of clients. One figure that has been tracked is number of client visits – in 2004 the figure was 7,707 and 11,996 in 2009 – and increase of 55%. Housing is a constant issue for Food Cupboard clients – some are at risk of losing their housing, some are living in substandard conditions but are afraid to complain to their landlords.

The Kootenay Christian Fellowship offers a hot lunch program, “Our Daily Bread”, five days per week to anyone that comes through their door. Staff and volunteers at Our Daily Bread have noted an increase in clients – a 26% increase in the number of meals served between 2008 and 2009 and a 51% increase since 2003, as shown on Figure 3-1. The past year also saw a greater percentage of women who are accessing the meal program with 34% of clients in 2009 compared to 29% in 2008. The most recent survey of clients, conducted in February 2010, showed an increase in the percentage of clients who access Nelson Mental Health and Addictions services – 23% in 2009 and 27% in 2010.



Figure 3-1: Number of Meals Served, Kootenay Christian Fellowship



Source: Kootenay Christian Fellowship, Our Daily Bread Statistics

Among the clients accessing the meal program, almost one quarter (24%) who completed a survey reported they were homeless or couch surfing and the remaining 76% were renting an apartment or sharing a room in a house. While most clients (75%) were unemployed, retired or receiving disability assistance, 25% were employed or students.

3.3.5 *Mental Health and Addictions*

There are currently about 800 open files in Nelson's Mental Health and Addictions (NMHA) portfolio, administratively, part of the Interior Health Authority. This includes anyone who accesses services from the Nelson office. The Community Manager indicated that there are approximately 175 to 200 people with serious mental illness, with 75 to 100 having a severe and persistent mental illness and need to access regular outreach support as part of their individual care plan.

Housing is recognized as a "huge barrier" for NMHA's clients. The most difficult to house are between 19 and 35-40, especially men with serious mental illness and behavioural challenges. NMHA has a total of 16 formally supported housing units – 12 units at NDHS's Lakeside Place, and four units at Ward Street Place, operated by Nelson Cares. They also provide outreach to elderly clients in NDHS's seniors housing.

In addition to partnerships with other service providers, NMHA staff spend considerable time with private landlords to show that they will support their clients when clients occur, for example, paying for repairs and cleaning.

The NMHA office continues to offer support to CMHA with its development initiative for psycho-geriatric clients age 55+, a client group that requires unique health care support. CMHA has been working on this project since 2004 and has secured a site and a rezoning to accommodate 31 units. Despite being "shovel-ready", the project has not received capital funding through BC Housing. As of early 2010, the project was still "high on the list" and hopefully, will receive funding this year.

3.3.6 *Transient Population*

Defining who is "local" was a topic that generated considerable discussion among key informants. Non-locals are often considered to be "transients" who do not necessarily have a single place they call home.

Transients were noted by officials and public sector representatives to be causing a strain on local service providers and law enforcement officials. However, according to non-profit service providers, most of their clients are local or are individuals with strong connections to the area. As Nelson is a central hub to many smaller communities in the region, it is anticipated that this trend of "out-of-towners" accessing local services will always take place. Nelson therefore serves as a catchment area for people who are in need of housing and services, but also to others who are homeless by choice and pursue a lifestyle of transience.



While no completely reliable data is available on the transient population, service workers report that many of the transients are single men, occasionally couples, who camp or live outside. It was also noted by service workers that most of their clients, whether or not they are local, have strong connections to the region and, even when they do not, they would not wish to deny services to individuals who are in need.



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SECTION 4 HOUSING NEEDS

Nelson is working on many fronts to set a positive course for the future. From our meetings and conversations with many people, it is very evident that service and housing providers, together with the City of Nelson, are at the forefront in BC in collaborating and developing mutually successful partnerships. Understanding the community's housing needs and ensuring that there is housing that is "affordable" to those who live and work in Nelson is a prime concern.

4.1 Housing Survey

In seeking further understanding of the housing needs and how residents of Nelson and surrounding area perceive their housing needs, the municipality undertook an open-access (online) housing survey. Appendix B provides a more complete overview of the survey results.²⁴ A few highlights from the survey are presented here.

- Overall, home owners expressed satisfaction with their housing more often than renters. For example, 51% of renters were dissatisfied with the cost of their housing, 28% were dissatisfied by the quality/condition of this housing and 30% were dissatisfied by the indoor space available. Comparatively, 20% of homeowners still holding a mortgage on their home were dissatisfied with the cost, 14% with the quality and 10% with the level of indoor space.
- The majority of survey respondents who rented their homes reported they did not have enough income to support a home purchase (70%) or did not have enough downpayment (44%). Only a small percentage were renting because of a lifestyle preference (13%) or were recent migrants to the area (13%).
- The most commonly reported challenges faced with finding rental accommodation included availability, cost relative to income and poor quality or conditions.

When respondents were asked to rank the groups according to how challenging they thought it was for that group to find suitable, affordable housing:

- Single people with low wage jobs were identified as having the greatest challenges, followed by people with special needs (e.g., people with physical disabilities or mental health issues) and single parent families. Seniors on fixed incomes also ranked highly.

²⁴ The survey ran from March 26 to April 13, 2010 and was posted as a link off the City of Nelson's website. A total of 345 surveys were completed. As the survey respondents were self-selected, the results are not considered to be representative of the resident population, but can provide an indication of the priority housing issues that are most pressing from local residents' perspectives.



- The survey also revealed that:
 - 78% did not feel there was enough good quality rental housing.
 - 74% thought that young adults and families with young children are moving away because housing costs are too high.
 - 58% did not feel there was enough affordable housing options for seniors.

4.2 Housing Needs and Gaps

Based on statistical research, survey results, and discussions with community members, we identify the following groups to have considerable challenges in securing suitable, affordable housing.

- Individuals with mental health, addictions or related disabilities.
- Households who require safe, affordable and suitable rental housing, principally in the private market²⁵. This includes single people and single parent families with lower incomes, as well as households moving to Nelson who have relocated for well-paying jobs and need of suitable rental housing ;
- Renters who aspire to become home owners, particularly young families with moderate incomes; and
- Seniors on low fixed incomes, especially those who have supportive care needs.

4.2.1 Gaps in Non-Market Housing

In Nelson, the main gaps identified in the non-market housing sector were the lack of housing and support services for vulnerable populations including:

- * *Individuals with mental health, addictions or other disabilities*
- * *Seniors on low incomes with supportive care needs; and*
- * *At-risk youth and youth in transition.*

A critical need has been identified for supported housing for people with mental health and addictions. Staff from NMHA, City of Nelson Police and other service workers reported there is an urgent need for this type of housing with support services.

- *Housing with Supports* – There are relatively few housing options for people with support service needs in Nelson, particularly people with physical, mental or addictions challenges. In the absence of supported housing, many people are



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²⁵ Private market refers to all housing that is not owned or operated by non-profit organizations.

unable to maintain their housing independently – some experience difficulties with landlords or neighbours and are evicted. When there is a crisis, health issues are further intensified. Social service representatives identified the need for housing with support services in central areas of the city within easy access to transit, shops and services.

- While many of these individuals (estimated by NMHA to be in the order of 175-200 people) are being assisted through government and non-profit interventions, more dedicated housing is warranted. At present, NMHA has only 16 dedicated units and the remainder must be secured in the private sector.

While there are a number of seniors housing complexes, seniors have reported that it is difficult to find the right combination of care and affordability.

- *Changing Tenant Mix* – Changes in the mix of tenants to include persons with special needs at non-market seniors buildings has created challenges for residents. It is reported that tenants with mental health issues and physical disabilities do not always receive enough support in seniors independent living environments. As a consequence, the quality of life and level of privacy for all residents is said to have declined in those buildings.
- *Few Affordable Options* – A new seniors housing facility has added 103 new units to the supply of seniors housing. However, 90 of these units are rented at market rates and are not accessible to lower income seniors.

At-risk youth are in need of support services. In a tight rental market, they often face great difficulty finding housing and do not usually have the life skills or experience to enable them to maintain their housing.

- *Safe, Affordable Housing Options for Youth* – For youth who are transitioning out of Cicada Place, it was noted that there are few affordable housing options available in the city. It would also be beneficial for young people in that situation to have access to some support services to assist them in their transition to independent living and to ensure they do not get into unsafe living environments.

4.2.2 *Gaps in Market Housing*

Market housing refers to all housing that is not subsidized, including individual homes, rental buildings, private-pay congregate care, and condominiums. From the research, the groups that are in greatest housing need in this area include:

- * *Working households seeking safe, affordable and suitable rental housing at the lower end of market;*
- * *Single parent families with low incomes;*



- * Households seeking to get into the ownership market or looking to maintain their housing;
- * Households relocating to Nelson and area for employment, wanting to rent and explore the community, before purchasing.

Very little purpose-built rental housing has been built since the 1970s and some conversions to strata tenure have occurred since then. As a result, there is substantial reliance on the “secondary market” including houses that are rented by absentee owners, basement suites and investor-owned condominiums. This shortage has strongly affected low and moderate income households and, in particular, single parent families. Nelson’s rental market appears to favour landlords rather than renters and several key informants raised concerns about tenant security, safety and wellbeing.

- *Lower Cost Rental Housing* – With low vacancy rates, landlords have been able to rent their suites for rents that are unaffordable to low income and moderate income households, particularly individuals and single parents. Many key-informants reported spending well over 50% of their income on rent in Nelson. The costs of utilities are rarely included in the rent and heating costs can be substantial during the winter months. Creating incentives or opportunities for the development community to begin building rental housing again would increase the rental supply and potentially meet the needs of newcomers, low and moderate income families, service workers and professionals.
- *Rental Housing Quality and Conditions* – At the lower end of market housing, the quality of the housing is inconsistent and is often reported to be in very poor condition. There are concerns about the quality and safety of lower cost rental housing in the private market. Many secondary suites remain illegal and may not be upgraded to meet minimum building and health safety standards.
- *Tenure Insecurity* – While more prominent outside the city boundaries, some owners are reported to rent their houses out in the winter time and displace the tenants during the summer when they either occupy it themselves or rent their properties at higher rents as vacation rentals.

Homeownership in the form of detached, ground oriented housing with a yard is becoming increasingly inaccessible to most first time buyers in the province. While there has been some apartment and townhouse development in 2008 and 2009, most of the stock remains in older single detached homes, some in need of repairs and upgrades. The need for a greater diversity of housing is evident.

- *Limited choice of housing types and sizes* – Nelson’s housing stock is predominantly detached homes, many on large lots. Given Nelson’s geographic location and land constraints, future housing construction will be largely restricted to infill and intensification of existing neighbourhoods. Creating a



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mix of housing options (types, sizes, tenures) within residential neighbourhoods may enable more young people to stay in the community and facilitate ownership for families and individuals.

- *Concern regarding the potential loss of affordable housing in existing manufactured home parks* – Over time, as the infrastructure ages and the costs of upkeep increase, it can be expected that mobile home parks will also face redevelopment pressure. Protecting the tenure security of current residents of manufactured home parks is an area of concern.
- *Aging in Place* – Many seniors would prefer to stay in their homes, but find it increasingly challenging to maintain their housing due to increasing costs and upkeep. Home support and other services to assist seniors to age in place is one consideration.

4.3 Companion Report – Housing Strategy

In response to the findings of the research, and subsequent feedback from the City of Nelson, the Housing Forum and the Nelson Coalition on Homelessness, the consulting team prepared a draft Housing Strategy. It is under separate cover.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Data Sources & Key Informants

Appendix B - Affordable Housing Survey Results

Appendix C - Laneway Housing Briefing Paper

APPENDIX A - DATA SOURCES & KEY INFORMANTS

Meetings and Focus Group Discussions

Throughout March and April, the consultants participated in a variety of meetings and committees and facilitated discussions with various local groups. Local volunteers assisted with the organization and implementation of these meetings.

Meetings & Committees:

- Nelson Housing Forum (March 2, 2010)
- Nelson Business Association (March 4 & March 25, 2010)
- Nelson Committee on Homelessness (March 10, 2010)

Focus Group Discussions:

- Selkirk College students
- Low-income women in housing need
- Seniors with housing challenges (6 participants)
- Front-line services workers; representatives of agencies working with at-risk groups (10 participants)
- Local artists (5 participants)

Key Informants

The consultants met with individuals representing a range of local interests and those who are directly or indirectly dealing with housing issues and those with unique insights into housing needs in Nelson.

City of Nelson:

- Mayor Dooley and all members of City Council
- City staff – Kevin Cormack CAO; Dave Wahn, Senior Planner
- Nelson Police Department – Chief Dan Maluta; Sergeant Howard Grant

Employers/Local Business Representatives:

- Community Futures – Paul Wiest, General Manager
- Jan Wright, Executive Director – Kootenay Career Development Services
- Pacific Insight Electronics Corporation – Amanda Laughton, Human Resources
- Whitewater Winter Resort – Robyn Mitz, Human Resources
- Nelson Walmart – Rajesh Sabharwal, Manager
- Golden Life Management – Celeste Mullin



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- Selkirk College – Cathy Mercer, Director, Student & Enrolment Services / Registrar

Real Estate and Development Community:

- Coldwell Banker Rosling Real Estate – Panny Taylor
- ReMAX RHC Realty – Lorne Westnedge, Board Member, Nelson & District Credit Union
- Dave Sorensen, Sorensen Fine Homes
- Trevor Jenkins, Nelson Realty and Chair of the West Kootenay Landlords Society

Service Agencies/Non-Market Housing Providers:

- Aids Network Kootenay Outreach and Support Society (ANKORS) – Karen Lehman
- BC Housing – Manfred Gerschack, Development Services
- Cicada Place – Joyce Dahms-Whiffen & Christine Vanlerburg
- CMHA-Kootenays – Janice Bradshaw, Executive Director & Joffre Pomerleau, Consultant with Innovative Housing
- Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance – Stephanie Fischer, local artist and advocate
- Golden Life Management – Celeste Mullin, Lakeview Village
- Habondia's Community WISH Project – Hanna Hadikin, Consultant & Project Coordinator
- Kootenay Christian Fellowship – Pastor Jim Reimer & Michelle Fillion
- Nelson Community Services Centre – Stacey Locke, Community Outreach Worker
- Nelson and District Youth Centre – Christine Schmidt, Manager
- Nelson CARES Society – Rona Park, Executive Director & Bev Derby, Residential Transition Support Worker
- Nelson Seniors Housing – Joan Reichardt, Seniors Advocate
- Nelson Cupboard Society – Lauren Steeg, Coordinator
- Nelson Mental Health and Addictions – Maggie Haley, Marisa Smith & Mark Laforet
- Nelson and District Housing Society – Cathy Heyland, Property Manager
- Nelson Committee on Homelessness – Celeste LeDuigou, Community Coordinator
- Meals on Wheels at Jubilee Manor



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- Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, Nelson Cares Society — Mike McGaw & Klee Hunter
- WIN Society — Pasquale Bonhomme
- Youth Employment Resource Centre — Manager

Media Representatives:

- Nelson Daily News
- Express News Community Paper
- Kootenay Coop Radio
- Mountain FM Radio

Visits & Informal Meetings

- Non-market housing providers — Nelson & District Housing Society, Ward Street Place, Stepping Stones Emergency Shelter, Kiwanis
- Meals/service providers — Food Cupboard, Our Daily Bread
- Nelson WIN Thrift Store
- Artist Studio/Rehearsal Space — Oxygen Arts Centre
- “Windshield survey” and observations of residential neighbourhoods

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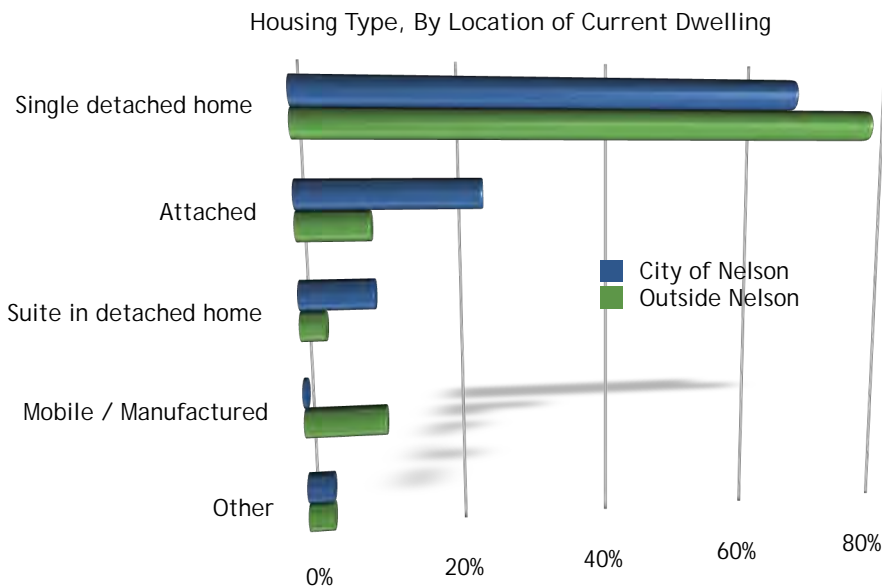
Appendix B
2010 Affordable Housing Survey Results

CITY OF NELSON AFFORDABLE HOUSING SURVEY RESULTS

This report presents the key findings from an open-access survey that was posted on the City of Nelson's website between March 26th and April 13th, 2010. The survey was designed by CitySpaces Consulting, in consultation City staff. Three hundred and forty-five people completed the questionnaire. The appendices to this report provide complete detail for both closed-ended and open-ended questions.

Key Findings

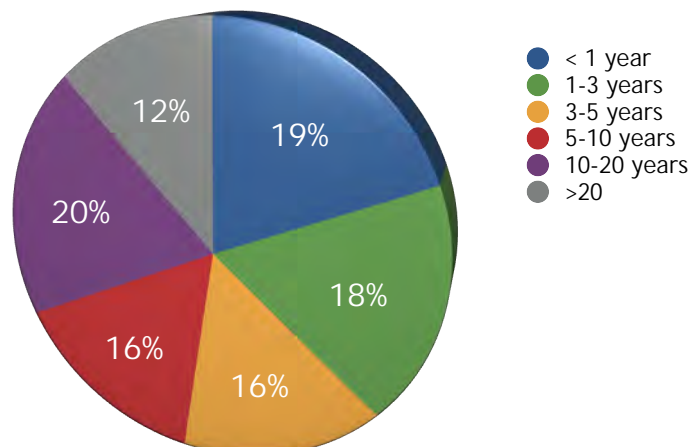
1. Location of Dwelling. Of the 345 respondents, 72% live within the City of Nelson. 28% of the respondents indicated they live outside the City limits.
2. Type of Dwelling. Among Nelson respondents, 64% live in a detached home, slightly higher than the 2006 census count at 59%. In contrast, for respondents living outside Nelson, a higher proportion live in detached housing (75%). The accompanying graphic shows a comparison of housing type between respondents living in Nelson and those living outside the City.



City of Nelson
Affordable Housing
Survey Results

3. Length of Time in Current Dwelling: There was a good representation of varying length of time the respondents had lived in their current dwelling, as shown in the accompanying chart.

Length of Time in Current Dwelling, Years



April 2010

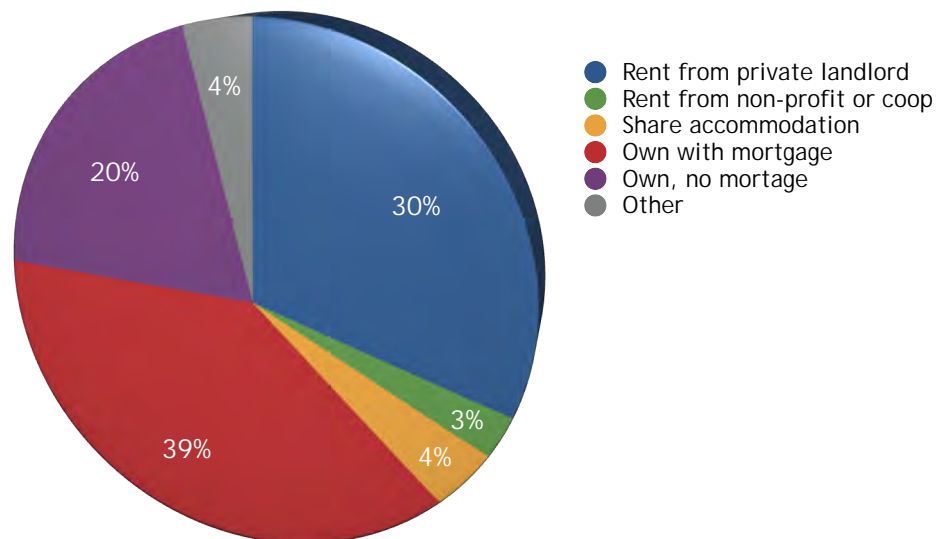
4. Satisfaction with Current Dwelling. A series of questions was posed regarding level of satisfaction with various aspects of the respondent's current housing situation. The accompanying table shows the percentage of respondents who were somewhat or very dissatisfied. For all aspects, renters indicated a higher level of dissatisfaction.

Somewhat or Very Dissatisfied – Various				
	All Respondents	Rent from a Private Landlord	Home Owners with a Mortgage	Home Owners with No Mortgage
Cost (rent or mortgage)	27%	51%	20%	3%
Quality and condition	17%	28%	14%	0%
Safety and security	7%	11%	5%	3%
Indoor space	17%	30%	10%	7%
Outdoor space	17%	28%	12%	3%
Access to transit	21%	24%	19%	12%
Access to shops and services	12%	23%	19%	12%



5. Current Housing Situation. Approximately 59% of respondents own their homes, with only a small variation between respondents living in Nelson and those living outside the City. The 2006 Census of Canada identified 63% of homes as owned in the City of Nelson. Overall, there was a reasonable representation from people living in various housing situations.

Current Housing Situation, All Respondents



6. Reasons for Renting. In answering the question, "If you rent the dwelling you currently in from a private landlord, why is that?", respondents were invited to check as many reasons as apply and to add other comments.

- ▶ 70% - Not enough income to support a home purchase
- ▶ 44% - Not enough downpayment to qualify for a mortgage
- ▶ 13% - Renting suits my lifestyle
- ▶ 13% - Recently moved to the Nelson area and not ready to purchase a home
- ▶ 17% - Other reasons (e.g., renting from family member, student, on waitlist for subsidized housing, family in transition)

7. Challenges associated with finding suitable rental accommodation. Only 8% of respondents indicated they did not have any challenges finding suitable rental / shared accommodation. Among *all* respondents, the greatest challenges were:

- ▶ Not much available when I was looking (65%);
- ▶ Cost of rent relative to my income" (59%),
- ▶ Poor quality or conditions" (45%);
- ▶ Extra costs associated with rental" (30%);
- ▶ Landlords not pet-friendly" (29%).

• When the results are examined on an *income basis*:

- ▶ 73% of respondents with household incomes of less than \$40,000 identified the "cost of rent relative to my income" as a challenge, while only 37% of those with incomes over \$80,000 identified this as a challenge;
- ▶ Sixty-three percent of households with incomes \$80,000 and over noted "poor quality or conditions" as a challenge. The comparable figure for households less than \$40,000 was 45%.

8. Housing Challenges: Specific Groups. The survey asked respondents to indicate the level of challenged experienced by eight sub-groups to find suitable, affordable accommodation.

- ▶ Overall, respondents the situation to be "very challenging" for single people with low wage jobs (71%), followed by people with long term disabilities (62%), single parent families (62%), and people with special physical or mental needs (61%).
- ▶ Among the remaining four sub-groups, respondents found the situation to be "very challenging" for seniors on fixed incomes (55%), college students (38%), couples with young children (38%), and seasonal workers (38%).

9. Housing Issues. The survey posed six statements and asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement.

- ▶ 78% somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement, "There is enough good-quality rental housing for year-round residents."



City of Nelson
Affordable Housing
Survey Results

April 2010

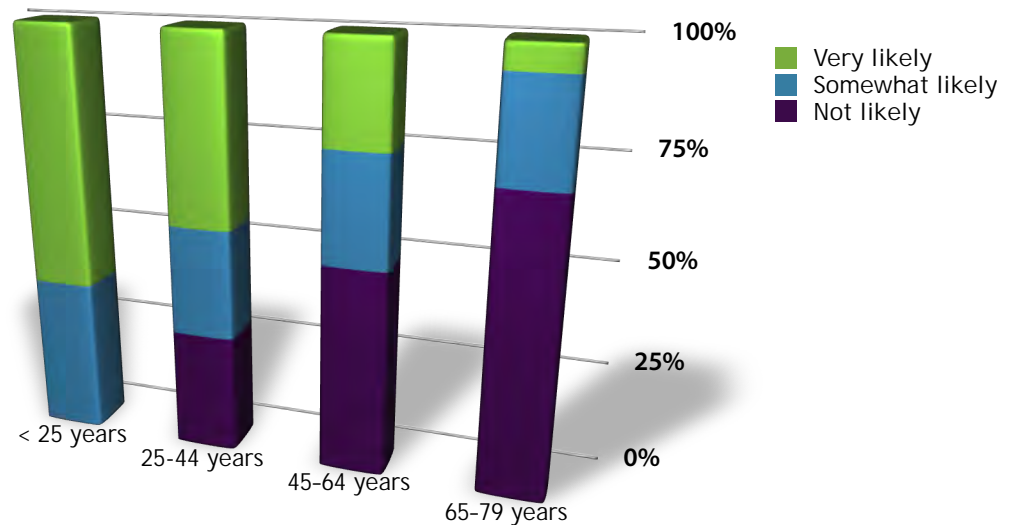
- ▶ 74% somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement, "Young adults and families with young children are moving away from the city of Nelson because housing costs are too high."
- ▶ 58% somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement, "There are enough affordable housing options for seniors". Another 21% indicated they didn't know.
- ▶ 50% somewhat or strongly agreed with the statement, "It will be easier to find rental housing in Nelson when the college residence renovation is finished next year."
- ▶ 47% somewhat or strongly disagreed with the statement, "There are enough services for seniors who choose to stay in their homes". Another 26% indicated they didn't know.
- ▶ 39% somewhat or strongly agreed that employers should provide some form of housing assistance to attract and retain workers. A large percentage (29%) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed.

10. Challenges for First-time Home Buyers. Forty-eight respondents indicated they had purchased a home (any type or tenure) in Nelson that they currently live in. Of these, 27 were first-time home buyers. The following were cited as the challenges they encountered in making the purchase.

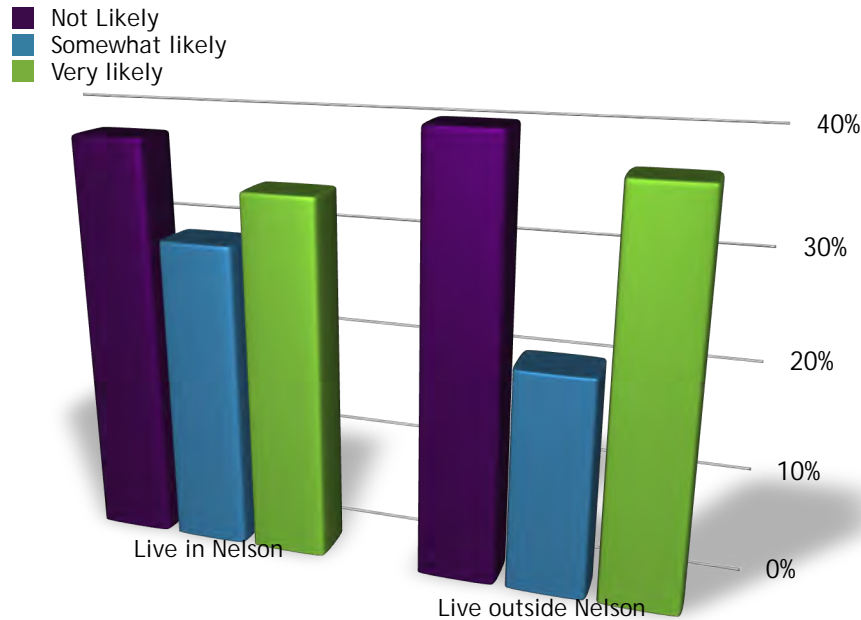
- ▶ 57% - finding a home well-suited to household's needs
- ▶ 54% - having enough regular income to qualify for an insurable mortgage
- ▶ 46% - having a large enough downpayment to qualify for an insurable mortgage
- ▶ 32% - complications related to other debts
- ▶ 11% - did not have any challenges



Likelihood of Moving, by Age Group, Next Three Years



Likelihood of Moving, by Place of Residence, Next Three Years



11. Likelihood of Moving. A question related to the likelihood of moving from their current dwelling in the next three years, revealed six in 10 respondents were somewhat or very likely to move. The accompanying two charts show the variation among age groups and between current place of residence.

12. Factors Influencing a Move. Among all respondents who indicated that they were somewhat or very likely to move away from their current dwelling in the next three years, the factors that will influence their decision:

- ▶ 40% - to improve the quality / condition of my living space
- ▶ 37% - to reduce housing costs
- ▶ 27% - to have more space
- ▶ 27% - to follow job opportunities
- ▶ 24% - to have more privacy
- ▶ 11% - to be closer to relatives or friends
- ▶ 8% - to be closer to health / medical services
- ▶ 12% - to spend less time / money on home and garden maintenance
- ▶ 10% - to use the equity from my home for other purposes
- ▶ 9% - to feel more safe and secure
- ▶ Among those who cited other reasons, a number of renters noted their dwelling is being sold or will be used by the owner (11)

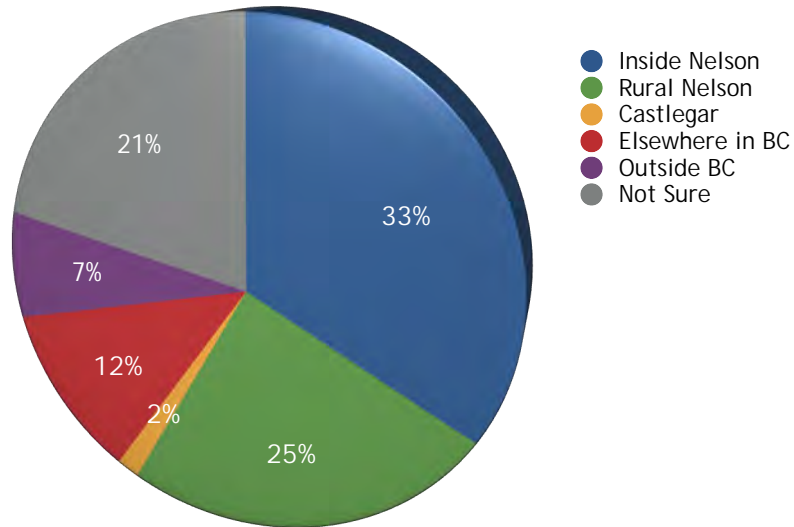


City of Nelson
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13. Location of New Dwelling. Fifty-eight percent of respondents who said they were somewhat or very likely to move from their current dwelling in the next three years anticipate their move to be in Nelson or the Nelson area.

Anticipated Location of New Dwelling

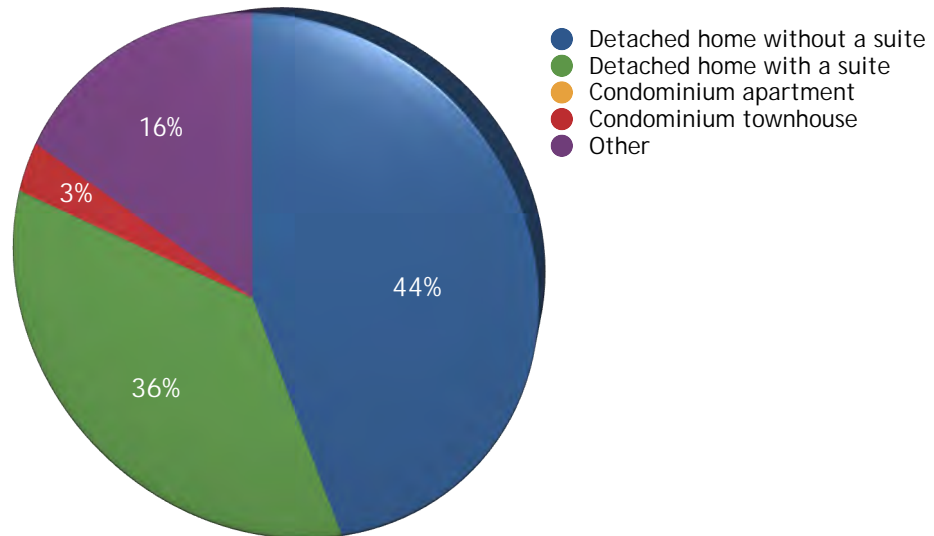


14. Age 25 - 44 Buying Intentions. Several questions were addressed to respondents in the age group 25-44 regarding a potential home purchase. Forty-four indicated they plan to purchase a home in Nelson and area in the next three years and 59 indicated they were not sure. The accompanying chart plots 61 respondents answer to the question, "What type of home do you think that will be?" Among the 16% of respondents that answered "other", responses included "what ever is affordable", "eco-home", "acreage", "mobile on small piece of land".



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Type of Anticipated Home, Next Three Years



April 2010

15. Age 25 - 44 Anticipated Purchasing Challenges: Of those in the age group 25-44 thinking of purchasing in the next three years, the following were cited as likely challenges in making the purchase.

- ▶ 51% - finding a home well-suited to household's needs
- ▶ 51% - having enough regular income to qualify for an insurable mortgage
- ▶ 68% - having a large enough downpayment to qualify for an insurable mortgage
- ▶ 31% - complications related to other debts
- ▶ 1% - do not expect any challenges

16. Secondary Suites: Several questions were posed of home owners related to secondary suites. The accompanying table relates to the first of these questions.

Reasons for Not Having a Suite		
	Own Home but DO NOT have a secondary suite	Own Home with Suite but DO NOT RENT at this time
Do not need extra income	15%	6%
House not suitable for creating a suite	43%	0%
It would impact my privacy	44%	18%
Do not want complications of being a landlord	33%	24%
Extra costs do not make the potential income worthwhile	31%	41%
Cannot afford the costs to create a legal secondary suite	36%	—
Use the suite for other purposes	—	41%
Repairs / renovations costly / spending money not worthwhile	—	12%



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17. Reasons for Creating Secondary Suite: Home owners who do not currently have a secondary suite indicated they would consider creating a suite for the following reasons:

- ▶ 88% - To provide extra income for my household
- ▶ 35% - To provide accommodation for students
- ▶ 35% - To ensure someone else is living in the house when I am away from Nelson

April 2010

18. One question asked whether the City of Nelson's charges for a secondary suite (@ 80% of the primary home) is appropriate. Responses indicated:

- ▶ 14% - Yes it is appropriate
- ▶ 54% - No, it is too high
- ▶ 24% - Don't know



The following questions were asked of respondents to determine the overall demographic profile.

19. Age group

- ▶ 2% - Less than 25 years
- ▶ 50% - 25 to 44 years
- ▶ 42% - 45 to 64 years
- ▶ 5% - 65 to 79 years

20. Current living circumstances

- ▶ 36% - A single person
- ▶ 64% - Living as a couple

21. Current working situation

- ▶ 55% - Working full time
- ▶ 19% - Working part time
- ▶ 6% - Semi-retired
- ▶ 6% - Fully-retired
- ▶ 4% - Unemployed and looking for work
- ▶ 3% - Long term disability and unable to work
- ▶ 3% - Homemaker
- ▶ 3% - Student

22. Household income

- ▶ 15% - Less than \$20,000
- ▶ 24% - \$20,000 - \$40,000
- ▶ 19% - \$40,000 - \$60,000
- ▶ 16% - \$60,000 - \$80,000
- ▶ 8% - \$80,000 - \$100,000
- ▶ 13% - More than \$100,000
- ▶ 5% - Prefer not to say



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Appendix 1

City of Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Tables

Appendix 1: Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Closed-ended Responses

1	Where do you currently live?	Number	%age
	City of Nelson (inside City boundaries)	247	72%
	Other, please specify	98	28%
	Total	345	100%

2	How long have you lived in your current dwelling?	Number	%age
	Less than one year	66	19%
	Between one and three years	62	18%
	Between three and five years	55	16%
	Between five and 10 years	54	16%
	Between 10 and 20 years	68	20%
	More than 20 years	40	12%
	Total	345	100%

3	What TYPE of dwelling do you live in?	Number	%age
	Single detached home	231	67%
	Duplex	25	7%
	Townhouse/Rowhouse	13	4%
	Apartment - rental	23	7%
	Apartment - condo	5	1%
	Suite in a single detached home (example: basement suite)	26	8%
	Mobile / manufactured home	11	3%
	Other, please specify	11	3%
	Total	345	100%

4 Thinking about YOUR current housing situation, please indicate how satisfied you are with the following:

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Cost (rent or mortgage)	109 32%	87 26%	50 15%	55 16%	37 11%
Quality and condition	124 36%	123 36%	38 11%	43 13%	14 4%
Safety and security	197 57%	105 31%	20 6%	13 4%	9 3%
Enough indoor space to meet your household's needs	164 48%	82 24%	35 10%	38 11%	22 6%
Enough outdoor space to meet your household's needs	184 54%	78 23%	25 7%	33 10%	23 7%
Enough parking	187 55%	79 23%	29 8%	21 6%	26 8%
Access to transit	149 44%	67 20%	53 16%	43 13%	28 8%
Access to shops and services	160 47%	88 26%	52 15%	29 8%	15 4%

5	Please describe YOUR current housing situation from the following options:	Number	%age
	Rent my dwelling from a private landlord (individual, company, or property manager)	105	30%
	Rent my dwelling from a non-profit group (example: Nelson and District Housing Society)	5	1%
	Share accommodation (examples: house-sharing, room in home)	15	4%
	Belong to a housing cooperative	3	1%
	Own my dwelling and have a mortgage	134	39%
	Own my dwelling and DO NOT have a mortgage	69	20%
	Do not have a permanent dwelling / am homeless	2	1%
	Other, please specify	12	3%
	Total	345	100%

Please see Open-Ended File for comments

Appendix 1: Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Closed-ended Responses

6	IF YOU RENT the dwelling you currently live in from a private landlord, why is that? (Check as many as apply to you).	Number	%age	
	Renting suits my lifestyle	16	13%	
	Recently moved to the Nelson area and not ready to purchase a home	16	13%	
	Support services are available (example: meals, assisted living)	0	0%	
	Not enough income to support a home purchase	89	70%	
	Not enough downpayment to qualify for a mortgage	56	44%	
	Other, please specify	22	17%	Please see Open-Ended File for comments

7	Thinking your MOST RECENT experience in renting your dwelling or shared accommodation, what challenges did you encounter in finding suitable rental accommodation?	Number	%age	
	Cost to of monthly rent relative to my income	134	59%	
	Extra costs associated with rental (examples: utilities, phone, cable)	68	30%	
	Poor quality or conditions	101	45%	
	Inadequate size	51	23%	
	Not much available when I was looking	146	65%	
	My rental history / lack of references	6	3%	
	Landlords did not allow pet (s)	66	29%	
	I did not have any challenges in finding suitable accommodation	19	8%	
	Other, please specify	27	12%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.

8 How challenging do you think it is for each of the following groups to find suitable, affordable housing in Nelson and area?

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	Very challenging	Moderately challenging	Only somewhat challenging	Not at all challenging	Don't know / not sure
Single people with low wage jobs	243 71%	69 20%	14 4%	5 1%	11 3%
Couples with young children	127 38%	146 44%	42 13%	3 1%	16 5%
Single parent families	209 62%	92 27%	17 5%	2 1%	16 5%
Seniors on fixed incomes	185 55%	86 25%	35 10%	4 1%	29 9%
People with special physical or mental needs	204 61%	71 21%	16 5%	4 1%	40 12%
People with long term disabilities	206 62%	64 19%	17 5%	3 1%	44 13%
Seasonal workers (example: tourism)	124 38%	114 35%	55 17%	8 2%	28 9%
College students	127 38%	127 38%	52 15%	12 4%	20 6%
Other, please specify	52 61%	9 11%	3 4%	0 0%	21 25%

Appendix 1: Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Closed-ended Responses

9 Thinking generally about housing in Nelson and area, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
There is enough good-quality rental housing for year-round residents.	8 2%	27 8%	25 7%	84 25%	179 53%	15 4%
Young adults and families with young children are moving away from the City of Nelson because housing costs are too high.	145 43%	104 31%	32 9%	20 6%	9 3%	29 9%
Employers should provide some form of housing assistance to attract and retain workers.	47 14%	84 25%	97 29%	36 11%	52 15%	24 7%
There are enough affordable housing options for seniors.	7 2%	28 8%	36 11%	82 24%	115 34%	70 21%
There are enough services for seniors who choose to stay in their own homes.	7 2%	36 11%	46 14%	58 17%	101 30%	89 26%
It will be easier to find rental housing in Nelson when the college residence renovation is finished next year.	33 10%	136 40%	72 21%	37 11%	15 4%	44 13%
10 Within the last three years, have you purchased a home (any type or tenure) in Nelson that you are currently living in?	Number	%age				
Yes	48	14%				
No	287	86%				
Total	335	100%				
11 If you answered YES to the PREVIOUS question, please choose among the following:	Number	%age				
I was a first time home buyer	27	50%				
I already owned a home but wanted to change my housing situation	14	26%				
Other, please specify	13	24%				
Total	54	100%				
12 If you answered that you were a FIRST-TIME home buyer in the previous question, what challenges did you encounter in making this purchase?						
Having a large enough downpayment to qualify for an insurable mortgage	13	46%				
Having enough regular income to qualify for an insurable mortgage	15	54%				
Complications related to other debts (e.g., student loans, car loan, other)	9	32%				
Finding a home that was well-suited to my household's needs	16	57%				
Did not encounter any challenges in making this purchase	3	11%				
Other, please specify	6	21%				
13 In the next three years, how likely are you to move away from your current dwelling?	Number	%age				
Not likely	135	39%				
Somewhat likely	91	26%				
Very likely	119	34%				
Total	345	100%				
14 If you answered "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to Question 13, what are the main factors that will influence your decision to move?	Number	%age				
To be closer to relatives or friends	23	11%				
To be closer to health / medical services	16	8%				
To spend less time / money on home and garden maintenance	25	12%				
To follow job opportunities	56	27%				
To get the equity from my home to use for other purposes	20	10%				
To have more privacy	50	24%				
To have more space	57	27%				
To feel more safe and secure	18	9%				

Appendix 1: Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Closed-ended Responses

	To improve the quality / condition of my living space	84	40%	
	To reduce housing costs	77	37%	
	To move to a housing complex that provides meal, social activities and light housekeeping	1	0%	
	Other, please specify	81	39%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
15	If you answered "somewhat likely" or "very likely" to Question 13, where do you anticipate this move to be?	Number	%age	
	Inside the City of Nelson	65	31%	
	Rural Nelson	49	23%	
	Castlegar	3	1%	
	Elsewhere in BC	23	11%	
	Outside of BC	14	7%	
	Not sure at this time	42	20%	
	Other, please specify	14	7%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
	Total	210	100%	
16	IF YOU ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 25 AND 44, are you planning to purchase a home in Nelson and area in the next three years?	Number	%age	
	Yes	44	27%	
	No	62	38%	
	Not sure	59	36%	
	Total	165	100%	
17	If you are between the ages of 25 and 44 and you answered YES to the previous question, what type of home do you think that will be:	Number	%age	
	Single detached home WITHOUT a suite	27	44%	
	Single detached home WITH a suite	22	36%	
	Condominium - apartment	0	0%	
	Condominium - townhouse	2	3%	
	Other, please specify	10	16%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
	Total	61	100%	
18	If you are between the ages of 25 and 44 and thinking of purchasing a home in the next three years, what challenges do you foresee? (Check as many as apply)	Number	%age	
	Having a large enough downpayment to qualify for an insurable mortgage	75	68%	
	Having enough regular income to qualify for an insurable mortgage	67	61%	
	Complications related to other debts (examples: student loans, car loan, other)	34	31%	
	Finding a home that was well-suited to my household's needs	56	51%	
	Do not expect to encounter any challenges in making a purchase	1	1%	
	Other, please specify	19	17%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
19	I own a single detached home in Nelson but DO NOT have a secondary suite. My reasons for this are:	Number	%age	
	I do not need extra income	20	15%	
	My house is not suitable for the creation of a suite	57	43%	
	It would impact my privacy	59	44%	
	I do not want the complications of being a landlord	44	33%	
	The extra costs (example: taxes, water and sewer fees, repairs) associated with a secondary suite do not make the potential income worthwhile	41	31%	
	I cannot afford the costs to create a legal secondary suite	48	36%	
	Other, please specify	11	8%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.

Appendix 1: Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Closed-ended Responses

20	I own a single detached home in Nelson and HAVE a secondary suite, but DO NOT RENT it at this time. My reasons for this are:	Number	%age	
	I do not need extra income	1	6%	
	My house is not suitable for the creation of a suite	0	0%	
	Use the suite for other purposes (example: home based business, extra space for family)	7	41%	
	It would impact my privacy	3	18%	
	I do not want the complications of being a landlord	4	24%	
	The extra costs (example: taxes, water and sewer fees, repairs) associated with a secondary suite do not make the potential income worthwhile	7	41%	
	I need to repair or renovate the suite and cannot afford these costs / do not think spending this money is worthwhile	2	12%	
	Other, please specify	5	29%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
21	I DO NOT currently have a secondary suite in my single detached home BUT would consider creating a suite for the following reasons:	Number	%age	
	To provide extra income for my household	70	88%	
	To provide accommodation for students	28	35%	
	To ensure that someone else is living in the house when I am away from Nelson	28	35%	
	Other, please specify	7	9%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
22	Some BC municipalities charge additional utility fees (example: water and sewer charges) for a secondary suite. The City of Nelson charges an additional 80% of the water and sewer fee of the primary unit. Do you think this is an appropriate fee?	Number	%age	
	Yes	46	14%	
	No, it is too high	178	54%	
	Don't know / not sure	79	24%	
	Other, please comment	25	8%	
	Total	328	100%	Please see Open Ended File for specific comments.
23	This question and the three questions that follow will assist the City of Nelson in analyzing the results of this survey. Please be assured that your responses remain totally confidential. What age group do you fall into?	Number	%age	
	Less than 25 years	8	2%	
	25 to 44 years	174	50%	
	45 to 64 years	145	42%	
	65 to 79 years	17	5%	
	80 or more years	1	0%	
	Total	345	100%	
24	How would you describe your current living circumstances?	Number	%age	
	I am a single person	123	36%	
	I am living as a couple (married, common-law)	218	64%	
	Total	341	100%	
25	How would you best describe your current working situation?	Number	%age	
	Working full-time	189	55%	
	Working part-time	66	19%	
	Semi-retired	21	6%	
	Fully-retired	21	6%	
	Unemployed and looking for work	15	4%	
	Long term disability and unable to work	9	3%	
	Am a homemaker	11	3%	
	Am a student	12	3%	
	Total	344	100%	

Appendix 1: Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Closed-ended Responses

26 What is your household's annual total income?	Number	%age
Less than \$20,000	52	15%
Between \$20,000 and \$40,000	81	24%
Between \$40,000 and \$60,000	66	19%
Between \$60,000 and \$80,000	54	16%
Between \$80,000 and \$100,000	26	8%
More than \$100,000	43	13%
Prefer not to say	17	5%
Total	339	100%

Appendix 2

City of Nelson Affordable Housing Survey – Respondent Comments

Question 28

Summary - Question 28

What do you think is the most important thing the CITY OF NELSON should do to in relation to "affordable housing".

Secondary Accommodation – Encourage / Facilitate

- Encourage secondary suites. (x 11)
- Encourage secondary suites, laneway housing, and other rental alternatives that do not require major investments by developers.
- Consider secondary suites, laneway housing and the like.

Secondary Accommodation – Remove Barriers and Provide Incentives

- Make it easier and more affordable for owners to have a legal rental suite in their house. Utility rates should be based on footprint and housing capacity not based on the number of families under a roof. The 80% utility is one of the worst issues. It is the main factor that leads to illegal suites and therefore unregulated poor quality conditions. You need to make an incentive to having a suite, not a deterrent.
- Remove barriers to secondary suite development such as lot size (there are many suitable infill houses in lower uphill whose lots are still too small) and parking requirements. We need affordable housing more than we need parking. Use resident permits if street parking is a problem.
- Make it easier to create secondary suites (no parking requirements, review zoning restrictions and lot coverage).
- Reduce the bills for landlords who supply secondary suites especially water and sewer bills.
- Get rid of parking restrictions for suites. A lot of renters need homes rather than cars.
- Encourage development of secondary suites without the strict conditions formerly demanded.
- Help landlords with tax / cost for having a suite in their homes - landlords need incentive.
- Reduce costs of having a second suite.
- Lift barriers to having secondary suites in homes to reducing housing issues, monitor rentals - some are so shockingly below living standards I'm surprised they are allowed to rent them in the first place.
- Give home owners "a break" (i.e., water&sewer charges, taxes, or even an incentive program for allowing secondary suites) for having or creating a secondary suite.
- Two requirements for a legal secondary suite should be changed: 1. Reduce minimum lot size required. 2. Reduce, or remove, off-street parking requirements (encourage reduced dependency on cars, & allow better use of valuable lot land).
- Reduce development and utility fees for secondary suites
- Ease up on "illegal" suites
- Relax bylaws re: legal suites.
- Make it financially affordable to do the renovation and apply for legal suites, lower taxes for legal suites and rentals.
- Provide tax incentives to those home owners who might consider creating secondary suites but for whom the overall costs exceed the benefits.
- Tax breaks for secondary suites to help encourage their affordability.
- Add initiatives for having a secondary suite in the home.
- Provide incentives for home owners/builders to add a secondary suite.
- Reduce property taxes so suites are more affordable.

Summary - Question 28

- Reduce costs for secondary suites, by reducing taxes on houses with secondary suite (especially if for handicapped or low income people) and reduce water, sewer, garbage to 50% of the very high current cost per dwelling for the same type of suite.
- Increased incentives for secondary suites.
- Give incentive to landlords in building secondary suites.
- Lower secondary suite water/sewer rates to encourage people to add/rent out secondary suites.
- Ease restrictions for building secondary suites.
- Reduce the cost of legal secondary suites.
- Allow semi detached homes to house secondary suites.
- Give breaks to people with suites rather than penalizing with higher taxes.
- Find ways to eliminate some of the barriers to secondary suites.

Property Tax and City Fees Related

- Keeping taxes as low as possible.
- Lower taxes.
- Promote the creation of lower cost affordable housing through incentives (tax and utilities).
- Increase taxes on vacant land.
- Do not raise utilities or water.
- Increase taxes on non permanent home owning residents, take this extra tax to fund affordable, aesthetically pleasing, government independent, high density housing (co-operatives, co-housing, etc.).
- Give homeowners property tax incentive breaks in order to create more affordable housing. City of Nelson taxpayers have the second highest tax rates next to Whistler. This will drive lifelong proud citizens of Nelson away from their homes and city that they dearly love, and can't see themselves living anywhere else, because they can't afford to retire and still live in the City of Nelson.
- Not use City taxpayers dollars that should be going to infrastructure to subsidize housing for people who don't seem to want to pay their own way as we have all our lives.
- Amalgamate nearby areas (Blewett, Bonnington, North Shore) to increase the tax base & improve services.
- Revisit classification system for legal suites and duplexes. Consider household size when assessing taxes for city services; I have a three-person household and pay double for sewer, garbage and water. Consider metering for water
- Reduce property taxes and water and sewer costs!
- Realistically? Use water meters and bill by usage.
- Either create more and/or make it attractive for homeowners to rent a part of their homes say by giving a tax incentive or something similar.
- Not make people pay for water.
- Lower taxes to make it affordable. Stop spending money on frills and start working with a budget to improve housing.
- Stop wasting our tax dollars on bogus highway renovation projects.
- Reduce rates for building permits.
- Reduce property taxes.

Summary - Question 28

- Offer tax incentives and less than 80% for sewer water for affordable housing owners.
- Lower the secondary billing charges for water and sewer. Metering would do the trick and encourage conservation.
- Give tax incentives for rentals if below a certain amount
- Allow more industry in town to offset taxes.
- Reduce taxes, get rid of over paid workers and restructure pay scales.
- Tax people who only live here part time or who own more than three properties.
- Cutting some of the fees for services wouldn't hurt.
- Start raising funds in other areas and use that to build more affordable housing. They should increase the cost of parking in Nelson. It is ridiculously cheap and also increase the cost of garbage tickets and re-allocate these funds to other important areas. Not only will this help the environment, but the extra funds raised could be used to build affordable housing.

Housing Choices, Density

- Provide public education around affordable housing that works to de-stigmatize low income populations and populations in need - as well as help people to understand the benefits of density (energetic neighbourhoods with people walking) and the cost of sprawl (environmental, social isolation).
- Consider mixed use, mixed income accommodation. for example - the Woodwards building in Vancouver.
- Fix up existing buildings (old apartment buildings that are empty etc) to be used as low income housing. More high-density, modest housing developments - NOT more "luxury" Silver Bay or Amber Bay condos though. Need some modestly sized complexes with maybe 10 units. Maybe two storeys. Buildings that would blend into neighbourhoods as other houses do, not standing out as CONDOMINIUMS. Not everyone wants an old big three-bedroom house, or new big three-bedroom house. Some people are happy with 800-900 sf that is affordable. Not everyone wants granite countertops and shiny appliances that most condo developers seem to think people "need" and charge TOO MUCH money for. So you get small space but pay a lot for these luxuries. I think there are many people for whom these luxuries are just not that important. Just want clean, modest, functional, affordable (\$200K range) place to live.
- More seniors retirement complexes and mature buyers affordable condominiums would free up some available houses for purchase.
- Encourage development of the waterfront, to contain high density housing.
- Densification is a must and development for new housing opportunities.
- More apartment buildings. Many many more!
- Build an apartment complex.
- Be proactive in promoting housing development that meets the needs of many groups of people (apartments with high income and low income people in the same development rather than separate developments for both).
- Allow more apartments.
- Develop policies which will promote densification and allow for more secondary housing on properties. This would ideally ease the housing shortage, creating a more competitive market which would not allow landlords to charge inflated rents.
- More urban condos for young families relocating from major centers.

Summary - Question 28

- Invest in housing options like container homes; convert unused space into apartments/condos (10th Street dorms project is fantastic).
- Make it easier for residents who own their own homes to increase density on their property.
- Increase high density building - condos and increase land base.
- More apartment buildings.
- Work with other levels of government to help develop tax incentives for individuals looking to develop apartment style complexes.
- Stop allowing developers to build establishments without having affordable units included. Also, more apartment buildings should be built (not just in Rosemont).

Sub-Regional Planning / Housing

- Ensure development is well planned (good design), with efficient services (road, water, sewer, etc.) encourage affordable housing in the community where services currently exist - not in the rural area. Work with the rural areas to target appropriate development in the City.
- Help facilitate the creation of affordable housing in rural areas
- Reduce the amount of restrictions and regulations.
- RDCK must be a partner in any solutions.
- Encourage progressive planning.
- Ease subdivision restrictions to allow more affordable housing on smaller lots.
- Look at it as a regional issue and find regional solutions.
- Work with other communities and region to create solutions.
- Respect the existing fabric of the City by encouraging and building small scale rather than rezoning that would allow for large scale developments to be built that sit uncomfortably within existing neighbourhoods or even eliminate existing housing.
- Ensure levies on new market-housing (non-secondary suites) developments are at market rate, and that the associated fund is used to levy new social housing units because research shows that that is what is needed.
- Hold developers accountable to including affordable housing units within new developments or charging a fee in lieu. Then using these fees to support non-profit housing starts.
- Do not create a situation with affordable housing all in one location, or seniors all in one area, each area should contain all ages, stages and financial status---that helps everyone work together more.
- Encourage some affordable housing construction and ensure the price remains affordable once built (i.e., developer does not up the costs for more profits).
- Look at providing more affordable housing when new developments apply for zoning.
- Create many more affordable building lots.
- Make it easier for developers to build apt or townhomes and once they are built, the "tidy premises" bylaw must be enforced by the bylaw department.
- Increase the rental stock significantly.
- Look at ways to grow and develop that are also smart-planning, environmentally sound and foster diversity.
- Allow multi-family dwellings to be built even in neighbourhoods like Fairview which I'm not sure what they are so scared of in having such dwellings in their neighbourhood.

Summary - Question 28

Transit and Mobility

- Development - link it with a strong transit system.
- Increase transit to outlying areas as that's where people are being forced to go. Of five people recently transferred at the same job, we were the only ones fortunate to find a home we would actually live in, the rest moved to Castlegar or Slokan Valley.
- Improve transit from outlying more affordable areas such as Blewett, Bonnington & the North Shore.
- Better transit to surrounding communities such as Ymir and Salmo.
- Plus public transport.
- Quality affordable transit.
- Help facilitate transportation to rural areas.

Advocacy and Leadership

- Provide leadership for action
- Lobby the provincial and federal governments OR become a landlord and build social housing.
- Advocate for services for local residents (such as health care)...many important things.
- Demonstrate strong leadership / be open to new and creative ideas that may come forward.
- Lobby all levels of government. Lack of political will is #1 contributor of lack of affordable housing.
- Strive to make more affordable housing.
- Since the other levels of government have abandoned housing, I guess it's up to the City to find the money to support the creation of affordable rental housing for its citizens.
- Use whatever means available to a municipal government to facilitate creation of housing affordable to low income people, and advocate with senior governments for return to building non-profit subsidized housing.
- Oppose the tax burdens on home construction, HST etc.
- Make it a priority - identify all possibilities that could be converted to decent affordable housing, involve the community in converting existing facilities and/or building new, eco-smart low cost housing - make it part of what keeps Nelson real. Then open the doors to people who can appreciate what this would mean, to have a home, and who would look after these community facilities.
- Create an over-all and comprehensive strategy that works in large scale and small scale, do not leave parts out. All segments of this society have a direct need for affordable housing, young, working, middle-aged, families, elderly...spiky-hairs, no-hairs. With this survey you are heading in the right direction.

Private Sector Involvement

- Start engaging the private sector by creating a welcome environment and development incentive.
- Provide incentives to developers to redevelop downtown heritage buildings such as the Legion and Nelson Daily News.
- Look at incentives to redevelop industrial areas for housing.
- Negotiate incentives for developers if they deliver "affordable" housing options
- Flexible zoning and cooperation with landlords and developers.
- Understand where the private sector will step in in some areas to help address the issues. The City does not have to do it all.

Summary - Question 28

- Require [affordable housing] in all new developments, no excuses from the developers accepted, they're already making tons of money.
- Create a climate where developers look to develop affordable housing for young families, not only single low income moms...but them also, housing for seniors that is respectful of human needs.
- Offer landlords an incentive to work with Agencies that promote housing programs /housing workers that can offer ongoing support /mediation to both tenants and landlords.
- No more big sprawling waterfront condos, please. Nelson is known for its quaint heritage vibe, for being funky and artsy. Let's not drive out these very same people!
- Cooperate with groups, agencies, individuals, to create affordable accommodation and insist that new development includes a number of subsidized rental units for families with children / pet units.
- Stop building huge houses that only rich people can afford.

City & Public Lands - Sell or Lease

- Identify land (such as city campground) and facilitate the construction of more affordable housing.
- Build a variety of rentable units on City land, designed for site specifics. Or lease land (long-term) to qualified owner/builders, who after the lease period would be able to present the homes back to the City as additional rental units.
- Donate land to housing creation, such as through Nelson Cares.
- Purchase land and enter into partnerships with community agencies like Nelson CARES Society in managing affordable housing.
- The City may wish to partner with other housing societies by providing land and accessing funding from organizations like BC Housing.
- Create a land bank; do something with the Mount, and the old school board office property, for a start.
- Look to developing the lands - taking into account our culture and working with nature - be the leader in sustainable community.
- Have more affordable land to sell.

Partnerships

- When opportunities arise to partner with agencies that provide housing such as BC Housing the City needs to take advantage of these important partnerships.
- Work in partnerships when there is opportunities for more affordable housing, developments and supports.
- Partner with organizations to assist with the creation of affordable housing...they are ready to go = Stepping Stones, Habondia, West Kootenay Women's Association - they have ideas and just need the financial assistance, it will be self-sustainable.
- Partner with BC Housing to create more suitable small space supported living units particularly for those with mental health and addiction issues.
- Work with BC Housing to get more social housing in Nelson.
- Work with community groups such as the Nelson Committee on Homelessness to develop a strategic plan that addresses the housing needs of all individuals who want to make Nelson their home.
- There are many subgroups with differing housing needs, engage the public in identifying priorities and then start working through the priorities - you can't do everything immediately on such a complex issue.
- Work with other levels of government to create more affordable housing.

Summary - Question 28

Special Needs Housing

- Create some for people with physical and psychiatric disabilities.
- Convert Mount St. Francis to housing.
- Work with other levels of government & non-profits to build housing for the mentally ill & addicted.
- Create housing for people with mental health conditions.
- More second stage housing!!
- More money to supported housing, to housing for seniors, to housing co-ops, to different residential options for people who need extra assistance. This doesn't need to be a lot of money. . .or a lot of space. People sharing gardens, resources, kitchens. So many options!!!
- Stimulate more affordable housing for youth, seniors and homeless.

Cooperative Housing

- Find the demographics of needs and create sustainable, cooperative housing opportunities. There are working models out there in BC. Get on with it.
- Create either cooperatives or build in a sense of ownership into the housing community.
- Build where possible affordable units to house the lower paid. Maybe make them cooperative where the renters can be part owners which will make them hopefully more responsible.
- Build more housing units, particularly co-op housing.
- Perhaps zoning more spaces for co-housing and other projects like "the Links".
- Build more subsidized housing and co-op housing.
- Development of more co-op housing.
- The City can also help develop co-op housing.
- Facilitate development of co-op style housing.
- Encourage community initiative e.g: co-op and co-housing projects.

Students, Student Housing

- Support for the 10th St Campus Res project was a bullseye – very smart.
- Renovate the student housing at Selkirk College as planned.
- I think Nelson needs to think about the fact that there is a college here and help students more in finding suitable, affordable housing.
- Support students with quality housing.
- Complete the Selkirk college dorms and lower housing prices in the city.

Second Home Owners / Vacation Rentals

- Have those who buy expensive secondary homes in Nelson, pay heavy levies to balance their negative impact on housing in Nelson.
- Bylaws which discourage empty residences and unused second homes
- Restricting non-resident ownership. (i.e., seasonal housing).
- Discourage wealthy "investors" from other areas.

Rents and Renters

- Cap rent for students.

Summary - Question 28

- Some accountability for how much landlords can charge for rent.
- Offer money to local organizations who can help finance renters to become home owners.
- Give people incentives to rent out parts of their house and make the residential tenancy grievance process easier for the resident.
- Reduce rent for single parents and students.
- Lower the rents and better the living conditions.
- Lower the rent!
- Publish articles about the real cost of gouging tenants. I.e., the cost of constant turnover of tenants and tenants disrespect for their rentals because they feel they are being screwed.
- Encouraging landlords to not be so crazy greedy when charging for average rentals. This town is out of control!
- Support the development of rental properties. The best landlords would be non-profits with covenants to protect the more vulnerable renters.
- Put a "cap" on what people can charge for renting a house within reason.
- Rent control.
- Make a bylaw preventing landlords from discriminating against renters with children.
- Find some that is pet friendly; it's okay if you smoke pot but not if you have cat!
- Create a bylaw which would assist in preventing discrimination of landlords towards those with pets/ single parent families.
- Many landlords say no to single families. Also, the amount of landlords who do not allow any pets is ridiculous.

Economy and Jobs

- Encourage economic development in the business sector in the city, so people can find good paying jobs to be able to afford to live and work here.
- Encourage small industry and commercial ventures which would provide better paying jobs, it seems that people here do not want this , such as fast food and other large businesses, how can the taxpayer continue to carry this burden when money and resources needs to go to infrastructure and taxpayer based needs.
- Doing something for the economy that would create jobs so that people could afford to rent or buy.
- Encourage construction and employment.
- Dissuade people who do not want to work from locating here.

Environmental Matters

- Ensure [affordable housing] is environmental.
- Incorporate "green" building measures (water conservation, connectivity, smart communities model). I think that publicly subsidized housing should be a progressive model. Not low functioning, unconnected, no riparian vegetation. , big streets, not catering to pedestrians and bikes, concrete jungle style communities (i.e.. Johns Walk).
- Some attractive small units (preferably "green") be built - either detached or in some sort of community-cluster.
- Create ecologically sound housing that is truly affordable and can be purchased with buying assistance for those who want to care for a home over the long term.

Summary - Question 28

- Change its building codes to include different models of eco-building that are low cost structures that have endured many many years. To not create a huge cost for bureaucratic tape by having to have all these documents that cost more than the home itself! I think the CITY OF NELSON should really check in with what a vision of equality looks like and not get everyone bogged down in a few people's selfishness.
- Increase the stock that is available, offer rebates for renos, etc to bring things up to standard and make them more energy efficient (reduce low income people's utilities) and enact enabling bylaws (even more) to allow for suites, etc. densification).
- Look into building sustainable homes such as straw bale and adobe. There are many ways to build that are cheaper than regular construction.

Homelessness

- Build [affordable housing], and in the interim, support the local shelter. Homelessness is everyone's problem. the City needs to take care if its people!
- Acknowledge that the issue of homelessness will not go away and have a plan to deal with it.

General Statements / Challenges

- The City of Nelson is limited by the very fact of where it is situated. If boundaries could be expanded (as most other places do) there would be more building lots available (the more the competition the lower the price).
- Expand the City boundary.
- Build something. Create some!!! BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING!!!!!! Build it! Create more. Build more affordable housing units that are clean, safe and soundproof. Build more subsidized units. Get the cost DOWN !!! Build some. Build some!!!!!! - Build more affordable housing. Create more!!! Create subsidized housing. Create more affordable houses. Build more low income housing both for purchase and rent.
- The City should get into the "affordable housing" market. And thus be able to provide the necessary housing, at an appropriate cost, without trying to make a "Profit" as to the private sector or build low-cost/affordable housing units.
- Have affordable housing for young people who want to stay here.
- Provide affordable housing for the working poor.
- Encourage affordable development.
- Increase affordable housing stock.
- More affordable housing. (not condos or subdivisions on the waterfront).
- More subsidized housing, as there always seems to be a waiting list.
- Help those with older homes fix them up. Because of the state of many of the older homes they are almost impossible to afford and I predict Nelson will continue to lose their older buildings.
- Supporting local businesses that empower the individual to find a sustainable solution to the root chakra need of shelter.
- Make it happen please.
- Make it available for everyone that needs it!!!!
- Unrealistically, build an apartment block.
- Enforce quality housing with affordable living costs, if all the rich keep buying up the property and hiking up the rents there will be no one left to serve their needs.

Summary - Question 28

- Reduce the stigma surrounding low income by integrating nice housing for low income families and renting to those wanting a clean, peaceful, home environment without the red flag "these are low income people" housing we currently have.
- Get the police to stop harassing people in mobile homes. I find that mobile homes add to the city's character, and I don't see why public funds should be spent to get the police to escort them out of town at two in the morning, as is common practice at present.
- Create housing complex for seasonal workers (i.e., for whitewater staff) that is central to Nelson.
- Cap a certain percentage of the prices on housing to make it more affordable for Nelson residents.
- As I said before (and believe me I'm not alone thinking this way), get rid of the so called "Artist Scene" - the unworthy soup kitchen clan - etc.
- Look at the middle class people not just the low income and seniors, this effects everyone.
- Benefits for first time home buyers.
- Grants for first time buyers.
- Not to create mini ghetto's
- Have a fire and let the hole's burn down.
- Multiple answers, as there is no one answer: the dorms at the college, the secondary suite bylaw; encouragement of Whitewater to provide some housing for its seasonal employees, more trailer park zoning.
- Encourage the building of more housing by the public and private sectors.
- Educate home owners that maybe building a gigantic home for a few people is not environmentally friendly and should have a suite in their home or build more duplexes and triplexes.
- Facilitating the planning and creation/building of affordable housing.
- Alignment of quality and cost to housing.
- Nelson is a politically aware and forward thinking city. It is time to think of housing, along with other things such as safe drinking water, as a right, not a privilege.
- Regulate the real estate market in the city. Having a meeting with the real estate board and letting them know the results of this survey would be beneficial.
- Decrease the down payment to get a mortgage.
- So many people get jobs with so low wage... affordable housing is a necessary. But owners pay so much in taxes and everything they can't so much ask for lower... I'm sure something in the middle .. better wage. .less taxes...?
- Get rid of the NOT IN MY BACK DOOR mentality.
- Offer attractive housing for different kind of groups, so the rent/buy prices are not that sky high.
- Ensure there is an increase in numbers-with one to three bedrooms.
- Think of the end consumer - don't penalize good landlords with too many taxes and regulations, just the slumlords should be held accountable for their inadequate housing.
- Encourage multi-family housing, including duplexes.
- Stop removing the affordable housing project just to replace them with expensive suites that are not affordable.
- Provide incentives for people to assist in accommodating people that don't own their own house.
- Remove real estate from commodity speculation and make it perpetually affordable.
- Look at what's making the housing so "unaffordable" and work with that.

Summary - Question 28

- Be creative, intensely research the subject, be a model community and add this to list "great reasons to work & live in Nelson".
- Look at what's making the housing so "unaffordable" and work with that.
- Look for ideas worldwide and act.
- Learn from other successful communities and follow suit.
- Stop talking, forming committees and move forward. More time is wasted on talking than doing.
- Stop undertaking studies and actually do something!!
- Do something about it instead of discussing it and surveying it. There is a lack of affordable housing and we need to DO something to change it. The doing part is the challenge.
- Figure it out soon before everyone moves away.
- Facilitate and encourage communication, that you work with any housing or building issues/challenges you can so more housing can be opened up, you need to set an example, you need to check out best practices and models from other communities and bring them to the table. Respectfully, I guess the most important thing you ALL can do, is for a week or two pretend you didn't have your home, or you had to move, and you only made \$20K a year, and try to find a place to live, or maybe pack up a suitcase and hop around to your friends houses for a few months while still working and taking care of your family.

Appendix C
Laneway Housing Briefing Paper

Briefing Paper: Laneway Housing, Sample Practices

The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide background information that may be of assistance to the City of Nelson Planning Department. At the time this research was undertaken, the City was updating its zoning bylaw and giving consideration to the inclusion of “laneway housing”.

This briefing paper summarizes different approaches to the implementation of laneway housing and presents sample practices from several communities to inform design considerations. The regulatory environment is presented for seven municipalities: Kelowna, Maple Ridge, Delta, North Vancouver, and Vancouver in BC; and Berkeley, and Santa Cruz in California. Lesser information is provided for a number of other communities, including a number of weblinks.

One of the challenges faced by the City of Nelson is its sloping topography. For this reason, where possible, the consultants have provided commentary and diagrams in relation to hillside/slope conditions.

What Is Laneway Housing?

“Laneway housing” is typically defined as a small, single detached dwelling, which is secondary/ancillary to a principal house. Depending on the local context, other terms are more familiar – carriage housing, coach home, granny flats, backyard cottages, and alleyway housing. From a regulatory perspective (zoning, ordinances) they are usually referred to as “Accessory Dwelling Unit”. Often built above or in place of a garage, a laneway house is located at the rear of a lot abutting a lane. Similar to a carriage house or coach house, laneway houses are smaller and lower in height than primary housing stock.

Benefits Of Laneway Housing

- Provides affordable rental housing and a greater variety in the housing stock. Typical motivations for construction are students, seniors or teen family members.
- Increases density in low density areas where amenities and infrastructure already exist while preserving the character of established neighbourhoods at-grade/above grade.
- Offers an alternative to basement suites.
- Improves the vitality and appearance of existing lanes.
- Provides income to owner of principal house.



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Housing Briefing Paper

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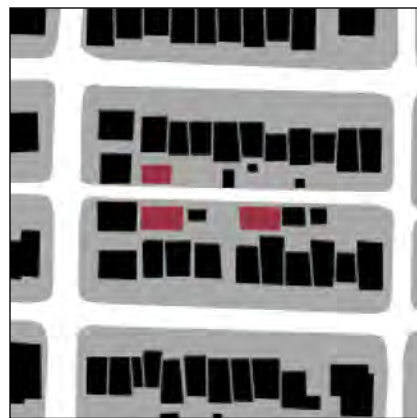
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Barriers To Laneway Housing

- Municipal parking requirements, often a problem on smaller, constrained lots.
- Limits on building footprint, height and massing.
- Community concern about changes to the neighbourhood character.
- Complicated municipal approval processes.
- Cautious approach by elected officials and staff.

Common Design Considerations For Laneway Housing

- Remains secondary to principal housing in size and height.
- Minimizes overlook and shadowing impacts.
- Preserves prominent trees and landscaping features.
- Respects the scale and built form of neighbourhood properties.



Typical infill density pattern in an established Hamilton, Ontario neighbourhood. Laneway housing is shown in red.



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Recurring Policy Features:

There are common aspects to accessory dwelling unit housing bylaws / ordinances and policy / design guidelines.

- Accessory units must be smaller in floorspace and massing than principal dwelling – from the seven cases in this paper, minimum sizes from from 300 sf in Berkeley, California to 1,000 sf in North Vancouver.
- On-site parking required.
- Mature tree retention a preference.
- Additional guidelines related to hillside development – views, stormwater management.
- Stratification is not an option.

Kelowna, British Columbia

The City of Kelowna permits secondary suites in the form of **basement suites, guest cottages, granny flats or in-law suites**. A secondary suite may be located in an accessory structure on a residential lot (i.e. laneway house, coach house, carriage

house, etc). Accessory dwelling units are allowed in all single family residential zones but may require rezoning.

Many new areas of Kelowna are on the hills that surround the city. The City has special provisions for residential development in these locations, including provisions for accessory dwelling units.

Regulations/Considerations:

- Accessory dwelling units (laneway house, coach house, carriage house, guest cottage, etc.) are only permitted in RU-6 zones or zones with an "s".
- Development Permit and Building Permit are both required to construct an accessory dwelling unit.
- Maximum size of 90m² (968ft²) or 75% of the size of the principal dwelling, whichever is less.
- To be eligible for an accessory dwelling, the residential lot must be greater than 700m² (7500ft²) for an interior lot, and greater than 800m² (8600ft²) for a corner lot.
- Guidelines define site coverage and height requirements for secondary units.
- Parking: minimum of three parking stalls must be provided on the lot.
- Strata titling is not permitted.

Secondary Housing and Hillside Development:

Special zoning provisions apply to residential zones that permit accessory dwelling unit housing on hillside sites. These "h" zones may be developed in accordance with Hillside Standards; the addition of an "s" indicates secondary suites are permitted and must comply with the provisions of the "parent" zone.

Kelowna has developed the following guidelines to limit the impact of housing on hills and ridges:

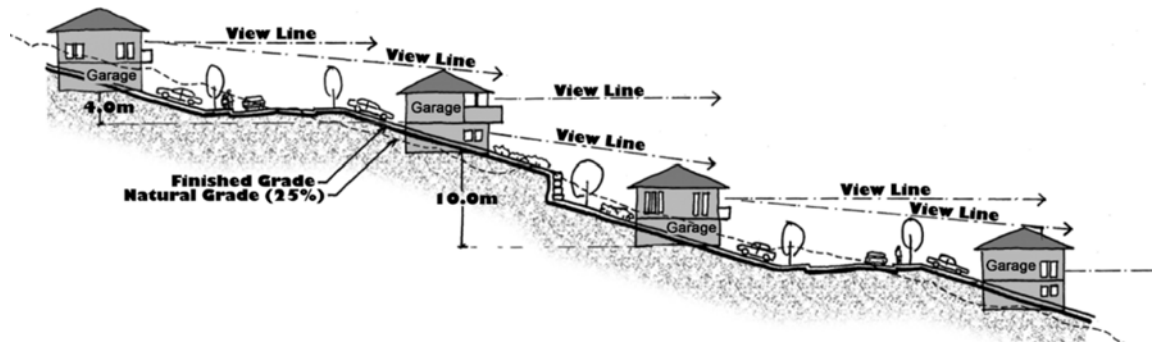
- Hillside character should not be compromised, retaining trees and other native vegetation where possible. Landscape features should be used to screen buildings.
- Greater backyard set backs to increase the distance between structures.
- Step back second and third stories, paying attention to lines of sight and privacy.
- Structures and building faces should not dominate the landscape.
- Street and building light is not dominant.



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Kelowna's suggested hillside built form

- Backyard space should be permeable to help deal with surface run off.

Kelowna Summary:

Zoning: permitted in RU-6 and residential zones with an "s"

Guiding Policy: Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision, Development and Servicing Bylaw. Development Permit required (conditions outlined in OCP).

Fact Sheets or Guides: Secondary Suites and Two Dwelling Housing information page includes links to relevant policy and information brochures:



City Of North Vancouver

North Vancouver Council approved accessory "coach housing" for rental purposes in Single Unit Residential zones in April 2010. Two types of units are permitted, Level-A and Level-B. Level A units are smaller and limited to one storey. Both unit types require a Development Permit, however; Level-A permits will be issued by staff, while Level-B permits will require a Development Variance Permit or Rezoning and will be approved by Council.

This well illustrated document, provides guidelines that cover a range of design topics – siting, access, parking and driveways, massing, height, habitable space at grade, relationship to neighbours, sloping sites, corner lots, architectural elements, landscaping, setback treatments, and sustainability elements. <http://www.cnv.org/c//data/2/232/NoShow/2009%2005%2001%20-%20Coach%20House%20Guidelines.pdf>

Regulations/Considerations:

- Permitted in Single Unit Residential zones on lots that are at least 362m² (3,900ft²) and 10m (33ft) wide. Laneway access is not required.
- Size: Level-A maximum 75m² (800ft²) Level-B maximum 93m² (1000ft²).
- Height: Level-A 1 storey / 4.5m (15 ft). Level-B 1.6 storey /7.9m (22 ft).
- Parking: 2 onsite stalls are required (one for each unit).
- Rental only, no strata titling.
- One complete application has been received by the City since the Bylaw was approved in April 2010. Several applications are in progress.

Hillside Development Considerations (noted in Development Guidelines):

Sloping Sites – On steeply sloping sites, the views from adjacent properties should be respected by adapting the scale, massing and location of the coach house development to follow the topography and natural features of the site.

North Vancouver Summary:

Zoning: Accessory Coach Housing is permitted in Single Unit Residential Zones

Guiding Policy: City of North Vancouver Zoning Bylaw and Development Permit Guidelines.

Fact Sheets or Guides: Accessory Coach House information page provides links to the Development Permit Guidelines, process overview, and background information.

<http://www.cnv.org/CoachHouse>



Briefing Paper: Laneway
Housing

District of Maple Ridge

Maple Ridge permits secondary suites as basement suites or as detached garden suites. Average-size lots in Maple Ridge are comparatively large and many homeowners choose to build a garden suite rather than a basement suite as they are able to afford the space, making potentially problematic regulations such as parking provisions null, despite both being legal and legitimate housing options.

Maple Ridge's OCP expresses preference for ground orientated housing explaining it is more likely to preserve neighbourhood character since the majority of houses are single detached.

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Regulations/Considerations:

- Permitted in all residential zones except R-1.
- Minimum lot area of 557m² (5995ft²), garden suite must be located within rear yard.
- Permitted in cottage form for properties less than one acre; above an accessory



Delta's suggested density and design, showing how infill housing can complement existing housing

residential or parking structure on properties more than one acre; and on properties with lane access.

- Owner occupancy is required on site.
- Additional parking space required for addition of basement suite or garden suite.



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Maple Ridge:

Zoning: Garden suites are allowed in all single family zoning.

Guiding Policy: District of Maple Ridge Zoning Bylaw and Permitted Use guidelines.

Fact Sheets or Guides: Detached Garden Suites: Issues and Options discussion paper. Provides an overview of garden suite policy in Maple Ridge. http://www.mapleridge.ca/assets/Default/Planning/pdfs/garden_suites_discussion_paper.pdf

Corporation of Delta

July 2010

The municipality of Delta supports coach housing as an infill option in the Ladner neighbourhood within single detached housing neighbourhoods, provided such development is compatible with existing housing character and is of good design. The guidelines are intended to facilitate coach housing that complements the character of existing areas.

Design Guidelines:

- Housing designs should respect and integrate the massing, shape, scale, proportion and details of neighbouring properties. This includes consideration of height and form.
- Side by side placement of identical designs is discouraged.
- Create housing designs, which respect privacy, sunlight exposure and views of neighbouring properties.
- Consider larger side setbacks where an adjacent house is very close to the property line.
- All vehicular access should be from a lane.
- Access to corner sites should be from flanking streets as far from the intersection as possible, where no lane exists.

Delta (Ladner) Summary:

Zoning: Coach houses are allowed as infill housing in all single family residential zoning.

Guiding Policy: Delta Housing Guidelines and Coach House Guidelines.

Fact Sheets or Guides: Coach house design guidelines. www.corp.delta.bc.ca/assets/CPD/PDF/Forms/w_lu_024.pdf



Appendix C: Laneway
Housing Briefing Paper

Vancouver

Vancouver City Council approved laneway housing for rental purposes in single residential zones (RS-1 and RS-5) in July 2009. The Laneway House Guidelines were adopted by Council July 28th, 2009. As of June 2010, 89 permits have been issued.

Regulations/Considerations:

- Permitted on lots 10m (33 ft) wide and wider, with an open lane, on a double fronting street, or on a corner with a lane dedication.
- Limited to family/rental use only - no strata title
- Recommended laneway house size is 50-65m² (540-700ft²).
- Maximum height of laneway housing is 1 ½ storey.
- Director of Planning may relax height and location to accommodate sloping topography.

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- Parking: minimum 1 space off-street parking for use by any unit on the lot.
- Tree planting is permitted between laneway house and lane. Entrances are encouraged to face the lane for security and livability reasons. This helps improve the aesthetic appeal of a laneway house.
- All laneway housing must be built to contribute to citywide long-term strategies of GHG reduction of 80% by 2050.
- 89 permits issued since the approval of laneway housing (as of June 2010). Additional laneway housing applications in progress. Generally, permits have been evenly distributed across the City.

Vancouver Summary:

Zoning: Permitted in Single-Family residential zones (RS-1 and RS-5), subject to certain parameters.

Guiding Policy: City of Vancouver Laneway House (LWH) Guidelines, City of Vancouver Zoning Bylaw: Section 11.24 Additional Regulations.

Fact Sheets or Guides: The City of Vancouver provides links to online guides to zoning requirements and many illustrative examples of prototypes for different lot configurations. <http://www.vancouver-ecodensity.ca/content.php?id=47>



City of Berkeley, California

The Bay area is expected to experience significant population growth over the next 25 years. In response to the growing pressure to provide housing, Berkeley allows accessory dwelling units in all single family residential areas. Permitting Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as an approach to urban infill is expected to slow urban sprawl, increase affordable housing options, provide additional income for homeowners and densify existing public transportation corridors. Much of Berkeley is located on hillside overlooking San Francisco Bay.

Regulations/Considerations:

- Key housing provision for seniors wishing to live close to families whilst maintaining an independent living space.
- Accessory dwelling units were identified by the community as a potential source of seniors housing, especially for seniors who wish to live close to relatives.
- Permitted in most residential districts, subject to development standards in the zoning ordinance.

- Lot size: a lot with an ADU must be at least 418m² (4,500 ft²).
- Size: 91-195m² (300-640ft²) depending on lot size and configurations.
- Height: 3.6m (12 ft.)
- Parking: one additional off-street parking space required. Possible parking relaxation available.
- Uptake: between 2002 and 2009 only 21 units were built. Research indicates zoning ordinance requirements are extremely restrictive, limiting the potential to introduce an ADU on many Berkley properties (ADU Final Report: <http://eetd.lbl.gov/staff/gadgil/docs/2009/adu-rpt-2009.pdf>)

Planning for Hillside Development – Lessons from Berkeley

Trade-offs and choices must be made when making decisions about hillside development policies. For example, making a choice between safety, providing large numbers of housing units, or limiting hillside development to low-density, upscale homes. Other decisions include:

- Preservation of the appearance of the hills.
- Wider roads for fire safety or minimizing slope disturbance.

Summary:

Zoning: Permitted in most residential zones

Guiding Policy: City of Berkley Zoning Ordinance

Fact Sheets or Guides: none found



Appendix C: Laneway Housing Briefing Paper

- Effect on property values since hillside development may spoil existing views and vistas.
- Dense native vegetation for aesthetic/environmental or irrigated landscaping.

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City of Santa Cruz, California

The seaside city of Santa Cruz has developed a housing strategy to help maintain its small town character and to continue providing affordable housing to encourage community home ownership. As one of the most expensive cities in the USA, in 2006, the median price of a detached home was \$746,000, affordable to only 7% of resident households.

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The City of Santa Cruz is recognized as a pioneer in developing a comprehensive approach to promoting the development of Accessory Dwelling Units. ADUs, also

known as “mother in law” or “granny” units, are small residential units that are accessory to a principal dwelling. The City provides financial incentives to encourage ADUs, including grants and loans (up to \$100,000) and wage subsidies.

Regulations/Considerations:

- Permitted in single family residential zones, on lots larger than 464m² (5,000ft²).
- Must meet setback, height and parking requirements.
- Parking: minimum 1 stall or 2 stalls for units with 2 or more bedrooms (in addition to residential parking standards; generally 2 stalls per house).
- Height: 1-1.5 storey with relaxation to permit special roof features to match existing house.
- Size: 152-244m² (500 - 800ft²), depending on lot size.
- Strata titling is not permitted.
- In the first year of the program (2003) 35 units were built, with an average of 40 to 50 ADU permits approved every year since then.

Hillside Development

The City encourages potential projects to take the following hillside factors into consideration:

- Not to build on steep slopes where possible, as this has the most potentially negative impact on slope stability.
- Setting out costs for landscaping and grading in budget advice, detailed in guidance released by the city planning department.
- The root systems of existing trees, especially heritage trees



Appendix C: Laneway
Housing Briefing Paper

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Santa Cruz, California:

Zoning: Permitted in most residential zones, including “Multiple Residence - Low Density District”

Guiding Policy: Santa Cruz ADU Zoning Regulations: TITLE 24 ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SANTA CRUZ CHAPTER 24.16 PART 2

Fact Sheets or Guides: The ADU Development Program provides links to guides and templates for navigating the application process, obtaining financial assistance, designing and constructing an ADU. Local architects created seven prototypes.

<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=1150>

Other Resources:

CMHC Research Highlight “Livable Lanes”

<http://www.cmhc.ca/odpub/pdf/66642.pdf>

www.laneway-house.com

City of Vancouver:

Vancouver Laneway Housing Information Page

<http://www.vancouver-ecodensity.ca/content.php?id=47>

City of Kelowna

Kelowna Subdivision, Development and Servicing Bylaw 7900: Schedule 4 Design Standards (Section 7: Hillside Street Standards) - <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1329.aspx>

Kelowna Hillside Development Audit

www.kelowna.ca/CityPage/Docs/PDFs/Strategic%20Planning/Hillside%20Development%20Audit.pdf

City of Santa Cruz

Accessory Dwelling Unit Development Program:

<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/index.aspx?page=1150>

District of Maple Ridge

www.mapleridge.ca/EN/main/business/4389/4398/garden_suites.html?zoom_highlight=garden+suites

The Corporation of Delta

www.corp.delta.bc.ca/assets/CPD/PDF/Forms/w_lu_024.pdf#search=%22Coach%20Housing%20design%20Guidelines%22

Santa Cruz Zoning Ordinance for ADUs:

<http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=8862>

Principles of Hillside Development (New Hampshire):

www.nh.gov/oep/resourcelibrary/referencelibrary/v/viewsheds/pas466.htm

Accessory Dwelling Units: Case Study

US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. 2008. <http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/affhsg/adu.html>

Provides examples of ordinances and programs from several US communities that have taken initiatives to actively promote and facilitate ADUs. In its concluding comments, the authors note the following “A community can tailor ADU ordinances to suit its demographic, geographic, and socioeconomic characteristics. The



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communities discussed in this case study provide loan programs, tax incentives, streamlined permitting, and reduced development fees as part of their ADU programs. In order for an ADU program to succeed, it has to be flexible, uncomplicated, include fiscal incentives, and be supported by a public education campaign that increases awareness and generates community support.”

The “Alley Flat” Initiative – Austin Texas.

The Alley Flat Initiative is a joint collaboration between the University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development (UTCSD), the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation (GNDC), and the Austin Community Design and Development Center (ACDDC). The Alley Flat Initiative proposes a new sustainable, green affordable housing alternative for Austin. “Alley Flats” are small, detached residential units, accessed from Austin’s extensive network of underutilized alleyways. Approximately 12 units have been completed since the initiative got underway in 2008.

<http://www.thealleyflatinitiative.org/vision>



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Examples from British Columbia



Innovative laneway design on display during the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver



Laneway in the foreground, principal dwelling in the background - laneway housing compliments density of built form



Unit built above garage



Lot configuration showing parking and laneway house



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June 2010



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