



REPORT

City of Nelson



Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (Smart Planning) Community Assessment

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This community assessment is intended to review the City of Nelson's readiness to engage in Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP), also known as "Smart Planning". The review is based on the Ministry of Community Services' ICSP Community Assessment Template (see Appendix A), which defines community sustainability planning as planning that:

...helps communities plan for their own needs while ensuring that the needs of future generations are also met and does so by incorporating an integrated approach that considers broader environmental, economic and social considerations in each planning process beyond current conventional planning frameworks.

The Community Assessment is the first step towards more comprehensive sustainability planning, and is designed to help communities take stock of:

- priority areas in the community;
- the plans and capacity currently in place to address these priority areas; and,
- next steps for moving forward with sustainability planning.

To assess Nelson's readiness to undertake integrated community sustainability planning, the City hosted a workshop on January 22, 2008 to discuss the community context and vision, the plans and capacity currently in place to undertake sustainability planning initiatives, and potential next steps. Urban Systems facilitated the community workshop which was attended by a wide cross-section of leaders in the community. Workshop attendees included:

- Linda Tynan, City of Nelson
- Kevin Cormack, City of Nelson
- Allen Fillion, City of Nelson
- Dave Wahn, City of Nelson
- George Millar, Seniors
- Tom Thomson, Chamber of Commerce
- Ross Lake, RHC Realty
- Mel Reasoner, West Kootenay Eco-Society
- Tim Hicks, Masse Miller Consulting
- Glenn Sutherland, Interior Health Board of Directors
- Tim Pearkes, Arts & Culture
- Barry Auliffe, Selkirk College
- Bill Reid, Kootenay Lake School District



- Jenny Robinson, NDCRS
- Christine Schmidt, Nelson Youth Centre
- Dan Huang, Urban Systems Ltd.
- James Klukas, Urban Systems Ltd.

The workshop agenda and presentation are provided in Appendix B, and workshop minutes are provided in Appendix C.

Separate from this workshop, the background review also included an assessment of Nelson's current policies and plans and their capacity to address sustainability objectives.

Further sections of this ICSP assessment are organized as follows:

- Section 2: Community Context
- Section 3: Planning Framework
- Section 4: Review of Overall State of Planning
- Section 5: Community Priorities
- Section 6: Next Steps



2.0 COMMUNITY CONTEXT

2.1 Community Overview

Nelson is a City of approximately 9,900,¹ located on the shores of Kootenay Lake in the Selkirk Mountains. The community is located on Highway 3A, to the northeast of Trail and Castlegar, and it is the largest of these communities. Nelson is surrounded by a rural population of approximately 16,500 residents, many of whom use Nelson as a service centre. Today, Nelson's economy is relatively diverse. The community is a centre of commercial activity and government services, and it also has a number of educational facilities, both public and private. Nelson has a strong entrepreneurial spirit, the community is known as a cultural centre, there is nearby access to plentiful outdoor recreation opportunities, and the City continues to become an established tourist destination.

2.2 Unique Community Attributes and Challenges

At the January 2008 community workshop, residents listed a number of things that make Nelson special and unique from other communities. Most responses revolved around Nelson's physical and social character. People talked about Nelson's geographic isolation and its physical surroundings which include mountains and Kootenay Lake. There was conversation about the fact that Nelson has a vibrant downtown core, and that it is a self-contained community, where people can meet their daily living needs without having to travel beyond the City. The lack of heavy industry in the community was noted, and people talked about the City's diverse economy. There was also significant discussion about the City's unique heritage, active arts community, unique talent pool, awareness of environmental concerns, and overall positive quality of life.

Notwithstanding Nelson's strengths and unique attributes noted above, workshop participants discussed a number of challenges facing the community. Discussion revolved around a wide range of topics such as intergovernmental cooperation, housing affordability, employment, infrastructure renewal, demographic challenges, health care, climate change, food security, air quality, contaminated sites, and energy use.

A more detailed inventory of the community's current strengths and challenges is provided in Appendix C which provides the results of the community workshop and organizes strengths and challenges around the categories of individual and community wellbeing, economy, and environment.

¹ BC Stats, 2007 Municipal Population Estimate, City of Nelson

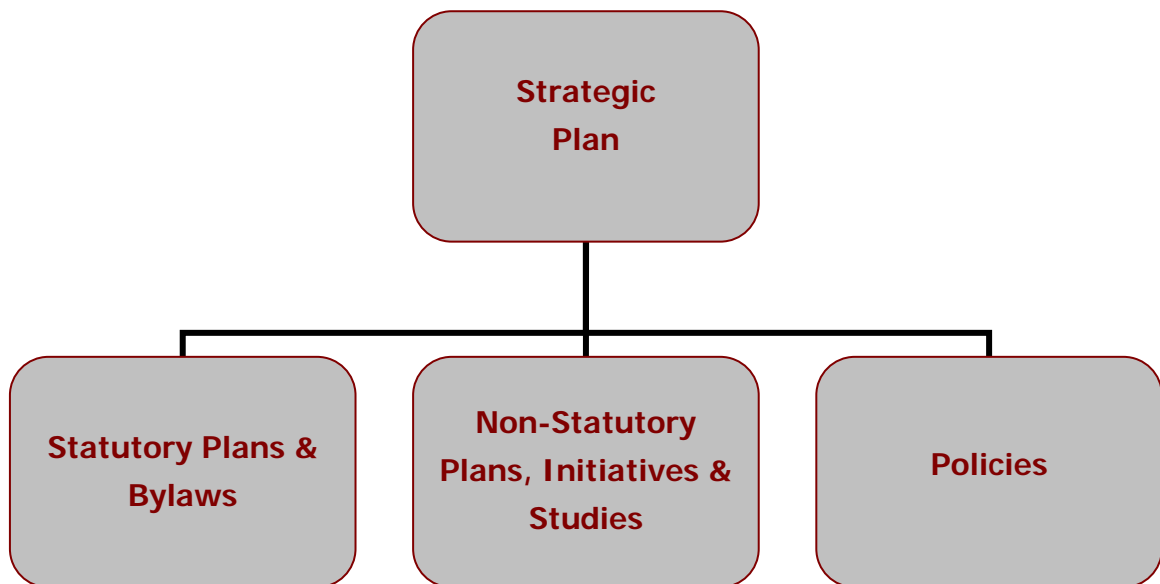


3.0 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overview

Figure 3.1 illustrates a generalized framework for Community Plans and Policies from broad visioning documents to specific regulatory bylaws. The broad visioning document is usually found in a Strategic Plan which is intended to set the overall course for a community and establish community priorities. Priorities are implemented through: 1) Statutory Plans and Bylaws; 2) Non-Statutory Plans, Initiatives and Studies; and, 3) Policies. There are strong interrelationships between all three categories as Statutory Plans and Bylaws can influence the development of Policies, non-Statutory Plans, Initiatives and Studies, and vice versa.

Figure 3.1 – Generalized Framework for Community Plans and Policies



The remainder of this section summarizes Nelson’s main plans and activities that relate to Integrated Community Sustainability Planning, organized around the categories shown in Figure 3.1.



3.2 Strategic Plan

The City of Nelson has articulated a number of 2008 strategic priorities, including:

1. Completion of this community assessment and initiation of sustainability/smart planning activities;
2. Adoption of the draft Official Community Plan bylaw;
3. Completion of a Pedestrian Strategy;
4. Completion of a Water System Financing Strategy; and,
5. Provision of City support for Affordable Housing.

Beyond these priorities, this community assessment is the first attempt at articulating a broad strategy for future sustainability planning initiatives. Should the City wish to undertake a more comprehensive strategic planning exercise, the development of an overarching sustainability plan may be warranted. Such an initiative could: set sustainability goals and principles for the City; review baseline conditions; and, develop action plans to achieve the City's sustainability goals.

3.3 Statutory Plans and Bylaws

Statutory plans and bylaws are required by legislation (i.e. *Local Government Act*). A number of Nelson's statutory plans and bylaws relate to sustainability planning, and these plans and bylaws are summarized below.

Official Community Plan (OCP)

The City of Nelson recently undertook an Official Community Plan update, and the revised OCP is currently in draft form. The last OCP bylaw was adopted in 1993. The OCP is a general statement of broad objectives and policies related to the form and character of existing and proposed land uses and servicing requirements. Major categories of the draft OCP include: Community Vision and Goals; Community Context; Residential Development; Affordable, Rental & Special Needs Housing; Commercial Development; Industrial Development; Waterfront; Social Needs, Well-Being & Development; Air, Rail & Marine Services; Roads & Circulation; Water, Storm, Sanitary Sewer & Solid Waste; Institutional Development; Heritage, Arts & Culture; Parks & Recreation; Natural Environment & Hazardous Conditions; and, Development Permit Process.

Zoning Bylaw

The Zoning Bylaw regulates specific land uses guided by the Official Community Plan. The intent of a Zoning Bylaw is to promote the health, safety and welfare of the public, to ensure the compatibility of land uses, and to protect the value of properties. A zoning bylaw can be used to



promote sustainability through components such as: riparian area setbacks, maximum percentage of impervious surfaces, required bicycle parking, density bonusing for provision of affordable housing, and so forth.

Subdivision and Development Servicing (SDS) Bylaw

The City has recently undertaken a Subdivision and Development Servicing Bylaw review. The Subdivision and Development Services Bylaw regulates the provision of works and services (e.g. roads, water, sewer, storm drainage, electric power, telephone) with respect to the subdivision or development of land.

Building Bylaw

The Building Bylaw administers the building code, regulating construction in the general public interest. Building bylaw regulations can be used to support sustainable measures such as the use of low-flow fixtures, geothermal heating, solar-ready construction, etc.

Electrical Bylaw

The Electrical Bylaw regulates the City's electrical utility, Nelson Hydro, and it imposes the rates and terms of use for electrical light, heat, and power. Nelson Hydro is the BC interior's only municipal utility that operates generation, transmission, substation, and distribution facilities.

5-Year Financial Plan

In order to plan for future expenditures and revenues, municipalities must create and adopt a Financial Plan which must be made available for public review prior to adoption by Council. The Financial Plan ensures that sufficient sources of funding are available to implement and achieve the objectives of the municipality. The Plan should balance current expenditures with transfers to capital reserves in order to ensure that appropriate funds are set aside for projects in the future.

Tangible Capital Assets (TCA)

In 2009, new regulations initiated through the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB 3150) will come into effect requiring all municipalities to account for, value, and depreciate all of the tangible capital assets. This includes all infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, and drainage), buildings and structures, furniture and fixtures, and equipment. The intent of this initiative is to lead municipalities into comprehensive asset management programs leading towards more sustainable infrastructure.



3.4 Non-Statutory Plans, Initiatives and Studies

Non-statutory plans and studies are not required by legislation; however, they can lead to changes in municipal policy and/or regulations and provide important guidance and direction for the community. Non-statutory plans/studies may be completed by the City of Nelson or by various community agencies or organizations. Current examples of non-statutory plan/studies include the following:

- Roadway Network Review;
- Airport Task Force;
- Waterfront Visioning;
- Water Master Plan;
- Zero Waste Action Plan; and,
- Arts & Culture Task Force Final Report.

3.5 Policies and Practices

The City maintains a number of policies and current City practices that have a direct relationship to sustainability issues. Current examples of these include the following:

- Airport related policies;
- Civic Centre policies;
- Comprehensive Cultural Sector Policy;
- Economic Development Opportunity Policy;
- Parking policies;
- Park policies;
- Vehicle policies; and,
- Water related policies.



4.0 REVIEW OF OVERALL STATE OF PLANNING

The Province's ICSP (Smart Planning) Assessment Template identifies fifteen community aspects that should be addressed through integrated community sustainability plans and processes. These aspects are listed below, and brief comment is provided on how current plans and processes address each item.

Health and Social

While the Province is responsible for health services (through Interior Health) and a number of social services, Nelson's draft OCP identifies opportunities for the City to take a more proactive role in addressing social issues and concerns. As outlined in the draft OCP, key topic areas may include: persons with disabilities; the aging population; family support services; child care; access to health care; poverty; and, youth. To address these areas, the draft OCP suggests that the City continue with the Social Planning Mapping project and that it work with community service groups to determine the need and feasibility of developing a Social Plan and/or other strategies.

Arts, Culture & Heritage

Nelson has a strong heritage, arts, and cultural sector, and it is known as the "best little arts town in Canada." Recent initiatives include: the 2003 Economic Impact of the Arts Analysis, which illustrated that arts and heritage contribute significantly to the local economy; the merger of the Kootenay School of the Arts with Selkirk College; the City's investment in the new museum, archives, and art gallery site; and, the work undertaken by the City of Nelson Arts and Culture Task Force and the City's Cultural Development Initiative, which resulted in the adoption of a Comprehensive Cultural Sector Policy in spring 2007. In fall 2007, the City appointed members to a Cultural Development Commission which advises the City on the implementation of the Cultural Sector Policy and provides input to Council on cultural matters. The City also has a Community Heritage Commission which functions in much the same manner to the Cultural Development Commission. Currently, the City is working towards adoption of an Art in Public Places policy. As well, the City has an active Arts Council which provides art programming and serves as an advocate for the arts.

Recreation and Leisure

Nelson's recreation services are provided by the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), through the Nelson and District Recreation Commission. Activities are centered on the Nelson & District Community Complex, which is a multi-purpose facility that opened in 2005, offering an arena, indoor pool, fitness centre, concession, recreational programs and a meeting room. The City is responsible for the provision of local parks, and there are OCP policies guiding the development of public open spaces and parkland dedication. In particular, the draft OCP



identifies the importance of providing a continuous recreational corridor along the waterfront with rest and view areas along the way.

Economic Development

In partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures Central Kootenay, Nelson has completed a Business Vitality Index, which identifies opportunities for improvement in supporting community entrepreneurs, and a Business Retention and Expansion Initiative. In recent years, Nelson has had success in economic development initiatives. In 2005, the Nelson Economic Development Partnership (NEDP) was established between the City, Community Futures, and the Nelson & District Chamber of Commerce. The partnership takes a unified approach to economic development, and it has five priority areas, including: business retention and expansion; business investment and attraction; communications and sector strengthening; infrastructure; and, labour market issues. Also in 2005, the Invest Kootenay Partnership (IKP) began as a partnership of communities to pursue local and regional economic development initiatives aimed at attracting out-of-area investment. Currently, the Partnership includes Nelson, Castlegar, Creston, Revelstoke, and Grand Forks.

Energy Planning and Climate Change

The Nelson community has demonstrated a strong interest in energy planning and climate change. In April 2007, the West Kootenay EcoSociety hosted a Climate Change Symposium. The purpose of this sold-out symposium was to raise awareness of climate change and to inspire the community to action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy efficiency. Both the City of Nelson and the Regional District of Central Kootenay are now members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Partners for Climate Protection Program. This is a five step program for communities to assess and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Also, in September 2007, the City of Nelson signed on to the BC Climate Action Charter which commits the community to the goal of having local government operations become carbon neutral by 2012. The Climate Action Charter also commits the City to measuring and reporting on the community's greenhouse gas emissions profile and working to become a more compact, energy efficient community. It is noted that Nelson is in a unique position to undertake energy planning given that Nelson Hydro is a city-run utility.

Water and Wastewater

The City recently completed a Water Master Plan which identified three major components to be addressed: the aging water distribution system; water supply and the need for a secondary source; and, water treatment investments to improve water quality. One of Council's 2008 priorities is completion of a water system financing strategy to facilitate the required system improvements. The City is also currently working to complete a Wastewater Master Plan to



address issues and options related to sanitary sewage collection, treatment and disposal. The City currently does not have a Liquid Waste Management Plan and operates under permit for the disposal of sanitary sewage effluent. In addition to sanitary sewer, the LWMP allows municipalities to explore ways to manage the quality of stormwater discharge. There are currently best management practices in place to address stormwater quality through low impact development, engineered wetlands, protection of natural drainage corridors, and so forth, outlined in "Stormwater Planning: A Guidebook for British Columbia (Ministry of Environment, 2002)".

Food

In November 2007, a number of agencies partnered to host The Future of Food in the Kootenays Conference: Food Security in a Changing World, held at Nelson's Prestige Inn. Conference events were attended by over 250 people. The conference goals were to educate the local populace with regard to reportedly threatened core food security issues, and further, to create a report that will guide a working group in implementing changes necessary for local/regional food reliance in the coming years.

Natural Areas

Nelson's Official Community Plan contains policies related to the protection of natural areas and open space. The draft OCP highlights opportunities to prepare development permit guidelines for areas of environmental sensitivity or natural hazard and to develop a wildfire mitigation plan for the community.

Buildings

Nelson's Building Bylaw administers the building code and is the main document prescribing standards for buildings. Some municipalities are developing green municipal buildings and providing incentives for green building development in the private sector. Nelson may be in a position to explore such tools as part of an integrated sustainability planning initiative.

Land Use

Nelson's Official Community Plan sets the overall policy direction for future land use while the Zoning Bylaw regulates land use. As indicated in Section 3, the OCP is currently being reviewed, and a draft OCP has been prepared for adoption. Following the OCP update, there are a number of steps that the municipality could also take to ensure that the Zoning Bylaw promotes sustainable development as much as possible.



Transportation

Nelson's Major Road Network plan was last officially updated as part of the Official Community Plan, adopted in 1993. In early 2007, the City completed a brief roadway network review to identify and summarize issues relating to the Major Road Network and to update the Major Road Network Map concurrently the OCP update. Also in early 2007, the City completed a Transportation Operations Administration Guide which provides guidance on the implementation of traffic control devices (i.e. signs, pavement markings, and traffic signals) within the City. Other significant studies include the Nelson Highway 3A Roadway Network Study, completed in 2002, and the City of Nelson Integrated Transportation Study which is now 14 years old. Neither of these studies was comprehensive or able to replace the need for a City-Wide Transportation Master Plan. The City has now initiated a Major Road Network Capital Plan which will lay out the investments required to implement the road network improvements identified in previous studies. A Transportation Master Plan would go one step further in integrating this work and providing a holistic and detailed review of transportation requirements for multiple modes including pedestrians, cyclists, and transit.

Learning

In the Nelson area, resident and visitor needs for formal and informal lifelong learning are primarily met through the School Board and Selkirk College, and through various seminars, workshops, and other events sponsored by numerous community agencies.

Governance and Partnerships

At the community assessment, participants identified the need for greater inter-governmental co-operation, particularly at the regional level. On certain sustainability initiatives (e.g. air quality, watershed protection, transportation), inter-agency co-operation may be required to effectively address the issues. Nelson has had some success with regional partnerships in the area of economic development where there are partnerships in place with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, and other municipal governments.

Affordability and Housing

The Nelson Economic Development Partnership has been undertaking research to determine the scope of the housing affordability issue in Nelson. The research is reviewing the impact of housing affordability on the labour force, retention of existing residents, and attraction of new residents. The Economic Development Partnership is currently continuing to work with the Selkirk College Regional Innovation Chair, the Regional District of Central Kootenay, the City, and the BC Real Estate Foundation to research housing affordability and to assist the City and Regional District to create policies that more effectively deal with the issue. Additionally, it is noted that the City's draft OCP encourages the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy and Policy.



Materials and Solid Waste

The Regional District of Central Kootenay maintains a Solid Waste Management Plan, last updated in 1996. Garbage collection services are provided within the City, and there are plans to implement door to door recycling pick up in 2008. In 2003, the City completed a Zero Waste Action Plan. This plan presented a package of policies and programs intended to make it more economic to eliminate, reuse, recycle, or compost waste, than to dispose of it in landfills.



5.0 COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

5.1 Vision

Nelson's community vision is articulated in the draft Official Community Plan as follows:

Nelson has its feet in Kootenay Lake and reaches up into the mountains naturally embracing its environment in a unique way. Nelson is a human-centred, ecologically sound and cosmopolitan city. Nelson will remain resilient and be open to change while retaining its small town feeling.

Baker Street will remain the heart of the City, expanding westwards along Hall Street towards the waterfront. Nelson will provide its residents with diverse opportunities for employment and social growth. Nelson will be welcoming and safe for all of its residents no matter what age, gender, or income level.

The draft Official Community Plan also articulates the following goals:

- 1. Nelson will protect its environment.*
- 2. Nelson will protect its small town character by respecting the cohesion and integrity of all neighbourhoods, its heritage, and its special features.*
- 3. Nelson will provide direction for development throughout the whole city.*
- 4. Nelson will promote sustainable economic balance and growth in the community.*
- 5. Nelson will provide municipal services to meet the needs of the community in a cost efficient manner.*
- 6. Nelson will adhere to the policies of "Smart Growth" through the increase of quality of life and the optimization of the use of infrastructure.*
- 7. Nelson will promote and support energy efficiency and sustainable community development through planning and implementation of energy-efficient land use, transportation, building and infrastructure and renewable or alternative energy supply.*

At the Community Assessment workshop, participants discussed a community vision for sustainability. In this discussion, a number of common vision ideas emerged including the following:

- Nelson is unique and different;
- Nelson is environmentally responsible;



- Nelson retains its demographic balance;
- Nelson has a balanced, diverse economy;
- Nelson has affordable housing for all;
- Nelson is inclusive and has employment for all;
- Nelson is a confident community;
- Nelson is the healthiest community in Canada; and,
- Nelson has healthy core infrastructure.

These vision statements touch on social, economic, and environmental sustainability. A full list of Community Assessment workshop responses is provided in Appendix C.

5.2 Priority Action Areas

Based on Community Assessment workshop discussions and the review of the current state of planning in the community, a number of priority action areas emerge to further Nelson's path to sustainability. Priority action areas include:

- A healthy communities initiative focused on prevention;
- Action on affordable housing;
- Initiatives related to energy planning and climate change (including action steps to make municipal operations carbon neutral by 2012);
- Infrastructure renewal (capital planning and finance strategies);
- A Waterfront Plan;
- Use of sustainability indicators to evaluate development applications;
- A Social Plan;
- A Regional Growth Strategy;
- Action to continue the path towards zero waste;
- Continued work on food security issues; and,
- A Transportation Master Plan.

Appendix C provides further details of the workshop discussions on community priorities.



6.0 SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

6.1 Summary of Key Initiatives

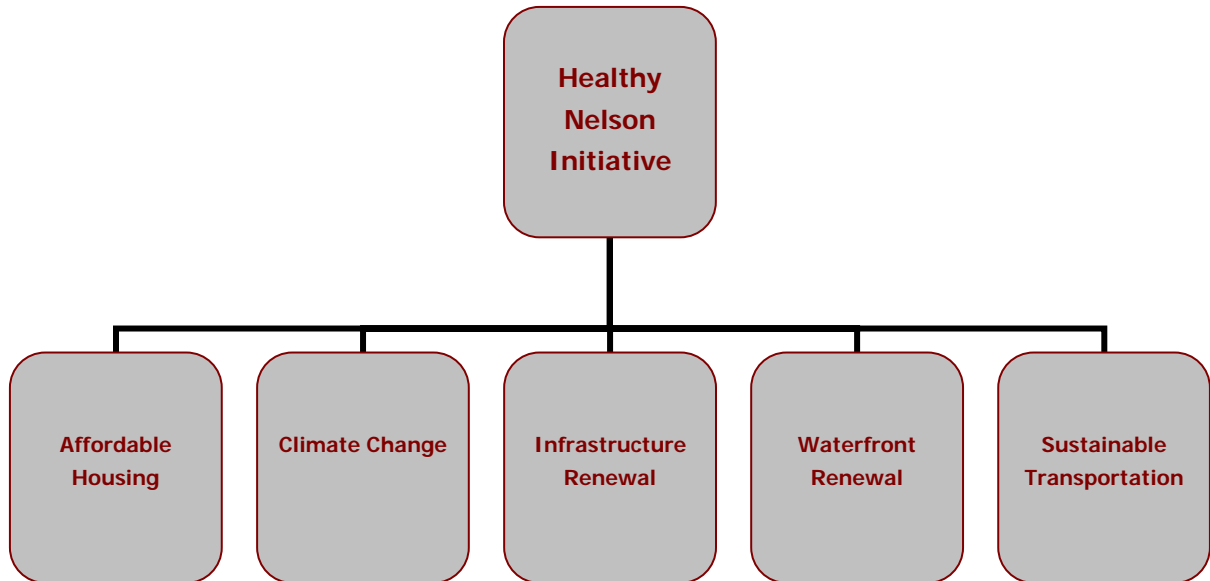
The Community Assessment indicates that the City of Nelson is on the leading edge in many areas. The community is relatively compact, there is a thriving arts and cultural scene, and there is strong environmental awareness indicated by 2007 events focused on issues such as climate change and food security. Nevertheless, as shown in Section 5, there are many priority areas that need additional work to further Nelson's path to sustainability. Infrastructure renewal is a significant issue, it is apparent that a waterfront plan is necessary, and it appears that further action is warranted on the issue of affordable housing. As well, the community is highly motivated on issues such as climate change, energy planning, food security, and health, and there are tremendous opportunities to address these issues, among others. Clearly, Nelson is a unique community with a demonstrated commitment to all facets of sustainability and a willingness to act.

Based on this Community Assessment, we suggest that the City of Nelson may be ready to undertake a broad sustainability initiative with the vision of Nelson being **"the healthiest community in British Columbia"**. This initiative would develop a high-level plan that sets goals for a healthy community in various areas (e.g. climate change, affordable housing, infrastructure renewal, waterfront renewal, and transportation), reviews baseline conditions, and articulates action plans for each area. Similar high-level exercises have been undertaken, or are currently being undertaken, in communities such as Dawson Creek, Rosland, and Whistler although focused more broadly on sustainability. As work on the high-level sustainability plan progresses, Nelson would be in a position to address key project areas, and the high-level sustainability plan would help the community to leverage further funding opportunities (e.g. Real Estate Foundation funding, BC Healthy Communities, Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Municipal Fund, General Strategic Priorities Fund/Innovation Fund portion of the Gas Tax Agreement).

Based on the Community Assessment we have identified a number of components that could be addressed as priorities under the high-level sustainability initiative described above. These priorities are illustrated in the following chart.



Figure 6.1 – Framework for a Healthy Nelson Initiative



A brief description of each priority area is provided below.

Affordable Housing

The purpose of the Affordable Housing component would be to review housing issues in Nelson, determine housing needs, and develop recommendations to guide municipal policy, practice, and investment in housing. The intent would be to build on the work currently being undertaken by the Nelson Economic Development Partnership.

Action on Energy Planning and Climate Change

The purpose of this component would be to continue with the momentum built in 2007 through the Climate Change Symposium and the signing of the BC Climate Action Charter. Specific items could include a Community Energy Plan, an audit of greenhouse gas emissions related to municipal operations, a profile of greenhouse gas emissions for the community as a whole, and development of initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g. fleet program, building retrofits, district energy systems, green building incentives, establishment of a carbon neutral fund, land use planning initiatives).

Infrastructure Renewal

In 2009, municipalities across Canada will be required to record all of their Tangible Capital Assets, including all infrastructure components (water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and



roads). This is the first step towards an asset management strategy to ensure investments are made to promote sustainable infrastructure. An Integrated Infrastructure Management Strategy would assist the City in assessing its existing infrastructure, determining future infrastructure requirements, and establishing a long-term business plan to finance capital and operating expenditures for all utilities in a sustainable fashion. Completed and current studies such as the Water Master Plan, Wastewater Master Plan, and Major Road Network Plan would feed into the integrated infrastructure management strategy which would primarily focus on the financing strategy and business plan for necessary infrastructure improvements.

Waterfront Renewal

Most of Nelson's current redevelopment and intensification potential exists in the community's waterfront areas. Following up on recommendations in the draft OCP, this project would develop a comprehensive master plan for Nelson's waterfront areas. The plan would consider a wide range of issues such as the land use program, brownfield redevelopment, development alternatives based on airport retention or redevelopment, transportation linkages, the parks and open space network, waterfront design guidelines, etc.

Sustainable Transportation

This project would go beyond the development of the Major Road Network Capital Plan to consider opportunities for putting other modes before the automobile such as pedestrians, cyclists, and transit (i.e. a "people first" transportation strategy). As such, this component of the plan would review Nelson's on and off-street pedestrian and bicycle network, opportunities for enhanced transit, and considerations for the development of further transit and pedestrian friendly land uses.

Other Components

In addition to these priority planning areas, there may be additional areas that the community may wish to consider as part of its overall healthy community / sustainability strategy, such as protecting the social fabric, promoting sustainable economic development, enhancing arts and culture, and so forth.

6.2 Next Steps

The Community Assessment workshop demonstrated that there is strong interest in proceeding with Integrated Community Sustainability Planning initiatives in Nelson. A wide cross-section of the community leadership was present, and there appears to be the capacity and resources to undertake a multi-faceted ICSP project that addresses several areas. As outlined above, it is suggested that City staff and Council consider initiating a high-level integrated healthy



community initiative and to move forward with one or two project areas as soon as possible. The community sustainability plan can then be used to leverage project funding in the future for actions that address the community's additional priorities.

This Community Assessment document is to be used by City staff and Council as a discussion paper to assist with the establishment of priorities as they relate to integrated community sustainability planning. Once a program of action is established, the City will be in a position to move forward with its key initiatives in 2008 and beyond.

APPENDIX A

ICSP COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

GENERAL NOTES ON THIS TEMPLATE

What is Integrated Community Sustainability Planning?

Integrated community sustainability planning (ICSP) encourages communities to take a fresh look at their future and take proactive steps to get there. ICSP provides a framework for community sustainability planning, i.e. helps communities plan for their own needs while ensuring that the needs of future generations are also met and does so by incorporating an integrated approach that considers broader environmental, economic and social considerations in each planning process beyond current conventional planning frameworks.

Purpose of this template

The purpose of this community assessment is to assist you in assessing your community's readiness to engage in integrated community sustainability planning. It is intended to help your community take stock of the: priority areas in your community; the plans and capacity you have in place to address these priority areas and next steps for moving forward with sustainability planning.

How to use this template

As collaboration, public engagement and education are all key aspects of integrated community sustainability planning, it is our hope that you will involve a wide range of community stakeholders in the process of working through this template. This might include business, institutional and community leaders, and local government officials in workshops or other forums.

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

A. Community Context

One starting point for assessing your community's readiness for ICSP is to identify current realities and priority areas within your community. This section will help you identify the strengths, challenges, opportunities and priority areas within your community.

A. 1. General

- a) What makes your community special and unique from other communities?
- b) What are the major challenges facing your community?

A. 2. Individual and Community Wellbeing¹

- a) What are the significant strengths of your community relating to individual and community wellbeing?
- b) What are the significant challenges facing your community relating to individual and community wellbeing?
- c) What opportunities are available to your community to improve individual and community wellbeing and further your community's path to sustainability²?
- d) What priority areas within your community relating to individual and community wellbeing do you need to take action on to further your community's path to sustainability?

A. 3. Economy

- a) What are the strengths of your local economy?
- b) What are the challenges facing your community with regards to the economy (e.g. labour shortage or unemployment in your community)?
- c) What opportunities does your community have to enhance its economic strengths in order to further its path to sustainability?
- d) What economic priority areas do you need to take action on to further your community's path to sustainability?
- e) What is the capacity and condition of the physical infrastructure³ of your community?
- f) What physical infrastructure priority areas do you need to take action on to further your community's path to sustainability?

A. 4. Environment

- a) What are your community's greatest environmental assets?

¹ For example: community spirit, a sense of community, art, heritage, culture, health, education, volunteerism, housing, social support, social development, access to community services etc.

² Sustainability: meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

³ Includes roads, utility infrastructure, hospitals, schools etc.

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

b) What environmental challenges or concerns does your community have?

c) What could your community do to enhance its environmental assets in order to further your community's path to sustainability?

d) What environmental priority areas do you need to take action on to further your community's path to sustainability?

A. 6. Overall Community Priorities

Reflecting on your answers in A.2.-A.5.:

a) What are your community's top five priorities that need action in order to further your community's path to sustainability?

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

B. Assessing the Sustainability Dimensions of Your Community's Vision

Integrated community sustainability planning is characterized by long-term thinking. This section will assist your community to identify: whether your current vision accurately reflects the desired future for your community; the time horizon of your vision; and next steps for your community with regard to your community's vision to ensure a long-term, sustainable future.

B. 1. a) What is your community's long-term vision and where is it identified (e.g. in OCP)?

b) What is the time horizon of this vision?

c) As part of creating your community vision, did you consider future forces (internal and external) that might change your community in the long-term?

B. 2. a) To what extent is sustainability incorporated into your community's vision?

B. 3. Keeping in mind your community's priority areas (as identified in Section A), to what extent are these captured in your community's vision?

B. 4. What next steps could your community take with regard to its community vision to ensure a sustainable future?

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

C. Assessing the State of Planning in Your Community
 Integrated community sustainability planning is characterized by plans and planning processes that are broad in scope (i.e. address all community aspects) and reflect a coordinated approach that emphasizes linkages between different types of plans and planning activities. ICSP also emphasizes putting plans into action. This section will help your community identify: the current state of integration within and between your community’s plans; the degree to which these plans are informing decision-making; and next steps for further integrating and implementing plans.

C. 1. What plans does your community have in place? Please ‘check’ the community aspects (see Section F of this template for further description) that each plan currently addresses.

NAME OF PLAN ⁴	LAST UPDATE	Health & Social	Arts & Culture & Heritage	Recreation & Leisure	Economic Development	Energy	Water	Food	Natural Areas	Buildings	Land Use	Transportation	Learning	Governance and Partnerships	Affordability & Housing	Materials and Solid Waste	Other	Other

C. 2. For each plan (listed in the above table), please ‘star’ the *additional* aspects of your community that you feel it could or should be addressing in order to ensure a sustainable future (e.g. does your transportation plan consider the land use aspects of your community, and your heritage plan consider energy aspects etc.)

C. 3. Taking a look at each aspect of your community (in the above table):

- a) What aspects of your community are not being addressed or are poorly addressed by your plans?
- b) What aspects of your community are being addressed by more than one of your plans? How do your plans acknowledge and discuss these areas of overlap?
- c) What next steps could your community take to further the integration within and between your plans?

C. 4. a) How well does your implementation and decision-making reflect the directions, policies and guidelines laid out in your plans?

- b) What next steps could your community take to further the extent to which your plans are used to inform decision-making that ensures a sustainable future?

C. 5. a) To what extent do your plans reflect and encourage your community’s vision (as identified in Section B)?

- b) What next steps could your community take to further the extent to which your plans are used to encourage your community’s vision of sustainability?

⁴ For example: Official Community Plan, Greenways Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, Transportation Plan, Social Plan, Solid Waste Plan, Parks Plan, Capital Plan etc.

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

D. Assessing Sustainability Planning Capacity and Resources

Integrated community sustainability planning is characterized by planning processes that are collaborative (i.e. engage community members and partners to support sustainability) and that emphasize public engagement and education (i.e. designing processes that enhance public input) This section will assist your community to identify: your capacity to engage in sustainability planning; priority areas for building this capacity; a process for initiating your community's sustainability planning; and the financial resources your community could secure to engage in sustainability planning.

D. 1. a) Please identify who in your community has the capacity (knowledge of, familiarity with, and/or expertise) in:

	Planning and Implementation	Sustainability Leadership and Expertise	Communication and Outreach	Technical / Specialized Expertise in Overall Community Priorities (as per A6)	
Local government council					
Local government administrators					
Local government staff					
Non-profit sector (i.e. name of organization)					
Private sector (i.e. name of organization)					
Other					

b) Please identify capacity building priority areas (e.g. in sustainability expertise) and how you might go about building this capacity (e.g. by holding workshops, e-learning sessions or public events on key ICSP topics)

D. 2. a) What planning committees and task forces does your community have? To what extent do these committees offer opportunities for community participation?

b) What other committees meet regularly in your community (e.g. parent advisory committee, library committees etc.)?

D. 3. a) What other opportunities exist for citizens, community organizations and sectors to participate in a decision-making or advisory role within your community?

b) What are some of the challenges to community participation (e.g. distances, time, demographics)

D. 4. a) Given the capacity within your community and the current opportunities for participation in decision-making (as identified in questions D.1.-3.), what next steps could your community take in order to move ahead with sustainability planning?

b) An initiation committee plays an important role to ensure that the process gets underway. Who will be the key individuals that sit on this committee to help shape the project and process in the months to come?

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

D. 5. Please use the table below to identify the financial resources your local government has (or knows about) to engage in sustainability planning and the next steps you could take to secure these resources?

	Resource	Amount	Method of Securing Resource
Local government (e.g. budget for staff person)			
Provincial government (e.g. names of grants)			
Other local authorities			
Other organizations (e.g. Federation of Canadian Municipalities)			

E. Moving Forward with ICSP: Next Steps
 ICSP encourages communities to take a fresh look at their future and take actions to become more sustainable. As you have moved through this community assessment, your community has identified priority areas and next steps to action. The purpose of this section is to bring these together and set out a strategic course of action for your community to move ahead with ICSP. With this in mind, please identify:

- 1. Community priority areas (A.2.d., A.3.d, A.3.f., A.4.d., A.6.)**
- 2. Next steps for your vision of a sustainable community (B.4.)**
- 3. Next steps for enhancing the integration and effective implementation of your plans (C.3.c., C.4.b., C.5.b.)**
- 4. Next steps for building your capacity to engage in ICSP (D.1.b), engaging in ICSP, i.e. identifying the initiation committee (D.4.a-b), and securing resources for engaging in ICSP (D.5)**

Congratulations! You have made it this far. We would now like to encourage you to:

- 5. Create your plan for putting these next steps into action.**

Ministry of Community Services ICSP Community Assessment Template

F. Community Aspect Categories (through a sustainability lens)

Categories as taken from the Alberta Union of Municipalities Association Draft Guidebook for Integrated Community Sustainability Planning.

Health and Social - How to meet the health and social needs (including physical, mental, spiritual and emotional) of the community.

Arts/Culture/Heritage - How arts, culture and heritage will be supported, enhanced and delivered, and how they will stimulate and support the transition to sustainability in your community.

Recreation & Leisure - How recreation and leisure activities for both residents and visitors will be delivered to exceed expectations while protecting the environment.

Economic Development - How your community will create a strong local economy and develop and maintain successful, resilient businesses that help move the community toward sustainability.

Energy - How to meet your community's energy needs in an efficient, affordable, sustainable and reliable way, while managing greenhouse gas emissions and air quality.

Water - How to provide a dependable supply of high quality water in a way that maintains healthy aquatic environments and uses water efficiently.

Food - How to ensure a healthy, nutritious and sustainable food supply that maximizes opportunities to build the social, ecological, cultural and economic capital of the community.

Natural Areas - How ecosystem integrity and biodiversity will be protected and where possible restored in your community/region.

Built Environment - How to develop and renew buildings, neighbourhoods and facilities that will contribute to making your community unique, livable and sustainable.

Transportation - How to move residents, employees, visitors, and materials to, from and within the community in a more sustainable manner.

Learning - How to meet resident and visitor needs for formal and informal lifelong learning.

Governance & Partnerships - How local government and other stakeholders will organize and collaborate in decision-making and implementation of the ICSP.

Affordability & Housing - How to make living and playing in your community affordable for residents, and how to meet housing needs of diverse permanent residents.

Materials and Solid Waste - How to meet your community's need for material supply and disposal through the most efficient use and reuse of the most sustainable materials and keeping waste out of the natural environment.

APPENDIX B

NELSON COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP – AGENDA AND PRESENTATION








AGENDA

subject: **Nelson Smart Planning Community Assessment**
 meeting date: Tuesday January 22, 2008
 time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm
 location: Best Western Baker Street Inn – Vintage Room
 file: 0795.0093.01-M

Attendees	Organization	Attendees	Organization
Linda Tynan	City of Nelson	Tim Hicks	Masse Miller Consulting
Kevin Cormack	City of Nelson	Allen Fillion	City of Nelson
George Millar	Seniors	TBA	LV Rogers Student
Dave Wahn	City of Nelson	Glenn Sutherland	Interior Health Board of Directors
Dan Huang	Urban Systems Ltd.	Tim Pearkes	Arts & Culture
James Klukas	Urban Systems Ltd.	Barry Auliffe	Selkirk College
Tom Thomson	Chamber of Commerce	Bill Reid	Kootenay Lake School District
Woody Wudkevich	Kootenay Glass & Mirror	Jenny Robinson	NDCRS
Ross Lake	RHC Realty	Christine Schmidt	Nelson Youth Centre
Mel Reasoner	West Kootenay Eco-Society		

1. Introductions
2. Overview of ‘Smart Planning’ (formerly Integrated Community Sustainability Planning)
3. Mental Mapping Exercise
 - Please list three things that would make Nelson the most sustainable community in BC.
4. General Questions
 - What makes Nelson special and unique from other communities?
 - What are the major challenges facing Nelson?
 - Does Nelson have a community vision for sustainability, and if so, what is it?
- Triple Bottom Line {
 - Individual and Community Wellbeing – What are Nelson strengths and challenges?
 - Economy – What are Nelson’s strengths and challenges?
 - Environment – What are Nelson’s greatest assets and challenges?
5. Review the current state of Nelson’s policies and plans
6. Whiteboard exercise and discussion
 - What are Nelson’s top priorities that need action to further the path to sustainability?
7. Next steps – Who will provide leadership for Nelson’s sustainability initiatives?






City of Nelson

Integrated Community Sustainability Planning (ICSP)

Community Assessment Workshop

Dan Huang, MCIP, Principal
James Klukas, M.Pl., Community Planner
Urban Systems. Ltd.

January 22, 2008



Introductions


- Warm-up questions:
 - What is your name?
 - Which organization are you representing?
 - What's a secret gem in the community that you would tell a visitor about?

or


What is your favourite 3rd place (i.e. not home or work) in the community?

City of Nelson: ICSP Community Assessment

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Provincial ICSP Program ("Smart Planning")



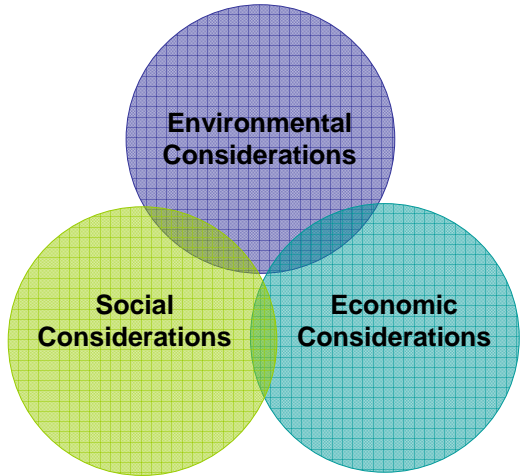

- Gas Tax Funds
 - General Strategic Priorities Fund
 - Innovations Fund
- Objective of Sustainability Planning:
 - ...help communities plan for their own needs while ensuring that the needs of future generations are met by incorporating an integrated approach...

City of Nelson: ICSP Community Assessment

3



Integrated Approach



Environmental Considerations

Social Considerations

Economic Considerations

"TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE"

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4





Community Assessment

- First step towards comprehensive sustainability planning
- Intended to help communities:
 - Identify priority areas
 - Review plans & capacity to address priority areas
 - Identify next steps
- \$41.7 million available for April 2008 intake of applications

City of Nelson: ICSP Community Assessment

5





Mental Mapping Exercise

- Please list 3 things that would make Nelson the most sustainable community in BC.

e.g. "In 20 years, Nelson is..."

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6





Community Context Discussion Questions

- What makes Nelson special and unique from other communities?
- What are the major challenges facing Nelson?
- Does Nelson have a community vision for sustainability, and if so, what is it?

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Triple Bottom Line

- What are Nelson's strengths and weaknesses related to:
 - Individual and Community Wellbeing (Group 1)
 - The Local Economy (Group 2)
 - The Environment (Group 3)

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State of Planning (ICSP Assessment Template)




- Health & Social
- Arts & Culture
- Recreation & Leisure
- Economic Development
- Energy Planning
- Water
- Food
- Natural Areas
- Buildings
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Learning
- Governance & Partnerships
- Affordability & Housing
- Materials & Solid Waste
- Air Quality
- Liquid Waste Management

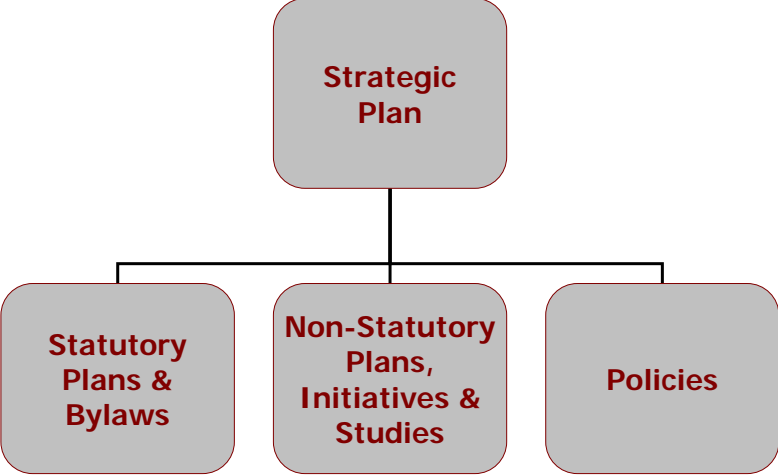
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9



Planning Framework





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graph TD
    SP[Strategic Plan] --- SPB[Statutory Plans & Bylaws]
    SP --- NSPIS[Non-Statutory Plans, Initiatives & Studies]
    SP --- P[Policies]
    
```

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Planning Framework



Statutory Plans & Bylaws	Non-Statutory Plans & Studies	Policies
Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Official Community Plan▪ Zoning Bylaw▪ Subdivision Bylaw▪ Building Bylaw▪ Capital Plans	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Roadway Network Review▪ Airport Task Force▪ Waterfront Visioning▪ Water Master Plan▪ Zero Waste Action Plan▪ Arts & Culture Task Force Final Report	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Art in Public Places Policy▪ Others

Priority Actions



- What are Nelson's top priorities that need action to further the path to sustainability?

Next Steps



- Project Funding Application
 - April 30, 2008 Deadline
 - Strategy to move project(s) forward



APPENDIX C

MINUTES OF NELSON COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY WORKSHOP



MEETING NOTES

subject: **Nelson Community Sustainability Assessment Workshop**
 meeting date: January 22, 2008
 location: Best Western Baker Street Inn
 file: 0795.0093.01-M

attendees	organization	attendees	organization
Linda Tynan	City of Nelson	Mel Reasoner	West Kootenay Eco-Society
Kevin Cormack	City of Nelson	Tim Hicks	Masse Miller Consulting
Allen Fillion	City of Nelson	Glenn Sutherland	Interior Health Board of Directors
Dave Wahn	City of Nelson	Tim Pearkes	Arts & Culture
Dan Huang	Urban Systems Ltd.	Barry Auliffe	Selkirk College
James Klukas	Urban Systems Ltd.	Bill Reid	Kootenay Lake School District
George Millar	Seniors	Jenny Robinson	NDCRS
Tom Thomson	Chamber of Commerce	Christine Schmidt	Nelson Youth Centre
Ross Lake	RHC Realty		

* indicates multiple responses

ITEM DISCUSSION

- a) Vision Exercise. What is Nelson’s community vision for sustainability?**
- ⇒ unique & different*
 - ⇒ environmentally responsible*
 - ⇒ retain demographic balance*
 - ⇒ balanced, diverse economy*
 - ⇒ affordable housing for all & workers can afford to live in Nelson*
 - ⇒ walkable, livable city with art in the public realm
 - ⇒ stewards of the environment
 - ⇒ healthiest community
 - ⇒ pedestrian & cycle routes
 - ⇒ strong business sector
 - ⇒ strong post-secondary presence
 - ⇒ waste reduction
 - ⇒ inclusive, has employment for all (including those with disabilities)*
 - ⇒ people can have their basic needs met (e.g. food, clothing)
 - ⇒ daycare
 - ⇒ Nelson is a destination
 - ⇒ growing community
 - ⇒ greenhouse gas reductions, cognizant of the environment and the costs of energy
 - ⇒ growth incorporated into the cultural fabric
 - ⇒ enhanced agriculture and food security (regional approach)
 - ⇒ confident community (importance of higher education)*
 - ⇒ has economic sustainability (e.g. green economic generators)
 - ⇒ private secondary education
 - ⇒ healthy core infrastructure*

MEETING NOTES

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ITEM DISCUSSION

- ⇒ continued revitalization of the downtown (heritage, arts)
- ⇒ preserve air/water/land quality
- ⇒ integrated service delivery (regional and municipal)
- ⇒ regional approach to growth and sustainability strategies, considering services
- ⇒ we know what we don't want to be (this is how community vision is often articulated)
- ⇒ collaboration/cooperation is important
- ⇒ climate change symposium (energy/lifestyle/transportation)
- ⇒ shared resources – one stop shop

b) What makes Nelson special & unique from other communities?

- ⇒ mountains & lake
- ⇒ diverse demographics
- ⇒ vibrant downtown core*
- ⇒ diversity of personalities*
- ⇒ isolation (geography)
- ⇒ ice free lake
- ⇒ no heavy industry*
- ⇒ restaurants
- ⇒ history/heritage
- ⇒ first health care co-op (with Selkirk College nursing)
- ⇒ quality of life
- ⇒ community engagement*
- ⇒ unique talent pool (community attraction)
- ⇒ size of underground economy
- ⇒ per capita intelligence
- ⇒ self-contained (“you can live here”)
- ⇒ fragile ↔ resilient
- ⇒ arts community

c) What are the major challenges facing Nelson?

- ⇒ intergovernmental cooperation (City vs. region)
- ⇒ housing affordability*
- ⇒ diversifying local government residential revenue streams
- ⇒ employment/succession planning
- ⇒ transportation to/from Nelson
- ⇒ migration to the community
- ⇒ complacency (don't rest on laurels)*
- ⇒ developing a community mindset vs. individual position
- ⇒ infrastructure
- ⇒ tax base – high demand, low \$\$\$
- ⇒ aging population
- ⇒ lack of public consultation (appropriate/timely/open)
- ⇒ attracting highly qualified professionals
- ⇒ government/global support for small/rural communities

MEETING NOTES

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ITEM DISCUSSION

- ⇒ centralization/urbanization of services
- ⇒ Census undercount

d) Individual and Community Wellbeing – Nelson’s Strengths and Challenges (Small Group Exercise)

Strengths

- ⇒ some recreation opportunities (facilities)
- ⇒ emergency facilities
- ⇒ lifestyle sensibility (restaurants, shopping, groceries, organizations)

Challenges

- ⇒ some cracks in health care
- ⇒ no go to place for social planning

Thoughts

- ⇒ big unique idea around the notion of “healthy community”
- ⇒ What if we wanted to call Nelson the healthiest community in Canada?
- ⇒ community has a built-in appreciation of the outdoors, athletics, good eating choices – Nelson is an aware community with a good intelligence quotient
- ⇒ how to leverage funding?
- ⇒ involve community in preventative health
- ⇒ pitch as pilot instead of being reactive to health problems

e) Economy –Nelson’s Strengths and Challenges

Strengths

- ⇒ underground economy
- ⇒ real estate growth & use of equity
- ⇒ tourism generating \$\$\$
- ⇒ plenty of small businesses
- ⇒ Pacific Insight – possibilities
- ⇒ strong retail in downtown area
- ⇒ diverse economy

Challenges

- ⇒ no taxation of underground economy
- ⇒ not enough available staff
- ⇒ no real economy to sustain community if real estate drops
- ⇒ hard to get direct manufacturing
- ⇒ taxation on business

MEETING NOTES

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ITEM DISCUSSION

- ⇒ some families struggling
- ⇒ could use tech/research facilities
- ⇒ desire for 'clean' jobs

f) Environment –Nelson’s Greatest Assets and Challenges

Assets

- ⇒ pristine environment
- ⇒ beautiful viewscape
- ⇒ awareness of environmental concerns
- ⇒ well preserved watershed
- ⇒ confined, compact community – no sprawl
- ⇒ four well-defined seasons
- ⇒ potential for alternative approaches to energy (geothermal, hydro) – business opportunity

Challenges

- ⇒ vulnerable to events (e.g. climatic)
- ⇒ legacy of contaminated sites (landfill, CPR, etc.)
- ⇒ transportation efficiencies/linkages (bus timing to Selkirk)
- ⇒ air quality – valley inversions
- ⇒ run-off from infrastructure into creeks/lake
- ⇒ ineffective regulation (e.g. riparian areas)

g) Thoughts on Next Steps

- ⇒ healthy communities
- ⇒ community leadership
- ⇒ unique approach is necessary
- ⇒ maintain collaboration
- ⇒ diversity tax base
- ⇒ green industry development
- ⇒ 'bigger than Nelson' – importance of regional collaboration
- ⇒ define what Nelson doesn't want to be
- ⇒ community is 27,000 population
- ⇒ regional co-operation
- ⇒ climate action – green energy
- ⇒ vision to be healthiest, greenest community
- ⇒ importance of political will and economic means

h) Action Item

Package will be presented to Council to summarize findings and to present options for projects to put forward in an ICSP funding application – deadline of April 30, 2008.