

# NAKUSP & AREA

## DEVELOPMENT BOARD ▶

### Community Housing Discussion – Briefing Paper

March 2022

#### Intention:

Nakusp and Area Development Board (NADB) members understand the lack of housing impacts residents, employers, developers, and the availability of services in our community. It is a vast and complex issue and one not easily solved. However, having an informative discussion about the current situation, and understanding the rationale for potential options, could provide the building block for a homegrown solution.

To that end, NADB met with various community-stakeholders to discuss the current housing situation, presenting relevant local statistics and metrics and holding a facilitated discussion amongst the group.

#### What We Know and What Is Being Done:

Please see attached slide deck for detailed statistics and reference material.

#### What We Have:

- Although the current real estate inventory is depleted, various undeveloped areas exist in the village as well as some village-owned lands, which are listed on the **Develop Nakusp** website.
- The new Official Community Plan (2020) for Nakusp and the soon-to-be updated zoning bylaw (2022) encourage and support higher density of development, such as carriage homes, secondary suites, and mixed-use zones.
- The zoning bylaw update should also include the ability to build accessory buildings *before* the construction of a primary dwelling as well as allow limited permits for living in recreational vehicles on the property during construction.
- Recent changes by the Agricultural Land Commission include regulations that are more permissive of secondary homes on land in the Agricultural Land Reserve.

#### What We Want/Need:

- **Smaller and tiny homes** (including tiny home villages) may support people in marginal demographics, such as younger adults and families, seniors, and low-income earners.
- Providing more **secondary suites** within existing homes would alleviate some of the pressure faced by renters.
- Shifting the focus to **modular or prefabricated homes** might be a solution to the lack of skilled tradespeople available for construction.

#### What Obstacles We Face:

- As more properties are developed, the pressure on the capacity and the reach of municipal infrastructure increases, but the municipality has been investing in the expansion of these services.
- The cost of building has risen, sometimes up to **\$425 per square foot**, which restrains development, as is the pressure on supply chains delivering building materials.
- The builders that are available in this area are already at capacity, and—short of an influx of contractors and skilled labour—new developments will often be delayed by a substantial amount of time.

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- Historically, rental rates have been much lower than surrounding communities, which has had a negative impact on the development of rental units. Over the past two years, however, **rents have been increasing** in this area, which will make rental properties more attractive to prospective landlords.
- Due to concerns about the liabilities associated with renting, the favour given to tenants over landlords in the updated Residential Tenancy Act, and the lack of viability for professional property management, many potential landlords will not develop rental units.

### What Are the Implications for Our Community:

- **Staffing issues** persist across most sectors, especially during peak-seasons, and the housing shortage will only exacerbate the issue.
- Skilled labour and professionals migrate to other communities, or choose to live there rather than here, where the value per square foot is greater and amenities are more abundant and relevant to their lifestyles.
- **Meaningful growth**—both in business and socially—is **hindered** by the lack of available housing for new staff.
- Despite the pressure they put on long-term rentals, the proliferation of **short-term rentals** does address the lack of capacity of accommodations for visitors during peak tourist season.
- As real estate prices rise and rental rates rise to match them, it will become more viable to develop more purpose-built rental housing, which can help address the lack of available accommodation, especially for young adults and seniors.
- Because real estate development tends to be more lucrative and achievable in other areas like the Okanagan, any solutions we develop will likely have to **come from developers living within** our community.
- Despite the flat population numbers from the latest federal census, we are likely seeing a **shift of demographics** from seniors toward younger families and professionals; note the increase in school enrolment.

### How We Can Help:

- While the Village of Nakusp is fairly permissive in its allowance of development, we can encourage the Regional District to ease some of its restrictions.
- Once the new Nakusp **zoning bylaw** is complete, we can create awareness around it and the **Official Community Plan**.
- As the inventory of the properties available in the village declines, we can encourage landowners to subdivide and develop their lands.
- We can encourage the building of **secondary suites** and of **smaller homes** that are more appropriate to the needs of contemporary and future generations.
- We can be supportive of **new housing developments**, advocate for more capacity in municipal infrastructure, and support landlords to provide more rental inventory.
- Lastly, we might have to accept that substantial growth is not what the community wants, that the lifestyle of a quiet small town is the reason most of us live here.