

# WHAT IS LAND DEVELOPMENT & WHY DO IT?

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As the Investment Ready Nakusp (IRN) Leadership Team launches Phase II, it is relevant to consider the reasons why land development is beneficial to the Village of Nakusp and all of its residents. I would like to share the process and explain the approach with hopes others will see just how beneficial it can be, the benefit it provides, and consider developing as well.

Housing is one of the main outcomes: Nakusp has a housing shortage, both of rentals and affordable housing options. "Stakeholders in Nakusp report that the long-term rental vacancy rate is essentially zero." Moreover, our Community Profile notes that 89% of Nakusp homes were built before the year 2000, 74% were built before 1981, (compared to 44% across BC), and 8.9% require major repairs. It is critical that we create new housing opportunities.

Investment to create new residential units above commercial shops or behind a primary residence adds vibrancy and revenue-generating opportunities. Investment in land, in the form of development, creates value and wealth for the landowner, but also jobs for consultants, trades, builders and supporting industries. Investment raises the value, which raises the property taxes paid, and helps lower the taxes for residents. New residents and businesses spend in local shops and restaurants and help grow a healthy community.

The key to remember is that Council and Staff are here to protect our Village, our downtown core, our neighbourhoods, our streets. They spend enormous time and effort to consult residents and businesses, understand the priorities, needs, and fundamental fabric of a community. These are enshrined in the Official Community Plan, which is why this update and consultation is so vitally important. From there, Bylaws are created, updated, and enforced to keep the community character and form and feel while permitting some key development opportunities: downtown revitalization, garden and carriage house suites, subdivision, multi-family developments, mobile home, industrial park, and commercial developments. Development is tightly regulated and must meet these Plans and Bylaws or get Council's explicit permission for a variance.

The first step in considering development is to understand what rules and regulations pertain to your land. IRN can help you with this. You need to know the designation in the OCP, the Zoning in the Bylaw, and any site-specific considerations such as minimum lot size, maximum height, required setbacks. The Bylaws also prescribe whether a Development Permit is required to show Staff and Council additional information. In some cases, a Development Variance Permit is required to legalize an existing non-conforming condition or permit a variance to an existing Bylaw. In most cases, infrastructure upgrades are required. Staff offer a pre-application meeting to discuss and explain if you wish. You want to know what is permitted, and then consider the highest and best use of your lands.

Highest and best use often means looking at whether simple Building Permit within the existing zone, or perhaps a re-zoning or re-designation to a different use might be appropriate. These controls are crucial: you do not want incompatible uses next door to one another. At the same time, densification, and creation of more units on a given site may be in the community's benefit, and Council is charged with considering and deciding what is best for the community.

Land Development is a crucial part of the growth, vibrancy, and financial health of a community. Done right, done carefully, considered, and contributing to the betterment of the Village, development can be a key component of a strong community. Our next article we will lay out the steps to development approvals.

Yours truly,

**INVESTMENT READY NAKUSP**

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