

# Taking Stock of BC's Affordable Housing Needs

*City of*  
**NELSON**



# Nelson's Context

## Stable Growth @ 1%/year

- **Next 20 years**
  - 3,000 new residents
  - 1,600 new dwelling units
  - Difficulty in accounting for transient population
- **90% purpose built rental stock was completed pre-1980's**
- **Recent BC Housing projects completed added 150 non-market units**
- **Vacancy rates remain at or near 0%**
- **Homeownership is only "attainable" for the highest income bracket**

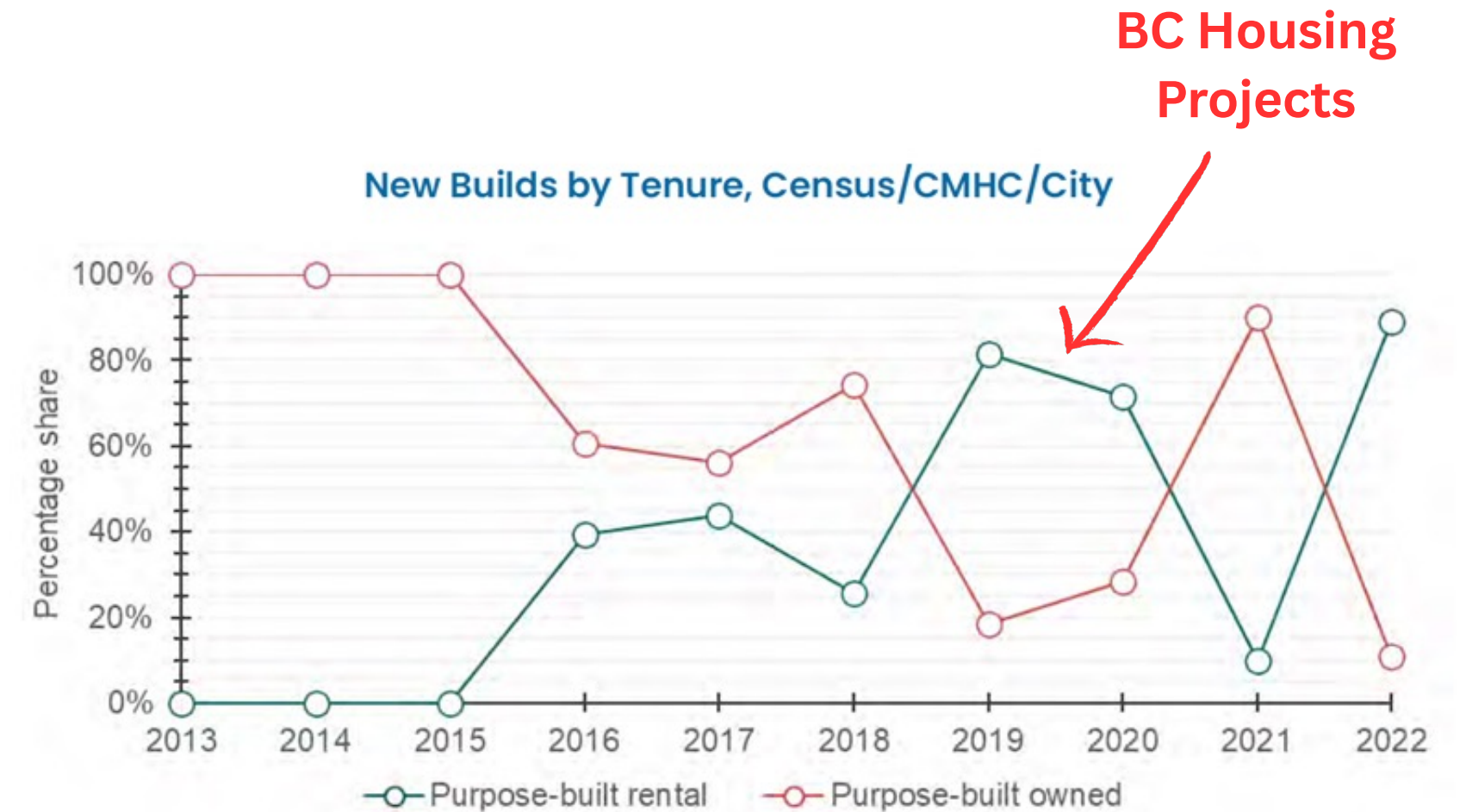
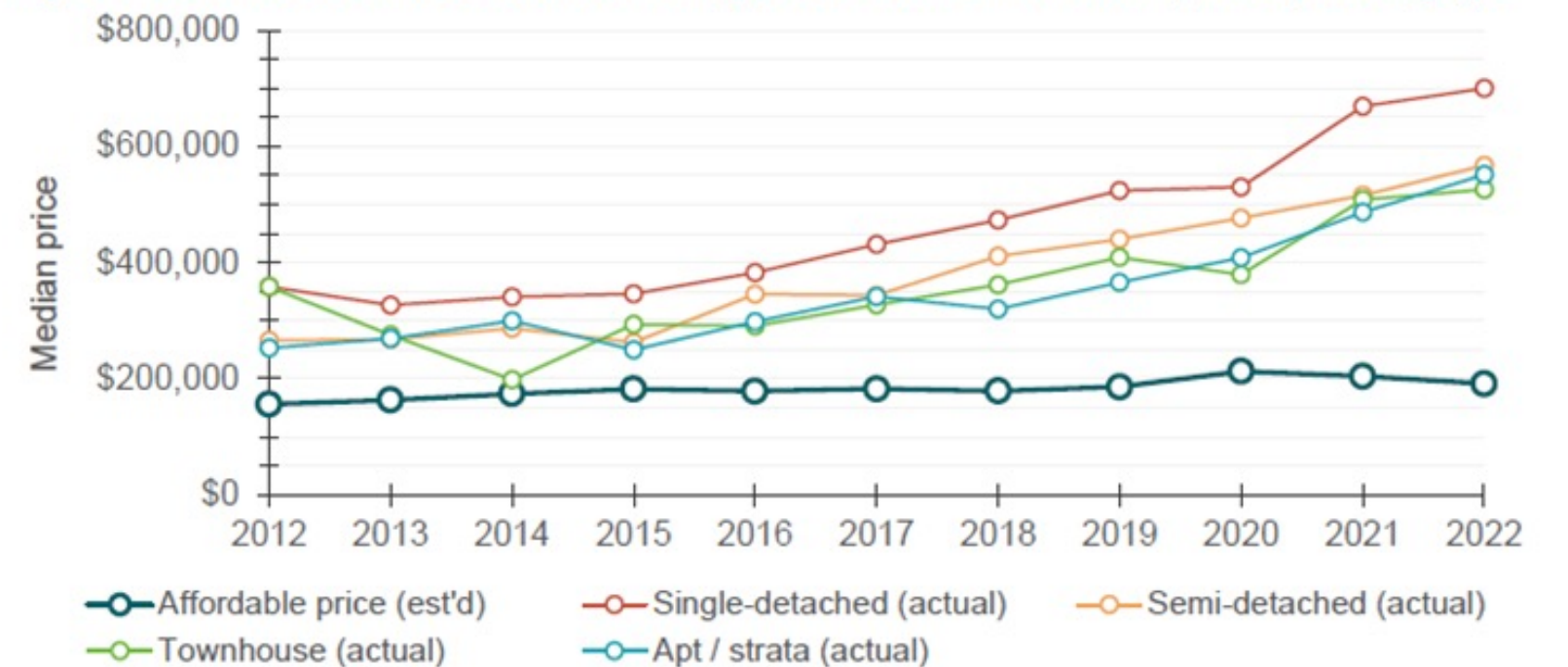


Figure 6.2: Historical estimated affordable dwelling price vs actual median home prices by dwelling type



Source: derived from BC Assessment, custom Statistics Canada dataset<sup>6</sup> and mortgage assumptions

# Nelson's Approach to Housing

## Flexible Zoning

- 2 to 3 units permitted in low-density zone:
  - Duplex
  - Secondary Suite
  - Laneway House

## Comprehensive STR regulations since 2017

- Continuous enforcement

## Continuously review and update bylaws

- What's not working...make it better
- Be flexible

## Innovate

- Laneway house design competition
- Reduce fees for water/sewer for ADUs

## In the news....

### Laneway housing plans discussed at Nelson city council

Laneway housing, Nelson CARES plans for Ward Street Place and park fees were discussed at Monday's city council meeting.

Megan Cole  
May 8, 2012 7:00 AM



### City seeks clarity on proposed amendments to secondary suites, laneway houses

By Timothy Schafer

December 21st, 2020



Council elected to move forward for a review and information before making any changes to laneway housing bylaws. Winner in the City of Nelson 2019 Laneway House Design Competition.

British Columbia

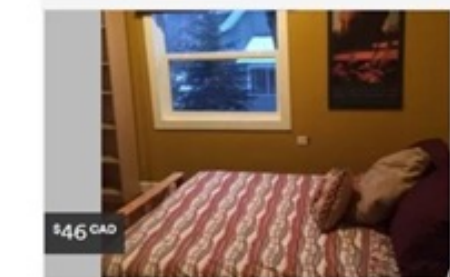
### Nelson looks to regulate Airbnb-type short-term rentals

'We do have rules that were designed for hotels and B&Bs, perhaps we need rules for short-term rentals.'

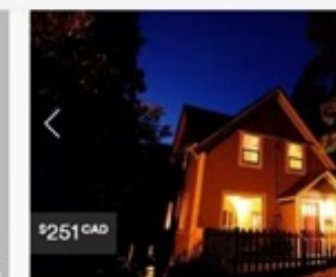
CBC News - Posted: Jun 09, 2016 10:37 AM PDT | Last Updated: June 9, 2016

airbnb Nelson, Canada

Filters Property Type



Mill St. uphill  
Private room - 2 guests - 4.5 stars - 22 reviews



Beautiful downtown 3 bedroom home  
Entire home/apt - 5 guests - 4.5 stars - 13 reviews



# Nelson's Approach to Housing

## Exploring a Housing Entity

- Exploring regional approach with neighbouring communities

## Working with Not-For-Profit / Community Groups

- Explore vacant land options for BC Housing projects

## Provincial/Crown Lands

- Work with Provincial ministries to explore options for vacant/underutilized lands
- Identify partnership opportunities



Photo Credit: Cover Architecture



# Nelson's Housing Challenges

## Land

- No more “easily” developable lands
- Brownfield sites – environmental challenges
- Natural hazards – floodplain, debris flow, wildfire interface, etc.

## Servicing

- Un-serviced or under-serviced lands
- Major infrastructure upgrades (STP, lift stations)

## Labour

- Large projects require a labour force from out-of-town
- Leads to delays and increases in costs

## Cost of Development

- Relatively higher cost of construction in Nelson
- Remaining land requires significant up-front costs (natural hazards, remediation, Geotech, servicing, etc.)



Secondary Suite  
in Heritage Home





# Nelson's Housing Challenges

## Key Takeaways

- Need to increase the number of purpose-built rental units
- BC Housing / Provincial intervention is key to completing additional non-market housing in Nelson
- Not-for-profit housing providers want to build more housing but don't have lands
- All levels of government need to take a look at their land holdings and evaluate options for housing



# Next Steps

## On-Going Collaboration

- Work with BC Housing / Province to create partnerships and opportunities for vacant or underutilized lands
- Assist not-for-profit housing providers in finding developable lands

## Legislative Changes (2024)

- Zoning Bylaw amendments presented to Council on March 5th
- Focus on density and other minor amendments

## Official Community Plan Review (2023-2024)

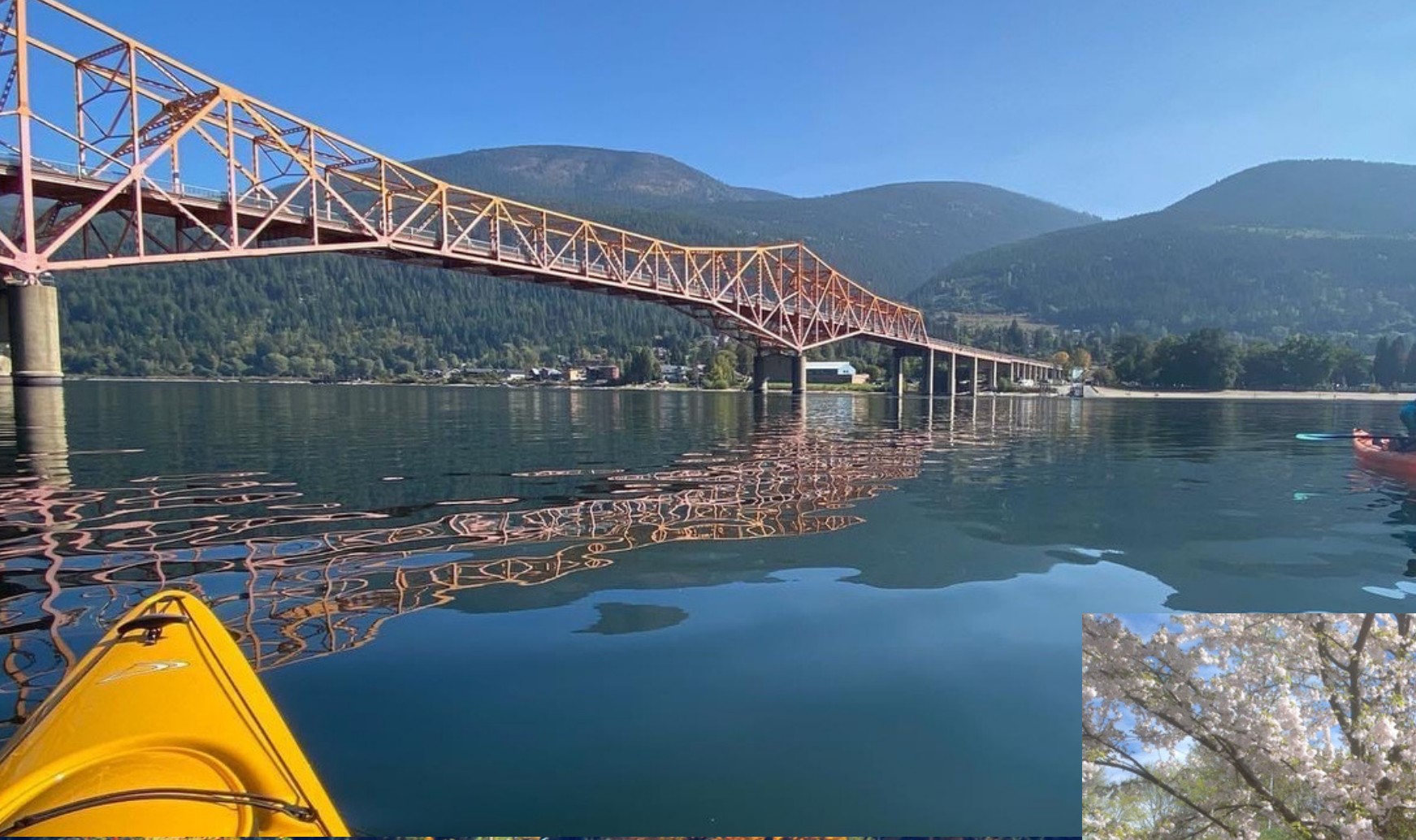
- Complete Housing Needs Report
- Explore housing-related policies – continue to innovate on the housing front

## Zoning Bylaw Review (2025)

- Explore changes to align with OCP and provincial policy manual







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