

# Nelson at its Best — Chair’s Report

Reporting period: October 2024 – September 2025

Over the past year, Nelson at its Best (NAIB) convened partners, advanced poverty-reduction work, and continued to champion a coordinated social-development approach for our community. Thank you to our members, partners, and volunteers for their time, expertise, and care.

## 1) Building a Coordinated Social-Development Approach

- City proposal & engagement: Developed and presented a business case for a three-year Social Development Coordinator (SDC) at the City of Nelson (Dec 3, 2024 Committee of the Whole), followed by a written submission and councillor outreach.
- Cross-sector learning: Drew on the experience of Penticton and Cranbrook to refine the model and messaging; their coordinators shared lessons with our network.
- Community engagement: Hosted a May 8, 2025 cross-sector lunch to broaden dialogue on roles, benefits, and gaps; follow-up planning meetings began June 5 to shape next steps.
- Trust-building next steps: After a targeted survey in July (4 responses—support in principle but limited authority/resources), pivoted to 2:1 meetings with key agencies, peer-to-peer advocacy at UBCM, and clarifying the full scope of social development as community health & well-being; exploring funding avenues with Community Action Initiative (CAI) and continued City dialogue on role design.

## 2) Poverty Reduction & Western Canada Leads (WCL)

- Dedicated capacity: Hired a part-time Poverty Reduction Coordinator (Feb 18, 2025) to lead WCL deliverables, engagement, and data/story work aligned with the Four-Year Action Strategy (2022–2026).
- Impact measurement: Launched an Impact Assessment using Tamarack’s ‘Getting to Impact’ approach, piloted with the Transportation pillar to map initiatives and gaps.
- Continuity plan: Following a staffing change in June, engaged consultant Marjie Lesko to deliver the Impact Report (due Oct 31 to NAIB; Dec 31 to Tamarack) and the Strategy Update (early 2026) on the original timeline.
- Emerging findings: Early analysis (2021 data) shows overall poverty trending down, yet locally remains nearly double the provincial rate. Members reaffirmed the outsized impact of Income Tax Clinics and Financial Literacy—priority candidates for scale-up in 2026.

## 3) Housing, Homelessness & Community Wellbeing

- Through the Nelson Housing Committee, tracked and contributed to files including workforce-housing models in Railtown, Happipad uptake/co-living, and major projects from Nelson CARES and SHARE Nelson (letters of support; public-process monitoring).
- By July, Front Street and Fell Street rezonings were approved; both advancing under BC Housing’s Community Housing Fund. Happipad recorded six matches locally, with coordination/funding transitions noted.

- Monitored Government Road (complex-care) timelines (Nelson CARES has been approved as the operator, with an earliest opening date of spring 2026), North Shore Inn operations, and Health Campus opening timing.

#### 4) Living Wage & Cost of Living

- Published the local Living Wage update; supported methodology consultations (housing/transport/childcare inputs); deferred a spring learning event to improve timing and focus.
- Developed rural-lens recommendations (multi-car commuting, childcare deserts) for the next Living Wage cycle and continued contributing to the provincial network.

#### 5) Grants, Partnerships & Organizational Capacity

- Grants submitted: ReDi (RDCK/City/Areas E & F) – \$4,475 to update the Four-Year Action Strategy; Osprey Community Foundation (Apr 14, 2025) – \$4,650 to resource the 2025 Impact Assessment.
- Tamarack membership renewed to sustain WCL participation and benefits.
- Financial administration & systems: NCFC remains financial manager/qualified donee (MOA in place); onboarded Liz Knox as bookkeeper and shifted to QuickBooks Online.
- Economic & childcare linkages: Strengthened ties with Greater Nelson Economic Development and Community Futures (childcare strategy; social-enterprise supports such as Innovate for Impact/Small Economy Works).

#### 6) Engagement, Governance & Planning

- Learning & advocacy: Hosted a Tamarack Engage Fest watch party (Oct 28–29, 2024) and participated in a Basic Income Guarantee webinar; attended EngageFest 2025 with policy resources circulated to members.
- Representation & alignment: Coordinated participation with the Nelson Committee on Homelessness (NCOH) and provided updates as needed; noted the City’s OCP passage and related community input.
- Strategic planning: initiating a NAIB strategic-planning process in Oct/Nov to set 2026 priorities and roles.

#### 7) Priorities for 2025–26

- Listen, then design: Complete targeted 2:1 meetings with key leaders; refine scope/options for coordination; pursue CAI and other funding avenues; continue City discussions.
- Deliver on WCL: Finalize the Impact Report (Oct 31 draft to NAIB; Dec 31 submission) and Strategy Update (early 2026), with accessible, Grade-8-level framing.
- Scale what works: Expand Income Tax Clinics and Financial Literacy; improve benefit take-up (e.g., explore low family uptake of BC Rental Assistance).
- Targeted communications: Launch a Communications Strategy (newsletter, myth-busting, lived-experience storytelling) once the Impact Report and key messages are finalized.

## Closing

This year asked us to do three things well: hold a clear vision, measure what matters, and earn trust through steady, practical collaboration. I'm grateful to everyone at the NAIB table—and to our many partners—for the work we've done and the work still ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Ryan, Chair

Nelson at its Best