

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF KOOTENAY BOUNDARY -
2020 APPLIED RESEARCH HOUSING PROJECT

Supplemental Report: Genelle Case Study

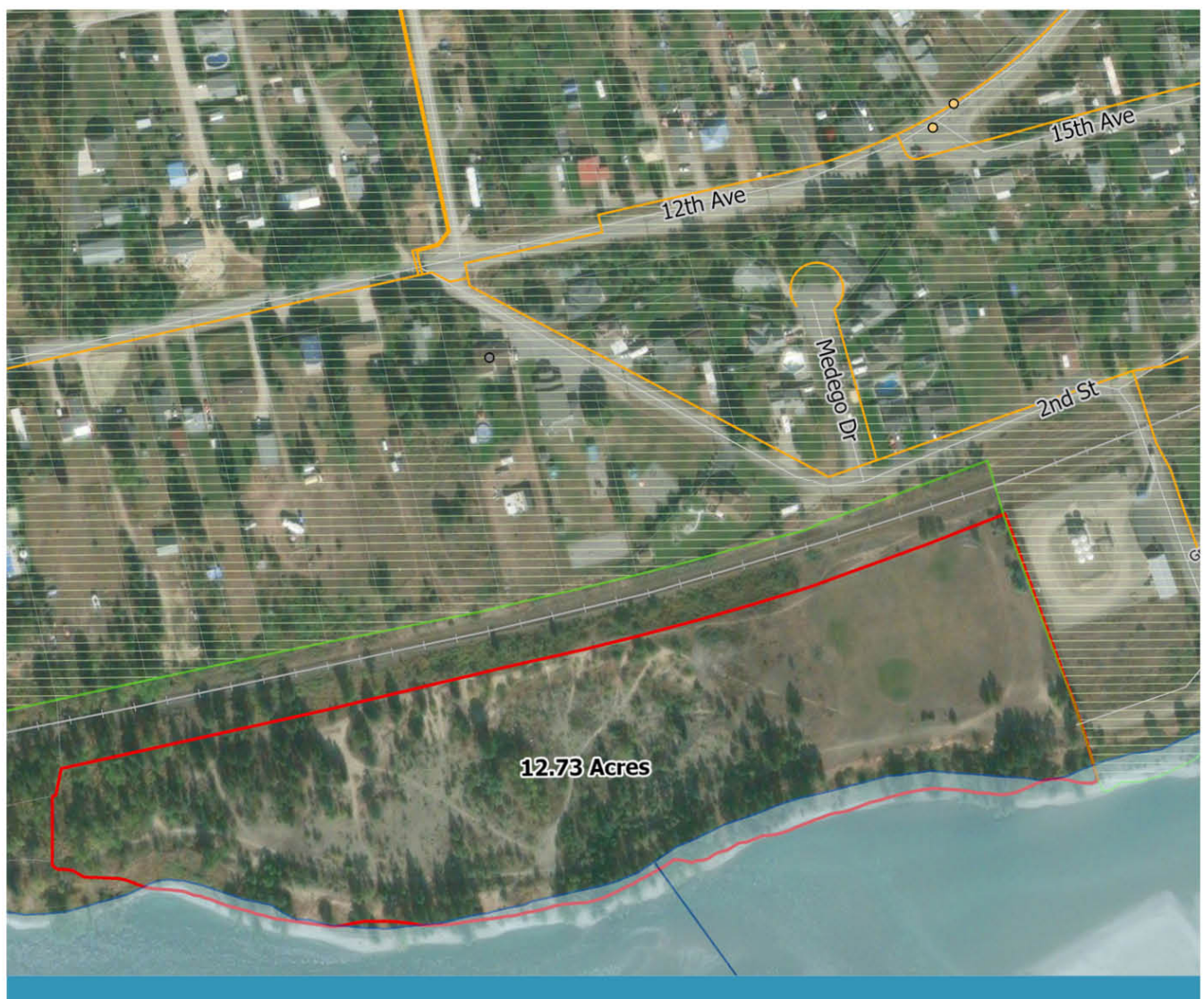


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Publication Details

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a supplement to the *Regional District of Kootenay Boundary: Perspectives on Rural Market Housing Solutions* report. Facing an inadequate supply of market housing, the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB) identified priorities for review:

- 1) identification of successful local and regional approaches to rural market housing development, including mixed-use and mixed-income models;
- 2) engagement of housing developers to pinpoint challenges and barriers to development of market housing;
- 3) two supplementary reports that (a) applies rural market housing to an RDKB-owned parcel in Genelle and (b) provide an economic snapshot of the Boundary-region to complement the findings of the housing needs report¹; and
- 4) an inquiry into relevant practices of post-disaster rebuilding and rehousing, with analysis and recommendations of applicable regional and community-specific models.

This report addresses 3(a) above. Items (1) and (2) are in *Perspectives on Rural Market Housing Solutions* report. Items 3(b) and (4) are addressed in separate reports.

At the request of the RDKB's Advisory Committee for this project, the Research Team explored housing development opportunities for a 12.73 acre, RDKB-owned parcel in Genelle, with special consideration for seniors housing. Four phases of research were completed:

- 1) Review of parcel details;
- 2) GIS mapping;
- 3) Environmental scan; and
- 4) Applied development exercise.

The following summarizes the research and key findings that require consideration prior to development of housing on this parcel. Based on the findings, the suggested housing development is a mixed-use, mixed-income, and multi-generational development. It is important to note that this is not a comprehensive review. As with any housing development, a visioning exercise with the community is highly recommended to identify on-the-ground needs, concerns, and ideas.

PARCEL DETAILS

The Research Team was given a 2001 Summary Appraisal² for the Genelle parcel, which provided a summary analysis of zoning, assets, and best use. Based on the appraisal, approximately 40% of the parcel is zoned as a playfield (P-1) and the remaining 60% is zoned as rural (RUR-1).ⁱ There are questions on the previous use of the RUR-1 section as this area appears to have been used as former gravel extraction site. However, no environmental assessment has been conducted to determine if contaminants exist or if remediation is required. The appraisal identified the best possible use of the parcel as residential development consisting of eight to nine 1.0 acre lots.

Table 1 summarizes key information and considerations.

ⁱ Note: the zoning has been updated since the 2001 Summary Appraisal and is now 100% P-1.

Table 1: Quick facts and considerations

Quick Facts	Considerations
<p><i>Parcel Location</i> 2nd Street, Genelle, BC 15 km north of Trail</p> <p><i>Parcel Size</i> 12.73 acres</p> <p><i>Current Genelle Population</i> 500-700</p> <p><i>Current Zoning & Use</i> North east (40%) P-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play field South west (60%) RUR-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible gravel extraction </p> <p><i>Infrastructure</i> Unconnected but near services Unimproved, legal roadway</p> <p><i>Best Use</i> Residential development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No environmental assessment has been conducted on the property • Location of rail line may decrease value • Proximity to water may increase value • Low “walkability” score • Close proximity to bus route and Selkirk College-Castlegar Campus • Proximity to water and sewer connections reduces infrastructure development costs • Zoning may need updating

GIS MAPPING

RDKB staff mapped out various amenities in Trail and Castlegar that are accessible from the Genelle parcel. These amenities included grocery, recreation, health, community services, and school access. In Genelle, current amenities are limited to bus stops and a community hall.ⁱⁱ Table 2 summarizes travel times to the downtown cores of both Trail and Castlegar, two nearby population centres that provide health services, major employment, and schooling.

Table 2: Travel times to Trail and Castlegar downtown cores (minutes)

	Trail	Castlegar
Car	15	20
Bus	20	30

Three maps were produced to provide additional information on parcel location, travel times, and amenities:

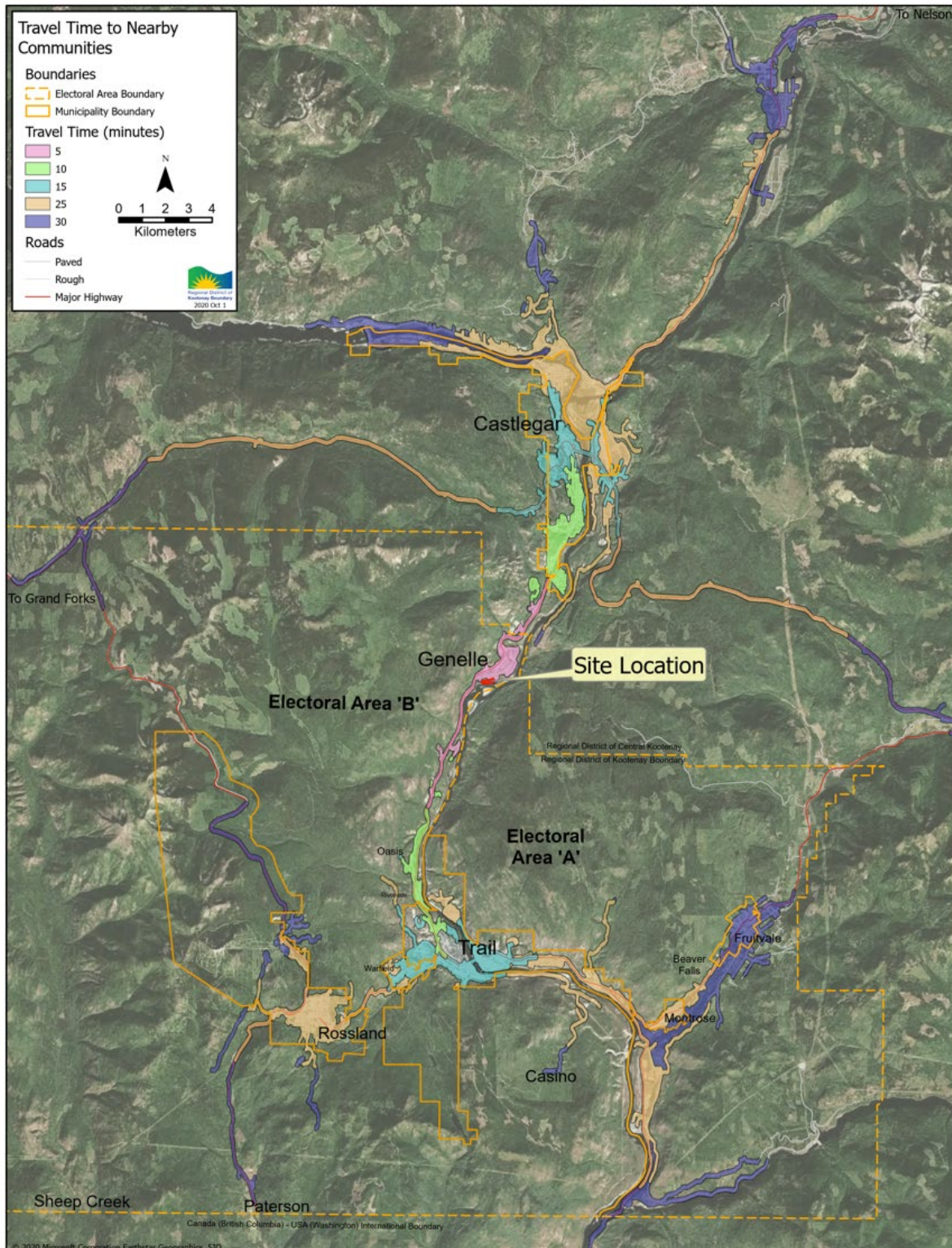
- Map 1 (page 5) provides an overview of the parcel location in Genelle.
- Map 2 (page 6) is a demonstration of the travel times, as noted in Table 2.
- Map 3 (page 7) indicates the identified amenities in Trail and Castlegar.

ⁱⁱ Genelle has a gas station and convenience store, but no literature references either of these as amenities within a sustainable development framework for meeting social or environmental well-being goals.

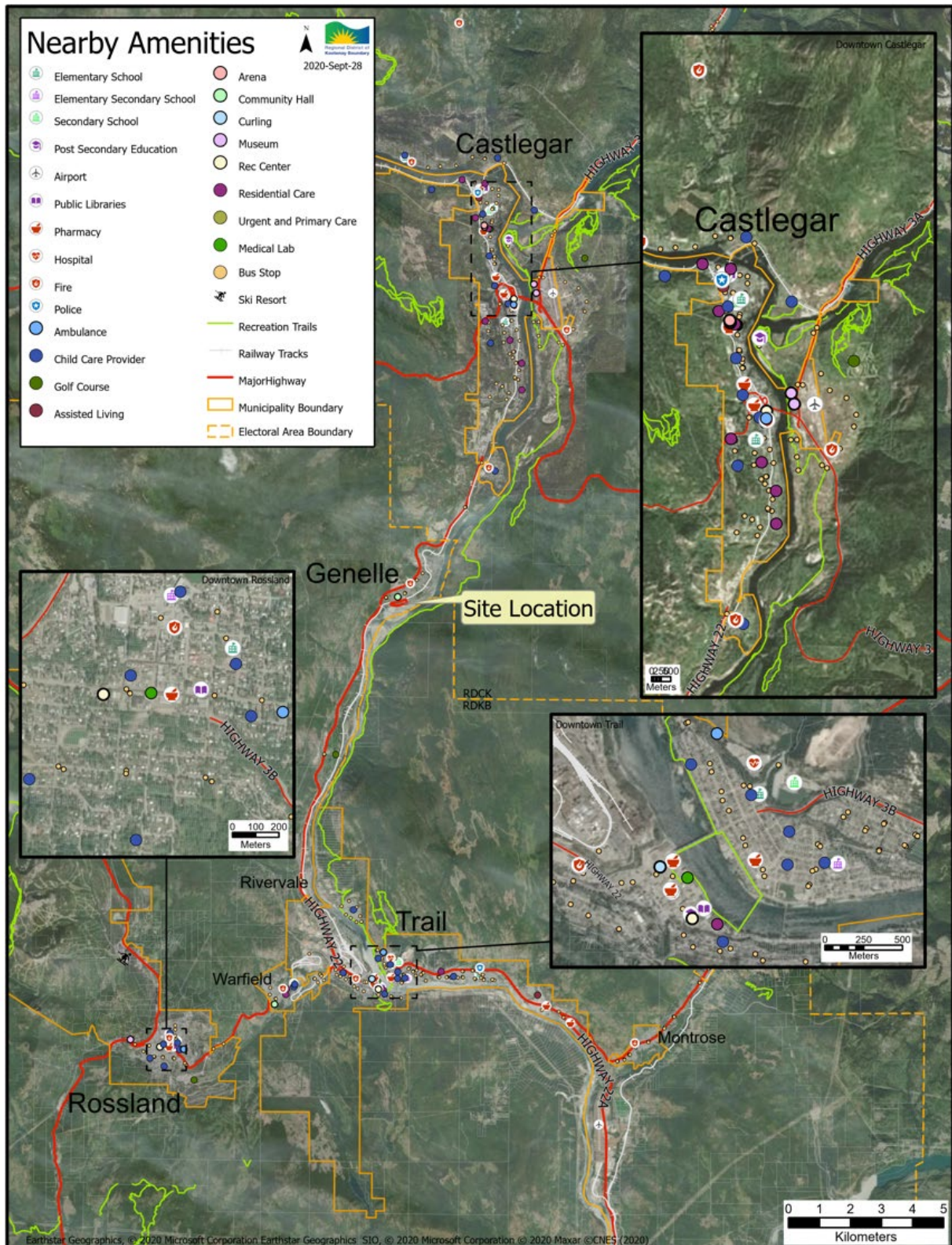
MAP 1: GENELLE PARCEL



MAP 2: TRAVEL TIMES



MAP 3: AMENITIES IN TRAIL AND CASTLEGAR



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

A literature review was conducted and relevant case studies were reviewed to understand barriers and best practices relevant to seniors housing developments, as well as general guidelines or practices related to sustainable housing and neighbourhood development models.ⁱⁱⁱ This review was supplemented by conversations with stakeholders, developers, builders, and realtors. Conversations focused on collecting ideas for housing development on this parcel.

The Genelle parcel is situated between Trail and Castlegar, providing an excellent location for a work or school commute to either community. However, with a lack amenities within walking distance, the property would best serve those who are active and independent.

Infrastructure connections are nearby and the waterfront could be considered a premium asset. However, the proximity of the rail line may reduce that premium. The creation of a neighbourhood that incorporates single-family homes on smaller lots, duplexes that have ground access, and a three- or four-storey building with smaller units would allow for a variety of occupancy and ownership options, including young families, seniors, and rentals.

Three major considerations emerged that impact a seniors housing development on the Genelle parcel:

Consideration 1: Available Transportation

The research confirmed the likely need for future residents to have access to a vehicle, whether a personal vehicle or through car-sharing. In terms of public transit, the Columbia Connector (Route 98) currently runs from approximately 6 am to 7 pm, Monday through Friday, and 8 am to 5:40 pm on Saturdays. There is no service on Sundays. The schedule creates limitations for shift workers (e.g., employees at Teck, Mercer Celgar, healthcare) and those employed in the retail sector. The schedule also impacts any person or family reliant on child-care, and may affect those who provide care services to others (e.g., after-work elder care).

Consideration 2: Housing Needs Projections

The housing needs projections in the 2020 Housing Needs Report³ indicate a decline in population and increased dwellings in the RDKB. The Kootenay/Lower Columbia projections indicate that bachelor, 1- and 2-bedrooms will be required in the coming years. This Genelle case study is focused on preliminary identification of suitable market housing options and is not intended to replace a feasibility assessment. Further research is required that incorporates the needs identified in the Housing Needs Report.

Consideration 3: Appraisal Age and Shifting Trends

The appraisal was conducted nearly 20 years ago. The suggested sales pattern – single-detached homes on 1.0 acre lots – is demonstrative of one form of housing development. A broader range of potential development options is recognized today. For example, one developer identified the opportunity to develop tiny or small homes on the property, noting that some young families are looking at smaller and more affordable options focused on energy efficiency and smaller footprints.

ⁱⁱⁱ See *Perspectives on Rural Market Housing Solutions* for a summary of housing models (*Appendix A: Extended Development Models*), emerging best practices (*Rural Case Studies: emerging best practices*), and seniors housing considerations (*Appendix C: Case Studies*).

APPLIED DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE: AGRIHOOD, A PLANNED COMMUNITY IN GENELLE

The Research Team conducted a preliminary exploration of how an agrihood development could fit this parcel. As noted above, this supplemental report is not a feasibility assessment, but provides an alternative vision of planning and development that extends beyond the 2001 appraisal recommendation and reflects a development model receiving increasing interest and uptake across North America.⁴

An *agrihood* is a relatively new model that offers “proven financial, health, and environmental benefits – to the stakeholders involved in their implementation, to surrounding communities and to the planet”.⁵ Instead of the traditional master-planned community around a golf course or other recreational feature, it is planned around a farm or community garden.⁶ Agrihoods vary in size and extravagance but share the following features⁷:

- Centred around a farm or food production space
- Embraces sustainable building practices
- Limits sprawl and encourages smaller dwellings and densification
- Design elements include:
 - Large front porches to increase interaction between residents
 - Trails and sidewalks to support foot traffic
 - Edible landscaping

The 2001 Appraisal suggested eight to nine 1.0 acre parcels at an average lot sale price of \$60,000 plus service costs of \$15,000. Following the best practices recommendations for agrihoods, single-family homes would be developed on 0.5 acre lots instead of 1.0 acres.

The size of the farm or garden varies but a less-than-five acre parcel set aside for food production would provide opportunities for education, demonstration, programming, and employment, with at least one or two full time staff to manage the plot.⁸ Examples of food-production spaces include a community or market garden that is professionally managed, greenhouse or other controlled-environment agriculture, and/or demonstration farm. A professionally managed community or market garden would likely provide the most feasible and viable option. Setting aside approximately two acres of land would allow for a 1.5 acre production plot plus 0.5 acres for adequate storage, washing, and small market stand facilities.⁹ This would allow for ten acres of residential development, providing approximately 18-20 homes at 0.5 acres each.

The ownership and governance of agrihoods can take many forms. In general, the developer is in control of the property and farm and then works with a management team to transition the property.¹⁰ Typically, this transition results in a land trust or homeowners association that would own the land, and the farm would be managed by a non-profit entity.¹¹ Given the size of the farm or garden discussed above, this structure would be appropriate for this development. Under a strata model, strata fees could allocate a percentage to assist in the payment of a full-time staff member to manage the farm or garden.

The RDKB is well positioned to support a planned community like an agrihood. This approach addresses a number of the 2040 visions as identified in the RDKB 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, including climate action, sustainable development, food security, and affordable living.¹²

FINDINGS

This research has identified two key findings relevant to the future development of the Genelle parcel:

- 1) **The parcel is not well suited for a dedicated seniors housing development.** While seniors housing is a recognized need in the region, providing appropriate seniors housing in rural communities has its challenges. Best practices demonstrate that seniors-dedicated housing is best suited for areas that

have high walkability (approximately five minutes) to amenities,¹³ such as grocery, health care, post offices, and shopping. A stand-alone seniors development is best suited for a downtown location in communities such as Trail, Grand Forks, or Midway.

- 2) **The parcel is well suited for a planned community.** Based on best practices, the Housing Needs Report, and complementing the RDKB 2019-2022 Strategic Plan, the Genelle parcel would be well suited for a mixed-use development that integrates mixed-income and multi-generational housing. This is in line with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' *Sustainable Neighbourhood Development*¹⁴ guidelines, which promotes walkable and mixed-use communities to promote healthy lifestyles and social connections, reduce municipal operating costs, and meet environmental goals. The Genelle parcel would be better suited to a planned community that incorporates mixed-use functions – like a community garden - and that is attractive to young families, students, empty-nesters, and active retirees.

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

To determine the most desirable and viable housing development option for the Genelle parcel, the following actions are suggested:

- 1) Conduct an updated appraisal to assess the current value of the property.
- 2) Conduct a preliminary site investigation to determine the presence of any contaminants that may require further assessment or remediation.
- 3) Conduct a visioning exercise or community charette to engage local residents early in a housing development project and better identify issues or barriers that may arise.
- 4) Conduct a feasibility study on the Genelle parcel that incorporates alternative models of ownership, as set out in *Perspectives on Rural Market Housing Solutions Appendix A: Extended Development Models*.

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