

Summary of Public Input from  
“Community Conversation on Sustainable and  
Responsible Development” hosted June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Fernie, BC

**Report Submission to RDEK Board of Directors**  
**Meeting - July 8, 2022**

Report Submitted by Rethink Galloway

[info@rethinkgalloway.com](mailto:info@rethinkgalloway.com)

Presentation by:

Lee-Anne Walker, MA Environment and Management and RDEK Area A Resident since 1984

## Contents

Summary .....	3
---------------	---

Reiteration of Priorities and Vision .....	4
Request to the RDEK Board of Directors .....	4
Feedback from attendees .....	6
Question 1: Visioning the Future .....	6
Question 2: Threats and Opportunities .....	7
Question 3: Characteristics of sustainable and responsible development .....	8
Question 4: Priorities for the fall election .....	9
Appendix: Raw notes from engagement .....	10

## Summary

In January 2022, the Galloway Lands application, a development proposal designed by Handshake Holdings, was brought forward to the Regional District Board of Directors for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> reading, despite significant concern around the lack of details pertaining to a number of key issues including:

- Fire protection and water access
- Road access and transportation network impacts
- Wildlife impacts
- Environmental impacts, including threats to Lizard Creek
- Social impacts
- Recreational impacts

Community groups and concerned citizens voiced their opposition, through letters to the RDEK Board, and through presentations at the Planning and Development Services meeting. A grassroots citizen-led group, Rethink Galloway, provided a platform for community members to engage in the issues, including through a petition demanding planning that reflects community values and long-term sustainability in decision making. There are over 1,000 signatories to that petition, with the majority of the signatories being from Fernie and RDEK Area A.

While the development application was paused in January 2022, it was brought forward again in May 2022, after direction to staff was provided by the Board at the April 2022 meeting to prioritize the application. Again, community groups voiced concerns, pointing to deficiencies in the revised application that did not address the key issues previously identified. Despite the opposition, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> readings were approved, and the application was moving to Public Hearing.

One day prior to the required timeline for public notice on the Public Hearing, the applicant pulled the Galloway Lands application, stopping the process in its tracks.

Over the course of the 6 months of this application being in process, citizens from the Elk Valley, and the East Kootenay more generally, became increasingly concerned with the lack of representation of community values and disregard for sustainable development practices in the process.

In response to a concern by citizens across the East Kootenay a community conversation was planned to spark a discussion around what exactly citizens want to see in sustainable developments across the region, and what values must be upheld as communities continue to grow.

The event included a Keynote Address by Robert (Bob) Sandford, author of sustainable development goals relating to water and United Nations Chair in water and climate security, as a means to catalyze a conversation. Small group discussions on visioning and values for the future was facilitated both online via Zoom and in-person at the Fernie Seniors Centre. Seventy people attended in person, and an additional 90 via Zoom, including small groups who gathered to watch together across the East Kootenay. A discussion framework was provided to all participants to focus the conversation.

The questions posed during the discussion included:

Picture yourself in your community in 2050. What values do you want reflected in what you see?

1. What are the challenges threatening those values? What are the elements that would be a 'no go' where developments are 'denied'?
2. Define the characteristics of a sustainable and responsible development in your community. What would a development look like that successfully reflected those characteristics?
3. This fall, in the municipal election, what vision do you want reflected by candidates that support responsible and sustainable development?

This document summarizes the event's findings following an analysis of the submissions and comments from the attendees. Many attendees were left with a keen desire to continue the conversation and learn more about the process for development applications, and how various planning documents, including Official Community Plans, the Regional Growth Strategy, Housing Strategies, etc. are used by the RDEK to inform sustainable and responsible decision-making.

### Reiteration of Priorities and Vision

We want responsible, sustainable development. This needs to be prioritized ahead growth. We need to set high standards for what responsible, sustainable development looks like. This includes:

- Conservation – protecting and preserving the natural environment wherever possible
- Public Access – making it easy for our citizens to access the natural environment
- Safety – ensuring developments meet the highest standards of public safety, both during construction and upon completion
- Big Picture Thinking – requesting Directors to look at development planning for the area as a whole, viewing individual applications as a piece in the broader area puzzle
- Low-income housing – providing opportunities for a broad spectrum of housing within our community

We are seeking leadership of our elected officials to support this Vision. This means rejecting applications that are inconsistent with this Vision and the planning documents adopted by the RDEK; it means holding developers accountable for planning and design that reflects the Vision. We seek leadership that works with Regional District staff to improve the development planning, approval and accountability process to provide more transparency and ensure decisions made reflect community values.

By creating communities consistent with this Vision, we inspire and support a deep sense of place, one that supports sustainable opportunities to live, recreate and thrive, for generations.

### Request to the RDEK Board of Directors

1. RDEK provides feedback on the public response contained in this report addressing the reflected concerns.

2. Support communities in understanding the process by which development applications are received, reviewed against local OCP and Regional Growth Strategies and moved through the process of evaluation and recommendation by Staff. We are requesting a presentation from the Manager of Development Services at a community-wide 'Lunch and Learn' online.
3. Consider supporting sub-regional meetings for OCP review and feedback. Although minor bylaw updates have been completed across OCPs in rural areas, the context in which they were initially written has changed. East Kootenay residents are requesting an opportunity to engage in an open house to discuss rural area OCPs.



**1 Elk Valley citizens attend the in-person event in Fernie to discuss sustainable development. The event was hybrid with groups joining via Zoom as well.**

## Feedback from attendees

After the keynote speaker catalyzed conversation both in-person and on-line, attendees were asked to consider a number of questions and provide feedback via a facilitated session. The responses are summarized in the sections below and the full data of raw responses are included as an appendix to this document.

### Question 1: Visioning the Future

Picture yourself in your community in 2050 (only 28 years away!). What values do you want reflected in what you see?

The discussion in person and online articulate a variety of wants and vision for the future. There was a strong desire to support a sense of place and belonging in our communities, and a key component of that comes from leadership that upholds those values. Participants in the discussion imagined a community in 2050 where community connection and citizenship had resulted in a sense of place. Where development had been done in a way that retains environmental and ecosystem integrity. Tourism is supported but managed in a way that balances economic opportunity with ecosystem values.

There was a strong desire to see wild/natural spaces and wildlife corridors are core values to be retained. That access to wild spaces be managed and that development consider long term impacts of climate change in how spaces are preserved and protected. Watershed-level planning, with emphasis on long-term climate resilience was identified as a desire for 2050.

Affordability for community members was identified as a key priority for the long-term viability of the community. There were a number of respondents concerned about lack of employee housing. Inclusive neighbourhoods that emphasize affordability not just from a housing perspective, but from an affordable lifestyle perspective (e.g. active transportation, basic amenities accessible nearby, etc.).

The RDEK Area A Housing Needs Report 2021 highlights that the primary need in the community is affordable housing, and this development does not meet the type of housing stock required to address the critical issues of access to affordable housing. Responses that summarized this key concern included:

*“There are limited affordable rental housing and ownership housing opportunities in Fernie. A significant concern for housing and support providers was the lack of suitable housing available for vulnerable populations, including low-income residents.”*

*“Overall, to meet basic housing demand from the 2016 census to 2026, an additional 187 units with nearly 550 additional bedrooms could be required. Broken down into tenure type, this is an additional 54 rental and 132 owner housing units. The proportion of renter households is anticipated to increase. There is a growing demand for rental housing, as well as housing suitable for families (2-3 bedrooms).”*

## Question 2: Threats and Opportunities

2a - What are the challenges threatening those values? What are the elements that would be a 'no go' where developments are 'denied'?

The responses to this question were broad and included concerns related to impacting wildlife corridors, local waterways, ensuring that developments are designed to meet the needs of the community and with services sustained by the tax base.

Sprawl and poorly considered rezoning approvals were identified as considerable threats to the values upheld by the community. There was concern about the lack of reflection of the priorities in the OCPs and Regional Growth Strategy in rezoning applications or development approvals.

Inability to house workers and support service industry jobs was identified as a major threat to East Kootenay communities. Without affordable places to live, and too much emphasis on supporting a 'yes' to every application, there is a risk and threat of workers not being able to afford to live in the community. The threat of affordable housing not being the highest value from a profit perspective for developers is a significant concern – this results in more luxury homes and exclusive market developments being proposed.

2b - What are the MUST HAVE elements?

Affordable housing is a must, whether it be a required for a certain % of housing in a development or another metric. There is also a critical need to address the legacy developments that do not have housing for staff or affordable units for local families.

Attendees discussed opportunities and ideas that would require developers commit to densify housing and expand mixed housing so that housing (ownership and/or rental) is affordable for workers/households on the low end of the wage scale, including housing for seasonal workers.

Ecological integrity played a strong role in this discussion as well, with an emphasis on the need to steward and protect existing green and natural spaces for ecosystem services, growing food, community well being, and climate resilience.

Specifically, there was a group that pointed out the 'Principles of Smart Growth' and the importance of considering the carrying capacity of our communities with respect to natural assets and infrastructure. Consider the long-term implications of asset management by local government and the tax payer – are developments being designed to prevent the downloading of asset renewal and management on local communities?

### Question 3: Characteristics of sustainable and responsible development

Define the characteristics of a sustainable and responsible development in your community. What are the elements that would drive approvals of successful developments?

This question received a huge number of responses. For the most part the respondents offered pragmatic views that refer to the key tenets of sustainable development. There were a high proportion of responses that referred to the need for mixed developments with high-density housing, again, echoing the local Housing Needs Report. There was a strong emphasis on connectivity to community amenities – addressing transportation options through active transportation networks and public transport options.

Preservation of natural spaces was again a critically important with an emphasis on avoiding areas that are important for wildlife migration, and/or have contribution to fish habitat and water quality. Success would be mapping out and pre-emptively protecting through green space, wildlife covenants or other means, the important corridors.

Respondents want to see responsible, sustainable development. This needs to be prioritized ahead of growth. To achieve this high standards and clear metrics must be set for what this looks like. This includes:

- Conservation - protecting and preserving the natural environment
- Public Access - making it easy for citizens to access the natural environment
- Safety - ensuring developments meet the highest standards of safety both pre and post construction
- Long Term Planning - requiring development planning as a whole, viewing individual applications as a piece of a broader regional perspective
- Address low income housing needs thus providing a broad spectrum of housing within our community.

Participants want to see developments that include sincere public consultation and follow real sustainable development practices that build community values. One response emphasis the United Nations seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, which can be referenced by communities as a framework off of which to develop and design growth.

Groups discussed the existence of a number of plans, policies and regulations that are meant to guide responsible development, but that leadership is required to uphold them. There needs to be more open communication and transparency in the evaluation of development, and in the way in which long-term planning is supported by communities and the Regional District of East Kootenay.

## Question 4: Priorities for the fall election

This fall, in the municipal election, what vision do you want reflected by candidates that support responsible and sustainable development?

This question looked to collate opinions on what leadership the public is looking for from elected officials. When examined, the responses show a clear desire to have representatives that consider the local community with a focus on long-term planning. Key aspects from the responses include elected officials that have ideas and plans to support the creation of housing stock and developments that meet the needs of the community.

There is a desire to see more engagement and communication with the public on the process of evaluating and rejecting or approving development applications. More transparency on how these uphold the values of the community, and the commitments made in various planning documents.

Some of the key characteristics or priorities for desirable candidates for the next municipal election include:

- Support for the vision of blended housing and sustainable systems
- Candidates that have strategies and ideas for developing affordable & sustainable housing
- Candidates understand and demonstrate a commitment to the broader vision for RDEK & their role in supporting both their area and the Municipalities in the region.
- Candidates demonstrate a value for a longer-term vision that needs to be crafted and supported for the Region to be sustainable and healthy.
- A clear, future forward economic plan with operational professionalism, and the courage to question inefficiency and irresponsible government.
- Strong climate initiatives
- Promise to listen to and represent constituents
- Work with community and region on a consistent, comprehensive regional development plan around Fernie and other RDEK communities.
- Have the energy to demonstrate leadership and vision.
- Promote the characteristics and principles of best practices in responsible and sustainable development that reflects community values
- Citizenry is currently thinking more about rights than responsibilities and this needs to be reversed and should be a talking point of candidates.

# Appendix: Raw notes from engagement

Responses from Question 1: Picture yourself in your community in 2050 (only 28 years away!). What values do you want reflected in what you see?

- Respect for the environment and the landscape we live in. Water, landscape, wildlife, etc.
- Communication, a way to discuss and address different needs. Community connection, engagement.
- Courage and citizenship - relentless!
- People feel they belong, rather than a sense of “us and them”. A sense of place.
- A community that looks after each other. All members of the community have the ability to get their needs met - housing, food, education, childcare, healthcare
- Recognition that natural spaces don’t belong to humans, our environment belongs to other beings as much as us. Undisturbed habitat.
- Accessibility of recreation, and sustainable tourism which allows outsiders to experience the community in a beneficial way. Community values should be apparent to visitors (and respected by them).
  - How do we educate people on how to be a conscious and engaged tourist?
- A place where children can grow and stay here rather than being forced to move away – affordability.
- How do we solve the economic development to accommodate this?
- People need to be able to fill all roles to accommodate the community.
- People to maintain desirable areas/wilderness.
- Events to get people involved in community – more all year round.
- Staff housing for larger companies.
- Current situation in Fernie for many is house-sharing with no possibility of ownership
- Not profitable to build affordable housing
- Need a living wage to allow affordable housing to be viable
- Ideal would be a parallel development of affordable and “affluent” housing = *Blended housing*
- Built with a guaranteed contribution to services/infrastructure – self-sustaining communities without a dependence on a nearby city – such as Fernie.
- Lack of these criteria gives grounds for denying development.
- affordable housing for service industry workers
- preservation of wildlife corridors and old growth forests

- protection of health of rivers
- preservation of wilderness experience on recreational trails
- A published and reviewed community plan which shows ALL planned developments and does not stop with city boundaries but includes the overall region. Such a plan would be reviewed and debated publicly in various forums. Such a plan would protect wildlife corridors, water and fishery quality, and overall environment health
- More seniors homes and sr. housing options incorporated into the community
- Appreciation for natural life
- Joy of outdoor activity
- Balance of people needed to sustain the community and they have a good life
- Different cultures influence diversity
- Wide demographic age
- Equity between people amongst those that live and work here
- We know most people, we are a true community
- Great contributions of volunteers
- Vibrant, Vital
- People readily step up and contribute, community fills its own gaps, volunteerism is strong
- Members values being part of the community and contributing
- People are healthy, energized
- Rallying around causes
- Overall healthy population – linked to outside & enjoying benefits of outdoors
- Passion for nature
- Younger people can live well here
- Local flavour, affordability
- Passion for living here shows up in our service and service to others
- Authentic, not manufactured, real not fabricated community - town
- Diversity of industry that supports residents, healthy economic environment above and beyond tourism

- A community where people who to work here doing essential services (nurses, teachers, professionals, etc.) can actually afford to live here.
- A place that welcomes temporary workers and creates a track for them to become permanent residents
  - Eg, creating diverse demographics and therefore a diverse community
- Ensure that natural/ environmental consideration are upheld and maintained
- Protecting natural resources, but not gate keeping
- A place that still has a strong sense of community and people who live here, work here, and vice versa.
- A community that has a strong and vibrant arts and culture scene.
- A place where small businesses can survive and thrive
- Able to clearly articulate what the community is all about.
  - I.e. everyone in the community on the same page, cohesion
- Open and welcoming, neighbourhoods where kids play in the street and grandparents watch them from the porch.
  - Safe, still small town feel
- A community where a car is not a necessity.
  - Eg 2nd ave is car free
  - Bike lanes/paved and maintained trails connect all neighbourhoods and outlying areas
- Areas adjacent to municipal boundaries are managed to compliment & maintain the same core values of the municipality
  - Eg DCC's inplace for developments to support municipal expansion
  - Viewscapes and landscapes managed to not detract from quality of life
  - Trail systems managed and maintained for greater community good
    - Access to public and private lands maintained or enhanced.
- Our team put a high value on diversity of our community with something for everyone. The concern was that the current trend of almost exclusively adding luxury vacation homes would upset the current balance.
- Access to natural environment. Concern was that unchecked development could limit access for outdoor pursuits.

- Opportunity for youth. We would like to see our youth be able to have jobs and raise a family without being forced to move to a city. Therefore support for our local industries, mining, forestry and railroad must be balanced with protection of the environment.
- Respect for the environment.
- Geared towards seniors
  - Accessibility
  - Peace and quiet
  - Healthy and a safe environment
  - Affordable
  - Love of the outdoors and easy access to recreational activities
  - Accessible health care, available and effective
- Trail network that supports safe active transportation from RDEK to CoF and more for recreation
- A cohesive, comprehensive, specific regional plan that all local governments can work implementing, reducing adversarial entrenchment. Consolidated planning would be more effective than ‘piecemeal one off development approvals’.
- Natural assets are valued as ‘natural’ capital
- Large protected and preserved wild spaces in the region that support nature, wildlife connectivity/corridors.
- Community is represented and listened to by decision makers.
- Community voice is effectively expressed to the RDEK. It feels like we are in the ‘dark’ resulting in loss of confidence due to flip flop decision making.
- “Democracy dies in darkness” quote from the Washington Post
- We want responsible, sustainable development. This needs to be prioritized ahead growth. We need to set high standards for what responsible, sustainable development looks like. This includes:
  - Conservation – protecting and preserving the natural environment wherever possible
  - Public Access – making it easy for our citizens to access the natural environment
  - Safety – ensuring developments meet the highest standards of safety, both during construction and upon completion

- Big Picture Thinking – requesting Directors to look at development planning for the area as a whole, viewing individual applications as a piece in the broader area puzzle.
- Low income housing – providing opportunities for a broad spectrum of housing within our community.
- By creating communities consistent with this vision, we inspire and support a passionate love of place. People fall in love and stay in love with this place we choose to call home.
- A diverse, inclusive, resilient and engaged community, and safe, livable climate.
- As our local area population continues to grow indefinitely (as it must due to climate migration, amenity migration, and relocation for economic reasons), it is necessary to take stock of what we have, identify what we value and determine how to address needs equitably while protecting ecosystem functions that support life and contribute to resilience to climate change.
- Homes for everyone
- All Energy StepCode 4 or 5.
- All single family dwellings should be able to have legal secondary suites and laneway homes.
- Create zoning for tiny homes and other affordable small home options.
- Ensure a mix of low cost housing (the Federal government has a relatively recent program from two or three years ago that provides generous financing to builders and requires a mix of low cost housing. This would be mainly apartment-style rental dwellings.)
- Stewardship areas defined in land use plans and supported by community for food production, natural asset services (eg. watershed, carbon capture, flood management, temperature mitigation, water and air quality, fully functioning ecosystem (wildlife)), and green space for community wellbeing.
- Using [Principles for smart growth](#)
- Articulate community identity/culture and provide “onboarding” to newcomers. For example, ‘Welcome - this is who we are...these are the things that make us a vital, resilient, and healthy community...’”
- Supporting our own needs (especially in regard to food, water, and energy)
- Localizing products and shortening supply chains
- Economy that is circular, local and regenerative. It is constrained by limits to growth rather than being based on consuming more than can be supported, for example: [Donut Economics Kate Raworth](#)
- Inclusive, family-friendly neighbourhoods within walking/biking distance of schools, green space and basic amenities.
- Embracing reciprocity and community health and well-being as priorities

- Caring, sharing, generous communit
- Respect and value for all of nature
- Love for the Elk Valley
- Opportunity for economic well-being for everyone.
- Rent controlled housing ( eg whistler corp )
- Value professionalism
- Unifying vision
- An OCP for the whole valley, unifying municipality and RDEK
- Greenway corridors that are respected, maintained and enforced.

Responses from Question 2: What are the challenges threatening those values? What are the elements that would be a 'no go' where developments are 'denied'?

- Development where wildlife corridors exist
- Development that creates a risk of impact to local waterways
- Development where impacts to existing wilderness trails have not been carefully weighed and considered
- A community without a mix of low, medium and high-cost housing to encompass all income levels
- Anytime it doesn't fit in the above
- Anytime the infrastructure required is not maintainable by the development tax base (i.e. is subsidized by the rest of the community)
- No-go elements: Sprawl, lack of walkability. Inconsistency with the principles of Smart Growth. Exceeding local carrying capacity in respect of natural assets and/or infrastructure. Large scale developments on greenfield lands. Developments that are commercial plays by outside developers who have no long-term local interests.
- Ill-considered development and ill-considered zoning
- Residential sprawl
- Lack of willingness/ability to hold the line on Fernie's Official Community Plan over time
  - Many small changes lead to unintended outcomes that are inconsistent with OCP
- Fragmentation of various governments - municipal, RDEK, provincial, federal
- Unsustainable resource extraction, lack of regulation for resource extraction on private land (i.e. logging on the south side of the Elk Valley)
- Inability to service the community properly because needed people (healthcare workers, educators, hospitality workers) can't afford to live in the community
- Lack of support for community groups who are trying to build things like affordable housing
- Politicians are not listening, and are being swayed by developers and tax revenue increases (RDEK)
- High cost of living
- High amount/cost of development
- Unaffordability

- Local community & governments not having the standards to maintain & uphold the values of the community.
- Developers need to abide by community standards & ensure public have their say IN PERSON – LOCALLY!
- All developments must accommodate some affordable housing.
- Developers using some money earned by selling certain parcels of land to pay back into the community – i.e. to put toward development of affordable housing, greener & more eco-friendly housing (solar on each house), community gardens, parks, food bank – the list goes on, but basically anything to help the “little people”.
- Essentially all the issues with the current Galloway Proposal
  - transportation, fire, water supply, waste disposal...
- Moratorium on development until any current development has met certain standards.
- Politicians who disregard OCPs, or do not uphold values, make amendments to bylaws to shirk duties and established bylaws
- Developers spouting whatever the politicians want to hear to make the amends required for zoning applications
- Decisions in the RDEK disregarding community’s/municipality’s OCPs and values
- Provincial decisions can override local values
- Connectivity disintegration increases human wildlife conflicts
- Needless sprawl pulling people further away from core services, and the ensuing maintenance and replacement costs of stretched infrastructure.
- Environmental degradation
- Apathy amongst community members
- Climate change and its impacts on the natural environment
- Our team would like to see strong enforced legislation to promote affordable housing
- Developments must consider access and egress traffic for both construction and long term
- Water and sewer supply is essential
- Planning must put a priority on the environment and wildlife habitat protection
- Affordable housing is not seen as desirable or a positive for adjacent property values
- Affordable housing is not a money maker for the developer

- Environment is threatened by our legal system that supports exploitation of private lands by owners without consideration of larger impacts to the environment
- Trails will be impacted by developments
- Ensuring and developing a diverse economic environment - beyond tourism
- There are criteria for approval of development proposals and a process that ensures the criteria is met and are aligned with stated Community values i.e. maintenance of green spaces, safe access etc
- Value local developers with an understanding of the community - vs foreign developers
- Development needs to meet community needs as well as the goals of the developer. I.e. Hotel development needs housing for service staff
- Consider an allocation ratio/% of funds from proceeds to support affordable housing as part of new developments
- Urban sprawl threatens green spaces
- Need to plan for alternate forms of transportation – biking etc
- New Development Approval process must include the review of and accountability for criteria before approval – ie rezoning
- Demonstrate a value for Public Input into planning and approval
- There is shared & understood accountability for developing and then maintaining Plans – OCP & Environmental Plans – holding Developers accountable to do what is approved
- Clear process for approvals
- Overall there is a serious concern that lack of affordable housing may be the virus that kills the Fernie Community
- Biggest challenge is the money to be made by developers in big luxury houses
  - supply needs to be provided to keep pricing down.
  - every developer should have to provide a real blended plan and be a “Net” contributor to the valley
  - challenges is that investors are not “invested”in the valley, but they could be
  - RDEK has the “golden cow”, RCR land and potential for tax base
  - city of Fernie has already permitted at least 10,000 possible new residents when montane, cedars, etc are finished. They don’t have the infrastructure to support that (schools, rec facilities, etc)
  - challenge is no one is willing to have sustainable, incremental changes to existing OCP and bylaws -no one is there to enforce environmental changes, there are no environmental police for that.
- We feel helpless

- Leaders are few and far between
- Broken process
- Ineffective development process. Feels like so many aspects of the process
- are in silos, or information is contained in 'different binders', gathering dust on the shelf and there is no integration. Integrate OCP, Zoning
- Local governments represent the people, who vote, not businesses.
- Weighting of significant decisions like Galloway should be by the Elk Valley, not RDEK Directors in Radium or Kimberley.
- Public input is important to listen to; need to include an ongoing conversation that demonstrates working together with representative.
- Alternate views to the elected RDEK Director must be expressed honestly and openly
- Current APC looks like the RDEK Area A Director – need diversity e.g ages, sexes, professions and follow more stringent bylaw procedures
- No go for development – when there is a high percentage of public outcry the answer is back to the drawing board and possibly no go! Do not lead developers down the path of expecting yes!
- Regarding low income housing, we should explore the housing trusts and exist in other jurisdictions, creating more diverse and integrated communities.
- Growth will happen, as evidenced by an inventory of 1750 zoned, unserviced lots in the City of Fernie, plus of course all the inventory outside the city boundaries. We need to ensure we do it right.
- Allowing the free market to drive growth (rather than operating within a broader strategy and detailed planning that addresses a community's social, economic and environmental values first and foremost).
- Monetary competition rather than working cooperatively for an equitable, livable future. There is no room for greed. Neither living systems or human systems can afford this culture of taking and the collateral damage resulting from this culture. Shift to a culture of reciprocity, some won't share these values, but perhaps deeper conversations on these topics will help with this challenge.
- Here are some concepts that we have considered about development that reflect our values:
  - Limit the size of homes allowed to be built – when we looked to move away from our neighbourhood and find a new place to call home, we explored the new developments as potential options. Some of the current developments require a MINIMUM square footprint, not a maximum. And we are not talking a small minimum! To meet our personal values of living lightly on the planet, we would have had to build a bigger home than what we need. Not only would this have increased our building costs, more importantly it would have required additional

materials and land resources to build it, heat it, maintain it, and such. Additionally, in some of these developments, the building guidelines precluded the allowance of renewable resource set-ups like solar panels, nor the ability to grow food. At a time when the cost of living is rising and climate change is bearing down on us, isn't food security and treading lightly on the planet a sustainable vision we should all be embracing and including in our way of living?

- Tourism Fernie and the Chamber of Commerce alongside the City of Fernie (and others), seems to have been working hard to promote our community to capitalize on tourism dollars. But do we have the infrastructure to support this push? Is the lens of capitalism and the vision of success supported by a sustainable mandate? Should we instead be working to maintain what we have rather than seeing expansion as the only measure of success? We would argue that a more sustainable lens that supports the current assets and resources, is more in tune with the world climate we are living in. The risk of endangering our wild spaces, our sense of community and the ability for locals to enjoy the very place they have chosen to call home, seems to have been lost.
- Is a moratorium on development a solution? Without having backgrounds in urban planning, we are not in a position to accurately address this piece. However, we feel that the very issues that Bob Sandford spoke about in his presentation and his sense of loss with his home community of Canmore is possibly a reflection of the moratorium that was placed on the neighbouring town of Banff back in 1998. Fernie would be wise to explore the very issues that Canmore has faced, at risk of a potential domino effect on our neighbours of Sparwood, Elkford, and the South Country communities, and out of respect to our Indigenous peoples. As our fellow Elk Valley residents, we owe them that consideration.
- Staff housing: at what point should RCR be held accountable for providing accommodation to its seasonal staff? Additionally, what other local businesses should be held accountable for ensuring their staff have affordable housing? The high rental cost issues could be significantly offset if this were mandated to RCR (and other employers – we aren't sure what the number of employees should be to set the requirement). Individuals and families with a commitment to the broader Fernie community would then be able to afford rent, and the general cost of living. We know of many who have had to leave town because they could no longer afford to live here – individuals like ourselves, who have contributed unaccountable hours to the fabric of this community and made it into what it is today (our own personal list includes, and is not limited to: creating and building the Angel Garden, volunteering with the Fernie Nordic Society and Fernie Nordic Racers program, co-authoring a book that celebrates locals growing their own food; a past Board of Director with Advocates for Local Living, and the Fernie Community EcoGarden; volunteering at many local events (Wapiti, Elk River Alliance annual clean-up, Fernie Triathlon, Stag Leap Running events, etc.); banner art work displays, volunteer coaching for youth athletes (in several sports), and participants/competitors in many local events – we think it's fair to say we are important contributors to the fabric of this community).

- The impact of recent developments on the land: Both Montane and The Cedars are examples that should be noted for turning a beautiful piece of land into an eyesore. What happened to all the trees and other native plants? Isn't it ironic that homeowners are "planting" old burnt stumps as part of their landscape design? A ghostly reminder of what once was... Perhaps development guidelines should stipulate that all trees and native plantings must remain on the property (other than those in the building footprint), and contractors must work around all others plantings to complete their work. Developers would also need to heed this requirement when installing infrastructure like water and sewer lines, gas and hydro requirements). Better yet, developers could be mandated to have all services for energy requirements be renewable. Are new developments mandated to have complete environmental studies done on their development plans and are the developers then held accountable to uphold these requirements (if the development is in fact allowed to proceed)? By way of summary, there is no such thing as a problem bear....humans are the problem. How has the bottom line and top dollar overshadowed the very place we became so enamoured with?
  
- We were absolutely astounded to witness the process of governance at the recent presentations made to the RDEK Board of Directors about the Galloway Lands Development by the proponent Handshake Holdings. How is it that our democratic process allows a vote to not count? As we witnessed, a number of presentations were made at the May 12, 2022 Board of Directors meetings, most in opposition to the proposed development (9:6). The vote was against proceeding further. Who knows what conversations or money was exchanged 'after-hours', but the vote the next morning (6:9 in favour ), is the one that counted! Are we really living in such a corrupt system of governance? We are still jaw-dropped from witnessing some of the RDEK Directors reverse their votes 15 hours later. How is this democracy? What policy changes need to happen to ensure a more democratic process? Additionally, what measures can be put in place to ensure that proponents who have a profit to make on a development CANNOT present at any private or public hearings (and we aren't just referencing the Area A Director...there were others)? How can key proponents of a development be allowed to directly influence the elected officials who cast the vote, when there is direct monetary gain to be made? Why isn't full disclosure mandated? Why is their bias allowed into the conversation in the first place?

Responses from Question 3: Define the characteristics of a sustainable and responsible development in your community? What are the elements that would drive approvals of successful developments?

- Connectivity to community amenities
- Greener/eco-friendly housing developments/adaptations to current houses
- Public transport system that is reliable, regular, and affordable, to connect towns together and areas within that town.
- Blended housing
- Sustainable systems – indefinite lifespan
- Sustainable energy – renewable resources (wind, solar, geothermal etc)
- Be located in areas that did not support wildlife migration
- Be located in areas that did not pose a threat to fisheries or water quality
- Include a mix of low, medium and high cost housing to meet community needs
- Preservation of natural land
- Diversity of housing stock
- Mixed use residential and commercial
- Community spaces, green spaces
- Connectivity to other neighbourhoods
- Sufficient density to maintain infrastructure and replacement costs
- Partnerships with housing authorities to provide affordable units
- Building standards that meet or exceed efficiency standards, and are future-proofed with solar/EV/heat sink, etc. ready wiring and plumbing
- Sincere public consultation is essential. Our team was concerned that our regional councillors were only paying 'lip service' to the consultation process. A case in point was the reversal of the votes of three councillors after the last public form.
- Must include affordable housing
- Sense of community
- Shared spaces, villages

- Open communication, transparency with developers and government agencies
- Environment covenant with teeth to remove approvals
- Policy regulations
- Green spaces, wildlife covenant and corridors
- OCP/Zoning/Regional Plan is 'ironclad with teeth' representing what is in the plan e.g. preserving wildlife corridors, environmentally sensitive areas, etc.
- Benefit to the existing community needs is demonstrated e.g. if produce a housing study and affordable housing is a need, developer is expected to demonstrate accommodating this need in the mix of housing/development.
- What is the long-term financial benefit to the community not just the developer?
- Developer must register public access on the title, or something, to prevent public access for no good reason.
- Zoning that protects conservation values must be demonstrated with science and research to demonstrate reduction of risk to water, soil, air and wildlife habitat. Just saying 'conservation' does not equal conservation. Also if owner wants to remove Private Managed Forest from the program, how are natural values protected.
- In essence, must comply with a strategy to address the values of area residents including social, environmental and economic requirements, the principles of Smart Growth, and optimizing climate resilience and meeting provincial, federal and international climate change targets.
  - no land banking allowed. Use it or lose it for developers. Keeps prices lower
  - blended developments where mixed use and lower income housing is mandatory.
  - Conservation covenants need to be enforceable and have true preservation by laws.
  - are we short of habitats or corridors?
  - cluster developments should be encouraged to leave the most land free of development.
  - we are all part of the mother tree and we need to respect the connections between humans and the natural world. Just because it has been allowed in the past doesn't mean that it is ok.
 We can create a new and better model.
- We believe responsible and sustainable development is best defined by the United Nations with their seventeen Sustainable Development Goals:
  1. No Poverty: end poverty in all its forms everywhere.
  2. Zero Hunger: end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

3. Good Health and Well-Being: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages.
4. Good Education: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Gender Equality: achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Clean Water and Sanitation: ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Affordable and Clean Energy: ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduced Inequalities: reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Responsible Consumption and Production: ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Climate Action: take urgent action to stop climate change and its impacts.
14. Life Below Water: conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Life On Land: protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Partnerships for Goals: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

- These sustainable development goals are well-researched with supporting guidelines: [https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SDG\\_Guidelines\\_AUG\\_2019\\_Final.pdf](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SDG_Guidelines_AUG_2019_Final.pdf)
- We don't need to reinvent the wheel on what it means to develop as a community in 2022. Let's follow the lead of the world experts, and ensure that we return the broader Fernie community to the place we all chose to call home and hopefully continue to choose as our sense of place well past 2050.
- High-residential density with lots of green space (wildlife corridors, not just "human" green space)
- Limit square footage of single-family homes?
- In new developments, either a percentage needs to be affordable housing OR the development is taxed in some way to finance affordable housing elsewhere
- Diversity of developments, of neighborhoods, increases demographic diversity in the community
- Openness to new forms of development and design to encourage diverse communities
- Community that design encourages a sense of community, interactions between neighbors, and shared space

Responses from Question 4: This fall, in the municipal election, what vision do you want reflected by candidates that support responsible and sustainable development?

- A sustainable, cohesive, and diverse community, existing in respect with the natural landscape and its non-human residents while being proactive in addressing the significant challenges of the future.
- Support for the vision of blended housing and sustainable systems
- Information sessions to educate current and future residents and RDEK
- Support our elected officials
- Find willing candidates that represent our values
- A published and reviewed community plan which shows ALL planned developments and does not stop with city boundaries but includes the overall region
- Such a plan would be reviewed and debated publicly in various forums
- Such a plan would protect wildlife corridors, water and fishery quality, and overall environment health
- Candidates that have strategies and ideas for developing affordable & sustainable housing
- Candidates understand and demonstrate a commitment to the broader vision for RDEK & their role in supporting both their area and the Municipalities in the region.
- Candidates demonstrate a value for a longer term vision that needs to be crafted and supported for the Region to be sustainable and healthy.
- a clear, future forward economic plan with operational professionalism, and the courage to question inefficiency and irresponsible government.
  - boundary expansions addressed
  - elected officials who care about the people they represent not the developers.
- Strong climate initiatives
- Minimizing environmental impacts
- Fight for more local control
- Private managed forest lands legislation changed
- NEED TO FIGHT HARDER!!!
- A vision for affordable housing
- Diversity of housing stock

- Our team would like to see our elected officials listen to the public and have the courage to stand up to the developers.
- Taking a long-term view is essential to effective planning. Once a wildlife corridor is covered by a development it is gone forever.
- Community engagement
- Not just with developers
- Leaders with courage and initiative
- Improved accountability and governance
- Effective representation by population
- Open and transparent
- Promise to listen to and represent constituents
- Work with community and region on a consistent, comprehensive regional development plan around Fernie and other RDEK communities.
- Have the energy to demonstrate leadership and vision.
- Represent a level of environmental consciousness
- Keep taxes low
- Encourage constituent meaningful involvement
- Promote the characteristics and principles of best practices in responsible and sustainable development that reflects community values
- We want our elected officials to stand up to this vision. This means they will reject applications inconsistent with this vision. This means they will hold developers to be accountable for following through with promises made. This means they will work with the regional district to improve the development planning, approval and accountability process to provide more transparency and ensure decisions made reflect community values.
- Recognition of how precious this place is - culturally, community-wise, ecologically. Candidates should be clear about what they personally value and want to protect. This should include existing assets (human or biophysical) as well as the assets (systems we have failed to invest in which we now need to build or rebuild (food, energy, social and health services).
- Unique about EK - cities with undeveloped areas between them - avoid urban sprawl - apply principles of smart growth

- Address future and stewardship of our water assets; Consider climate projections in all decision making.
- Canada has committed to: sustainability goals; convention on biodiversity; UNDRIP, and deep cuts to emissions.
- Candidates should speak up/ inform the electorate on why major societal changes are essential at this time. Hierarchy of needs in a climate emergency: distinguish needs from wants.
- Climate refugees are part of our future. Some of us in EK may become temporary or permanent climate refugees due to flood, wildfire, or other climate-related displacement. We are morally obligated to welcome climate refugees. We are not interested in turning away people who need a new home, but rather letting people know who we are so they can become part of the community
- Citizenry is currently thinking more about rights than responsibilities and this needs to be reversed and should be a talking point of candidates.
- Discounts for full-time/long-standing locals
- Incentives for people trying to be/who want to adapt to be sustainable/eco-friendly
- New homeowner schemes to help get people on the property ladder and into affordable housing.