



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Beautiful small homes and preservation of cherished Commonage land at core of proposed attainable housing plan to restore “housing hope” in Vernon**

**Vernon, B.C. (February 7, 2025):** An innovative new housing concept aimed at creating more than 1,800 attainably priced new homes on a portion of Vernon’s Commonage lands is scheduled to be considered by Vernon City Council next week.

The City of Vernon is reviewing a proposal by BC-based home builder Kerkhoff Develop-Build to allow the construction of nearly 4,000 new homes, with more than 1,800 of them designed to help address the shortage of attainably priced homes in Vernon. Kerkhoff is proposing to build a new master-planned community on part of its 421-hectare (1,040 acre) property known as the *580 Commonage*, located seven minutes from downtown Vernon. The new homes would be built in multiple stages over the next couple of decades.

Lack of housing directly impacts population growth, local business, and the ability to attract new families — a crisis faced by cities across Canada. Provincial legislation has already mandated the city to add more than 3,300 new homes in the next five years.

Kerkhoff is seeking an Official Community Plan amendment and rezoning which would be required for the proposed development plan that calls for 38 per cent of the land (159 hectares) to be developed for housing and a village town centre. The balance (262 hectares) would be conserved for park and recreational use, with almost half of that (120 hectares) being gifted to the City of Vernon as parkland.

Kerkhoff is committed to a balanced approach with nature, attainability, and healthy lifestyles at the forefront while supporting the social and economic prosperity of the region. Preservation of almost two-thirds of the land from future development or agriculture will protect and preserve wildlife corridors, sensitive habitats and species at-risk. A network of pathways will link clusters of homes with natural areas to the neighbourhood hub, as well as expanding the greater community’s trail network.

#### *The need and the preliminary master plan*

Eighty-five per cent of the housing demand in Vernon comes from smaller families with low to moderate incomes who overspend on rent and are unable to buy homes in the local real estate market.

In response to this need, almost half of the new homes to be built at the *580 Commonage* would be attainably priced as defined by the City of Vernon, providing local renters with the opportunity to buy their first homes.

The aim is to price these homes below comparable market prices, coupled with a nature-conscious commitment to environmental stewardship. “Light touch” construction would be used to build new homes that work with the natural landscape to protect the health and beauty of the lands.

Some of the other new homes on the site will be reserved for seniors and affordable rental housing. Additional market priced housing will round out the balance of the development.

Under the proposal, superior quality construction materials will be manufactured off site, transported, and assembled on site. Construction time for each home is forecast to be less than two months.

“By rethinking our approach to home design and construction while preserving land for conservation, we are reintroducing attainable homes back into the market and bringing hope back to home ownership,” said Leonard Kerkhoff, president and CEO of Kerkhoff Develop-Build. “Too many people who live and work in Vernon can’t afford to buy their own home and are spending too much of their income on sky-high rents for multiple housing units or condominiums.”

Kerkhoff relates the story of a well-paid 30-year-old project manager who couldn’t make ends meet living in the Okanagan. “So, he moved to Edmonton where the cost of living is half and the pay is about the same. That math doesn’t work. I feel very passionate that we have to do things differently to keep our talent, our young people here. We need to rethink every aspect of our industry to find a solution that unravels the housing crisis.”

“By proposing this innovative new housing concept, our objective is to give hope to thousands of potential home buyers by making home ownership attainable again,” said Kerkhoff. “Vernon City Council has identified housing diversity and economic development as priorities in its Council Strategic Plan. With our proposal for the *580 Commonage*, we’re seeking the city’s support in principle to help create an inventory of urgently needed, attainably priced homes, while preserving the remaining two-thirds of the land for conservation and recreational use, protecting it from further future development.”

*(More information in attached Backgrounders)*

**Website:** [580Commonage.ca](http://580Commonage.ca)

### **About Kerkhoff Design-Build**

Kerkhoff Design-Build is a British Columbia-based builder with offices in Kelowna, Chilliwack, and Victoria. With deep roots in the Okanagan dating back to 1978, Kerkhoff is a home builder first and foremost, committed to delivering quality projects. As one of the few home builders with in-house construction capabilities, Kerkhoff prioritizes building homes for those who need them most.

Kerkhoff has delivered, and is in the process of delivering, over 1,450 homes in the Okanagan, including projects in Kelowna, Penticton and Summerland, generating hundreds of jobs for local residents. Visit [www.Kerkhoff.ca](http://www.Kerkhoff.ca).

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