

**ON TABLE**  
City Council Meeting  
November 15, 2021  
re: Item 5.1.a.



## Presentation to New Westminster City Council

November 15, 2021

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# Cohousing: An Overview



# Presentation Outline

- What cohousing IS
- What cohousing IS NOT
- History of cohousing
- Cohousing development process
- Cohousing development models
- Cohousing development financing



“Strong social connections are the greatest contributors to human health, happiness, resilience”  
- Charles Montgomery  
(Happy City)

# What cohousing IS

- A **governance & community-living** structure
- Architecturally designed to encourage **interaction & connection**
- **Private homes** combined with extensive shared indoor & outdoor **amenities**
- Developed & designed **by the future residents** (units priced at cost)
- Typically **strata-titled** (1 rental community in Seattle)





“The beauty is I can lead a private life and a community life...but only as much of each as I want!”  
- Catherine

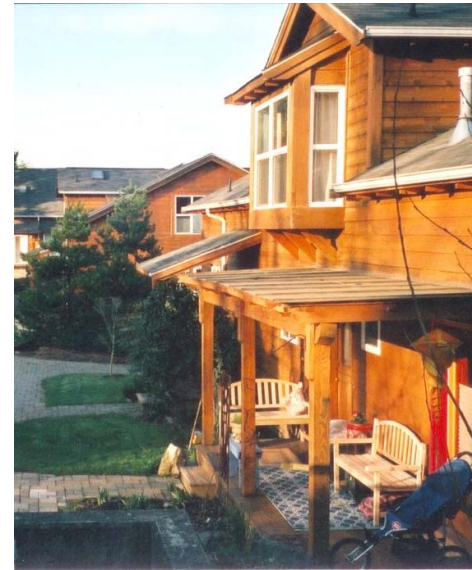
# What cohousing IS NOT

- A legal or ownership structure
- Co-ops
- Affordable/low-cost housing
- ‘Communal’ living (e.g. units without private bathrooms/kitchens)
- Easy or fast to develop
- A standard building form

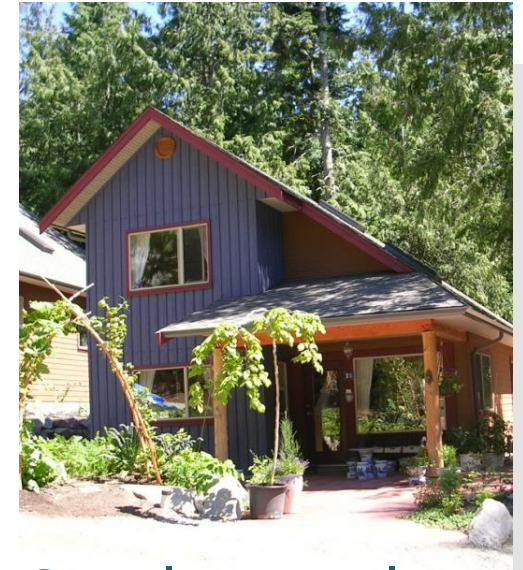
# Urban & rural with various building forms



Midrise



Townhouse



Single Family



Midrise



Lowrise



Duplex



Extensive  
shared  
amenities as  
the 'heart' of  
a cohousing  
community

Common kitchen & dining



Guest suite

Outdoor space



Kids playroom



Workout room

Lounge

Workshop



Shared office

"... has become something of a bible for the cohousing movement."  
— *New York Times*

# COHOUSING

A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves

*The revised edition of the definitive book – updated and expanded  
with accounts of the new American communities.*



Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett  
Second Edition with Ellen Hertzman



Foreword by  
Architect Charles W. Moore

## History of cohousing

- Denmark (1960s)
- United States (1980s)
- Canada (1996)
- 160 communities + 100 in development (North America)
- 20 communities (Canada) with 15 in BC



**“The development  
phase is a lot of  
stress fun!”**  
- Carol

# Cohousing Development Process

**Group Formation Phase**  
(building membership)



**Development Phase**  
(pool \$\$, hire consultants, buy land)



**Living In Community Phase**  
(governance structures, systems, policies)





“You can't go wrong when you have twice as many places to park your bike as park your car.”

- Wayne

# Cohousing Development Models

1. Group as Developer ('DIY')
2. Group as Developer (Project Management)
3. Partner with Developer (Cohousing 'Lite')



“I'm looking forward  
to cooking in large  
quantities.”  
- Jennifer

## Group as Developer ('DIY')

- Group functions as **developer and project manager**, without external consultant support (development management)
- **Pros:** group has most control, fewer consultant fees
- **Cons:** Non-development-savvy members running development process, more time/schedule delays (can mean more cost)
- **Examples:** Cariboo Cohousing (Quesnel, BC), Radiance Cohousing (Saskatoon, SK)





“This is a crazy huge project, but my future neighbours make it fun!”  
- Mackenzie

# Group as Developer (Project Management)

- Group functions as **developer** but hires **external cohousing project manager** for development management
- **Pros:** professional consultants managing development process (more efficient, lower costs due to schedule delays)
- **Cons:** more consultant fees (project manager)
- **Examples:** all recent urban BC cohousing projects



“I can't wait to walk  
our community's  
little ones to Van  
Horne Elementary in  
the morning. It's  
just 2 blocks away!”  
- Kathy

## Partner With Developer (Cohousing 'Lite')

- Group **partners with a developer** who owns land & customizes project to group
- **Pros:** less risk & \$\$ required of group up front
- **Cons:** less customization & input in design, paying developer profit, limited development partners (so far)
- **Examples:** Our Urban Village





“I can’t wait to have so many new pet friends”

- Lucy

# Cohousing Development Financing

- Equity membership contributions for **initial financing** (consultant costs)
- Additional membership loans for **land loan downpayment**
- Top up to **10% of unit cost** at construction start (similar to presale)
- Additional membership loans for **further equity required for construction loan**
- Loans as discount on unit price at occupancy
- **Municipal CACs:** in kind (affordable ownership or rental units), cash (typical)



“I couldn’t imagine a more perfect wedding venue – sharing my new home and community with all my loved ones”  
- Rebecca



Questions?