

A Community for Proactive Adults

What Is Senior Cohousing?



Senior Cohousing is based on the successful senior housing models in Denmark, and was introduced to the United States by Charles Durrett in his recent book “The Senior Cohousing Handbook”. He is an architect who has designed dozens of intergenerational cohousing communities in the country. Silver Sage Village in Boulder, Colorado is one of the first three Senior Cohousing communities in the US. It was completed in 2007 by Wonderland Hill Development Company with design by Charles Durrett.

Most of us aging Boomers want to have maximum control over our lives, and we want to be smart about getting the most out of life as we age. We want to efficiently live healthy, engaged, and creative lives. We also want to continue to build on relationships, ideas, and places and things that have special meaning to us. At the same time we want to simplify our lives and try and get rid of some of the clutter that distracts us from living a more fulfilled life.

Cohousing is an intentionally cooperative neighborhood where common facilities are creatively shared yet where each household owns their home and has ample privacy and maximum control over their involvement. The close knit design and self management of cohousing communities, where neighbors see each other more often in the coming and going of their daily lives, provides economic, social, health, and security benefits creating real social capital important to seniors. Senior cohousing is really retirement housing for those that don't want to ever retire from living a proactive, meaningful and mindful life.

Want more information?

Learn more: Visit: www.cohousing.ca and www.canadianseniorcohousing.com

Join the Langley Cohousing Network: www.meetup.com/Langley-Cohousing-Meetup-Group

Start a group: Need help call Alan Carpenter Cell: 778-551-2929 Email: alan.carpenter@gmail.com

Advantages of Cohousing for Seniors

There are numerous reasons why cohousing makes sense for seniors in particular, including the following:

1. **Affordability** – typical cohousing units are much smaller than single family homes yet they maintain the functionality of a single family home. Seniors who are “house rich but cash poor” could sell their single family home, move into a smaller cohousing unit and realize some of the equity in their home to assist in supporting them in the coming years (see page 129 of the Seniors Cohousing Handbook for an example) (freeing up their larger house for a larger family). Cohousers can have smaller houses because they have the benefit of a shared common house and the cooperation that occurs there.
2. **Reduced operating Costs** – seniors living in cohousing typically report significant savings in monthly living expenses due to the sharing of facilities and equipment, cooking together saves money versus buying and cooking all your own food, smaller units means smaller utility and tax bills and reduced maintenance costs vs. a single family house.
3. **Aging in Place** – the homes are designed to allow the owners to age in place in their community by including features in the design that may be needed later in life when the owners needs change (eg. Large bathrooms that enable future installation of roll in showers or baths if mobility issues arise).
4. **Quality of Life** – perhaps most important of all, cohousing developments improve the quality of life of seniors by giving them a support network of neighbours to socialize with, help each other out and engage in activities with.
5. **Resource Use** – Seniors in cohousing will save the City / District considerable resources by helping one another, and by being cared for by younger members of their cohousing community. This means they’ll be less dependent on meals on wheels, home hospice, fire department calls, etc. Additionally, seniors will be part of a community of people living in sustainably built homes.

