

## What is Cohousing?

Cohousing is an option that advocates living in an active community where you have a relationship with your neighbors before, during and after construction. Because the neighborhood and the homes are designed **by the persons who live there**, cohousing offers homeowners a social network that is already built into the neighborhood. This model works because those who live there continually develop social capital through shared activities that occur naturally as people work together and enjoy activities in the common house and common open spaces.

## The Common House and Common Space

The common spaces designed for daily use, are an integral part of the community, and are always supplemental to the privately-owned homes. Because cohousers have “right-sized” their homes for the space they actually use on a daily basis, the common house contains a dining room large enough for the entire community to share meals as desired, as well as activity rooms, a workshop, and sleeping rooms for any guests that come to visit. The cohousing community is managed by the people who live there, with no one person having authority over others. If the homeowners decide that some practices are not working, they work together to change them. **Decisions are made by consensus rather than majority rule.**

## Interested in Learning More?

If you would like to learn more on how the cohousing development works and how it works for you, please call us as we are taking in focus groups.

Focus groups will be informed on every aspect of the cohousing development, led by developer, Gene Anderson. Throughout the process, other cohousing speakers will visit Enid and share how other communities have started their cohousing developments. This is an exciting time to be in Enid and to have this amazing resource available to you.

**We would like to ask you to participate in our initial focus group to learn more! Please call Gene or Christy today!**

### Stonebridge Village Cohousing

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## Stonebridge Village

## Introducing Cohousing in Enid, Ok.

*LIVE. WORK. PLAY*

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## Characteristics of Cohousing

**1. Participatory Process.** Future residents participate in the design of the community so that it meets *their* needs. This cohousing community is initiated by a developer. The developer brings the future resident group into the planning process giving the residents input into the design. A well-designed, pedestrian-oriented community with significant resident participation in the planning makes this living community a cohousing project.

**2. Neighborhood Design.** The physical layout and orientation of the buildings (the site plan) encourage a sense of community. For example, the private residences are clustered on the site, leaving more shared open space. The dwellings typically face each other across a pedestrian street or courtyard, with cars parked on the periphery. Often, the front doorway of every home affords a view of the common house. What far outweighs any specifics, however, is the intention to create a strong sense of community, with design as one of the facilitators.

**3. Common Facilities.** Common facilities designed for daily use, are an integral part of the community, and are always supplemental to the private residences. The common house typically includes a common kitchen, dining area, sitting area, children's playroom and laundry, and also may contain a workshop, library, exercise room, crafts room and/or one or two guest rooms. Cohousing communities often have playground equipment, lawns and gardens as well. Again, this is based on YOUR design and YOUR needs.

**4. Resident Management.** Residents manage their own cohousing communities and also perform much of the work required to maintain the property. They participate in the preparation of common meals and meet regularly to solve problems and develop policies for the community.

**5. Non-Hierarchical Structure and Decision-Making.** Leadership roles naturally exist in cohousing communities; however, no one person (or persons) has authority over others. Most groups start with one or two “burning souls.” As people join the group, each person takes on one or more roles consistent with his or her skills, abilities or interests. Most cohousing groups make all of their decisions by consensus, and, although many groups have a policy for voting if the group cannot reach consensus after a number of attempts, it is rarely or never necessary to resort to voting.

**6. No Shared Community Economy.** The community is not a source of income for its members. Occasionally, a cohousing community will pay one of its residents to do a specific (usually time-limited) task, but more typically the work will be considered that member's contribution to the shared responsibilities.

## Cohousing Advantages

**Place:** Enid's Cohousing project will be conveniently located across Cleveland from the new Stonebridge Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market.

**Cost Savings:** Living in cohousing is less expensive than the alternatives. Sharing on-site resources and not having to maintain a big house are obvious money savers. Compared to the traditional alternatives, cohousing can be about one-half as expensive.

**Social Interaction:** Cohousing is living in a neighborhood where you can more easily choose community and social interaction over isolation while still maintaining all the privacy you need.

**More Facilities & Resources:** Cohousing means having attractive and functional interior and outside common areas and facilities conveniently available and affordable by sharing the cost with neighbors.

**Security:** Cohousing offers a well-connected living environment where neighbors watch out for each other's safety and security.