

Durham Central Park Cohousing Community
Values and Principles Statement

Updated June 25, 2010

We are a group of families and individuals envisioning a new model of neighborhood and working to create an intentional cohousing community in Durham. Along with sharing common goals, agreements and intentions, we will welcome diversity of age, culture, gender, class, family structure, occupation, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, or physical ability, etc. Our community will serve people and the planet well by supporting members to dwell privately but together cooperatively, and to promote a sustainable world now and for future generations. This community will foster social support for members of all ages and create an opportunity for members to age in place. It will embrace these values and follow these principles:

1. Vision

We, the members of DURHAM COHOUSING are united by intent to create and maintain, through a set of behaviors and actions, a strong sense of community. We welcome diversity, encourage ecologically responsible living, and value active participation in the larger world. We want to:

- (a) Create and maintain a cohousing community in downtown Durham NC, near Durham Central Park
- (b) Support and encourage the well-being of members through mutual caring, including creating both space and community infrastructure to age in place
- (c) Maintain and strengthen links to the larger Durham community
- (d) Foster a balance between private lives, our cohousing community, and the well-being of the wider community
- (e) Live a cooperative sustainable life.

2. Intentional Community

To foster communal interaction, to promote social support for our members, and to live sustainably, members of Durham Cohousing will:

- (a) Actively participate in the management and activities of Durham Cohousing
- (b) Collectively own all common space
- (c) Work toward sharing living and space features where and when appropriate; building examples: high speed internet wiring, solar water heaters/collectors, laundry, and repair service contracts; social examples: house keepers, care givers,
- (d) Share community responsibilities: indoor common space maintenance, gardens, roof top maintenance are examples.

3. Participatory Processes

Members will take an active role in the life of the community, staying abreast of community decisions, serving on committees and assuming other tasks as necessary. Durham Cohousing values communal decision-making processes that include, but are not limited to, consensus, and proportional and majority voting.

- (a) Durham Cohousing members will participate equally in all Durham Cohousing decisions.
- (b) The nature of the decision that needs to be made will determine the type of decision-making process Durham Cohousing uses.
- (c) During the pre-construction phases of the Condo building project, members of Durham Cohousing will actively participate in the planning and design processes.

4. Space Planning

The physical design of the space of the condominium building will be utilized to support private and community interests. Five primary goals will drive the design of our spaces:

- (a) The community will consist of private units and several types of indoor and outdoor common space.
- (b) Space design will encourage community interaction.
- (c) Universal design will be used in both private units and common space.
- (d) The design and materials will support sustainable green living
- (e) .The design and materials will bring delight to our lives, in addition to being lovable, durable, flexible and frugal.

Private space: Durham Cohousing is a community of members who will own individual residential units in the condominium building.

- (a) Members of Durham Cohousing will buy and use privately-owned family condominiums.

- (b) This community is not a commune and residents' private space and time will be respected.
- (c) All residential units in the community will be owner-occupied and will not be purchased with the intent to be rental units.

Common Space: As an integral part of the community, common areas will be designed for daily use, to supplement residents' private living areas, and to facilitate sharing of resources. Common facilities might include: guest rooms, large meeting/dining room with kitchen, storage space, garden space and specialized space for fitness activities, for the arts, and offices. The common spaces (indoor and outdoor) will:

- (a) Be collectively owned (such cost will be part of the final costs of purchasing a unit in the condo building)
- (b) Be designed to encourage members to easily connect with others in a supportive setting
- (c) Foster informal, as well as more structured, community and social interaction
- (d) Promote simple living with a respectful relationship with the environment
- (e) Encourage sharing of recreation, travel, arts, and talents
- (f) Allow for community-to-community interactions in certain designated common areas.

5. Green Design Features

To foster sustainable living and energy-conscious design, the project will "think small," "think green," and "think conservation." We will de-emphasize cars and emphasize living outdoors. To these ends we will:

- (a) Limit the size of units from 800 sq ft to 1,500 sq ft
- (b) Seek maximum use of solar energy and conservation measures in physical spaces including but not limited to the use of CFL lighting and star energy appliances, and conservation of water
- (c) Seek to utilize solar opportunities for heating and cooling of units and common space and for the heating of water
- (d) Seek opportunities for resource sharing, e.g. community-owned vehicles, shared tools (garden and other), shared laundry facilities
- (e) Encourage behaviors that reduce the need to use cars, e.g. carpooling, creation of a local grocery, Durham Cohousing owned vehicles
- (f) Advocate with the architect/s to have access to the roof and an option for a balcony space for each unit
- (g) Advocate for Durham Cohousing community ground(s) with gardening and composting opportunities.

6. Reasonable cost.

Members will advocate to keep costs reasonable.

- (a) Family unit costs will be comparable to our current dwelling costs, so that families do not have to take on extraordinary financial risks.
- (b) Collective space ownership will be a part of the final costs.
- (c) Cost saving features will be shared when appropriate

7. Aging in place

Older members seek an opportunity to grow old with grace and to age in place. To that end:

- (a) Both private and common spaces will foster friendships and companionship for elders. In later life, we will live "not home alone."
- (b) The building will be built with universal design features throughout to promote aging-in-place.
- (c) Community members will encourage mental stimulation, sharing, learning new skills and physical exercise for its members.
- (d) The community will encourage connection with neighbors who will notice "if one hasn't opened her blinds in the morning."
- (e) It will help us learn about how to care for one another in our later years.
- (f) Durham Cohousing will explore the possibility of guest room usage by care givers.

We understand the following words to mean

Intentional = dedicated by intent and commitment to specific communal values and goals

Cooperative = behaviors that foster mutual support while respecting privacy. We place high value on the shared ownership or lease of common facilities.

Housing = urban, condominium building (4 -5 story with one floor mostly community space).

Community = we are a group of people who care enough about each other to regularly monitor each other's lives, find them interesting, want to know and help and support each other.