

# Cohousing – The Case for Change America's Small House Movement



*Building a better society,  
one neighborhood at a time.*

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Industry: [Real Estate](#)



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Movement

Job insecurity and the mortgage crisis are combining to drive change in America's housing market, and cohousing is a concept coming of age.

Cohousing, which groups 20-30 individual, self-contained homes around a neighborhood plan with shared common kitchens and community spaces, originated in Denmark in the 1960's. Brought to America by architects Katie MacCamant and Charles Durrett, this sustainable model is gaining momentum, with over 115 cohousing communities in the United States to date.

Cohousing projects are known for reducing the carbon footprint of housing in at least three key ways—green and re-used building materials; shared community features allows individual homes to be smaller, and lastly; changing behaviors to community living, which results in less car travel and localized lifestyles.

Smaller houses, shared spaces and environmentally sound building practices successfully trade out excess for improved quality of life and reduced cost of living. David Wann's book, *Simple Prosperity*, suggests, "If the United States and other wayward nations are wise enough to substitute moderation for excess, our world can come back into balance, maybe just in time." Author Wann lives in a cohousing community and has served on Cohousing Association's Board of Directors.

The biggest benefit to cohousing though, may just be living with neighbors and the natural reduction of duplicated community resources through sharing common space, dining and chores. "Knowing our neighbors, feeling like we belong, being a part of something that we care about and that cares about us..." Chris Scott Hanson, *The Cohousing Handbook: Building a Place for Community*

If you are ready for Cohousing 101, the Cohousing Association of the United States is holding it's annual conference, *Growing Community*, in Seattle, June 24-28. This event brings together international thought leaders, professionals, cohousing grass-roots experts, and those interested in cohousing. *Growing Community* features seminars, presentations and tours. Presenters include one of Denmark's cohousing concept originators, Jan Gudmand Hoyer, architects and authors Charles Durrett, Katie McCamant, cohousing consultant Chris Scott Hanson.

Cohousing Association's slogan "Building a better society, one neighborhood at a time" may just be the type of housing change America can truly believe in.

To learn more or register, visit [www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org), email [growing@cohous.org](mailto:growing@cohous.org) or call 866-758-3942 (toll free) or 314-754-5828.

**Event details:**

WHO: Cohousing Association of the US

WHAT: *Growing Community*, International Cohousing Summit, Pre-Conference Workshops and Tours, National Cohousing Conference

WHEN: International Cohousing Summit (by invitation)—Sunday, June 21 thru Tuesday, June 23, 2009

Pre-Conference Workshops and Tours—Wednesday, June 24 thru Friday, June 26, 2009

National Cohousing Conference— Friday, June 26 thru Sunday, June 28, 2009

RESERVE: <http://www.cohousing.org/conference>

WHERE: Conference events will be at the University of Washington plus a variety of regional onsite tours

FEES: Some offerings are free; workshops begin as low as \$20, full conference registration \$375 (\$325 for first 50 registrants)

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