



Meetings Minutes

Date: May 05, 2022

Time: 7-8PM (PT)

Location: Zoom

MONTHLY MEETINGS FOR THE COHOUSING–CURIOUS

Theme: Mental and Physical Health Benefits of Cohousing

A review of *Public health should promote co-operative housing and cohousing* by A. Lubik and T. Kostasky

Meeting called by: Laura Chatham

Facilitator: Laura Chatham | Sustainable transportation Safety Lab, Civil Engineering, UBCO

Note taker: Laura Chatham

Key Takeaways

- **About Cohousing & Our Project, Okanagan Cohousing (OKC)** – please see resources [1]–[5]
- **Group brainstorm** – after learning about cohousing, how can this type of community promote better physical and mental health for its residents?

Benefit	Cause
- decreased sense of loneliness → mental benefits, especially from the pandemic	- people are currently on internet, so cohousing will promote more physical socialization
- less financial stress → reduced mental stress	- sharing of resources
- physical health	- gathering space, events to bring people together - more walkability
- for seniors: good mental and physical stimulus from younger generation - for kids: mature role models	- multigeneration

- **Paper Review & OKC Perspective** – we compared the group brainstorm against what is written in the article by Lubik & Kostasky [6], in addition to other health benefits likely brought on by common cohousing features and features we are striving for in our Okanagan Cohousing Communities.

Benefit	Cause
<i>Public health should promote co-operative housing and cohousing</i>	
- reduced social isolation → associated with less depression, anxiety, cardiovascular issues, cancer outcomes, and cognitive decline (namely from dementia)	- facilitation of regular social interaction
- aging in place: seniors stay at home 8-10 years longer than in conventional communities	- nearby neighbor support
- lower incidents of chronic disease & other impairments (most prominent in seniors)	
- 13% of persons must move away from their cohousing home to supportive housing vs. 22% in conventional communities. These numbers are 16% and 33%, respectively, for people at or above 50 yrs. old.	- nearby neighbor support; study done specifically in multigenerational communities
- increased mental stimulation	- community involvement
- common sense of belonging and ownership	- common facilities shared by close neighbors
- increased feelings of efficacy & self-esteem	- opportunities to be involved & help the community/other residents
- intergenerational teachings	- multigenerational communities
- increased food security (Especially for the underprivileged)	- sharing of food resources, eg. gardens
<i>Okanagan Cohousing Perspective</i>	
- crime reduction	- design that enhances visibility & lighting
- enhanced pedestrian safety	- car-free play areas. Many cohousing communities opt to be pedestrian-orientated
- physical health through more exercise	- location with good walkability & nearby amenities promote walking/biking over driving.
- childcare	- neighbor support, creating a safe and social place for children to grow.

- Discussion on property, building codes, and funding options:
 - building codes dictate allowed construction & accessibility
 - Funding Potentials → Federal government
 - Okanagan Foundation Funding
 - CMHC / BC Housing
 - Housing societies / non-profit organizations (all for rentals?)
 - Habitat for Humanity --> sweat equity
 - 100 doors per development project to break even (cohousing usually has 20-30units)
 - Kelowna OCP aims to build more units & lower costs [7]
 - plans for 5000 units downtown

A huge thank-you to everyone who attended for their participation and enthusiasm. Because of you, these meetings are very productive and fun! We hope to see you all again next Meeting scheduled for: **June 9th, 2022 (7-8) PM – THEME: *Selecting Property Location & Transportation Options***

Please contact Laura at laura.chatham@ubc.ca or Dr. Gordon Lovegrove at gord.lovegrove@ubc.ca for zoom link or more info.

Resources

- [1] **The Sustainable Transport Safety Lab**, “Okanagan Cohousing,” *University of British Columbia, Okanagan*. <https://sustainablecommunities.ok.ubc.ca/research/cohousing/>.
- [2] **The Sustainable Transport Safety Lab**, “Okanagan Cohousing Facebook Page,” *Facebook*. <https://www.facebook.com/kelownacohousing>.
- [3] **Canadian Cohousing Network**, <https://cohousing.ca/>.
- [4] **The Cohousing Association of America**, <https://www.cohousing.org/>.
- [5] **K. McCamant and C. Durrett**, *Creating Cohousing Building Sustainable Communities*. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2019. <https://newsociety.ca/books/c/creating-cohousing?sitedomain=ca>
- [6] **A. Lubik and T. Kosatsky**, “Public health should promote co-operative housing and cohousing,” *Can. J. Public Heal.*, vol. 110, no. 2, pp. 121–126, 2019. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330148868_Public_health_should_promote_co-operative_housing_and_cohousing
- [7] **City of Kelowna**, “Official Community Plan (OCP),” 2021. <https://www.kelowna.ca/our-community/planning-projects/official-community-plan>.