

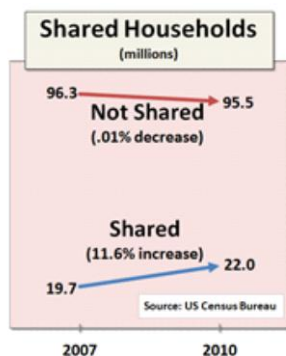
The Cohousing Project

a sustainable model for shared households

This collaborative project is defining, supporting, and promoting a model for sharing homes which have been designed for single families. We are integrating hard-won knowledge from existing coop houses and collectives, as well as cohousing and intentional community. Our research is also drawing from organized home share programs and aligned experts, including attorneys, architects, real estate professionals, investors, and community activists.

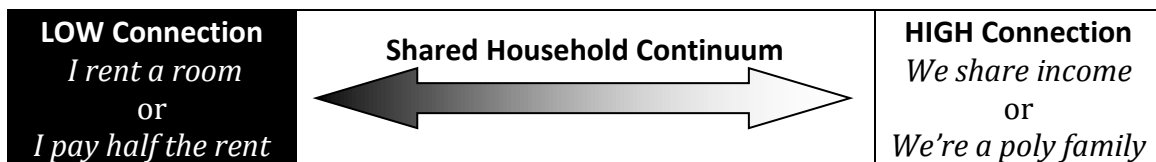
*Cohousing is more sustainable:
economically, socially, and environmentally*

We're creating a replicable model which new shared households can use. Cohouseholds better meet the economic and social needs of their residents, while reducing their environmental impact. Ideally, cohouseholds will operate indefinitely – the residents may change, but the household persists. The cohousing model provides an 'operating system' or infrastructure that supports the unique needs of any household.



The economic downturn has driven many people to shared housing situations – in response to financial need. The number of shared households is growing, while homes occupied by singles, couples or nuclear families is decreasing. Financial needs often causes people to begin sharing quickly, with poor planning – and have led to many challenging situations as interpersonal issues arise.

Focusing on the money, i.e., just renting a room or sharing an apartment, often leads us to ignore our basic social needs. Living with strangers or friends/family who are not compatible is stressful and undesirable. While few seek connections as intense as sharing income or becoming polyamorous, most want their home to be more than a place to sleep.



There are many existing resources that can help people share space. Some people take the time to research and learn from these. Most people focus on renting rooms, rather than co-ownership or co-leasing - or creating a gracefully shared home. Just renting a room rarely leads to healthy, happy relationships – and many renters leave as soon as possible.

There are many instances of shared households that have persisted for many years - occupied by residents who have chosen this lifestyle. Such cooperatives and collectives have much to offer. Similarly, cohousing and larger intentional communities have tackled similar issues on a much large scale, creating structures and processes that work well.

In addition to living models, there are approx. 100 Home Share programs in the United States that offer home-owner/renter matching services - primarily for seniors who wish to age in place. We're learning from these programs - which create shared households that have proven more success than do-it-yourself, casual matching.

Many professionals are available to help us share space more gracefully. Lawyers can help us form agreements that protect our ass(ets), architects can help us modify or build homes that are better suited for sharing, real estate professionals can help us identify/develop appropriate properties and then co-purchase them, investors can purchase a portion of a shared home's equity, and community developers can facilitate, refine, and support new cohousholds.

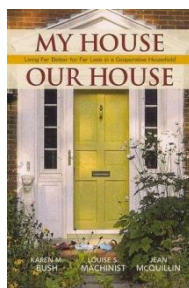
And cohousing is not just for people with financial need. For example, if three people, each of whom can afford a \$350K home, co-purchase a \$700K home, not only do they save \$300K, but they can also live in a safer neighborhood and enjoy higher quality space with amenities not found in less expensive dwellings.

In addition to those who want to live in shared households, cohousing will help professionals tap into this new, expanding market. Many who want to cohoushold effectively will seek goods and services to be more successful. To that end, we will offer market data about shared households and their residents to help related businesses better serve the growth of this movement.

Organizations which support shared households



Relevant books



www.cohousing.com