GARIBALDI ESTATES

EMERGING IDEA

SQUAMISH

COHOUSING

The District is exploring 'Emerging Ideas' as themes to consider as policies are developed for the Garibaldi Estates Neighbourhood Plan. Emerging ideas reflect public input received earlier in this planning process, as well as existing District policies (i.e. Official Community Plan). This page focuses on cohousing in the neighbourhood.

Summary

- Cohousing is intentional, collaborative community of private homes clustered around shared space.
- Larger parcels within the Garibaldi Estates could be desirable locations for for cohousing townhouse or apartment developments.
- Cohousing could be encouraged in the Garibaldi Estates by supporting rezoning applications that permit limited additional height and density increases when combined with appropriate amenities.

Cohousing

Cohousing refers to an intentional, collaborative community of private homes clustered around shared space. It is a housing form intended to address alienation found in modern housing developments where few people know their neighbours and there is little sense of community. Cohousing combines the autonomy of compact self-contained private dwellings with the benefits of shared, spacious community amenities. These amenities typically include a large dining room, kitchen, recreation spaces, meeting rooms, children's play spaces, guest rooms, workshops, and gardens.

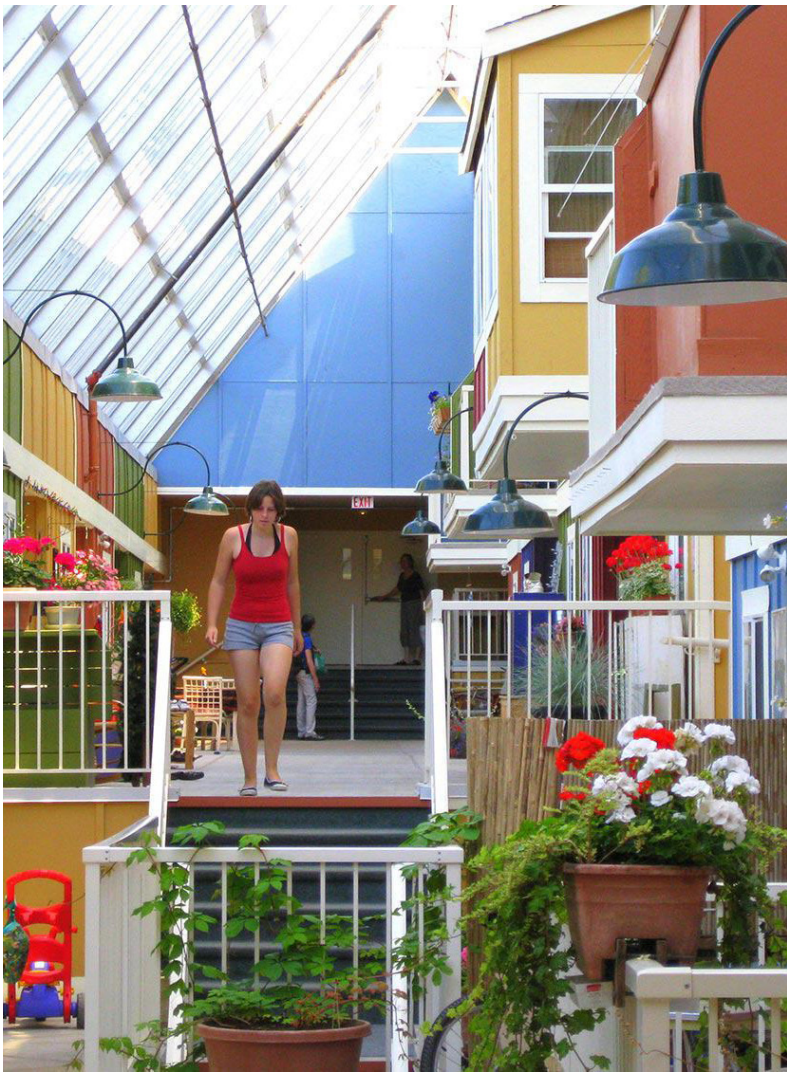
Emerging Idea: Support rezoning applications for cohousing projects with limited increases to building height and density.



Characteristics of Cohousing

Cohousing typically refers to multifamily developments such as townhouses or apartments, with the following characteristics:

- Ideal development size ranges from 25-35 units.
- Future residents are integral to the planning and development process.
- Cohousing is neither a specific ownership structure, nor tenure. Generally cohousing is stratified, though some communities use the co-op structure.
- Diverse cohousing projects can support intergenerational housing through the inclusion of accessible ground-oriented units in combination with larger, family-oriented units.
- Increased common areas allow homes will smaller private spaces.
- Cohousing developments can include affordable housing units rented at below market rates.
- Units are typically structured to face inwards towards a central shared space.



Supporting Cohousing in the Garibaldi Estates

Cohousing advocates indicate that finding a suitable location is the most significant challenge for cohousing projects. Larger parcels within Garibaldi Estates could be used to support cohousing if limited height and density increases were permitted. Smaller parcels could also support cohousing if consolidation up to 0.5 ha was permitted.

Uses, Height and Density

Cohousing developments similar to examples from other British Columbia municipalities could be possible with the following characteristics on parcels 0.25 ha and larger.

- **Permitted uses:** Apartment and townhouse
- **Maximum Height:** Approximately 14-15 m, 3-4 stories.
- **Density:** Floor Area Ration of 1.1 - 1.5

Amenity Requirements

The increases to maximum height and density could be dependent on the provision of identified characteristics and amenities that are specific to cohousing projects and are not found it typical development housing projects.

- Significant central pedestrian common area with amenities that facilitate spontaneous connection and includes some of the following:
    1. Garden allotment
    2. Children's play area
    3. Gathering space
- Significant indoor amenity space exceeding 7% of the project gross floor area. This amenity space would need to include a communal kitchen and dinning area capable of accommodating 65% of residents in addition to some of the following:
    1. Meeting Space
    2. Community workshop
    3. Guest bedroom
    4. Children's playroom



Density Exclusions

Cohousing project viability could be supported by allowing common amenity space above and beyond the existing zoning requirements to be exempt from maximum density calculations. These exemptions could be applied to the common kitchen and dining facilities as well as common areas that support spontaneous connections such as:

1. Wider hallways with seating
2. Meeting nooks
3. Gathering spaces

Implementation

Cohousing within the Garibaldi Estates Neighbourhood could be supported in multiple ways. One option would be to support rezoning applications that seek limited increases to building height and density when combined with the appropriate amenity requirements for a cohousing project. A second option would be to establish a neighbourhood overlay density bonus that permits limited additional height and density for projects that provide community amenities in line with the District CAC policy as well as appropriate amenity requirements suitable for a cohousing development.

Cohousing Example: Cranberry Commons - 4272 Albert Street, Burnaby, BC

This project was built on a 0.25 ha parcel. The development has a Floor Area Ratio of 1.3 (1.1 with exclusions for amenity space and circulation) and a max height of 13.2 metres. The development includes a mix of 2, 3 and 3½ story buildings situated over underground parking.

