



WASHINGTON VILLAGE

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(Click on a question to jump to the answer within the document)

Basic Features

[How many units are there?](#)

[What types of units are still available?](#)

[What are the common amenities?](#)

[How is Washington Village different from a typical condominium association?](#)

[What are the benefits of cohousing?](#)

[How is Washington Village different from other cohousing communities?](#)

[What does LEED certified mean?](#)

Washington Village Location

[What schools would my children attend?](#)

[How far is downtown?](#)

[What's nearby?](#)

[How do neighbors feel about the development?](#)

[How did the 2013 flood impact the development?](#)

Design and Construction

Who is the developer?

Who are the architects?

Who is in charge of construction?

When will construction be done?

Can I pick my finishes?

What about storage?

How do I reserve a unit?

Are there any early buyer discounts?

What "green" building techniques are in use?

Are the homes handicap-accessible?

What about noise?

Ownership Rights

How is homeownership legally structured? Do I own my own unit?

What if I have (or want) to move out of the community and sell my unit?

What about property taxes?

What is the percentage of owner-occupied units?

How often do units change owners?

What if I'm only in Boulder for half the year? Can I rent my unit?

Can I rent space in my unit?

Who owns the land?

How does property insurance work?

Do I own my own patio/porch/balcony?

Do I have my own kitchen and laundry?

Can I make changes to my unit?

Do I have assigned parking?

Can I have pets?

Community Finances

Are there maintenance fees (dues)? How much are they?

Who do maintenance fees (dues) cover?

How are expenses distributed?

How much do you rely on volunteers to get work done?

How do you manage reserve funds?

How are utilities handled?

Can I have an electric car?

Can I have a satellite TV?

What if I don't need a bus pass (EcoPass)?

What if I don't use the common space? Do I still have to share that expense?

Community Life

Can anyone join the community?

Are there any age restrictions?

Who makes decisions? Does every decision have to be unanimous?

Will I have any privacy?

Do I have to like everyone?

Do I have to invite everyone in the community to social activities that I plan?

Who is in the community? Do I have anything in common with them?

How do you handle conflicts between members?

How much work do I have to do? What are my responsibilities with regard to yard work and maintenance?

How much do I have to participate in community activities?

How often do you have community meals? Do I have to cook?

Who gets to use the common space?

What about safety and security?

General Cohousing

What is cohousing?

How is cohousing different from a condominium development?

Who lives in cohousing?

What are the defining characteristics of cohousing?

How does cohousing differ from other kinds of shared living/intentional communities?

Basic Features

How many units are there?

Washington Village will have 38 units total, 36 residential and 2 commercial. Currently, 20 units have been transferred to owners, with four more scheduled to close by the Fall of 2016. ([top](#))

What types of units are still available?

Currently, all of our "ready-to-move-in" homes are sold. Only 5 of 12 flats remain available in the Broadway building, which is expected to break ground the Summer of 2016 for a projected completion in late 2017. The available residential units range in size from 1100 sq. ft. to 1480 sq. ft. Each unit has a main-floor master bedroom and a private kitchen, dining, and living room, with an assigned space in the underground parking structure. This building will also include 2 commercial units (1250 sq. ft. and 1350 sq. ft.) that are zoned for light business.

For more information on availability, you can email [Barb Silverman](#) or call (303)886-5329. ([top](#))

What are the common amenities?

Washington Village currently offers:

- beautifully landscaped grounds throughout the 3-acre property
- a guest suite with private bath
- a conversational sitting area around a central fireplace
- a fully-equipped woodshop/bike repair shop
- a creative arts studio
- a library
- a meditation/contemplative space
- a flexible meeting space/gallery with a TV for movie nights
- one shared laundry room

When the project is finished, the Broadway building will have additional amenities including:

- a large, group kitchen and dining room with the capacity for community meals and meetings
- a large patio area with outdoor cooking space
- another family-sized guest suite with private bath
- 2 more conversational/sitting areas, one with a fireplace
- a multi-purpose room for exercise classes or childcare
- another shared laundry room

In addition to having these spaces available for community use, members have been discussing ideas for using these spaces to engage the larger Old North Boulder community in art activities, seminars and community pot-luck dinners. ([top](#))

How is Washington Village different from a typical condominium association?

In many ways, Washington Village will function just like any other condominium development. It has a homeowner's association, shared grounds and common facilities. But unlike typical condominium associations, members buy into the association with a strong interest in building a sense of community among fellow residents. By giving careful consideration to the placement of common space and facilities within the development, Washington Village is designed to maximize opportunities for neighbors to cross paths throughout the day, which makes it easier to keep in touch and make plans for getting together. Also, rather than handing over all operational responsibility to a single Board of Directors, Washington Village residents have more involvement in running the community, either by serving on one of the management teams, or by assuming responsibility for a job, such as coordinating bus passes. Governance is coordinated through a Steering Team, which is composed of representatives from other teams. ([top](#))

What are the benefits of cohousing?

Cohousing communities, like Washington Village, are structured (physically and socially) in a way that makes it easy to build meaningful relationships with your neighbors, which explains why cohousing communities typically have a low turnover rate.

In today's busy world, connecting with friends always seems to start with the challenge of finding a mutually available calendar date, which is often weeks in the future. Cohousing residents connect with each other regularly at community meals, or whenever they're sitting around the common fireplace, or working in the woodshop, art room, or community garden. Residents might encounter each other on a garden pathway and decide to walk downtown for some fun. In cohousing, connecting with neighbors doesn't have to be scheduled. It just happens.

Cohousing relationships are also strengthened when people work together. Washington Village residents will work together on planning social activities, and making decisions about how we want to run the community, and how funds are spent to maintain and improve the property. Some might decide to work together on special projects, like cultivating a community garden, or building a play structure. ([top](#))

How is Washington Village different from other cohousing communities?

Washington Village does not require the level of commitment to physical labor that is often required by many cohousing communities. Because of our prime real estate location, the market value of Washington Village units are significantly higher than most cohousing developments. At this price point, unit owners are reluctant to have property maintenance depend on volunteer labor. Therefore, our budget includes funds for a property manager and contracting essential maintenance services, such as landscaping, snow removal, and regular common house cleaning.

Also, the Washington Village Participation Agreement allows for more flexibility in participation expectations than is typically associated with cohousing communities. Community members can contribute to the community as a member of a team, or by assuming responsibility for an individual role within the community, depending on what suits their ability, interest and scheduled. ([top](#))

What does LEED certified mean?

LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ certification. It designates environmentally responsible - sometimes referred to as "green" or "sustainable" - buildings designed, built and operated to optimally use the building location, minimize non-renewable energy use, reduce water consumption, while offering healthy settings in which to work and live. Washington Village is proud to have achieved LEED Silver Certification, which recognizes the environmentally sound building practices in use, but also the advantages of being in a location that makes it easy to walk, bike, or take public transportation to get to local businesses and services. ([top](#))

Washington Village Location

What schools would my children attend?

Washington Village is in Boulder Valley School District RE-2. Public schools that serve Washington Village include:

- [Columbine Elementary](#)
- [Casey Middle School](#)
- [Boulder High School](#)

The school district has a process by which students can apply to attend other schools in the district, such as [Foothills Elementary](#), [Whittier Elementary](#), or [Fairview High School](#), which are within easy reach of Washington Village. Boulder also has a number of private school options. One of our community members has her daughter enrolled in the [Shining Mountain Waldorf School](#) in North Boulder.

NOTE: Boulder Schools are not just for children. The [University of Colorado Boulder](#) (aka CU Boulder) offers adults who are 55+ the option to audit classes for a small fee, and we enjoy many other benefits of living near a university campus. CU runs the [Conference on World Affairs](#) every spring, with a variety of panel discussions and performances that are open to anyone who chooses to show up. ([top](#))

How far is downtown?

We are 9 blocks from the heart of [Pearl Street Mall](#). It's a scenic 15-minute walk, 5-minutes biking, 7 minutes by the SKIP bus route, or 5-minute drive. ([top](#))

What's nearby?

Location is one of the best features of Washington Village. It's really hard to beat the convenience. Being close to everything lets you get your errands done quickly, so you can spend more time having fun.



Broadway Shopping Center: 2 blocks south

Ideal Market (groceries), Pharmaca (pharmacy/post office), Wine Merchant, restaurants (Noodles, Breadworks, Moe's Bagels, KT's BBQ, Hungry Toad, Milo's), coffee/tea shops (Vic's, Pekoe), Urban Pearl hair salon and the Alpine Barber, Sweet Cow ice cream, Ian Fredericks Eyewear, dry cleaners, gift show, flower shop, bike shop, and tons of open air seating where you can hang out with friends and view the Flat Irons in the distance. ([top](#))





[North Boulder Recreation Center](#): 2.5 blocks north

Workout room, gym, two large pools (one for children), gymnastics, dance, tennis, volleyball ([top](#))



[Community Garden \(Hawthorne Garden\)](#): 3 blocks north

Hawthorne Garden is one of the prime community gardens in Boulder, with 300 garden plots, a 2-acre CSA youth program, children's Peace Garden, ability garden, greenhouses, and an orchard and berry patch. ([top](#))



[Boulder Medical Center](#): 1 block south

This is one of several office complexes in the area providing access to your choice of medical and dental services. ([top](#))



[Casey Middle School](#): 4 blocks south

Recently renovated facilities to support the quality of public education provided by one of Boulder's best middle schools. ([top](#))



[Boulder High School](#): 14 blocks south

Provides an exemplary education where students can excel in academics, arts and athletics. ([top](#))



[Pearl Street Mall](#): 9 blocks south

Boulder's downtown not only has outstanding restaurants and shopping, but also offers a number of street performers, craft fairs, festivals and music events that happen over the course of the entire year. ([top](#))



[Boulder Farmer's Market](#): 11 blocks south

With locally grown vegetables, meats, fruits, flowers, plants, gourmet cheese and wines sold by the farmers that produce them. While you're purchasing your fresh fruits and veggies (many of them organically grown), enjoy a tasty pastry from a local bakery or a meal created by local chefs. ([top](#))



[Boulder Public Library:](#) 12 blocks south

The main branch is downtown, where you can borrow a wide variety of media and publications, as well as events and art shows. The library spans Boulder Creek, which is a very pleasant place to ride or walk any time of year. ([top](#))



Bike Lanes/Paths: Everywhere

With miles and miles of bike lanes, separate bike paths, and the Valmont Bike Park (3 miles away), Boulder is one of the most bike-friendly cities in the country. More bike commuters travel down [13th Street](#) than car commuters. ([top](#))



Open Space Trail Access: 1.2 miles

The "goat path" up [Mt. Sanitas](#) starts at the west end of Forest Street, or a less rigorous path starts at the trailhead on Mapleton Street. Hikers also enjoy relatively quick hikes around the Flat Irons above [Chautauqua](#). And these are just a few of the nearby paths. ([top](#))

How do neighbors feel about the development?

The project experienced some significant resistance from the neighborhood between 2006-2008 that resulted in a compromise that turned one of the condo buildings into 6 single-family homes and a public park to preserve some of the open space of the school grounds and have the development present more of a residential face to the well-established residential neighborhood of Old North Boulder. While there will always be some who choose to resist any new development, many of the neighbors seem to be delighted with the project and how it is turning out. Community members have a number of ideas for how we can add value to the neighborhood by inviting neighbors to participate in some of our activities, such as art shows, neighborhood-wide pot-luck suppers, workshops, seminars and exercise classes, and possibly getting a casual Bocce ball league going in the park on summer evenings. ([top](#))

How did the 2013 flood impact the development?

The property is not in the 100-year floodplain, so we were fortunate to not have any creeks overflowing onto our property or surface water running into our buildings. However, we did experience a significant rise in the water table to a level that is above the bottom of the foundation for the single-family homes that have basements. These houses are currently dependent on sump pumps to keep their lower levels dry. The ground water from under the houses is being channeled to the storm water drainage pipe that runs down Broadway. No water entered the Schoolhouse and the water table is not high enough to interfere with the Elm townhome basements. ([top](#))

Design and Construction

Who is the developer?

Washington Village is being developed by Washington School Developments, LLC, which is under the umbrella of [Wonderland Hill Development Company](#) (also referred to as Wonderland or WHDC). As WHDC's founder and president, Jim Leach has developed over 22 other cohousing communities around the country, as well as a number of regular developments in the City of Boulder. ([top](#))

Who are the architects?

The site plan and design of most buildings, including the condos in the Washington Schoolhouse has been done by Adrian Sopher of [Sopher Sparn Architects, LLC](#). The single-family homes were designed by Ronnie Pelusio and Korkut Onaran of [Pel-Ona Architects & Urbanists](#). ([top](#))

Who is in charge of construction?

The remaining construction will be managed by General Contractor, Michael Artino, who successfully managed most of the site development, as well as construction of all of the existing buildings, except for one of the single-family homes and the Schoolhouse renovation. ([top](#))

When will construction be done?

More than half of the project is already completed or near completion. We expect ground to be broken on the last remaining building by the Summer of 2016 with anticipated completion by late 2017. Based on recent sales activity, we expect all units to be sold out before construction is finished. ([top](#))

Can I pick my finishes?

One significant advantage of purchasing a unit under construction is that you can choose finishes that suit your personal taste. The price of every unit includes a finish budget that covers a standard level of finish, with some opportunity to choose patterns and colors, and a standard cabinet package, plumbing fixtures, lighting budget, and appliance package. You may choose to upgrade finishes for additional cost. ([top](#))

What about storage?

In addition to kitchen and bathroom cabinets, some kitchens also have pantries. Master closets come with built-in shelving and double-hanging rods. Additional storage is available in the garage space provided for each unit. ([top](#))

How do I reserve a unit?

Please contact [Barb Silverman](#) at (303)886-5329 with any interest.

The first step in joining Washington Village is to reserve a unit with an initial deposit of \$5,000. After you have secured your reservation, you will be invited to a "Meet & Greet" event so that you can meet other community members. An additional down payment will be required to finalize your purchase contract prior to the start of construction. ([top](#))

Are there any early buyer discounts?

Yes. Discounts are available if you reserve before construction begins. ([top](#))

What "green" building techniques are in use?

Washington Village is being constructed with some of Colorado's most energy efficient windows and insulation options, with attention to passive solar efficiency in the design. Geothermal heating systems have been incorporated into many of the buildings, and several homes are also wired for solar panels to be installed. ([top](#))

Are the homes handicap-accessible?

All of the common space is wheelchair accessible with ADA compliant facilities. Except for the Elm townhomes, the 2 carriage units, and the upper flat in the North Maple building, all of the other units are either one-level flats with elevator access, or feature a master bedroom suite on the main floor. ([top](#))

What about noise?

We are working with a number of proven techniques for mitigating noise between units, both through walls and through the floors/ceilings. The new construction units also have Alpen windows, which are not only energy efficient, but contribute significantly to outside noise reduction. ([top](#))

Ownership Rights

How is homeownership legally structured? Do I own my own unit?

Legally, Washington Village is structured as a condominium association, with a Condominium Declaration (sometimes referred to as CC&Rs) that is fully compliant with the Colorado Common Interest Ownership Act (CCIOA). You will own your own unit, plus an undivided share of all common areas within the property. Units cannot be separated from the Condo Association.

You own your unit "from drywall in".

You would be responsible for your own property taxes, and for paying monthly HOA assessments, which covers such things as the association's master insurance policy premiums, property management, grounds maintenance, maintaining the common spaces, and building a reserve funds account for periodic major expenses, such as exterior painting and roof replacement, when needed. Units in multi-family buildings may also have an additional assessment for shared building operating expenses. ([top](#))

What if I have (or want) to move out of the community and sell my unit?

It's your home and you may sell it at any time to whomever you please, subject to the usual real estate laws and fair housing regulations. The new owner becomes part of the HOA and is only required to abide by the HOA's rules and regulations. In the event that a community member decides to sell, most cohousing communities want to facilitate the sale by attracting buyers who will be good members of the community. Also, as soon as all of our units are sold, Washington Village will establish and maintain a waiting list of potential buyers. So, when a member needs to sell, there will be a group of interested buyers to work with. ([top](#))

What about property taxes?

Each unit owner is responsible for paying the property tax on their unit to Boulder County based on the assessed value of your property. The developer can provide an estimate of property taxes for each unit. The HOA does not have any property tax obligation. ([top](#))

What is the percentage of owner-occupied units?

Because people who buy into cohousing communities typically have a strong interest in participating in the community, cohousing properties usually have a very high, if not 100% owner occupancy rate. This adds value to the property, because owners typically have a stronger commitment to the upkeep and value of their property. It also contributes to the stability of relationships in the community. ([top](#))

How often do units change owners?

Cohousing developments typically have a much lower turnover rate than most condominium developments. Once our development is fully occupied, prospective buyers may have to wait a long time to purchase their choice unit. ([top](#))

What if I'm only in Boulder for half the year? Can I rent my unit?

Yes, but we would prefer that members use their unit as a primary residence. There is nothing in our Condo Declaration that prevents owners from renting their unit, and most members recognize that there are occasionally times when it makes sense for owners to rent. However, our fundamental interest lies in building community, and it's hard to do that with part-time or transient residents. Therefore, Washington Village members are working to attract buyers who plan to live in their unit. The community is also working to define a Rental Agreement, which will establish community expectations regarding how often and how long units can be rented, and possibly set limits regarding the number of units that can be rented at any given time. If you will only be around part time and plan to rent your unit when you're gone, Washington Village is probably not a good fit for you. ([top](#))

Can I rent space in my unit?

Yes, as long as you adhere to the City of Boulder's regulations regarding occupancy of single-family residences. That means that you can legally have up to 3 different family names living in the same residence. However, the Condo Declaration does not allow you to rent your unit to transient occupants. In other words, you can't run your unit as an Air B&B. ([top](#))

Who owns the land?

Each unit owner fully owns the interior of his/her unit (sometimes referred to as "drywall in") plus an undivided interest in the land on which the unit is situated. The Common Area and Limited Common Areas are owned (and insured) by the homeowner's association, which includes all unit owners. When you sell your unit, it must be sold as a unit within the Washington Village Community Association. ([top](#))

How does property insurance work?

The HOA is required to maintain a master insurance policy to cover the entire property, all common space, and the exterior of all units. In addition to standard causes for property damage and loss, our policy includes coverage for liability, accidental injury, hail and wind damage. Unit owners - even those owning single-family homes - are advised to obtain a condo insurance policy that insures their personal property and dwelling from the "drywall in", as well as any exterior enhancements to their unit, such as solar panels. If, for example, your house burns to the ground, the master policy replaces the structure, windows, and drywall. Your "condo" policy would need to cover replacement of all interior finishes, such as flooring, trim, paint, fixtures, tile, cabinets and counters, as well as your furnishings and personal belongings. ([top](#))

Do I own my own patio/porch/balcony?

Technically, no. Those areas are designated as "limited common elements" so the association can have access to those areas for maintenance and repair purposes (e.g. exterior painting). However, you DO have exclusive use of any patio area, porch, or balcony attached to your unit. You are also responsible for basic maintenance of those areas, such as leaf and snow removal. You may make improvements (e.g. planter pots, seating) to these areas, but any permanent structural changes are expected to undergo a Design Review process to ensure that any additions or changes are structurally sound and consistent with the standards of the overall design of the community. ([top](#))

Do I have my own kitchen and laundry?

Yes. Each home has a full kitchen, including stove and dishwasher, a dining area, living room, and one or more bedrooms and bathrooms. Every home has its own washer and dryer hookups for private laundry facilities, but you also have the option to use the common laundry facilities. You can also reserve the community kitchen and dining room for private events that you host. ([top](#))

Can I make changes to my unit?

Interior changes are only restricted to the degree that they may impact other unit owners. Owners are encouraged to communicate with their neighbors regarding any noise or construction mess that would impact other members. You are required to submit plans for any exterior changes to the Building Team so they can be reviewed for both structural integrity, and to ensure that we maintain a constant appearance for the community as a whole. ([top](#))

Do I have assigned parking?

Yes. Some units have attached garages. Others come with at least one space assigned in the garage under the Broadway building. A community member has stepped up to take on the role of assigning spots in the parking structure. ([top](#))

Can I have pets?

Washington Village has a Pet Agreement that allows unit owners to have up to two dogs, and other animals, such as cats, as indoor pets. Dog owners are expected to comply with Boulder's dog regulations, which includes keeping dogs on a leash outside the home and cleaning up after your dog. There is also the expectation that owners will keep their pets from using common lawn areas from relieving themselves. ([top](#))

Community Finances

Are there maintenance fees (dues)? How much are they?

Washington Village unit owners pay monthly HOA dues to cover common operational expenses and reserves. The developer can tell you the estimated dues for any given unit in a given year. Since the HOA is now operating on a budget based on actual expenses, the dues projections will be adjusted each year when the annual budget is adopted. ([top](#))

Who do maintenance fees (dues) cover?

Currently, our budget covers the following types of expenses:

- master insurance policy
- property management services, which includes accounting and bookkeeping
- landscaping maintenance and repairs
- snow removal
- trash and recycling services
- common utilities, including irrigation water, common space electricity, and a share of the gas and water bill for buildings that have common spaces
- required safety inspections (e.g. fire sprinklers, elevators)
- audit and tax preparation
- bus passes for all residents
- supplies (e.g. community kitchen staples, cleaning supplies)
- capital improvements (small amount each year)
- contingency (e.g. for unexpected repairs and expenses)
- deposit to reserve funds account

Many individual homeowners typically pay a number of these expenses for their current home. So, dues payments can be viewed as being offset by a reduction in expenses that private homeowners usually pay from their household budget. ([top](#))

How are expenses distributed?

Expense allocation for Washington Village is somewhat complicated due to the wide variety of building types, sizes, configuration, age, construction, and unit sizes within the complex.

In general, common expenses, which account for roughly 70% of our budget, are allocated based on the square footage of your unit relative to the total square footage of all units in the community. Building-specific expenses, including reserves, are managed separately for each building and allocated based on your unit's square footage within the building.

We encourage you to read the Condo Declaration and the Washington Village Community Association (WVCA)'s Budget Overview document for a more detailed understanding of how different expenses are allocated. ([top](#))

How much do you rely on volunteers to get work done?

Washington Village members have agreed to hire professionals for any essential work that must be done to maintain property values. We have hired a property manager to handle bookkeeping and manage property maintenance. We work with the property manager to contract professionals for maintenance services, such as landscape maintenance, snow removal, and regular cleaning of the common spaces. We will also hire professionals to audit the books and prepare taxes for the association. There is still plenty of work for volunteers to do in the way of planning and decision making, coordinating social activities, overseeing maintenance, as well as doing things like maintaining the website and coordinating bus passes. Residents are also encouraged to supplement the regularly scheduled maintenance services by cleaning up after using common spaces, particularly in the community kitchen, and help with maintaining the garden areas as they see fit. We may also schedule a few community work days each year to focus on areas that required some focused attention. To the degree that we can employ volunteer energy to get things done, it helps lower our expenses, but if we should ever run short on volunteer energy, the budget is sufficient to maintain property values. ([top](#))

How do you manage reserve funds?

Each building has a separate reserve account funded by the units that occupy the building. Until the project is completed, we are assessing reserves based on 75% of the estimated reserve requirement calculated by the developer based on the construction costs for each building. Once the project is completed and the developer has provided the HOA with a formal reserve study, we plan to fund reserves at 65% of the reserve requirement, which is considered to be a reasonably conservative funding level by many HOA managers. ([top](#))

How are utilities handled?

Some utilities, such as electricity, are metered separately for each unit. Other utilities, such as gas and water, are metered individually for single-family homes, and shared in multi-family buildings. Each unit pays its own electricity. The bills for shared meter utilities are allocated to the units by those utilities on a square footage basis. ([top](#))

Can I have an electric car?

Yes. While many electric cars can be charged on a 110v circuit, the attached single garages also have at least one 240v circuit to support an electric car charging station for owners who choose to install one. We have yet to determine a system for managing expenses associated with electric car charging stations in garages with shared electric meters, but the most likely solution will be based on sub-metering the use of electricity on a given outlet, so the expense can be assessed to the owner of the car that is charged on the outlet. ([top](#))

Can I have a satellite TV?

Yes. However, no satellite TV hookups are provided by the project. Units are wired for standard cable service. So you must contract separately with the satellite dish provider for installation and service. The installation must adhere to the covenants, codes and restrictions of the homeowners' association. ([top](#))

What if I don't need a bus pass (EcoPass)?

Boulder has a great public transit system and encourages residents to get bus passes, which make it easy to hop on a bus. Not only do the buses get you all over town, but you can also catch a bus from Boulder to downtown Denver, the airport, or the Eldora Ski Resort.

If you already have a bus pass through work, we still need to assess the cost of one pass (~\$130/year in 2015) to each household. You will be given the option to pay for additional passes for other members of your household.

The City of Boulder required the Washington Village HOA to pay for annual EcoPasses for every household in the community for at least 3 years. One of our community members successfully negotiated to have our community included under the Old North Boulder's neighborhood EcoPass contract, which reduced the bus pass expense to \$130 per household (2015 rate).

Until the end of 2016, we will be subject to RTD rates and practices. After 2016, the community will be free to decide whether or not to continue paying for bus passes through HOA dues. However, it is likely that many members of the community will choose to participate in the EcoPass program, regardless of whether it is paid for through the HOA. ([top](#))

What if I don't use the common space? Do I still have to share that expense?

Yes. That is standard practice for any condominium association. Many regard the common space as an asset that adds to the value of homes in our community. If you do not value the grounds and common space, Washington Village may not be a good fit for you, because those expenses represent a significant percentage of our dues. ([top](#))

Community Life

Can anyone join the community?

Yes. Washington Village willingly adheres to Fair Housing regulations. So, anyone can purchase a home in Washington Village, regardless of their interest in cohousing. All owners are members of the community.

Prospective buyers are given an opportunity to meet existing community members and understand expectations regarding community membership. We hope that residents will be motivated to participate as members of the community, but we have no actual means of enforcement, beyond what is provided in our Condo Declaration. ([top](#))

Are there any age restrictions?

None. Washington Village was established as a multi-generational community. Not only do we welcome residents of all ages, including children, but we also look forward to meeting the family and friends of residents and including them in social activities when they visit. ([top](#))

Who makes decisions? Does every decision have to be unanimous?

Decisions are generally made by the consensus of community members who choose to participate in the decision making process. This does not mean that every decision will be unanimous. It means that objections will be heard and an effort will be made to modify proposals based on objections that are justified. In the event that a decision is needed and consensus cannot be reached, a decision may be based on a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of members present or represented by proxy. ([top](#))

Will I have any privacy?

Definitely. Washington Villagers value privacy just as much as social interaction. The layout of the property has been designed to strike a balance between having sufficient privacy within each home, and creating opportunities for social interaction outside of our homes. Your home is your private domain to share with others, inside or outside of the community, as you see fit. ([top](#))

Do I have to like everyone?

As in any healthy community, members are expected to be tolerant and respectful toward others. Aside from that, you are free to build (or not build) friendships with whomever you choose. Some members are very private individuals and many only feel comfortable with a few friends in the community, whereas other will form friendships with everyone. As in other areas of life, individuals will create their own balance between a personal life and a social life within the community. ([top](#))

Do I have to invite everyone in the community to social activities that I plan?

Any social activity you host in your home is your personal business and you can invite (or not invite) whomever you want. Cohousing communities tend to have plenty of activities that are open to everyone in the community, so no one should feel left out, just because you didn't invite them to your party. ([top](#))

Who is in the community? Do I have anything in common with them?

Even though we don't have everyone moved into their units at Washington Village, we already have about half of our community members identified. These are just a few of the interests that community members have in common so far (in no particular order):

- playing with children
- hiking, skiing, running, and bike riding
- golf and tennis
- cooking and nutrition (membership includes vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters willing to share recipes and food interests)
- meditation
- yoga and Thai massage
- creative writing
- reading and talking about books (there's book club)
- gardening (flowers and vegetables)
- woodworking (woodshop on site)
- wine tasting and oenology
- studying ancient cultures
- travelling (both U.S. and international)
- music (guitar, piano, ukulele, drums), audio recording, attending concerts
- theater and dance (both performing and attending)
- drawing and painting (watercolor, pastels, acrylic, collage)
- pottery
- photography
- quilting, crocheting, and other fabric arts
- jewelry making
- Native American feather craft
- walking dogs
- bird watching
- watching movies (both at home and in theaters)
- playing cards and other games, and doing puzzles

Imagine having friends who like to do things you like to do who are living just a stone's throw away from your front door. Having others readily available to engage in fun activities with you is one of the main benefits of cohousing. ([top](#))

How do you handle conflicts between members?

Community members agree to make a sincere effort to peacefully and reasonably resolve any conflicts that may occur between themselves and other community members. If mediation is required, support for mediation is available within the community. If necessary, disputes may be referred to City of Boulder Mediation Services.

([top](#))

How much work do I have to do? What are my responsibilities with regard to yard work and maintenance?

Washington Village members have already agreed to hire professionals for essential maintenance service, such as landscape maintenance, snow removal, and building repairs. The community may periodically call for volunteers to do periodic maintenance tasks, such as spring cleaning or fall yard cleanups. No one is obligated to do physical work, but to the degree that members step up when volunteers are need (e.g. spreading mulch, cooking meals, or doing some cleaning between janitorial services), we can minimize expenses and have more fun. ([top](#))

How much do I have to participate in community activities?

Our Participation Agreement encourages every community member to participate on either one team, or assume responsibility for a job, such as coordinating bus passes, organizing social events, overseeing certain common areas, or maintaining the community website. We also encourage members to attend community meals as often as possible, since that is one of the best ways to connect with neighbors and keep in touch with what's happening in the community. ([top](#))

How often do you have community meals? Do I have to cook?

Washington Village members have decided to wait until more members are on board to decide how we want to handle community meals. Among current members, there is a strong interest in having pot-luck style meals once or twice a month. We currently have pot-luck meals scheduled once a month. Once we have access to a common kitchen, there may also be a smaller group that shared regular meals based on a cooperative system of shared meal preparation on a rotating basis for those who choose to participate in that group. We also have a regular "happy hour" every Friday afternoon for whoever wants to show up. ([top](#))

Who gets to use the common space?

We have yet to develop any formal agreement regarding the use of common space. In principle, all community members will have equal access to the common space. The Agreement will primarily define how space is used, reservation practices, and whether people outside the community, other than guests, can use any of the space. In some cases, fees may be charged for use of the space, particularly when space is used by non-members. Fees collected for use of common facilities often help reduce the total common expense that is assessed to owners. ([top](#))

What about safety and security?

Because we know all our neighbors, someone who does not belong in the community is very easily recognized. Members on site generally watch out for the safety of our children, one another, and the property of absent residents. ([top](#))

General Cohousing

What is cohousing?

Cohousing is a form of housing that offers residents the opportunity to get to know their neighbors very well and develop a strong sense of community, which is often absent in contemporary cities and suburbs. By participating in the planning and design of various aspects of their housing development, residents form the bonds that are the basis of ongoing community. Cohousing emphasizes a supportive, intergenerational community, and members of a cohousing group generally come together around a shared vision and values.

Cohousing communities consist of private, fully-equipped homes and extensive common amenities including a common house and recreation areas. They are designed and managed by the who have chosen to live in a close-knit neighborhood that seeks a healthy blend of privacy and community.

In addition to the obvious social advantages of living near friends, residents may have more free time because many of the routine activities of life can be shared; such as dinners or gardening and yard work. Expensive and/or rarely used tools and recreational equipment purchased by the group can be available to all. Car-pooling is easier to arrange. ([top](#))

How is cohousing different from a condominium development?

Legally, a cohousing community functions just like any other condominium development. It will have a homeowners' association, shared grounds and common facilities. However, cohousing is also different from ordinary condominium developments in that the people who buy units in cohousing have a strong interest in building relationships and interacting with their neighbors in the spirit of community. ([top](#))

Who lives in cohousing?

Those attracted to cohousing tend to be people who have thought about this idea of creating community long before they heard the term cohousing. They tend to be people seeking to improve their quality of life and are willing to help others do the same. People who choose to be a part of a cohousing community come from a variety of backgrounds, income levels, family types and beliefs. What they do have in common is a desire to have a say in how their neighborhood will be and a belief that having more connection with their neighbors will be good for them. In our Fresno community you will see evidence of a sensitive attitude towards the natural environment, reduced home size, sharing of resources and community recycling. ([top](#))

What are the defining characteristics of cohousing?

Washington Village has many of the characteristics of cohousing. However, the bulk of our property maintenance is handled more like a regular condo and we have employed a property manager to handle bookkeeping and help us manage operations.

- **PARTICIPATORY PROCESS.** Residents participate in some aspects of the design and maintenance of the community so that it meets their needs.
- **NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN.** Most of the residences are clustered around the main courtyard or central walkways to increase opportunities for chance encounters among neighbors.
- **COMMON FACILITIES.** Common facilities are designed for daily use, are an integral part of the community, and are always supplemental to the private residences. In addition to having a large kitchen and dining room for community meals and meetings, we will have an art room, woodworking/bike repair shop, meditation space, library, a community garden, a couple of multi-purpose spaces for things like exercise or childcare, two laundry rooms, two guest suites, and three sitting areas for tea time, book club, and other casual gatherings. Some of our common space is in the historic school building, and the rest will be in the Broadway building.
- **RESIDENT MANAGEMENT.** Cohousing communities are managed by their residents, with teams that manage different aspects of operations. Residents participate in common meals, and meet regularly, usually once a month, to develop policies and do problem-solving for the community.
- **NON-HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION-MAKING.** Cohousing communities have leadership roles, but no one has authority over others. Members take on one or more roles consistent with their skills, abilities or interests. Decisions are made through a consensus decision making process that allows for proposals to be improved by addressing objections. ([top](#))

How does cohousing differ from other kinds of shared living/intentional communities?

Cohousing is a unique blend of private homes and shared facilities within a custom-designed neighborhood. Our community has no political, religious, or ideological orientation. Financially and legally, cohousing is the same as a condo association. You can live privately within a cohousing community, but most members choose to participate for the social benefits. If you simply value having a sense of community among your neighbors, you will fit in. ([top](#))