

Table of Housing Alternatives

10/24/2010

At this time, the alternatives presented are in the Chicago area, with links to national organizations. More will be added over time.

	Cooperatives	Cohousing	Shared Housing	Dormitory Co-op
General idea	Owning a share in a housing co-op means purchasing a share in a corporation that owns the property, which conveys the right to live in a particular unit. Co-ops are member owned and governed. As a member, you democratically participate in the governance of the property. There are many advantages to co-operative ownership, not the least of which is lower transaction and overall housing costs. Additionally, democratic governance gives each member a say in the policies where you live.	People live in individual houses or apartments and the common house, designed for large gatherings and shared meals permits individual units to be smaller. Sharing resources, such as tools and appliances makes ownership less costly. How many lawn mowers and snow blowers does a neighborhood need? Owner management and consensus decision-making are the norm. Ownership could be structured as a co-op or a condo although as a co-op it would likely be more affordable.	This model is not widely practiced but there are some very successful households. The National Shared Housing Resource Center provides a clearinghouse of agencies in 44 states to match homeowners who want to share their home with potential housemates. Careful screening and matching, usually produces good results. There is a need for inter-generational, non-familial house sharing in which all adults are on an equal basis as owners or renters.	By dormitory, we mean a private bedroom and the other areas of the premises being open to all residents. Examples of this are limited.
History	Cooperatives have existed as a business model since the Rochdale Society introduced the concept in 1844. During World War II and through the 1960s cooperative housing developments met some of the pressing housing needs of war effort and resulting baby boom. Some were well designed	This relatively new housing model originated in Denmark in the 1980s and the movement is growing. Before the 2008 recession, over 100 cohousing communities existed in the US and at least 100 cohousing developments were in some stage of formation.		

	and organized and still operate successfully today. See the following links. http://www.urbanhabitat.org/node/1834 and http://www.yelp.com/topic/richmond-why-leave-when-you-can-buy-a-coop-apartment-for-30k			
Price Range	Co-ops range in price from Section 8 developments to the fanciest addresses in town. One advantage of ownership is lower transaction costs.	Price is dependent on the development.	Price would depend on location, condition of the property and of the neighborhood.	Possibly inexpensive
Barriers to formation and potential time frame	Lack of funding With existing laws and frozen funding, forming a new co-op may take a long time.	Lack of funding With existing laws and frozen funding, forming a new co-op may take a long time.	This could potentially be a relatively speedy process. Utilizing third party expertise to evaluate and screen parties for compatibility, safety, security, and a host of issues increases the odds for success.	Not widely available or well understood.
Presumed demographic appeal	All age groups Housing co-ops can function as an apartment or house. In some communities, the members are more aware, available and responsive than typical communities today.	All age groups Ownership could be structured as a condo or co-op. By design, the community would be more aware, available and responsive than typical communities.	Single parents, older people, young people who value an inter-generational living experience. Young adults who have aged out of the foster care system. Disabled people.	Single people
Existing communities to join	Cooperatives have vacancies so timing is important but buying into one is definitely possible.	In Chicago, Prairie Onion Cohousing has a site and a developer. Eight more households need to commit financially to move this from the dream stage to reality.		

<p>Resources</p>	<p>Several national cooperative organizations have experts throughout the country, so expert advice is available within arm's reach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North American Students of Cooperation (NASCO) • National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) • National Association of Housing Cooperatives (NAHC) 	<p>The Cohousing Association of the United States Cohousing developments structured as a co-op, would have access to those resources as well.</p>	<p>The National Shared Housing Resource Center (NSHRC) is a non-profit clearinghouse of information for people looking to find a shared housing organization in their community or to help get a program started. Two Chicago area agencies match people who have homes with people who want to live in a home. The arrangement serves all parties. The Interfaith Housing Center of the Northern Suburbs serves the northern suburbs and the Center of Concern serves primarily suburban Cook County. Six states are not listed in the NSHRC Directory.</p>	
------------------	--	---	--	--