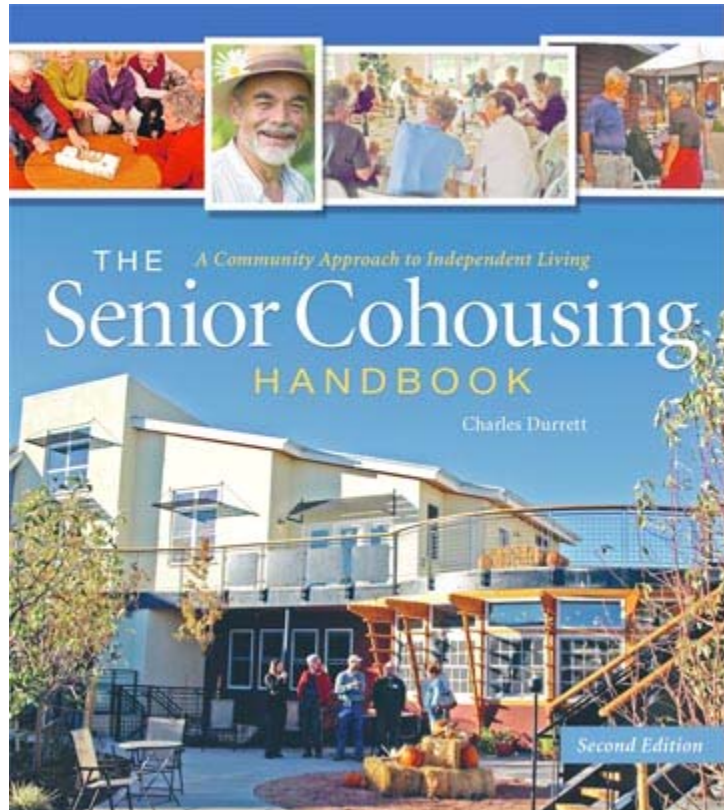


Housing the New Majority: 78 Million Seniors

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Industry: [Real Estate](#)

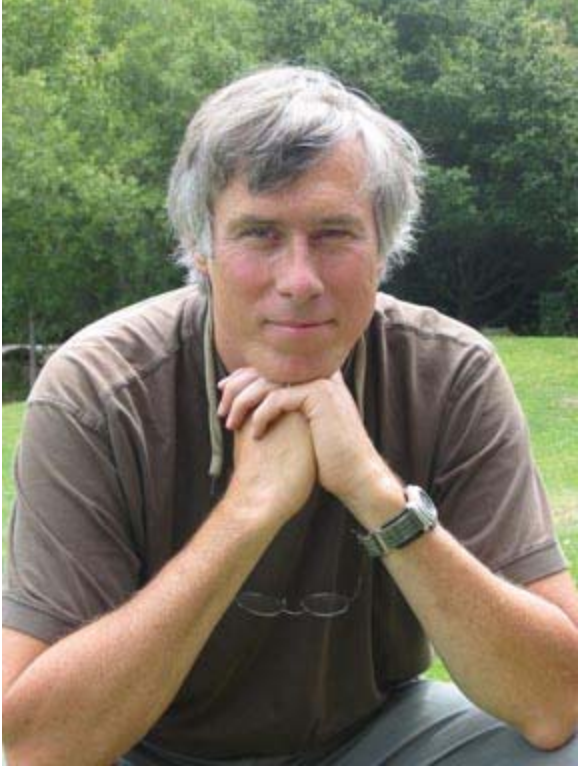
If you are looking for an idea with legs, take a closer look at this mashup: 78 million new senior/baby boomers "coming of age" in the next 20 years and planned cohousing communities of 50+ adults sharing independent lifestyles and solid financial health.

Architect and author Charles Durrett's recently released book *Senior Cohousing Handbook* comes at a time of high interest in greening, sustainable housing and affordable living concerns. Durrett's new book is a comprehensive guide for baby boomers wishing to continue vibrant, active lifestyles.



Senior cohousing is ready for the fast growing baby-boomer demographic -- healthy, educated and proactive adults who want to live in a social and environmentally responsible community and maintain a quality lifestyle while stretching their dollars further into the future.

Durrett is the leading cohousing architect. His awards include the United Nations World Habitat Award and the Best of 50+ Housing Award. He coined the term cohousing, introduced the idea to the U.S. and is currently the U.S. leader in the field as an architect and consultant.



I caught up with Chuck Durrett between project meetings and book signings and quizzed him on the “hows and whys” of senior cohousing.

Q: What are some of the unique characteristics of senior cohousing communities?

A: One word: proactive. These communities are filled with individuals who are choosing to take control of their destinies through planning, not leaving things up to chance. For instance, accommodations are made for shared caregivers to live on site and long-term mobility and access issues are examined. Just the process of thinking things through as a group changes cohousing participants, preparing them with realistic views of

their future.

Q: What are some senior cohousing benefits?

A: Emotional well being, saving money through shared services and community and maintaining independence for much longer than is commonly possible.

The biggest factor by far is living with kindred and having a number of close friendships. But it cannot be overlooked that cohousing costs significantly less than other senior facilities and gives the longest possible independent lifestyle—good for living a full life and conserving financial resources

Q: How does cohousing reduce an individual’s carbon footprint?

A: Cohousing takes an individual out of the single home mindset. Top of mind: better lifestyle, greener lifestyle. Seniors realize that it’s really okay to leave their ranchette and move closer to town knowing they will be living with people they are comfortable with and that they are creating a home they can easily maintain for the next 20+ years.

Last year Americans drove 5 billion miles caring for seniors in their homes (Meals on Wheels, Whistle Stop Nurses, and so on). In our small, semi-rural county in the Sierra foothills, Telecare made 60,000 trips in massive, lumbering, polluting vans-buses – usually carrying only one senior at a time

– schlepping a couple thousand seniors total over hill and dale to doctor’s appointments, to pick up medicine, or to see friends.

In our cohousing community of 21 seniors, I have never seen a single Telecare bus in the driveway. In cohousing it happens organically by caring neighbors: “Can I catch a ride with you?” or “Are you headed to the drug store?”, etc.

This alternative is much more fun and inexpensive for all involved, and much less damaging to the environment. For instance, Wolf Creek Lodge, a new senior cohousing community about to start construction, has 30 units to be built on 1 acre within walking distance of downtown Grass Valley, population 12,000.

Senior cohousing is a mind shift that is not just greener—it makes a better life.

Q: How does cohousing effect my retirement planning?

A: Cohousing is a proactive, realistic way of addressing issues. Really, it's an ultra-responsible approach to assessing how to provide for one’s own future. Everyone in the process is dealing with understanding that mortality is real and that aging successfully means examining the whole person benefits—economic, emotional and physical well being. Cohousers choose to place themselves in a fun, life-affirming and embracing community.

The big thing here is that by living independently longer, money is saved at every juncture, so by taking control, resources can go much further. Turns out that an independent, quality life costs less than facilitated retirement.

Q: What kind of start-up process is involved?

A: First off, contact a cohousing company. They will find out what considerations and requirement are needed for your specific area. They will also be able to guide you in forming a group.

Next, read the book. Then start talking to friends. Host a presentation in your town, secure a site. You may already know some of your new cohousing neighbors.

Hear Durrett speak about how the 50+ population is redefining its future by applying cohousing concepts.

Contact Charles Durrett by calling The Cohousing Company at 530.265.9980. Visit: <http://www.cohousingco.com/>

UPCOMING BOOK EVENTS:

Friday, September 11th, 7:30pm
Builder's Booksource, 1817 4th Street (near Hearst), Berkeley, CA (510)
845-6874

Sunday, September 20th, 4:00pm
Village Books, 1200 11th Street, Bellingham, WA (360) 671-2626

Wednesday, September 23rd, 7:00pm
Changing Hands Bookstore, 6428 South McClintock Drive, Tempe, AZ (480)
730-1142

October 13, 2009, 6:30pm
Maria's Bookshop, 960 Main Avenue, Durango, CO (970) 247-1438

October 1st, 7:30pm
Books Inc., 301 Castro Street, Mountain View, CA (650) 428-1234

October 14, 2009, 7:30pm
Tattered Cover, 9315 Dorchester Street, Highland Ranch, CO (303) 470-7050

Thursday, October 29th, 7:00pm
Bloomsbury Books, 290 East Main Street, Ashland, OR (541) 488-0029

Friday, November 6th, 5:30pm
Unity Church of the Triangle, 118 S. Person St., Raleigh, NC, (919) 832-
8324
(There is a \$20 fee for this lecture only.)

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