



# Nomad Cohousing Community

1460 & 1480 Quince Avenue, Boulder CO 80304 | [www.NomadCohousing.org](http://www.NomadCohousing.org)

## ***Life at the Nomad Cohousing Community***

**The purpose of this document is to give interested parties an idea of what it is like to live at Nomad Cohousing.**

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### **What is Cohousing?**

Cohousing describes an intentional community of private homes clustered around a shared open space where residents enjoy community gathering areas and share resources. Households have independent incomes and private lives, and neighbors collectively participate in planning and managing the shared spaces, and agree to spend time together in activities such as regularly-scheduled meals and community work days. Many cohousing communities also share tools such as lawnmowers, garden tools, and other larger equipment. Common characteristics of cohousing neighborhoods include: neighbors know each other and cultivate a culture of sharing and mutual benefit; neighborhood design balancing privacy and community, where residents find their own personal level of engagement in community life; decisions are made by consensus within a self-managed homeowners association (HOA); and shared values including a green approach to living. (See [Definition of Cohousing](#)) The idea of cohousing originated in Denmark in the 1960's and the first cohousing development (Sættedammen) was founded in 1972, The idea was later introduced to North America in 1994 by two American architects, Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett, who wrote the book "Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves". Nomad is one of 4 cohousing communities in Boulder County, 11 in Colorado, and over 150 in the U.S.

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### **What is life like at Nomad Cohousing?**

In some ways living at Nomad Cohousing is like living in an old-fashioned village where neighbors know one another and share their time and resources. Our community consists of about 30 residents living in 11 private homes in two townhouses on a one-acre site. The community manages a "Common House", attached to the historic Nomad Theater that includes a full kitchen, a 750-square foot carpeted room, and a large open patio. The Common House is used for community meals twice a week, business meetings, and social events. The community also shares other areas including a grassy courtyard, a small community garden, a play area, and several decks and patios. Our neighborhood is close to Lucky's Market, several restaurants and other shops, and is a 3-min walk to the nearest RTD bus stop station on Broadway along the SKIP and Y lines. Current residents include singles, couples and families with children. We do most of the yard work and maintenance ourselves as a community during scheduled workdays or as assigned roles within the community. Typical tasks include painting, raking leaves, shoveling snow, weeding, and landscaping.

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## **What is the legal structure and governance of Nomad Cohousing?**

Nomad is registered as THE NOMAD CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION as a nonprofit homeowner's association and is comprised of 11 independently-owned homes. Homeowners also share ownership of the land and common facilities. As defined by our By-laws, all owners are members of the homeowners association and each household has an equal share and voice in decision making. Every two years we elect HOA officers, including a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer from among the homeowners.

The community governs itself through regular business meetings using a consensus model which seeks to include all views and achieve unanimous agreement in all major decisions. We hold 90-minute business meetings every month or every other month depending upon community issues requiring attention. Since our HOA is self-managed and we do most of the work ourselves, HOA decisions closely impact all residents, in terms of financial costs and how we live together. Therefore, all members are encouraged to attend business meetings to participate in the management of our neighborhood. Any community member may add items to the meeting agenda. We rotate the meeting facilitator role and take turns speaking in an orderly, respectful fashion. Meeting minutes are posted online.

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## **What are the HOA dues and what do they cover?**

Revenue for community expenses is primarily comprised of HOA dues paid by homeowners that cover some utilities, maintenance of the common areas, and other shared community costs. Dues are calculated based on a combination of factors. Some dues expenses are calculated by the square footage of the home, some by the number of occupants, and some are divided equally by the number of homes in the community. Market rate homes pay an additional flat HOA dues contribution per month. Dues include water, sewer, trash & recycling, maintenance of building exteriors, fire suppression systems within the buildings, and access to common house and community grounds. Dues do not include electricity or internet used by each home, or any repairs or maintenance in the interior of each home.

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## **How is the neighborhood maintained?**

We maintain our neighborhood by participating in workdays and agreed upon chores. Doing much of the work ourselves helps us reduce our HOA dues significantly and build community. We strive to divide the work fairly and ensure that everyone feels comfortable with their designated chores and workday activities.

Every two years, each household signs up to take care of ongoing chore responsibilities in the community. These include being an officer, being a member of standing committees, and ongoing tasks such as mowing, gardening, and sweeping. Chores are each assigned a certain number of points based on the time and effort required. Each household signs up for an equal number of chore points.

In addition, each adult participates in six workdays per growing season (spring through fall), with each scheduled workday consisting of three hours of work. Typical workday activities include

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weeding, painting, cleaning shared areas, raking leaves, planting or trimming trees and shrubs, and other activities as agreed by the community. (for example, raking leaves, shoveling snow, staining community decks, weeding, landscaping, and so on) Residents are not expected to do work beyond their skill level or ability.

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### **Tell me about Community Meals**

Our common meals are a core aspect of community life. Sharing meals gives us time to be together regularly, prepare food for our neighbors and appreciate the food our neighbors prepare for us. Community meals meet our environmental value of using the energy and electricity of one kitchen instead of 11, plus residents save time and money. We offer common meals twice a week, typically on Sundays and Wednesdays in our Common House. Community members may sign up to attend as few or as many common meals as they like. For each 18-week meal rotation a cooking schedule is created, and community members sign up to be a lead chef twice and a sous chef twice at a time that works for their schedule.

The lead chef is responsible for planning the menu, posting the menu/sign-up sheet, shopping and preparing the meal. The sous chef is responsible for helping the lead chef prepare the meal. Everyone who dines shares clean-up together. The cost of each meal is divided equally among those eating and is generally between \$5 and \$10 depending on the menu and the number of attendees. At the end of each meal rotation, a reconciliation is performed to determine which households owe or are owed money for community meals.

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### **What if I don't get along with someone?**

We value open and direct communication and work toward creating harmony among our residents. Naturally, there may be disagreements when people live in close proximity. On those occasions we invite the parties to work it out among themselves. However, if extra help is needed we have a Mediation Team composed of community members to offer support and mediate when asked.

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### **What will be expected from me if I live at Nomad Cohousing?**

Community members at Nomad Cohousing agree to abide by the Declaration of Codes, Covenants, and Restrictions (CC&Rs), By-Laws, and any Agreements of the Nomad Condominium Association (NCA) made during business meetings. As community members, we agree to participate in community business meetings and workdays, manage specifically assigned chores for the maintenance and upkeep of shared community property, and pay monthly HOA dues. Community members also participate in the preparation and cleanup of common meals. In addition, we ask all members to commit to peaceful resolution of interpersonal conflicts, and to engage in open, honest and respectful communications as we live together as neighbors. Read more at [Participation Agreement for Nomad Cohousing Community](#).

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### **How Environmentally Friendly is Nomad?**

The Nomad community was built using environmentally sound design and materials. The homes were designed to benefit from passive solar energy features, and we encourage the use of natural, non-toxic and recycled materials such as bamboo floors, fly-ash (in the concrete foundations), xeric landscaping, Hardi-plank siding, low-VOC paints, and recycled PET or wool carpeting. We strive to be as environmentally friendly as possible by composting our leftover food from common meals, recycling, and using eco-friendly products when possible in common areas and on the building exterior.

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### **What is it like to raise children at Nomad?**

Growing up in community offers benefits to both the kids and the parents. Although there is no expectation of sharing childcare, parents sometimes do make cooperative arrangements while respecting individual parenting styles. Cohousing provides a great opportunity for kids to enjoy playing together in the shared courtyard and community play structure in a safe and nurturing neighborhood where they learn how to share toys, and be respectful of community space. Children generally thrive growing up in a multigenerational community, and benefitting from nurturing and mentoring relationships with people of all ages. Nomad Cohousing currently has households with children of varying ages.

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### **How much privacy do I have?**

Cohousing offers a healthy balance of privacy and community. We respect each other's privacy, and we value the benefits of living in a close-knit community of neighbors. You can have as much privacy as you like and as much social interaction as you like.

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### **How does use of the Common House work?**

Each resident may use the 750 square foot Common House, which is attached to the Nomad Theatre. We view the Common House as an extension of our living room. Residents may reserve the space for free for non-paying events, and there is a minimal charge for events charging a fee. In addition to community meals twice a week, the Common House (CH) also hosts parties, celebrations, yoga classes, kids' music classes, discussion groups, book clubs, art showings, and other activities residents bring to the community. We have a designated resident responsible for coordinating use of the CH and the schedule can be viewed on-line to determine space availability.

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### **Getting to Know Us**

If you are interested in finding out more about living at Nomad, we invite you to contact us to learn more. Please email [live@NomadCohousing.org](mailto:live@NomadCohousing.org).

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### **Additional Information**

More information is available on our website: [www.NomadCohousing.org](http://www.NomadCohousing.org)

General information about cohousing can be found at the website for the Cohousing Association of the United States: [www.cohousing.org](http://www.cohousing.org)

An overview of cohousing with images of communities in the U.S. and Denmark is described in the book *Cohousing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves* by architects Kathryn McCamant and Charles Durrett (Ten Speed Press, 1988).