

# Design Decision Making

*An efficient, enjoyable workshop approach*



The Heart of Community

Coho/US \* May 30, 2020

# Acknowledgements

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- Thanks to my former business partner Laura Fitch, who collaborated with me to develop this effective methodology.
- Thanks always to my cohousing clients, who help me to refine my process – working with you is a joy and a privilege!

# History



# Workshop Goals

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- Design program: general & specific requirements
- Design directions: basic design concept
- Community-building

# Steps

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1. Survey
2. Agenda (including preliminary draft of design program)
3. Slide show
4. Weekend workshop
5. Schematic designs



# Survey – Informational items

## Meals Work Systems

The majority of your community's work will be in preparing and cleaning up after common meals. This is one of the main community activities, and something that provides ample opportunities for a rich connection - both at the meals themselves and in the kitchen. This section explores different ways to organize the meals work.

**Meals Systems in Different Communities:** The following are some descriptions of meals systems in various cohousing communities. Subsequent questions will refer to different aspects of these systems. Note that questions may refer to one aspect of a given community's system, or may refer to qualities present in more than one community. Some questions may also refer to aspects of meals systems that are not included below. These descriptions are presented here in order to give you more familiarity with cohousing meals systems.

### BURLINGTON COHOUSING EAST VILLAGE:

- \* Mandatory participation (a few exceptions), 1 job/month
- \* Meals every even day
- \* Mon-Fri meals by cook teams, weekend meals potlucks
- \* 1 lead cook, 2 assistant cooks, 1 cleanup person
- \* ~24 people/meal
- \* Buffet style

# Survey – Suggested program

## 13. Outdoor Gathering Areas

### 33. Main Gathering Area: The outdoor "Living Room" of the community

- Gathering area to be in front of common house.
- Visual connection to common house dining room if at all possible.
- Include a hardscape area, approximately 40x70.
- Comfortable microclimate – solar access, wind protection.
- Provide some shade.
- Sitting at perimeter, e.g., sitting wall.

If you would like to make any additions, deletions or changes to the above, please list them below.

# Survey – Questions

## 2. Prioritization of Design Goals

It is important to have a discussion with your future neighbors about your overall goals for living in community before you begin serious design work. We are assuming that a certain amount of this work has been done while you brought your group together, developed your mission statement, looked for a site, etc. However, we would like to begin the workshop with some discussion of your overarching goals as they relate to design.

### 5. Overall Goals:

**Please rate the following design goals for your site as to their importance. We believe the first 3 items ("Foster interactions", "Privacy" and "Sharing resources") are essential for true cohousing experience, and recommend listing them as "1".**

#### RATING SYSTEM:

- 1 = this goal is of utmost importance to our community**
- 2 = this goal is important for our community**
- 3 = this is a goal that would be nice to accommodate, but it's not necessary**
- 4 = this goal is not important to me, but I do not object to including it**
- 5 = no, this goal is wrong for me and/or the community**

#### Overarching Design Goals:

	1 utmost importance	2 important	3 nice to accommodate	4 not important to me	5 wrong for me and/or community
Foster interaction between neighbors – design units, porches, etc. to encourage neighbors to cross paths, interact, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Privacy within home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing resources – community facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safe & nurturing environment for children and adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Foster interaction between neighbors – design units, porches, etc. to encourage neighbors to cross paths, interact, etc.

Privacy within home

Sharing resources – community facilities

Safe & nurturing environment for children and adults

Ecological sustainability – design to minimize ecological impact (materials, energy, etc.)

Accessibility - above and beyond code requirements (for example: all units visitable by someone in a wheelchair)

Affordability – units affordable to all people interested in living in the



# Survey – Questions

## 21. Prioritization of Common House Spaces & Other Common Spaces

### RATING SYSTEM:

**1 = essential, must have**

**2 = very important, include if at all possible**

**3 = would be nice to have, but it's not necessary**

**4 = I don't care whether we have this or not**

**5 = no, I don't want this in our common house or community**

	1 utmost importance	2 important	3 nice to accommodate	4 not important to me	5 wrong for me and/or community
Main Entry Porch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mail & Coat Area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Great Room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kitchen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support Functions (Bathrooms, Mechanical, Halls, Storage)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living / Sitting Room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Young Kids' Play Room	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Porch, Patio and/or Deck (other than Main Entry Porch)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Laundry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guest Room #1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guest Room #2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Main Entry Porch

Entry

Mail & Coat Area

Great Room

Kitchen

Support Functions  
(Bathrooms, Mechanical,  
Halls, Storage)

Living / Sitting Room

Young Kids' Play Room

Porch, Patio and/or Deck  
(other than Main Entry  
Porch)

Laundry

Guest Room #1

Guest Room #2

Guest Room #3

Bicycle Storage (in  
Common House vs  
elsewhere)

Root Cellar (in Common  
House vs elsewhere)

# Survey – Questions

**34. Accessibility: If code does not require additional cooktop & sink at lower height, would you like to provide them anyway? Check as many as apply:**

	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	Neutral	No, probably not	No, definitely not	Unsure
Cooktop at accessible height	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sink at accessible height	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**24. Should the Great Room be one large space, or should the room be broken into nooks?**






	Yes, definitely	Yes, probably	Neutral	No, probably not	No, definitely not	Unsure
One large space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nooks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**25. If nooks, should there be an area that can be closed off for “quiet” dining experience?**

- ☐ Yes, definitely
- ☐ Yes, probably
- ☐ Neutral

# Survey Analysis

**18. Ceiling Heights: Would you prefer to have 10' ceilings (versus 9' minimum noted above) in order to include high daylighting windows?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, definitely		37.5%	6
Yes, probably		43.8%	7
Neutral		6.3%	1
No, probably not		6.3%	1
No, definitely not		0.0%	0
Unsure		6.3%	1

**Conclusion: Propose as part of Draft Design Program**

# Survey Analysis

**25. Should the Great Room be one large space, or should the room be broken into nooks?**

**26. If nooks, should there be an area that can be closed off for “quiet” dining experience?**

		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes, definitely		6.7%	1
Yes, probably		33.3%	5
Neutral		20.0%	3
No, probably not		26.7%	4
No, definitely not		0.0%	0
Unsure		13.3%	2

**Conclusion: Put on agenda as discussion item**

# Agenda & Draft Design Program

## **Main Entry Porch:**

- Covered or sheltered area outside of the main entrance to the common house (Main Entry)
- The entrance should be visually noticeable and attracting upon entry onto site, if possible
- Accessible (directly on grade, or with short ramp)
- Approximately 300 SF, Minimum: 8'x12', or 100 SF; *consider a much larger porch if it's on south*
- Easily maintainable surfaces and materials
- *Designed to minimize snow removal and ice buildup*
- Walk off mats or *removable grate (preferred option)* for snow / dirt removal
- *Include permanent ledges, steps, or other elements for sitting*
- *Consider storage for ice control (sand, snow melt, etc.)*
- *Connected to main outdoor gathering space*

## **Porches, Patios and Decks (other than Main Entry Porch, listed above):**

- *Include a patio or open deck*
- *Consider a raised kitchen garden at patio/deck*

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

- Should there be a patio, or a deck – which is preferred?
- Should a covered or screened porch be included?

Survey results → Proposed design program  
& Topics for discussion



# Weekend Workshop

- Slide Show (Friday night)
- Workshop:
  - Introduction & group-building
  - Guided visualization
  - Discussion & exercises to reach consensus on identified issues
  - Block exercise
- Schematic Design (by architects post-workshop)

# Slide Show

## Cohousing and Sustainability

### Part 5c: Green Building



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*Home - Community - Planet*

Text Version - 06/2011



# Workshop: Ground Rules

## **GROUND RULES:**

**EMOTIONS OK, AGGRESSION NOT**

**LISTEN FOR UNDERSTANDING**

**HANDS TO SPEAK**

**STACKS OF FOUR**

**WHEN IN DOUBT, FACILITATOR DECIDES**

**SILENCE = ASSENT**

**IF CONFUSED, ASK**

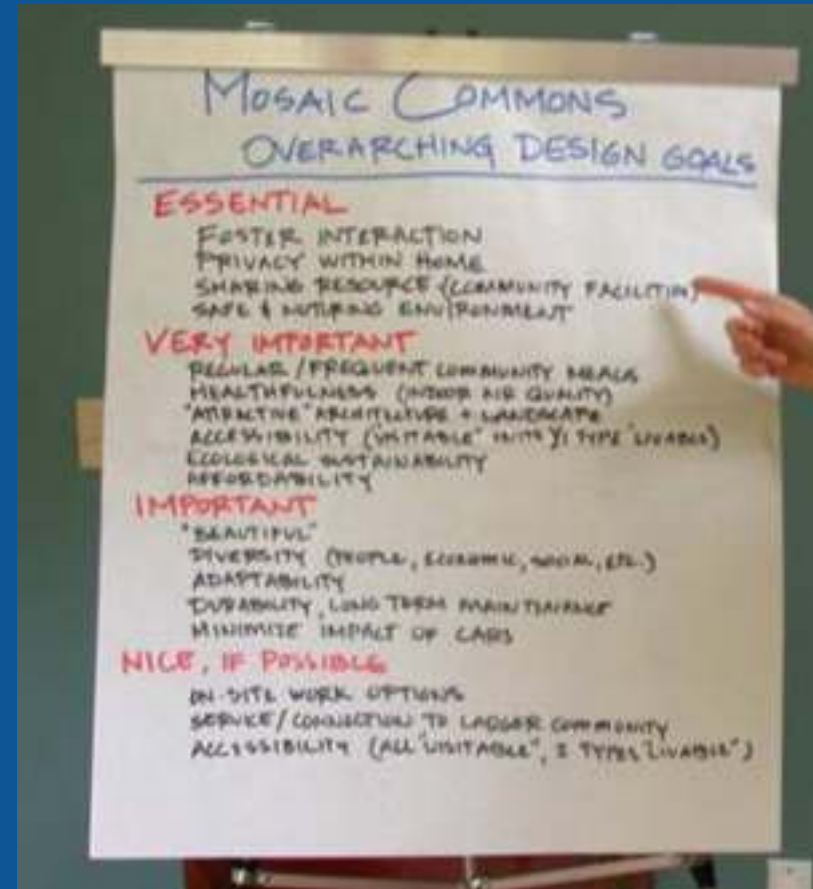
**STAY ON TOPIC**

**LET OTHERS SPEAK BEFORE YOU SPEAK AGAIN**

**NO SIDE CONVERSATIONS**

**ONLY EQUITY MEMBERS CAN BLOCK CONSENSUS**

# Workshop: Overarching Goals





# Workshop: Community-Building



## Purpose



Purpose is the destination we choose from a sea of possibilities. Shared purpose calls us together and focuses us, evolving as understanding deepens. It gives impetus and energy to our work—when we're connected with genuine purpose, energy flows and things happen.

*related:* Commitment ~ Setting Intention  
~ Spirit ~ Holding Space ~ Common Ground  
~ Seeing the Forest, Seeing the Trees  
~ Priority Focus



# Workshop Exercises



## Site Analysis

## Guided visualization



# Workshop Exercises



Discussion

Spectrum



# Workshop Exercises



Prioritization



# Workshop Exercises



Image Board

# Workshop Exercises

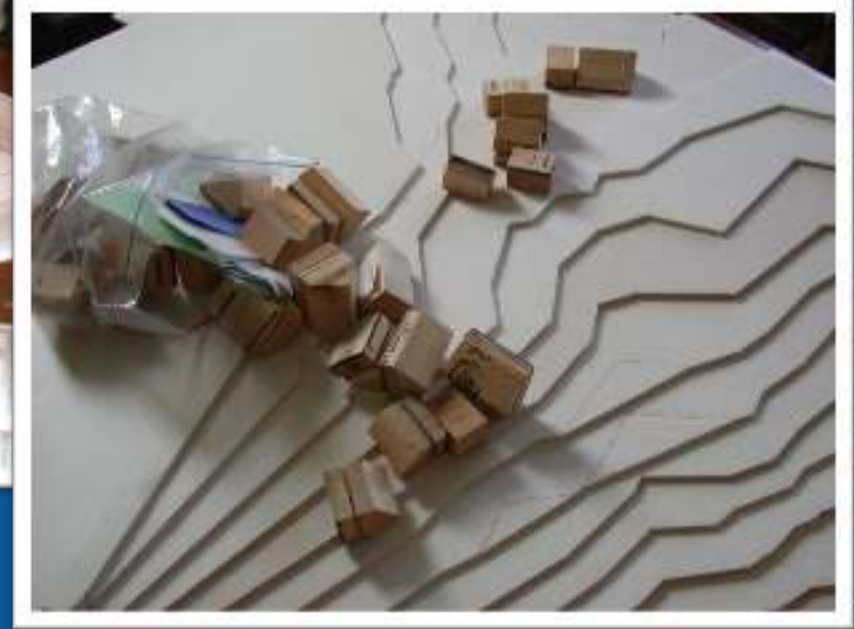
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Temperature:

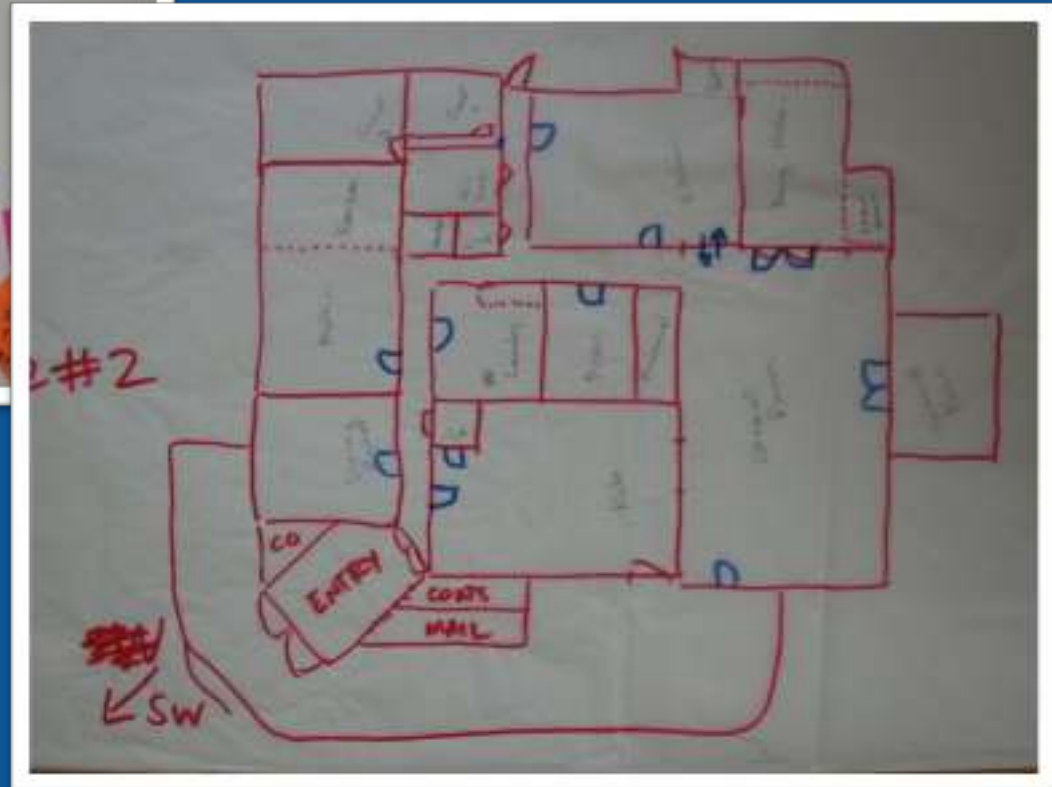
- Love it
- Like it
- Don't like it, but can live with it
- Can't live with it



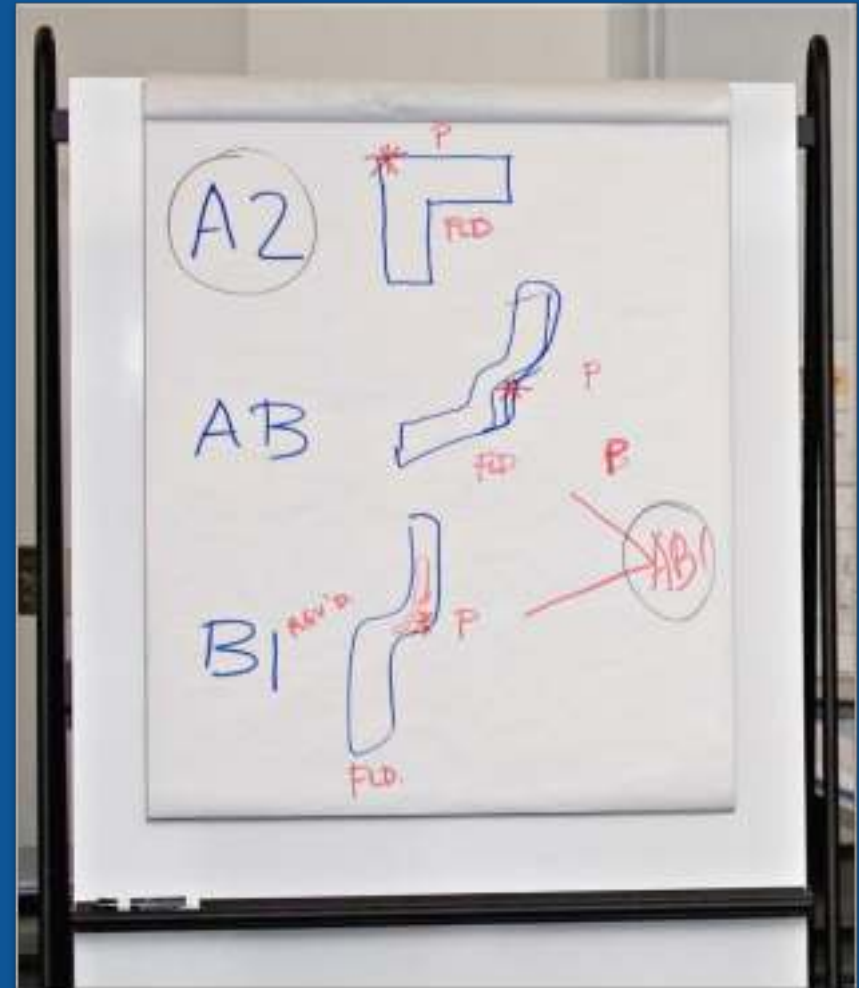
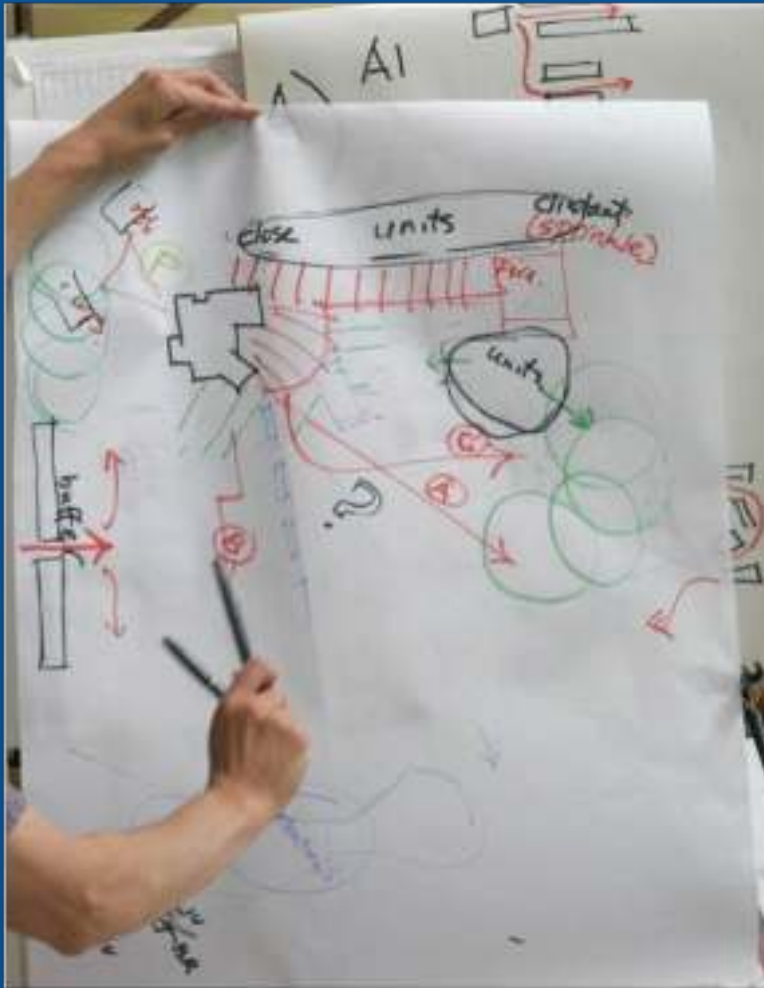
# Workshop Block Exercise



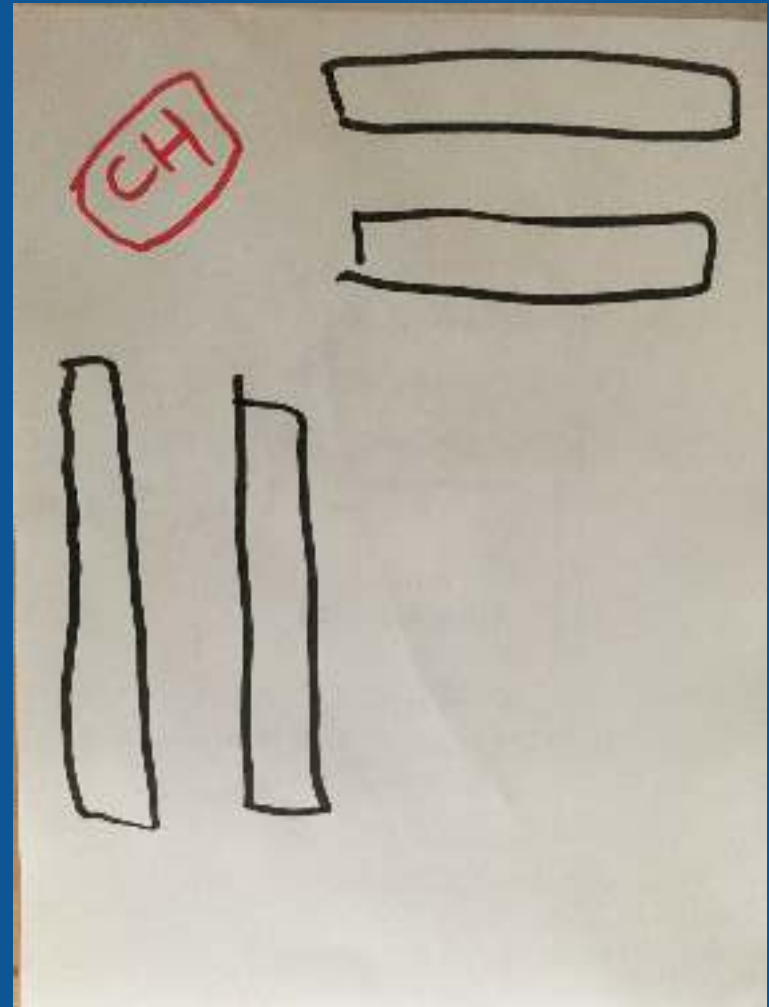
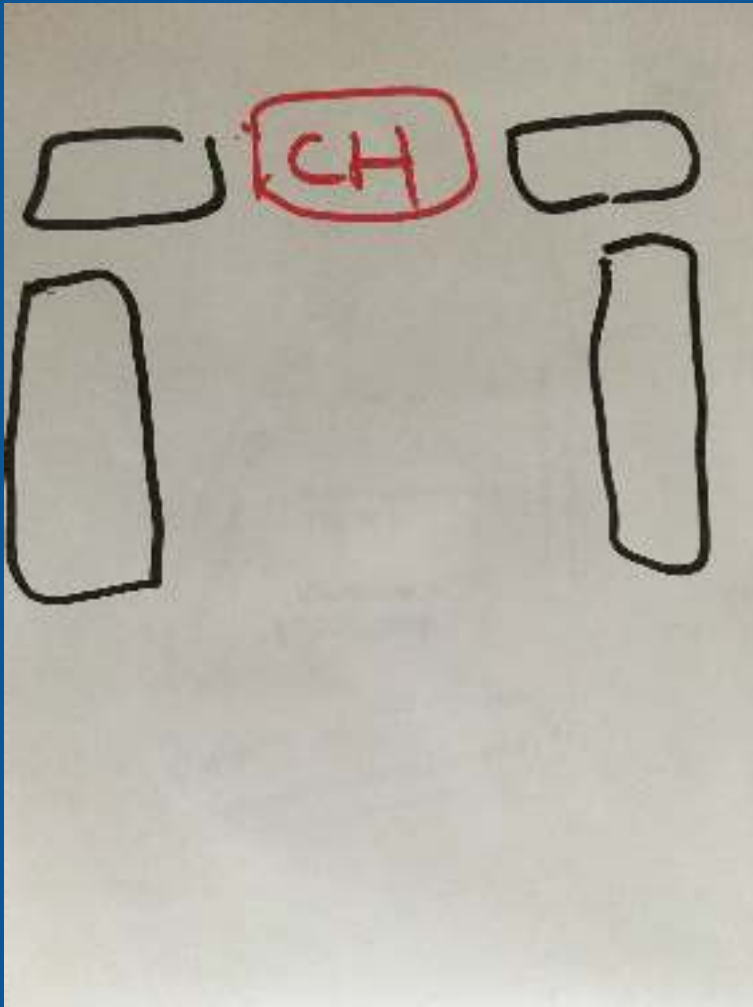
# Workshop: Block Exercise



# Workshop: Design Directions



# Workshop: Design Directions





# Workshop: Design Directions

Architects'  
synthesis →

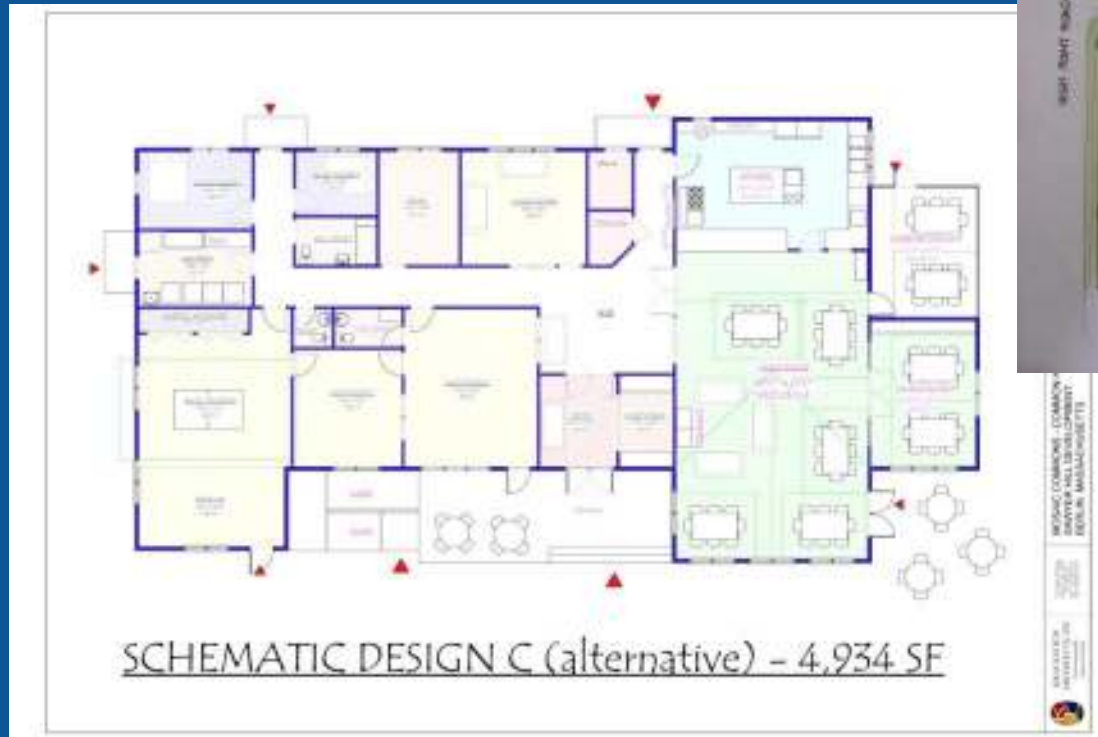


← Child's design





# Post-Workshop Design



# Finalized Program

## COMMON HOUSE DESIGN PROGRAM

### PART II – GOALS

#### RATING SYSTEM:

- 1 = this goal is of utmost importance to our community
- 2 = this goal is important for our community
- 3 = this is a goal that would be nice to accommodate, but it's not necessary
- 4 = this goal is not important to me, but I do not object to including it
- 5 = this goal is wrong for me and/or the community

#### Overarching Design Goals & Green Strategies

The following are the Goals as prioritized prior to the Eco-Design and Site Design Workshop, listed in order of priority as collated from the surveys.

#### Overarching Design Goals:

1.3	Foster interaction between neighbors – design units, porches, etc. to encourage neighbors to cross paths and interact
1.4	Sharing Resources – specifically community facilities
1.5	Privacy within home
1.5	Ecological sustainability – design to minimize ecological impact (and adapt to Alaskan conditions)
1.6	Safe and nurturing environment for children and adults
1.6	Durability of community and structures – long-term maintenance
1.8	Regular and frequent community meals
1.9	Beauty – architecture and landscape
2.0	Adaptability of community and structures – for future changing needs (e.g., aging in place)
2.1	Healthful living (e.g., low toxic interiors)
2.3	Diversity – design that is friendly to people of diverse backgrounds (age, family, economic, social, etc.)
2.3	Minimize impact of cars
2.4	Affordability – units affordable to all people interested in living in the community
2.5	Service & connection to larger community
2.7	Accessibility – above and beyond code requirements (e.g., all units visitable by someone in a wheelchair)
2.8	Support & create on-site work options – e.g., office building, agriculture

Un-prioritized items added by individuals during survey:

- Natural appearance and setting
- Educating general public on living more sustainably
- Gardening for food for the community

# Finalized Program

## Part IV – PROGRAM SUMMARY WITH SQUARE FOOTAGES

Function	Total Area		1st Floor Area		2nd Floor Area		Notes
	Area (SF)	Area totals (SF)	Area (SF)	Area totals (SF)	Area (SF)	Area totals (SF)	
<b>ESSENTIAL SPACES</b>							
Great Room	1200	1200	1200	1200		0	
Kitchen	400	1600	400	1600		0	
Support Functions (Bathrooms, Mechanical, Halls, Storage)	800	2400	600	2200	200	200	
Mail & Coat Area	150	2550	150	2350		200	
Entry	150	2700	150	2500		200	
Living / Library	270	2970	270	2770		200	
Laundry	150	3120	150	2920		200	
Guest Room #1	150	3270	150	3070		200	
Guest Room #2	100	3370	100	3170		200	
Library (as nook or shelving)	20	3390	20	3190		200	
Young Kids' Play Room	400	3790	400	3590		200	
<b>SECONDARY SPACES (IN ORDER OF PRIORITY)</b>							
Community Office (as a nook or closet)	5	3795			5	205	
Game Room / TV-Movie / Music	400	4195			400	605	
Root Cellar (priority for having now)	0	4195			0	605	
Exercise Room – Movement	300	4495			300	905	in shop if doesn't make it into CH

# Finalized Program

## **PART VI – GENERAL COMMON HOUSE PROGRAM**

### **Size / Storeys**

- Approximately 4,000 SF
- Do not restrict to one storey only (include basement and/or second storey if possible)
- Design for future addition on a partial second floor
- Spaces to be determined
- Design for a future lift
- Restrict the use of any basement or attic spaces to “resident only” (future lift will provide access in case use changes)

### **Green Strategies (specific to Common House)**

- See Site Program and Vision Statement for additional Green Goals (also see above)
- Keep massing of building fairly simple, but not box-like
- Orient large expanse of roof towards south for future installation of photovoltaics and solar hot water systems (and avoid roof penetrations on south side). The goal would be to accomplish this without significant cost or sacrifice to rest of program.
- Solar-ready building may include vertical locations for collectors as well
- Design roofs to divert snow & rain from entrances
- Design for natural daylighting
- Orient windows to take advantage of winter solar gain as much as possible
- Insulate and air seal building shell to a high standard per Eco-Design Program
- Consider material choices that are healthful and sustainable, within budget constraints
- Select materials that are durable to reduce need for replacement and frequent maintenance
- Access to fresh air (venting, screens)



# Finalized Program

## PART VII – SPECIFIC SPACE PROGRAMING

### Main Entry Porch:

- Note that the consensed-upon design might be considered to have two main entries
- Covered or sheltered area outside of the main entrance to the common house (Main Entry)
- The entrance should be visually noticeable and attracting upon entry onto site, if possible
- Accessible (directly on grade, or with short ramp)
- Approximately 300 SF, Minimum: 8'x12', or 100 SF; consider a much larger porch if it's on south
- Easily maintainable surfaces and materials
- Designed to minimize snow removal and ice buildup
- Walk off mats or removable grate (preferred option) for snow / dirt removal
- Include permanent ledges, steps, or other elements for sitting
- Consider storage for ice control (sand, snow melt, etc.)
- *Connected to main outdoor gathering space*

### Porches, Patios and Decks (other than Main Entry Porch, listed above):

- Include a patio or open deck
- Consider a raised kitchen garden at patio/deck
- No attached screened porch on Common House (may plan a screened gazebo in the future)

# And then ...



# And then ...





# And then ...





# What it's all about



## Technical Credits:

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