

# Fair Oaks EcoHousing Receives Planning Approval for New Neighborhood

By Marty Maskall

**FAIR OAKS, CA (MPG)** - Fair Oaks EcoHousing received unanimous approval from the Fair Oaks Community Planning Council (CPAC) on September 3, 2014, by a vote of six to zero. Following Design Review by Sacramento County in September, the project will be reviewed by the Sacramento County Planning Commission. Move-in dates are projected for summer 2016.

Local residents submitted their planning application to Sacramento County on July 21st to request approval of their design for a new environmentally friendly neighborhood on New York Avenue in Fair Oaks. A group of nine families have been working with architect and international cohousing expert, Charles Durrett, on the design of their community.

The 30 new homes will range in size from two-bedroom flats to four-bedroom townhomes, along with extensive community facilities and garden areas. The new community is unique in that it is being initiated by a group of local families that seek to live in a more socially and environmentally sustainable neighborhood than what traditional developers have been building in the Sacramento Suburbs.

Fair Oaks EcoHousing was inspired by other cohousing neighborhoods that have built around the country over the last two decades, including Southside Park in downtown Sacramento, Nevada City Cohousing, and Wolf Creek Lodge, a recently completed community designed for active adults in Grass Valley.



Cohousing neighborhoods are composed of privately-owned homes clustered around shared open space and extensive common facilities. The Club House typically includes a dining room, kitchen, workshop space, children's playroom, guest rooms, and lounge. It is the heart of the neighborhood for a variety of other activities. Cars are parked on the periphery of the site, making the neighborhood more pedestrian-friendly and kid-safe. Future residents are involved in the design and development so that it reflects their needs and priorities, creating a truly custom neighborhood. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Ecohousing

### What are cohousing neighborhoods?

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View of entry to Fair Oaks EcoHousing. Photo courtesy of Fair Oaks Ecohousing

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Environmental sustainability is a core value in these neighborhoods with smaller homes, green building attributes, and renewable energy systems made possible by combined efforts and shared resources. On-site activities and companionship enable

residents to socialize close to home and reduce their need to drive as much for day-to-day activities. The Fair Oaks property offers close proximity to the American River Parkway and its miles of bike paths, as well as Fair Oaks Village, Banister Park, the Sacramento Waldorf School, and the Rudolph Steiner College. Cohousing provides social, environmental, and economic benefits for a more sustainable lifestyle.

### Local Residents initiate their own Neighborhood

Fair Oaks resident Marty Maskall has been looking to create such a community since she first saw Southside Park in downtown Sacramento. Marty says, "I have lived in this area for 23 years and I want to stay here, but I'm tired of the isolation and maintenance of my single-family home. I love the multigenerational nature of these communities." Carmichael resident Ivan Greene has been looking for a friendly neighborhood with substantial gardening space. Ivan says, "As a single person, I want to connect with my neighbors. I'm excited about the large garden and orchard area." Sacramento residents Linda and Frank Tanforan are looking to downsize and move into a safe and convenient neighborhood. Linda says, "I want to spend my retirement years in a friendly community with people of all ages."

The current members are looking forward to meeting people interested in cohousing and in sustainable living. Interested parties are invited to attend one of the regular site tours of the property. For more information, visit [www.fairoaksecohousing.org](http://www.fairoaksecohousing.org). ★

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