



# Capitol Hill Urban Cohousing

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November 15, 6 p.m. at Central Co-op

In 1985 my husband and I bought a beautiful turn-of-the-century Capitol Hill craftsman a block from Central Co-op (then at 12th and Denny). We loved being able to walk there for those middle-of-a-recipe necessities AND for big shops. When the co-op moved to Madison it seemed so far away! In search of community, we downsized and moved to a new condo near the new Central Co-op (Madison Market) in 2006. But alas, the community we sought was not to be found in a large condo, lacking shared intention, desire for community, or shared values. We had explored the then new-to-the-U.S. concept of cohousing in the early '90s, but were not willing to leave the diversity and density of urban living on Capitol Hill.

Fast forward to 2010: We stumbled on a Capitol Hill Blog post (thanks to a neighbor knowing our passion for community) and learned about a new cohousing project slated for 12th Avenue between Howell and Olive. We attended an information session and have never looked back. Two years later we are part of a multi-generational, diverse and vital community of seven households with room for 5 more. We meet monthly and have all-day retreats periodically to strengthen our skills in communication, facilitation, decision making, etc. We still have a lot of decisions ahead, but we've developed our shared vision and values (see sidebar), and made some basic decisions by consensus, such as having both a no smoking and no guns policy, and wanting to share meals several

times a week. While details of the meals program are not yet formalized, our monthly meetings include a vegetarian potluck that is vegan and food-allergy accommodating.

Our new home is slated to break ground by the middle of next year. We are working to make it highly sustainable both through the construction phase and when we live in it. Part of the plan is a rooftop farm. More than a few raised planters on the roof, we envision a working, year-round urban farm, most of it open-air, but some in a covered greenhouse. We have a few avid gardeners in our group, so residents will have a few plots for growing what we choose. The children will also have an area so that they can learn to plant, tend, harvest what they want and grow up understanding where their food comes from.

Seattle University and Seattle Central Community College will collaborate with us on this urban agriculture project, providing grant money as well as student interns to work the farm, and help with educational outreach tours to the general public and school groups so others can see that food production in an urbanized area can happen without being ground-related.

Additionally, we've hired an urban farmer, Nicole Capizzi of Amaranth Farms ([www.amaranthurbanfarm.com](http://www.amaranthurbanfarm.com)), to assist with the physical design as well as operating the farm as a for-profit business venture. Nicole will also coordinate educational outreach, including managing the student interns.



We hope our rooftop farm will be part of a neighborhood food network. Nicole will help us realize this, developing a network of plots around Capitol Hill to encourage a hyper-local food chain from production to consumption that involves very little vehicular transportation.

We'd love an opportunity to share more with you in person at our next info session, Thursday, November 15, 6-7:30 p.m. at Central Co-op's new community space, 1900 E Madison St. Please RSVP to [info@centralcoop.coop](mailto:info@centralcoop.coop).

Read about cohousing, our plans, and a bit about the members of our community at [www.capitolhillurbancohousing.org](http://www.capitolhillurbancohousing.org).

sheila hoffman,  
capitol hill urban cohousing

## CUC Vision & Values

### Our Vision

We are an urban community bridging generations, aiming to be good neighbors on Capitol Hill. We value sharing and seek health, both for ourselves and our planet.

### Our Values

#### • Sharing

Sharing is the bedrock of our community. We commit to supporting each other by sharing resources and knowledge, and embracing life's experiences good and bad.

#### • Environmental Awareness

Understanding the web of life is complex, we commit to making conscious choices that honor our relationship to the earth.

#### • Intergenerational

Appreciating the wisdom that comes from every stage of life, we foster a community that supports each individual from child to elder.

#### • Neighborhood Partnership

Recognizing the limitations of insular living, we commit to being an active part of our Capitol Hill neighborhood as both leaders and learners.

#### • Healthy Individuals

Knowing that a community is only as healthy as its members, we commit to taking responsibility for our personal growth and development, both physical and emotional.

#### • Healthy Community

In order to foster healthy relationships and a healthy community, we commit to communicating with respect, compassion, authenticity, with the intention of identifying solutions together.