



Planning & Transportation Commission

Staff Report (ID # 10848)

Report Type:	Study Session	Meeting Date: 11/13/2019
Summary Title:	Study Session on Cohousing and Coliving	
Title:	Study Session Regarding Cohousing and Coliving With Presentations from Cohousing and/or Coliving Owners and/or Operators in the Bay Area, and Commissioner Discussion and Questions	
From:	Jonathan Lait	

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Planning and Transportation Commission (PTC) conduct a Study Session regarding Cohousing and Coliving featuring presentations from owners and/or operators of such housing communities in the Bay Area. No action will be taken.

Background

The terms cohousing and coliving refer to models of housing that emphasize establishing and nurturing community among households that may share one home or may share common facilities in a neighborhood of homes. The building, home, or neighborhood design may emphasize shared spaces, such as common kitchens, laundry facilities, outdoor space, recreational space, or other spaces that all members of the cohousing or coliving community can access. Cohousing and coliving communities also provide private space for each household.

While design can play an important role in cohousing and coliving, the emphasis on building and sustaining meaningful relationships with fellow households sets these communities apart from other housing developments and living arrangements. Cohousing communities typically have individual single-family homes or apartment units for each household with shared community space. Coliving facilities are typically one home or apartment unit with private rooms for each member of the community. Some coliving facilities are larger multi-unit buildings that feature private dwelling space for each member, with shared cooking facilities and other shared amenities.

The Cohousing Association of the United States reports that cohousing first emerged in Denmark; that the first cohousing in the US was completed in 1991; and that by 2008 more

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than 113 cohousing communities were established in the United States. A cohousing community was recently constructed at 445 Calderon Avenue in Mountain View, California.¹ This community features 19 flats and townhomes with 6,000 square feet of shared facilities.

In the Bay Area and other major metropolitan areas in the United States, coliving has emerged as a tool to both provide more affordable housing, more flexible living arrangements, while also building community among residents.

It should be noted, that different cohousing and coliving communities have created their own definitions. The above description identifies some of the common characteristics of cohousing and coliving communities. Additionally, many communities possess these characteristics and may not identify with the cohousing or coliving description.

Discussion

To learn more about cohousing and coliving, the Planning and Transportation Commission has invited two providers of coliving to share insights into the market trends, the operations of their communities, descriptions of the facilities they operate (unit sizes, amenities, etc.), enabling legislation at the state or local level, and the pros and cons of these living arrangements. The two providers are Starcity and Bungalow.

Starcity

Starcity defines coliving as “a new form of middle-income housing where renters share furnished communal living spaces in exchange for more affordable rent.” According to Starcity, “Affordability, convenience, and community are some of the main reasons why individuals are being drawn to Coliving as a viable and attractive urban housing solution.”

Founded in 2016 in San Francisco, Starcity is an owner, operator, and developer of Coliving communities. Starcity's mission is to make great cities accessible to everyone by providing affordable, welcoming, and flexible housing solutions for the middle class. With active communities in San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles, Starcity is leveraging unique design, development and operational expertise to become the premier Coliving brand in the otherwise undifferentiated apartment business. Earlier this year, Starcity entitled 2 vertical developments in the SoMa neighborhood of San Francisco and Downtown San Jose respectively, the latter of which is the largest approved Coliving development in the country at 803 beds.

Presenters and staff present from Starcity include Jon Dishotsky, CEO & Cofounder, and Eli Sokol, Senior Development Manager.

Jon Dishotsky is CEO and Cofounder of Starcity. He grew up in Palo Alto and lived in a cohousing home with Stanford students and his family. He graduated from UC Davis with a Bachelor's in Managerial Economics and joined Cushman & Wakefield a few years before the recession (great timing!). He did over 3 million square feet of commercial real estate transactions primarily with

¹ <http://mountainviewcohousing.org/>

hyper-growth startups and in that experience, he found that housing affordability was a major problem in cities which led him to start Starcity.

Eli Sokol is a Senior Development Manager at Starcity and oversees real estate development and entitlements at Starcity. His current projects include Starcity Minna and Starcity San Jose, 270-bed and 803-bed towers respectively that are among the largest approved purpose-built Coliving developments in the country. Prior to joining Starcity, Eli worked in commercial real estate in the Bay Area and New York City. He holds a Master of Design Studies in Real Estate from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from Washington University in St. Louis.

Bungalow

Bungalow is a co-living startup that is solving for the affordable housing and loneliness crisis impacting our nation. Bungalow pairs potential tenants who are otherwise priced out of major metropolitan cities with homeowners who own the existing, outdated housing supply, to solve a problem for both. Bungalow unlocks existing housing supply quicker and with less disruption than going through an entitlement process. Bungalow's residents consist of early career professionals, nurses, nannies, firefighters, etc., and are members of the communities in which they reside. Bungalow's homeowners own large, vacant homes that they are otherwise unable or unmotivated to procure tenants for.

In addition to solving for the affordable housing problem, Bungalow also solves for the loneliness issue by creating community. Bungalow assists residents with meet-and-greets of potential roommates before signing a lease, hosts monthly events for the entire Bungalow community, and fosters housemate bonding through individualized home events and exercises. Moreover, each home comes furnished and includes WiFi, utilities, and housekeeping to ensure proper upkeep and maintenance.

Presenters and staff present from Bungalow include Head of Field Operations Bryan Connolly, Bay Area General Manager Alex Canedo, and Head of Strategic Initiatives Ali Nichols.

Bryan Connolly heads field operations for Bungalow. In this role, he is responsible for managing operations across all of our 10 markets nationally. Bryan is a West Point graduate and Army Special Operations Officer who recently graduated from Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley. He is a leader with international experience and a proven track record in project planning and execution, leadership, management, and training.

Ali Nichols heads expansion and strategic initiatives for Bungalow. In this role, she is responsible for launching new cities for Bungalow, as well as spearheading the piloting of new initiatives. Prior to joining Bungalow, Ali had substantial experience working in various business strategy roles at Uber, IBM, and Boeing.

Alex Canedo is Bungalow's General Manager for the Bay Area. In this role, she is responsible for resident onboarding/off-boarding, creating community and day-to-day operations for the area. Prior to joining Bungalow, Alex held management roles at Castlight Health, and Jiff Inc.

Environmental Review

The item has been assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. As a discussion item there is no action to be taken. The discussion item is not a project under CEQA and is therefore exempt from CEQA.

PTC Liaison, Report Author & Contact Information

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