

KINGSTON COHOUSING NEWS

December 2024



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WHAT'S COMING UP IN 2025

JOIN US SUNDAY DECEMBER 15th

We look forward to seeing you between 2 and 5 p.m. on Sunday December 15th at the Kingston Community House, 99 York Street, in downtown Kingston. Drop in and share some holiday treats as we celebrate progress we've made this year and plan our next steps.

It's been another busy year and our progress in 2024 includes touring other cohousing communities, pursuing discussions with Providence Village, and engaging the services of Amisto Cohousing Society, a consultant group that guided the design and completion of the beautiful Vancouver Cohousing complex.

Take a look!

<https://www.amisto.ca/projects>

PROVIDENCE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENTS

We continue to engage in active discussions about opportunities in the Village, located at 1200 Princess Street. Our members are considering two separate projects: a renovation to create affordable apartments within the historic Motherhouse; and new construction on the South Lot of the Providence Village site (the parcel of land north of Elmwood Street).

Over the past year, we organized a number of tours to see the vacant floor on Level 2 of the West Wing (formerly known as The Spirituality Centre) in the Motherhouse, and Level 0 of the Marion Wing, which is expected to become available for lease in the next year. Over time, a third wing may become available.

We have engaged Amisto Cohousing to assist us with assessing the feasibility of a new construction project on the western-most portion of the [South Lot](#).

**For more information about Providence Village:
www.providencevillage.ca**

COHOUSING TOURS

One of our founding members, Susan Yee, visited a new Canadian cohousing community in Nova Scotia this past June.

Treehouse Village Ecohousing

39 Treehouse Lane, Bridgewater, Nova Scotia

<https://treehousevillage.ca/>

Treehouse Village Ecohousing is Atlantic Canada's first cohousing community and its largest multi-unit residential Passive House construction project. It is also considered one of Nova Scotia's greenest neighbourhoods.

Co-developed and managed by a group of 30 families and individuals, Treehouse aims to foster a joyful, healthy, multi-generational cohousing community that lives lightly on the earth. Their homes are situated on 16 acres of forested land in Bridgewater, a thriving town on the LaHave River in Nova Scotia — known as “Canada's ocean playground”.

Residents began taking possession of their units approximately a year ago, so there is still construction happening. Several people from Ontario chose to move there and there are many children.

Here's a [video](#) that provides more information.

And one of our longtime supporters, Chad Joshi, recently visited three cohousing communities in Massachusetts and has kindly shared his impressions.

During a trip to Massachusetts this past November, I took the opportunity to visit a few cohousing communities, of which there are dozens throughout the state. I found them on the Foundation for Intentional Community website (www.ic.org). The communities I visited are all in the vicinity of Northampton, in the western part of Massachusetts.



Pathway Cohousing

25 Mountain Laurel Path, Florence, MA

www.pathwaycohousing.org

This was the first community I visited, in Florence, a village within the city of Northampton. Established in 2000, it consists of 24 households living on six acres, but surrounded by an additional 21 acres of woods, giving it a very rural feel.

Still, it's only a short bike ride to the town centre.

Pathway can best be described as 'cohousing lite'. It is set up like a cohousing community in that it has a common house surrounded by single family and duplex homes. However, my guide told me there are few community activities and no regularly planned common meals. During my visit, I met no other residents and there was no activity in the common house, even though there are preschool-aged children in the community. This group uses a consensus governance model with a Board of Trustees and annual general meeting.

This community appears to have low turnover. I was told that, on average, one house sells per year and all recent sales have been through their waiting list rather than on the open market. This community is situated on land that is adjacent to Rocky Hill Cohousing, which was the next stop on my tour.

Rocky Hill Cohousing

100 Black Birch Trail, Northampton,
MA <https://www.rockyhillcohousing.org/>

Rocky Hill Cohousing owns 27 acres in common, most of which is wooded with trails and bike paths leading into the surrounding community. It consists of 28 houses ranging from 770 to 3000 square feet. Established 20 years ago, they also use a consensus governance model, but they have been looking into shifting over to Sociocracy. The houses are built in pairs. The common ownership property includes roofs and exterior walls of houses, along with a community house with kitchen, dining for weekly dinners, movie screen, pool table, ping pong, arts centre and jacuzzi. Some households have added an apartment to their unit for rental income.

Rocky Hill is a multi-generational community which also has Affiliate Members who include renters, as well as nearby neighbours and former residents who participate in the activities of the community but are not involved directly in the decision making. The community is currently hosting a refugee family of eight housed within the community. About half of the original founders still reside here. A game afternoon in the common house was buzzing with activity, involving adults and kids.

This community has had no turnover in five years. They have a strong vetting process for newcomers, which includes getting letters of interest, participating in meetings and dinners, and paying a nominal deposit. While the final decision for selling a unit is the owner's decision, the community assures that new residents understand the cohousing structure.

Village Hill Cohousing

**117 Olander Drive, Northampton,
MA <https://www.villagehillcohousing.org/>**

Village Hill Cohousing is the newest of the communities I visited. It is situated adjacent to Smith College and thus has a suburban feel to it. It consists of 28 houses ranging from 1 to 4 bedrooms and is multi-generational, but currently slanted more to the 50+ age group. There are only five school-aged children in the community, for whom there is a small outdoor sandbox for play.

Compared with the other communities I visited, this one seemed to be lacking in play structures and playgrounds, but that could be because they are newer and thus less well established as communities.

The Village Hill Common House has a high-end kitchen, dining room, small dining/play area for kids, and two guest rooms.

This community also uses Sociocracy as their governance model and I was able to observe a general circle meeting during my visit, which was attended by 25+ members in person and an additional six to eight via Zoom. It was a well facilitated meeting where there was a discussion of subjects including:

- Renovating the Common House basement to make it more accessible and inclusive to the broader local community;**
- Structuring owners' vs.. condo building insurance; and**
- How to use budget funds leftover at year end!**

There have been no vacancies for six years at Village Hill. Should units become available, they aim to bring in younger families.

Rocky Hill and Village Hill seem to work well, often sharing ideas and supporting each other. The housing in all these communities is either detached single family or duplexes ranging from 700 to 3500 sq. ft. According to Zillow.com, the market value of these units runs from U.S.\$140k to U.S.\$770k (approx. U.S. \$200-\$220 per sq ft.).

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP WITH DR. KIM BERGERON

Dr. Kim Bergeron (Kim) is excited to develop a collaborative relationship with Kingston Cohousing members to create a 'living lab' that would explore the benefits, challenges, and lessons learned when implementing a cohousing development design in Ontario. This means working together to identify challenges and develop innovative solutions and practices to increase the capacity of KCH members and others, such as government decision-makers and private developers, related to a cohousing development approach. This will be done by engaging in community-based participatory action research.

Keywords to describe Kim's research interests are intergenerational living, aging in the community, collective wisdom, social justice and healthy aging. Kim's research portfolio includes creating a 'living lab' for older adults and post-secondary students' participating in an intergenerational home-sharing program (Loyalist College), contributing to the development of the Aging in Community, Education and Research hub (Humber College) and, most recently, collaborating with the second largest long-term care home in rural Nova Scotia to create an intergenerational activities program involving elementary and high school students, residents, and older adults living in the community (East Cumberland Lodge). The long-term care home will function as a Seniors Centre for all older adults regardless of where they live and involve children of all ages.

Kim is a social justice community-based researcher and ally to those who experience structural and systemic barriers based on age, race, socioeconomic status, geographic location, and disability. She is

trained as a policy analyst and uses research methods and skills to change inequitable and unjust policies. She works collaboratively with others to implement community-based participatory action research to influence structural, systemic, and policy barriers to create a more equitable society. Kim is an Assistant Professor (Continuing Adjunct) in the Aging and Health and Rehabilitation Leadership graduate programs in the School of Rehabilitation Therapy at Queen's University and a Faculty member at the Trent University Centre for Aging and Society.

LOOKING TO 2025

LAUNCH OF OUR WEBSITE!

Yes, we will soon unveil our new website where we'll be able to post news and showcase current developments.

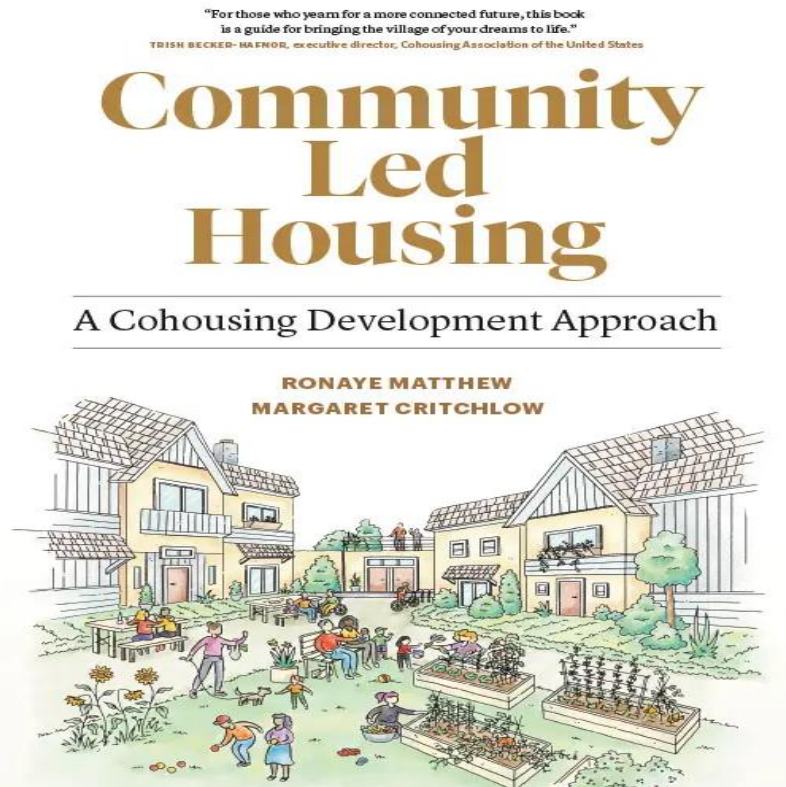
A KINGSTON COHOUSING BOOK CLUB? (Sort of...)

Actually, we have plans to read just one book together this year: Community Led Housing by Canadian cohousing experts Ronaye Matthew and Margaret Critchlow. It's a big book, so we'll be proceeding a chapter or two at a time.

At our request, the Kingston Frontenac Public Library has ordered a copy, and we expect it will be available for borrowing soon.

By buying ten copies of the book, we earned a 90-minute Zoom consultation with Ronaye Matthew. In the new year, we'll be consulting with her on our financial framework and design work.

When you attend our Dec. 15th holiday get together, you'll be able to enter your name in a draw for a free copy of Community Led Housing.



For those who have already purchased their copy of Community Led Housing, please remember to bring it with you to the social.

And if you can't make it on December 15th...

Happy



Holidays!

Please share our newsletter and feel free to email us at:

kingstoncohousing@gmail.com

