



**OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR**

**CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA**

**HEATHER FARGO
MAYOR**

March 15, 2007

Supervisor Roberta MacGlashan
County of Sacramento
700 H Street, Suite 2450
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Supervisor MacGlashan:

It is my understanding that you will soon be considering a cohousing project in Orangevale. I am writing this letter to bring to your attention the success of Sacramento's first cohousing project, and to offer my personal support for this housing type. In fact, I have often asked: "Why don't we have more cohousing in the Sacramento area?"

I was on the Sacramento City Council in 1991 when we approved the project. Sacramento's cohousing community has 25 homes on 1.3 acres at Fifth & T Streets, at a density of just over 19 homes per acre. However, the community does not feel crowded because of the way the homes are clustered around a common green which leads to the centrally-located Common House. From the street, the homes look like many of the neighboring Victorian homes. A casual visitor would not recognize anything different until they enter into the central courtyard/common green. The design is compatible with the surrounding historic neighborhood, and it has been very well received by neighbors. Furthermore, it has won city-wide praise and awards.

Sacramento Cohousing has added greatly to the quality, stability, and value of the area by the infusion of investment dollars and homeowners. The project helped stabilize the neighborhood, which was perceived 15 years ago as being in danger of losing its residential character to encroaching office development from the north. A great many of the then-boarded up houses have since been rehabbed and quite a few then-empty lots now have new homes. The Common House is available to the neighborhood for meetings and occasional public events.

Sacramento Cohousing residents work actively to make a better community. It was obvious to everyone in the neighborhood that an afterschool program for kids was essential. The neighborhood association had been trying to put together a community center in Southside Park for years -- long before the cohousing community was built. The cohousing members got involved in 1993, as soon as they moved in. The project was spearheaded by an elementary school teacher and an attorney. Within a few months, they had arranged for a temporary clubhouse. With the help of Jimmie Yee, the City Council representative, funding to build a permanent youth clubhouse was finally secured in 1999. Today, the youth clubhouse sits next to the public swimming pool at Southside Park and is open at 3:30 p.m. every school day to welcome area youth with games, tutoring, and computer access.

This innovative approach to housing has helped Sacramento create an increased sense of caring in its neighborhoods. The concept of neighbors helping neighbors is really an old concept, but one that meets real needs for modern families, who benefit greatly from the supportive environment cohousing has created. I am enthusiastic about what it has done for our community, and I believe you will be proud to have such a project in Orangevale as well. Please call me if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Fargo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

HEATHER FARGO
MAYOR

cc: Marty Maskall, Sycamore Village