

Our Household Composition System

(prepared 8/9/17 by Susan Hedgpeth, Barbara Lynch, and Yehudit Lieberman)

In 1999-2000 as our community was forming, we found that the majority of folks who were coming to our meetings and wanting to join our group were adults without children. We were concerned that all the slots would be filled before any families with children were able to commit.

It seems that families with young children are reluctant to join a cohousing community until it is fairly well along the way to reality. For example, a family won't want to commit to a group if there isn't a site yet - they want to know about the neighborhood, schools, closeness to other family & friends, safety, etc. Also a family may not want to commit until they know there will be other families in the group with children for their children to play with.

Since we all agreed we wanted an intergenerational community and definitely wanted to include children of various ages, we came up with a Household Composition system to try to accommodate this.

Important Note: *This can only be done legally before the units are actually sold. During the early stages of forming a community, the group can decide on criteria for membership including setting up a priority system. Once the units are sold and you transition to a condominium association, you cannot legally put restrictions on who can buy.*

Our idea was to create groups with different number of slots for each. When one group was filled, any new people would be added to a waiting list for that group.

At first, we created 3 groups with 10 slots in each (we had a total of 32 units):

- 10 households for singles
- 10 households for 2+ adults including children age 15 or over
- 10 households for families with one or more children under 15

After awhile we added a 4th group because we realized that (1) some couples who had no children presently but were planning to have children would have them by the time (or shortly after) we moved in, and (2) some families with teens or older children would likely be child-less by the time we moved in because the children would have left home for college or otherwise.

The breakdown looked like this:

- 10 units will be reserved for households of only one person.
- 9 units will be reserved for households that contain 2 or more people, but no children under the age of 15.
- 8 units will be reserved for households that include children under 15.
- 5 units will be reserved for households that either include children under 15 or have stated their intent to have children within the next five years.

Later, we changed the maximum number to a range rather than a definite number to give us more flexibility.

Below is the final system we used, along with the consensed proposal language. This was a handout that we had available for all to see and the Membership Committee kept it updated as households joined (or left).

**Pleasant Hill Cohousing
Household Composition
As of 12/27/00**

This table represents our current Household Composition decision and covers all 32 of the slots in our development as currently planned. See full text of decision below.

	9-11 slots will be reserved for households of only one person	8-10 slots will be reserved for households that contain 2 or more people, but no children under the age of 16	7-9 slots will be reserved for households that include children under 16	4-6 slots will be reserved for households that either include children under 16 or have stated their intent to have children within the next 5 years
Current Members	[names listed here]	[names & ages of children listed here]	[names & ages of children listed here]	[names & ages of children listed here]
Totals (32)				

Waiting List Members:

[names listed here in order of when they were put on the WL]

Household Composition System as of September 1, 2000 - Passed by consensus 8/23/00

In order to promote household composition diversity, the guidelines presented below will be used to guide us in establishing membership in our group.

These guidelines will remain in effect until September 1, 2001 or until the first house is sold, whichever comes first. If no new proposal is drafted and approved by September 1, 2001, then any open slots will first be filled from the wait list. If no one from the wait list is interested in the open slot(s) then these slot(s) will be open to potential members on a first come first served basis.

The 32 membership slots in our development will be reserved in the following numbers for households of the following compositions. When a slot becomes available, we will offer it to the first household from the waiting list that does not cause any of the categories to be out of the stated range.

9-11 slots will be reserved for households of only one person.

8-10 slots will be reserved for households that contain 2 or more people, but no children under the age of 16.

7-9 slots will be reserved for households that include children under 16.

4-6 slots will be reserved for households that either include children under 16 or have stated their intent to have children within the next five years.