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Co-housing project planned near downtown Fort Collins

'Living community' would be yet another for Boulder company

By Kevin McCullen

Rocky Mountain News Staff Writer

BOULDER — A Boulder-based company expects to build another co-housing project in Fort Collins to bring a "living community" to the downtown area.

Wonderland Hill Development Co. has developed other co-housing villages in the state and around the country, including the existing Greyrock Commons in Fort Collins and Harmony Village in Golden.

A non-profit group that holds title to 11 acres in Fort Collins, the Friends of Martinez Park, this week selected Wonderland to build a co-housing village of up to 40 homes in an area near downtown.

Co-housing is designed to allow neighbors to share some common facilities, such as a kitchen, dining area, children's play areas, workshops, gardens and a common courtyard. It is based on a Danish model of communities, said Jim Leach, president of Wonderland Hill.

"It's designed to attract people who are interested in working with their neighbors and living a lifestyle that's rewarding. It tends to attract people who want more say in their neighborhoods," said Leach, who is scheduled later this week to receive a national design award from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Co-housing is an effort to create a neighborhood that functions to help people know each other better and work together," he said.

The Friends of Martinez Park also have proposed building 10 single-family homes and a neighborhood commercial building with loft apartments. The proposed project is about a 5-minute walk from the Old Town area of Fort Collins.

Wonderland was involved in construction of the first co-housing project in the state, Nyland in Lafayette, and it developed Highline Crossing in Littleton. The company also is building a co-housing village in north Boulder, where it broke ground last month.

Wonderland's project in Boulder, Nomad co-housing, will include 11 townhome units with a shared central courtyard, gardens and kitchen. Seven of the units will be sold at a rate designed to make them affordable to buyers earning 60% to 115% of the area's median income.

Co-housing projects in Colorado have attracted a wide range of buyers, from senior citizens to singles and families, Leach said. Buyers also seem to vary by occupation and income.