

Immersive Living Communities

Hello! My name is Ashley Harris and I've designed an immersive living concept to revolutionize what we now refer to as "trac housing" or "subdivisions." My concept rests on how we can heal ourselves and how we can heal the earth when we preserve large wild spaces and are immersed daily in this wilderness as a community. I've submitted several items that, together, help provide a more thorough representation of my idea for healing our earth. The first is a 3x3 ft 3D model I've built as a visual for my Immersive Living concept. It is at the MONAH for any judges to reference, along with another diagram I use in my video and my video notes. The second piece is a video introducing my idea and giving you the "why" behind it. The third is a brief written proposal of how to initiate my idea, including an example advertisement to potential community members and some troubleshooting of potential objections or challenges.

Please now view the following YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/1fmtE4w2Npc>

Proposal for Immersive Living

Studies have repeatedly shown how access to green spaces and strong community benefit our bodies and minds. In my Immersive Living design, everyone's back door leads to large areas of uninterrupted wild spaces and at the center of each community is a shared space where people come to celebrate, play, work, and connect. This design also protects large tracts of land, which is better for the earth's biodiversity than preserving small areas like we do for our traditional suburb park.

How would this place be built? The short answer is: like any other subdivision. More specifically, my conceptualized size for these tracts is .5 x .5 miles in its outer dimensions. This land would be purchased by a developer with the intent to build according to Immersive Living designs. The land would be as wild and undeveloped as possible, although land reclamation is also an option. The developer would then build the housing units and shared living spaces that are practical for the area, with a diversity of spaces that would welcome a diversity of people in all stages of life (apartment complexes as well as single family homes). All dwellings would be modest and focused on resource efficiency and sustainable building practices. The outside individual lot sizes would be very small, just enough for a driveway and backyard with an option to fence for pets.

With this model, many more houses could be built in a smaller space than current subdivisions, but an equivalent price point would be gained by the developer because of the desirability of nature and community immersion. I believe that people will pay high prices for smaller homes for the quality of life that Immersive Living would provide. The money that the developer saved in building costs would go to putting in a basic trail system and a few basic community center amenities to get the community started and attract people to these homes.

An advertisement to buy a home or rent a condo in an Immersive Living Community might look like this:

Tired of the miles of concrete out your window on your way to work? Tired of getting into your car every time you want to get out into nature? Or, are you tired of feeling isolated by living out in the middle of nowhere?

Whether you are currently a city-slicker or a country dweller, you can come live where the natural world and vibrant community collide! You no longer have to choose between serenity and neighborhood because Immersive Living Communities have it All!

How do you know if an Immersive Living Community is right for you and your family? Well, are you...

Ready to trade indoor square footage for miles of access to the beauty and serenity of natural, undeveloped spaces?

Ready to commit to community interaction, including deciding as a community how to use group spaces and work together to protect and preserve natural resources?

Ready to use your car rarely and enjoy the health and joy that comes from traversing wild spaces using your own power? Or, if you wish, you can live here without a car at all! This place is designed to be able to walk or bike everywhere you need to go in less than 20 minutes!

If your answer is "Yes!" Come Tour our Immersive Living Community Today!

Potential Obstacles

I foresee a few obstacles with this idea, and I'm sure there are many other hurdles I have yet to foresee. One obstacle would be how the shared use spaces would be owned and maintained. I think the best way to solve this issue would be to have the residents equally share the community land, like an HOA concept. Everyone that is a resident would have a voice in trail building, community center offerings, and along with a voice, they would share the responsibility of upkeep of these shared spaces. This could create conflict in a community, but I think that is part of building a healthy community, where we learn and practice how to live more like a tribal unit again, with dissention, compromise and leadership, just like in any shared living situation. The community would act like a larger family unit because they inhabit shared space and all persons have a voice and a responsibility to the whole.

Another obstacle could be the potential gap in socioeconomic diversity. Houses would be smaller, but there would be expenses in maintaining the community land, similar to an HOA, which could cause it to be unaffordable to those living on a tight budget. Ways to solve this would be to implement some government assisted housing in each community, create jobs within the community in exchange for rent or the HOA-like fees, and also to make sure all residents have an equal voice in the community, regardless of their rent or owner status.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to immerse yourselves in my idea! I call my idea Immersive Living because I believe we can heal our earth and continue to live on this planet by immersing ourselves in both nature and community. The first step to living sustainably and healing the earth is to allow the earth to heal us of our greed, selfishness, and ignorance. The earth will teach us how to live harmoniously again if we are around her and can listen. Together, we can relearn what it means to live off the land in this new age and time. When we immerse ourselves in nature and build greater levels of community, we (ourselves and our children) will gain the vision and love it takes to take care of our earth and each other.