



## **2008 Fact Sheet**

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## **GEOS NEIGHBORHOOD *Community Design Fact Sheet***

Elevating sustainable community design to a whole new level, the Geos Neighborhood is all about solar efficiency, not just a few solar panels. It is about maximizing space, not having the most space. It is about cultivating a garden not just for beauty, but also to conserve water.

Geos succeeds as a comfortable, modern and attractive neighborhood, while cleverly allowing environmentally sustainable function to dictate form. This was no easy feat: Geos Neighborhood's architects and land planners exhaustively reviewed dozens of options in terms of home, street, alley, pedestrian walkway and park placement to develop the most energy-efficient and sustainable community design possible. What emerged is a new model for residential design that mixes some of the best "energy-smart" concepts found in Europe, South America and even historic downtown Denver.

Integrating livability with sustainability, Geos' forward-thinking community model breaks established design rules to create a new generation of sustainable communities. Here's how:

### **A PATTERN OF SUSTAINABILITY:**

- In one neighborhood at Geos, the strategic placement of each home relies on a groundbreaking "checkerboard design." This means that every other home sits on the front of the lot whereas its neighbor sits to the back, minimizing the shadowing that could impede a home's solar collection. This innovative, solar-sensitive pattern differs markedly from a typical neighborhood where homes are designed with a linear setback – each the same distance from the property line in a configuration that can block access to the sun.
- This checkerboard concept minimizes space-wasting side yards and instead creates one larger, courtyard-like front yard or backyard for each home. At Geos, every square foot counts, even outdoors, where residents will enjoy private, usable outdoor rooms as a livable extension of their home.
- Homes are situated so the home's longest expanse is on the south side to maximize passive solar collection. Windows are minimized on the colder, north-facing walls.

### **JUST ONE TREE MAKES A DIFFERENCE:**

- The deciduous tree that is planted on the south side of homes was designed to make the indoors feel more comfortable for residents by providing shade. Generous tree plantings along the east, south and west sides of buildings will further provide shade from Colorado's harsh summer sun.

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- Where possible, Geos will utilize “living fences” to divide spaces – hedges of hardy shrubs instead of wood or metal fencing.
- Geos offers an extensive and integrated system of pathways and parks. The neighborhood connects to Ralston Creek Trail. Also adjacent to Geos is the Croke Canal and a lush riparian habitat.
- Community gardens will offer opportunities for residents to grow their own food. Each green has a different type of fruit tree surrounding it, with the vision of an orchard co-op.

**HIGHLY ADVANCED  
BIOLOGICAL  
STORMWATER  
MANAGEMENT  
SYSTEMS:**

- Rain gardens will be cultivated throughout the community to harvest water and filtrate rain and snowfall.
- Each green, or percolation park, is a storm water detention basin that also functions as a neighborhood park, providing play spaces, gardens and bird habitats.
- Downspout and parking lot tributaries will divert runoff from impervious surfaces to rain gardens, planting areas, parks and lawns.
- Storm water also is managed alongside each streetscape. Each street-side rain garden is submerged six inches below street level, thus diverting the water to the tree located alongside the street. Then, cobblestone dissipates the velocity of the water before it reaches a drain that recycles the excess water back to the neighborhood parks instead of sending it through a storm drain.

**NATURALLY  
POWERED, PEOPLE  
CONNECTED:**

- Throughout Geos Neighborhood there is an atmosphere of community and space provided to encourage social activities – pedestrian promenades, common greens, community gardens and events and meeting places.
- As a result of the consistent emphasis on energy and resource conservation and preservation, and the integration of natural systems into the neighborhood, Geos Neighborhood also fosters a strong culture of neighborhood environmental stewardship. It demonstrates how the actions of individuals – in collaboration with their Geos neighbors – can make a difference in environmental quality.

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