



Oshara Village Models Sustainable Walkable Town in Santa Fe, New Mexico

Study finds town's energy-efficient homes can reduce energy costs by over 50 percent and a family's carbon footprint by 26,000 pounds of CO2 per year by living in an energy-conscious walkable New Urbanist town -- gasoline consumption in NU towns can also be 60 percent lower

For Immediate Release:

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SANTA FE, NM; March 25, 2009 – Lowering carbon emissions is one of the top priorities for [Oshara Village](#), a New Urbanist town under construction in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The town is one the country's first environmentally-focused New Urbanist neighborhoods in the U.S. combining green building techniques within a mixed-use, mixed-income walkable community.

Oshara's sustainability features are the subject of two energy studies conducted by [New Village Institute](#), a non-profit organization based in Santa Fe. The transportation study found that **Oshara households could reduce the amount of gasoline used in driving by between 62 and 80 percent**, depending upon the fuel efficiency of their car. The home energy study found that **a family living in an energy-efficient home would use 58.7 percent less energy to run their home** than in a typical energy-compliant U.S. home. A 10-minute DVD "The Oshara Model" summarizing the energy studies is available at www.OsharaVillage.com.

"All the home energy saving features are off-the-shelf technology currently available to builders and are only slightly higher in cost -- usually not more than 3 to 5 percent," said Alan Hoffman, town founder of Oshara Village. "However, the long-term energy savings for the homeowner are over 50 percent for the duration of their stay in the home. The New Urbanist resident can save 26,000 pounds of carbon emissions per year simply by walking to basic services," said Hoffman.

Currently 40 households are now living on the 450-acre site that is approved for 750 households, light commercial in the business zone, local agriculture with over 50 percent of the land preserved as Open Space. Oshara has installed a neighborhood-wide water treatment and recycling program to reuse 100% of the black water from residence homes for landscaping. All of the homes are built with passive solar design, highly-energy efficient construction and include Energy Star appliances.

Oshara's model home won a *Build Green New Mexico* award for both its architectural appeal and its environmental features. The house includes solar panels for domestic hot water and wiring for photovoltaic panels. Homeowners can receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the total cost of the solar or photovoltaic system, up to a \$2,000 cap.

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Background on Home Energy Use

In the New Village Institute home energy study, the amount of energy needed to heat a 2,000 square foot Oshara Model Home was compared to the energy needed to heat a new house with an identical floor plan in Santa Fe. The Oshara home incorporated passive solar orientation and energy-saving features into the building envelope; Energy Star-rated lights and appliances (required by Oshara Village in all its homes); an energy-efficient boiler; in-floor radiant heating system; a catalytic wood-burning stove, and solar hot water heating. The comparison home was constructed using current 2" X 6" frame building practices using standard fiberglass batts, a forced-air central heating and cooling system, and no solar orientation.

Background on Transportation Energy

The transportation study measured how much gasoline is used by a typical New Mexico driver as compared to an Oshara Village resident whom could meet most of his/her daily living needs by walking or biking within the village. The reduced driving in New Urbanism is the result of an intentional neighborhood design where homes are located within a five-minute walk to the town center offering shopping, dining, recreation, healthcare, civic center, day care, etc. Oshara founder Hoffman estimates that as the town gets built out, 50 percent of residents will work from home or will work in a business located within walking distance of the town.

Transportation Study Details:

The transportation study found that an Oshara resident driving a hybrid (gas/electric) car would use 20 percent of the gasoline of a typical New Mexico driver or a net savings of 80 percent in energy savings per year. The study used figures from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation to compare the 12,329 miles per year driven by a typical New Mexico motorist to an estimated 4,768 miles per year that an Oshara resident would drive. These energy savings equated to 442 less gallons of gasoline per year - equal to the difference between 550 gallons used per year for a typical New Mexico driver versus an estimated 108 gallons per year for a typical Oshara Village resident. In the transportation study, the Oshara resident drove a fuel-efficient car with 44 miles per gallon, as compared to a the standard American car fuel efficiency of 22.4 miles per gallon. **On a national comparison, an Oshara resident would drive approximately 60 percent less than a typical American.**

New Village Institute:

Diego Mulligan, co-founder of New Village Institute based in Santa Fe, NM, said:

“If U.S. cities were developed following the Oshara example of reclaiming wastewater for irrigation, requiring Energy Star appliances, and encouraging solar energy for domestic hot water and home heating, an American family could significantly lessen its impact on the environment and reduce its energy consumption and costs – while still enjoying a high quality of life,”

“The Oshara Model” Documentary

The full home energy study and transportation studies are available on the New Village Institute website at: www.NewVillageInstitute.org. A 10-minute video entitled **“The Oshara Model: Sustainability for Mainstream America”** describes the New Urbanist approach of walkable mixed-use communities and summarizes the Oshara energy-use studies commissioned by New Village Institute.

More information available at the OsharaVillage.com website or by calling **505-629-4116**.