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and stand up eight.”
Japanese proverb

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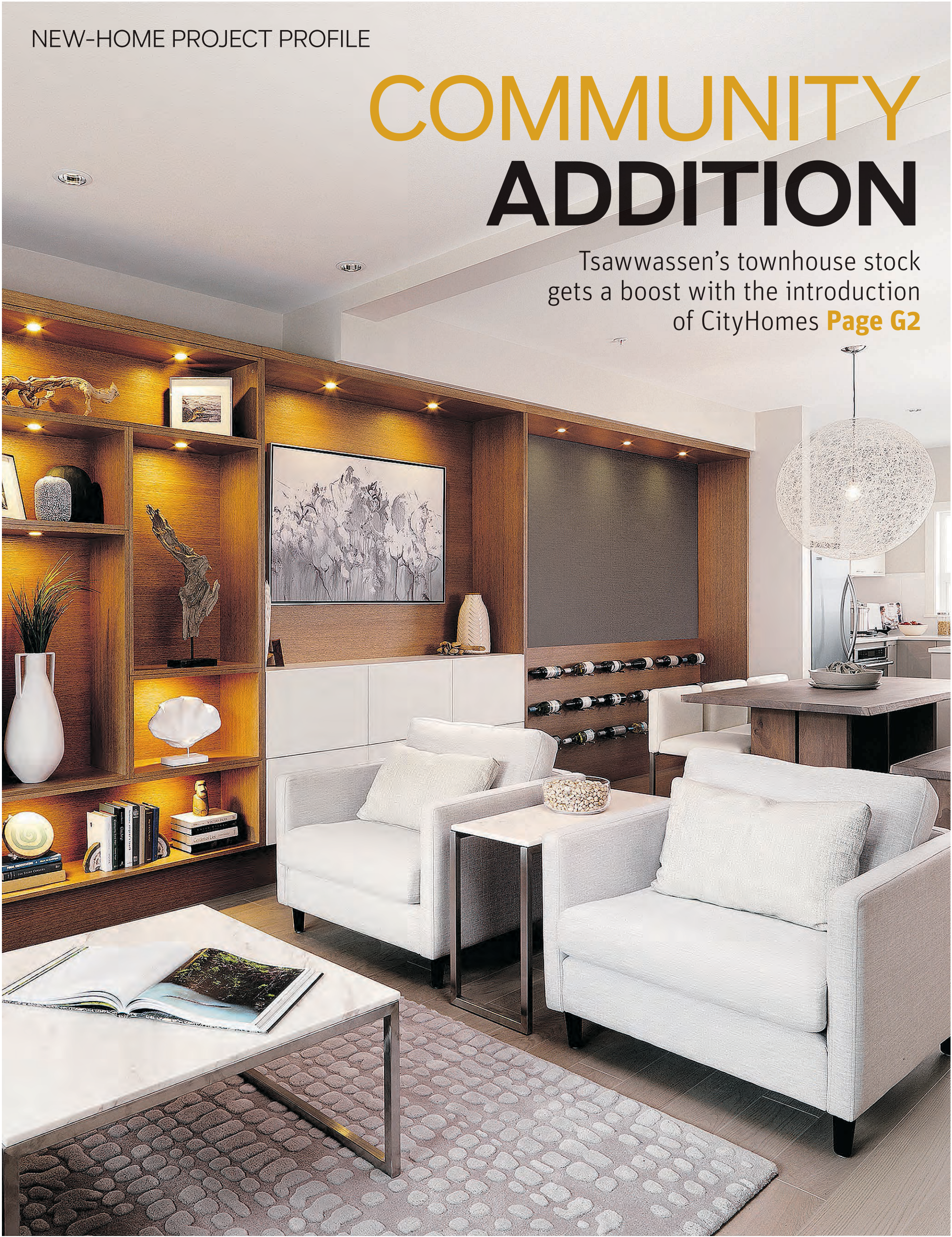
WESTCOASTHOMES

SATURDAY, JULY 25 | 2015 | EDITOR BARBARA GUNN | HOMES@VANCOUVERSUN.COM

NEW-HOME PROJECT PROFILE

COMMUNITY
ADDITION

Tsawwassen’s townhouse stock
gets a boost with the introduction
of CityHomes **Page G2**



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NEW-HOME PROJECT PROFILE



The CityHomes residences will have a deck or patio space, or two, in the case of the larger units.

Increasing the options

Century Group townhouses poised to take their place in Tsawwassen

CityHomes at Northgate
Project location: Tsawwassen
Project size: 41 one-, two- and three-bedroom townhouses
Residence size: 700 to 1,900 sq. ft
Developer: Century Group
Architect: Peter Dandyk
Interior design: Portico Design
Price: one-bed \$289,900; two-bed \$359,900; three-bed from \$439,900
Sales centre: 1708 55A St., Tsawwassen
Telephone: 604-948-2345
Sales contact: Doug Lucier — 604-644-2099
Hours: noon to 5 p.m., Sat to Thurs
Website: cityhomesnorthgate.ca
Occupancy: February 2016

BARBARA GUNN
VANCOUVER SUN

The 41 residences now being constructed just blocks inside the entrance to Tsawwassen represent a relative rarity for the South Delta community.

While there’s a preponderance of single-family homes in town, as well as a good number of apartments — most of them clustered near the centre of Tsawwassen — townhouses are somewhat scarce.

By early next year, not so much. Taking their place on 55A Street, just one block west of the main drag and a short distance from Highway 17, will be CityHomes, the townhouse component of the Century Group’s new mixed-use Northgate development. (Also being constructed on the site is The Wexford, a four-storey seniors’ community, and a commercial building that will house a mix of retail and office space.)

Will it be a much-needed addition to Tsawwassen? Absolutely, says Doug Lucier, who is handling the sales and marketing for CityHomes.

“It fills a need that we have in Tsawwassen,” he says, noting that for the younger set and those with families, the townhouses represent an attractive middle ground between a condo and a (perhaps unattainable) detached home.

“This does fill a niche. This is, for younger people, much better, I believe, than a condo. It is absolutely a great entrance into the market.”

Not surprisingly, then, a good number of buyers who have purchased homes belong to that demographic.

“We’re getting a lot of young people, young families,” says Lucier, adding that singles and some downsizers have rounded out the mix. Twenty-seven homes in two of three blocks have so far been made available (the remaining 14 in the third



Above: Bedroom at CityHomes, the townhouse component of the Century Group’s new mixed-use Northgate development in Tsawwassen., Below left: Ensuite bathrooms have spacious walk-in showers with porcelain tile surrounds. Below right: Two handsomely outfitted show suites, the work of Portico Design, are on display.



block will likely come to market in September), and close to half have sold, primarily to individuals from the area.

Residences have one, two or three bedrooms, with single- and multi-level configurations on offer. Given that the project has underground parking, and

that some units are stacked one on top of the other, CityHomes can also be seen to be somewhat of a hybrid of townhouse/condo living, notes Joanna Kwan, Century Group’s vice-president of real estate development.

“We offer five different unit types, from single-level one-



bedroom to three-level three-bedroom plans, all with their own street entry — yes, even the one-bedroom — and underground parking, and yes, even the one-bedroom,” she says, echoing Lucier’s comments about the need for this type of residence.

“It’s true that the housing options in Tsawwassen have been primarily single-family detached homes and condos,” Kwan says, “while demand has grown significantly for townhouses.”

CONTINUED ON G4



Kitchens feature two-tone cabinets, quartz countertops, mosaic tile backsplashes, stainless steel undermount sinks, Panasonic microwaves, and KitchenAid Architect Series refrigerators, dishwashers, wall ovens and gas cooktops. Large windows let plenty of natural light stream into this amenity-filled space.

FROM PAGE G2

Increasing the options

Among the younger folks attracted to the project were first-time buyers Lee and Nicole Zirk, Tsawwassen residents who bought a three-bedroom unit. “We were drawn to the townhouse-style home, rather than a condo, (because of) the idea of our own front door,” says Nicole, 26, who works as a booking clerk in the radiology department of Vancouver General Hospital. “This townhouse gives us two levels and 1,440 square feet that a condo cannot provide. We knew we wanted to live in Tsawwassen, but could not afford a detached home at this time.” Among the features that appealed to Nicole and husband Lee, a 30-year-old mechanical engineer, were the hardwood floors, the quartz countertops and the KitchenAid appliances. Visitors to the CityHomes sale centre can check out such features courtesy of five suites open for viewing, two of them fully decorated. These range from a 700-square-foot unit with one bedroom and den — it sells for \$289,900 — to a 1,900-square-foot handsomely outfitted residence with two private outdoor areas, three-and-a-half bathrooms and three good-sized bedrooms, one of which has been imagined as an enormous top-level media room. This home, which sells for \$679,000, also

has direct in-suite access to the parking. (Occupants of the other units will be able to access their parking stalls — one or two, depending on the size of the unit — by stairs or elevator.) Every home will have a patio or deck — and in some cases, two. Large windows on two sides (or three in the case of the six end units) allow for air flow and plenty of natural light. Ceilings rise to nine feet in the open-concept homes, which have oak engineered hardwoods in the main living areas, carpeting in the bedrooms, and porcelain tile flooring in the bathrooms. Kitchens feature two-tone cabinets, mosaic tile backsplashes, stainless steel undermount sinks, Panasonic microwaves, and KitchenAid Architect Series refrigerators, dishwashers, wall ovens and gas cooktops. Bathrooms, meanwhile, feature quartz counters, laminate wood vanities and polished chrome faucets and hardware. Ensembles have large walk-in showers with porcelain tile surrounds. Residences — which are but a stroll to transit, shops and restaurants, as well as the South Delta Rec Centre and the highly regarded private Southpointe Academy — have Brownstone-style exteriors, with stone, stucco and HardiPlank accents. Tsawwassen, says longtime



In this 1,900-square-foot three-bedroom unit, the top-level space is imagined as a huge media room, to demonstrate the possibilities.

local Lucier, has changed in recent years — and for the better. “Before, there was no shopping, there were no (private) schools, and it was hard to get here,” he says, noting that several developments have tweaked that picture — or will in the near future. Among them; the coming bridge

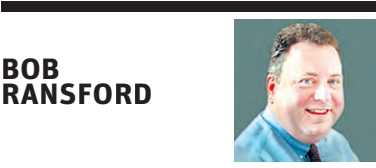
that will replace the George Massey Tunnel, the enormous malls being constructed on Tsawwassen First Nations lands, and the fairly recent openings of the South Fraser Perimeter Road and the new Southpointe Academy campus. “You’ve got the school, you’ve got the shopping, you’ve got

the access,” he says. “And it’s the sunniest spot in Greater Vancouver.” Little wonder, then, that the community is attracting home-buyer attention, Lucier says. “The values are spectacular here, compared to anywhere else with this proximity to Vancouver,” he says. The Century Group’s Kwan agrees. “Affordability is a hot topic in Metro Vancouver, especially for single people and young families that are finding it difficult to enter the market or afford the kind of housing that meets their needs for more space,” she says. “In that regard, Tsawwassen is a great option because it is a well-established community, it’s safe, it offers an active outdoor lifestyle, while the housing market is still relatively stable and affordable.” That’s an observation that resonates with Nicole Zirk, who was born and raised in the community. “The townhouse was a great fit,” she says. “We also love the idea of moving into something brand new, (and) with the limited townhomes available in Tsawwassen, we were going to have to start looking at other communities as a condo was too small and a detached home was too expensive.”

REAL ESTATE MATTERS

A neighbourhood’s value lies in its social connections

Changing times: Aging of baby boomers creating a ‘huge shift’ that’s being felt everywhere



BOB RANSFORD

This week, as I prepared some notes for a talk to a group in the Richmond community where I live about how we can manage change in our neighbourhoods, I reflected on what we value and cherish in our neighbourhoods. It’s not the things we can measure — building heights, floor space ratios, square footages, setback dimensions, building materials or colours — that matter. It’s not these tangible things that make us feel comfortable or uncomfortable in our neighbourhoods. People define our neighbourhoods. It’s our affinity for our neighbours that makes us feel comfortable. That affinity is an unspoken acceptance that is based on a familiarity. Familiarity isn’t only about everyone looking like us, living like us and having the same status that we have attained in life. But it comes from either sharing common lifestyles and common socio-economic backgrounds or from accepting that each of us with our differences contributes to the kind of diversity that makes a

neighbourhood feel comfortable, stable and authentic within the context of the constant evolution that takes place in our society. When I was growing up in the same Richmond neighbourhood where I still live, we had plenty of diversity. People from all parts of the world lived within the few blocks of where I lived. Some had been there for ages and others were recent arrivals. I grew up in a family where our income level was probably at the higher end of the spectrum within the neighbourhood. We also had a bigger house than most. But our lifestyles were similar. There were a lot of young families with small children in the neighbourhood. There were blue-collar workers and white-collar workers. Many commuted daily to work outside Richmond. There were still some farm families with intergenerational relationships that meant that multiple households of the same family lived quite close to each other, having subdivided old farmsteads to provide housing for different members of the family — the densification of that era. There were older folks and poorer folks on the same block, but you really couldn’t tell who was who based on what their house looked like or based on the size of their property. The kind of social mixing and neighbourly interaction that

Since the beginning of time, big shifts have occurred because population grows in waves.

makes us all feel connected to a place and reinforces our comfort came from the everyday encounters we had over back fences, on the streets where so many kids played and in local shops and schools to which many of us walked or rode our bikes. You waved to neighbours when you were washing your car in the driveway that was often close to the line that divided your two properties. While some houses might have differed slightly in size and look, essentially most were the same. Most had three or four bedrooms and a two-car garage. Most people were first or second owners and most had mortgages that they could pay if they had career stability, although no one was rich. These intangible characteristics that defined our commonality as fellow neighbours were, in fact, shaped by the settlement patterns that were defined by the land-use rules of the day and by the built form — the houses, streets and public realm. So, it

was the tangible things — lots sizes, dwelling units per lot, lot coverages, etc. — that then defined who lived in my neighbourhood and how we lived together. The look and feel of our neighbourhood was both deliberately planned and it also evolved organically as society evolved and times changed. Often, the change was unnoticeable as it took place slowly over time, but there were also leaps and bounds when what seemed like big sudden shifts changed what we had once taken for granted. In reality, these sudden changes were really a reflection of how time changes the stages of our lives. It’s this kind of generational change that sneaks up on us and, before we realize it, we are no longer teenagers living at home, but young adults setting out on our own or we are no longer middle-aged workers, but empty-nester retirees. Since the beginning of time, big shifts have occurred because population grows in waves. We are in the midst of a huge shift today due to the aging of the baby boom generation, one of the largest population cohorts in the history of the Western civilization. This shift is playing out globally. It’s also playing out locally. In fact, it is playing out in my neighbourhood. Some of my neighbours are

up in arms about the “monster houses” that are popping up on the relatively big lots on our quiet neighbourhood streets. It’s not so much the size or design of the houses that really bother them, as they suggest. In reality, it is their fear that the familiarity that came from a common lifestyle they shared with their neighbours is disappearing. What they forget, or maybe don’t want to admit, is that their own lifestyles are changing too. Successfully managing change in their neighbourhood is dependent on two things. First, on accepting the neighbourhood physical changes that will allow them and people just like them to remain living in that same neighbourhood. Second, on also accommodating more diversity, by housing people who want to have what they had 20 or 30 years or more ago when they came to the neighbourhood. In my next column, I will share some ideas I shared with my Richmond neighbours about how we can do just that.

Bob Ransford is a public affairs consultant with Counterpoint Communications Inc. He is a former real estate developer who specializes in urban land-use issues.
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