

# THE VANCOUVER SUN

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## Langley conveniences all within walking distance Change afoot in pedestrian-oriented centre

BY CLAUDIA KWAN, SPECIAL TO THE SUN MAY 13, 2013



Two-bedroom plus den show suite at Kensington development in Langley.

Photograph by: Jason Payne , VANCOUVER SUN

The stereotypical concept of living in the suburbs likely includes big box stores stretching for kilometres without end, having to hop in the car to get anywhere, or — horrors! — being deprived of ready access to sushi.

That, promises Diane Zarola, is not at all what Kensington at Willoughby Town Centre will be like.

“This is the kind of place where you’ll be able to park your car and not use it for the entire weekend,” says the sales and marketing manager for Qualico Developments. “Some of the people coming in to the sales centre have been talking about getting rid of their second car. One lady says she’s considering not having a vehicle at all.”

In official real estate speak, Qualico calls the eight-hectare site of Willoughby Town Centre “the Fraser Valley’s only pedestrian-oriented, socially active retail, commercial, and multi-family development.” The project will ultimately include more than 145,000 square feet of retail and office space, and more than 500 homes when complete in a decade.

Negotiations are underway to populate the site with a comprehensive mix of retail operations. Casual restaurants and coffee shops are high on the wish list, and farmers’ markets will satisfy the hunger for local, seasonal produce. Home and garden enthusiasts will likely want a floral shop, decor stores, and easy access to renovation and landscaping supplies. Book and music stores, dance and art studios, and daycare are also envisioned for the development, and salons and spas will have a presence as well. Qualico has been actively soliciting feedback through social media on what else area residents might want.

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“On the site, you see how wide all of the sidewalks are, with lots of landscaping, and we’ve put in benches in a lot of areas,” explains Zarola. “This is very much a pedestrian community — the type of place where you’ll see people stopping on the sidewalk and having an extended chat while having their morning coffee.”

Nature trails are nearby, as are a number of parks. The Langley Events Centre, a few minutes away, has extensive athletic facilities, where residents can either play or watch high-level athletic competition.

An agent has made preliminary inquiries about leasing out office space for a walk-in medical clinic at Willoughby Town Centre, and dentists are polishing up their chairs. Both RBC and G & F Financial are opening up bank branches on the site, and Noma Sushi is already in operation.

A franchise grocery store affiliated with President’s Choice products – known as “Hakam’s Your Independent Grocer” — offers up both conventional and standard products. Signs proclaim pork and chicken to be hormone- and antibiotic-free, while the beef proudly displayed in the butcher’s case comes from the Blue Goose Cattle Company, known for its farm to fork, ‘clean protein’ philosophy.

It’s not unlike a university campus, where you could dwell for some time without having to access the outside world. When work and school call, they’re easily accessible. An elementary school is kitty corner to the development, and a secondary school is a brisk walk away, while the Trans-Canada Highway is less than a five-minute drive. An express bus will also take commuters to Braid SkyTrain Station in just over 20 minutes, allowing them to disperse to other points of the Lower Mainland.

“There are two types of buyers who are interested in living at Kensington,” Zarola says. “The first-time homebuyers want homes on the front of the building, where all of the action is, and the downsizers are looking for the bigger units in the back.”

The homes on the second level have particularly large balconies, as they are recessed back from the retail on the ground floor. Zarola predicts they will be popular with those who love indoor-outdoor living.

The condominiums range from 660 to 1,360 square feet. First-time purchasers or investors renting to people attending Trinity Western University or Kwantlen Polytechnic University will likely favour the one-bedroom homes. The larger two-bedroom homes will probably be bought by families with young children or downsizers looking for convenience.

The two-bedroom, two-bathroom show suite displays some of the appeal of the design at Kensington.

An open office space is situated on the right immediately after entering the suite. It is large enough in size to accommodate a desk, shelving, and a good chair without feeling cramped.

The kitchen has a Whirlpool french-door refrigerator with a bottom drawer-style freezer; the stove has a sleek ceramic glass top to make wiping up spills a breeze. The elongated U-shape of the kitchen is a pleasant contrast to the narrow galley-style kitchen seen in other condominiums. In homes with enough space to do so, Qualico has included a large millwork pantry cabinet to store dry goods.

The living and dining space is dominated by floor-to-ceiling windows. It separates the two bedrooms in the home, contributing to an increased sense of privacy for residents.

Mirrored doors in a walk-through closet are a thoughtful touch in the master bedroom, as is the oversized frameless glass shower. A soaker tub is located in the second bathroom of the home. Quartz countertops and oversized porcelain tiles complete the clean, modern look.

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Homes are available in three colour schemes: daybreak, twilight and horizon. The first offers all white cabinetry, smoky grey-brown laminate flooring, and kitchen countertops in an attractive speckled granite.

Twilight contrasts the same flooring against all dark cabinets, and gleaming off-white quartz kitchen counters. Horizon combines white cabinetry up top and dark cabinets below with the same off-white kitchen countertops, and dark laminate flooring.

Included in the purchase price for buyers is one year of a cable television and Internet service package from Shaw.

Zarola says they have tried hard to anticipate everything the location will need to feel like a community.

"It's all here," she says. "This is for people who already know and love Langley, or for those who can see how great it can be. This is the kind of place where you will close down the road for street hockey tournaments or community barbecues — we're already working on it."

## **Kensington at Willoughby Town Centre**

Project location: 20728 Willoughby Town Centre Dr., Langley

Project Size: 65 apartments in a four-storey building

Residence size: One-bed apartments 660 sq. ft; one-bed + den 701 – 710 sq. ft; two-bed 880 – 935 sq. ft; two-bed + den 933 – 1,360 sq. ft

Prices: One-bed from \$199,900; one-bed + den from \$209,900; two-bed from \$264,900; two-bed + den from \$299,900`

Sales centre: C-110 -20678 Willoughby Town Centre Drive, Langley

Hours: noon – 5 p.m., daily

Telephone: 604-427-3311

Web: [liveatkensington.ca](http://liveatkensington.ca)

Developer: Qualico Developments, in partnership with Chow & Li

Architect: Chandler Associates Architecture

Interior Designer: Calvert Design Studio

Occupancy: Summer 2014

Sales began: late April 2013