

## In the Region/Long Island

# Demand Remains Strong for Residential Condos

**Low maintenance and recreational facilities are luring buyers.**

By CAROLE PAQUETTE

**T**HE residential condominium market continues to grow on Long Island and builders predict much more to come as buyers purchase units from architects' plans or computer programs.

Since the beginning of the year, the number of new condos being built "has significantly risen even from the boom of the past several years," said Glen R. Cherveny, an architect and principal in Axelrod & Cherveny in Commack, which has specialized in designing condos since its founding 28 years ago. "We're not seeing any scare from the economy — it's pretty amazing."

Since the mid-1990's, condos, which range from apartments to town houses and villas, have become increasingly popular with those looking to own maintenance-free, attached housing in gated communities, often with shared recreational facilities. Monthly common charges for the units include security, outdoor maintenance and taxes for common property like clubhouses and outdoor swimming pools.

In the town of Smithtown — which has 1,400 units and 300 more in the permit stages — the increase in condos is related to a decline in the need "for marginal commercial space," said Frank DeRubeis, planning commissioner.

"Because of the buildup of malls along the highways, and less need for retail space because more people are ordering merchandise on the Internet, there is not the need for as much prime commercial space in certain areas of the town," he said.

"Since the town started approving condominiums for the first time in 1985, the numbers have built up, with all construction done on property rezoned from commercial or industrial," he said. "We are just beginning to go full speed ahead."

There is always a demand for alternative forms of housing in Smithtown, where only half of the 37,000 households have school-age children, he said.

In December, the Beechwood Organization of Jericho, which has built many condos on Long Island designed by Axelrod & Cherveny, opened sales for new town house units in Smithtown and Miller Place, each including a clubhouse and swimming pool.

"We are selling condominiums to all segments of the market," said Michael Dubb, a principal.

Half of Country Pointe at Miller Place "has been sold from plans, that's how strong



Steven A. Klar at Willow Wood at East Setauket, a development of 44 town house condominiums on 30 acres.

the demand was," he said.

Construction began in February and models are expected to be completed by June 1. The 110-unit project will consist of 24 two-story buildings on 30 acres. The three-bedroom units, which will range from 2,000 to 2,400 square feet, are priced from \$324,900 to \$399,000. Common charges will be about \$225 a month, including taxes for common property.

Fifty contracts have been signed since sales began in December for the Smithtown project, on Brown's Road, which has 88 units. That project will include 20 buildings, each with three to six three-bedroom units on 23 acres. The units range from 2,000 to 2,200 square feet and sell for \$375,000 to \$450,000. Common charges will be \$300.

According to town codes, large trees will remain on the property and there will be a heavy replanting of foliage in both the Smithtown and Miller Place projects, Mr. Dubb said.

Beechwood will also break ground on a 137-unit condominium in Kings Park in the fall, which will include 1,400-to-2,000-square-foot, two-story units with two or three bed-

rooms selling "in the mid-200,000's to upper 300,000's," he said. There will be 37 two-story buildings on 25 acres.

Another 240-unit project has been proposed for the central Suffolk County area, Mr. Dubb said.

Farther east, the Klar Organization in East Meadow, which has also built many condos on Long Island, is beginning construction on two projects in the town of Brookhaven.

"We never seem to satisfy the demand," said Steven A. Klar, a principal. "We all seem to be having a field day bringing out projects that get gobbled up quickly."

Almost half of a 44-unit town house-style condominium on 30 acres, called Willow Wood at East Setauket, were sold "within two months based on a virtual reality walk-through on a computer screen," Mr. Klar said.

Construction has begun on 11 two-story buildings, each with four units containing two or three bedrooms that range in price from \$325,000 to \$377,000. Common charges will be \$196 a month.

"It will be just relaxed living, with no

recreational facilities, which will keep the common charges down," Mr. Klar said.

In February, Klar opened sales for the Waterways at Moriches, a 410-unit condo project for people 55 and over. Waterways will include attached two-story houses with four single-level units, each with a separate entrance and a garage. The two-bedroom, two-bath units will range from \$289,000 to \$300,000. Common charges will be \$355 a month.

Besides a private marina there will be a clubhouse with exercise room, an outdoor swimming pool and four tennis courts.

In western Suffolk, Stone Ridge Estates plans to open 88 units in Dix Hills for sale in July, with construction to begin in September. The project, for people 55 and over, will consist of 12 buildings with four to eight units each, including 1,500-square-foot flats and 2,100-square-foot town houses, and a recreation building with a pool, according to Larry Gresser, a principal.

Ehasz Giacalone Architects in Farmingdale is designing for the Greens at Half Hollow in Huntington, a condo development being built by SBJ Associates of Garden

City. The project, for people 55 and over, will include villas, town houses and apartments.

"Condos appear to be more prevalent than in the past," said Louis P. Giacalone, a principal at Ehasz Giacalone. "It is a strong market because it is the most efficient way of utilizing land and leaving more open for green space."

**I**T is that green space that is making condos more appealing to town planners and residents, said Alec Ornstein, a developer and principal in the Ornstein Leyton Company of Garden City.

"Getting town approval is the hardest challenge," he said. "There is a lot of public concern regarding overdevelopment. We try to balance those needs by dedicating sections to open space."

Ornstein Leyton is about to open Hauptpage Green, a development of 28 town houses on five acres in Islandia. One acre will be set aside as open land and there will be "many trees and a strong landscaped buffer" adjacent to the surrounding single-family homes, Mr. Ornstein said.

The approximately 2,000-square-foot, three-bedroom units will range from \$290,000 to \$340,000. Common charges will be \$225 a month.

An 85-unit project, Crossroads, which includes a clubhouse and outdoor swimming pool, is being planned by Ornstein Leyton for Miller Place for people 55 and over. The 1,400-to-1,800-square-foot town houses will range from \$240,000 to \$275,000.

Another project, for 90 town houses, in Moriches is "on the drawing board," Mr. Ornstein said.

In Nassau, construction has begun on the Addison, a six-story, 150-unit condo apartment building within the Harbor View complex in Port Washington, which is an \$80 million, 275-unit mixed housing complex on 33 acres for people 55 and over being built by Bernard Janowitz Construction of Roslyn Harbor.

More than half of the Addison units have been sold since sales opened last August, according to Marilyn Larsen, marketing and sales director for Harbor View.

The one-to-four-bedroom units range from \$320,000 to \$564,000. There is 100,000 square feet of parking spaces in two below-ground levels in the 325,000-square-foot building. Common charges range from \$345 a month to \$443.

John Notaro, a principal in Notaro Grupp Architects in Melville, is currently proposing a project for people 55 and over to the village of Freeport at the site of the former Southside Hospital. The proposed condos would include 32 units in buildings of four units each that resemble "the stately looking homes on the block," Mr. Notaro said.