



**SENIORS FUTURE:** Pre-fabricated, one-level strata units, such as these proposed by the Keremeos Modular Housing for Seniors project, are potential examples of the future of B.C. housing as older buyers dominate sales. Photo: Scuka/BC Housing

# Seniors will make up 80% of market in 19 years

A startling forecast by the Conference Board of Canada claims that, by 2030, 80 per cent of Canadian housing sales will be to senior citizens, what the Board calls a “fundamental shift” in the housing market. The Board analyzed future housing formation by age, and the results are striking. By 2030, just over 60 per cent of new households will be formed in the 75 plus age cohort. If you include younger seniors the figure jumps to a staggering 81 per cent. Thus, by 2030, four out of every five new households will be formed by people aged 65 and over. This is a stark change from today’s situation where growth in households is concentrated in the 45 to 64 age group, while those aged 25 to 34 also comprise a decent share of newly formed households. Given that the vast majority of new households 20 years from now will be formed by seniors, where

will that leave the housing market? According to the Board, it means much more multi-family housing, especially condominium apartments. In 2006, 57 per cent of condo owners were over the age of 50 while 17 per cent were over the age of 75. The Conference Board’s Canadian Outlook Long Term Economic Forecast predicts that the share of multiple housing units will increase from its current 47 per cent to 68 per cent in 2030. “As the population ages, construction will shift from single family dwellings in the suburbs to multifamily developments catering to the needs and desires of the soon-to-retire baby boom generation,” the report states. “If you believe the demographics, it’s pretty evident that there’s going to be a fundamental change in housing demand,” Pedro Antunes, the Board’s director of forecasting

and analysis, said.” Baby boomers have had a huge impact on the housing market for years and years, and it’s just because they’re such a big cohort in the demographic,” said Antunes. “They are about a third of the population currently, and so as they go through their different life cycle changes, I guess you tend to have an impact on various aspects of the economy, including housing.” The oldest baby boomers are just starting to enter their retirement years now. But the starkest changes will take place by 2030 when the tail end of that group -- those in their late 40s and early 50s - retire, the Board explained. B.C. has one of the highest proportions of seniors in Canada, but it also attracts about 40,000 mostly younger immigrants every year, which may help balance future housing demand, some analysts say.