



Potomac Shores in Prince William County offers southern-style homes



By Audrey Hoffer

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Kerri Pagel hasn't yet moved into her new house in Potomac Shores. And while the Prince William County community is far from complete, Pagel says she's happy with how everything is taking shape.

"A lot of things drew us to Potomac Shores — walking paths, green space, town center — things that make a community a home," said Pagel, whose husband, Josh, and their children, Campbell, 10, and Coen, 7, are among the 50 families who have bought southern-style single-family houses in the community. "This is a development we've been waiting for for 10 years."

We liked the intangibles," Pagel added, "the sense of community, which we can feel even before all the houses are up."

Thirty miles south of Washington along the Potomac River, Potomac Shores is a 2,000-acre community in the early stages of development.

Being built on rolling and wooded land, Potomac Shores is designed to be a mix of residences, retail, recreation and business with a focus on walking and biking. Bordered on the northeast by Powell's Creek and on the east-southeast by the river, the land has sweeping water views. Historically it was a water-oriented community catering to fishermen.

Tidewater design: "We worked long on creating a theme and distinctive design for the development," said Edward S. Byrne, vice president of project management for Potomac Shores.

"We studied indigenous design and architecture across the South, in Williamsburg, Richmond and small-scale towns with comparable features," he said. "We wanted a common Tidewater vocabulary" that incorporated symmetry, wraparound porches, steeply pitched roofs and many windows.

Stan Brent said a "beautifully designed house" attracted him and his fiancée to the community; they were the first residents to move in. "I feel I am breaking ground for the homeowners that will follow me," he said.

"The floor plan is smartly designed and gives us abundant footage," Pagel said. "We needed two home office spaces plus bedrooms. We wanted bigger space for our children, separate bathrooms for them and a laundry room with space to fold the laundry."

Haynes Davis III said that standards of the homes "are incredibly high, and features such as molding are included." Davis said he and his wife, Becky, recently closed on a property and watched their house "come out of the ground."

"We went over and took pictures of the wiring and pipes behind the walls. My son — Haynes Davis IV— got to see our house being built."

Houses are sited close together to maximize green space. Garages are recessed five feet behind house facades. Eight-foot-wide front porches are common because “we wanted them to be legitimate outdoor living spaces,” Byrne said.

Office buildings and hotel: A town center adjacent to the river will be the community’s heart. It will include shops, restaurants, walking paths, recreation and transit, and it will serve as an “activity generator,” Byrne said. Fifty acres will be set aside as an employment campus, and smaller office buildings will also be built.

“If everything happens as planned, it should be a lot of fun here and there’ll be no reason to leave,” Davis said.

A five-star resort hotel is an integral component of the town center, on a spot 100 feet above the river. An 18-hole Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course will open in April. A 10,000-square-foot clubhouse with Tidewater design will feature a grand front porch.

A park will be created next to the hotel, and eight miles of trails will be created. Forty percent of the property will remain undeveloped.

A 450-slip marina will connect to the town center. “For a private community to have water access is huge,” Pagel said. “We won’t have to get into our car to get to a launch.”

Schools: Swans Creek Elementary, Potomac Middle and Potomac High. New elementary and middle schools to be built by the county in Potomac Shores are expected to open in 2016.

Transit: Potomac Shores is 2.5 miles from Interstate 95 and the Prince William Parkway, and five miles from Marine Corps Base Quantico and Fort Belvoir.

An integral element of the planned town center is a station for Virginia Rail Express, the regional commuter rail service connecting Northern Virginia communities to Union Station in Washington. This link is expected to open in 2017.

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