

PRE-Transition Guide

For Homeowners Transitioning to Retirement Communities

Created by Brian Schwatka, Realtor and Transition Specialist (DRE# 01426785)



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Introduction

Congratulations! I know how difficult it was for you to decide whether to stay in your home or make a transition to a new home. I've been working with transitioning homeowners since 2004 and I've seen first hand how paralyzing it can be and also how liberating it can feel when you finally make that tough choice.

My purpose in business is to help homeowners make the best decision for their future, whether they are staying or going. Additionally, it is our priority to make this transition as stress-free as possible for you and your family.

I developed this PRE-Transition Guide over the past 20+ years of my career while working with transitioning seniors. It is meant to shed some light on all of the things homeowners should be thinking about between the time they decide to make a transition, and the time they actually start the home selling process.

Side Note: *The entire home selling process is spelled out in another publication* called the Listing Manual, or "FlightPlan" which is only available to Brian's Clients.

You will notice that **this PRE-Transition Guide is broken down into four stages:**

1. Before you get on the waiting list
2. After you are on the waiting list
3. Once you choose your new home
4. During the move-out and move-in process

You may not be making your transition immediately, but working on your plan now, when you "WANT" to, rather than later when you "NEED" to, will save you time, money and frustration down the road. **Let's get together for an hour and do some prioritization!**

As you go through this Pre-Transition Guide, there may be links to short "Puzzle Piece" video clips which will explain these options for you.

There's a Video for That at: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/puzzle

That's about it. I hope you enjoy the following guide and that it gives you the clarity, certainty and confidence we all need to make this transition. If you have any questions, comments, concerns or requests, please contact Brian Schwatka, Realtor and Transition Specialist.

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Stage 1: Before you're on the waiting list

I'm assuming that you have indeed decided to make a transition to a retirement community.

If you have NOT yet made that decision and you're still on the fence, please download my "Stay Or Go Workbook" at www.stayorgohomeowner.com/start

The Stay or Go Workbook will help you decide once and for all if you're staying or going:

- **Evaluate** your homeownership in the areas of your finances, health, support network, trust and estate, and in your Real Estate.
- **Envision** your ideal future of how you see the rest of your life playing out.
- **Educate** yourself by watching educational videos and seeking counsel.
 - Schedule a Homeowner Analysis at: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/appointment
- **Explore** your options in the areas of WHERE you might want to go and prioritize your search criteria using the Prioritization Grids.
- **Execute** your plan. The entire home selling process is spelled out in another publication called the Listing Manual, or "FlightPlan" which is only available to Brian's Clients.

All retirement communities are different in some way, shape or form. In fact, it's like apples, oranges, bananas and grapefruits. You have to find ones that resonate with you and your lifestyle. Afterall, this is where you are going to live out your next, greatest adventure!

In my opinion, if you are going to consider a retirement community then you should narrow your search down to communities that are "Continuing Care Retirement Communities" (CCRC) which offer all levels of care; Independent Living, Assisted Living, along with Skilled Nursing and Memory Care (preferably on-site). A true CCRC is a place you can go and spend the rest of your life, no matter what health issues may arise.

What's going on at the Community during Stage 1?

Visit communities and take a tour:

- Gather brochures that spell out all of the services and amenities
- Explore the grounds and the ideal locations that appeal to you and your needs
- Participate in the community's PRE events to really get a feel for the vibe
- Talk to residents and find why they love living at the community

Meet with the Sales Directors and learn more about the community

- Discuss your health and finances to see if you qualify for Independent Living
- Decide what size unit you need/want
- Obtain pricing sheets for the different size units and different levels of care
- Understand the differences between non-refundable and rebatable buy-in plans
- Narrow your search down to 2-3 communities

Join the wait-list(s)

Retirement communities often have limited space and specific criteria for admission. Turnover is low, so spaces open up infrequently. Applicants are prioritized based on various factors such as the need to sell their home in order to obtain the buy-in fee, or not. Planning ahead and applying early to a couple of different communities will increase your chances of getting into a community sooner than later. There is usually a refundable wait list fee that can be applied to your buy-in fee.

Here's a great video that I created where I interviewed some past clients and asked them some questions about their thoughts on Retirement Communities:

www.stayorgohomeowner.com/communities

- Why did you start considering a retirement community?
- What were you looking for?
- What was the most difficult part?
- What have you discovered, and how has your life changed?
- What does your family think about your new life?
- What would you tell someone who is considering a transition?

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What's going on at your home during Stage 1?

Seek Council with a Homeowner Analysis

Maybe it's time to get a sanity check and meet with Brian for a "Homeowner Analysis". Let's start putting the pieces of your puzzle together and come up with a plan.

During our 1 hour *Homeowner Analysis* meeting, we can discuss:

- Where you are in your current homeownership.
- Staying in your current home and aging in place.
- Retirement living options: home or community.
- Retirement community differences.
- The best retirement communities for you.
- The best areas for you to relocate to.
- The best time to make a transition
- Selling your home for a cash-out.
- Renting your home for a cash-flow.
- Should you buy first or sell first?
- Should you vacate or occupy?
- Creative financing options.
- Selling your home as-is.
- Home preparation tips.
- The home selling timeline.
- How to select the best Realtor.
- How to make a stress-free transition.
- How much you would net after taxes should you sell.
- Anything else that you have questions about. I've been helping homeowners make the best decisions for their future since 2004 and I can help you and your family as well.



The Homeowner Analysis gives you the Clarity, Certainty & Confidence you need.

To schedule a personal Homeowner Analysis with Brian, on the day and time of your choice, go to: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/appointment

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Educate yourself via Webinars

Webinar: The Myths of Retirement Living Communities (1 hour)

This live webinar will dispel all of the myths surrounding retirement communities and show you what it's like to live on a cruise ship on land. You'll get answers to tough questions like:

- Why is a CCRC the best option?
- What's the difference between a buy-in or a month-to-month?
- Will the costs continue to go up and what if I run out of money?
- What if my spouse's health declines before mine? and much, much more!

A video recording of this webinar: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/myths

Webinar: In-Home Care VS. Retirement Living Communities (1 hour)

Many homeowners think that it is easier and less expensive to stay in their current home and age-in-place rather than transitioning to a retirement living community. Choosing between in-home care and an assisted living community involves many factors, both personal and financial. It's a complex decision and the answer depends on your specific situation. In this webinar, you will learn:

- What are they?
- What do they cost?
- The Pros and Cons of each

A video recording of this webinar: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/inhomecare

Webinar: Breaking the Paralysis of Analysis (1 hour)

You've done your research, but you're still on the fence and can't decide if you should stay in your home or make a transition to a new home. You may be suffering from "Paralysis of Analysis". In this live webinar, you will learn:

- The most compelling reasons to make a transition
- Why being proactive will save you time, money and frustration
- The dangers of waiting too long to decide

A video recording of this webinar is available at: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/paralysis

Explore WHERE you might want to go.

Relocating out of the area:

If you are thinking about purchasing a new home, go to this page of the website:

<https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/buyerquestionnaire>

If you're thinking of relocating out of the area, take a look at our favorite areas:

<https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/relocation>

If you would like us to suggest some areas that match your ideal search criteria, fill out the Relocation Questionnaire: <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/relomatcher>

Retirement Communities:

We offer an unbiased database of over 200 Retirement Communities, in the ten surrounding counties. Each county list offers a link to each of the community websites and shows if the community is a month-to-month community or if they have a buy-in. Lastly, you'll be able to see if the communities offer Independent Living, Assisted Living, skilled nursing and memory care on campus. Do your research on this page of the website:

<https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/communities>

If you would like us to find the perfect community that matches your ideal search criteria, go to this page of the website and tell us what you are looking for in your ideal community and we'll send you the results: <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/communitymatcher>

What is your nest egg worth?

You may already have an idea of what your home is worth because you have seen what other homes in your neighborhood have sold for. As a Realtor, I can prepare a Comparative Market Analysis (**CMA**) that is an in-depth version of any research you may have done on your own.

The **CMA** is used to help evaluate how your home will fare against the competition. It takes a look at both homes that are currently listed and those recently sold within a one mile radius. The purpose is to find the highest price that will still make the home competitive on the open market.

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The CMA includes a fact-based portrait of the home including information such as number of bedrooms and baths, approximate square footage, size of major rooms, age of the home, property taxes, and desirable amenities such as fireplaces and pools. **CMAs** can cover areas as narrow as one or two streets surrounding your home, or as broad as an entire subdivision.

If you or someone you know needs to find out what a home is actually worth, fill in the **Home Value Request** This form can be found at: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/CMA

How much will you net after paying your Capital Gains Taxes?

Keep in mind that I am a Realtor and can only give Real Estate related advice. I can not give legal, financial, health and tax advice. But I am a well rounded Realtor so I can definitely point you in the right direction and give you very educated suggestions in all of those areas. If you have specific questions about legal, financial, health and tax related issues, please contact those professionals directly.

Capital Gains Taxes

After finding out what your home is really worth, you need to “estimate” what your **capital gains taxes** might be, should you decide to sell your home. The retirement community will want to know what your ACTUAL NET proceeds are. I can help you with this, but keep in mind that I am not an accountant or a tax person, so feel free to have these estimated numbers reviewed by your tax advisor for accuracy.

If you’ve purchased your home, your starting point for determining the property’s “basis” is what you paid for it. Logically enough, this is called its cost basis. Your cost basis is the purchase price, plus certain other expenses. You use the full purchase price as your starting point, regardless of how you pay for the property—with cash or a loan.

Your basis in property is not fixed. It changes over time to reflect the true amount of your investment. This new basis is called the “*adjusted basis*” because it reflects adjustments from your starting basis. In a nutshell, a higher basis lowers your gain. The lower the gain, the lower the amount of capital gains taxes you will have to pay.

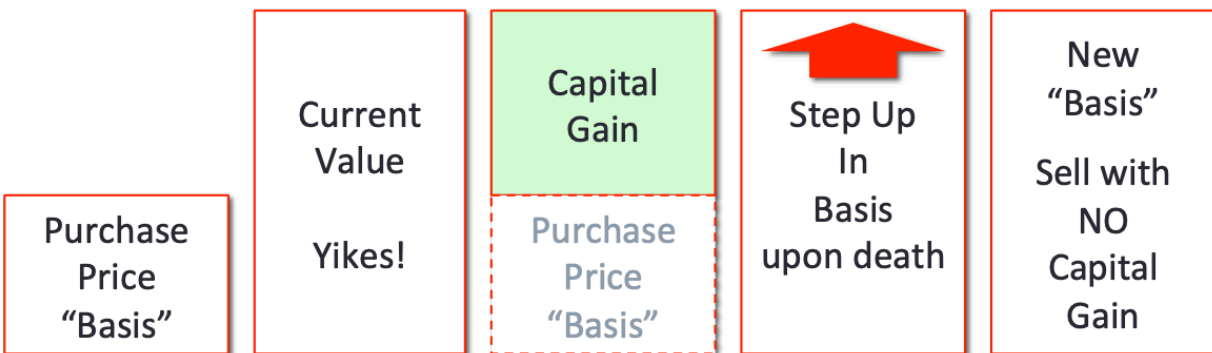
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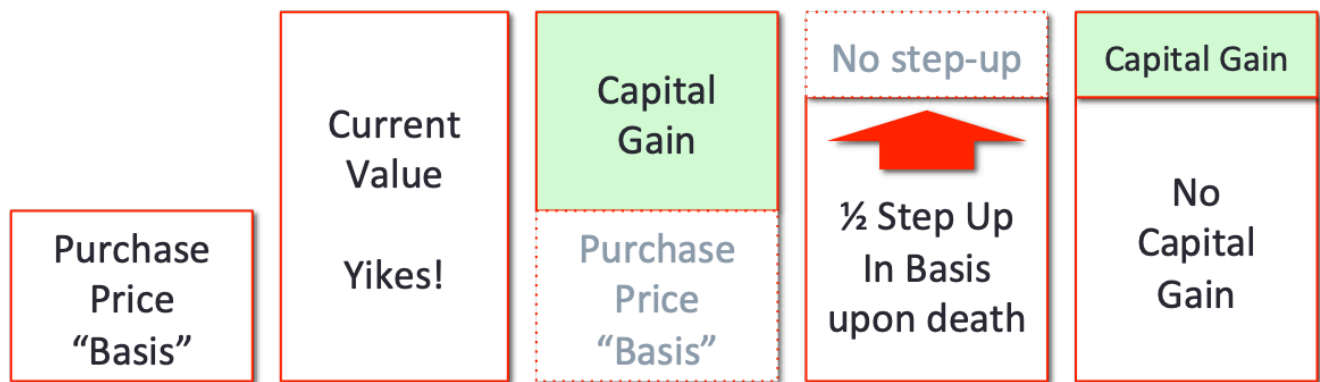
Estate Planning - If a co-owner has passed away

Find out how you held title if/when a co-owner passed away

When a co-owner passes away, the income tax “basis” for his or her portion of the property (the amount he or she paid for the property) is raised to the fair market value on the person’s date of death. This “**step-up in basis**” allows the surviving owner(s) of the property to sell it right away without paying income tax. Under these rules, if the decedent was married (and they held title to the property as “community property”) all of the couple’s community property, even the ½ interest the surviving spouse owed, would be entitled to this step-up in bases. This allows the surviving spouse to choose to sell any of the couple’s property and pay no income tax. Even if the surviving spouse decides not to sell, future appreciation (and capital gains) starts from this new “stepped up” basis. So the higher the step up, the better.



*But beware, property held in **Joint Tenancy** or **Tenants in Common** is not community property and only a certain percentage of any such property would be entitled to this income tax basis adjustment.*



Clear title of past co-owners who are no longer with us

Clearing title to real estate upon the passing of the first co-owner is often overlooked until the surviving owner wants to sell the property, or by the surviving beneficiaries when the second co-owner passes. Closings can be delayed until the title is cleared. Sometimes, beneficiaries do not have sufficient knowledge to provide affidavits without further research. For these reasons, the surviving owner should seek counsel and assistance shortly after the passing of the first owner to make sure that title to real estate is properly cleared, and title is vested in the sole name of the surviving owner.

There's a Video for that at: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/puzzle

Get a trust in place if you don't already have one

A Living Trust is designed to meet four primary goals: (1) to minimize estate taxes for a married couple, by ensuring that both spouse's applicable exclusion amounts are utilized; (2) to ensure that your beneficiaries receive the property in the manner you desire, i.e. the property can be given outright or apportioned over the years based on need or age; (3) to provide lifetime management of the property, which is especially important should you become unable to manage the property, and (4) to avoid the time and expense of Probate

Obtain a Copy of Your Trust and Have it Reviewed

If you already have an estate plan, it should not be considered permanent. Conditions, as well as your desires, may change. Estate plans should be reviewed every 3-5 years and certain important life changes may require immediate review.

Is it time to review your estate plan? If you don't yet have an estate plan, it's time to get it done. Your death or incapacity will be emotionally traumatic for your family; don't make it legally difficult as well.

Find out how you currently hold title to your home(s)

One of the most important things we teach our students in the Stay Or Go Homeowner class is how to hold title to their property correctly. There are many ways to hold title to your property. It's always best to consult a real estate attorney before deciding. Make sure that your home is "In The Trust"

If you are not quite sure how you are holding the title or if your home is held in the name of your trust, contact Brian and he can help you determine this.

Document all home improvements made to your current home

The most common way homeowners increase their basis is to make home improvements. Improvements include any work done that adds to the value of your home, increases its useful life, or adapts it to new uses. These include room additions, new bathrooms, decks, fencing, landscaping, wiring upgrades, walkways, driveway, kitchen upgrades, plumbing upgrades, new roofs, etc. You may or may not have every receipt for every project that you've ever done on your home. Do your best to create a list of upgrades/improvements and the estimated cost for each.



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Document your Costs of Home Improvements

NOTE: If a co-owner has passed away, you can only count the improvements you made after the passing. All of the improvements that were made prior to the passing are wiped out because of the step-up in basis upon the co-owner's death.

Bedroom Addition	\$ _____
Bathroom Addition	\$ _____
Deck/Porch/Patio/Garage Additions	\$ _____
Bathroom Remodel(s)	\$ _____
Kitchen Remodel	\$ _____
Flooring (all)	\$ _____
Patio Lawn & Grounds Landscaping	\$ _____
Driveway / Walkway(s)	\$ _____
Fence(s) / Retaining wall(s)	\$ _____
Swimming pool	\$ _____
Exterior windows/doors	\$ _____
New roof (only the last one)	\$ _____
New siding / Attic / Ducts / Insulation	\$ _____
Furnace / Water heater (only the last one)	\$ _____
Central air conditioning	\$ _____
Air/water filtration systems	\$ _____
Upgraded wiring	\$ _____
Security system	\$ _____
Copper plumbing	\$ _____
Built-in appliances	\$ _____
Major Repairs (other)	\$ _____
Total (Estimated)	\$ _____

Stage 2: After you're on the waiting list

Being on the waiting list doesn't mean that all we should do is just wait.. As I mentioned in the introduction, **it is our priority to make this transition as stress-free as possible for you and your family.** You may not be making your transition immediately, but working on your plan now, when you "WANT" to, rather than later when you "NEED" to, will save you time, money and frustration down the road.

What's going on at the Community during Stage 2?

Stay engaged with the Sales Director

In the process of securing a spot at a retirement community, being on the waitlist is a positive step, but it's essential to understand that the demand often exceeds the availability of openings. To maximize your chances of moving off the waitlist and into residency, it's crucial to stay engaged and proactive with the Sales Directors at each community. By being a "squeaky wheel" you're effectively reminding them of your interest and eagerness to join the community. This can mean regularly checking in, expressing your enthusiasm, and ensuring they have all necessary information about your preferences and needs. While patience is key, being proactive can significantly increase your chances of getting called up sooner rather than later."

Get connected with the community

- This is your opportunity to start integrating yourself into the community even before you officially move in. Getting engaged with the community during this time is beneficial for several reasons.
- It allows you to **become familiar with the environment**, the staff, and your potential future neighbors. This early interaction can make the transition smoother when you eventually move in. Actively participating in community events, activities, and social gatherings **demonstrates your genuine interest** in becoming a part of the community. This proactive approach **keeps you top-of-mind for Sales Directors**

- Engaging with the community while on the waitlist can **provide valuable insights** into whether the retirement community is the right fit for you. You can get a feel for the culture, amenities, and lifestyle, helping you make an informed decision.

Meet with a Financial Advisor

The Sales Directors at the communities have various financial assessment computer programs that they use to assess and approve your financial situation. But these programs don't take "everything" into account, so I always tell my clients to meet with a Financial Planner as well.

Meeting with a formal Financial Planner before making the transition to a retirement community is a crucial step for seniors to ensure their financial well-being and peace of mind. Retirement communities often come with various costs, including entrance fees, monthly fees, and potentially additional charges for amenities and care services. By consulting with a financial planner, seniors can gain a clear understanding of their current financial situation and how it aligns with the costs associated with living in a retirement community. They can analyze the terms and conditions of these contracts, clarify any ambiguities, and ensure that seniors fully understand the financial implications of their decision.

Furthermore, meeting with a Financial Planner allows seniors to plan for unexpected expenses and contingencies that may arise in the future, such as healthcare needs or changes in personal circumstances. Remember, the goal is to NOT outlive your funds. Period.

Prepare your 10% deposit funds (if applicable)

When an apartment or cottage becomes available and you decide to reserve it, you may be asked to place a deposit for 10% of the buy-in fee. This 10% deposit will need to be wired to the community within 2-3 business days, if not sooner. While you are on the waiting list is the best time to get those funds ready to go, because your name might come up sooner than you think.

Preview your new home (apartment or cottage)

From time to time, apartments and cottages will become available and the Sales Directors may invite you to come take a look. Different communities have different policies. Some will only let you "pass" on a unit one or two times before you get sent to the bottom of the wait-list while others are more lenient. The more selective you are, the longer your wait might be..

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What's going on at your home during Stage 2?

Meet with Brian, Realtor and Transition Specialist, and start planning

Home preparation ideas

I'm sure you're wondering what you should do to the home to get the home ready for the market and get the biggest return on your investment (ROI). Brian will advise you on what you might want to do and what you don't need to do for home preparations. This short video will show you the best ROI projects to get the biggest bang for your buck.

Home Preparation Video Link: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/homeprep

Decide on a home preparation budget

Selling a home is not inexpensive. In addition to the title fees, commissions and closing costs, you may need to spend some money getting your home ready for the market. The goal is to get top dollar for your investment and make a good first impression on the buyers. Here are some average costs that you may or may not want to consider:

Home Inspection	\$ 750.00
Pest Inspection	\$ 600.00
Roof Inspection	\$ 350.00
Chimney Inspection	\$ 250.00
Bathroom floor repair	\$ 750.00
Handyman	\$1,000.00
Painting interior	\$4,000.00
Painting Exterior	\$6,000.00
Painting kitchen cabinets	\$2,000.00
House Cleaning	\$ 600.00
Window Washing	\$ 300.00
Hauling: per truckload	\$ 500.00
Landscaping: Basic yard cleanup	\$ 800.00
Rain Gutter Clean-out	\$ 250.00
Home depot: smoke & carbon detectors	\$ 150.00
Water Heater Strapping	\$ 250.00
Downsizing and packing	\$4,000.00
Others _____	\$ _____
Grand Total:	\$ _____

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Gathering Information about your home

In order to fully disclose everything about your home to the potential buyers, we need to start gathering disclosure information, which may take some time. Here are some examples of information we need to gather and disclose:

Preliminary Title Report,

A preliminary report is a report prepared prior to issuing a policy of title insurance that shows the ownership of a specific parcel of land, together with the liens and encumbrances thereon which will not be covered under a subsequent title insurance policy. The preliminary report lists, in advance of purchase, title defects, liens and encumbrances. There may be some inconsistencies or corrections that need to be made before we go on the market.

Natural Hazards Disclosure Statement (NHDS)

The NHDS is a mandatory disclosure for sellers and indicates if the property being sold lies within one or more state or locally mapped hazard zones. We may need to do some research and take some actions if you are located in one or more of these hazard zones:

- A SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREA
- AN AREA OF POTENTIAL FLOODING
- A VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE
- A WILDLAND AREA THAT MAY CONTAIN SUBSTANTIAL FOREST FIRE RISKS AND HAZARDS
- AN EARTHQUAKE FAULT ZONE pursuant to Section 2622 of the Public Resources Code.
- A SEISMIC HAZARD ZONE pursuant to Section 2696 of the Public Resources Code.

Solar panels and systems:

When selling a home with solar panels, several steps are essential to ensure a smooth transaction. Firstly, gather all pertinent documents related to the solar panel system, including warranties, installation permits, and any financing agreements.

Homeowner Associations and Documents:

If you live in a complex that has a Homeowner's Association, the complete HOA Seller's Package must be ordered, at the exact right time. The seller must pay for the HOA package upfront.

Outstanding Loan Balance:

Ordering a mortgage payoff amount when selling a home is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it provides clarity on the exact amount needed to pay off the existing mortgage, which is essential for calculating the most accurate seller's net proceeds from the sale. Secondly, it helps prevent any surprises or discrepancies during the closing process, ensuring a smooth and efficient transaction.

Begin your downsizing - Focus on what you are bringing with you

When you are selling your home, you want it to look as large and spacious as possible. Buyers are looking for clean, well lit, uncluttered homes. I know what you're saying; I don't know where to start, I have too much stuff, I don't have time to sort it all out, I'll sell some things first and the kids will take the rest.. No worries, slow and steady wins the race and we have time.

There's no reason you need to do it all by yourself. Downsizers (or Move Managers) use tried-and-true techniques and systems that get the job done calmly and efficiently, and they take care of your belongings as if they were their own. They will work with you and go through everything to determine what can be repurposed, recycled, and sold. You are the ultimate decision maker. They can also assist with selling items and utilize many options for dispersal; hauling things to the dump is the last resort. Feel free to schedule an initial consultation with a couple of different Downsizer/Move Managers to see how they operate. Brian can also give you some tips and tricks that will save you time, money and frustration.

There's a Video for That at: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/puzzle



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Stage 3: After you've selected your new home

What's going on at the Community during Stage 3?

Sign the Deposit Agreement

This agreement outlines the terms about the (10%) initial deposit required to secure your residency. The agreement also outlines the buy-in amount (90%) (if applicable), and the monthly fees. These monthly fees cover various amenities and services provided by the retirement community, such as maintenance, utilities, dining options, recreational activities, and healthcare services if applicable.

Overall, the deposit agreement is designed to ensure a transparent and mutually beneficial relationship between residents and the retirement community. It's important to review the agreement carefully, ask any questions you may have, and seek clarification on any terms or conditions that are unclear.

Wire your 10% deposit

You should have already set aside your funds for the deposit, as we discussed this earlier in Stage 2. This 10% deposit will need to be wired to the community within 2-3 business days, if not sooner. You should obtain the community's wiring instructions from the Sales Director.

Health Assessment w/ Physicians Report

Since it may have been quite some time since you put your name on the waiting list, your health condition may need to be reassessed. The Health Assessment with a Physician's Report at the retirement community is a personalized evaluation conducted by a healthcare professional to understand each resident's unique health needs. During this assessment, which typically involves a physician or registered nurse, residents discuss their medical history, current health status, medications, and any concerns they may have. The Physician's Report generated from this assessment serves as a comprehensive overview of the resident's health, helping the care team at the community tailor individualized care plans to ensure residents receive the appropriate support and services they need.

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Financial Assessment

Since it may have been quite some time since you put your name on the waiting list, the Sales Director may need to rerun your numbers, as your financial condition may have changed and your home value may have changed as well.

If you or someone you know needs to find out what a home is actually worth, fill in the **Home Value Request** This form can be found at: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/CMA

Review the Sales Terms of the overall Residential Care Agreement

This agreement details the level of care and support offered to residents. It includes services such as assistance with daily activities, medication management, personal care, and access to healthcare professionals if needed. The specific services provided may vary depending on individual needs and the type of care plan chosen.

The agreement also outlines the cost structure associated with residential care. This includes monthly fees or service charges, which cover the cost of accommodation, meals, housekeeping, utilities, and the provision of care services.

Another crucial aspect of the Residential Care Agreement is the admission and discharge policies. It outlines the criteria for admission to the community, as well as the process for transitioning to a higher level of care if needed. Similarly, it explains the circumstances under which a resident may need to leave the community and the procedures for discharge.

Lastly, the agreement may address other important topics such as visitor policies, emergency procedures, and grievance resolution processes. It's essential to review these provisions to ensure we fully understand our rights and obligations as residents.

Overall, the Residential Care Agreement is designed to ensure that residents receive the care and support they need while maintaining their independence and quality of life. By understanding and agreeing to the terms outlined in the agreement, you can enjoy a comfortable and fulfilling living experience in the retirement community."

Acquire move-in date? (30/60/90 Days)

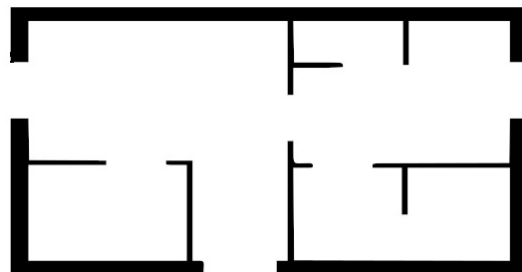
Some units need more renovations than others and this depends on the last time the unit was remodeled. The fastest availability times are as low as 30 days. The typical renovation period is 60 days, but that could extend to 90 days depending on how much upgrading you want to do to the unit before you move in. It is critical to know how long the community estimates the move-in date to be, so that we can create an accurate transaction calendar. Brian will be staying in constant communications with the retirement community and the renovation team.

Receive the resident welcome binder

The resident welcome binder serves as a comprehensive guide and resource for seniors transitioning to a retirement community, offering essential information to help you acclimate to your new environment and make the most of your living experience. This binder typically contains a variety of materials, including an overview of community amenities and services, contact information for key staff members, details about dining options and meal schedules, activity calendars, and information about community policies and procedures. Additionally, it may include helpful resources such as maps of the facility, emergency contact information, transportation options, and tips for settling in comfortably. The welcome binder serves as a valuable reference tool as you embark on this new chapter of your life.

Obtain a Floor Plan for your unit

The Sales Director will give you a floor plan which will provide you and the Downsizer/Move Manager with a clear visualization of your new living space. A floor plan allows you to plan the arrangement of their furniture, assess the flow of the space for ease of movement, and identify any potential obstacles or areas that may need modification to accommodate your needs. Moreover, it helps you envision how you can personalize and decorate your new home.



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Engage with Downsizer/Move Manager

If you didn't contact the Downsizer/Move Manager during Stage 2, then **now is the time to make contact and have your initial consultation**. They will need to see and use a detailed floor plan for your new home so that they can help you decide what you are taking with you and what you are leaving behind.

One of the first things that a Downsizer will suggest is that you create a "Staging Area" somewhere in your home. This could be the garage or a spare bedroom. Once you have decided on the staging area, get some boxes and label them: Move, Donate, Sell, Family/Friends. You can also use colored sticker dots for items that you don't want to move to the staging area. Spend most of your time deciding on what you are taking with you.

SELLER'S DOWNSIZING HOMEWORK:

- Watch our video on downsizing: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/downsizing
- Obtain a floorplan for your new home or from the retirement community.
- Schedule an initial consultation with the Downsizer
- Create a staging area with areas/boxes: keep, move, donate, sell, give.
- FOCUS on what you are taking with you. We will handle the rest after you vacate

Meet Move-In and Renovation Team

When you meet with the move-in renovation team at a retirement community, you'll embark on a collaborative process aimed at customizing your living space to meet your unique preferences and needs. During this meeting, the team listens to your vision and requirements, discussing aspects such as accessibility features, aesthetic preferences, standard materials, and upgrades that may be important to your comfort and convenience. The team provides expert guidance and recommendations based on their experience in creating functional and inviting living environments tailored to seniors' lifestyles.



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What's going on at your home during Stage 3?

Update your Comparative Market Analysis (CMA)

We completed a CMA for your home back in Stage 1 in the “What is your nest egg worth?” section. But time has passed since then and now that you have selected your new home, you and the retirement community are going to want to know what your home is worth TODAY. You will also want to know how much you'll be walking away with after paying the selling costs, your mortgage (if applicable) and your capital gains taxes (if applicable).

As a Realtor, I can prepare a Comparative Market Analysis (CMA) to help evaluate how your home will fare against the competition. It takes a look at both homes that are currently listed and those recently sold within a one mile radius. The purpose is to find the highest price that will still make the home competitive on the open market.

If you or someone you know needs to find out what a home is actually worth, fill in the *Home Value Request* This form can be found at: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/CMA

Watch the FlightPlan Webinar

Your Real Estate “Flight Plan” - Homework between deposit and move-in

Description: Your bags are packed and you're ready to sell your home and make the transition to your new home. The goal is to get the biggest return on your investment while reducing stress and avoiding mistakes. Airplane Pilots never leave the ground without a detailed Flight Plan.

In this **live webinar recording** www.stayorgohomeowner.com/flightplan you will learn about:


- Selecting a Pilot (Realtor)
- Your documentation (reports and disclosures)
- Preparing for take-off (home preparation)
- Take off (what to expect and accepting a purchase contract)
- Prepare for landing (Contract accepted, Now What?)
- Arrival at your destination (What to expect at the community)



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Interview Realtors (if you had not done so during Stage 2)

Selling your home will be the most important financial decision of your life. ANY Realtor can sell a house, but making a real estate transaction as smooth as possible while getting the biggest return on your investment calls for a veteran. Here are some questions you can ask a Realtor:

Realtor Interview Questionnaire			
QUESTION		Agent 2	Agent 3
How long in business?	✓		
Retirement Community Expert	✓		
Certified Seniors Advisor (CSA)	✓		
Estimates your capital gains taxes	✓		
Provides step-by-step Listing Manual™	✓		
Provides step-by-step videos	✓		
Financial options for you to vacate early	✓		
Would NEVER represent the buyer	✓		
Dedicated Staff			
Home Preparation Manager	✓		
Licensed Listing Agent Assist	✓		
Real Estate Assistant	✓		
Paperwork Manager	✓		
Marketing			
Covers the costs of ALL marketing: photos, videography, areal shots, floorplans, brochures, luxury signage, custom property website, social media marketing to the entire world	✓		

If you are thinking about **selling your home**, and would like to learn how Brian Schwatka and his team have been preparing, marketing and selling homes for the past 20+ years, go to this page of the website: <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/sell>

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Sign a Residential Listing Agreement (if you had not done so during Stage 2)

If we have not yet signed a listing agreement, this is the first order of business. Even if we are not planning to put the home on the market for some time, we still need an “Agency Relationship” in place so that I can legally advise you on things and accomplish certain tasks for you.

A “Listing Agreement” is a contract between a real estate agent (the Listing Agent) and a seller, that says that the agent has the right to prepare, list, advertise and handle the sale of your house. The Residential Listing Agreement (RLA) also protects you, the seller, by explaining the Realtor’s responsibilities and what you can do if I don’t meet them. We will discuss and agree upon: the list price (just a rough estimate at this point), the commission amount (split between Selling Agent and Listing Agent), and the duration of the agreement (typically 6-12 months).

In preparation for signing the Residential Listing Agreement (RLA) I have created an educational video that will walk you through the document and explain it in plain English.

California Association of Realtors Listing Agreement (RLA): www.stayorgohomeowner.com/rla

Once the RLA is completed, we can start to engage and give you access to more resources:

Our Listing Manual is a step-by-step guide covering everything that will happen during the real estate transaction. This “Flight Plan” outlines everything that you need to do, everything that my team and I are doing and informs you about what is going on behind the scenes.

Our “Clients Only” webpage which gives you access to a number of things:

- A private list of our trusted business contacts
- **Educational videos** about every step of the home selling process

Our Transaction Calendar which is Based around your move date.

Here is a Video that I created that explains what happens after the RLA is signed:

Listing Preparation: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/listprep

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Occupy or Vacate your home?

One VERY important question that you should ask yourself at this point is “Do you want to occupy your home during the home preparations and while it is on the market”?

Most homeowners DO NOT want to occupy the home while it’s on the market because of:

- Downsizing issues and where to put all of their belongings until they move
- Home preparation process: subcontractor’s schedules, fumes and dust
- Safety and security concerns from people coming through their occupied home
- Inconvenience of multiple visitors and having to keep the house clean at all times
- Added stress in the form of multiple activities, tasks and the timing of everything
- Uncertainty with the timing of the home sale and the transfer of funds on an exact date.

Most homeowners would rather slow things down, make a controlled move to their next home, and then sell a vacant house once they have settled in at their new home. The problem is that many homeowners don’t have the liquid funds for their next move without selling their current home first.

Some things to consider:

- Retirement Communities require a 10% deposit upon apartment acceptance
- Retirement Communities require the other 90% before you can move in
 - Retirement Communities require their funds on an exact date
- You don’t know how long the home will be on the market
- You don’t know if the buyer will back out of the deal until it closes
- You don’t know the exact close date or when you will receive your funds
- You may be required to pay capital gains taxes on any investments that you sell
 - You may also have to pay capital gains taxes on the sale of your home



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Creative Financing options to vacate before selling:

- Use your savings or non-taxable investments and pay yourself back after the sale
- Use a Home Equity Line of Credit HELOC (don't let them know that you are selling..)
- Obtain a personal loan from friends and family and pay them back after the sale
- Use a modified bridge loan and pay back the fees and the interest after the sale
- Any combination of the above

Bridge Loans for paying the entrance fee, and other expenses before vacating:

Bridge loans are typically for homeowners who are purchasing another replacement home. In the case of transitioning to a retirement community, you're not purchasing another piece of property, you are purchasing a life-time care contract and it's very difficult to find a lender who will fund a transition to a retirement community. Brian has bridge loan contacts who will fund transitions to retirement communities and here's how to calculate the cost of doing so.

The loans are 30 year amortization due in 11 months. No prepayment penalty.

Lender fees: 1.55% of the loan amount plus \$1,620 processing & document fees (as of 2024)

Appraisal fees: \$550 - \$1,000

Credit counseling: \$159

Escrow & Title Fees: About \$1,950 for a \$750,000 loan to \$2,850 for a \$1,400,000 loan

The monthly fee is calculated as follows: $1.55\% \times \$750,000 = \$11,625$ due each month.

TIP: You may want to add on additional funds to the loan amount which will cover the monthly bridge loan fee, some funds for home preparations, as well as the monthly fee at the retirement community while your home is on the market. Keep in mind that it could take anywhere from 30-90 days for the sale of your home to close escrow.

In the end, if you can do it, it's easier for everyone involved if the home has been vacated before the home preparation process begins. If you are interested in vacating your home before the home prep and the sale, then we need to start thinking about this sooner than later.

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Home preparation plans for the best ROI

Soon we will be meeting at the property to discuss the home preparation plans. I'm sure you're wondering what you should do to the home to get the home ready for the market and get the biggest return on your investment (ROI). This short video will show you the best ROI projects to get the biggest bang for your buck.

Home Preparation Video Link: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com/homeprep

The next step in the process is for our Project Manager to meet with you at the property so we can do an initial walkthrough and check on the **general operation** of certain things:

- Smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and a double strapped water heater.
- The sprinkler system and water faucets (inside and outside)
- The lighting, appliances and electrical devices
- Windows and sliding doors

Your Transition Calendar

Once we receive a more accurate move-in date from the retirement community, we can draft the first version of your transaction calendar. Some of the milestone dates will include:

- Signing of the Residential Purchase Agreement
- Gathering Information: Title report, NHDS report, Solar contract, HOA docs, etc.
- Home preparation initial meeting and getting quotes
- Packing and move-in dates
- Dispersing the remaining items
- Home preparations
- Inspections and Disclosures
- Staging and photography
- Approval of marketing materials
- On the market and open house schedule



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Stage 4: Moving-Out and Moving-In

What's going on at the Community during Stage 4?

Sign the Residential Care Agreement (RCA)

A Residential Care Agreement (RCA) at a retirement community is a contractual arrangement outlining the terms and conditions of your stay. It typically specifies the services provided, such as accommodation, meals, housekeeping, and assistance with activities of daily living, along with associated fees and payment schedules. The RCA delineates the duration of the stay, resident and community rights and responsibilities, procedures for accessing healthcare services, dispute resolution mechanisms, termination conditions, and move-out procedures.

Wire balance of entrance fee - 90%

At or around the same time that you sign the RCA, your funds from the sale of your home or from the Bridge Loan (or other creative methods) are due to be wired to the retirement community. Unfortunately, you can't get the keys and move in until these funds are received by the retirement community.

Meet with move-in coordinator

During this meeting, the coordinator typically provides detailed information about the community's amenities, services, and accommodation options, tailoring the discussion to the specific needs and preferences of the individual. They guide you through the application and move-in process, clarifying any questions or concerns regarding residency agreements, fees, and available support services. Additionally, the coordinator often offers tours of the facilities, allowing you to familiarize yourself with the environment and envision your future home within the community. You will also conduct a final walk-through of your new home, confirm that your landline (phone) is in place and receive keys, mailbox, badges, parking, etc.

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Move-Out and Move-In

Moving out of one's old home and into a retirement community can be both exciting and challenging. Initially, there's often a mixture of emotions as the individual prepares to leave behind familiar surroundings and memories.

The day before your move, your belongings are packed into boxes by the Move Management Team. There's a sense of anticipation about the upcoming change and the opportunities that await in the new community.

On the second day, the Movers and Move Managers will unload and unpack your belongings. The Move Managers will set everything back up and personalize your new environment to match your old home as closely as possible. All this will be done while you relax somewhere else or meet with the Move-In Coordinator. It's up to you, but rest assured, you're home.

At this point you may feel a combination of eagerness and apprehension as you step into your new apartment. While there may be challenges and adjustments along the way, the process of moving into a retirement community ultimately offers the opportunity for a new chapter filled with community, support, and new adventures.

Meet the staff and residents at the community

Upon moving into the retirement community, you will have ample opportunities to meet the dedicated staff members who ensure your comfort and well-being. You may be introduced to the facilities staff where you can learn about maintenance services and address any concerns regarding your living space. The housekeeping staff often welcome new residents by assisting with move-in preparations and providing guidance on housekeeping schedules and services. Additionally, seniors will interact with dining staff during meal times, where they can enjoy delicious meals prepared by the culinary team and get to know the friendly faces behind the kitchen.

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Meet Resident Buddy (when you're ready)

The resident buddy program pairs newly arrived seniors with experienced residents within the retirement community, fostering a sense of belonging and providing valuable support during the transition period. These resident buddies serve as friendly faces who offer guidance, answer questions, and share insights about community life, amenities, and activities. They help newcomers navigate the social landscape, introduce them to fellow residents, and may even accompany them to meals or activities to ensure they feel welcomed and included.

What's going on at your home during Stage 4?

I'm assuming that you decided NOT to sell your home during Stage 3 and that you are vacating your home, moving to the retirement community and will sell your home after moving into the retirement community. This is the least stressful way to make a transition.

1-2 weeks to settle into your new home

Since our number one goal is to make this transition as stress-free as possible, we give our clients as much time as they need to settle into their new home (typically 1-2 weeks). Bring too much stuff?, bring some back to your old home! Room for more stuff in your new home? Bring more stuff over from your old home! This grace period allows the Downsizer/Move Manager to clear out your home in a more relaxed and purposeful way.

Downsize: donate, consign, recycle, dispose

Now that the home is vacant, the Downsizer/Move Manager will carry out your "clear-out" plans. Some things will be hauled to other people as gifts, while other items might make a trip to the consignment store or a donation site. Our number one goal is to keep as much out of the land-fill as possible. You will work all of this out with your Move Manager.

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Selling your home

The entire home selling process is spelled out in a different publication called the Listing Manual, or “FlightPlan” which is available to Brian’s Clients. Here’s the table of contents:

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Free Resources

Contact Brian Schwatka: <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/appointment>

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The Stay Or Go Homeowner Website: www.StayOrGoHomeowner.com

Should I Stay Or Should I Go Workbook: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/start

The Stay Or Go Homeowner Analysis: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/consultation

Request a **Free Home-Quote** or CMA: <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/cma>

Brian's **Real Estate Webpage:** www.stayorgohomeowner.com/real-estate

Interview Brian "virtually": <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/sell>

Listing of **ALL Retirement Communities:** www.stayorgohomeowner.com/communities

Retirement **Community Matcher:** www.stayorgohomeowner.com/communitymatcher

Relocation Services: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/reloaction

Relocation Matcher: www.stayorgohomeowner.com/relomatcher

ALL of Brian's **webinar recordings:** www.stayorgohomeowner.com/webinars

Quick **educational videos:** <https://www.stayorgohomeowner.com/puzzle>

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