

## Your Step by Step Guide to Selling Your Home and Moving to a Retirement Community

Selling the family home you have lived in for decades and moving to a 55 plus community is one of the biggest transitions of your life. Done well, it unlocks your equity, simplifies your lifestyle, and sets up a comfortable retirement. Done poorly, it can mean rushed decisions, two mortgages at once, and money left on the table.

This guide walks you through the entire process in six phases, from your first planning conversation to moving day. Work through each checklist in order. If you have questions at any point, call or text Kevin Flaherty directly at 226-270-6433.

### Why One Realtor for Both Transactions

When one experienced Realtor manages both your sale and your purchase, closing dates are negotiated together, conditions protect you on both sides, and nothing falls through the cracks between two different agents. Kevin has been selling real estate since 1988, with over \$500M sold, and specializes in helping Ontario downsizers make this exact move.

### How to Use This Guide

The move breaks down into six phases. Some phases overlap: you will be decluttering while your home is being prepared for market, and touring communities while it is listed. The week ranges below are typical for a three to six month move. Check off each item as you complete it, and bring this guide to your first meeting with Kevin so nothing gets missed.

**Phase 1: Planning and Financial Groundwork** Know your numbers before you commit to anything.

**Phase 2: Decluttering and Downsizing** The longest job. Start it the day you decide to move.

**Phase 3: Preparing Your Home for Market** High-impact, low-cost improvements only.

**Phase 4: Listing and Marketing** Maximum exposure brings the strongest offers.

**Phase 5: Offers, Conditions, and Coordination** Aligning your sale with your community purchase.

**Phase 6: Closing and Moving Week** Logistics, lawyers, and the key handover.

### Phase 1: Planning and Financial Groundwork (Weeks 1 to 4)

Before you list anything or tour any community, build a clear picture of your finances and your goals.

- Get a professional evaluation of your current home at [flaherty.ca/homeeval](http://flaherty.ca/homeeval)
- List your must-haves for the new community (location, ownership model, amenities)
- Browse communities across the province at [adultcommunities.ca](http://adultcommunities.ca)
- Understand the ownership model of your target community (freehold, condo, or land lease)
- Meet your financial advisor to review retirement cash flow
- Ask your lender about bridge financing and HELOC options before you need them
- Review your mortgage terms for discharge penalties

# Selling Your Home and Moving to a Retirement Community

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- Choose a real estate lawyer experienced with dual closings
- Confirm principal residence exemption status with your accountant

## Phase 2: Decluttering and Downsizing (Weeks 2 to 8)

Decluttering is the most time-consuming part of the move. Start early and work room by room.

- Measure your future space and plan what furniture will fit
- Sort belongings into three piles: keep, gift, and donate
- Give family members a deadline to claim heirlooms and keepsakes
- Book a charity furniture pickup for large donation items
- Digitize photos and important documents
- Sell valuable items you will not need (estate sale or online)
- Arrange secure shredding for old paperwork
- Clear closets, basement, garage, and attic to 50 percent capacity
- Keep a small "essentials" box for moving week (medications, documents, chargers)

### The Double Duty Rule

Every box you sort before listing is a box you will not face on moving day, and a decluttered home photographs better, shows better in VR tours, and sells for more.

## Phase 3: Preparing Your Home for Market (Weeks 4 to 8)

Focus on high-impact, low-cost improvements. Skip major renovations, as you rarely recoup the full cost.

- Complete a pre-listing walkthrough with Kevin to identify what matters
- Fresh paint in key rooms (neutral colours)
- Fix leaky faucets, squeaky doors, and burned-out bulbs
- Update dated hardware and light fixtures where inexpensive
- Deep clean the entire home, including windows and carpets
- Maximize curb appeal: lawn, walkway, front door
- Stage main rooms to highlight space and light
- Address known maintenance issues before the buyer inspection finds them
- Gather warranties, permits, and utility cost records for buyers

## Phase 4: Listing and Marketing (Weeks 6 to 14)

Maximum exposure brings the strongest offers. Make sure your marketing plan covers every channel serious buyers use.

- Set the list price using sold comparables, not wishful thinking

- Insist on Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings of your home and area
- Professional photography before going live
- Full MLS distribution plus targeted digital advertising
- Review the listing details line by line before launch
- Keep the home show-ready with a 30 minute tidy-up routine
- Track showing feedback weekly with your Realtor
- Tour retirement communities actively while your home is listed

## Why VR Showings Matter for Downsizers

Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings let buyers tour your home and the surrounding area online before booking a visit. You get fewer, more serious in-person showings, which means less disruption while you are busy planning your own move.

## Phase 5: Offers, Conditions, and Coordination (Weeks 8 to 20)

This is where the sale of your current home and the purchase of your new one come together.

- Evaluate the full offer: price, deposit, conditions, and closing date
- Negotiate a closing date that aligns with your community purchase
- Consider a conditional offer on your purchase if your sale is not firm
- Ask about a seller rent-back if you need extra time after closing
- Arrange bridge financing if buying before your sale closes
- Cooperate fully with the buyer home inspection
- Engage your lawyer immediately after acceptance on both deals
- Budget for land transfer tax, legal fees, and moving costs
- Confirm deposit structure and timelines if buying a new build

## Phase 6: Closing and Moving Week

With both transactions aligned, the final week is about logistics and a smooth handover.

- Book your moving company at least four weeks ahead
- Schedule utility disconnections and connections for both homes
- Complete change of address with Canada Post, banks, and government
- Do the final walkthrough of your new home
- Sign closing documents with your lawyer
- Keep medications, documents, and an overnight bag off the truck
- Plan for key release late in the day on closing
- Leave keys, garage remotes, and manuals for your buyer

- Celebrate: you have officially made the move

## Decision Guide: Sell First or Buy First?

There is no single right answer. The best sequence depends on your finances, your target community, and current market conditions. Use this quick comparison to frame the conversation.

Strategy	Best When	Watch Out For
Sell first, buy later	You need exact proceeds to set your budget, or your market is slow	You may need short-term housing if the right community home takes time to find
Buy first, sell later	Inventory in your target community is tight and the right home appears	Bridge financing costs, and pressure to accept a lower offer on your sale
Simultaneous closing	Both deals are firm and dates can be negotiated together	Complex coordination; a delay on either side affects both deals

## Bridge Financing Basics

Bridge financing is a short-term loan that covers the gap when your new home closes before your old home does. It is secured against the firm sale of your current property. Most lenders require an unconditional accepted offer on your sale before advancing bridge funds. A Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC), set up while you still own your current home, is a flexible alternative for deposits and moving costs. Talk to your lender early, before you need either one, and ask Kevin how to structure closing dates so the bridge period stays as short as possible.

- Ask your lender whether you qualify for bridge financing and at what rate
- Get a HELOC in place before listing, while your income and equity qualify easily
- Keep the gap between closings as short as possible to limit interest costs
- Confirm your lawyer handles both closings and the bridge payout

## Costs to Budget For

Build a complete budget so the final numbers on closing day hold no surprises.

- Real estate commission and HST on your sale
- Legal fees for both transactions
- Mortgage discharge penalty, if any, on your current home
- Land transfer tax on your purchase (freehold and condo purchases)
- Bridge loan interest and setup fees, if applicable
- Moving company, packing supplies, and short-term storage
- Monthly fees at your new community (land lease, condo, or club fees)
- Utility connections, address changes, and small setup costs
- A contingency fund of roughly one percent of your sale price

## Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Realtor

Interview with intention. The agent you choose will manage the largest financial transaction of your retirement.

- How many downsizers moving to retirement communities have you helped?
- Will you handle both my sale and my purchase, and how will you coordinate dates?
- Do you provide Video Narrated VR Animated Online Showings of the home and area?
- What is your written marketing plan beyond the MLS?
- How do you arrive at your recommended list price?
- What happens if my home does not sell before my purchase closes?
- Can you provide references from recent downsizing clients?

## At a Glance: The Typical Timeline

Stage	Typical Duration	Key Activities
Planning and Evaluation	2 to 4 weeks	Home evaluation, community research, financial review
Preparation	3 to 6 weeks	Decluttering, repairs, staging, VR tour production
Active Marketing	2 to 8 weeks	Showings, open houses, offer negotiation
Sale to Closing	4 to 12 weeks	Conditions, inspections, coordinating the purchase
Moving Week	1 week	Closing day logistics, movers, key handover

Most moves complete in three to six months. New build purchases can extend the timeline to a year or more.

### Ready to Start Your Transition?

Find out what your current home is worth before you plan your move. Get a free, no-obligation home evaluation, then let Kevin coordinate both sides of your move to a retirement community.

[flaherty.ca/homeeval](http://flaherty.ca/homeeval) | Call or text Kevin: 226-270-6433