

## Maybe It's Time to Downsize

### *As an "Aging in Place" Strategy*

Whether by choice or out of necessity, downsizing to a smaller, more manageable size home may be an attractive option as we age. Common reasons why older adults downsize include:

- **Climate** – Moving to a warmer climate remains a popular choice, especially for older adults. In addition to the southwestern states, many coastal and southern states are popular destinations because of their consistent year-round temperatures.
- **Cost** – In today's economy, the combined cost of the mortgage, insurance, general upkeep, and heating/cooling can be more than people can afford. People on a fixed income may also find it difficult to pay these costs that increase constantly.
- **Equity** – A home is often a source of equity for those who are retired and living on a fixed income. While there are ways to get money out of a home without moving, like the use of a reverse mortgage, selling a home may provide greater financial freedom.
- **Floor Plan** – The current home layout is often a deciding factor for downsizing. Having difficulty walking up or down steps, or not having a full bathroom on the first floor can present challenges, especially for people with a disability, chronic illness, such as arthritis, or those who are recovering from a medical event, like a stroke.
- **Planning Ahead** – Some people downsize because they know that as they get older it will be increasingly challenging to cope and manage a move. As a result, some consider their future needs and choose to pursue simplified living arrangements, or they want access to services that are often associated with senior living communities.

- **Size** – Whether as a result of becoming empty-nesters or losing a spouse, people often realize they have more space than they need or want. Maintaining a large home is not the way many people want to spend their time or money.

Waiting too long before downsizing can also present challenges. Many people come to realize that as they age there comes a point in time that the sheer thought of moving becomes overwhelming. There is a big difference between knowing what you want to do and actually doing it. Going through years of accumulated “stuff,” deciding what to keep and what to get rid of, eliminating clutter, packing boxes, and more can be both emotionally and physically exhausting.

Downsizing is more manageable when a client has the capability and energy, or if not, when family, friends, and professionals can help.

Downsizing may also require a change in a client’s planning. The attorneys at Anderson Associates can assist clients with their estate, financial, long-term care insurance and veteran’s benefits planning.