



Dave Windsor's 'Alaska Real Estate'

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Real Estate For Seniors

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Seniors face particular challenges when purchasing a new home.

Over the last few years I have worked with several seniors who, for one reason or another, need to relocate. One of the most common issues is that, when ready to downsize, they need to downsize to a home that does not have stairs.

This decision to sell an existing home that has been your pride and joy for 20 years or more is an emotional decision. Yet it must be made, and not deferred until the logical becomes the impossible.

Clearing out the family home and relocating is an enormous task, and every year it becomes more difficult for seniors, even when family is available to help. Sometimes, one spouse is ready but the other stubbornly resists.

When counselling seniors on their real estate, one must be particularly sensitive to the emotional content of the decision they are trying to make. If you need to downsize to a home without stairs, you face a couple of serious barriers that a good Realtor can assist you with.

The first is finding an available home that works for your lifestyle. Ranch style homes are in relatively scarce supply for Anchorage's ageing population so you will likely have to view a listing and write up an offer really fast when

that new home appears on the market. You may even have to compete with other buyers shopping for the property. Some builders, like Spinnell, are now offering new construction ranch style homes, and this provides an extra source to explore. However, construction time is approximately 12 months.

Don't get stuck, necessarily, on a traditional ranch-style house. Sometimes, a 'Hillside Ranch' with one walk-in level and a walk-out, daylight basement can work. Even a 2-Storey home could work if you walk into the main level and it has a bedroom and full bath on the ground floor.

Besides finding a suitable structure that works for your lifestyle, there is a second issue you should talk about with your trusted real estate licensee. That is timing. Do you need to sell first in order to buy? This situation will not work in current market conditions. If you are making an offer 'contingent' on the sale, or closing of the sale, of your present home you will be out of luck.

Ideally, you should qualify and buy first, then sell your existing home. If this is financially out of reach, then you must have a Plan B stepping stone between the two transactions – that is, somewhere to live when you have sold your home, as a transitional abode while you are trying to buy your new home.

All these, and other issues, can be patiently worked through with Realtor assistance. First you must make the decision, together with your spouse, to do it - and then call your preferred real estate guide.

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