FREE GULF COAST REAL ESTATE GUIDE

Retiring or downsizing on the Gulf Coast

A smaller home is not automatically an easier home. The right move balances daily life, carrying costs, maintenance, timing, and the things you want to keep close.

Inside this guide

Bryce Burch | Broker/Owner, Pensacola Bay Realty

Read online: bryceburch.com/guides/retiring-downsizing-pensacola/

01 / THE DECISION

Define the life you are moving toward

Write down what you hope will improve: less yard work, a shorter drive to family, one-level living, more travel, or easier access to care and everyday services. Then identify what you do not want to lose, such as hosting space, hobbies, pets, or privacy.

Tour homes against that list rather than a square-footage target alone. Consider entry steps, bedroom and bathroom access, lighting, parking, storage, and whether ordinary maintenance will still feel manageable in five or ten years.

ACTION LIST

- Name the three biggest reasons for moving.
- Test accessibility and upkeep during each tour.
- Keep a list of needs that may change later.

02 / THE DECISION

Compare total costs, not only prices

A smaller purchase price can still carry higher monthly costs. Request estimates for insurance, taxes, HOA or condo dues, utilities, maintenance, and any flood coverage. If you are considering a condo, read the governing documents and ask about reserves, assessments, insurance responsibilities, and restrictions before treating the dues as the full cost.

Discuss tax, estate, investment, or retirement-account consequences with the appropriate licensed professional. A real estate plan can coordinate timing and property choices, but it should not substitute for personal financial or legal advice.

ACTION LIST

- Build a side-by-side current-home and next-home budget.
- Review HOA or condo obligations when applicable.
- Speak with tax and financial advisers before committing to a funding plan.

03 / THE DECISION

Plan the sale and purchase as one sequence

Decide whether you need to sell first, buy first, or use a contingency. Each route changes your cash needs, moving logistics, and negotiating position. Estimate the net proceeds from your current home using a realistic sale range and selling costs, then set a purchase budget that works even if the sale does not reach the top of the range.

If the home holds decades of belongings, begin sorting before photos or showings are scheduled. Separate keepsakes, items for the next home, donations, and items that require a family conversation. Give yourself time for this work; it is often the hardest part of downsizing.

ACTION LIST

- Map sale, purchase, and move dates on one page.
- Get a realistic net-proceeds estimate.
- Start sorting well before listing.

04 / THE DECISION

Test the new routine before moving

Visit the neighborhood on a weekday and weekend. Drive to groceries, friends, medical appointments, and the places that make the Gulf Coast feel like home. If travel is a priority, think about how the property will be cared for while you are away.

A good downsizing decision should make the next ordinary day easier, not merely produce a smaller floor plan. Leave room to revise the plan if the first set of homes does not meet that test.

ACTION LIST

- Practice the weekly route from the new address.
- Check the property-care plan for time away.
- Revisit the reasons for moving before making an offer.

BRING THESE QUESTIONS

Make the next conversation useful.

What work do I want to stop doing?

What activities or people must stay easy to reach?

How will the move work if selling takes longer than expected?

NOTES

FURTHER READING

National Institute on Aging: aging in place: https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/aging-place-growing-old-home

This guide is educational and is not financial, legal, medical, or construction advice. Confirm property-specific facts and consult the relevant licensed professional before committing.

Talk through your real estate questions: Bryce@pbrrents.com | 850-202-8647