

CONSIDERATIONS FOR RELOCATION TO AN AGE-RESTRICTED
RETIREMENT OR LIFE PLAN (aka, Continuing Care Retirement {CRC})
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Any planning for relocation to a retirement community must start with a realistic self-assessment of constraints, both physical and financial. Before starting through the lists of considerations for planning relocation to a retirement residence, determine current or anticipated physical constraints that are age related or due to illness or injury. Use this assessment to determine whether a retirement community that only provides independent living is the best fit or whether a Life Plan Community, with provisions for higher levels of care, is advisable. Consider family medical history in the risk assessment so that you can reasonably ensure your choice of retirement community will provide joy for many years to come. Likewise, be realistic about what you can afford to reduce the risk of financial insolvency while you are resident in your “dream community.” Finally, decide up front if you want to rent or purchase. Rental communities are more plentiful and present more choices; however, purchasing (where available) allows you to build equity. In addition, in your timing decision, consider market conditions for selling and buying another residence and consider whether you will be able to avoid a capital gain on the sale from the federal capital gain exclusion for sale of residences if you delay the sale. Give these considerations top priority in your planning and timing for execution of your plan.

The list of considerations is most useful to those who are planning to relocate in retirement to an age-restricted independent living retirement community (e.g., a 55+ or 62+ community) or a Life Plan Community (which provides, when the need arises, for transition from independent living to assisted living or memory care to full nursing care within the same community). This list is not designed for those who are planning to age in place in their current residence or relocate to senior-friendly, non-age restricted communities without support services (e.g., Villages or Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities {NORCs}), or to relocate to cohousing units with shared common facilities, or to move directly into Assisted Living or Nursing Care communities with no option for independent living. The list also assumes that relocation will take place in the USA and does not cover considerations unique to those considering relocation to another country.

The considerations which make up the list are grouped in the order each should be considered for the most efficient decision making. Each consideration has several factors from which you identify those that matter. The considerations start with the

regional geographic location of your future residence followed by considerations related to the locale of the retirement community, the needed and desired services, other community factors and then the specific type of residence desired. The consideration list ends with finance, legal, and miscellaneous considerations. Use these lists to choose the factors you need or desire and this becomes your specifications for use in developing a small list of candidate locations which meet most or all specifications and are therefore worth visiting

LIST OF RELOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

I. Choosing a U.S. National Region or State for Relocation

1. Proximity to loved ones and friends
2. Climate and Weather (including susceptibility to natural disasters)
3. Politics and Culture
4. Cost of Living
5. State Income tax/ inheritance tax
6. How does it rate in lists of best places to retire. How does it cater to the Senior population.

II. Choosing a Geographic Locale within the National Region or State

1. Surroundings and Natural Ambience-- Urban, suburban, small town, or rural. Topography--Seashore, Lakeshore, Mountains, Forested, Plains
2. Personality/Safety of Locale--- conservative or liberal politics. Fast or slow paced. Crime and traffic congestion (highway system)
3. Internet and Cellular access
4. Proximity to retail shopping, bars and restaurants, banks and financial brokerage offices, barber and beauty salons, library
5. Proximity to Hospital or Medical Center with specialists and primary care physician. Response time for emergency services and police.
6. Proximity to college campus, lifetime learning opportunities, cultural activities such as theatre and music venues
7. Proximity to churches/worship communities
8. Adult/senior activities--- art and other hobby clubs, community theatre or choir, book clubs and discussion groups, volunteer activities, charitable/social organizations such as VFW, Elks, Masons.
9. Proximity to international airport or large national airport or other long haul transportation hubs such as train station. Proximity to local transportation/rail services to get you to a transportation hub
10. Outdoor recreation—parks, ski areas, golf courses, hiking and nature trails, softball and other sport leagues

11. Indoor recreation—gym, swimming pool, racquetball, bowling, etc.
12. Proximity to interesting historic or picturesque sites/towns to visit
13. Development planning for locale—planning commission projects

III. Identifying Needed and Desired Services from the Residential Community Within Your Chosen Locale

1. Lawn mowing, other landscaping, trash removal, snow removal, gutter cleaning. etc services (which cover all exterior chores)
2. Home repair or home warranty services (which cover all interior maintenance and repair chores)
3. Community Center with theatre for movie watching and live performances and use for large gatherings, meeting rooms, classrooms, large party room
4. Indoor recreation (billiard, ping pong, card playing, cooking classes, ceramics, wood working, etc.)
5. Full time staff managing an active program of clubs--educational, recreational, social-- and travel services including local excursions to nearby events in the larger community
6. Exercise facility including indoor swimming pool, volleyball and racquetball courts, exercise classes
7. Outdoor recreational facilities--- golf course, swimming pool, tennis and/or pickleball courts, jogging tracks, bocce ball
8. Gated community, other security measures
9. Dining facilities- full service and bistro/bar where sports can be viewed or happy hour enjoyed. Chef credentials, quality and freshness of ingredients, preparation and service, nutritionist on staff for menu planning, menu selections, seasonal rotations of menu. Is food seasoned and delicious or is withholding salt and other seasoning/spices (i.e., bland) the norm. Alcohol (e.g., wine or beer) available during the meals
10. Accommodations for overnight guests for whom there is insufficient space in your home
11. On-site chapel, chaplain
12. Transportation services for shopping, medical appointments, etc. Pick up services for small items you may need.
13. On-site convenience services like a 7-11, bank branch, postal station, medical and dental services including pharmacy

IV. Choosing Candidate Residential Retirement Communities to Visit Within the Chosen Locale

1. Is the community managed by a professional property management service or is delivery of services managed by a volunteer resident homeowners association? Complaints about how well services are delivered?
2. Does the Community provide the needed and desired services identified in III.
3. Active social lifestyle or laid-back quiet and peaceful. Get a sense of cliquishness—are all residents warmly welcomed and making friends is easy? For example, are you a single person in a community of couples or vice versa? Do your values and preferred lifestyle “fit”?
4. When built. When last renovated. Any expansion plans for undeveloped property or renovation plans in the foreseeable future?
5. Decide between rental and purchase of residence (if purchase option available). Waiting list. Available openings. What entrance requirements--- financial qualifications, physical exam, others.
6. For-profit or Not-for-profit community.
7. Demographics: Average age for move in. Age distribution of residents. Female to Male ratio. Couples vs singles ratio. Ethnic diversity
8. Special affiliations; e.g., retired military, specific religious denomination. Political diversity within community (e.g., majority Trump republicans or Bernie Sanders liberals). What is the community “personality”?
9. Policy about pets
10. Parking privileges and restrictions. How many cars per household? Are boats and campers permitted?
11. Storage facilities provided or for rent on-site or close by
12. Policy and accommodations for overnight guests. Can family members come for extended stay? Is there an age restriction for guests?
13. Lockdown restrictions applied to the residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. Were guests prohibited and movement of the residents off-campus restricted. Under similar future circumstances, how will your personal freedom of movement or to have guests be restricted
14. Emergency plan and shelter plan for residents in the event of a natural disaster or prolonged power outage. Have there been any such incidents in the last 5 years.

V. Choosing the Residence Style

1. Condo apartment, connected (e.g., townhouse style), or single family
2. Single or multi-level. If multi, are there assists for stair climbing between levels
3. Built to universal design standards to accommodate senior living

4. Review floorplan against your specifications for square footage, bedrooms, bathrooms, dining area, garage and storage space. Consider space needs for overnight guests, entertaining, and all that special family furniture and “stuff”
5. For single family, review spacing from neighbors houses for privacy
6. Builder reputation

VI. Finance and Legal Considerations

1. Entrance fee (with refundability provisions), monthly fee, what services are included in that fee, and which of your needed or desired services will result in additional fees. For Life Plan Community, determine how entry fee covers cost of higher-level care when needed; there are generally three types of contracts: A. All-inclusive unlimited (most expensive), B. Limited amount of services included in entry fee with pay-as-you-go after pre-paid care exhausted, C. Services guaranteed available when needed, but only on a pay-as-you-go- basis (least expensive)
2. What is the history of fee increases over time
3. Review rules and restrictions which apply to residents to identify those that conflict with your expectations, such as who you can host for visits and extended stays, restrictions on interior or exterior design or landscaping, parking restrictions, etc.
4. If you can purchase a residence, get an estimate of the property tax
5. How financially stable is the community or the homeowners association. Have there been special assessments imposed on the residents to cover needed repairs? Is the owner or management company bonded?
6. If you have long term care insurance, how might it be used while you are a resident in the community to provide for additional care that may become necessary

VII. Miscellaneous Considerations

1. The advantage of Life Plan Communities is that higher care levels are available within the community when the resident develops the need. Some independent living only retirement communities have an agreement with nearby facilities providing a higher care level, when needed, to ease the transition and not put their resident in a difficult position in a crisis. If you are considering an independent living only community, ask if they have such an agreement with a close by higher care level facility.

2. If not a Life Plan Community, ask about policy on bringing outside care services into your residence should that become necessary
3. If a Life Plan Community and one spouse develops the need for a higher level of care, ask whether that care level is brought to the couple's residence or if couples are physically separated with one continuing in independent living and the other moved to assisted living or nursing care. The norm is to separate, but some communities are developing the capability to bring the services to the resident rather than to separate the couple.
4. What is your back up plan should you unfortunately suffer a medical crisis after moving into your independent living community which makes you no longer able to function in independent living
5. Is there a "fellowship fund" or other provisions to cover the costs of residents who have become financially insolvent in their older years. If so, what is the percentage of residents who are currently receiving such financial assistance. What happens in the event of insolvency?

Suggested Information Sources for Further Research Before Choosing Communities to Visit

Start by talking with friends or acquaintances who are residents of the community you are considering, then research:

1. Virtual tours, brochures, discussions with sales staff
2. County Office on Aging
3. Local realtor (for purchasing)
4. Associations in which Community holds membership
5. Check into any awards received by Community
6. State Regulatory Authority (Community will have one if offering assisted living or nursing care)
7. Better Business Bureau
8. Local Chamber of Commerce
9. Local Police (info on crime/safety in specific community and surrounding area)
10. Local library and newspaper