

PROJECT CONNECTIONS / PLANNING SERIES 06

Choose the living arrangement that fits your next chapter.

Downsizing Before Retirement Decision Planner

Compare complete living arrangements: cost, daily routines, maintenance, access and proximity to the people and services you value.

PRINT-READY WORKBOOK / 14 PAGES

Illustrative scene; not an identified SJBA member project.

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Put your preferences first

A smaller home is not automatically less expensive or easier to live in. Let the people making the move define success before choosing a property or sale date.

STARTING POINT / Exploring • Comparing • Viewing • Move planning

Desired daily-life outcome and how you will measure it

Resident decision owner, participants and preferred timing

What you want to keep about your current life

Use the workbook in three passes

Gather facts and constraints / pages 3-6

Compare and coordinate / pages 7-10

Confirm next steps / pages 11-14

Track progress in the action plan on page 13. Keep completed worksheets private; no online submission is required.

Understand the current baseline

Record current expenses and responsibilities using actual bills where possible. Include the features that work well so a new option is compared with the full picture.

Current arrangement	Cost / responsibility	Works well / concern
Housing payments / charges		
Utilities / insurance / taxes		
Maintenance / outside work		
Daily access / routines		
Transport / destinations		
Support / enjoyment		

Most important unresolved question / next action

Keep recurring costs separate from one-time repairs and anticipated future needs.

Define the next home’s requirements

Describe the routines and preferences of the people who will live there. Avoid letting a generic idea of retirement override what makes daily life practical and enjoyable.

Which daily activities, access features and room arrangements matter most?

Which services, transport options and support relationships should remain convenient?

What space do you want for pets, hobbies, guests and storage?

What is non-negotiable, what is preferred, and what can change?

If adaptations are relevant, involve appropriate qualified professionals and the resident in the decision.

Compare arrangements fairly

Include staying and adapting alongside a smaller owned home, rental or another verified option. Test tradeoffs without assuming that ownership or renting is best for everyone.

Option / provider A: _____ B: _____

Comparison point	A / evidence	B / evidence
Daily routines / access		
Maintenance responsibility		
Transport / support		
Flexibility / future changes		
Upfront cash commitment		
Recurring charges / uncertainty		

Recommendation / information needed before choosing

Label columns with the two options you are currently comparing. Repeat this sheet for a third option.

Compare the full cost

Use the same time period for each option. Convert annual charges to a monthly planning amount where useful, and keep one-time moving or transaction costs separate.

Cost item	Current / source	New option / source
Housing / association charges		
Tax / insurance		
Utilities / services		
Maintenance / transport		
One-time transaction / moving		
Reserve / uncertain expenses		

Most important unresolved question / next action

Current monthly total $_____; option total $_____; one-time cash needed $_____.

Map sale, purchase and moving dates

Decide which commitments depend on one another. Ask the appropriate advisers about dates and terms before assuming sale proceeds, possession and moving arrangements align.

Milestone	Owner / confirmed date	Dependency / fallback
Current-home preparation		
Sale / lease commitments		
New-home availability		
Funding / proceeds timing		
Moving / storage		
Temporary accommodation		

Most important unresolved question / next action

Fallback if the dates separate: _____

Bring focused adviser questions

Ask for advice on your actual circumstances. The workbook does not calculate retirement income needs, tax consequences, eligibility or a suitable investment strategy.

Financial / tax adviser: how does this option affect cash flow and reserves?

Legal adviser: which ownership, agreement or responsibility questions need review?

Lender: what financing conditions and timing apply to this option?

Insurance professional: what changes in property, occupancy or coverage need discussion?

Record written recommendations and assumptions; do not infer a tax exemption or benefit.

Rightsize possessions respectfully

Separate ownership questions from preferences about what to keep. Make time for shared decisions before promising, selling or disposing of an item that others may have an interest in.

Group / item	Decision / ownership question	Owner / destination / date
Keep in daily use		
Relocate / store		
Gift with agreement		
Sell		
Donate		
Decide later		

Most important unresolved question / next action

Record the decision owner, recipient or destination and any approval still needed.

Test everyday life during a viewing

Use the same objective criteria at each property. Record observations at relevant times rather than assuming that a smaller floor plan or nearby map pin meets the need.

Criterion	Observation / source	Follow-up / tradeoff
Entry and everyday routes		
Kitchen / laundry routines		
Storage / hobbies		
Parking / transportation		
Services / support visits		
Charges / maintenance rules		

Most important unresolved question / next action

Property / visit date _____ Most important unresolved question _____.

Plan the service transition

Keep essential services and contacts continuous through the move. Use verified providers and retain private records securely rather than entering sensitive details in this workbook.

Transition	Current / new arrangement	Owner / date / confirmation
Utilities / communications		
Mail / address changes		
Care / service contacts		
Moving / storage		
Keys / access arrangements		
Document location		

Most important unresolved question / next action

Ask movers about the applicable intrastate or interstate consumer protections and written scope. [S2, S4]

Use professional advice to decide

Bring your baseline, comparison and unanswered questions. A useful recommendation should show assumptions and explain which evidence would change the conclusion.



BETTER QUESTIONS. CLEARER NEXT STEPS.

Bring the relevant worksheets to your professional conversation. Record the recommendation, who owns the next action and when to follow up.

Illustrative scene; not an identified SJBA member project.

Real estate professional: how can timing support the chosen arrangement?

Financial / tax / legal advisers: which consequences need individual review?

Mover / service provider: what access, scope or transition needs must be priced?

Role / contact / meeting date and documents to bring

Recommendation received / assumptions to confirm

Next action / owner / deadline / follow-up date

Check the current SJBA directory for relevant professionals; not every proposed role is necessarily represented.

Choose a supported next step

Record proceed, revise, investigate or stay for now. A decision to wait can be an active plan when it includes a review date and the evidence needed next.

READINESS CHECK / mark confirmed or name the unresolved issue

☐ Resident preferences remain central

☐ Full costs and responsibilities compared

☐ Timing and adviser questions reviewed

☐ Move / service plan is workable

Decision: proceed / revise / investigate / pause | Date: _____

PRIORITY 1 / Action: _____

Owner: _____ Due: _____

Dependency / evidence needed: _____

Progress / next review: _____

PRIORITY 2 / Action: _____

Owner: _____ Due: _____

Dependency / evidence needed: _____

Progress / next review: _____

PRIORITY 3 / Action: _____

Owner: _____ Due: _____

Dependency / evidence needed: _____

Progress / next review: _____

Review monthly while exploring, then weekly during an active move or whenever circumstances change.

Sources and your next connection

Use these primary resources with the relevant professional. Source checks: October 14, 2026. Blue underlined titles are clickable; [S#] references point to this list.

[S1] CFPB | Loan Estimate explainer

Review mortgage costs and ask lenders to explain the terms and assumptions.

[S2] FMCSA | Moving checklist

Interstate moving: compare written estimates, verify registration and retain moving documents.

[S3] Camden County | Official services

Find county services and contacts; confirm individual arrangements directly.

[S4] NJ Consumer Affairs | Public movers FAQ

For moves within New Jersey, verify state licensing and the written service and coverage terms.

General educational planning information, not individualized legal, financial, insurance, clinical, engineering or construction advice. Requirements vary. Qualified professionals and relevant authorities should confirm applicable decisions.

Need professional guidance?

Explore current professionals in the SJBA directory. Bring the relevant worksheet and explain the decision you need help making. Not every role listed is necessarily represented; verify scope, credentials and availability.

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