

Upsizing or Downsizing in the Boise Area

A homeowner's guide to choosing the right next home, using your equity wisely, and planning a move with fewer surprises.

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Homeowner Guide
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BEGIN WITH THE DECISION

Start with the life change, not the square footage

A bigger or smaller home is useful only if it solves the problem you actually have. Describe the next chapter first; then let the home search serve it.

What is not working now?

- Rooms are doing too many jobs.
- Stairs, yard work, or repairs feel harder than they should.
- Work, caregiving, hobbies, or guests need dedicated space.
- Monthly housing costs no longer match your priorities.

What should feel easier next?

- Daily routines and storage
- Commutes and regular appointments
- Indoor and outdoor maintenance
- Hosting, privacy, accessibility, or flexibility

Write your non-negotiables before you browse

1. The next home must...

2. The next home must...

3. The next home must...

A feature we would like, but can trade...

A cost or chore we want to reduce...

A location factor we will verify...

A Boise-area lens

Compare properties by the routines that matter to you. Test likely commutes at the times you would actually travel, confirm school boundaries directly with the appropriate district, and review each property's association documents, utilities, access, and maintenance needs. Conditions can vary by property and location; use current, property-specific information rather than assumptions about a community.

Your first decision is not “Where?” It is “Why?”

If the reason is clear, it becomes easier to compare tradeoffs without being distracted by finishes, staging, or one impressive room.

PATH ONE

Upsizing: give every extra room a job



Signs it may be time

- [ ] Your household is growing or changing.
- [ ] Working from home is competing with daily living.
- [ ] Storage problems return immediately after organizing.
- [ ] You need space for guests, hobbies, caregiving, or pets.
- [ ] The layout, not just the size, creates daily friction.

More space also means more of...

Purchase cost is only one part of the decision. Consider utilities, upkeep, furnishing, landscaping, insurance, taxes, association dues where applicable, and the time required to care for the property.

Question: Which added spaces will improve life every week, not merely look appealing during a showing?

Five tradeoffs to settle early

1

Space

Bedrooms, flexible rooms, storage, yard, parking, and future needs.

2

Schools

Verify boundaries, transportation, programs, and enrollment directly.

3

Commute

Test work, school, medical, and family routes at realistic times.

4

Budget

Price the whole monthly and annual picture, plus reserves.

5

HOA or none

Compare rules, services, dues, reserves, restrictions, and your preferences.

Future fit

Ask whether the layout can adapt if work, mobility, or family needs change.

PATH TWO

Downsizing: reduce friction, not quality of life



Common reasons to right-size

- An empty nest leaves rooms that are rarely used.
- Retirement changes location, budget, or travel priorities.
- Yard work and maintenance take too much time or energy.
- A simpler home could reduce recurring costs and chores.
- Single-level living would make daily movement easier.

Protect what matters

List the routines you want to keep: hosting family, a workshop, pets, gardening, privacy, storage, parking, or access to familiar services. A smaller home that blocks those routines may not feel simpler.

Option	Potential advantages	Questions to verify
Smaller detached home	Private space, familiar ownership pattern, possible yard.	Layout, maintenance, storage, lot care, accessibility.
Condominium	Some exterior work may be handled through the association.	Dues, reserves, insurance boundaries, rules, parking, assessments.
55+ community	May offer age-qualified housing, activities, services, or lower-maintenance options.	Eligibility and occupancy rules, fees, services, resale rules, accessibility, and the community's governing documents.

Decluttering rule: do not begin with sentimental items. Start with duplicates, expired goods, broken items, and spaces you use least. Early progress creates momentum without forcing hard decisions too soon.

MONEY FRAMEWORK

Equity is a starting point, not the final budget

Your home's estimated value is not the same as the cash available for the next purchase. A useful plan separates gross value, debt payoff, selling costs, reserves, and the full cost of the replacement home.

Estimated sale proceeds - loan payoff - selling and moving costs = estimated net proceeds

1. Estimate the sale
Use a property-specific pricing opinion and a realistic range.

›

2. Estimate the net
Account for payoff, transaction costs, repairs, concessions, and moving.

›

3. Build the next-home plan
Choose how much to use, how much to reserve, and what payment feels sustainable.

Questions for the current home

- What is a reasonable sale range in its present condition?
- Which improvements may help marketability, and which may not pay back?
- What liens or loan balances must be satisfied?
- What moving, storage, repair, and temporary-housing costs should be reserved?

Questions for the next home

- What monthly housing cost is comfortable, not merely approvable?
- How much cash should remain after closing?
- How might taxes, insurance, utilities, maintenance, and association dues change?
- Would a new layout reduce or create future costs?

Keep tax questions separate from cash-flow questions

A mortgage payoff affects the cash you receive, while tax treatment depends on separate rules such as gain, adjusted basis, use of the property, and available exclusions. Ask a qualified tax professional about your situation before relying on an estimate.

COORDINATING TWO TRANSACTIONS

Selling and buying together: choose your risk on purpose

No sequence removes every uncertainty. The right structure depends on your financing, the strength of each offer, available housing, and how much overlap or temporary housing you can tolerate.

Approach	How it works	What it may help	What to plan for
Offer contingent on selling	Your purchase contract depends on the sale or closing of your current home, subject to negotiated terms.	May reduce the risk of owning two homes at once.	The seller may view the offer as less certain. Deadlines, release rights, and exact language matter.
Sell first	Close your sale, then buy after proceeds and timing are known.	Clarifies available funds and may simplify the purchase offer.	Temporary housing, storage, an extra move, and pressure if the next home takes time.
Coordinate closings	Plan both transactions so the sale and purchase close near each other.	Can reduce the gap between homes.	Delays in either transaction can affect the other. Moving, possession, funds, and backup housing need written plans.

Ask your lender before listing

Confirm qualification assumptions, cash needed, whether current housing debt is counted, acceptable contingency structures, and how sale proceeds must be documented. Loan options and underwriting vary.

Ask your agent before offering

Discuss current local conditions for both your existing home and target property type, likely contract pressure points, possession options, and the strongest backup plan if timing shifts.

Contract language is not one-size-fits-all. Contingencies, possession, repairs, extensions, and closing coordination should be documented using appropriate forms and reviewed by the professionals responsible for those issues.

TIMING

Plan around decision gates, not a perfect market moment

Market conditions matter, but your move also depends on readiness, financing, home preparation, replacement-home choices, and the cost of waiting. Build a sequence you can live with if one step takes longer than hoped.

1

Clarify the destination

Define must-haves, tradeoffs, target property types, and location factors to verify.

2

Confirm the money

Discuss financing, estimated net proceeds, reserves, and carrying-cost limits.

3

Prepare the current home

Choose repairs and presentation work based on likely buyer expectations and your return on effort.

4

Select the sequence

Decide whether to sell first, buy with a sale contingency, or coordinate closings.

5

Write the fallback

Identify temporary housing, storage, pet care, extra funds, and who makes decisions if timing changes.

6

Review before each commitment

Update estimates and assumptions before listing, offering, accepting, and removing protections.

Your plan B should answer these questions

- [ ] Where could we stay if the closings do not line up?
- [ ] How long could we carry overlapping housing costs, if our lender approves?
- [ ] Which possessions need storage, and what must stay accessible?
- [ ] Who needs to coordinate movers, utilities, keys, school or work schedules, and pets?
- [ ] What condition would cause us to pause instead of forcing the move?

SELLER PREPARATION

Smart things to do before you sell

Make the home easier to understand, inspect, and imagine living in. Start with clarity and condition before committing to a large renovation.

Declutter and edit

- [ ] Clear walking paths and crowded surfaces.
- [ ] Reduce closets and cabinets enough to show function.
- [ ] Pack personal collections carefully rather than hiding them onsite.
- [ ] Create donate, sell, keep, and discard zones.

Handle minor repairs

- [ ] Fix small items that suggest deferred maintenance.
- [ ] Replace failed bulbs and address obvious leaks or loose hardware.
- [ ] Touch up only where the result will look consistent.
- [ ] Ask before starting costly or specialized work.

Improve curb appeal

- [ ] Make the entry clean, visible, and easy to approach.
- [ ] Trim, sweep, weed, and remove seasonal debris.
- [ ] Check the door, house numbers, exterior lights, and gates.
- [ ] Keep improvements appropriate to the home's condition and setting.

Get a pricing opinion

- [ ] Review recent comparable activity and current competition.
- [ ] Discuss likely buyer expectations for this property type.
- [ ] Compare selling as-is with targeted preparation.
- [ ] Use a range and net sheet, not a single hopeful number.

Before spending money, ask three questions

Will buyers notice it? Will it remove uncertainty? Is the likely benefit worth the cost, time, and disruption?

A clean, cared-for, well-explained home often benefits more from disciplined preparation than from a rushed remodel.

Documents worth gathering

Loan payoff contact · HOA documents · Permits and warranties · Utility notes · Repair records · Keys and access details

YOUR CONVERSATION CHECKLIST

Questions to ask your agent

About your current home

- [ ] What sale range is realistic in its current condition?
- [ ] Which improvements would you prioritize, and which would you skip?
- [ ] What costs should appear on an estimated net sheet?
- [ ] What could make the home harder to sell or finance?
- [ ] How will you communicate changes in local competition?

About the next home

- [ ] How will we compare total ownership costs?
- [ ] What property details must be verified during due diligence?
- [ ] How will you help us evaluate associations and governing documents?
- [ ] What local professionals may be needed for inspections or specialist advice?

About timing and risk

- [ ] Which transaction sequence fits our priorities and financing?
- [ ] How might a sale contingency affect an offer?
- [ ] What happens if one closing is delayed?
- [ ] Which dates, notices, and decision points should we track?
- [ ] What is our backup plan for housing, storage, possession, and funds?

Ask for a written move plan

It should show assumptions, next actions, who owns each task, the planned transaction sequence, and the fallback if timing changes.

Not sure which move makes sense?

Team Owens Realty can help you compare the options in plain language: what your current home may sell for, what preparation could matter, what your next-home priorities cost, and how the timing might work.

Start with a no-pressure conversation.

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Important: This guide provides general information only and is not legal, tax, financial, lending, inspection, appraisal, or insurance advice. Rules, contracts, financing, costs, community requirements, and property conditions vary. Consult the appropriate licensed or qualified professional about your circumstances.

REFERENCE NOTES

Useful consumer resources

These sources provide general background for mortgage planning, home-sale tax questions, and housing for older persons. They do not replace advice for a specific transaction.

- **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Your Home Loan Toolkit.** Affordability, total housing costs, loan comparisons, and closing documents.
  https://www.consumerfinance.gov/owning-a-home/explore/home-loan-toolkit/
- **Internal Revenue Service, Sale of Residence - Real Estate Tax Tips.** General information about gain, ownership and use tests, reporting, and Publication 523.
  https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/sale-of-residence-real-estate-tax-tips
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Fair Housing Act Design Manual.** General federal fair-housing and accessibility background, including housing for older persons.
  https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/pdf/fairhousing/fairintro.pdf

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Local facts should be verified for the property

School boundaries, association rules, utilities, taxes, insurance, accessibility, commute conditions, permits, and property condition can change or differ from one address to another. Confirm the details that matter before making a decision.