

# Cash-In Your Old Home's Equity For A New, Easier Lifestyle

Your home is quiet except for the hum of the refrigerator or the voices from the TV. The rooms are filled with pictures and memories, but the children have grown and gone. You spend hours each week cleaning rooms you never use.

Are you an “empty nester” who needs a home for the future? Is it time to downsize or to move into another home more suitable for your retirement years? Here are some tell-tale signs:

- Your current home is too large for your lifestyle. Rather than close off the extra rooms or rent out the excess space, you may opt to move to a smaller home.
- You are retired and your income is lower than it was during your prime working years. You may want or need to sell your current home and move to one with a smaller mortgage payment or less upkeep. Maybe you could live more comfortably in a lower cost-of-living area. If you have loaded up a home equity loan, selling the home could give you welcome cash to eliminate those payments.
- As you approach your golden years, your wish is to have a home with few, if any, stairs, or one which could be easily converted to be handicap-accessible if the need arises.
- You prefer a location where the weather is more to your year-round liking and where there are activities you like —

golf, tennis, boating, or socializing with friends — during your leisure time.

- Changes in the capital gains tax law mean you don't have to buy a larger, more expensive home or do extensive renovations to a less costly home in order to avoid a hefty tax bill on your home-sale profits. Today, couples can move down and exclude up to \$500,000 in home-sale profits — \$250,000 for singles — without having to buy another home. Even better, homeowners can shelter the profits on the sale of a home as often as once every two years. (Previously, homeowners could deduct, one time only, \$125,000 in home-sale profits tax-free only after they turned age 55.)

## Getting It Sold

Once you have decided to sell and move, take a critical look at your current home. Even the best-maintained homes begin to show age.

Before you list your home for sale, be sure it's in “move-in” condition. Make needed repairs and replacements so the home will show at its best.

Remember, homes that sell fastest and for top dollar show like a model home

and are merchandised like a model, too. How does your home compare with other homes for sale, including new homes? Do you want to undergo major renovations, or would you prefer to make price concessions to help your home compete?

Here are some specific questions to ask yourself:

- Are kitchen appliances up-to-date and in good working order? Does the kitchen have popular features like a walk-in pantry, an island?
- Up-to-date homes often have a master bedroom suite. Does yours? Does the master bathroom have a spa or soaking tub or dual shower heads?
- Do you have a home office? Is telephone wiring adequate to support an office phone, computer modem, fax machine?
- Have you built any additions — a deck, patio, carport, sunroom — without first obtaining a building permit or without passing inspection?
- Do carpets and tile need to be replaced? Will a professional cleaning make them look like new?
- What do the walls look like? Do they suffer from puppy-bite or kitty-scratch? Should old, tired wallpaper be removed? Do walls and woodwork need repainting?
- Can you make closets and counters look larger? Are there items you can pack away and do without until after you move?
- Are shrubs and trees neat and does the yard look well-kept and attractive?
- How does your home compare to others currently for sale? What can you do to make it say, “Buy me!”

Price is one answer. If you've owned your home for years, chances are good you have some serious equity. Perhaps you can afford to be flexible on price in order to get it sold. After all, to get the best possible sale today, a home must be in tip-top shape in every way: price, condition, terms and exposure. That's where we come in. Give us a call.

To Purchase Call (703) 698-7750

