



FOR AN ACTIVE RETIREMENT ON THE CENTRAL ISLAND

Retiring in Oceanside

2026 EDITION

Parksville and the Oceanside coast, where the beach is the back yard and the calendar fills itself.

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WELCOME

Where the calendar fills itself

We're Travis and Kiel Bach. Most people picture retirement as slowing down. On the Oceanside coast it tends to do the opposite. The beach, the boardwalk, the trails, the clubs, the rinks, and the pools all sit a few minutes apart, and mild winters keep you moving year-round. The busiest retired people we know live right here.

This guide centres on Parksville and the Oceanside coast, with Qualicum Beach and Nanoose Bay as close neighbours that each have their own guide. It is about the life first and the home second, because the right place here is the one that keeps up with you now and still fits you twenty years on.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- ✓ What a week here actually looks like, and where it happens.
- ✓ How to plug into the social scene fast, and where the volunteering is.
- ✓ Choosing a home that suits you now and keeps suiting you later.

YOUR ISLAND TEAM



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THE PLACE

Why people land in Oceanside

Parksville and the Oceanside coast have built their whole rhythm around being outside and being together. Here is the character of the place.

The beach sets the tone. Parksville Community Park gives you a wide, shallow, sun-warmed beach and a long waterfront walk that becomes the town's living room. People meet there in the morning and again at sunset.

A proper town, not just a resort. You get the shops, services, and medical care of a proper small city, with Qualicum Beach's village minutes north and Nanaimo's bigger amenities about forty minutes south.

Mild, and active in every season. Winters here are grey and damp more than cold, so walking, golf, and indoor pickleball and swimming carry right through the off season.

Built for this stage of life. Oceanside has one of the older median ages in the country. That sounds dull and is the opposite: the clubs, classes, and calendars are designed around people who finally have time.

The short-drive test

Stand on the Parksville waterfront and most of a good week is within a short drive: the beach and boardwalk at your feet, the arena and pool nearby, the galleries and Tuesday market downtown, trails up the Englishman River, and the marinas at French Creek.

THE PLAIN PITCH

Your week, not your house

The thing worth buying here is not square footage, it is the calendar. Here is a week that is entirely ordinary for an active retiree on this coast.

A FAIRLY ORDINARY WEEK

Monday: pickleball at Oceanside Place, then a coffee on the boardwalk.

Tuesday: lengths at Ravensong, then the street market downtown in the evening.

Wednesday: the car club, the garden club, or a class at the MAC, whatever you have joined.

Thursday: a morning trail walk up the Englishman River, an e-bike along the coast after lunch.

Friday: a leisure skate or a round of golf, then friends over.

Weekend: a farmers market, a festival, a boat out of French Creek, or simply the beach.

The point is simple. Buy the home that puts a week like this within easy reach, and the rest of retirement mostly takes care of itself. That is the lens we shop with you.

THINGS TO DO

More to do than there are days

This is the part people underestimate before they arrive. A quick tour of where an active retirement actually happens here.

Oceanside Place PARKSVILLE · ARENA AND COURTS

Two NHL-size ice sheets for leisure skating and 55-plus and 70-plus hockey, plus indoor pickleball court rentals and dry-floor space in summer. Run by the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Ravensong Aquatic Centre QUALICUM BEACH · POOL

Lane swimming, aquafit, and a leisure pool about ten minutes up the coast, a year-round favourite for staying loose and easy on the joints.

The boardwalk and beaches PARKSVILLE · OUTDOORS

The Community Park waterfront walk and the long beach are the daily social hub: free, flat, and good in almost any weather.

Trails, bikes, and water ALL AROUND

Walking and e-biking the coast and the Englishman River, kayaking and paddleboarding off the beach, and boating and fishing out of French Creek.

Pickleball, tai chi, and fitness groups EVERYWHERE

Courts and drop-in groups have boomed here, indoors and out, alongside yoga, tai chi, lawn bowling, and walking clubs for every pace.

The Seaside Cruizers CARS · THE BIG ONE

The local club's Father's Day Show and Shine fills downtown Qualicum Beach with around five hundred classic cars, one of the largest events on the calendar.

THE CREATIVE SIDE

A maker's town, too

For all the pickleball and the trails, Oceanside is just as much a place for makers, painters, players, and growers. The creative scene here is busy, and it is welcoming: people fold a newcomer in quickly, whether you arrive with decades of practice or have always meant to start.

The MAC PARKSVILLE · ARTS HUB

The McMillan Arts Centre, run by the Oceanside Community Arts Council in a 1913 former schoolhouse downtown, holds three galleries, classes for every level, a gift shop carrying well over a hundred local artists, and an Artfully Aging program.

Guilds and makerspaces HANDS-ON

Pottery, weaving, woodworking, and silversmithing, including a long-running guild with studios in Parksville's historic former railway station and a community makerspace whose motto is simply making things.

Painters and exhibitions VISUAL ARTS

A strong painting community, with the Arrowsmith chapter of the Federation of Canadian Artists showing regularly and fresh exhibitions worth building a morning around.

Theatre and music ON STAGE

Community theatre from the E.C.H.O. Players at the nearby Village Theatre, the Parksville Outdoor Theatre in summer, and concerts at the MAC through the year.

The Tuesday market SUMMER BY THE SEA

From June, Craig Street downtown closes each Tuesday evening for the Summer by the Sea Street Market, where well over a hundred artisans, craftspeople, farmers, and food vendors set up. A fine place to sell your own wares once you've landed.

Sand is an art form here BEACHFEST

Each summer the beach hosts the Quality Foods Sand Sculpting Competition, drawing master sculptors from around the world, with concerts, buskers, and an artisan market alongside.

MAKING IT HOME

How to stop being the new person

The quiet worry in any retirement move is not the house, it is whether you'll make friends. On this coast it is easier than most places, because so much of life is built around joining in.

Start with one thing. Pick a single regular activity in the first month: a pickleball drop-in, a class at the rec centre, one club. Showing up every week is how a new town quietly turns into your town.

Volunteer. The festivals, the hospice, the food bank, the museum, the car show, and dozens of community groups run on volunteers, and it is the fastest way to meet people who already share something with you.

Bring the partner who didn't push for the move. Relocations get tested when one of you settles in and the other floats. Plan a landing spot for each of you, separately, before you arrive.

An easy first month

Get a rec centre pass, walk the boardwalk until faces start repeating, join one club, and sign up for one volunteer shift. That is usually enough to feel placed by the end of your first season.

THE HOME

Buy once, not twice

Here is the piece most retirement buyers miss. Buy for the active person you are today, and quietly for the one you'll be in twenty years. You never know when the knees give out mid-pickleball and leave you cursing a staircase, and the whole goal is to never have to move again.

The cost of moving twice. Buying again is not just a hassle, it is expensive. Sell and rebuy, and tens of thousands of dollars can vanish into commission on the sale and property transfer tax on the next purchase. A little forward planning now tends to pay for itself many times over.

One level, or one that could be. Main-floor living, with the primary bedroom, laundry, and a full bath on the entry level, is the single feature that lets a home grow old alongside you.

Gentle and walkable. A flat or gentle lot, a low-step entry, wider doorways, and a short walk to a coffee, a pharmacy, and a bus stop matter more with each passing year.

Low maintenance by design. Smaller yards, manageable decks, and newer systems mean more time on the boardwalk and less on a ladder.

Lock it and leave it. If you plan to travel or snowbird, a secure, low-upkeep home or a well-run strata makes leaving for three months simple.

What we look at with you

Single-level options, step-free entries, doorway and bathroom widths, lot grade, strata rules and fees, and the walk to daily errands. The goal is a home that suits you at sixty-five and still suits you at eighty-five.

THE GARAGE

Where the gear lives

Active retirees arrive with things: the boat, the trailer, the project car, the e-bikes, the kayaks, sometimes the motorhome. The home has to house the hobby, and most listings are not written with that in mind.

The shop and the garage. Think about depth, height, and power, and whether there is room for a workbench or a lift, not just two parked cars.

Boat, trailer, and RV parking. Many lots, and most stratas, have rules about parking a boat, a trailer, or a motorhome. Check before you fall for a place.

Bikes, boards, and the rest. Secure, dry storage for e-bikes, kayaks, and paddleboards is easy to overlook and a genuine nuisance to live without.

Tell us your hobbies first

If you tell us what you tow, ride, build, or store, we read every listing through that lens and rule out the homes that can't hold your life, before you waste a Saturday viewing them.

CLOSE TO CARE

Care close to hand

Active now does not mean care never matters. One of the smartest and quietest reasons to buy well here is simple proximity to health care.

Urgent care in town. The Oceanside Health Centre in Parksville offers urgent care every day, with lab work, medical imaging, and mental health supports, serving the coast from Nanoose Bay to Bowser.

The hospital nearby. Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, about a thirty-five-minute drive south, is the regional hospital for surgery and specialists.

Everyday health close by. Pharmacies, clinics, dentists, and physiotherapy are all in town. There is more detail in our separate Health Care guide.

Why this shapes the search

Buying within an easy drive of urgent care and a short reach of the hospital is the kind of decision you make once, early, while it still feels irrelevant, and are quietly grateful for later.

THE NUMBERS

A few things worth knowing

A short, retiree-specific note on the money side. None of this is financial advice, and the rules change, so confirm the current details and talk to a professional.

The home owner grant. British Columbia's home owner grant reduces property tax on a principal residence, and owners sixty-five and older can claim a larger amount, subject to an assessed-value threshold.

Property tax deferment, with a caveat. Owners fifty-five and older can apply to defer property taxes through the province while keeping at least twenty-five percent equity. As of 2026 the interest changed to prime plus two percent and now compounds, so treat it as a cash-flow tool to weigh carefully, not a free ride.

The quiet savings. No commute, often a smaller or newer home with lower upkeep, and a life built around low-cost outdoor things tend to add up to more than people expect.

Plan the whole picture

Strata fees, property tax, insurance, and upkeep vary widely between a condo, a townhome, a patio home, and a house. We'll walk through the true monthly cost of any place you're considering. Confirm current figures and programs at gov.bc.ca and with your own advisor.

THE FIRST SEASON

Landing well

- ✓ Tell us how you want to spend your week, and we'll point you to the homes and neighbourhoods that make it easy.
- ✓ Choose a home that works on one level, or could, so you buy once.
- ✓ Map the gear: garage, shop, and parking for the boat, trailer, bikes, or RV.
- ✓ Get a Regional District of Nanaimo rec pass, and book your first pickleball or pool session.
- ✓ Join one club and sign up for one volunteer shift in the first month.
- ✓ Register with the Health Connect Registry if you need a family doctor, and note the Oceanside Health Centre for urgent care.
- ✓ Walk the boardwalk until the faces start repeating. That's the moment it becomes home.

HOW WE HELP

The life first, the house second

We're guides first. Tell us the week you want in retirement, the gear you're bringing, and how you'd like the home to work as the years go on, and we'll match you to the right place on the Oceanside coast, and to the people and clubs that make settling in easy.

TALK IT THROUGH WITH US



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Book a 20-minute call, or explore listings and area guides at bachrealestate.ca

PLEASE NOTE

This guide is a general overview to help you plan, not financial, legal, or medical advice. Programs, facilities, hours, fees, and figures are current at the time of writing and they change, so please confirm the latest with the Regional District of Nanaimo, Island Health, gov.bc.ca, and your own advisors before you act.