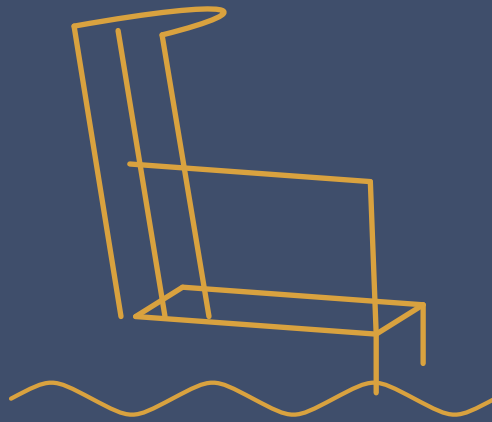




FOR AN ACTIVE RETIREMENT ON THE CENTRAL ISLAND

Retiring in Qualicum Beach

2026 EDITION

A walkable village of beaches, gardens, and galleries, where you set the pace.

Travis Bach and Kiel Bach
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WELCOME

A village that keeps your pace

We're Travis and Kiel Bach. If Oceanside is the coast's busy hub, Qualicum Beach is its village: a walkable, leafy, one-stoplight town where it is hard to reach the post office without stopping to talk to someone. People retire here for a gentler pace that still keeps them moving, on the beach, in the gardens, at the easel, and on the golf course.

This guide centres on Qualicum Beach, with Parksville 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 suits you now and still fits you twenty years on.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

- ✓ What a gentle, active week looks like here, and where it happens.
- ✓ The arts and gardens scene, and how to plug in fast.
- ✓ 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 the village

Qualicum Beach has built its whole rhythm around being walkable, leafy, and unhurried. Here is the character of the place.

A true village. The compact, heritage downtown is walkable end to end, with cafes, the bakery, galleries, and the grocer within a few blocks. Many residents do their whole day on foot.

Greener and gentler. Tree-lined streets, English-style gardens, and the old-growth Heritage Forest give the town a leafy, settled feel that newcomers notice within minutes.

The beach, without the bustle. The long seafront walk and the shore are quieter than the busier beaches nearby, and the Brant geese arrive each spring to prove it.

A town that has aged gracefully. Qualicum Beach has one of the oldest median ages in the country. In practice that means the whole place, from clubs to clinics to calendars, is built around people with time to enjoy it.

The stroll test

Park once downtown and a good day is on foot: a gallery, a coffee, the Saturday market, a walk along the seafront, and a wander through the Heritage Forest, all within easy reach.

THE TRUE DRAW

Your week, not your house

The thing worth buying here is not square footage, it is the pace. Here is a week that is entirely ordinary for an active retiree in the village.

A FAIRLY ORDINARY WEEK

Monday: a round at Eaglecrest, or a walk through the Heritage Forest.

Tuesday: lengths or aquafit at Ravensong, then a coffee downtown.

Wednesday: a class or a studio morning at The Old School House.

Thursday: birding along the seafront, an e-bike up the coast after lunch.

Friday: lawn bowling or pickleball, then a concert at TOSH.

Saturday: the farmers market, then the garden, then friends over.

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

Quiet, not idle

Gentle does not mean slow. A quick tour of how an active retirement actually fills its days here.

Ravensong Aquatic Centre QUALICUM BEACH · POOL

The town's own pool, with lane swimming, aquafit, and a leisure pool, an easy year-round way to stay loose and kind to the joints.

Golf, and lots of it FAIRWAYS

Eaglecrest and Arrowsmith in town, with Pheasant Glen and more a short drive on, give you green-season golf almost year-round in the mild coastal air.

The beach and the Heritage Forest OUTDOORS

A long, quiet seafront walk and the fifty-acre old-growth Heritage Forest, saved from development by the community, are both a stroll from the village.

Birds and the spring shore THE BRANT

Each spring thousands of Black Brant geese rest on the shore on their way to Alaska, celebrated by the Brant Wildlife Festival, a birder's delight on your doorstep.

Pickleball, lawn bowling, and walking clubs DROP-IN

Courts, greens, and groups for every pace, indoors and out, alongside yoga, tai chi, and gentle hiking.

Wheels and water AROUND TOWN

E-biking the coast, kayaking and paddleboarding off the beach, and the Seaside Cruizers' Father's Day Show and Shine, which fills the downtown streets with classic cars.

THE CREATIVE SIDE

An artists' village

Qualicum Beach has long drawn painters, potters, players, and gardeners, and the creative community here is unusually warm. People fold a newcomer in quickly, whether you arrive with a lifetime of practice or have always meant to begin.

The Old School House TOSH · ARTS HUB

The bright yellow heritage schoolhouse in the village centre holds three galleries, ten resident-artist studios you can watch at work, a gift shop of well over a hundred Island artists, and dozens of classes a year.

Concerts and live theatre ON STAGE

TOSH runs an intimate concert series through the year, and the E.C.H.O. Players have brought community theatre to the Village Theatre for decades.

Painters, potters, and printmakers HANDS-ON

Watercolour, acrylics, pastels, stone carving, silversmithing, printmaking, and textiles, with studios, classes, and guilds open to every level.

English gardens HORTICULTURE

A town of keen gardeners, anchored by Milner Gardens and Woodland and a long tradition of garden tours and plant sales.

The Saturday market MAKE, BAKE, OR GROW

Every Saturday, year-round, around a hundred vendors fill Veterans Way with produce and handmade goods, all made, baked, or grown by the seller. A fine place to sell your own once you've landed.

A village that celebrates FESTIVALS

From the spring Fire and Ice Street Festival to the summer car show and the Brant festival, the calendar keeps the creative community out in the open.

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. In a village this size 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 class at The Old School House, a lawn bowling morning, a walking group. Showing up every week is how a small town quietly becomes your town.

Volunteer. TOSH, the farmers market, the Brant festival, the Legion, the museum, and the garden club all 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 pass, walk the seafront and the Saturday market until faces start repeating, join one club or studio, 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. Backs and knees have a way of forming strong opinions about staircases later on, usually without notice, 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. In a village made for walking, a flat or gentle lot, a low-step entry, wider doorways, and a short stroll to the shops and a coffee matter more with each passing year.

Low maintenance by design. Smaller yards, manageable decks, and newer systems mean more time in the garden and on the seafront 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, and ask about the marinas at French Creek and Schooner Cove nearby.

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 minutes away. The Oceanside Health Centre in Parksville, about ten minutes from the village, offers urgent care every day, with lab work, medical imaging, and mental health supports.

The hospital nearby. Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, about forty minutes south, is the regional hospital for surgery and specialists.

Everyday health in town. Pharmacies, clinics, dentists, and physiotherapy are in the village or close by. 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 streets 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 swim or pickleball session.
- ✓ Join one club or studio, 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 seafront and the Saturday market 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 in the village, and to the people, clubs, and studios 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.