

**BEACHWOOD CITY COUNCIL MINUTES OF THE RESIDENTIAL HOUSING
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT BEACHWOOD CITY HALL, CONFERENCE ROOM
A, 25325 FAIRMOUNT BOULEVARD, ON MONDAY, JULY 16, 2018 AT 5:30 P.M.**

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chairwoman June Taylor.

ROLL CALL:	Present	J. Berns, B. Linick, J. Taylor, K. Tindel
	Absent:	J. Pasch
	Also Present:	Mayor Martin S. Horwitz, B. B. Janovitz W. Griswold, P. Kearns

1. Mayor's Report.

None.

2. Discussion regarding the Mission, Visions and Values of the Residential Housing Committee.

Ms. Taylor introduced this agenda item and turned the discussion over to Ms. Tindel.

Ms. Tindel introduced herself and gave background information about the process she went through to help determine the Mission, Vision, and Values of this Committee.

Ms. Tindel referred to a memorandum that was presented to Council ahead of the meeting. This memorandum outlined the Mission, Vision, and Values of the Residential Housing Committee.

Also discussed were opportunities for Consideration from Residential Specialists, and Solutions for Consideration.

That memorandum is attached hereto for the official record.

After discussing the outline, Ms. Tindel and Ms. Taylor moved on to the next agenda item.

3. Discussion regarding City of Beachwood Housing Stock: Strengths, Areas of Challenge, Opportunities.

Ms. Taylor stated that she had spoken with a small number of people in the community regarding the Housing Stock in the City of Beachwood, Ohio.

Some of the comments about the Housing Stock included; "outdated, overpriced/too expensive."

After discussing the Housing Stock, Ms. Taylor asked for questions or comments from the other Committee members.

Mr. Berns stated that he was concerned that the mission of the Committee is overly broad and Mayor Horwitz stated he would like to get the residents organized and get feedback.

Ms. Taylor asked if there were any further questions or comments on this item, and there were none.

4. Discussion regarding the “Quiet Housing Crisis”: Other regions, Solutions.

The next item discussed included comments on the “Quiet Housing Crisis.”

Ms. Taylor referenced a few internet articles. She mentioned “Apple Park” and “Google”. She stated that these companies are spending money on housing for their employees because it is difficult to purchase affordable housing in those areas.

Those articles are attached hereto for the official record.

Ms. Taylor stated that when speaking with members of the community, it was stated that it is also hard to purchase an affordable home in Beachwood.

Mayor Horwitz mentioned “aging in place” and making our Senior Citizen residents comfortable.

Ms. Taylor mentioned that making Beachwood more “work and play” friendly, offers a distinct advantage for making Beachwood a successful community.

5. Discussion regarding Housing, Citizens, and Security.

During this agenda item, Mr. James Heller made comments and discussed his concerns regarding the Housing, Citizens, and Security of the City of Beachwood, Ohio.

The Committee listened to Mr. Heller’s comments and thanked him for his attendance.

6. Discussion regarding next steps and goals.

The last item discussed were the next steps and goals of the Residential Housing Committee.

Mayor Horwitz stated that he wants Beachwood to continue being “age friendly.” He mentioned that he is having internal conversations with the administration. Mayor Horwitz stated that he would like to come back to the Committee with some ideas to support this concept.

Mayor Horwitz stated that being “age friendly” is the key to attracting and keeping people in the City of Beachwood.

Mr. Linick stated that he would like the Committee to be an active participant in attracting new families. He also stated that he would like to encourage housing improvements as well as updating the Building Code.

Ms. Janovitz stated that she would like to have more Community Services programming and would also like to see oversight for renters in the City.

After the discussion Ms. Taylor asked if there were any further questions or comments. There were none.

7. Any other matters coming before the Residential Housing Committee.

None.

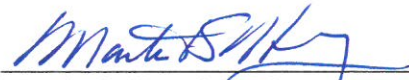
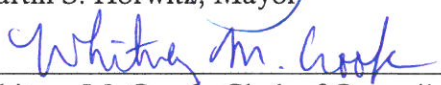
ADJOURNMENT

Moved by J. Taylor, seconded by J. Berns at 6:38 P.M. to adjourn the Residential Housing Committee Meeting.

ROLL CALL:	Yes:	J. Berns, B. Linick, J. Taylor, K. Tindel
	No:	None.
	Abstain:	None.
	Not Voting:	None.

MOTION ADOPTED

Approved:


Martin S. Horwitz, Mayor

Whitney M. Crook, Clerk of Council

Pursuant to Ordinance Number 2017-107 Council has determined that the official Minutes of its Body, its Committees, and those of the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consist of the Audio Recording of the meetings together with a written synopsis of all agenda items and votes.

City of Beachwood, Ohio
Residential Housing Committee
July 17, 2018
5:30 PM
City Hall
Presented by:
Resident, Ms. Karen Roth Tindell
City Councilmember, Ms. June E. Taylor

Note: *This Committee is new. We had no basis to start from. Therefore, we reviewed over 15 Mission & Vision Statements, as well as Council Vision & Priorities, Statements and Themes. In addition, within Ohio, we looked at the Housing and Residential Committee of various cities as they related to non-utility items referred by a city's Planning Commission, the various Regional Planning Councils, as well as urban growth policies we obtained from the CSU Urban Studies Dept. Finally, we asked the largest infrastructure companies in the US to give us some feedback on our city based on our population, location, housing stock, diversity statistics and developer feedback.*

Here's a statement we thought could easily represent City of Beachwood – IF the Mayor and Council want to outreach more and entice citizens to become engaged in the interests of the city and helping it to be a leader. **Key Word: Public & Citizen Engagement.** Read below:

A VIBRANT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY

We visualize Beachwood as an attractive, inviting and dynamic place to live, work and play. The City provides an environment of appreciation and inclusiveness for all residents by offering a range of diverse recreational programs, activities and events. Community services include a library, community center, senior center, historical museum, a regional safety center, community market, and much more. An attractive mix of affordable housing is available for families of all income levels. City parks are well developed and oriented for passive and active use, and many are adjacent to natural areas and wetlands, which have been set aside for preservation. An extensive urban trails system is linked with neighboring communities to provide both commuting and recreational access throughout the area.

AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

We visualize Beachwood as a city which empowers its residents to participate in grassroots projects and forums to work towards the improvement of the community. The City Council in collaboration with city staff and its advisory boards and commissions, creates an opportunity for dialogue, listening, learning, and joint problem solving. The City is responsive to the needs of its citizens and maintains excellent customer service standards. Business and neighborhood associations work cooperatively with City officials to address a number of local projects and issues and to implement neighborhood beautification projects and community policing programs including Crime Stoppers, Neighborhood Watch, and the Multi-housing Crime Prevention Program. In addition, the City supports a “community partnership” with the Beachwood Public School District, the business community, and other local educational institutions such as Cuyahoga Community College and Cleveland State University to foster a climate of learning, development, and enrichment.

COORDINATED AND COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

We visualize Beachwood with comprehensive plans in place for land use, transportation, urban trails, parks, and municipal utilities, providing a balanced approach to zoning and land use management policies, which are coordinated with regional plans, local needs, environmental concerns, and the development community. These plans are responsive to changing needs and incorporate a public process for periodic review and improvement. Residential and business areas are well-blended with complimentary design, landscaping, and signage.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

We visualize the City of Beachwood as a community developed in harmony with its unique location and pristine environment. The City is a leader and active participant in regional efforts to promote environmental stewardship, sustainability and conservation. Open space areas and large tracts of wildlife habitat, including the Beachwood Parks wetland, has been preserved. As a responsible steward of its resources, the City has implemented water conservation measures, adopted an Urban Forestry Plan to preserve large tracts of trees, and requires stormwater ponds in areas of new development to manage stormwater runoff. The City is using innovative technology to create reclaimed water to help mitigate the impact of growth on the environment.

EXCELLENCE IN PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

We visualize the City of Beachwood as an organization that is value driven, customer oriented, and motivated by quality results. Cost effective services are delivered in a timely fashion, and citizen issues/concerns are resolved in a timely manner. Staff is productive and adept at solving problems. A high degree of mutual trust, caring, and respect is reflected throughout the City in the staff's interactions and ability to "get things done." Employees are well trained, and perceive themselves as catalysts in meeting community needs, striving to provide the best services and programs for the public. As a whole, the City must have at all times - sufficient resources, both in personnel and capital, to consistently provide essential public services and enhancements which are superior and based on what City of Beachwood residents expect and demand. The Mayor, the Council, and Department Directors openly discuss problems, jointly agree on solutions, and provide a solid, progressive, supportive management team for both staff and the community. The City of Beachwood is an independent, progressive and leading suburb in Northeast Ohio that promotes effective intergovernmental relationships, building collaborative partnerships and providing leadership by our actions.

QUALITY TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

We visualize Beachwood with efficient infrastructure systems including streets, traffic signals, and municipal utilities. The City's transportation system efficiently and effectively moves people throughout the community, and is in the process of moving towards encouraging pedestrian, bicycle, transit, park and ride, and other multi-modal uses. The water utility provides excellent drinking water with minimal shortage while the wastewater (sewer) system is operated and maintained with few breakages or malfunctions. All of these systems are in good condition, well maintained and operating cost-effectively while providing the highest level of customer service.

1. Mission Statement:

To assist our residents in attaining and maintaining a high standard for their quality of life. The City of Beachwood Residential Housing Committee will provide models, services, opportunities and recommendations associated with desirable, innovative, secure and complimentary housing to individuals and families wanting to **age in place**. We will provide exemplary, innovative, customer service, programs and amenities which are “best in class” for all citizens. (See STAY UA)

A. Vision Statement:

To create/foster a world class community within the City of Beachwood. We want all citizens to embrace and give input about our residential housing advantages and challenges. We want to our residential housing to expand beyond the basic and extend into the extraordinary, which includes embracing using state of the art technology aimed at safety, security and exceptional quality of life.

B. Values Statement: (Mayor’s Vision)

2. Beachwood Housing Stock

We surveyed a sample size of 43 residents for comments about our housing stock. The comments were the following: old (28), outdated (37), overpriced (44), not current with families or senior needs (26), too expensive for what you get (40), not progressive (16).

Several comments were directed at how the City **is not** being a leader in helping families with housing challenges, and most certainly is not addressing the need for the older 55 + age group in a creative and “best in class” manner.

- A. **Strengths** are: Location; Educated Citizens; Parks; Size of Community, Sidewalks, etc.
- B. **Areas of Challenge**: Cannot Live, Work, Play, Walk, Bike to Work or Throughout the Community; Disconnected from parts of the city, no vibrancy, no downtown, not attractive to young couples, millennials, upper income values are not embraced.
- C. **Opportunities**: 55+, Tiny Houses (Eugene, Oregon), Vertical Construction = full service, vertical, high rise with no kids like One University Circle, embrace technology to enhance all the resident’s experiences.

City of Beachwood
Residential Committee
Opportunities for Consideration from Residential Specialists

SAFETY: From a transportation perspective, safety can be improved with physical infrastructure such as proper sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signalized intersections.

- What is the condition of the current infrastructure? Are crosswalks adequately marked?
 - Are the pedestrian signal heads conducive to a pedestrian culture? (Different types of signal heads give people varying sense of comfort. Some signal heads start flashing red as soon as people start walking. Some signal will show how much time is left).
 - Vehicular traffic safety can be enhanced by looking at intersections to see if there are issues with wrong way turns, blind corners, etc.
- **SECURITY:** In public areas, security is enhanced by proper lighting, sight distance, proper lighting, sight distance (reduce blind corners, etc.) and surveillance system (becoming standard; revenue producer for cities/accidents).
 - **ACCESS:** Is access to certain areas an issue? As the number of senior citizens grows, so does the need to provide proper access to community events, medical facilities, senior citizen homes for socialization, etc.

AECOM recently worked on a project in Chicago where a known problem was solved. The problem was that a large group of senior citizens in a neighborhood did not have adequate access to a community center. A partnership was created between the City and the Power Company. AECOM provided the engineering/integration to create a system where a senior citizen who needed a ride to the community center was paired with a volunteer who was available. The vehicle was one of a few pool electric vehicles provided by the city and charged by the power company. So a smart app that connected all parties facilitated this. These are the principles of a Smart City environment. (The City of Columbus is doing a huge project and the known problem they are addressing is transporting pregnant mothers to neo natal care because of the high rate of infant mortality in Franklin County).

BEST IN CLASS – NEIGHBORHOOD EXAMPLE

<http://bronzevillecommunityofthefuture.com/>

**City of Beachwood
Residential Committee
Solutions for Consideration**

We recommend the following sequential steps:

1. Advise fellow council members that the three things Council could address are Safety, Security and Access immediately and get STAY BEACHWOOD model in place.
2. Give examples of how Safety and Security can be improved by studying targeted neighborhoods within the City, or the entire City
3. Share the example of Bronzeville – it's small but mighty.
4. Come to Columbus and tour the City's proposed plan for a "Smart City" and using technology to solve known community problems. (AECOM)
5. Hold Public meetings to solicit community input
6. ***Integrate your community master plan with using Smart City technology and creative housing solutions to solve known problems and create a state of the art world class environment for the Citizens of Beachwood***
7. ***We propose retaining the services of a housing consultant well versed on City of Beachwood's history including residential and commercial projects, citizens, and housing trends in the industry. Propose 1 Vertical Project; 1 Downtown Multi-Use Project and 1 Ranch Single Level***

NOTE: Right now, one needs to go to several sources / websites to get access to all things needed for safe mobility. One of the hallmarks of a "Smart City" atmosphere is to create a system where all information is available at a single source, or a single website, from a single device.

STAY UA

Services to Age in Your Upper Arlington

A program designed to help UA's older adults remain safely in their homes

A primary goal of STAY UA is to reduce the stresses and costs associated with critical needs: providing our residents with links to appropriate, affordable, in-home support; reducing EMS runs that may be non-emergency in nature; and avoiding premature admission to more costly institutionalized care.

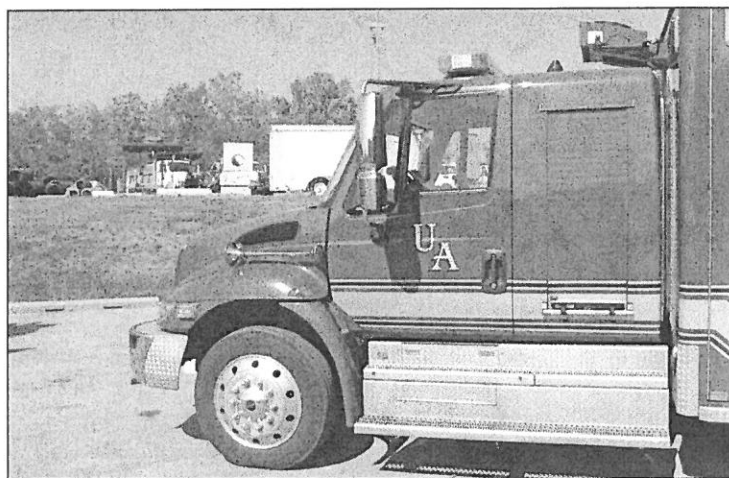
Introduction

After its initial launch as a pilot program in 2009, STAY UA was established in 2010 as a sustained community program, supported by the Upper Arlington City Council, the City of Upper Arlington and numerous community organizations.

Originally made possible through funding from the Rev. John R. Glenn Foundation and secured by its parent organization, National Church Residences, STAY UA is a Service Coordinator program that facilitates keeping older adults and residents with disabilities safely in their homes.

STAY UA is believed to be the first formalized program of its kind in the country. The program better utilizes the assistance mechanisms offered by the Fire Division's emergency medical services by connecting residents with the appropriate support mechanisms that could help prevent future emergency situations.

From its first year of existence, the program has helped link numerous members of our community with resources and services they did not know were available to them, resulting in immediate and cost-effective improvements to their quality of life and the ability to remain safely in their homes.



About the Service Coordinator

The STAY UA Service Coordinator has the necessary skills and training to meet with, assess, counsel and provide caring and practical support to the community's elderly and disabled at times when they may be unable to find the resources they want and need.

Co-located in the Fire Division's EMS & Training Office, firefighters can involve the STAY UA Service Coordinator either during or shortly after emergency calls for help. The Service Coordinator can then meet

Contact the National Church Residences Home & Community Services Coordinator:

614-551-1832 | 614-583-5114 | STAYUA@UAOH.NET



CITY OF | **UPPER
ARLINGTON**

Fire Division

3861 Reed Road, Upper Arlington, OH 43220

Phone: 614-583-5100 | Fax: 614-583-5496 | www.uaoh.net

Upper Arlington Emergency Information

Emergency- Police, Fire & Medical
9-1-1

Police
(non-life-threatening emergencies)
614-459-2800

Fire & Medical
(non-life-threatening emergencies)
614-451-9700

with these residents, at no cost, to discuss their situation and issues and provide information about the many existing support services that may be available to help prevent emergencies in the future.

Services

The STAY UA Service Coordinator can help connect residents to the following programs:

- Links to community services
- In-home skilled nursing
- Prescription assistance
- Access to meals
- Transportation assistance programs
- Counseling
- Adult daycare
- Hospice
- Home safety surveys and solutions
- Financial planning assistance
- Access to social networks



www.uaoh.net
www.facebook.com/CityofUA
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Partners

The City of Upper Arlington Fire Division wishes to thank its STAY UA partners:

- National Church Residences
- Rev. John R. Glenn Foundation



National Church Residences
HOME & COMMUNITY SERVICES

STAY UA Supporters:

- American Association of Service Coordinators
- Upper Arlington Commission on Aging
- Northwest Counseling Services
- OSU Office of Geriatrics and Gerontology
- City of Upper Arlington Senior Center
- Alzheimer's Association
- Upper Arlington Senior Association
- Upper Arlington Area Chamber of Commerce



CITY OF | **UPPER
ARLINGTON**

Upper Arlington City Council

Mayor Donald B. Leach, Jr.

Vice Mayor Debbie Johnson

John C. Adams, David DeCapua,

Kip Greenhill, Mike Schadek,

Erik F. Yassenoff

City Manager

Theodore J. Staton

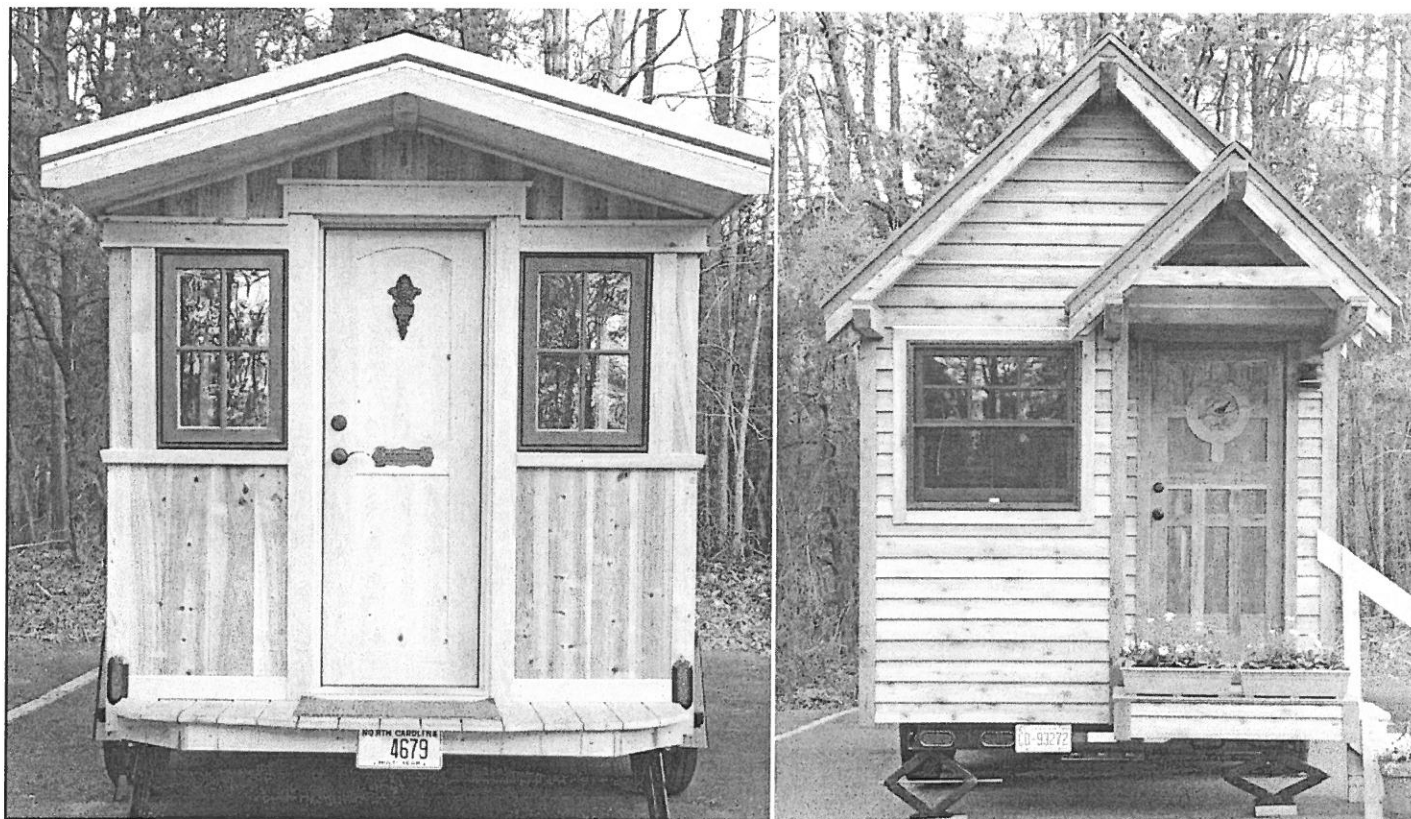
Fire Chief

Jeff Young

Tiny Houses Are Becoming a Big Deal

Very small homes can provide big opportunities for people of all ages — and the cities, towns and rural communities where they live

by Carol Kaufmann, **AARP Livable Communities**



PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER TACK FOR THE TINY HOUSE CONFERENCE. HOUSES BY WISHBONE TINY HOMES (LEFT) AND FRANK BELO.

They may look like children's playhouses but these are real, grown-up houses. They're just tiny. (Follow the slideshow link on page 4 to see more images of these homes and others.)

Over the last 40 years, the average home in the United States has increased in size by more than 1,000 square feet, essentially doubling the amount of living space per person since 1973.

But a decade ago, in the midst of the housing boom and explosion of outsized, luxury home construction in American suburbs (i.e., the "McMansion"), a quieter, smaller movement began to gain attention.

The idea of building quality homes of less square footage but with truly used spaces began to take hold. This concept, sometimes referred to as the "Not So Big House" approach to residential design has ignited a trend that reflects the state of the U.S. economy, the still-struggling housing market and a growing conservation ethic to reduce and reuse. Welcome to the Tiny House.

Subscribe! Sign-up for the free, monthly AARP Livable Communities E-Newsletter

A so-called "Tiny House" makes the average 2,600 square foot American home look and feel like a home twice that size. These micro homes measure, on average, from 100 to 400 square feet, but they can be as small as 80 square feet or as large as 700 square feet. Often resembling studio apartments, tiny homes can be crafted in many styles and customized to personal tastes.

Although these houses are small, they are big enough to include the needed amenities of a home. There's a sleeping area, a bathroom, a modern kitchen, storage and spots for eating and relaxing. In most cases, the structures are aesthetically-pleasing, often so much so that they're worthy of photo spreads in glossy housing magazines. While most tiny home owners live alone, the structures can be built to accommodate couples and even families.



PHOTO BY MELISSA STANTON

A small visitor poses in the front yard of a tiny house (called the Minim House) in Washington, D.C.

Unlike typical houses, these homes are mobile — some even stay on their wheels — and can either work on the utility grid or be completely self-sustaining.

The idea of living small, *really small*, is catching on. Tiny house communities are multiplying, and approximately two out of every five tiny house owners are over age 50. Tiny house converts and fans are hosting events and how-to workshops across the country. And builders and designers are catering to the demand. Tiny homes provide a viable living option for some older adults and offer communities new ways to think about housing.

Smaller Spaces = Less Work and Bigger Savings

"The benefits of tiny homes are obvious," says George Chmael, the CEO of Council Fire, an Annapolis, Maryland-based consultancy that advises nonprofits, corporations, governments and communities on sustainable building practices. "There's reduced maintenance, a reduced financial burden and added movability and mobility for a change of circumstances."

While each of those benefits is helpful to any homeowner, they're especially valuable for an older adult who isn't up to taking on major home maintenance work, is on a fixed budget and both wants and may need the flexibility to adapt to whatever the future brings.

With many Americans spending one-third to more than half of their income on housing, living small uses significantly less of a paycheck or savings for putting a roof over one's head. According to a frequently-cited infographic from The Tiny Life, a website of resources devoted to living small, 68 percent of tiny house owners have no mortgage compared to 29.3 percent of all U.S. homeowners.

The average cost of a standard-sized home in the United States is \$272,000 (plus an additional \$200,000 or so if the price comes with a 30-year mortgage at current interest rates). The average cost of a tiny house is \$23,000 if built by the homeowner. The price tag typically doubles if a builder is used.

Age-Friendly Options

Tiny houses can also solve difficult, and often prohibitively expensive, space quandaries.

- A tiny house can serve as an accessory dwelling unit (e.g. in-law apartment, "granny flat") that's literally parked in a backyard
- A tiny house can be a specially tailored space for a relative with special needs
- With a tiny house structure a person can park his or her office in the yard — and eliminate a commute
- A tiny house can be a starter home for grown children or grandchildren who may not be able to afford other options
- A tiny house can serve as a home on a property a person owns but can't build on, or it can serve as a home while a permanent home is renovated or built
- A tiny house can become the primary living quarters for a homeowner who has a no-longer affordable mortgage by enabling the owner to live on the property while renting out the larger house to cover the mortgage
- A tiny house can be a private living space for a live-in caregiver
- For someone who wants to spend time living at the beach, in his or her hometown *and* near scattered-about adult children, tiny houses can enable a person to be a multiple homeowner or — as it's sometimes called — a "mouseholer" by having several small abodes, each ready and waiting in a different location.

Not So Much "Stuff"

Living in a tiny space also means living with fewer possessions.

"In a tiny house you have to consider every item you bring into your home," says architect Sarah Susanka, creator of the Not So Big House approach to residential design. "I tell people it's like living in a haiku. You have to be aware of every single thing you bring into your house. Tiny living really teaches you to live more freely. Everything becomes a treasure."

Living small also requires a fundamental change in outlook. "What tiny houses really do is change the game in terms of your finances, your life, your time and the opportunities you have," says Ryan Mitchell, founder of The Tiny Life. "It's really an activator to change your life. It focuses on the life you lead outside the house."

Living in a small space on a large parcel of land enabled Mitchell to leave his hometown in Charlotte, North Carolina, for a few months and live

A Not So Big House

overseas, something he'd never have been able to do if he had mortgage payments. "My fixed costs are very low," he says. Also, because tiny houses can be moved, would-be homeowners have opportunities to set down roots in a place — or *places* — where an average-costing house could not be built.

The kitchen, living and dining area of Sarah Susanka's "Not So Big House." — Photo by Christian Korab, courtesy Susanka Studios



Big Community Benefits in a Tiny Package

Read an interview with Sarah Susanka, founder of the "Not So Big House" movement, about boomers and smaller homes.

5 Questions for architect Sarah Susanka

Tiny homes can help in managing several of the most significant issues facing towns, cities and counties across the U.S. Here's how:

1. Energy and the Environment

Part of the very definition of a tiny home is that it be constructed with environmentally conscious and renewable materials. Because of that tiny houses present clear opportunities for towns and cities looking for environmentally sustainable housing options.

According to TinyHouseBuild.com, a resource website created by tiny house owners Andrew and Gabriella Morrison, who teach others how to build tiny houses, constructing the average new home consumes three-quarters of an acre of forest, or seven full logging trucks worth of supplies. In contrast, the materials required to build a tiny house can fit on a half of one logging truck.

Tiny homes also save energy. The average American home needs 12,733 kilowatts a year to operate, which emits about 16,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per year. A tiny house uses 914 kilowatts a year of energy, emitting about 1,144 pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

Some tiny houses are able to get their utilities, water and sewage services the way most other houses do by connecting to electrical grids and using public utilities, if the community or city will allow it. If not, tiny houses can receive their electricity from standard generators or solar panel systems — or a combination of the two. Water may come from a well or a rainwater capture/treatment system that also filters the collected water and heats it by a propane hot water heater.

As for plumbing waste, the solutions vary. Some homes use composting toilets, which use the natural process of decomposition and evaporation to eliminate wastes; others rely on incinerator toilets, which burn instead of flush wastes. Some attach to septic systems or use a holding tank and removal system similar to that employed by portable toilet providers.

2. Homelessness

Tiny houses can provide an affordable tool for combating homelessness by getting people off the streets and into their own space, thus offering them both shelter and a measure of self-respect.

In Eugene, Oregon, a micro-housing community called Opportunity Village has 30 tiny homes that provide shelter for citizens in need. Each tenant lives in an 80-square-foot space and shares a common kitchen, community space and bathrooms. The homes were built by volunteers using donated materials and \$100,000 in private donations. In Oakland, California, an artist transformed illegally-dumped shipping containers into wheeled shelters for homeless citizens.

"A roof and a set of keys is 90 percent more effective than any other homelessness solution," notes Chmael, who has worked with cities on such issues.

3. Emergency and Transition Housing

Tiny houses can provide temporary shelter. Reeling from Hurricane Katrina, communities on the Gulf Coast built so-called "Katrina Cottages," 300 foot, durable and attractive small homes that were designed as an alternative to the unpopular and often hard-to-obtain trailers being provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The cottages were hailed as not only a great solution to a crisis, but as desirable housing choice in general.

Also, during a crisis, tiny houses have uses other than as homes.

"Tiny houses can also be tiny clinics, tiny schools, or tiny labs that can be transported to communities most in need," says Wade Boarman, who works with George Chmael as a program coordinator at SustainaFest, an educational nonprofit that engages all age groups in sustainability issues. He adds that micro homes can be a viable option for military personnel in transition.

4. The Economy and Development

Tiny homes can make use of unused land that can't be zoned for regular buildings or homes. Chmael says he's frequently approached by cities and communities that are looking for possible solutions to abandoned city lots.

"Typically, cities tear down structures, clean up the spaces, then offer tax breaks to developers, who then reestablish communities," he says. "But this tends to be socially displacing. Maybe these structures offer another way to address urban challenges. Tiny homes don't require massive investment."

Although tiny houses have all the basics — heat, electricity, water, a kitchen — they typically don't have the luxuries many now consider to be standard home appliances, such as a washer and dryer, dishwasher, a full-sized stove and refrigerator-freezer. However, because they don't have such appliances, tiny house residents will seek out the services of local businesses.

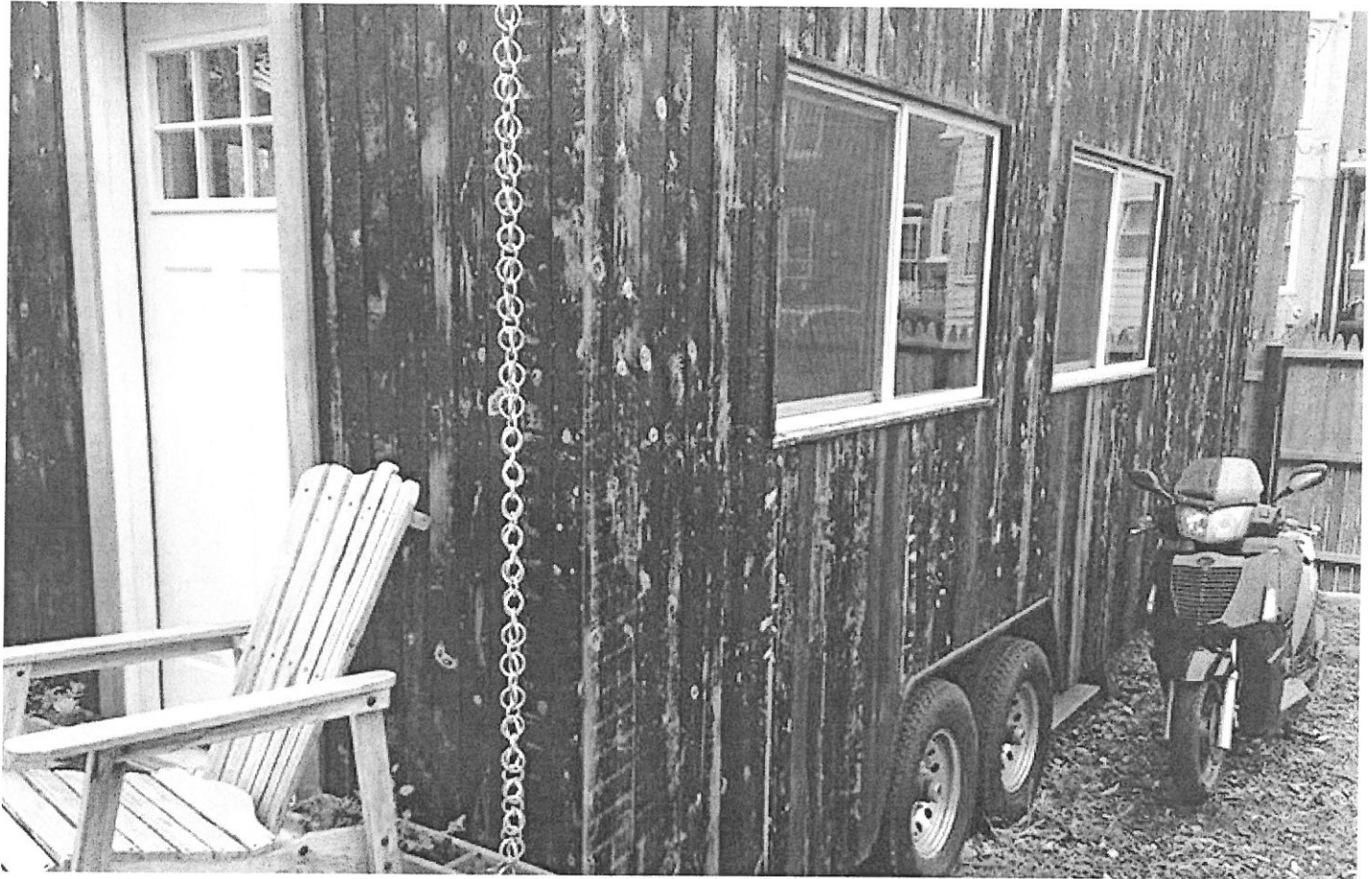


PHOTO BY MELISSA STANTON

Many tiny homes (including this one in Washington, D.C.) have wheels and can travel.

Since tiny homes don't have a lot of room for extended food storage, residents are more likely to consume what they buy soon after they buy it, so fresh foods (such as from a farmer's market) are especially useful — and healthier, too.

Since the homes rarely have washer-dryers, local Laundromats are used or laundry service providers are hired. The community benefits by having existing infrastructure (the Laundromat) used and jobs created (such as laundry pickup and delivery services). Over time the laundry costs to the tiny house resident could be the same or less than that of buying a washer-dryer and paying for the water, gas or electricity and detergents.

5. Zoning Law Benefits and Blockades

Since tiny houses aren't permanently installed to a site, they typically don't require building permits and are often treated by law as a type of recreational vehicle. As such, in many communities a tiny house owner could place their structure in the yard or on the grounds of a property they already own or rent, or that of a friend or relative. Campsite and RV parks are also location options.

Brian Levy, founder of Minim Homes, a firm that assists people who want to build micro homes, parked his own 210-square-foot tiny house — which sits on a trailer and was built for around \$30,000 — in a vacant lot he bought in Washington, D.C. The space, which serves as a tiny house showcase, has room for multiple tiny houses and features a common fenced-in area with a vegetable garden, fire pit and outdoor dining area.

Tiny house owner Lee Pera has organized community-building activities for the once-neglected space and leads tiny house design workshops. "Integrating places to live into an already existing community, and not isolating them," Pera says, could be valuable option for older citizens. "We're definitely seeing the interest" in the sold-out workshops she helps organize.

However, due to local zoning laws, the tiny house owners in D.C. can't permanently reside on the lot. (All have residences elsewhere.) The lack of standard zoning for such structures can be a conundrum for communities, many of which don't allow RVs to camp on city lots or even private spaces.

"Also, it's hard to convince cities to give up tax money," says Mitchell, who's written a book, *Cracking the Code: A Guide to Building Codes & Zoning for Tiny Houses*. "Building codes are set up in a certain way, and tiny homes often don't fit into any one box." Mitchell believes that it's only a matter of time before municipal governments are forced to figure out what to do with tiny-sized homes.

Tiny Houses, Big Benefits

Although tiny living has lots of benefits, the lifestyle isn't for everyone.

Residing in so small a home would present logistical problems for people with extensive "stuff" — or collections, such as art or books, large pieces of equipment for their jobs, or hobbies that involve big objects, such as a piano or skis.

Even though larger tiny homes are available and can be suitable for couples and families, not every household is good with that much togetherness, especially if there are other options.

Having a party or overnight guests becomes a challenge, acknowledges Mitchell. Daily logistics can be another challenge, he acknowledges, even though he has devised ways around not having a washer and dryer in his small space or even an on-location mailbox. (He uses a laundry service and a relative's postal address and mailbox.)

However, Mitchell also knows that, if he ever needs to, he can move his home simply by loading it onto a trailer that's then attached it to a pickup truck or other vehicle with towing capacity. (A tiny house owner can own or rent such heavy-duty equipment.)

A larger, farther-reaching plus, says Mitchell, is that the kinds of people who live in tiny houses are exactly the types of citizens communities need in order to thrive and flourish.

"Tiny house owners tend to be more engaged in their surroundings," he says. "Consumer things are less of an issue. Relationships are more of an importance." By definition, if you live in a tiny home, some of your living has to occur outside your home, he points out.

Tiny Houses can also serve an educational purpose, becoming a textbook of sorts for talking about sustainability issues and housing needs. Council Fire's George Chmael, who also founded SustainaFest, has used tiny houses as a teaching tool for middle and high school students as part of his educational outreach.

"We're talking to them about living in 200 square feet or less," he says. "This is a very tangible way of calling up real issues: How much space do you need? How many things do you need to live

Take a Tiny Tour

The SustainaFest tiny house is used as a traveling showcase home. — Photo by Jeremy Todd for SustainaFest



Take a look at several tiny homes, inside and out.

Slideshow: The Tiny Houses Tour

comfortably? What is the American Dream? Do you really need a mortgage, three cars, the debt? What does success mean?"

"Tiny houses used to be for people who wanted to live small and get off the grid, but no longer," says Chmael. "The coming years will give us a sense of how helpful these types of home can be. I have no doubt they have a role to play. I'm optimistic."

Carol Kaufmann is a writer and editor whose work has appeared in the AARP Bulletin, National Geographic, Reader's Digest and The New York Times. She is also the author of the best-selling books Safari and Ocean, both produced by Workman Publishing.

Published January 2015

Tiny houses are trendy, minimalist and often illegal

Nation Jul 6, 2016 9:58 AM EDT

Sarah Hastings' 190-square-foot home was on 3 acres of farmland next to a small garden in Hadley, Massachusetts. Now it's in storage.

The 23-year-old recent college graduate built the house last year while she was a student at Mount Holyoke College. But like many who want to live in a "tiny house," generally defined as a home smaller than 500 square feet, she has struggled to find a place to put it.

Living micro: Single residents embrace tiny apartments

After somebody reported her for violating Hadley's zoning ordinances, Hastings proposed changing the town's laws to allow for backyard apartments, but the measure was voted down in a town meeting.

Some local governments around the country are welcoming tiny houses, attracted by their potential to ease an affordable housing crunch or even house the homeless. Cities such as Washington, D.C., and Fresno, California, have eased zoning and building rules to allow them, and in May California's housing department **issued guidance** to help builders and code enforcers know which standards they need to meet. They are even the subject of the HGTV shows "Tiny House, Big Living" and "Tiny House Hunters."

But lost in the enthusiasm is the fact that in many places, it is hard to live in them legally.

Many residents and local officials fear they will drive down property values. Some state and local governments, perplexed about whether to classify tiny houses as RVs, mobile homes or backyard cottages, still refuse to allow them.

And as for tiny houses being a solution to the affordable housing crunch, some housing experts caution they aren't right for everyone.

"People using affordable housing are a diverse group. You've got retired people, disabled people, families," said Robert Silverman, a professor with the University of Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning. "A 300-square-foot trailer with a loft up top may not be suited for all those groups."

Hastings said Hadley rejected her tiny house proposal because some residents were afraid the town would be overrun with them. "There was kind of a backlash. It only takes a few people saying 'Oh, there'll be 500 of them,'" she said.



Cities and states are having trouble creating rules for increasingly popular "tiny houses."
Photo Tammy Strobel

The 'Wild West' of Construction

In 2015, the median new family home in the U.S. was 2,500 square feet, **61 percent larger** than homes from 1975.

Tiny houses have gained traction with people who want to live a simpler life with fewer possessions and financial obligations, and who want to have a smaller environmental footprint. Some nonprofits are eyeing them as a possible solution for people priced out of overheated housing markets.

The difficulty has been where to place them. Those built on foundations must meet local building and zoning regulations. But many tiny houses are built off-site, sometimes without knowing where they will ultimately rest. That makes it difficult to know which building codes to meet, especially if owners plan to move them from place to place.

Bill Rockhill, the founding president of the American Tiny House Association and a New York-based builder who primarily builds tiny houses, said he and other builders try to follow uniform building codes for houses or a similar set of standards for RVs. Still, not all requirements can be met — the ladders in a tiny house may not meet requirements set forth for stairs, and lofts may not have high enough ceilings.

During construction, Rockhill takes photos of everything inside the walls so that customers can talk with building inspectors about construction. He said code enforcers can be flexible on some safety requirements, such as allowing a loft as long as it has a large enough escape window.

“It’s kind of the Wild West of building,” said Tony Gilchrist, a builder based in Washington, D.C. But Gilchrist notes that the lack of clear standards makes some builders more cautious. That is especially true when the owners of a tiny house plan to move it frequently, and it must be sturdy enough to be driven down the highway at 60 mph.

“I think people overbuild because they’re afraid,” he said.

But Dan Buuck, a specialist on codes and standards for the National Association of Home Builders, insists that some tiny houses are filled with dangers. Smoke can accumulate more quickly in low-ceiling and loft areas, and ladders and small windows make it harder for help to get in and out.

Those concerns have spawned a cottage industry of firms willing to certify that a tiny house is safe. Chuck Ballard with Pacific West Associates Inc. said his company reviews architectural plans and photos of construction before issuing the certification, which costs around \$2,000.

On the Ground

As of now, few cities allow stand-alone tiny houses. Most communities have minimum square footage requirements for single-family homes mandating that smaller dwellings be an “accessory” to a larger, traditional house. Many also have rules requiring that dwellings be hooked up to utilities, which is a problem for tiny-house enthusiasts who want to live off the grid by using alternative energy sources such as solar panels and rainwater catchment systems.

That’s the case for Brian Levy, whose 210-square-foot tiny house in a peaceful back alley alongside a cemetery in Washington, D.C., isn’t considered fit to be occupied full-time because it is on its own piece of land and it is not connected to city utilities.

Many cities are more accommodating to tiny houses on foundations, which are considered guest cottages — as opposed to those on wheels. Starting in the fall, D.C.’s new zoning regulations will permit tiny houses in some neighborhoods, as long as they are on a foundation and are connected to utilities.

When cities require the same permitting for tiny houses on foundations as they do for traditional houses, it often doesn’t make financial sense to build tiny. “At that point it’s really more of a lifestyle choice than an economic choice,” said Nick Krautter, a real estate agent in Portland, Oregon, who abandoned plans for a tiny house development.

Just a few cities allow tiny houses that rest on wheels, including Fresno, where they are now considered backyard cottages.

Tiny Towns, Tiny Houses

Alexis Stephens, a tiny house dweller who has been traveling the country making a documentary on how people are living in tiny houses legally, said small towns have been more open to tiny houses than their larger counterparts.

One example is Spur, Texas — population 1,318 — where people hope tiny houses will help revitalize the shrinking community. In 2014, Spur declared itself the nation’s first **tiny-house-friendly town**.

John Schmidt, the city’s home inspector and code enforcement officer, said the process began by selling lots in town for as little as \$250. The town has already sold 60 lots, and though they’re a little less than a quarter of an acre, that’s plenty of room for a tiny house, a driveway and a garden.

There are three tiny houses now, and five more are expected to be finished by the end of the summer. Because the key is to get these new residents to stay, they must put their house on a foundation and connect to city utilities. If the tiny house was originally constructed on wheels, the owner needs to remove the wheels and axles and put a skirt around the base to keep out critters. "We've got people paying taxes, going to schools, buying groceries. It's a boon to the town because of the income," Schmidt said.

Stephens said Rockledge, Florida, is taking a different approach. The town recently approved zoning regulations that would allow for a "pocket neighborhood," or cluster, of tiny houses.

Tiny houses there can keep the wheels on, but they must build both a front and a back porch.

"It's enough to discourage frequent travel but it doesn't prevent it if needed or desired," Stephens said.

A Home of Their Own

Many advocates of tiny houses see them not just as part of a trendy minimalist movement, but as a way to offer affordable housing to millennials, retirees, low-income people and even the homeless.

There are a handful of tiny house communities for the homeless in places like Oregon, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin. More are on the way in Detroit and Kansas City.

Panza in Olympia, Washington, and Mobile Loaves & Fishes in Austin, Texas, are nonprofits that rent tiny houses to the homeless for a small sum. Panza's Quixote Village started as a tent camp. Now it includes 30 tiny houses which people can rent for 30 percent of their income, or at least \$50 a month. And a Mobile Loaves & Fishes program called Community First Village just finished building over 100 tiny houses in a mix of architectural styles, which will rent for \$225 to \$375 a month.

In both Olympia and Austin, the tiny houses lack bathrooms and kitchens. Instead, residents must share common bathrooms and kitchens — an arrangement designed to foster a sense of community and keep the cost of the houses low.

Some of the tiny house communities in development around the country will take a different approach.

Cass Community Social Services, a nonprofit in Detroit, is building 25 tiny houses. The rent-to-own structures will have both bathrooms and kitchens. The Rev. Faith Fowler, the group's director, said the homes will be available to those transitioning from homeless shelters, students who are aging out of the foster care system and low-income seniors.

Fowler said her main goal isn't just to house this population, but to address asset inequality — to give people something so they can borrow money, leave property to their kids, or even sell. People will rent the tiny house for the first three years and be added to a lien for the last four. After seven years, the house will be theirs.

Fowler said the project will be different from other affordable housing because it will provide a path to ownership for tenants. It also offers GED classes, and a gym and small store within walking distance. All will employ residents.

But Cate Mingoya, who oversees public housing and rental assistance for Massachusetts, cautioned that not all tiny houses are a good solution for the homeless.

When Mingoya toured several tiny house homeless communities she found that some homes were well constructed but others weren't properly built, leaving them vulnerable to the elements. "How much choice do they really have to live in that house?" she said. "When you're segregating people based on income and tell them you get 120 square feet, there's a social cost."

This story was produced by Stateline, an initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts.

By — Rebecca Beitsch, Stateline



6 Things that No One Tells You About Living in a Tiny House

Southern Living

Tiny houses are all the rage these days, but read this before you do an extreme downsize

SOUTHERN LIVING EDITORS

Dreaming of ditching your nine to five, all that clutter that you've accumulated, and your mortgage? Chances are you've been watching one of the many reality TV shows about tiny house living. We are devoted small home lovers and builders but we aren't sure that tiny houses are a permanent solution for many.

1. It needs to be less than 500 square feet to be considered a true tiny house.
2. It may not meet the building codes of its permanent home site making it illegal. Part of the genius of a tiny home is that unlike a traditional home, a tiny home can be built in one place and transported anywhere the wind takes its owner. This also presents a problem. Say your tiny house is built in Virginia, but ends up in California. You will need to check to make sure that it meets all of California's stringent codes.
3. If you plan on moving your tiny house around the country with you, then you need to be sure that you have a car or truck with the right towing capacity. You should also double check that you have the driving ability too.
4. It can be difficult to "park" your tiny home on wheels for long. Since the Tiny Home movement is so new and largely unregulated, cities are having a tough time figuring how to zone them. Many cities only permit them if they are attached to a foundation and connected to utilities, which effectively downgrades the tiny house ethos to living in a guest house.
5. Tiny home accessories are typically custom – and expensive. You probably cannot find that teeny toilet and sink at your local Home Depot. Instead it will need to be ordered through a more costly appliance dealer.
6. Just getting up to go to the sleeping loft can be tricky business.

You may also be interested in:

Though beautifully simplistic in theory, these reality checks are a must-know before you decide to ditch the space for a tiny home.



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4 Tiny House-Friendly Cities in the United States

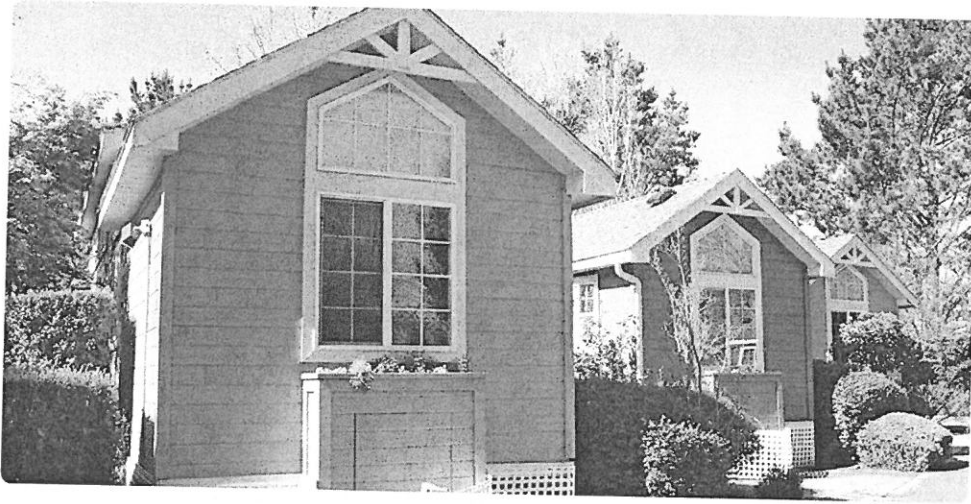


Erin Doman on

February 15, 2016

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Comments



Small living is a big deal. Tiny house communities are beginning to appear all over the country, for reasons related to economics, sustainability, minimalism and portability. For many people, the idea of living in a tiny home—with its tiny footprint and presumably tiny utility bills—is appealing. If you are looking into the viability of using a tiny home as your primary residence, you should consider more than just the feasibility of building and transporting the unit. Finding a permanent spot for a tiny home is a challenge no matter where you go in the U.S., but some cities make it easier than others. Below, we have outlined four notable tiny house-friendly cities as well as alternatives for those not local to these areas.

1. Spur, Texas

Spur, a town in Dickens County in Texas, is a well-known tiny house-friendly city and claims to be the first such town in the nation. Spur is located about an hour away from Lubbock and has seen a recent decrease in population. The town of Spur has since decided to allow the construction of tiny homes under minimal restrictions in order to attract new residents.

Properties are inexpensive in Spur, and the Texas sun and wind make off-grid living with alternative forms of energy a reachable goal. The town boasts a comprehensive public education system and fiber optic connectivity. Spur does not require any special permits to build a tiny home, but the home must be built on a foundation.

If you are interested in learning how to build in Spur and more information about this town, you can read more [here](#).

2. Fresno, California

Fresno is a Central California city of more than half a million residents. California, of course, is a big state. Some cities permit secondary dwellings (ADUs, or granny flats) to be built in residential zones, but

Section From the Update to Exhibit D: Revisions; November 18, 2015 (Fresno, California)

A [tiny house] structure intended for separate, independent living quarters for one household that meets these six conditions:

building codes and zoning regulations vary widely from county to county and city to city. Several counties in California allow tiny homes on wheels in backyards of residential lots on one condition: the occupant of the tiny house must be a caregiver for the occupant of the main house.

Fresno made the news in 2015 for being the first city in California to allow secondary dwelling units with wheels on residential lots, with no caregiver requirement. The local mayor, Ashley Swearingen, stated that Fresno is the first city to amend

its code to sanction tiny homes built on trailers, instead of lumping them in with recreational vehicles.

You can read more about Fresno's City Development Code here.

1. Is licensed and registered with the California Department of Motor Vehicles and meets ANSI 119.2 or 119.5 requirements;
2. Is towable by a bumper hitch, frame-towing hitch, or fifth-wheel connection [...];
3. Is no larger than allowed by California State Law for movement on public highways;
4. Has at least 100 square feet of first floor interior living space;
5. Is a detached self-contained unit which includes basic functional areas [...]; and
6. Is designed and built to look like a conventional building structure.

3. Walsenburg, Colorado

Walsenburg, in southern Colorado, is a town of around 3,000 residents. In 2014, the city changed its zoning rules specifically to allow tiny homes to be built on residential lots. The houses do need to be permanently constructed on foundations, not on trailers, and they must hook up to city utilities. While the city itself has changed its minimum square footage requirements, some subdivisions in Walsenburg may have homeowners' associations (HOAs) with their own size and building-type requirements. Before you purchase a lot in Walsenburg, check to see if it falls under the control of an HOA.

4. Brevard, North Carolina

The City of Brevard, in partnership with United Way of Transylvania County, has published a comprehensive guide (PDF) to building a tiny house for use within city limits. The guide lists steps for permitting and building a secondary dwelling on an existing property. In Brevard, the primary and secondary dwellings must have a single owner, and the secondary dwelling, or tiny house, must be built on a foundation (as opposed to being on wheels), and cannot exceed 800 square feet. The exact regulations listed in Brevard's publication are specific to that city.

Even if you do not live near these tiny house-friendly cities and are not willing to relocate to them, this is a good starting place for educating yourself about what kinds of steps you may need to take to get the ball rolling in any other city or town that allows secondary dwellings, or accessory dwelling units (ADUs), as they are commonly called, in residential areas.



Building in Your City

Depending on where you live, you may be able to build a tiny home and live in it legally. The easiest way may be to take advantage of any granny flat, ADU or secondary dwelling rules your city may have on the books. Bear in mind that many cities require both the primary and the secondary dwelling on a property to have a single owner.

If this will not work for you, check into local RV parks. If you build your tiny home on a trailer, it may be classified as either a park model RV or a towable recreational trailer. Check with local park owners to see whether or not they permit year-round residency, as well as what types of trailers they will accept.

If an RV park is not your style, you may be able to find a tiny house community on private property that is zoned for several tiny houses. These communities are popping up all over the United States and have many advantages for those who enjoy small living. For one thing, you will be part of a community of like-minded individuals. Also, many tiny house communities have common areas, such as a larger house or building with cooking facilities and showers, communal gardens and so on.

Anywhere, U.S.A

The advantage of building a tiny home on wheels is that it can be towed wherever the road leads. If you have the right kind of certification on your towable tiny home, you may be able to park it at any number of RV parks across the country. Many cities that don't allow tiny houses as permanent dwellings do allow them as temporary dwellings for a maximum number of days (either consecutive days, total days per year or a combination of the two). If you can work remotely, you could make use of these ordinances to live in a city for the maximum allowed time before moving on. Alternatively, you could find a large parcel of land in a state and county with friendly zoning rules and start your own tiny house community. With a tiny, portable home, your options are endless.

Cost of Living Considerations

Tiny homes, by virtue of their size, cost less to build than larger homes constructed of comparable materials. However, building costs can add up quickly, depending on the materials used, whether you are building the home yourself or hiring a contractor, and so on. Once built, tiny homes are well known for being energy efficient and contributing to a low cost of living.

Other ways to keep your total costs down include choosing a geographic area with a lower cost of living, using solar and/or wind power whenever possible and growing at least some of your own food. Being as efficient as possible will mean lower costs compared with traditional homes in the same geographic area, but moving to an area with even lower costs overall will allow you to save even more money in the long run.

The Future of Tiny House-Friendly Cities

These are just a few of the tiny house-friendly cities that are beginning to appear across the country. As the tiny house movement continues to gain momentum, there is a good chance that more cities will join in and become more friendly with their building and zoning rules. If you dream of owning a tiny home and living in it permanently, check out one of these tiny house-friendly cities or help to make your own city more accommodating for tiny houses and the people who love them.

11 Tiny House Villages Redefining Home

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By

Cat Johnson

September 17, 2014

Above: Boneyard Studios in Washington, D.C.

Tiny house villages are a new part of the tiny house movement, yet they hold a lot of potential to transform lives and communities. The idea behind these villages is straightforward: bring tiny houses together in one place to create communities that share land, time together, skills, support, and other resources.

Some tiny house villages are still in the planning phase or are demonstration villages, and many are designed to house the homeless. But as the tiny house movement grows, so too does the desire to

live a simple life in community. What we see today may be the beginnings of a large and diverse tiny house village movement. Below are 11 tiny house villages leading the way.

1. Boneyard Studios - Washington, D.C.



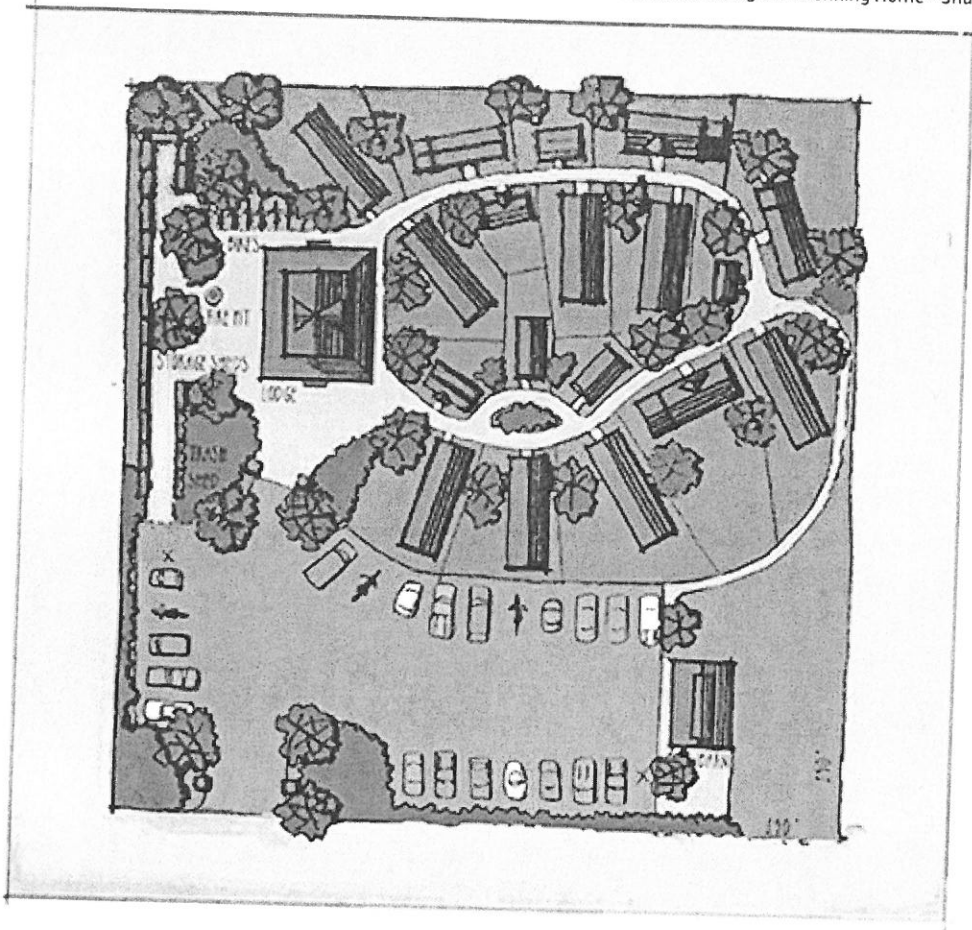
A demonstration tiny house village in the District of Columbia, Boneyard Studios has a mission to demonstrate creative urban infill, promote the benefits of tiny houses, support other tiny house builders, and model what a tiny house community could look like.

2. Community First - Austin, Texas



Community First! Village, a 27 acre master-planned community under development, will provide affordable, sustainable, housing in the form of tiny houses, RVs, mobile homes, and more. They are focusing on creating a supportive community for the disabled and chronically homeless in Austin and the surrounding area.

3. Tiny House Village - Sonoma, California



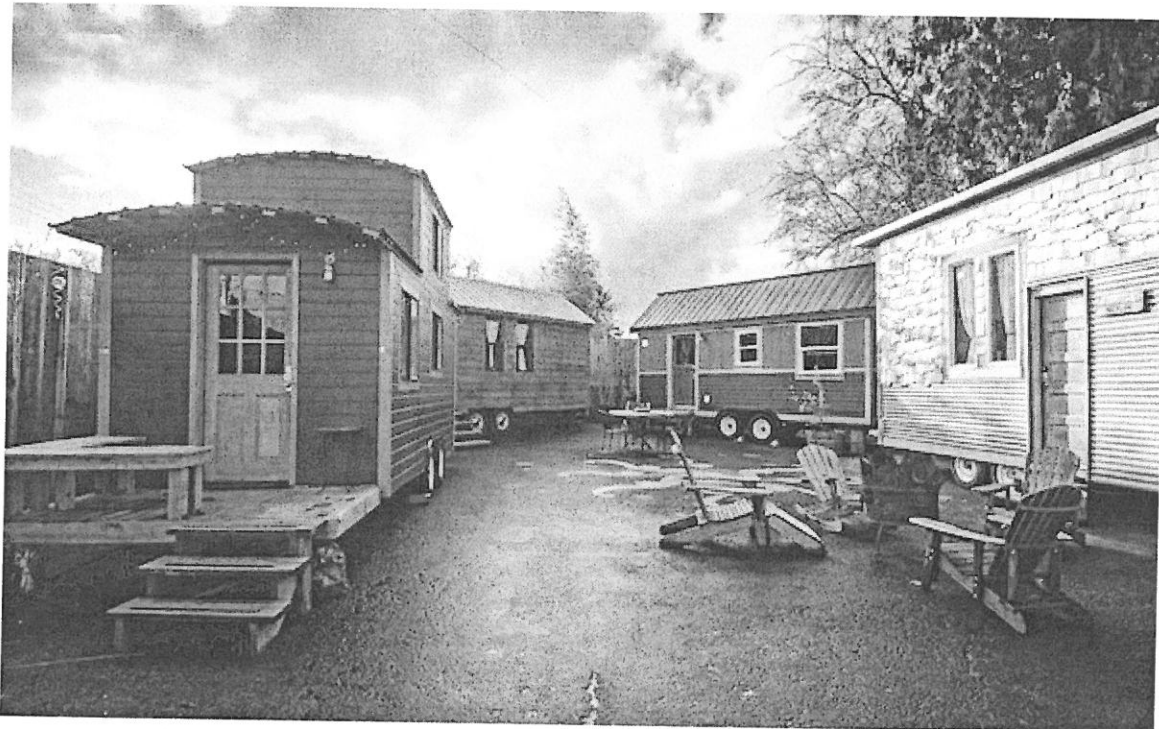
Still in the planning stages, this tiny house village in Sonoma, California is the brainchild of Jay Shafer, founder of the Four Lights Tiny House Company. The village will be zoned as an RV park, but function like a coop, with shared common spaces and an intentional community vibe. The village will be completed in 2015.

4. Quixote Village - Olympia, Washington



Originally a self-governing tent camp of homeless adults in Olympia, Washington, Quixote Village now consists of 30 tiny houses, a community garden, and a common space with showers, laundry facilities and living and dining space.

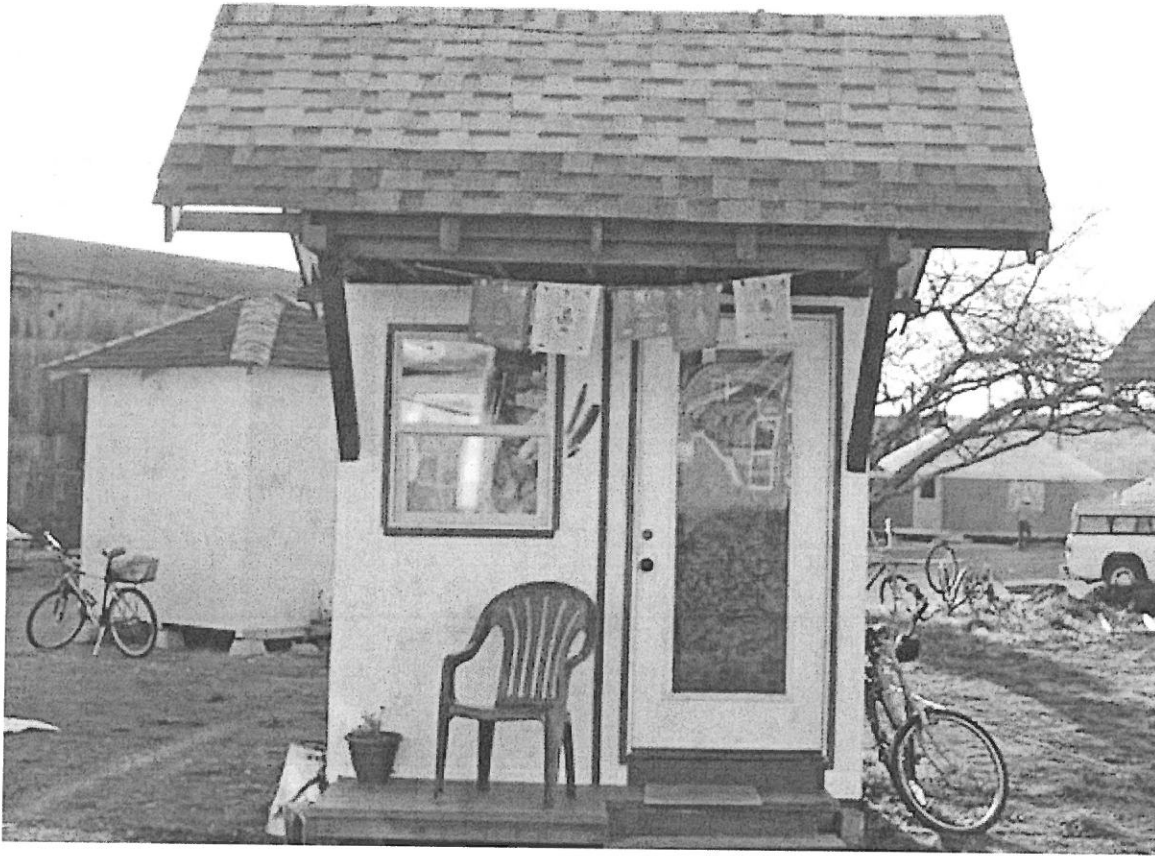
5. Caravan Tiny House Hotel - Portland, Oregon



Touted as the first tiny house hotel, Caravan is a model of what a tiny house village could look like. Although there are no permanent residents in this little village of tiny houses, it provides visitors an

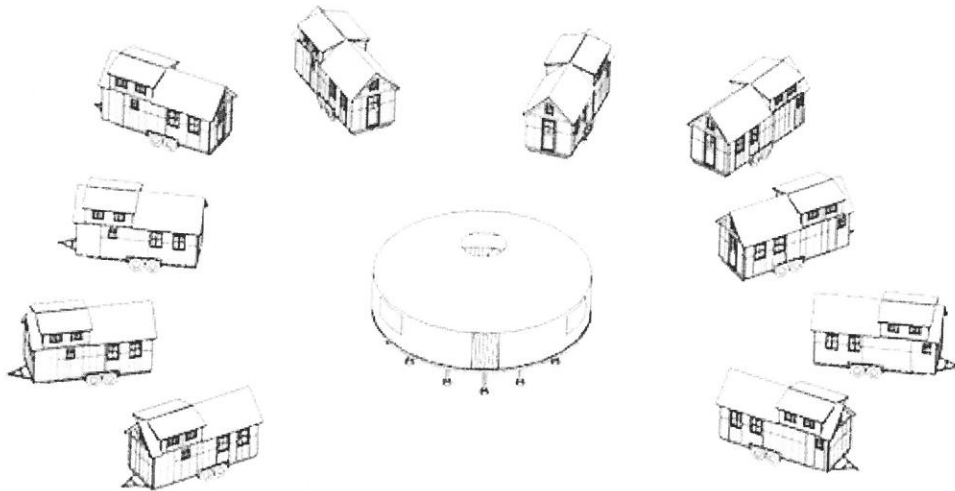
opportunity to test drive tiny house living and experience what it's like to live among other tiny house dwellers.

6. Opportunity Village & Emerald Village - Eugene, Oregon



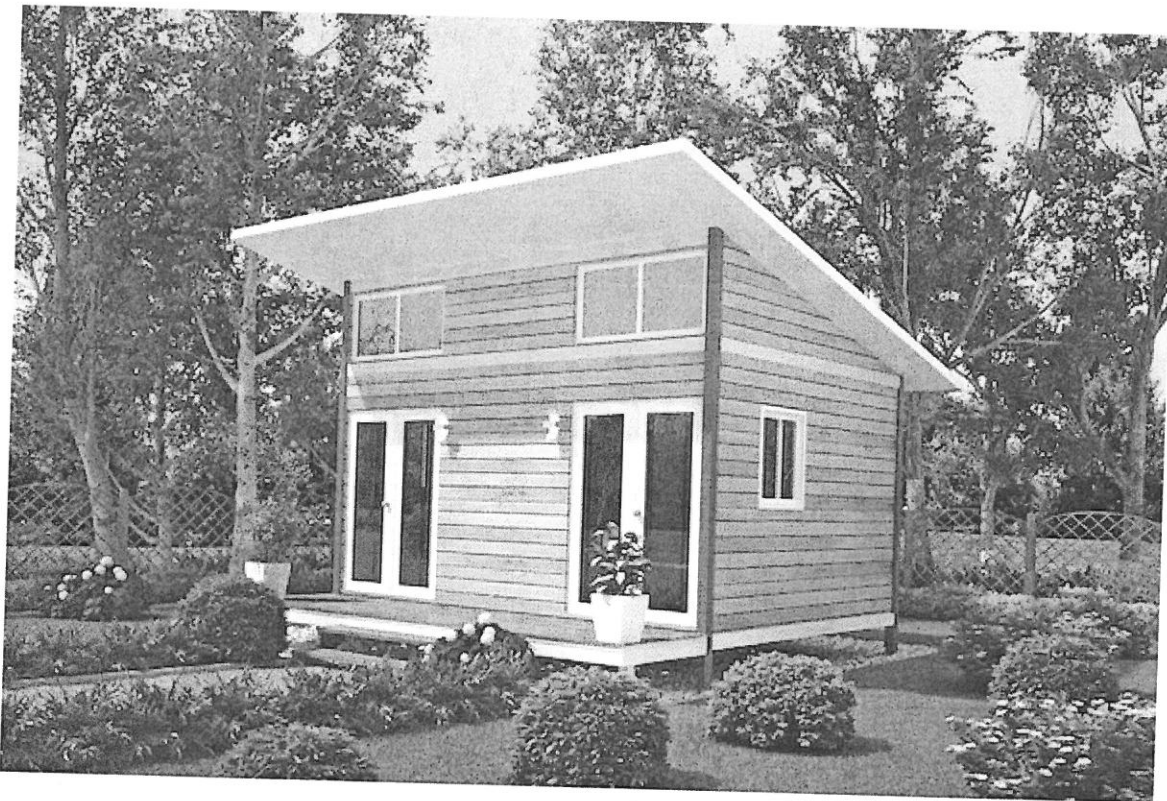
A collaboration between the “housed and unhoused,” Opportunity Village is a self-governed, self-managed tiny house village created to provide stable, safe housing while people transition to a more permanent living situation. Emerald Village is a planned tiny house village designed to be a model for long-term, affordable, tiny house living.

7. Tiny House Village - San Francisco, California



A group of people in the Bay Area, led by Chelsea Rustrum, are in the beginning stages of creating a tiny house village near San Francisco. The idea is to create a wifi-enabled village for those who want to be connected both online and off. The project is currently looking for land on which to test their model. To get involved and stay in the loop, sign up for the mailing list and join the community on Neighborland.

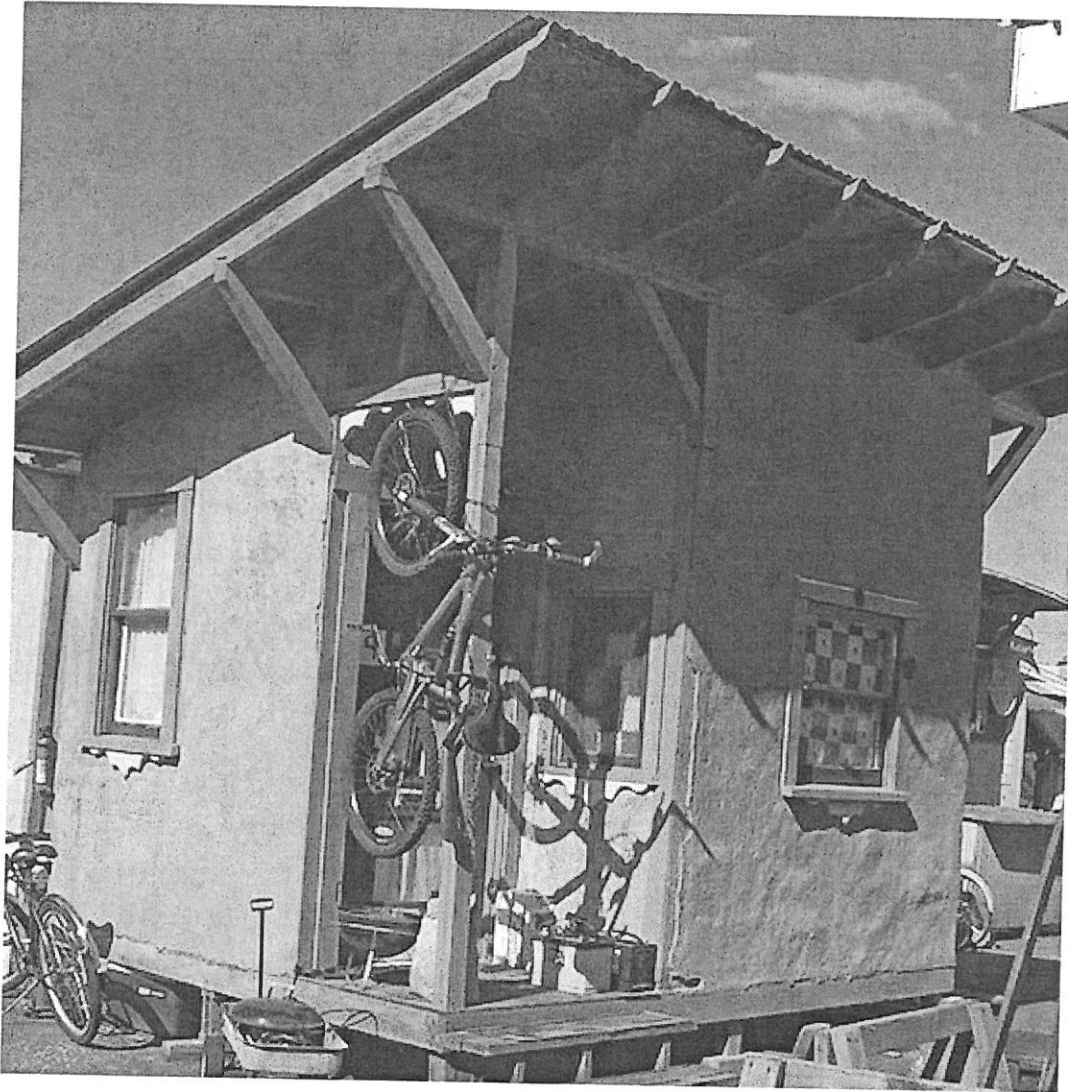
8. Micro Communities - Portland, Oregon



Given the thumbs up by city leaders in Portland, proposed tiny house villages called Micro Communities, with the help of building company TechDwell, will provide affordable housing for the

working poor. Still in the planning stage, these communities offer a way for people living near or under the poverty line to find safe housing, shared spaces, and vibrant neighborhoods.

9. Dignity Village - Portland, Oregon



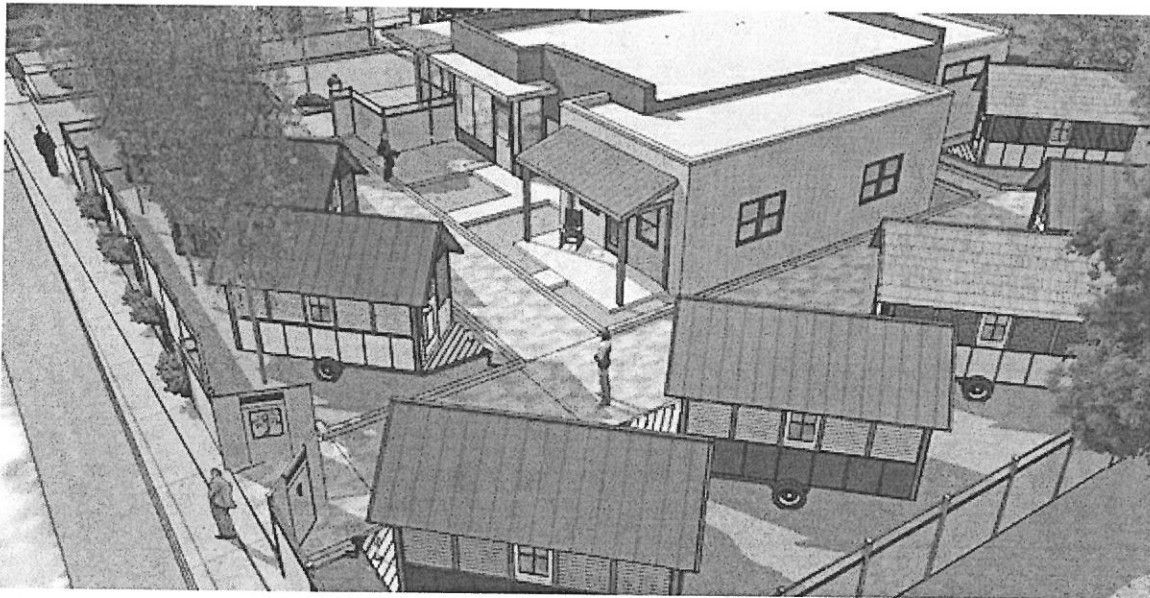
An official homeless encampment in Portland, Dignity Village has a number of tiny houses, community gardens, communal kitchens, internet access, access to education and counseling and more.

10. Second Wind - Ithaca, New York



A growing tiny village in upstate New York, Second Wind was started by Carmen Guidi as an attempt to help the homeless. With a crew of volunteers, he built the first six tiny houses and in early 2014. The first residents moved in shortly thereafter. There are currently plans to expand the village as time and funding allow.

11. Occupy Madison Village - Madison, Wisconsin



A project of Occupy Madison, OM Village is a tiny house village for the homeless currently in the building stage with the first four houses nearing completion. In addition to providing housing, there are plans for community gardens, an Occupy Madison store, a day labor program and more.

What other tiny house villages do you know of? Where would you like to see a tiny house village built? Please share in comments below.



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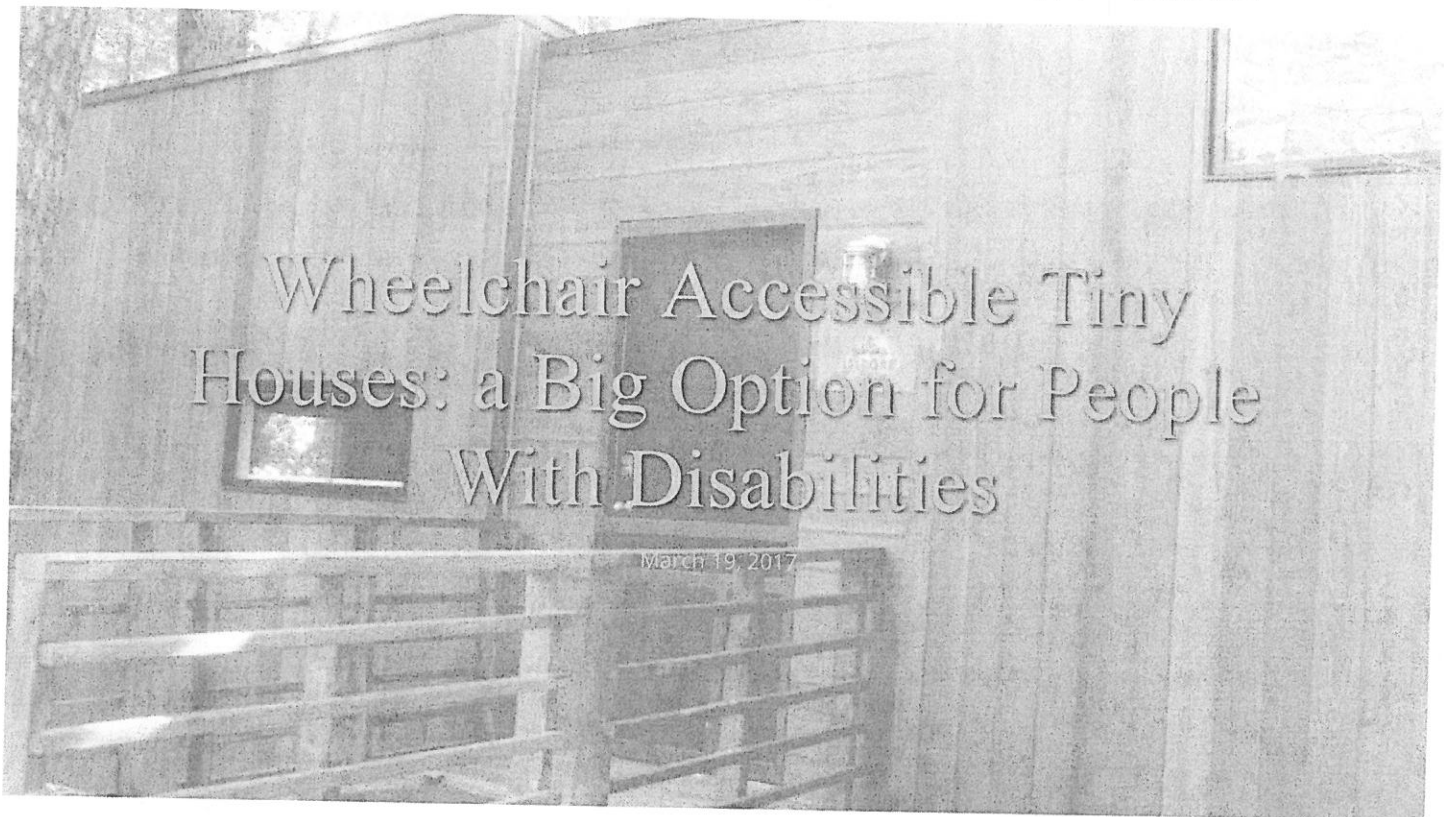
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Wheelchair Accessible Tiny Houses: a Big Option for People With Disabilities

March 19, 2017

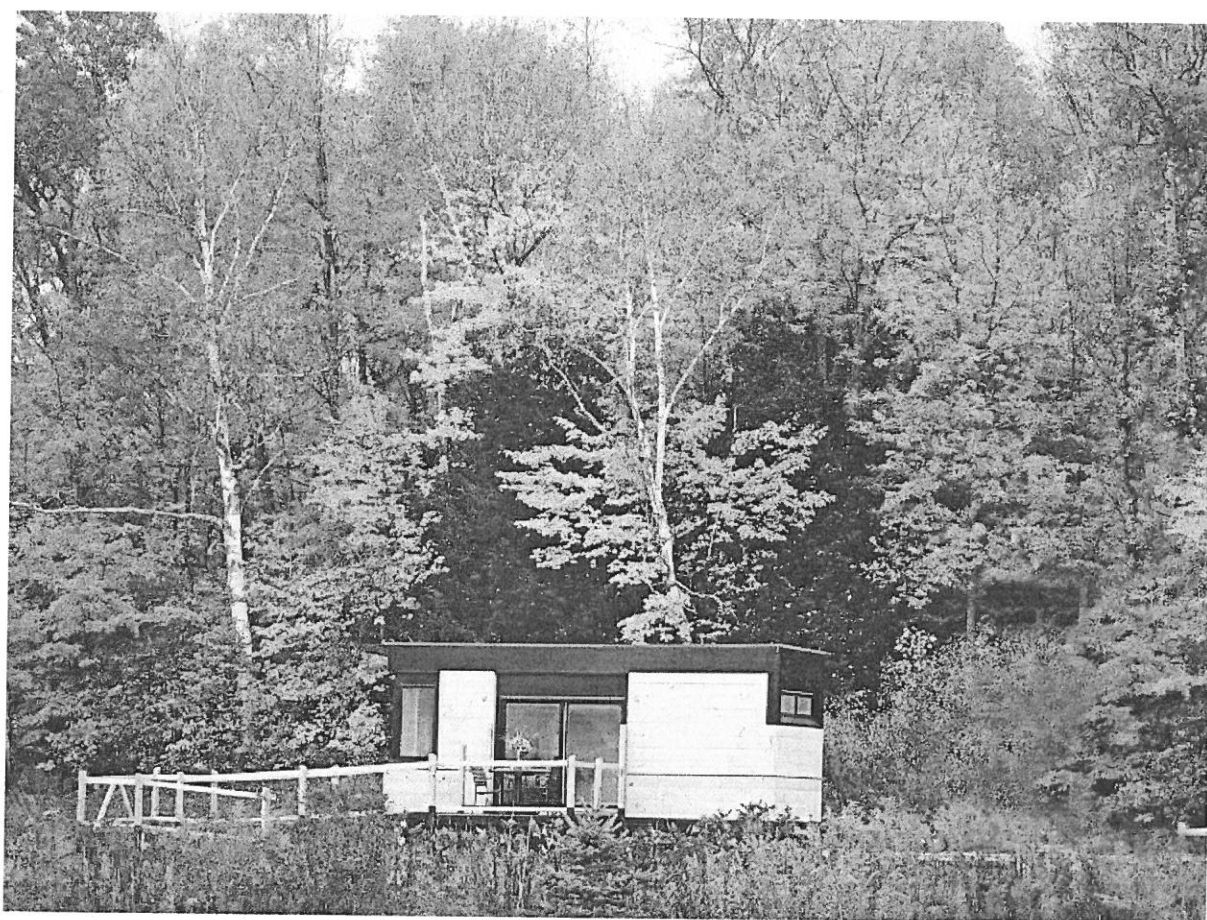
Could wheelchair-friendly tiny houses be a “big” option for people with disabilities?

A look at wheelchair accessible tiny houses

If you've spent much time on social media, chances are you've seen a tiny house pop up in your feed. They're a growing phenomenon, and for good reason. Tiny houses pack the amenities of a full-size house into a remarkably small footprint, and with considerably more style than the average house on the block. Tiny houses are often built on trailers, and have tons of custom features to suit the personality and needs of their inhabitants. They're affordable, too; videos abound of people



Although most tiny houses are still built by young couples looking to pursue an environmentally friendly lifestyle, their affordability and customization make them a natural candidate to consider for solving our affordable housing crisis. People with disabilities are particularly harmed by the lack of affordable housing, as the lack of affordable and wheelchair accessible housing is even more scarce. But disability and tiny don't seem like they go together at all... Or do they?



The Wheel Pad wheelchair accessible tiny house.

Tiny Houses for People With Disabilities

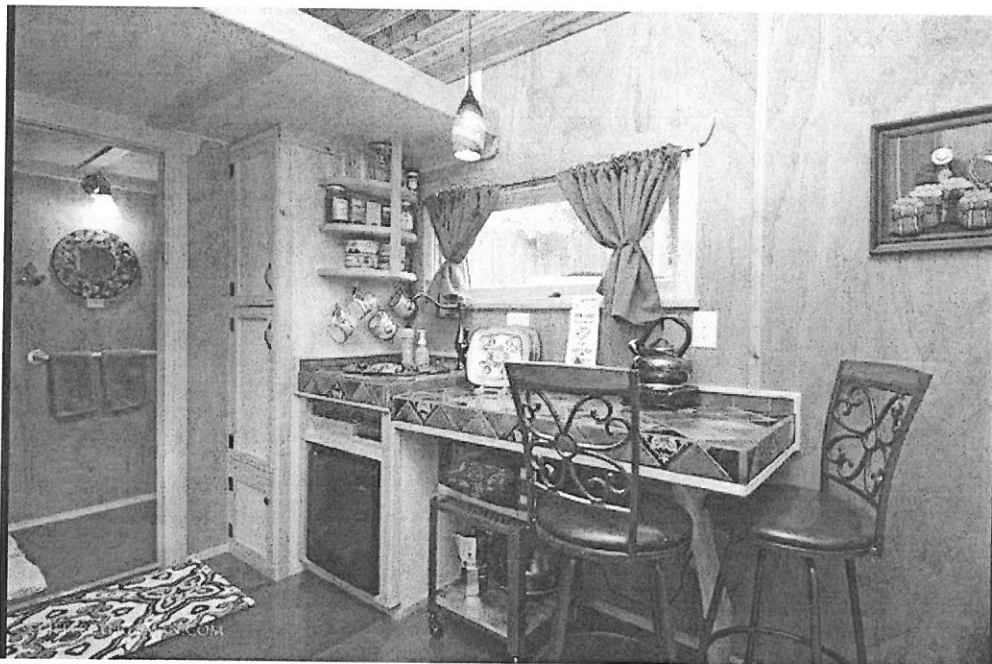
When considering the benefits and drawbacks of tiny houses for people with disabilities, we must first look at the overall picture — the full community of people with disabilities. Not all disabilities are physical, and the needs of people with physical disabilities vary considerably. Typical tiny houses can already meet the needs of a significant range of people with disabilities, including many who may struggle with other forms of housing. For example, a person with autism may find it difficult to live in a noisy apartment complex. However, a detached tiny house gives space between neighbors, and can be designed with sound-dampening walls and other features to reduce sensory overload. It can use materials the person finds comforting, such as specific flooring or wall textures, and be themed to the person's special interests, creating a safe haven in which they can thrive.


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with disabilities live with family members. This can be frustrating to an adult with disabilities who would like to have more independence and freedom to make choices about their environment. A tiny house can be placed in the backyard of the family home, giving a person their own space while still having support nearby to assist with personal care, medication management, and other tasks. If the tiny house is on wheels, it could be relocated if the family moves or if the person is able to live separately on another property.

Tiny houses can also provide outdoor living space that is typically not available to apartment dwellers. There may be room to set up a small garden, helpful to those who wish to eat healthy on a budget and/or have serious food allergies. Many people with a variety of disabilities benefit from a service or emotional support animal; a tiny house with a small yard can provide a safe space for animals and remove the hassle of getting accommodations from a landlord who may not understand the law.

In addition to sensory and mental health conditions, some people with physical disabilities can negotiate the space in a typical tiny house, perhaps with a few modifications. People who are blind or have low vision could benefit from a smaller space that provides easily identifiable paths and tactile guidance via surfaces, handles, etc. People with mild mobility disabilities or whose challenges include fatigue may benefit from a reduced need to walk in the house, and handrails and other supports can be provided for added safety. Instead of putting the bedroom in a loft as is common in tiny houses, it can be on the first floor, with the loft space eliminated or used for storage or a guest room.



The beautiful Zyl Vardos wheelchair accessible tiny house.

Wheelchair Accessible Tiny Houses

It seems clear that millions of people with disabilities who currently struggle with affordable housing could benefit greatly from tiny living. But what of those of us who use wheelchairs and have little or



To examine the factors affecting wheelchair accessibility in tiny houses, we first need to look at the typical dimensions of a tiny house. This is tricky, as there is no official, accepted definition of a tiny house. Some people say under 400 square feet, some under 1000, and so on. We don't necessarily need to settle on a number, as tiny can mean different things to different people. But intrinsic to a tiny house is keeping it both simple and fully featured, all in a smaller footprint than would be expected for a home with its amenities. So by its nature, a tiny house is small.

While a tiny house built on a foundation can be any dimensions you want, the popular tiny houses on wheels face certain limitations. In general, trailers can be up to 40 feet long, but they must be no more than 8 1/2 feet wide to travel down the road without a permit. That's where the trouble comes in. The interior width of the home will generally be under 8 feet, and wheelchairs need 32 to 36 inches to get around comfortably without crashing into walls. Wheelchairs also need about a 5 foot space to turn around in; again this varies by model and the skill of the driver, but it's a good rule of thumb. That leaves only about 2 feet in turnaround spaces to place anything else — a lot of space taken out of a tiny house.

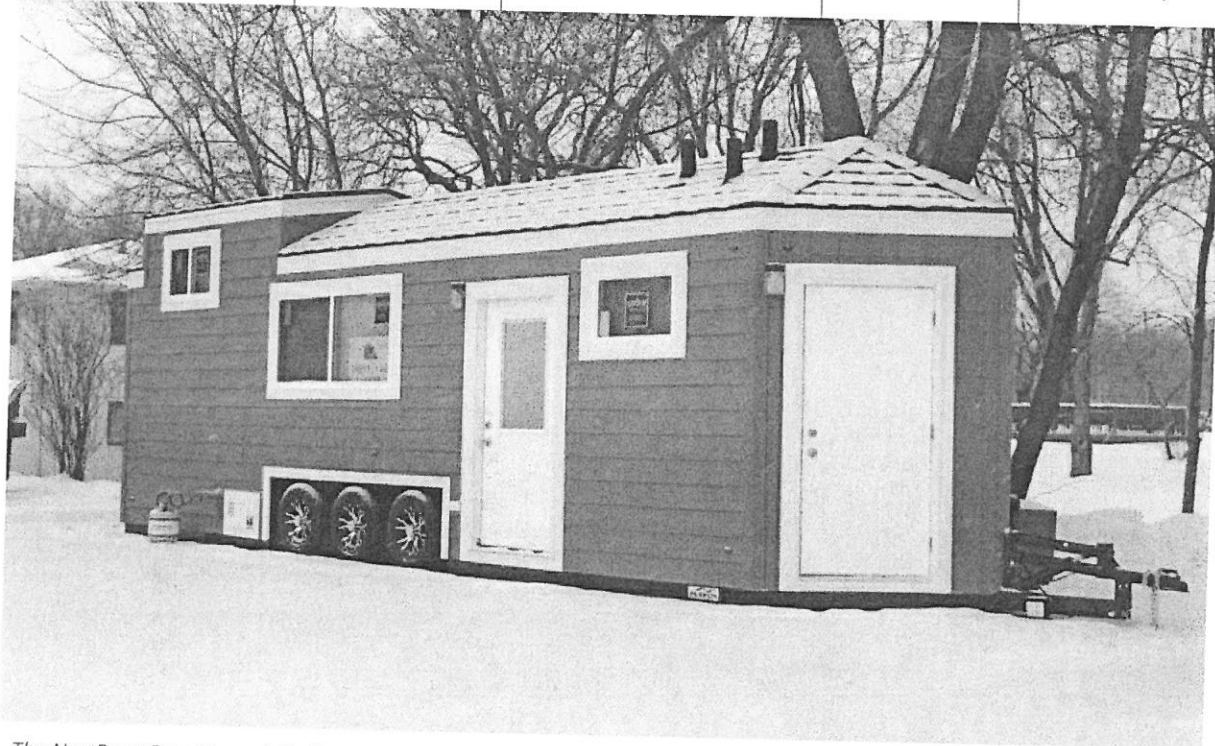
To solve this problem, we can look to the RV industry. They have faced the same limitations, and came up with an innovative solution — the slide out. In case you're not familiar with them, a slide out is a portion of an RV or camper that expands when the vehicle is parked. They are often used in living room or bedroom areas, but can expand the kitchen or just about any room. In the past, most slide outs had a step up of a few inches, but now level slides with just a small threshold are common. However, level slide outs present a challenge for insulating the floor, which is more necessary for a tiny house than a camper used for vacation or in warm climates. That said, slide outs with a step can still be used in an accessible tiny house to move pieces of furniture that would normally take up a lot of aisle space, such as the sofa, bed, or part of the kitchen.

Another challenge of tiny house living for wheelchairs is getting in and out. Most tiny houses sit quite high off the ground. A wheelchair lift could potentially be used, but it presents certain risks, including the possibility of becoming trapped inside or outside the house if the lift breaks down. So instead, many builders have created a lengthy switchback ramp to allow for access. This is fine for a tiny house that won't be moved often, but trying to transport a massive ramp would be difficult for those who wish to travel. One potential solution is to utilize an ice fishing trailer base. These trailers work similarly to kneeling buses in minivans; they lower to the ground with a touch of a button. This would allow for a much shorter ramp, one that could be folded up against the door for transport or placed inside the house.

People with all kinds of mobility disabilities have very individual needs. Tiny houses are ideal for such situations, as they are custom designed for each person who buys one. Most tiny house builders are willing to listen to their clients and think outside the box. Since everything is being built from scratch, it can be exactly the way a person needs it, but at a cost far less than a full-size custom home.


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The NextDoor DropHome is built on a hydraulic ice fishing trailer, so it lowers to the ground and only needs a small ramp to be wheelchair accessible.

Moving and Parking Wheelchair Accessible Tiny Houses on Wheels

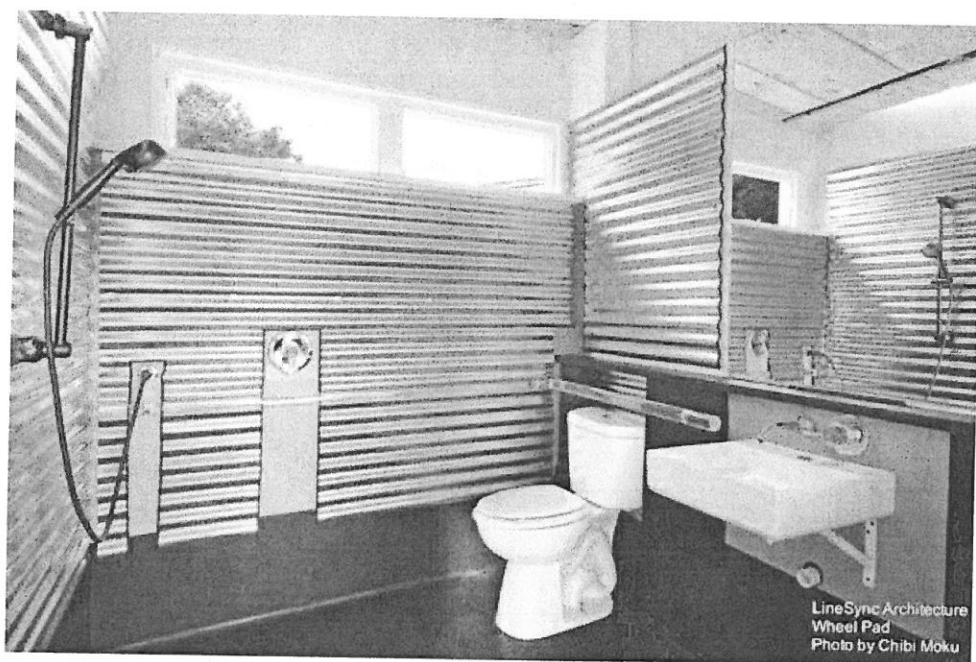
Many people with and without disabilities who are considering a tiny house on wheels don't seem to think much about what it takes to move one. Towing any trailer isn't as simple as hitching it up, and tiny houses present additional towing challenges due to their large size and weight. For people with physical disabilities, it's even more challenging, as very few vehicles can be both wheelchair accessible and tow a tiny house. There are a couple of companies that make accessible pickup trucks, but they are extremely expensive. Full-size vans are a better option, and 3/4 ton wheelchair accessible vans are fairly common in the new and used vehicle markets. But finding an accessible 1 ton van, which would be required for the largest tiny houses, could be a challenge. Therefore, it might be necessary to hire someone to move your tiny house, which could get expensive if you move often.

If you're trying to choose between an RV, travel trailer or tiny house, considering weight and ease of towing may help in your decision. If you want to road trip with your home, use it only part-time or plan to stay in warm climates, an RV or a travel trailer may be most convenient. If you want something for full-time living that can last the rest of your life, but still offer the flexibility to move once or twice a year (or every few years), a tiny house on wheels may be the better choice. If you've found a permanent location and just want to set up affordable housing on your property or your family's land, a tiny or larger-but-still-small home on a foundation may be best for practical and legal purposes.


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neighborhoods will allow you to park a trailer in your yard or driveway, but not actually live in it. Therefore, many tiny house dwellers choose to live in RV parks, rural areas, or in a secluded backyard where they are unlikely to be noticed living in their tiny houses. Things are starting to change, however, and some of those changes specifically benefit people with disabilities by allowing accessory dwelling units (granny flats) for people who need support and care from family. Check the zoning for your area before deciding which type of small living option to pursue, as these rules may permit or favor certain types of dwellings over others.

Whether we choose to live in a tiny house or not, people with disabilities can help advocate for affordable accessible housing by supporting tiny house projects, friendly zoning codes, and variance requests in our communities.



The bathroom in the Wheel Pad wheelchair accessible tiny house doesn't sacrifice style.

Companies Building Wheelchair Accessible Tiny Houses

Tiny houses offer tremendous potential for people with a variety of disabilities to own a home and increase their independence. So it's not surprising that a few companies have already built wheelchair accessible tiny houses. Here are a few I found, with my quick thoughts on each:

Zyl Vardos: Abel Zyl is one of my favorite tiny house builders because of the beauty and artistry of his structures. His wheelchair accessible tiny house, available to rent at Caravan, a tiny house hotel in Portland, Oregon, does not compromise on style. It seems to offer some accessibility, with a roll-in shower and rails around the toilet. However, it appears to not have adequate space to park a wheelchair next to the toilet, which would be a major problem for me and many other people with

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Caravan website says they need advance notice to set up the ramp, and it's not hard to see why. It's long, metal, and ugly. Since this tiny house stays in the same place, it would be much more attractive with a deck and wooden ramp out front. Abel Zyl says he can build accessible tiny houses and customize to your needs. I'd love to stay in and maybe own a Zyl Vardo someday!

Getaway: If you have only recently heard of tiny houses, chances are it was because of Shark Tank. Getaway Tiny Houses recently appeared on Shark Tank seeking funding for their tiny vacation rentals, but turned down the offers they received. In my opinion, everyone involved missed a great opportunity. Getaway offers a wheelchair accessible tiny house, the Isidore, at their upstate New York location. While the interior isn't as beautiful as the Zyl Vardo, the home is very accessible and the bathroom appears to be more spacious. In addition, they came up with an attractive, creative solution for the front entrance. Instead of a long, ugly ramp, they parked the home at a lower elevation, then built a lovely wooden bridge across to the higher level. It looks great and integrates the home well with nature. This is a tiny house I would love to spend a weekend in!

Wheel Pad: This new wheelchair accessible tiny house prototype has been popping up everywhere in the news, and for good reason. It has an upscale modern style and doesn't compromise on beauty or accessibility. The bathroom is particularly eye-catching, and they wisely made it a wet bath, my design of choice for my own bathrooms as it allows me to shower on the toilet and saves space in the bathroom. Unfortunately, this house also has several major shortcomings, the biggest one being that it completely lacks a kitchen! It's currently designed to be added onto an existing house to create accessibility for a newly disabled resident, but I don't see why it couldn't have a kitchen, as that would allow true independence and flexibility to relocate. At \$60,000, it's very pricey, costing as much or more than other tiny houses that include kitchens and lofts. This seems like the beginning of a great design, if it can be offered with a kitchen and guest loft at a competitive price.

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NextDoor Dropthome: I have to give this company credit. They thought of using an ice fishing trailer before I did, although I didn't find them until after I thought of it. They offer both road width tiny houses on wheels and wider park models. Their tiny houses on wheels include kitchens, and for under \$50,000. They offer an optional loft, and can customize bathrooms and other areas for your needs. They are currently aimed at the senior care market, but I believe their designs could appeal to a wider range of people with better marketing.



MEDCottage: This company is squarely aimed at the senior care market, and their website and language reflects that. The homes appear to be attractively designed, and the accessibility is great, but the "big brother" and hospital-oriented language of the marketing is off-putting to independently-minded people with disabilities like myself. They currently offer three different plans, and appear to be developing a tiny house on wheels with a large slide out, a great idea. If this company improved their language and marketing, I think they could appeal to a large segment of the disability community.

Ice Castle Fish Houses: Honorable Mention. Ice Castle is not technically a tiny house company, they are a manufacturer of ice fishing travel trailers. However, their designs and customization reflect the tiny house ethos. They may look like traditional campers on the outside, but the interiors of Ice Castle Fish Houses resemble tiny houses, with beautiful wood walls and built-in furniture. They even offer a fish house with a double loft! Since ice fishing trailers are designed to be used in subzero temperatures, they are well-insulated, and their construction quality seems to be far superior to most RVs and campers. The moment I saw them, I recognized the potential for wheelchair accessibility due to the lowering feature, and I was pleased to see that they are now offering accessible models. Only a short ramp is needed when the trailer is in its lowered position. My only concern is that the bathrooms I've seen, even in the wheelchair accessible trailer, were not very accessible, with a step either to get in or around the toilet area. But if this can be resolved, Ice Castles seem like a great choice for someone who is looking for something lighter weight than a tiny house but higher quality than a travel trailer. By the way, you don't have to be into ice fishing... they can make them without the portholes!



Did I miss any wheelchair accessible tiny house companies or models, especially tiny houses on wheels? Please let me know in the comments.

In light of the benefits and challenges, are tiny houses a good idea for people with disabilities? Of course, there is no right or wrong answer. It depends on the needs and circumstances of each individual. I wrote this guide to help with my own decision-making process, but I wanted to share the options I've discovered and also reach out to the tiny house community for more information and support.

Why I'm Considering "Going Tiny"

My own interest in tiny houses began a few years ago when I was searching for prefab wheelchair accessible bathrooms that could be added onto a home. I was thinking of moving, but I had been through the hassle of renovating multiple times, and wondered if there was a fast solution for accessibility. I then started wondering whether I could buy a mobile home and just move it if I ever wanted to move again... and in the process of researching that, I discovered tiny houses.

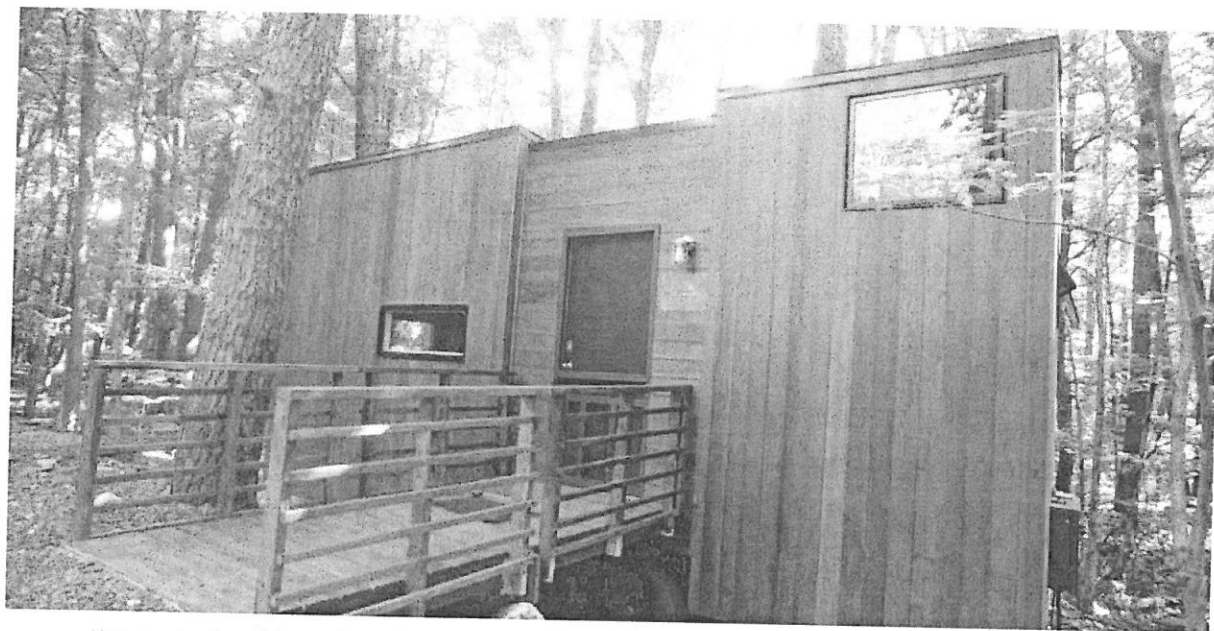
As a frequent traveler with a disability, I have longed to be able to take wheelchair accessibility with me wherever I go. I purchased a used RV about 10 years ago, but for various reasons, it didn't work out and I sold it at a considerable loss. But I knew that with the right setup, it would have been great for me — and a couple years later, I regretted having sold it, even with its problems. In 2014, I was the victim of a home invasion robbery and had to move suddenly for safety reasons. A big factor in deciding where to go was being able to stay with a relative who had an accessible home, but it was in a place where I didn't want to live. I was lucky to have that person and that place, but I ended up staying in the area, only to realize that, as I suspected, it really isn't for me.


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move with me and meet my needs for life. I need a tiny house.



You can book a night at the Gateway Isidore wheelchair accessible tiny house to see if tiny living is for you.

"Going tiny" would present a number of challenges for me, many of them unrelated to my disability. Yes, I need extra space for my wheelchair, but I also have four big dogs. I care about the environment and hate McMansions, but my main goal is to design a home that's portable, rather than simple. I'm far from a minimalist; I'm something of a clothes horse, and I have a few collections I'm quite attached to including musical theatre memorabilia and tiki mugs. I also have a couple of must-have items that absolutely won't fit in a tiny house, the most important one being a spare wheelchair. However, there are solutions to these issues. Due to the ongoing legal complexities of tiny houses and zoning, my plan is to purchase a property with a house on it where I want to live. I would then rent out the house and park my tiny house in a secluded area of the backyard, behind the fence. I would keep the garage for myself, as a space to store my extra wheelchair, tools, and other items I can't fit in the tiny house.

At this point, I'm strongly leaning towards getting a tiny house, but I haven't ruled out a camper, especially the Ice Castle Fish Houses. Short trips with a tiny house wouldn't be easy, whereas they might be possible with a 3/4 ton van and an Ice Castle. What if I got both and connected them? My mind can go to some pretty creative places sometimes... but that's what alternative housing is all about!

Tiny house folks, please comment or email me with your thoughts and any information I missed — I will update this page or write additional posts as I learn more. I look forward to getting to know the tiny house community!

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which actually does involve both new offices and some housing.



Apple and the Mall

The large indoor mall, which bridges over Wolfe Road, is about as old as Apple itself: built in 1976 as Americans were fleeing the cities to pave over surrounding farmlands in order to build out the sprawl of suburbia.

This move created the Petri dish of Silicon Valley, where kids like Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak were raised in safe communities of middle-class families, with the ability to pursue their curiosities--taking advantage of specialized technical education and job opportunities at the region's founding technology firms, including Atari and Hewlett Packard (the latter of which paved over the orchards and occupied the land where Apple Park now sits) and even found their own new companies.

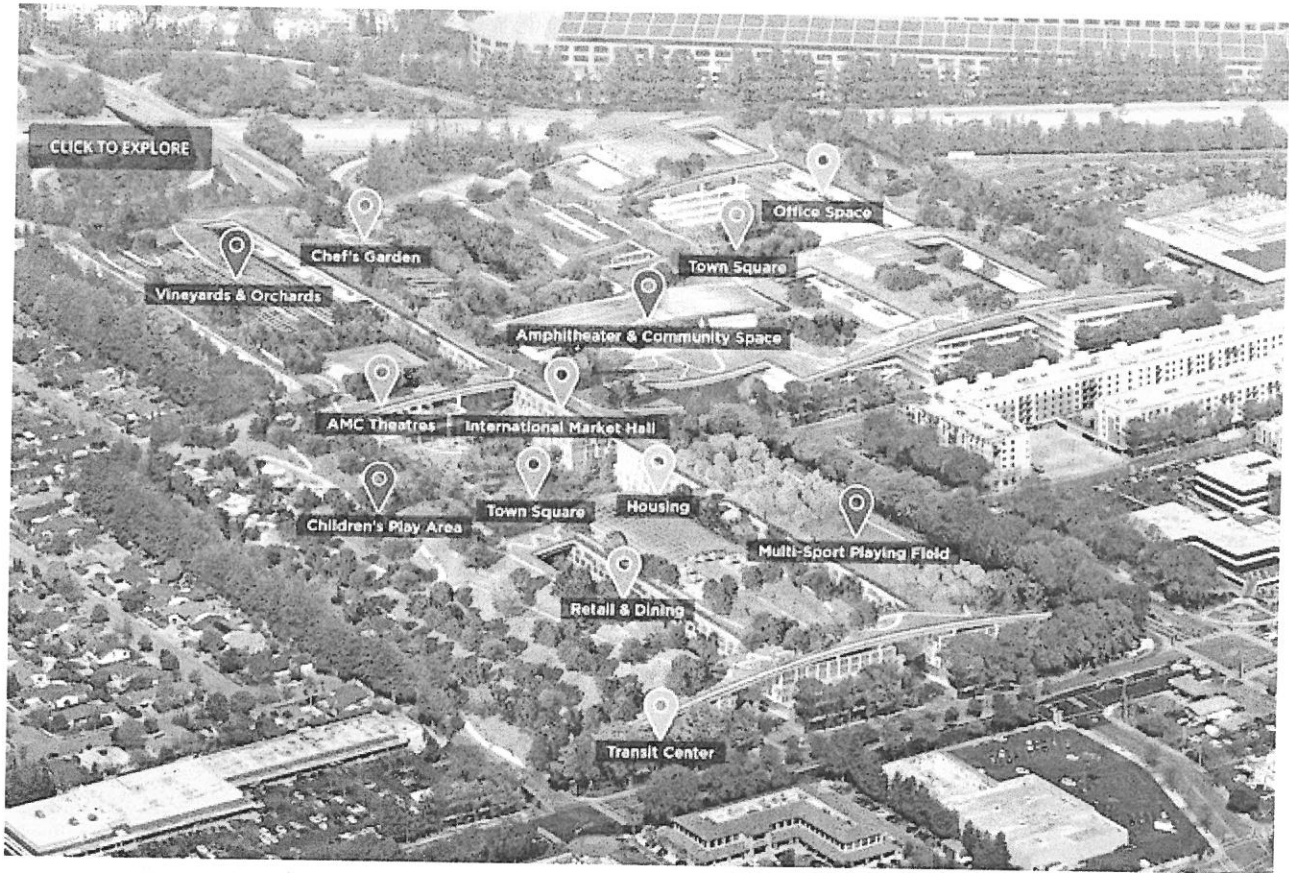
In the mid-80s, Vallco Mall, originally called "Vallco Fashion Park," began facing new competition from more modern shopping centers. Like Apple itself, the mall attempted to refresh and expand itself to remain competitive. However, in the 1990s it was hit by a series of forces, including the emerging role of online retailers and the fact that increasingly affluent demographics in Silicon Valley weren't attracted to its midrange tenants.

In 2007, as Apple released the iPhone, Vallco Mall added a new 16 screen theater and a bowling alley. By 2015, the decline of retail prompted its owners to come up with new plans to demolish the entire thing and rebuilt a modern mix of shopping, offices and housing on a street grid covered with green parks, orchards and gardens.

The project was called The Hills of Vallco. The planning site (portrayed in a rendering below) would be <https://appleinsider.com/articles/18/01/31/apple-parks-new-employees-asked-to-push-for-more-housing-in-cupertino>

directly opposite from Apple Park's garages (top of the image) and across the street from the company's Vallco Parkway 2A building (top right).

However, homeowners concerned that any new housing might affect the stratospheric valuation of their own property (in a city where a standard family home is priced in the millions) rushed to kill plans for any new housing. Two competing measures, one to block the construction of anything on the site apart from retail, and another to push through the original The Hills of Vallco plan without the risk of it being derailed by opponents leveraging the city planning process, both failed to pass in 2016.



In the year since, things have only gotten worse for Vallco Mall as its large anchor stores (formerly Sears, Macy's and JC Penney) remained abandoned and its interior walkways lead to little more than empty retail stores and a few random low-rent tenants. Its owners have announced that they have no interest in trying to spruce up the site because it demands a larger investment to create something new.

Homeowners are still trying to block any new housing, asking that the old mall only be replaced by a new shopping center, despite the fact that there is clearly no real demand for a shopping center in Cupertino.

At this point, Vallco could probably best serve as an opportunity for Apple to take over the property and use it for expansion of its existing Vallco offices. But housing advocates are asking Apple's workers--most of whom can't afford to buy housing in Cupertino even with professional salary--to push for new housing on the site.

At the currently insane housing prices of Silicon Valley, a couple of Apple employees trying to buy a house in

Cupertino would face a 20 percent down payment on an existing home at a price even higher than greater SV's median of \$1.17 million, meaning they'd also have to pay a mortgage of around \$10,000 per month. And there are only a couple dozen available houses for Apple's thousands of employees to even attempt to buy anywhere near the company's offices.

That prompts much of Apple's workforce to commute from more affordable (or at least more desirable) areas, including San Francisco, around 40 minutes away when there isn't any traffic. Apple has worked to develop a network of buses to minimize the impact of traffic because the Bay Area suburbs lack much effective transit of their own.

Some residents in desirable areas of San Francisco served by buses from Apple (and other firms in a similar predicament, including Google) have demonized the influx of new workers as a gentrifying force, as if the City would be better off in an economic decline, with the kind of violent crime and decay that San Francisco limped through in previous decades of lower rents.

San Francisco also faces a long-term housing shortage, in part because activists there, as in Cupertino, work to block the development of any new housing (particularly any housing density), fearing that any new housing would be filled with some sort of undesirables.

"At the currently insane housing prices of Silicon Valley, a couple of Apple employees trying to buy a house in Cupertino would face a mortgage of around \$10,000 per month"

Vallco process underway: what you need to know

Representatives from Opticos Design, Inc. (Opticos), the Berkeley-based land use and architecture firm hired by the City of Cupertino and paid for by the developer of the Vallco Shopping District site, visited Cupertino earlier this month to interview community members and business representatives. For the January interviews, Citizens selected individuals to share their visions of what they would like

**Kim-Mai Cutler**

@kimmaicutler

Are you an Apple employee who works in Cupertino? Take this survey to tell this NIMBY group down there that you want housing on this 50-acre failed mall site less than a mile from Apple HQ: surveyMonkey.com/r/VallcoSurvey (And then also attend the meetings listed below.)

4:20 PM - Jan 29, 2018

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While no panacea, the redevelopment of Vallco Mall as a place for people to live, work and shop could at least help reduce the need for long-distance commuting and further shifts that displace people and raise rents elsewhere.

For that reason, Apple employees have been encouraged to get involved in planning discussions that begin next Monday, February 5, and to weigh in on a survey that asks what individuals think should be built at the Vallco site.

That survey, set up by Better Cupertino, is currently tilted to support the anti-housing efforts that backed the measure to block anything from being built on the site apart from more retail. However, only a couple hundred people have yet responded to it.

MONEY

Google is spending \$30 million on housing for Silicon Valley employees

Ester Bloom | 2:46 PM ET Wed, 14 June 2017



Erin Lubin/Bloomberg | Getty Images



Rents in San Francisco and Silicon Valley have reached such unprecedented heights that some Facebook engineers reportedly

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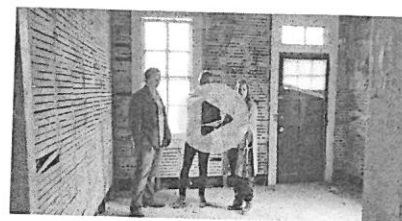
asked Mark Zuckerberg for help paying rent, some Twitter employees earning \$160,000 feel like they're barely scraping by, and even some residents making six-figures can qualify as "low-income" and receive subsidies. Now, Google's parent company, Alphabet, has come up with a patch: It is paying about \$30 million to provide temporary, prefab housing for 300 of its employees.

According to The Wall Street Journal, Alphabet is making a significant investment in modular housing built and shipped in from elsewhere by the start-up Factory OS, because the current local offerings are so overpriced: "San Francisco rents have jumped by almost 50 percent since 2010, while home prices have increased 98 percent since the bottom of the market in 2009."

Rents for these apartments are expected to be more moderate. Factory OS founder and CEO Rick Holliday tells the Journal that "a previous project that Holliday built using modular technology saved tenants \$700 a month in rent because of reduced construction costs."

Other tech companies are also taking action on behalf on their workers, the Journal reports:

As Silicon Valley battles its severe housing shortage, tech companies are becoming more active in trying to help solve the problem. Facebook Inc. has pledged to plan and design 1,500 units in Menlo Park, of which 15 percent will be classified as affordable housing. The project is still in the early planning phase. A spokesman said the company is considering modular housing and is supportive of Mr. Holliday's project and "anything that has the potential to accelerate building housing in the Bay Area."



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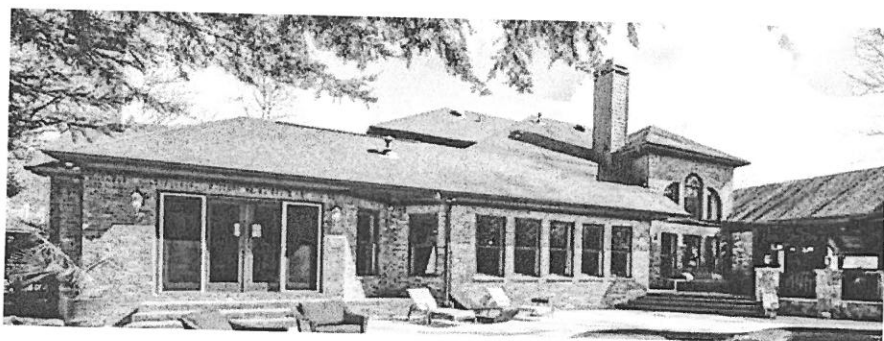


Forbes points out that tech companies continue to grow and hire in Silicon Valley, which will exacerbate the area's housing shortage.

Apple Inc. has already begun moving thousands of its employees into Apple Park, the company's new 2.8-million-square-foot circular building in Cupertino, Calif., that resembles a spaceship. Facebook Inc. and Alphabet Inc. have tapped top architects Frank Gehry and Bjarke Ingels for expansions. Salesforce.com Inc. paid to put its name on a new, 61-story tower that will be the tallest building in San Francisco.

A recent study by Apartment List found that millennials in San Jose, Calif., have the longest wait to purchase a home of anyone in the generation nationwide: Odds are they won't be in a good position to buy an apartment there for "almost 24 years," or "until the year 2041."

Don't miss: Google employees could buy 5 houses for the price of one if they left Silicon Valley



Here's what \$1.3 million can buy you in real estate in the U.S.'s biggest metropolitan areas



Ester Bloom
Senior Editor, CNBC Make It

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Google is spending \$30 million on housing for Silicon Valley employees

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