



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-374, **Version:** 1

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**Date:** August 18, 2016

**To:** Members of the Planning Commission

**From:** Scott Tempel, City Planner

Discussion of Temporary Health Care Dwellings, Accessory Dwelling Units and Tiny Houses

**Action Requested:**

The Planning Commission is asked to discuss the topics of Temporary Health Care Dwellings, Accessory Dwelling Units and Tiny Houses and provide staff direction on how to address these interrelated issues.

**Summary Report:**

At its August 16 meeting, the City Council passed an Ordinance option out of the requirements of Minnesota Statute, Section 462.3593, regarding Temporary Health Care Dwellings. Council members echoed the Planning Commission by stating that Northfield would be better served by adopting customized Land Development Code language addressing Temporary Family Health Care Dwellings as well as standards for Accessory Dwelling Units and Tiny Houses. With some thoughtful consideration, Northfield should be able to draft regulations allowing Temporary Health Care Dwellings in a manner that addresses the concerns outlined in the attached staff report. At this point, no other communities have adopted custom legislation on the matter.

Looking at Accessory Dwelling Units, the regulations quoted below show that ADUs are effectively only allowed above a garage as a carriage house style. This is not very senior friendly and would probably not meet the needs of someone requiring medical care. In addition, the use of ADUs has been stymied by the rental housing ordinance. The few inquiries we get on ADUs are regularly either not allowed under the rental ordinance or cost prohibitive for the applicant as part of a new garage.

(1) Accessory Dwelling Unit Development Standards

- (a) Only one accessory dwelling unit shall be permitted on a lot, and shall be included in the maximum number of allowable dwelling units on a property as shown in Table 2.7-1.
- (b) There shall be a minimum lot area of 8,000 square feet.
- (c) An accessory dwelling unit shall be located as part of a detached garage.
- (d) An accessory dwelling unit shall contain separate kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- (e) An accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed 864 square feet in size and 24 feet in height, and is subject to the building area ratio requirements in Table 3.2-1. One accessible off-street parking space shall be provided for each accessory dwelling unit in addition to the off-street parking spaces required for the principal dwelling in Section 3.6, Off-Street Parking, Loading, and Mobility.

- (f) An accessory dwelling unit shall be constructed so as to be compatible with the existing principal dwelling, as well as the surrounding neighborhood in terms of design, form, height, materials, and landscaping.
- (g) An accessory dwelling unit shall be separated from the principal dwelling by a minimum distance of ten feet.
- (2) An accessory dwelling unit may be rented if it complies with the Northfield Municipal Code, chapter 14, but the owner of the principal building on the property must reside on the property.

Tiny Houses are a rather new phenomenon, as referenced in the attached PAS response. Most Tiny House developments are allowed as PUDs, Manufactured Housing Parks, or RV parks. There are no good examples of ordinances addressing the matter in a comprehensive and novel manner.

To complicate matters, this issue highlights direct conflict between being a premier college town and one of the nation's top retirement communities. How can we allow an additional dwelling unit on a property for Grandma and not for a student? Staff believes we can address Tiny Homes through modifications to the Accessory Dwelling Use section of the LDC. Additional language may be needed to create a separate zone district for a Tiny House village. This will require input from the community at large, the Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and City Council.