

Tiny Homes in Pinellas County

A summary of zoning regulations in Pinellas County, St. Petersburg, and other Florida communities related to tiny homes as a housing option.

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SUMMARY

Background

- Tiny homes are defined in the Florida Building Code as a dwelling that is 400 square feet or less in floor area excluding lofts.
- Local governments can choose to refine this definition.
- Unincorporated Pinellas County's Land Development Code (LDC) does not directly include the term tiny home.
- Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg (St. Pete) utilize a similar approach, regulating around use types if they are on a chassis or built with a permanent foundation.

Findings

- Pinellas County addresses tiny homes on a chassis through two use types, recreational vehicles and mobile homes.
- St. Pete addresses tiny homes on chassis through two use types, mobile home and domestic equipment.
- Pinellas County and St. Pete address tiny homes on a permanent foundation as single-family dwellings or accessory dwelling units.
- Pinellas County and St. Pete allow for two units on a single parcel, with one tiny home as the primary single-family dwelling and one as the accessory dwelling unit (ADU).
- Pinellas County and St. Pete address multiple tiny home units on a single parcel differently.
- The County applies the criteria for a mobile home park if three or more tiny home units are proposed.
- St. Pete allows for the clustering of tiny homes under multifamily zoning.

Recommendation

- The County should consider allowing for three or more units in multifamily zoning districts, consistent with what St. Pete allows for now.

The tables on the following pages show how different tiny home structures are identified in the County and St. Pete.

- Tiny Homes on A Chassis
- Tiny Homes on A Permanent Foundation
- Accessory Dwelling Units

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TINY HOMES ON A CHASSIS			
	Pinellas County	City of St. Petersburg	Similar
<i>Recreational Vehicle</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting size requirements per Section 138-1 of the LDC; no fixed utility connections. 	N/A	X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed in Commercial Recreation Zoning District. 		
<i>Mobile Home</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be placed in a Mobile Home Park if on a lot or parcel of land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be located in a Mobile Home Park connected to public utilities and used as a residence. 	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed in Residential Mobile Home (RMH) zoning district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed in Neighborhood Mobile Home (NMFH) zoning district. 	✓
<i>Domestic Equipment</i>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows tiny home to be stored on existing residential property subject to Section 16.40.100 (LDR) 	X
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not be used as a residence 	

TINY HOMES ON A PERMANENT FOUNDATION			
	Pinellas County	City of St. Petersburg	Similar
<i>Single-Family Dwelling</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to single-family regulations per zoning, Florida Building Code, and Pinellas County Housing Code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to single-family regulations per zoning, and Florida Building Code. 	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to single-family subdivision standards (3+ units). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to single-family subdivision standards (3+ units) 	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily allowed in residential zoning districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primarily allowed in residential zoning districts. 	✓
	-		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A cluster of tiny homes on one lot may be permitted under multifamily zoning.
<i>Accessory Dwelling Unit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used as an accessory dwelling unit per Section 138-3210 (LDC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used as an accessory dwelling unit per Section 16.50.010 (LDR) 	✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed in all residential zoning districts and some commercial zoning districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowed in most residential zoning districts and commercial zoning districts. 	✓

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ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS		
Pinellas County	City of St Petersburg	Similar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 750 square feet maximum* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 800 square feet maximum – must not exceed 67 percent of the floor area of the principal dwelling 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District regulations pertaining to setbacks and lot coverage provisions shall be met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District regulations pertaining to setbacks and lot coverage provisions shall be met. 	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No off-street parking requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off Street Parking Required** 	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buffering standards are not specified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional buffering requirements exist for a second story ADU. 	✗
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed in all residential zoning districts, and in some nonresidential zoning districts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed in most residential districts and commercial zoning districts. 	✓

*Larger ADUs can be approved through a Type 2 review process

**Off street parking is required unless the unit is ≤ 600sf and within 1/8th mile of transit

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WHAT IS A “TINY HOME”?

Tiny homes are part of a growing trend toward compact living for a variety of reasons including housing affordability, greater mobility, reduced impact to the environment and a simpler lifestyle. A tiny home is smaller in scale in comparison to a typical single-family dwelling. Permitted sizes and associated regulations for tiny homes vary across local communities; however, all need to be in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.

According to [Appendix Q](#) of the 2020 Florida Building Code, Residential, 7th Edition, a “Tiny House” is a dwelling that is 400 square feet or less in floor area excluding lofts.

HOW DO WE REGULATE?

Tiny homes are a newer concept that are not specifically addressed in the Pinellas County Land Development Code (LDC), or the Pinellas Housing Code which establishes minimum life safety requirements for every building and its premises used in whole or in part as a dwelling unit.

Land Development Code

In Unincorporated Pinellas County, tiny homes are allowed to be built is dependent upon use type and the zoning districts that allow for that use. The Code addresses tiny homes in the following ways:

- Single-family dwelling – one unit on a parcel, with a permanent foundation

[*Dwelling, single family \(detached\) and their customary accessory uses*](#) means a dwelling unit in a single structure, on a single lot, not attached to any other dwelling by any means.

Tiny homes with a permanent foundation are subject to the same zoning, Florida Building Code, and Pinellas County Housing Code requirements as any new single-family home would be. Similarly, they would be subject to the same single-family subdivision standards if three or more tiny home units were proposed.

- Recreational Vehicle (RV) – on a chassis

[*Vehicle, recreational*](#) means and includes the following types of vehicles (each of the following shall have a body width not to exceed 102 inches and a body length not to exceed 40 feet when stored on residential parcels as an accessory use):

(1) Travel trailer means a vehicular, portable structure built on a chassis, designed to be used as a temporary dwelling for travel, recreation, and vacation uses.

(2) Pickup coach means a structure designed to be mounted on a truck chassis with sufficient equipment to render it suitable for use as a temporary dwelling for travel, recreation, and vacation uses.

(3) Motor home means a portable, temporary dwelling to be used for travel, recreation, and vacation uses, constructed as an integral part of a self-propelled vehicle.

(4) Camping trailer means a collapsible temporary dwelling structure mounted on wheels, and designed for travel, recreation, and vacation uses.

(5) Auto camper means a lightweight, collapsible unit that fits on top of an automobile and/or into the trunk with the cover removed, and designed for travel, recreation, and vacation uses.

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If a tiny home is on a chassis, it is considered an RV and must be regulated as such. This means the following:

- The tiny home meets the size and definition of a recreational vehicle per [LDC section 138-1](#).
 - The tiny home is properly maintained and functional.
 - The tiny home has current and proper DMV tag/registration as a travel trailer or park trailer.
 - The tiny home is not permanently fixed or secured on the property.
 - The tiny home does not have fixed utility connections.
 - The tiny home may not be used or occupied when stored.
 - May only be used in zoning districts that allow for RVs.
- Mobile Home – on a chassis, more than one unit

[Mobile home](#) and their customary accessory uses means a dwelling unit constructed in a factory before June 15, 1976, or constructed after June 15, 1976 in compliance with the federal [Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards \(the HUD Code\)](#) for manufactured *homes*. Mobile homes are not self-propelled.

[Mobile home park](#) and their customary accessory uses means a lot or parcel of land which contains *mobile home* sites and accessory open areas, recreation, or community facilities for the residents.

Although Tiny Homes are not built to the HUD Code, they are considered an allowable use within a mobile home park. If more than one tiny home is built on one parcel as part of a development, that development is reviewed as if it were a mobile home project.

- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) – residential unit as a secondary use on a parcel, with a permanent foundation

[Accessory dwelling unit](#) means an independently functioning dwelling unit which is an accessory use to the principal use on the same lot and which has a separate kitchen with a cooking stove. These uses are sometimes referred to as "garage apartments," "mother-in-law apartments," and/or "carriage houses."

A permanent foundation tiny home may also be built on a residential property with an existing single-family home as an ADU within all residential zoning districts. Standards for ADU's are established in [Section 138-3210](#) of the LDC addressing such things as a maximum size of 750 sq ft, owner occupancy requirements, and nonresidential allowances. This section notes that neither mobile homes nor recreational vehicles can be used as an ADU.

The following table details where tiny homes are allowed by use type.

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TINY HOMES USE TYPES			
Use Type	Size	Future Land Use	Zoning District
Single Family Dwelling	N/A	RR, RE, RS, RL, RU, RLM, RM, RH, R/O/R, CG	R-A, R-E, R-R, R-1, R-2, R-3, RMH, R-4, R-5
Recreational Vehicle (RV)	N/A	RR, RE, RS, RL, RU, RLM, RM, RH, R/O/R, CG	CR
Mobile Home (park)	N/A	RR, RE, RS, RL, RU, RLM, RM, RH, R/O/R, CG	RMH
Accessory Dwelling Unit	Max 750 sq ft	RR, RE, RS, RL, RU, RLM, RM, RH, R/O/R, CG	R-A, R-E, R-R, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5, RM, RPD (as accessory use)

Pinellas County Housing Code

The [Pinellas County Housing Code](#) establishes minimum standards to address life/safety requirements for every building and its premises used in whole or in part as a dwelling unit.

- Every dwelling unit must contain at least 150 square feet of floor space for the first occupant, and at least 100 square feet per additional occupant.
- Every dwelling unit of two or more rooms, every room occupied for sleeping purposes must contain 70 square feet of floorspace, as well as at least 50 square feet per additional occupant.
- Additional standards address light and ventilation, electrical systems, interior and exterior of structure, and sanitation.

2020 Florida Building Code, Residential, 7th Edition

[Appendix Q](#) of the 2020 Florida Building Code, Residential, 7th Edition specifically addresses ‘Tiny Houses’ that are used as single-family dwellings. These structures must meet all applicable building codes in addition to this section. Appendix Q addresses the following construction standards:

- Minimum ceiling height
- Loft standards including access and egress
- Emergency escape and rescue openings

Other Jurisdictions

A comparison of tiny home regulations in other Florida communities can be found in the table below. This table includes how others define tiny homes by use type and outlines other considerations such as, size, and allowable locations.

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TINY HOMES EXAMPLES				
<u>St Petersburg</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
Mobile Home	<p>A dwelling unit constructed in a factory before June 15, 1976, or constructed after June 15, 1976 in compliance with the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards (the HUD code) for manufactured homes. Mobile homes are not self-propelled.</p> <p>*As per Section 16.10.020.1 of the Land Development Regulations (LDR).</p>	N/A	NMH	On Wheels
Domestic Equipment	<p>Equipment which is accessory to residential single household activity, designed for recreational, water sport, camping, travel, or household utility applications, and not designed, used or intended to be used for permanent living or for commercial or industrial purposes. Domestic equipment also means all portable structures built on a chassis with wheels and either self-propelled or towable by a motor vehicle, including but not limited to: motor homes, mobile homes, campers, travel trailers, recreational vehicles, pick-up campers, tent trailers, and pop-out campers. Domestic equipment also includes but is not limited to four wheeled motorized carts, houseboats, boats, jet skis, any trailers specifically designed to transport or carry one or more pieces of domestic equipment, and utility trailers.</p> <p>*As per Section 16.40.100.5 section of the LDR</p>	35 feet in overall length, eight feet in width and 12 feet in overall height.	NT-1, NT-2, NT-3, NT-4, NS-E, NS-1, NS-2, NSM-1, NSM-2, NMH, NPUD-1, NPUD-2, CRT-1, CRT-2, CRS-1, CRS-2, CCT-1, CCT-2, CCS-1, CCS-2. CCS-3	On Wheels
Dwelling, Single family	<p>Dwelling, Single family: A detached residence designed for or occupied exclusively by one family. This term shall include "Modular" structures assembled in a factory, transported to the site, and which comply with the applicable building codes but which are not mobile homes.</p>	N/A	NT-1, NT-2, NT-3, NT-4, NS-E, NS-1, NS-2, NSM-1, NSM-2, NMH, NPUD-1, NPUD-2, CRT-1, CRT-2, CRS-1, CRS-2, CCT-1, CCT-2, CCS-1, CCS-2. CCS-3	Permanent

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<u>St Petersburg</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
Dwelling, Multifamily	A building designed for or occupied by two or more families (on the basis of monthly, or longer occupancies, or ownership of individual units) with separate cooking, bathroom and sleeping facilities for each unit. Motels, hotels, and other transient accommodation uses are not multiple family dwellings. Accessory uses include clubhouses, recreational and laundry facilities.	Minimum gross floor area shall be, for an efficiency/studio unit - 375 sf; one bedroom unit - 500 sf; two bedroom unit - 750 sf; for dwelling units with more than two bedrooms, an additional 200 sf for each	NSM-1, NSM-2, NPUD-1, NPUD-2, CRT-1, CRT-2, CRS-1, CRS-2, CCT-1, CCT-2, CCS-1, CCS-2, CCS-3, DC-C, DC-1, DC-2, DC-3, RC-1, RC-2, EC	Permanent
Accessory Dwelling Unit	<i>Accessory Dwelling Unit:</i> An independently functioning dwelling unit which is an accessory use to the principal dwelling unit on the same lot and which has a separate kitchen. These uses are sometimes referred to as "garage apartments," "granny flats," or "carriage houses." (See Use Specific Development Standards)	100-400 sq ft	NT-1, NT-2, NT-4, NS-E, NPUD-1, NPUD-2, CRT-1, CRT-2, CRS-1, CRS-2, CCT-1, CCT-2, DC-2	Permanent
<u>Monroe County</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
N/A	N/A	400 sq ft max	County Owned Lands	Permanent
<u>City of Tampa</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
Dwelling, single-family, detached	A structure containing one (1) dwelling unit with open space on all sides.	At least 1 room with 120 sq ft, every other habitable room 70 sq ft thereafter.	RS-150, RS-100, RS-75, RS-60, RS-50, RM-12, RM-16, RM-18, RM-24, RM-35, RM-50, RM-75, RO, RO-1	Permanent

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<u>Brevard County</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
Tiny house or tiny house on wheels (THOW)	A vehicular portable unit on a single chassis and mounted on wheels, which is intended for use as a primary residential structure that is not a mobile home, manufactured home, or park trailer, as defined by F.S. ch. 320, THOWs must meet all of the following conditions: (1)It must be towable by a vehicle with a bumper hitch, frame-towing hitch, or fifth-wheel connection; and (2)It cannot be designed to be moved under its own power; and (3)It must comply with the dimensional and weight limits established by the state for vehicles using public roads.	120 - 750 sq ft	GU, PA, AGR, AU, AU-L, RRMH-1, RRMH-2.5, RRMH-5, TR-3, THPUD	On Wheels/ Chassis
<u>Longwood, Florida</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
Tiny homes and tiny home communities	A detached, single-family residential dwelling unit between 200 square feet and 900 square feet set on a foundation that is the primary structure and meets all applicable Florida Building Code standards.	200 - 900 sq ft	MDR-7, MDR-15	Permanent
<u>Milton, Florida</u>				
Use Type	Definition	Size	Zoning District	Types
Tiny Home Subdivision	A tiny home subdivision, developments may be categorized as either a Major Tiny Home Subdivision or a Minor Tiny Home Subdivision.	Min 300 sq ft, 70 sq ft per habitable room	R-3, R-U	Permanent
Tiny House on Foundation	A tiny home shall be constructed on a permanent foundation. Permanent foundations must be constructed of durable materials, i.e. concrete, mortared masonry, or treated wood - and be site-built	Min 300 sq ft, 70 sq ft per habitable room	R-1AA, R-1A, R-1, R-2, R-3, R-U, R-C1, SSC-RC	Permanent